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by Ding Lin/Xinhua

President Xi Visits Latin America, Attends APEC Summit

November 20, Lima, Peru: Chinese President Xi Jinping (5th left, front) poses with other participants of the 24th Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' Meeting. President Xi Jinping arrived in Quito on November 17, kicking off a state visit to Ecuador and his third visit to Latin America since he took office in 2013. Along with Ecuador, the week-long tour also took Xi to Peru and Chile. In Peru, Xi attended the 24th APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in the capital city of Lima.

In a speech at the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting, Xi highlighted APEC's role as a pioneer, leader and trailblazer of economic cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region and the world at large, and called on APEC members to leverage Asia-Pacific's role as a growth engine and work for an innovative, invigorated, interconnected and inclusive world economy.



by Wan Quan

J-20 Stealth Fighter Debuts

November 1, Zhuhai City: A J-20 stealth fighter at the 11th China International Aviation & Aerospace Exhibition (CIAAE). The 11th biennial CIAAE, also known as Airshow China, was held in Zhuhai, Guangdong Province, from November 1 to 6. In arguably the most eye-catching episode of the event, two of China's domestically-built J-20 stealth fighters made a stunning public flight debut.

It was the first time for the aircraft to be unveiled to the public, and they haven't even begun service yet. Alongside the J-20 stealth fighters, a total of 151 aircraft attended the air show, attracting more than 700 exhibitors from 42 countries and regions and 400,000 professional and civilian spectators.



by Deng Hua/Xinhua

China's Longest Manned Space Mission

November 18, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region: Staff prepare to check the reentry module of the Shenzhou-11 spacecraft after its safe landing. Chinese astronauts Jing Haipeng and Chen Dong returned to Earth safely on November 18, completing the overwhelmingly successful Tiangong-2 and Shenzhou-11 manned space mission, which lasted over a month, making it the country's longest-ever manned space mission.

At 1:11 p.m. Beijing Time that afternoon, Shenzhou-11's reentry module separated from the spacecraft's orbiting capsule before separating from the propelling capsule, ending the 33-day mission with a return to the planet. The reentry module landed safely at the expected site in central Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region at 1:59 p.m.

This mission is a key step forward for China's plan to build a permanent manned space station. The core module of China's space station is expected to be launched around 2018, and the space station will enter full service around 2022, with capacity to continually operate for more than 10 years straight.



IC

Singles' Day Shopping Craze

November 11, Handan, Hebei Province: Workers sort piles of parcels at a distribution center. China's domestic online shopping platforms have turned November 11 ("Singles' Day") into a shopping holiday in China, a trend that seems to grow stronger every year, even abroad. Singles' Day was inspired by the numerical appearance of the day: 11/11.

This year, sales volume on Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba's marketplaces Tmall and Taobao alone reached 120.7 billion yuan (US\$17.73 billion) in just 24 hours. For Chinese consumers, apparel and accessories, skin care and cosmetics, food and beverage, mobile phones, and digital products have been the biggest buys over the past two years.

Comment

Historical Experiences on Strengthening The Party Discipline

Text by Tian Gaiwei

Remolding the subjective world while transforming the objective world is an important feature of Marxist political parties, compared to other parties. Whenever the Communist Party of China (CPC) prepares to launch a major historic transformation or fulfill a new historic mission, it first emphasizes self-examination and internal rebuilding and remolding. The sixth plenary session of the 18th CPC Central Committee, which concluded in late October, vividly demonstrated this point. Attendees of the meeting approved two documents on discipline of the CPC, including one defining the norms of political life within the Party in the current situation as well as regulations of internal supervision, which serve as the guide and guarantee that the CPC will fulfill its new historic mission and ensure strong intra-Party unity as well as political stability.

The CPC's history of development has shown that strengthening Party discipline and strictly regulating internal Party political life provide an effective safeguard that ensures the Party will make great achievements and promote major social changes.

The Yan'an Rectification Movement, which lasted from 1941 to 1945, was the first mass movement on self-assessment launched by the CPC. This movement brought the Party unprecedented ideological and organizational unity and tremendously reinforced its combat capacity. *Reform Our Study*, a report delivered by Chairman Mao Zedong during the campaign, guaranteed the Party's power to promote major revolution of social relations in China in those days.


In 1957, after China basically completed its socialist transformation, the country's social relations underwent fundamental changes. Shift-

ing to socialist construction from revolution, China entered a new phase. Amidst drastic social change, public mindsets also underwent transformation, and the CPC's mission entered a new historical period. To better lead social reform, the CPC Central Committee proposed in April 1957 that the Party and the working class improve their leadership in the transformation of all of society and the construction of a new society, better mobilize positive forces, and unite and transform negative strength into positive power, striving towards the goal of building a great socialist country while rebuilding the Party and the working class themselves. This campaign set a solid political foundation for China's socialist construction that followed.

In 1978, China began to implement reform and opening-up policies. In 1980, the fifth plenary session of 11th CPC Central Committee approved a document covering the norms of political life in the Party. Essentially, they institutionalized political life within the Party. This important move, which evolved from the Party's historical experiences, especially lessons from the "cultural revolution" (1966-1976), was a major act of institutionalizing and standardizing intra-Party political life. This document, along with *Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of the Party Since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, which was adopted by the sixth plenary session of the 11th CPC Central Committee in 1981, played a decisive role in the ideological unification of all Party members and all people in China and guaranteed China would move in the right direction while maintaining stability during the country's long reform and opening-up process.

After implementation of reform and open-

ing-up policies for nearly four decades, both Chinese society and the CPC itself have undergone profound changes. To lead the historical mission of comprehensively deepening reform and to achieve the goals of completing the building of a moderately prosperous society in all aspects by the CPC's centennial anniversary in 2021, building China into a modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, and harmonious by the time the People's Republic of China celebrates its 100th birthday in 2049 and realizing the great Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation, the Party must motivate Chinese society towards new interest adjustment at deeper levels and is bound to take on more challenges with new historical characteristics. The Party itself must once again undergo self-improvement, which should align with the challenges of the new era. By doing so, the Party will be able to conquer the "four challenges" of governing the country, furthering reform and opening up, developing the market economy and dealing with the external environment, and better confront the growing "four dangers" of lack of discipline and spirit, incompetence, alienation from the people and corruption.

The sixth plenary session of the 18th CPC Central Committee evidenced the Party's determination on the subject of internal transformation in accordance with new historical missions. At this crucial moment in history, the CPC again established norms, only inferior to the Party Constitution, on the political life within the Party. These norms, along with other Party regulations, will not only strengthen the Party itself, but also promote the further development of Chinese society under the CPC's leadership. 

The author serves as a researcher with the Institute of Political Science and director of the Research Office of Marxist Politics, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

Buzzwords

中国天眼 Heavenly Eye

Not long ago, a 500-meter aperture spherical telescope, "FAST," began operation in Guizhou Province, southwestern China. Nicknamed "Heavenly Eye" in China, it is the largest single-aperture radio telescope in the world. The intellectual property that made FAST possible is owned by China. After an investment of 1.2 billion yuan over five years, the telescope can receive even weak signals from the universe, probe pulsars in the Galaxy and beyond, test gravitational waves, hunt for alien life, detect dark energy, and help us understand galactic evolution.

China-U.S. Relations in a Trump Administration

Text by Zhang Shirong

Since "anti-globalization" was a signature campaign issue of U.S. President-elect Donald Trump, the incoming administration's foreign policy moves are understandably attracting global attention. It seems that the direction of China-U.S. relations, one of the most important bilateral relationships in today's world, will face a lot of uncertainties during the Trump administration.

Some analysts believe that Trump's presidency will actually be a good thing for China since he will likely focus more on domestic reforms as he promised in his populist campaign. The new administration would also be less aggressive with the Asia-Pacific Rebalance strategy initiated by the Obama administration. Should that be the case, it would help reduce tension between the East and the West.

Others, however, worry that since Trump has been explicitly accusing China of stealing American jobs, trade frictions between the two countries will likely intensify after he takes office in the White House.

Given the fact that economic exchanges have remained one of the most important driving forces in China-U.S. relations, increased trade frictions will definitely strain overall bilateral ties between the two major economies of the world today.

What has happened over the past decades shows that China-U.S. relationship has a high degree of flexibility with its own particular pattern. Following the end of the Cold War, relations between the two countries have experienced complexity and fluctuations.

Former U.S. President George H.W. Bush, despite advocating a friendly policy towards China, led comprehensive Western sanctions against Beijing in the 1990s in hopes of achieving a domino effect following the collapse of the


Soviet Union and tremendous changes in Eastern Europe. The Clinton administration (1993-2001) was capricious on the issue of China receiving most-favored-nation (MFN) trading status, and it criticized China on issues of human rights, Taiwan and Tibet. The Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1996 and the NATO bombing of Chinese Embassy in Yugoslavia in 1999 soured China-U.S. relations to an all-time low since the two countries established diplomatic ties in the late 1970s. During the George W. Bush administration (2001-2009), Washington's "preemptive strikes" strategy caused serious concerns on the part of the international community including China. By calling China a "strategic competitor," vowing whatever means necessary to help Taiwan defend itself, and even publicly endorsing Taiwan's separation from China, President Bush's contribution to improve China-U.S. relations was largely negative. As for the Obama administration, its Asia-Pacific Rebalance strategy, coupled with unconstructive moves on the disputes over the Diaoyu Islands between China and Japan, the issue of South China Sea, as well as its Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) initiative, continued to hurt bilateral relations.

However, despite the turbulence and setbacks, China-U.S. relationship over the past decades has never been completely derailed. There are those who feel uneasy about China's rise and growing strength, but prevailed was the perception that maintaining bilateral relations conforms to the fundamental interests of both the United States and China. That is a common understanding shared by the majority of people across the Pacific Ocean. And Beijing's U.S. policy has all along played a crucial role to keep on track such a relationship.

China has emerged as the world's second largest economy through peaceful development.

The 2013 summit between Chinese President Xi Jinping and his U.S. counterpart Barack Obama reassured principles concerning bilateral relations. These principles stress the need to avoid confrontation, promote mutual respect and cooperation, seek common prosperity and build a new type of relationship between the world's two largest economies. President Xi has, on a number of occasions, stressed the importance of tapping the huge potential in China-U.S. economic and trade cooperation. China's 300 million middle-income earners are expected to double in the next ten years. That is obviously a contributing factor behind the American drive to come into a Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) with China.

Analysts believe that despite harsh campaign rhetoric, it is unlikely that the Trump administration's China policy will deviate too much from America's set pattern strategy. At the same time, however, the long-term mentality and practice of suspicion and containment on China would still cause trouble in bilateral relations including trade frictions between the two countries in the years ahead under Trump's presidency. And a Republican-dominated Congress would only make it easier to resort to more protectionist policies than during the Obama administration. China should better be prepared.

On the other hand, any U.S. president is backed by professional administrative teams and massive think-tank systems. These are sophisticated state apparatus that work to make sure any administration's China policy is adopted in the national interests of the United States. They will, of course, try to strike a balance between containing and connecting with China. 

The author is an associate researcher with the Institute for International Strategic Studies, Party School of the Central Committee of the CPC.

电影产业促进法 Film Industry Promotion Law

The *Film Industry Promotion Law* was passed on November 7, 2016 at the 24th meeting of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China, the first such law for the country's cultural industry.

When it goes into effect on March 1, 2017, the law will provide easier access to film production through loosening examination and approval procedures, lowering the threshold for market entry, and abolishing filmmaking licenses. Also worth noting, it outlines harsh punishments for companies that manipulate box office numbers, data and information. According to the law, both movie distributors and movie theaters will face penalties for data fraud.



The 1,001 Kashgar Nights

Text and photographs by Martina Fuchs

After living in many Middle Eastern countries such as Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Syria and Yemen, I couldn't wait to visit Xinjiang, China's biggest Muslim region with a predominant Uygur population.

Tucked in the westernmost corner of China, the oasis city of Kashgar in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region marks the intersection of two branches of the ancient Silk Road and has been the junction of regional trade and cultural exchange for more than two millennia. And so it remains today.

Like Urumqi, the capital of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, Kashgar dra-

matically contrasts the rest of China. I was most fascinated by the local population of this metropolis. Home to over 500,000 according to the 2010 census, the city is fueled by colorful ethnic diversity—a mosaic of the Uygurs, Han, Kyrgyz, Tajiks and Uzbeks.

Kashgar's Old City has been deemed one of the "best-preserved" examples of a traditional Islamic city anywhere, and it attracts more than one million tourists annually, according to estimates.

Most people don't realize that the award-winning movie *The Kite Runner*, set in Kabul, Afghanistan, was actually filmed in Kashgar due to safety and security concerns.



Abakh Khoja Tomb is best known as the resting place of one of Kashgar's most popular rulers.



A Muslim man prays in the prayer hall.

Kashgar's narrow, labyrinthine alleys all seem to lead to the yellow-tiled Id Kah Mosque, built in 1442, which remains the spiritual and physical heart of the city. Muslim and non-Muslim men and women are allowed inside, but visitors are required to dress modestly and remove shoes before entering the carpeted area, and women are asked to wear a headscarf.

Local street snacks such as mutton kebabs and bagel-like breads can be found in food stalls opposite the Id Kah Mosque. The neighborhood is also a great place to buy souvenirs and local crafts such as copper teapots, musical instruments and wooden jewelry boxes.

As they have done for centuries, Uygur craftsmen and artisans continue working with hammers and chisels, traders haggle

in boisterous bazaars, and carts pulled by donkeys still creep down narrow alleys.

A highlight of any trip to Kashgar is an excursion to the lively Sunday livestock market, which only happens on that day and remains a fascinating sight. Thousands of Uygur farmers and herders from peripheral areas come to sell cattle, sheep, camels, horses and donkeys.

Another must-see attraction is Kashgar's Grand Bazaar. Its history can be traced back as far as 120 B.C. when famous Chinese explorer and envoy of Emperor Wudi of the Han Dynasty (202 B.C.-220 A.D.), Zhang Qian, visited Kashgar. Throughout the history of the Silk Road, the Grand Bazaar was a place where merchants from India, Persia and even Rome exchanged goods with merchants from

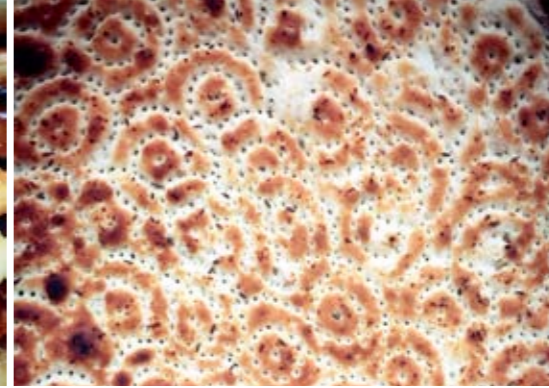
ancient kingdoms in western China. With over 2,000 years of history, it remains a fascinating blend of cultures and still offers a mesmerizing selection of goods such as handicrafts, carpets and spices. Haggling is a must.

Located three kilometers from the city center, the Abakh Khoja Tomb (also called Xiangfei Tomb in China) was my favorite attraction. It is a 17th-Century mausoleum of the powerful Islamic Kashgar ruling family and contains five generations of tombs. It is considered one of the holiest Muslim sites in Xinjiang and has become a pilgrimage destination. Prayer day is Friday.

Kashgar's Sunday market is famous near and far. Porters load goods on their backs or push trolleys through the crowds while yelling "Boish boish", which means



Xinjiang is famous for its freshly-baked bagels and flat breads. Many consider Kashgar's breads one of the seven wonders of the culinary world.



A flat, round bread called "nang" fresh from the oven.



Fresh fruits from Xinjiang such as peaches, grapes, figs and Hami melons, as well as nuts, are considered the best in China.




Id Kah Mosque is located in the central square of Kashgar. The whole complex occupies 16,800 square meters.

"make way" in the Uygur language. Despite its name, the market is open every day—but Sunday still draws the biggest crowds.

A 4-hour drive from Kashgar is Karakul Lake ("Black Lake"), another highlight thanks to its glittering mirror of glacial peaks. From its shores, one can enjoy a panoramic view of the Pamir, Tianshan and Kunlun mountain ranges. Unfortunately, thick clouds were covering this roof of the world during my visit.

Departing from Kashgar, one can continue along the southern Silk Road through either Torugart or Irkeshtam Pass to Kyrgyzstan, or south to Pakistan along the world's highest paved international road: the breathtaking Karakoram Highway, one of my favorite thoroughfares in the world.

Kashgar features a desert climate with hot summers and cold winters. It is one of the driest cities on the planet, averaging only 2.5 inches of precipitation per year. The best time to visit is between August and September, but don't forget to check the calendar for the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, when many shops and restaurants are closed during the day.

Modernity has swept this cultural and trade hub like a sandstorm. Where caravans and camels once trekked, taxis and motorcycles now crowd the streets. Dirt roads have become highways, and railroads now connect the region to the rest of China. Despite monumental changes, Kashgar's spirit remains strong. 

The author is a business reporter for CCTV NEWS, the English-language news channel of the Beijing-based China Central Television (CCTV).

Documentary Photography: Recording China

Text by Bao Kun

Photos Courtesy of China Photographers Association

Since photography was first introduced to China, attitudes towards the practice have evolved from those of family photos to ID photo, studio photography, and finally news photography. Until the late 1980s, documentary photography has never gone mainstream in the country.

After 1976, China experienced a wave of ideological emancipation and pan-artistic philosophies became popular with many groups, represented by Beijing's "April Photography Association." In 1979, the Association held the first ever non-political photog-

raphy exhibition: "Nature · Society · People." Li Xiaobin and Jin Bohong of the Association are considered pioneers of China's documentary photography, after recognizing the value of the style and promoting it early in its development. Back to the early 1980s, China's reform and opening up brought unprecedented changes to the country's politics, economics, culture and lifestyles. Li and Jin felt these changes and focused their lenses on the breathtaking transformations, capturing precious images of that period of China and enhancing public awareness of documentary photography.



Most photos herein were selected from winners in the Documentary Photography Category of the Golden Statue Award for Chinese Photography. Jointly sponsored by the China Federation of Literary and Art Circles and China Photographers Association, the award was established in 1989 and remains the highest honor in China's photography circles. The award has been bestowed 11 times so far.

1977: Workers pull carts loaded with coals on the banks of the Yellow River in Shandong Province. In the 1970s, handcarts were primary transportation vehicles in China. by Zhu Xianmin.

After Li and Jin, Hou Dengke and Hu Wugong from Shaanxi Province as well as An Ge from Guangdong Province started documenting their respective hometowns. Hou and Hu highlighted the lives of Shaanxi natives, while An Ge used his lens to narrate the tremendous economic and cultural changes taking place in Guangdong Province, the forefront of China's reform and opening up. Later, Song Xianmin, who worked with China Photographers Association at the time, began to photograph the ordinary people in his hometown in Henan Province. His photos were collectively published in 1985 under the name *The Folks of the Yellow River*. The book, featuring depictions of the most typical lifestyles of central China, made Song an icon of Chinese documentary photography. Such outstanding photographers have framed China in the 1980s, one of the most significant periods in contemporary Chinese history. At that time, however, the concept of documentary photography was still beyond most Chinese people, who still referred to such images as news photography or realism.



At 8 a.m., October 12, 1978: Soldiers of the Chinese People's Liberation Army listen to China National Radio in Benxi City of Liaoning Province. The radio program was required listening for their political studies. by Yu Wenguo



1977: A wedding ceremony in Jinan City, Shandong Province. by Hou Heliang



Beijing's Temple of Earth, 1984: An administrator drives dancers away. At the time, dance halls were not allowed in Beijing and underground clubs were often shut down by police. Ballroom dancing was considered indecent and was not allowed in public places like a park. by Zhang Zhaozeng



1987: In a morning in Beijing, two people dance waltz in a park. Several dust-women stop and watch them. When China first opened to the world, few people had seen social dance. by Zhang Zhaozeng



1986: People practice *qigong* (a system of deep breathing exercises) in Beijing's Temple of Earth. In the 1980s, *qigong* was so popular in China that practitioners, both old and young, could be seen virtually everywhere. by Zhang Zhaozeng



1996: The lower reaches of the Yellow River melts and causes flood in early spring, which seriously affects the area. by Zhu Xianmin



1980: A grandfather and grandson have dinner in Henan Province. The major goal for many Chinese farmers was to have enough food to eat at that time. by Zhu Xianmin



1987: On the way to the market in Shandong Province. Many rural areas lacked even a market or grocery store, so farmers traveled to go a county fair. by Zhu Xianmin

The term “documentary photography” had already appeared in *International Photography* magazine circulating on the Chinese mainland in 1981, but few understood what it meant. In 1988, when Xiao Xushan, a teacher in the Department of Journalism of Renmin University of China, returned from the United States, she published three articles introducing Western documentary photography’s history and situation, which inspired many young Chinese photographers. Documentary photography began stirring undercurrents in China.

In 1986, the fruits of documentary photography proved popular with the exhibition “An Instant Decade” at Beijing Modern Photography Salon, a show that displayed China’s changes in the decade after the “cultural revolution” (1966-1976) and caused a sensation. Still, the exhibition was considered about news photography. Two years later, Shaanxi Photographers Group, led by Hu

Wugong and Hou Dengke, organized a large-scale exhibition titled “Arduous Course,” at which some photos documenting the “cultural revolution” reminded spectators of the chaotic decade. The span and depth of the exhibition marked a high point in China’s photography history.

“People are the dominant factor in history and the focus of photography,” declared the preface of the exhibition. “Our nation rose up from hardship and then fell into ecstasy, enduring alternating ups and downs, as the rich and complicated spiritual world of our people was born. That is what we tried to display.” With a strong consciousness for humanity, “Arduous Course” was the first photography exhibition in China to promote discussion of history and society through photography. The event accelerated the development of documentary photography in China and inspired many formerly involved in studio photography to give it a chance.



1982: On a chilly spring morning in northeastern China, passengers get hot water on a platform at the Railway Station of Tongliao City in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. by Yuan Ruilin



April 1986: Construction of Baoshan Steel Plant (now Baosteel) was completed and Zhang Encui and his team won at least seven awards for their efforts for the project. When approached by reporters, most were too shy to face the camera. by Yu Wenguo

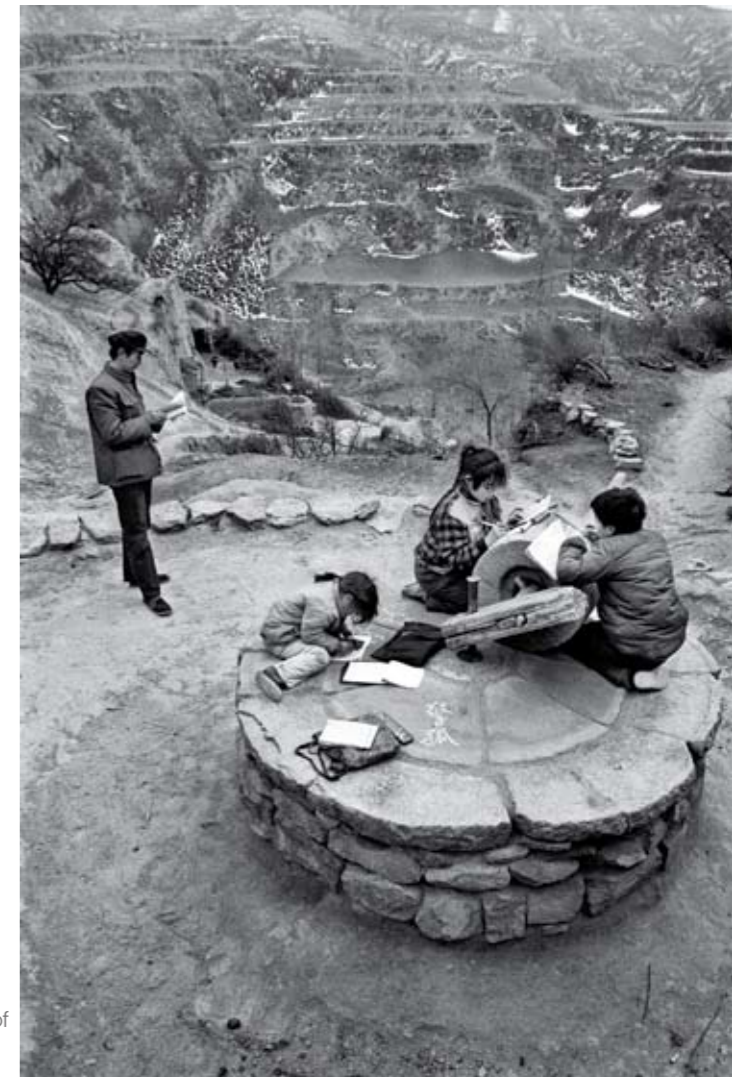


April 1991: Eight-year-old Su Mingjuan in class at Zhangwan Primary School of Sanhe Township, Jinzhai County, Anhui Province. She walked 12 kilometers on mountain road to attend school every day. This picture became iconic of China's Hope Project, which aims to help rural school children. by Xie Hailong

In the 1990s, documentary photography developed rapidly and even began to push social development in China. The photo series *Hope Project* by Xie Hailong is a good example of this phenomenon. While aimlessly taking art pictures in the countryside, Xie witnessed the poor situation of rural school children and turned his camera on it instead. He ended up spending six years taking photos of needy children. Later, China Youth Development Foundation (CYDF) exhibited his works, which aroused passion from people of all walks of life. Since then, Hope Project, a program sponsored by CYDF to aid rural school children, has seen an explosion of donations. Few people had even heard of the charity program before the exhibition.

Xie's work is particularly significant because it shattered the longstanding photography taboo of revealing misery in the country. From that point on, more photographs of suffering were published and more photographers began to seek out such subjects. Many excellent documentary photos and photographers emerged in Xie's wake. *Wheat Reapers* by Hou Dengke is particularly noteworthy. The photographer spent 10 years on the "image project," which focused on the wheat reapers on the Loess Plateau in western China, recording the region's seasonal and traditional modes of agricultural production with a humanitarian tint.

March 1992: A teacher and students at a school of South Yantou Village, Shenyugou Township, Jingle County of Shanxi Province. by Xie Hailong



April 1987: Dai Hongying teaches class with her five-month-old baby girl on her back at Zhaihuai Village Primary School, Antai Township of Rongshui County in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. Her older two-year-old daughter was left alone at home. by Xie Hailong



March 1992: Children of Yangzhang Village, Chiniwa Township, Jingle County, Shanxi Province, carry chairs and desks to school. by Xie Hailong



December 1993: Children from Jinshanling Primary School in Luanping County, Hebei Province long for a beautiful future, by Xie Hailong

Maike (wheat reapers) eat their dinners in the fields. After such long, hard days of work, they begin snoring upon leaving their feet. *Maike* refers specifically to migrants who help others reap wheat when the harvest season comes. Common in Shaanxi, Gansu and Ningxia for hundreds of years, many traditional working styles have disappeared along with improved living standards, but remain part of local folk culture. by Hou Dengke



June 1993: *Maike* (wheat reapers) cut wheat in the scorching sun. by Hou Dengke



Maike (wheat reapers) haggle with an employer. by Hou Dengke



En route to harvest wheat. Wheat becomes ripe in June, so a vast amount of labor is needed for a short period. Landlords would hire workers from elsewhere to harvest the crop for them. Wheat reapers jump onto any available vehicle to cut wheat. by Hou Dengke



1993: The day after Chinese New Year, at Fuyang County Railway Station, tens of thousands of farmers wait in lines for more than 10 hours to take the cheapest train to Shanghai. Back then, Fuyang Railway Station was considered one of the four major travel hubs for migrant workers. by Yu Wenguo



1985: In Nanchong City, Sichuan Province, people gather at the square in front of a cinema to learn pop songs, which had recently exploded in popularity after release on the Chinese mainland. by Yang Hui



December 1992: Cheng Ming Ming, a famous esthetician from Hong Kong, promotes a cosmetic "rejuvenating cream" at a counter in Hualian Department Store in Shanghai. by Yu Wenguo



1999: In Anfu Township, Sichuan Province, a painter promotes his business with portraits of Chinese leaders. The painter mainly paints pictures of the Gods of the Door, which are placed on the door during Chinese New Year to protect the household. by Yang Hui



1987: A young man buys a tie in the street in Nanchong City, Sichuan Province. by Yang Hui



September 15, 1998: Jiujiang citizens bid farewell to soldiers of the Chinese People's Liberation Army after their rescue and relief work in the wake of the city's flood disaster. by Yu Wenguo

On December 12, 2003, Guangdong Museum in Guangzhou presented a large-scale documentary photography exhibition, marking an important point in the history of this photographic style in China. The curator spent over a half year selecting exhibits, which were all acquired permanently by the host museum. It was the first time that a large volume of photographs was collected at once by a museum, heralding traditional galleries' more open attitude towards modern art media and evidencing a rising trend of image art in the history of contemporary Chinese art.

With the increased allure of fame and money, some self-styled documentary photographers began solely shooting religious topics and folk culture, intentionally avoiding social issues. In response to such phenomenon, Li Xianting, the first curator of Songzhuang Art Center, chose to host a photography exhibition titled "Between Heaven and Earth: Through the Eyes of Realism," in hopes of bringing documentary photography back to its original aim to "witness and record." The exhibition took advantage of the massive space in the art center to magnify humble images big enough to make spectators look up to them. This exhibition showed China in transformation.

Since the 1990s, China has experienced heavier exchange with the outside world. The West's strong interest in China's documentary photography pushed some Chinese photographers to shoot "Chinese images" catering to Western fondness for Cold War bias and "West-centrism." Such photographers highlighted distorted and demonizing images of China to gain access to Western commercial photo agencies and earn money. This deepened misunderstanding of China in the West and only exacerbated a typical post-colonialist practice.



August 1, 1998, Paizhou Bay in Jiayu County, Hubei Province: A break after a month of high water levels. Four hundreds soldiers performed relief work and 23,000 people were safely evacuated. by Li Jing



2002: A Longmen Town man washes mud off his shoes and bike with water from the Jialing River. by Yang Hui



2000: Parents buy fruits for their sick kid in Lidu Town, Nanchong City, Sichuan Province. by Yang Hui



2008: A farmer selling chickens makes way for a car in Lidu Town, Nanchong City, Sichuan Province. by Yang Hui




2010: A Changle Town woman answers a call with a new basin on her head to stay dry in rain. by Yang Hui

Since 2000, China has been more rapidly involved in globalization. Accordingly, its art market has been merging with the world's. Driven by the desire for profits, some documentary photographers have attempted commercial photography because it offers easier market access. Because of the internet, traditional photo agencies, the primary income source of many documentary photographers, have dwindled, leading many practitioners to switch focus. China's documentary photography seemed to be in a slump. In this context, some even believed art photography had taken its place in the limelight.

The rise of smartphones and the mobile internet has changed the traditional photo industry, but at the same time, made photography accessible to more practitioners. Practically, people around the world shoot numerous pictures with their smartphones every day, many of which are excellent documentary photos. So actually, documentary photography is not dying but only losing commerciality, remaining an important means to serve society.

In the years since the turn of the century, documentary photography has still played an important role in promoting social development in China. For instance, Wang Jiuliang's *Beijing Besieged by Waste* is one good example. From 2008 to 2009, 30-something Wang documented almost every landfill and trash heap surrounding Beijing and tagged the photos with GPS coordinates. His work created a ripple effect. Then Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao instructed governments at all levels to pay attention to garbage disposal and classification. The municipal government of Beijing printed the album of *Beijing Besieged by Waste* and distributed it to related authorities, requiring them to better handle waste problems. This marked another case of documentary photography inspiring the social development of China.

In a nation that is undergoing tremendous transformations, documentary photography is necessary. At present, most Chinese photographers have recognized the value and spirit of documentary photography and remain focused on it. 

Bao Kun, born in Beijing in 1953, is a renowned photographer, visual culture critic and curator. He once served as the judge of the China International Photographic Art Exhibition and the Golden Statue Award for China Photography, the highest of its kind in China, as well as curator and moderator of Lianzhou Foto Festival and Pingyao International Photography Festival.

The Middle-Aged Man and the Sea

Text by Hu Zhoumeng

Sailor Guo Chuan was scheduled to complete a voyage from San Francisco to Shanghai this November and celebrate a new solo world record with his team, family and other supporters. However, the whole month passed without his arrival, inspiring deep concerns for the seasoned captain.

Guo went missing in the vast Pacific Ocean seven days after he set off on his last attempt. The 51-year-old sailor lost contact with his team near Hawaii on October 25 as he sailed a trimaran named after his hometown Qingdao, across the ocean. The boat was found two days later near Hawaii but without Guo. People from around the world are still searching for him.

One and Only

Many are reluctant to accept the grim outlook for the legendary sailor. In a sport where Chinese faces are rarely seen, Guo amassed a trophy case envied by adventurers worldwide. He completed a 138-day non-stop solo circumnavigation of the globe in 2013, becoming the first Chinese in history to complete such a mission and the first man ever to do it in such a small vessel: a 40-foot (12-meter) yacht. After joining the ranks of less than 200 solo non-stop circumnavigators of Earth, Guo

led five crew members from Germany, France and Russia to thread the Arctic Ocean through icebergs and heavy smog. The non-stop sail through the Arctic Ocean's Northeast Passage was unprecedented. Guo earned respect not only for completion of such bold trips but also the calmness with which he conquered extreme conditions.

In 2008, Guo became the first Chinese to compete in the world's top VOLVE Ocean Race with the "Green Dragon." In that race, Guo nearly broke the bridge of his nose after being thrown into the air when his boat collided with a large fish at a speed of over 20 nautical miles per hour. But for the 10-month voyage, the episode was merely a hiccup.

As media crew, Guo was tasked with documenting the efforts of the team. Working with 10 veteran sailors, Guo felt like "a student with 10 professors." It didn't help that his English was spotty and he worried that he was dead weight. Many days, Guo failed to film any good material by the time the sun set, and the mounting pressure only caused depression and fear. Then the situation worsened: Months of claustrophobia caused insomnia, leaving him with stiff muscles. "It felt like drowning," Guo later recalled. "I lost control of my brain."

August 15, 2015: Guo Chuan sets out from La Trinité, France with five foreign crew members to sail through the Arctic Ocean Northeast Passage. After two years of dedicated preparation, the team became the first in history to complete a non-stop voyage through the passage. IC



When “Green Dragon” docked in his hometown of Qingdao in February 2009, local residents and media gave him and other crew members a hero’s welcome but few managed to see the emptiness in his eyes—Guo was on the brink of mental breakdown. “He lost twinkle in his eyes,” Guo’s elder sister described. Although those closest to him worried about Guo’s health and urged him to retire, he made the seemingly ill-advised decision to continue his oceanic “cultivation.” When asked his reasoning, Guo declared that he preferred to die like a soldier over being buried with regret for the rest of his life. He continued the mission. He recovered gradually with medications prescribed by doctors. He became better at filming the crew and writing their stories. He once described his endurance in the voyage as “a wounded soldier crawling forward,” and ultimately the soldier survived the 37,000-nautical mile journey on the waves.

Stream to the Ocean

Born in the eastern Chinese port city of Qingdao in 1965, Guo Chuan had childhood fantasies about the ocean but never imagined he would actually become a sailor. When he was young, Guo often spent time at the beaches with his friends. He once challenged himself to swim through a shark net from one beach to another, and set out on the mission after grabbing a flotation device and a bit of chocolate. Midway through the journey, he ran out his strength and ended up rescued by a fishing boat. Though he failed his most daring childhood stunt, his bold mentality only grew stronger.

Climbing up the ladder was relatively smooth for him when Guo grew up. Thanks to excellent performance in school, he was admitted to Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics and earned a Master’s

degree in aircraft control before an MBA from Peking University. He worked on commercial satellite launches at China Great Wall Industry Corporation, a state-owned company. Guo seemed destined to become a titan of business—except if he had any say in the matter.

Thirst for thrill and adventure led Guo to extreme sports. Since 1997, he tried skiing, paragliding, water skiing, microlight aircraft flying and diving, one after another. Traveling from continent to continent, he embraced great joy in the sky and life on the water. “I always look for new goals when my life is running low on challenges and pressure,” he remarked in a TV interview.

It’s hard for some to understand why Guo would let go of such a desirable job that ensured wealth and respect. A Chinese saying goes that a man should be committed to a career by the age of 30. Guo, however, opted for another life because, as he put it, he didn’t want to be a “dead fish.”

“I want to prove that a man can do something bigger after reaching maturity,” Guo said. And then came what he dubbed “his destiny.” Upon taking a trip on a sailboat as a passenger in Hong Kong in 2001, Guo fell deeply and passionately in love with sailing. Throughout his 30s, he competed in several sailing events in Qingdao and Hong Kong.

When he hit 40, Guo made up his mind to go even further and become a professional competitive sailor. He headed alone to Europe, the origin of sailing, and sought the places masters gather. He began living like an “ascetic monk” in his words. After settling on the west coast of France, Guo spent all of his days training and slept less than six hours a night. His diet was primarily rice, mushrooms and sausages. Repeated exhausting exercise lifted his spirit rather than boring him. He marched toward

his dream steadily.

“Curiosity and adventure are human nature,” he stressed. Guo answered the call of his heart with unrelenting efforts to explore the ocean. The world was impressed by his sailing records. To him, sailing is unparalleled. “Other sports were invented by the world, but sailing is about exploring the world,” he explained. “Human wisdom was born of exploring nature and seeking better ways to get along with it.”

Sports reporters from Xinhua News Agency were among the earliest to report him. They have noted that throughout Guo’s many-year rise from nobody to a legend, his spirit had remained simple and pure, and he never lost passion or ambition. “I didn’t turn my back on my dreams,” Guo once wrote. Indeed, he stayed loyal to himself.

The ocean proved a worthy challenge. Hurricanes in the North Pacific lashed 5-meter waves at him, the windless equator trapped him in burning sunlight, and the Drake Passage froze him with Antarctic gales. But in Guo’s eyes, the ocean can be gentle as it can be fierce. He was stunned by starry nights on the water and magnificent sunrises and sunsets atop the horizon. Dolphins’ escorts and circling albatrosses felt like greetings from nature.

After enduring toughest times along with breathtaking moments, Guo freed his mind on the ocean by moving forward with determination and persistence.

Destination Home

The ocean is the place Guo chased his dreams, but his destination is always home.

With his 2013 circumnavigation of the globe, Guo conquered one of the biggest challenges of his sailing life: Navigating the planet’s most difficult passages near the landmark Cape Horn at the southern tip of South America. Often called the “Qomolangma” of sailing, the treacherous stretch

of water has capsized over 500 ships and buried more than 20,000 sailors. Atop his 12-meter powerless boat, Guo couldn’t help bursting into tears. He clutched a toy bear and a photo of his youngest son in his trembling hands, and said to the camera on board: “I made it.” He named the boy “Guo Lunbu,” which sounds similar to “Columbus,” to honor the legendary sailor.

Upon crossing the finish line of the voyage in Qingdao, Guo jumped into the water and excitedly swam to his family. The media captured the touching scene of Guo kneeling down on the dock to give a big hug to his wife and kids, tears running down on his weather-beaten face. “The water is freezing, but my heart is warm,” Guo said in an interview.

His family is the source of his inner strength. They constantly appeared in his dreams, even 30-minute naps. With the help of the advanced satellite communication tools on his yachts, Guo managed to talk to his family during his voyages. On January 5, 2013, Guo’s family joined him on the South Pacific via video to celebrate his 48th birthday. He ate a bowl of instant noodles they had prepared beforehand. It was a luxury compared to the compressed dehydrated food he mostly ate. “It may not have been a great meal, but for me it was,” he said.

Family is the greatest comfort for the man who spent his days fighting howling wind and fierce waves on the ocean. “Everyday stuff calms him down,” remarked his wife Xiao Li. Guo and Xiao have two kids: The elder son is in primary school and the younger in kindergarten. His wife told him about everyday life and stories involving their kids while he was sailing on his boat, and he pasted the photos of his family on the cabin walls.

Guo’s family brought him the most joy. Parent-teacher conferences are annoying to



April 5, 2013: Guo Chuan drops to his knees to hug his wife and kids after completing a record 138-day non-stop solo circumnavigation of the globe. Xinhua



September 27, 2015: Guo Chuan lights a flare from the mast of his sailboat to signal his arrival in Qingdao, Shandong Province after completing the Arctic Ocean world record challenge. IC

many, but Guo considered them precious chances to engage with his kids’ growth. Xiao revealed in a TV interview that Guo felt envious that kids tended to cling to her more—but she said it with a big smile.

“My husband ensures that everyone in the family loves each other, and that is exactly what a husband should do regardless of his profession,” remarked Xiao, when asked for comment on the heroic sailor. Guo is awed and admired by many for taking the waterway less traveled. However, he

has also been criticized as a maniac who takes too many risks while neglecting his family. Xiao has only spent five minutes on her husband’s sailboats and never sailed with him, but she has steadfastly supported his dream chasing.

“It really makes him happy and when he shares the sailing stories with us, it makes us happy too,” Xiao said in a recent TV interview. “I never know for sure why he sets out, but I know his final destination is home. It always is.”

Sanjiangyuan: Source of Life

Text by Zi Mei

Jiangyuan Glacier. At the center of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, Jiangyuan Glacier Nature Reserve surrounds the Gela Dandong Snow Mountains, which are home to many glaciers and the source the Yangtze River. by Cai Zheng

Covering 395,000 square kilometers, China's Sanjiangyuan (literally, "Source of Three Rivers") National Nature Reserve is home to the sources of the Yangtze, Yellow and Lancang rivers. Dotted with numerous lakes, swamps and glaciers, Sanjiangyuan is a critical source of fresh water for China and thus nicknamed the "Chinese Water Tower." Its habitat of diverse flora and fauna at high altitudes makes the region acutely sensitive to climate change and a warning flag for the Asian and even world ecology.

For instance, at the end of the 20th Century, due to climate change and human activities, Sanjiangyuan was suffering serious environmental destruction. To restore the region's ecosystem, in 2000, the Sanjiangyuan National Nature Reserve was set up. Since 2005, the Chinese government has been implementing the Sanjiangyuan Protection Campaign. With the first and second phases of the campaign completed, the situation in Sanjiangyuan has already improved.

Ecological Recovery

"In recent years, when we go to countryside, we often see flocks of Tibetan wild donkeys, antelopes, wolves, and even brown bears," says Gezha, head of Shanglaxiu Township in Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province. "Sometimes the animals even chase the car."

According to 2015 statistics issued by Sanjiangyuan Protection Campaign Office, in the prefecture of Yushu alone, the number of bird species has increased from 31 to 61. Population of black-necked cranes has grown from 20 to 200, bar-headed geese from 800 to over 10,000, and Tibetan antelopes, nicknamed "plateau spirit," from 20,000 to 70,000. Even some of the most threatened flagship species of the Qinghai-

Tibet Plateau such as the snow leopard and brown bear are occasionally seen and sometimes even stop by local villages.

After the first phase of the Sanjiangyuan Protection Campaign, the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) assessed the work of the project: Ecological deterioration in the reserve had been abated to some extent, ecological capacity had been improved and the ecological situation of some prioritized areas had been greatly improved.

After a decade of protection, water volume in Sanjiangyuan has been estimated at up to 8 billion cubic meters, equal to 560 times the amount of Hangzhou's West Lake. Nearly 1,000 drying lakes have regained life and now glisten on the plateau.

Compared to 2004, the region produces 30 percent more grass and the coverage rate of grassland has increased by 11.6 percent, the forest coverage rate has grown from 3.2 to 4.8 percent, and the

amount of conserved soil has reached 723 million tons a year, from 546 million tons. Grassland degradation has been curtailed immensely. In particular, the black barrens in the Dawu area of Golok Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture and the Batang area of Yushu have been well controlled, and the vegetation coverage rate in the two areas has exceeded 80 percent.

Climate Change Challenges

Ice is the first to know when temperatures rise. About 85 to 90 percent of the glaciers on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, dubbed the world's "third pole," are melting. Professor Lai Yuanming with the Cold and Arid Regions Environmental and Engineering Research Institute, CAS, explains that Sanjiangyuan is special and is easily affected by natural changes. Climate change in recent years has posed a daunting challenge to the region.



A rainbow in Jiangyuan Glacier Nature Reserve. The Qinghai-Tibet Plateau's weather changes frequently, which causes many natural splendors. by Li Xiaonan



The Yellow River system. The Yellow River originates in the Bayan Har Mountains before flowing through nine provinces and emptying into the Bohai Sea. by Zhi Yue

Research performed by the Hydrogeology and Engineering Geology Institute of Qinghai Province shows that global warming has caused Sanjiangyuan's glaciers to disappear, tundra to thaw and marshes and wetlands to shrink. In the short term, the water level of rivers and lakes will rise, but in the long term, the layout of Sanjiangyuan's water bodies will change and water resources will dry up, which will lead to desertification and even death of inland rivers.

In 2011, the provincial government of Qinghai banned herding on moderately and seriously deteriorated grasslands. "Grass hasn't grown as well as we expected," says Wang Xiaofa, head of Grassland Office of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry Department of Qinghai Province. "We have to reconsider the measure."

"When cows and sheep eat the grass, it stimulates growth," explains researcher Wu Yuhu with Northwest Institute of

Plateau Biology, CAS. "Grazing works with the grass. If grass from the previous year has not been eaten, it's hard for new grass to grow because it's covered by old grass, can't get sun and just rots after rain. Moderate grazing helps the plant flourish and animal droppings enrich the soil."

A total of 2.3 million livestock are being raised in Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. Theoretically, the grasslands are not overloaded. Ecological problems cannot be blamed on herding alone, according to Tsering Gonpo, vice head of the prefecture of Yushu. Professor Zhang Xiaode with Chinese Academy of Governance believes across some 1,000 years of evolution, herders and livestock have integrated with the ecological system and coexist harmoniously. This is a distinctive characteristic of Sanjiangyuan: When the animals are suddenly removed, the imbalance results in ecological disorder.



2014: Photographers set up an infrared camera to shoot snow leopards in the source area of the Lanchang River. by Shen Bohan/Xinhua



Red deer, literally “horse deer” in Chinese due to its horse-like body. In Sanjiangyuan, red deer, Sambar deer and white-lipped deer all coexist. by Thubten Palden



An upland buzzard in Sanjiangyuan. by Xue Zhou



Sanjiangyuan is home to a great variety of fish. Xinhua



Tibetan gazelles trek snowy fields. A species unique to the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, the animal is the region’s most widely distributed hoofed animal. It’s scattered from Changtang area to Sanjiangyuan. by Fan Shangzhen

“In addition to its ecological value, Sanjiangyuan is also rich in culture,” notes Liu Shurun, a renowned botanist and grassland ecologist. “Without cows and sheep, the millennium-old nomadic culture on the plateau would disappear too.”

Premier National Park


In 2011, Sanjiangyuan National Nature Reserve designated 123,100 square kilometers for a pilot national park.

To improve efficiency, the pilot park set up a special administration to integrate various former departments of land, environment, water conservancy, agriculture and animal husbandry. The park is divided into three parts: the Yangtze River, Yellow River and Lancang River zones, which each focus on different priorities.

The park also invites participation from people from all walks of life and places special attention on the interests of herders. “The park will not only protect the ecology but also utilize nature to improve local standards

of living,” exclaims Li Xiaonan, director of Sanjiangyuan National Park Administration. “Along with the mountains, rivers, forests, lakes and animals, over 61,500 natives are also part of the park. They should be protected as well.”

Recently, the administration selected nearly 10,000 herders from poverty-stricken families to receive ecological training. They will receive a monthly salary from the government to patrol the park, enforce the law and monitor the ecology.

Moreover, the park will introduce satellite remote sensing and communication technologies to monitor the environment within four years. “The ecological map created by this system will be accurate up to 0.5 meters,” reveals Li. “The location and distribution of all people, animals and plants in the park can be tracked and the status of ecological system including glaciers, grasslands and wetlands can be monitored.” Data collected by the system will be used to drive local research and released to the public. 

Many Lanzhou locals start their days with a bowl of hand-pulled beef noodles. Although many people from other parts of China eat what they think are Lanzhou noodles, Lanzhou natives think that generic "beef noodles" is correct. Strict criteria and delicate techniques are employed to make each bowl. CFP



Tug-of-War

Text by Zhang Xue

Northern China has traditionally cultivated wheat for a long time. In sharp contrast to their peers in the south, where the major staple is rice, people from northern China enjoy all manner of wheat products including dumplings, steamed buns, pancakes, *nang* (Uygur flatbread), and noodles, just to name a few. And of course, based on varying local cultures and customs, different sub-regions feature different specialties of wheat-based food.

Lanzhou hand-pulled beef noodles, named after their origin city in Gansu Province, are representative of northern China's Muslim cuisine. Nowadays, those noodles are found not only across China, but also in Western metropolises on the other side of the world.

Originating in Lanzhou

Just mentioning the hand-pulled noodles brings the city of Lanzhou to the minds of many Chinese people. And many visitors to Lanzhou come primarily for a bowl of authentic hand-pulled beef noodles.

Ma Zilu Beef Noodle Restaurant on Zhangye Road in Lanzhou's most bustling commercial area is famous far and wide. Opened in 1954, the restaurant has eclipsed its competitors and attracted steady streams of visitors to the city. A strong beefy aroma radiates from the alley where the restaurant is located. Upon entering the simply-decorated eatery, diners witness the noodle-making process involving a lump of dough being repeatedly stretched until it multiplies into many strands of thin,

long noodles. They are cooked in boiling water for 30 seconds, then sliced beef is added along with coriander, chopped garlic sprouts, chili oil and beef stock. In minutes, a bowl of amazing hand-pulled beef noodles is ready to serve. And chefs usually customize noodles to different thicknesses upon request.

You must arrive early to get a table at Ma Zilu Restaurant. Most hand-pulled noodle restaurants prepare their soup base and dough at night in preparation for an early morning opening. They close up for the day when they sell out. Ma Zilu Restaurant usually closes around 1:00 p.m.

Historical records show that Lanzhou hand-pulled beef noodles emerged during

the reign of Emperor Jiaqing (1796-1820) of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). The origin of the dish is attributed to Chen Weijing, a student at the Imperial College, more than 200 years ago. Later, Ma Baozi, a member of the Hui ethnic group, improved the noodle making techniques. In 1919, Ma opened his own restaurant in Lanzhou, and long lines formed soon thereafter. His noodle making craft began spreading through Muslim communities in northwestern China including Gansu, Ningxia, and Qinghai. This version of hand-pulled beef noodles is characterized by crystalline soup, white daikon slices, red chili oil, yellowish noodles and green chopped garlic sprouts.



Lunch time is the busiest hours of a day for noodle chefs. Although it usually only takes about two minutes to prepare a bowl of noodles, the best still attract long queues. by Yang Yanmin



A lump of dough must be repeatedly stretched and folded onto itself in order to align the gluten and warm the dough, an essential step to make hand-pulled noodles. by Yang Yanmin



Chefs usually customize noodles to different thicknesses upon request. by Yang Yanmin



Place the noodles into boiling water, stir the noodles when they rise to the surface, and put them into a bowl when they're ready. The process usually takes only 30 seconds. by Yang Yanmin

Noodle Economy

Presently, most hand-pulled noodle restaurants throughout China are not operated by Lanzhou locals or anyone with any connection to the city. Most Chinese have never heard of the Hualong Hui Autonomous County of Qinghai Province, but they have usually met a Hualong native: Most Lanzhou hand-pulled noodle restaurants are operated by Muslims from Hualong.

If you drive east from Lanzhou, you will eventually arrive in Qinghai Province after crossing the Yellow River. Haidong, a prefectural-level city in Qinghai, is home to abundant Muslim communities. The city administers four counties: Hualong, Minhe, Xunhua, and Huzhu, wherein Muslims

account for more than 25 percent of the population.

Hualong sits on the upper reaches of the Yellow River in the transitional area between the Loess Plateau and the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, at an average elevation of 2,600 to 2,800 meters. Its cold and arid climate is extremely unsuitable for agriculture, except for a few hardy species such as spring wheat, highland barley, pea, broad bean, and potato.

According to Hualong locals, Han Dong was the first native to leave the county to open a hand-pulled beef noodle shop elsewhere in China. Han was born into a poverty-stricken family that survived on only his father's meager earnings as a construction worker. Because the family was frequently short of food, Han headed to Lhasa in the late 1980s to sell shoes with his father.

Han was tasked with purchasing shoes in the southeastern Chinese province of Fujian. He was struck by the lack of any Muslim restaurant near the train station of Xiamen, a coastal city in Fujian, despite the city's status as a major transportation hub. Back to Lhasa, Han mentioned the void to his friend Ma Guifu, who worked for a hand-pulled noodle restaurant, and suggested they open their own noodle shop in Xiamen. Because Lanzhou hand-pulled beef noodles were more well-known and most Chinese were not aware of trademark consideration back then, Han named the small shop "Lanzhou Hand-Pulled Noodles."


When the cuisine was still young, people from Qinghai learned the techniques from Lanzhou chefs. Today, Qinghai chefs still use the same traditional noodle-making methods and only vary the soup bases to customize tastes. Muslim food service workers from Hui and Salar ethnic groups make up the majority of the labor force in the industry.

Statistics show that people from Haidong operate about 21,200 hand-pulled noodle restaurants in 270 major and medium-sized Chinese cities, accounting for more than 70 percent of the country's total. Of the 21,200 restaurants, 13,000 are owned by Hualong people, which inject revenues of 700 million yuan into the county every year.

All in a Name

Seeing Qinghai people shoot their own name to fame, Lanzhou had to do something. In 2009, the municipal government of Lanzhou registered the "Lanzhou hand-pulled beef noodles" as a trademark with China's State Administration for Industry and Commerce. Contrasting the more common Qinghai-style restaurants that were usually small family-run operations, Lanzhou established big name brands to sell their hand-pulled noodles, and standard chain operations are the norm. Eventually, Lanzhou and Qinghai's long fight over hand-pulled beef noodles rose to nationwide attention.

In 1999, Lanzhou hand-pulled beef noodles joined Beijing Quanjude Roast Duck and Tianjin Goubuli steamed stuffed buns in being designated the three Chinese fast foods for further promotion. To many, Lanzhou hand-pulled beef noodles have become the top draw in the country.

As for the question of whether Lanzhou or Qinghai noodles are more authentic, the answer should be a predictable draw: "Gansu and Qinghai are two neighboring provinces, both with abundant Muslim populations who shared very similar living and eating habits," asserts an official with the Lanzhou Hand-Pulled Noodle Industrial Association. "Qinghai and Lanzhou hand-pulled noodles don't actually taste much different from each other." 

Vague and Complicated Middle Class

Text by Luo Dong

At the end of October 2016, China's State Council promulgated documents to define nationwide regulatory actions on property and distribution of income and further alleviate the tax burden on those below middle class while properly accelerating taxation adjustment on the higher-earning classes. The document didn't define the term of "high income," but many Chinese media outlets assume that the government will increase taxes on those with annual incomes over 120,000 yuan (around US\$18,000). This has triggered heated online discussion.

At the end of last century, "middle class," a term coined in Western countries, became known in China thanks to advertising by real estate brokers and automobile salesmen. As defined by Credit Suisse's Global Wealth Report in 2016, those who annually earn US\$28,000 to 280,000 in China are considered "middle class," of which China tallies 109 million.

However, most members of the demographic feel like they're barely surviving in China's metropolises such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. Their classification as middle class seems laughable if it's defined by what they have seen in

American and British TV dramas: spacious living quarters, private cars, pets, sports and social activities. The cost of living in different cities in China can vary drastically: The country lacks a unified way to calculate living conditions in every locale. Li Chunling, a female researcher with the Institute of Sociology under the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, has long been committed to the study of China's middle class. She sees members of the group vague and complicated.

In hopes of depicting the group more clearly, *China Pictorial* interviewed Researcher Li Chunling.



All in CARAVANING 2014 was held in Beijing. Many people believe that driving a car to picnic is a typical middle class activity in Western countries. CFP



January 20, 2016, Beijing: A bus station features an ad for the iPhone 6s. Today in China, material consumption is iconic of the middle class identity. IC



The Bund in Shanghai during the 2015 National Day holiday. As reported, 300 million Chinese citizens can be classified as middle class, a number that is expected to double in 10 years. Xinhua

China Pictorial (CP): What is the middle class?

Li Chunling (Li): There is no academic consensus. At present, economists in Europe and America place the group that ranks in the middle range in the social income distribution middle class. But globally, the term only refers to those whose incomes and consumption meet certain levels.

Experts have agreed on some of the features of this group in modern industrialized and post-industrialized countries: white collar, at least with some higher education and middle income that coincides with well-developed European and American countries. It would be improper to categorize the middle class by occupation or income alone.

CP: In Western countries income, education and occupation at least roughly coincide in terms of numbers. However, the opposite is true in China. Those with more education, for instance, might not necessarily have high income.

Li: Exactly. In most developing countries, including the newly-rising emerging economies, the definition of “middle class” is a multi-faceted determination including occupation, income, education, and consumption. Over the past few years, Chinese media have reprinted a wide array of reports on the middle class in China released by international organizations, think tanks, and financial institutions. Their definition was mainly made based on economic norms.

In China today, the definition of “middle class” doesn’t necessarily include every white collar worker. The middle class here is complicated if you take into account economic norms, occupation standards and education.

CP: Objectively speaking, many Chinese people are middle class but wouldn’t agree with that determination.

Li: It’s an interesting phenomenon. There are many factors behind this paradox.

First, it’s a tradition for Chinese people to stay contained and cautious. Many don’t want to reveal in public that they earn middle or high income. Second, some deny their “middle-class” identity because they don’t feel secure with an incomplete social security system and lacking public services. Another key reason is that China’s rapid economic growth and dramatic social change over the last few decades have resulted in strong public pursuit for material goods, and many of those with comparatively favorable living conditions don’t want to acknowledge they are in the “middle class” already because they feel less satisfied and secure.

CP: Why is that?

Li: Anxiety has always followed growth of China’s middle class despite the fact that both the country’s economy and the middle class are rising today. Many factors, such as the economic growth, dramatic social changes and changing cultural values, have brought pressure and confusion even though many people enjoy a better life materially.

Anxiety is the result of dissatisfaction deriving from great expectations. Many Chinese people assume that the middle class should own large stand-alone homes. However, purchasing such a home in big cities through a bank loan creates massive pressure on the borrower. Another burden comes from educating their children, especially if they want to send them to reputable schools. Economic growth and urbanization exert heavy pressure on peripheral sectors including food safety, personal privacy and environmental pollution, all of which greatly influenced quality of life and feelings of security. People become more anxious with increasingly-fierce competition, rising cost of living, and turbulent stock and housing markets.

CP: Has China’s middle class established their own cultural tastes and consumption methods like their British counterparts?

Li: Things are completely different in the two countries. In modern China, for instance, the middle class was born of the country’s economic reform and opening up as well as process of marketization. They have reached certain level in income and consumption, but they haven’t had time to build distinguishing identities in cultural tastes, values, and behavior patterns. In China today, this group is labeled by material consumption, such as housing, cars, and dressing styles.

CP: The middle class is considered a stable social segment in Western countries. What about China?

Li: It depends. Today, the Chinese middle class is undoubtedly stable because they tend to conservatively prefer moderate social progress rather than dramatic transformation. CP

The author works for the Beijing News ibookreview.



January 14, 2016: Children receive ice hockey training at Beijing Capital Skating Ground. The Chinese middle class invests in education and participation for their children in as many “imported” sports as possible. IC



August 2015: Chinese tourists visit Chateau de Versailles. Statistics show that in 2015, travelers from China with annual income of over US\$20,000 spent a total of US\$137 billion abroad, more than any other country on the planet. The figure will increase to US\$255.4 billion in 2025. IC



February 16, 2016: Chinese tourists shop in Bangkok. Rapid economic growth in China has greatly improved the living standards of the middle class. IC



The Balkan folk singing and dancing festival is held in Ohrid every July, adding charm to Macedonian summers. Xinhua

Inspired by Ohrid

Text by Chu Jiawang

Despite a small permanent population of only about 40,000, the town of Ohrid in Macedonia attracts more than 2 million visitors annually, from every corner of the world. Surrounding Ohrid's picturesque lake were 365 enchanting churches, which inspired the nickname, "Jerusalem of the Balkans." In 1980, the small town was designated a UNESCO's World Cultural Heritage site due to its culture, history, and natural landscape. The heavy flow of tourists for decades has invigorated its local economy.

I was lucky to get the chance to visit such an attraction. During my stay, I visited a small, well-preserved church with floor space of less than 20 square meters. Over 300 years ago, local residents built the church on the hillside with simple material, despite their meager incomes, and it remains under strong protection with its original look preserved. "How can such a humble structure be preserved so well for three centuries?" I asked my tour guide. "Through the power of faith," he asserted. For generations, the locals have remained

committed to protection and restoration, so applying for World Cultural Heritage status came naturally.

It reminded me of a small worship hall dedicated to the God of Land in my hometown. It was built between two townships, Xilin, where I was born, and Chayuan, 3.5 kilometers away, so that travelers could rest or get out of the rain. Its stone statues of the god and goddess of land attracted pilgrims on the 1st and 15th days of each lunar month.

I still recall taking a break there to escape rain or exhaustion during my walk to school in Chayuan. My mother and my aunt would take turns serving tea to passersby. My mother also made straw shoes and hung them in the hall for anyone with worn-out shoes.


I was so upset upon seeing that the hall had been destroyed during the "cultural revolution" (1966-1976) when I passed the site one day.

Next to the church there is a school that is considered one of the oldest in Europe,

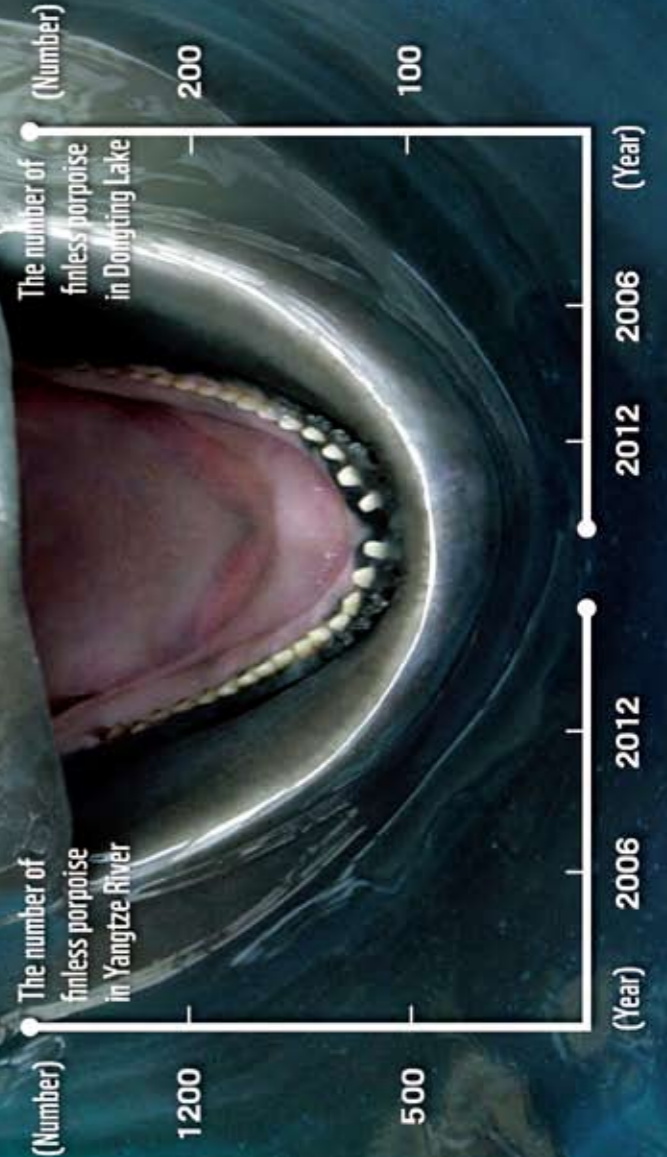
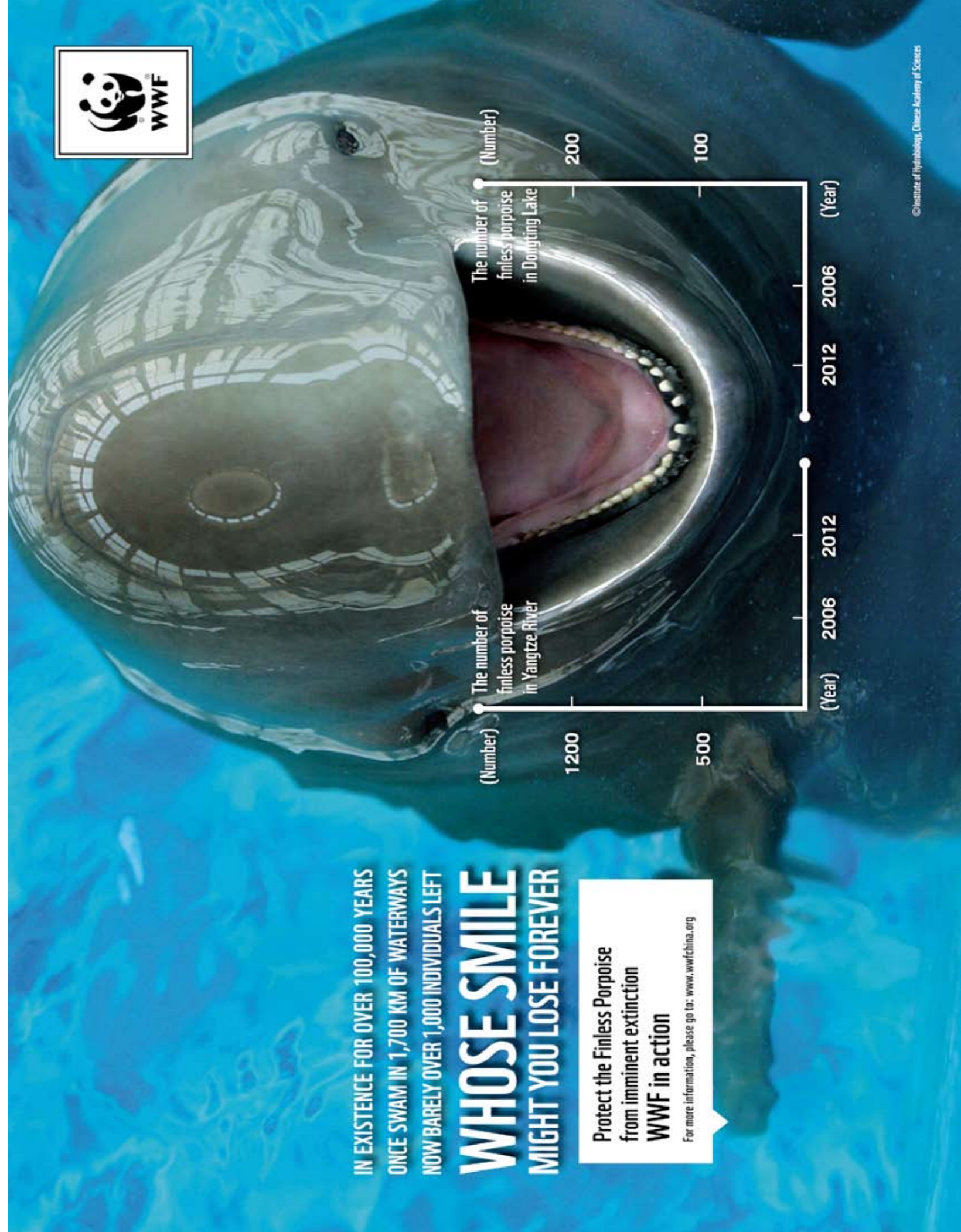
founded 1,200 years ago. "It accepts students of any religion in the world," the tour guide explained. Despite the fact that the majority of the local residents were Catholic, many other religions, including Buddhism, openly practiced there.

I was reminded of a TV interview I did 20 years ago. "How can you ensure that your business survives for centuries?" the reporter asked. "Temples and churches can stand for centuries or millennia because they are inclusive," I replied. My statement from the past seemed truer than ever when facing the 1,200-year-old school in Ohrid. Inclusiveness is the key to longevity.

My next stop in Ohrid was a music square established some 2,300 years ago. Despite its dilapidated appearance, I could still see vibrant traces of the brilliant culture and joy of people centuries ago. Today, the square serves as a gathering place for musicians from all over Europe during an annual summer music and theater festival.

My trip to the small town in Europe greatly inspired the winds of change in my life. 

Chu Jiawang is president and founder of the Ningbo Ruyi Joint Stock Co., Ltd., a major Chinese logistics equipment manufacturer. More than just an entrepreneur, Chu is a recipient of the China Charity Award, the top philanthropic honor in the country. In each issue, he shares his business insights and inspirations gained from his life experience.



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Rebranding the Past

Groundbreaking Cultural Experiment in China's Ancient Villages

Text by Li Xia

Photographs by Qin Bin

Pingshan is a small but extraordinary village in eastern China's Anhui Province.

Historical records show that 289 years ago, during the reign of Emperor Yongzheng of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), Pingshan native Shu Lian saved the emperor's life and was awarded the title of "imperial guard" and gifted construction of a memorial temple for his efforts. At the time, most residents of the village were from the Shu clan.

Due to their innate awe and respect

for the supreme rulers, for two centuries, locals carefully preserved the memorial temple and its plaque with the characters for "Imperial Guard." Not until the 1950s did villagers with minds pointed firmly towards the future consider dismantling the memorial temple's wooden pillars and iron components to support the nation's "iron and steel production movement" aiming to surpass Britain and catch up with the United States. In the 1960s, furniture and relics housed in the memorial temple were

smashed to pieces. When people became desperate to get rich, any surviving wooden components, doors and windows were removed and sold or used for other construction—just as the Shu clan's presence in the village was declining.

A Map of Ancient Huizhou Prefecture (including six counties)

The ancient Huizhou Prefecture administered six counties (Shexian, Yixian, Xiuning, Qimen, Jixi, and Wuyuan), from the prefectural seat at Shexian.



Pingshan (literally, "Screen Hill") at the foot of Qingyang Mountain, four kilometers east of the seat of Yixian County in Anhui Province, is so named for the mountain resembling a screen that shelters the village from the north. Its history is well documented for more than 1,100 years.

Pingshan Village was once primarily inhabited by the Shu clan. In its peak during the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing dynasties, its map featured 12 streets, 60 lanes, 24 wells, 18 ancestral temples, 16 memorial archways, and over 400 residences. Unfortunately, many of these buildings were destroyed over the course of history. Along with more than 200 ancient residences, seven ancestral temples have survived, including the Ancestral Temple of Shu Qingyu, the largest Ming-Dynasty ancestral temple in southern Anhui Province. Pingshan is honored by China as a Famous Village of Historical and Cultural Significance.

A panoramic view of Pingshan Village and its surrounding hills from the top floor of the Imperial Guard Boutique Hotel.



A group of art students sketch in front of the Imperial Guard Boutique Hotel.

In 2014, when film producer Zhang Zhenyan first visited the village, all that remained of the memorial temple was a dilapidated gate with the faded “Imperial Guard” plaque. Part of the 15-by-41-meter memorial temple site was absorbed into a vegetable field. Before that, it once became a commercial skating rink. Still, the exquisite sculpturing, superb carving and nearly collapsed gate in Huizhou architectural style awed Zhang.

Born in 1952, Zhang worked as a producer for internationally-renowned director Zhang Yimou for more than 20 years. He spent his childhood in a *shikumen* (traditional Shanghai-specific architecture) alley, where he witnessed the grandeur of European-style villas and experienced the dignified, elegant lifestyles of yesteryear’s upper class via his grandparents. At 11, Zhang went to

Beijing to live with his parents who were engaged in foreign trade there. They lived in a quadrangle residence shared by several households. In 1969, 17-year-old Zhang worked as an “educated youth” in Heilongjiang Production and Construction Corps, like many Chinese youths at that time. There, he became a trained chef. Every day, he got up at 5 a.m. to prepare breakfast for 500 colleagues. To this day, Zhang remembers the recipe and steps to cook deep-fried dough sticks by heart.

In 1976, Zhang returned to Beijing after seven years in the production and construction corps. He then joined China Youth Art Theater as a scenic designer. In the early years of China’s reform and opening up, the theater had a pioneering influence, especially by introducing foreign dramas and spreading modern Chinese

drama. Zhang participated in productions including *Galileo*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *Red Dresses Are in Fashion*.

When Zhang was a child, the only available news media in China were *People’s Daily*, *PLA Journal*, *Hongqi*, *China Pictorial*, *PLA Pictorial*, and *Nationality Pictorial*—as well as eight revolutionary model operas. Little to read was available, nor were other forms of entertainment. In this context, that generation of Chinese people suffered anxiety due to physical and mental scarcity alike, and many developed hoarding habits. When he was young, Zhang began to learn painting and became obsessed with collecting things. He now holds a wide-ranging collection of things from every corner of the world: more than 20,000 pieces of glazed tiles from old European-style villas in Shanghai of the colonial era, nearly 100 film projectors, various antique phonograph records, contemporary and modern Chinese and foreign paintings, fireplaces, wooden boats, and even refrigerators. His

collection may seem diverse, but everything is related to the Art Deco style of the late 19th Century.

When Zhang saw the nearly-collapsed gate of the memorial temple in Pingshan Village, he was struck that it would be the perfect home for his collection. He decided to convert the crumbling shrine into a boutique hotel and decorate it with artifacts he collected. With the injection of his artifacts from Shanghai, the hotel would create something new to rural tourism. Just as the treasures and artworks collected by Western explorers from around the world inspired European aristocrats to transform lifestyles during the Age of Discovery from the 15th to 16th Century, he hoped his contribution would inspire locals and visitors alike.

After a year and a half of design, artisan recruitment, construction and decoration, his Imperial Guard Boutique Hotel finally opened.

After rainfall, the hills around Pingshan Village become shrouded by mist,

and the trees become especially green, creating a fairytale ambience. In the first rays of the morning sun, the black tiles and white walls of traditional residences glisten like miniatures. A group of young people gather at the front gate and in the backyard of the Imperial Guard Boutique Hotel every morning. Most are students from art schools from across the country. Art students have frequented the village to sketch since the 1950s. Despite their simplicity, local landscapes and residences invited oscillating colors and lights, making them ideal subjects for art.

Though varied in background and profession, visitors to the hotel share one thing in common: They are all fairly well-off. Rooms go for 1,500 to 2,000 yuan (US\$217-290) per night. Once an active film producer, Zhang is not only an artist, but a street smart deal-maker adept at dealing with all sorts of people. The hotel and its eight rooms are a miniature world, and Zhang is the soul of the establishment with his grace, gentility and welcoming voice.

Art Deco is a style of modern decoration art widely considered an early form of Modernism. Its name derives from the International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts held in Paris in 1925. However, its early roots can be traced to the classical Egyptian art. Egyptian relics as old as 3,300 years, such as the gold mask from Tutankhamen’s tomb, feature simple geometrical patterns and metallic colors or black-and-white colors, creating a striking decorative effect. Soon after the style was discovered in 1922, it swept Europe and was widespread in Britain and the United States by the late 1920s. Art Deco experienced a revival in the 1960s.



A tourist sips a cup of coffee in the lobby of the Imperial Guard Boutique Hotel. On the shelf behind him are film projectors collected by Zhang Zhenyan.



A table decorated with old porcelain in the Imperial Guard Boutique Hotel.



A corner of the bar in the Imperial Guard Boutique Hotel, which features diverse decorative styles.



A commercial street in Xiuli Village, where the film *My Own Swordsman* was shot.

Today, Pingshan is home to 365 households, of which more than 30 earn annual incomes exceeding a million yuan. As the village becomes a popular destination, many young residents who once sought jobs in cities have returned. Mr. Wang, the village's Party chief, was once a migrant worker. He visited the boutique hotel after it opened and opined that Zhang had enriched the village's cultural ambience and inspired residents to recognize the value of their old dwellings. Now, everyone pays close attention to the protection of local buildings.

A native of Pingshan Village born in the 1970s, Mr. Han once served in the army and now works as a cab driver. When Director Zhang Yimou shot his film there, Han was hired to transport props. Later, he became a regular contractor for film crews needing drivers. When asked whether he felt happy living in such an ancient residence imbued with cultural profundity, he replied, "I still would prefer a new home because these are so familiar to me—it's just like appreciating the fragrance of flowers you live with every day. Unfortunately, now local farmers are not allowed to expand their residences for the sake of protecting historical buildings. Even enlarging a window is forbidden." Typically, the windows of traditional Hui-style residences are too small to let in ample light and fresh air.


Han operates a family hotel with six guestrooms that receives about 2,000 tourists annually. The relatively humble rooms in his hotel are priced at only 100 yuan per night. However, the rate can be doubled or even tripled during peak season. "Everyone wants to follow in the footsteps of Zhang Zhenyan's Imperial Guard Boutique Hotel, but it's not easy without business expertise and ideas," he sighs.

Prior to his boutique hotel project in Pingshan, Zhang launched another project to rebuild the ancient village of Xiuli in Yi-

xian County, Anhui Province. The restored village features 60 architectural complexes comprised of more than 100 Hui-style residences. "Hui-style architecture is characterized by circular balustrades and mortise-tenon joints, usually supported by 86 pillars without a foundation," he explains. "Consequently, such buildings are easy to dismantle and reassemble. In a week, we moved 60 old residences from an area 50 kilometers away." Furthermore, Zhang collected a lot of components from old buildings such as beams, pillars and tiles from nearby villages to aid in the reconstruction of Xiuli Village.

Zhang spent five years on the project from securing construction permits to design, engineering, and decoration. Eventually, a restored Xiuli Village integrating traditional architecture and modern amenities took shape in a 9-hectare area that was once total wasteland. "Many detailed designs I intended for Xiuli Village have yet to be completed," laments Zhang. "The project as a whole is still more like a rural family hotel than a masterpiece like the Imperial Guard Boutique Hotel."

During the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220), some aristocratic and wealthy families in northern China migrated south to Huizhou Prefecture (today's Anhui) to escape war. Similar migrations occurred in the Western Jin (265-316), late Tang (618-907) and Northern Song (960-1127) dynasties, shifting northern China's wealth, talents, culture, technology and lifestyles southward. Distinctive Huizhou culture is a fusion of indigenous and alien cultures.

Today, accenting the Imperial Guard Boutique Hotel are art students wandering Pingshan Village, bustling bars blaring noisy music, old women hawking vegetables and snacks on the street and taxi drivers working for film crews. Everything hearkens to Zhang's collections: diverse and eclectic, with a sense of inclusiveness. 

The author is executive editor-in-chief of *China Pictorial*.

“Preserving Tradition Wherever Possible”

Interview with Zhang Zhenyan

Text by Li Xia

Photographs by Qin Bin

China Pictorial (CP): What motivated you to build a boutique hotel in Pingshan Village?

Zhang: In 1999 when I first visited Yixian County, I was inspired to buy an old residence there to raise domestic animals and retire. I saw trucks transporting architectural relics purchased by collectors from local households. Wooden and brick carvings, masterpieces of Hui-style architecture, were moving for very cheap prices—usually 200 to 300 yuan per piece.

Many old residences were getting destroyed. When local young men were preparing a new concrete house decorated with porcelain tiles and marble pillars before their weddings, they demolished their antique buildings. They didn't realize the unparalleled historical value of their old, dilapidated residences, and dismantled them and parted out anything that would sell.

In 2014, when I bought the imperial guard's memorial temple, only its gate remained, behind which was a vegetable garden. Later, I purchased another 300-year-old memorial temple in a nearby village and moved its structure here, which is now the lobby of the hotel. The guestrooms, which account for two thirds of the total floor area, were constructed with components from old buildings and decorated with Shanghai relics dating back to

the Republic of China period (1912-1949).

Its floor is tiled with the flooring of Shanghai buildings of the 1920s and 30s, and the iron door of its lobby once protected a European-style villa in old Shanghai. Its interior decoration reflects the Art Deco style of the 1920s. I moved old stuff from 1920s Shanghai to the hotel, making it singularly connect history. Only something like this could rival historical significance of the original 300-year-old memorial temple.

The moment I saw the surviving gate of the memorial temple, I hoped it could survive for at least another two centuries. However, it would easily collapse eventually if preserved alone. So, I decided to build the hotel around it. Over time, I have fallen in love and even become obsessed with it. We should preserve good traditions as much as we can. A man of my age always attempts to leave something for later generations. My son now operates the hotel along with me. He will preserve the old stuff in the future as I do today.

CP: Old porcelain pieces seem to be the most eye-catching decorations in the hotel. What drew you to them?

Zhang: The porcelain comes from Britain and Japan in the decorative style of the 1920s. Many old buildings in Shanghai and Tianjin used such porcelain in their

Zhang Zhenyan created the Imperial Guard Boutique Hotel from an old, dilapidated memorial temple. “The moment I saw the surviving gate of the memorial temple, I hoped it could survive at least another two centuries,” he declares.



facades, tables, wash basins and fireplaces. At the time, they were just glued to concrete buildings, so they could be removed easily. Just a dozen years ago, few realized the artistic value of such porcelain pieces. I collected more than 20,000 pieces—perhaps the largest and most complete collection in China. None of these hand-drawn porcelain pieces are identical. Moreover, they were painted with mineral pigments under glaze, which ensures that their colors never fade.

A boutique hotel has to feature notable decoration with some artistic distinction. I used the 20,000 porcelain pieces I had collected to create the unique decorative style of the Imperial Guard Boutique Hotel: Its balcony walls, lobby fireplace, desk lamps and trays are all decorated with porcelain pieces. Regardless of era, art should feature something singular that could never be replicated and reconcile well with its environment. I think these porcelain pieces are each one-of-a-kind and together the strongest artistic and historical voice in the hotel.

CP: You devoted enormous energy and funds to the Xiuli Village restoration project. What was your driving force?

Zhang: In 2008, when I shot the action film *True Legend* in Yixian County, the local government gave me a plot of about nine hectares to build a production base. It was really then that I started reconstructing Xiuli Village. To restore its original look, I purchased old buildings I found in nearby villages. At the time, each two-story house with exquisite carvings cost only 3,000 to 5,000 yuan. I bought a total of 60 such buildings.

I managed to perfectly balance the relationship between man and architecture in the picturesque environment. The moment I raised my first building in Xiuli, I could see how to transform the place into a small

town, where every artificial establishment would coexist in harmony with nature, including the distant mountains, nearby rivers and brooks, and surrounding trees.

I dug a canal through the village, along which local residents dwell. So far, 300 ancient roofed bridges of Huizhou have disappeared in the river of history, so I restored three of them. Before that, I carefully examined the architecture of ancient Huizhou, including corridors, bridges, pavilions and stilted residences. I began restoring the village just as I was shooting a film. I served as director, cinematographer and art director. With the help of more than 100 local farmers, it took only five years to finally build the village I wanted.

Restored Xiuli Village is like a small town. I designed it around my understanding of natural laws on human subsistence, hoping its residents could enjoy a comfortable life. Some dwellings were sold to individuals, who became the “aboriginals” of the restored village. Aside from high-end hotels like the Imperial Guard Boutique, I have also built some economical hotels for backpackers and provide affordable accommodation facilities for students coming to sketch. Gradually, the village got underground pipes, tap water, and rainwater recycling facilities, as well as amenities such as swimming pools, cinemas, libraries, theaters and cafés, coupled with ancient buildings, old commercial streets and classical gardens. All of these have injected life into the village. In the years to come, it will become a mature town.

Xiuli showcases my understanding of ancient Huizhou's natural environment, culture and people. I have been engaged in film set design for 45 years and spent five years rebuilding Xiuli Village in a live-action setting. I hope it can be preserved for another 500 years. CP

The author is executive editor-in-chief of *China Pictorial*.

Paving Memory Lane

China-India Cultural Cooperation

Text by Wen Zhihong
Photographs by Dong Fang



A statue of Ganesha, 5th to 6th Century AD, schist, collected in Baroda Museum and Picture Gallery, Vadodara, Gujarat.

On September 28, 2016, a 1,600-year-old statue traveled thousands of miles to the exhibition hall of the Meridian Gate of the Palace Museum in Beijing to take part in the opening ceremony of the exhibition “Across the Silk Road: Gupta Sculpture and Their Chinese Counterparts between 400 and 700 A.D.,” which will run until January 31, 2017.

The event presents 56 sculptures dating back to the Gupta and Post-Gupta Period from the collections of nine Indian museums as well as 119 sculptures of the same period from Chinese museums in Hebei, Henan, Shandong, Shaanxi, Sichuan, and Gansu provinces and the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. The exhibition marks the first sculpture dialogue between the two ancient civilizations and a breakthrough in China-India cultural exchange in recent years.

Dr. B. R. Mani was born into a family of archaeologists. Before he became the director-general of India's National Museum in July 2016, he had worked in the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) for more than 30 years. As a renowned field archaeologist, numismatist and art critic, Dr. Mani has discovered many archaeological sites in India and directed more than 14 excavation projects. He found particular sites by studying travel accounts of historical travelers, including China's Faxian and Xuanzang.

Recently, *China Pictorial* interviewed Dr. Mani when he attended an international symposium related to the exhibition. He pointed out that Chinese sculptures adopted a new Chinese characteristic after Buddhism came to China from India. He hopes to organize future joint exhibitions between India and China of an even greater scale.

China Pictorial (CP): Before taking office at the National Museum, did you have a chance to work with China?

Mani: Back in 2006, before I was at the National Museum, I worked for the ASI as its additional director-general. We held an exhibition called “Treasures of Ancient India” in four cities in China. In return, we hosted an exhibition in India called “Treasures of Ancient China.” We also toured four cities in India, including the National Museum. It was also the first time we borrowed two Xi'an terracotta warriors. It was their first trip out of China. In 2011, we organized an exhibition in Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Kolkata. Earlier than that, I had visited China to take part in the Silk Road Conference in Xi'an. In June of this year, I visited for a conference on the Maritime Silk Road in Quanzhou.

CP: What inspired the cooperation between India's National Museum and the Palace Museum?

Mani: The National Museum of India was co-organizer of this exhibition. We sent over 50 sculptures to the Palace Museum and some were traveling for the first time.

In fact, the Palace Museum team selected more than 80 items. However, we determined that many objects were either AA category, which cannot be transported, or so fragile that the curators did not allow them to travel.

So we had to prune down the list. Still, the screening and evaluation committee in India were hesitant about four or five sculptures and did not want us to send them, such as a terracotta head from Jammu. I insisted that these pieces go. I argued that they can raise the insurance value by



November 15, 2016: Dr. B. R. Mani (first from the left), director-general of National Museum in New Delhi, attends the inauguration of an exhibition titled “Treasures of the Cyprus Museum” at the National Museum in New Delhi, India. Courtesy of the National Museum in New Delhi.



China section of the exhibition "Across the Silk Road: Gupta Sculpture and Their Chinese Counterparts between 400 and 700 A.D."



India section of the exhibition "Across the Silk Road: Gupta Sculpture and Their Chinese Counterparts between 400 and 700 A.D."

letting them travel. Otherwise we couldn't showcase the grandeur of the Gupta period. We had already cut at least 40 to 50 percent of requested exhibits. Finally they agreed, and we were able to get items from nine different museums in India, including the National Museum and some other important museums. And they approved the pieces to travel at the last minute.

CP: What measures did you take to make sure that such fragile sculptures would travel safely?

Mani: We took every precaution, especially optimal packing. The couriers are very professional. We also took some additional measures to pack the sculptures to ensure they wouldn't get damaged during transit.

CP: How did you find the Forbidden City and the exhibition?

Mani: It is an amazing palace. In India, we

also have many palaces. But most of them have lost their grandeur. For example, if you compare the Forbidden City with the contemporary palace of Mughal Period in India, the area is smaller in India, and the structures have already been damaged and lost. Sites that come to mind are the structures in Red Fort and Agra Fort, which were still standing and well-preserved before the British came. However, over the years, the sites were occupied by the British army and then the Indian army and the cells were converted into hospitals and barracks. Many of them are no longer with us today.

But fortunately, in the Forbidden City complex where China's palaces are located, at least the structures are safely preserved. Despite the fires and accidents most have been renovated and preserved in good shape. As for the palaces in Red Fort or Agra Fort or even Lahore Fort in Pakistan,

after the building was damaged, it was razed to the ground. In Red Fort, there were once at least 32 buildings, but today, only six or seven still stand. The gardens and pavilions have been gone too. We don't have any of the Mughal grandeur anymore.

The exhibition was put together beautifully. When I joined in August, I had very little time to send the pieces to the Palace Museum, or I would have sent twice as many. I know that people in China would definitely appreciate Gupta art in the Palace Museum. I have talked with some people who were thrilled to see the structures and artistic beauty of our 50 sculptures. This is the first time something like this has been done in the Palace Museum. Maybe in the future, we will organize an even better show.

There are parallels to the Gupta period in China. Relatively few pieces are available, and it gave me the chance to see many

of them for the first time. I had seen some of them in the photographs or books, but this is the first time I saw the real objects.

Buddhism came from India into China and even the art styles influenced Chinese art. Although the subject matter and some of the basic styles are Indian, the Chinese sculptures have developed a particular Chinese characteristic. Chinese sculptures have developed in their own way. The physical features, expressions and even some of the stories behind the sculptures are uniquely Chinese. It is very good interaction between India and China.

CP: How is the cooperative arrangement developing?

Mani: Now we can brainstorm future exhibitions. In June this year, I was in Quanzhou and saw the Hindu temples there. They are not there now; the remains of those temples and sculptures are in the

museum. I was just discussing with some colleagues the idea of an exhibition involving these sculptures or the materials from those Hindu temple remains from Quanzhou. In India, we have the largest 14-Century blue-and-white Chinese porcelain piece, which I have written about in the catalog. We can combine such things as part of the Silk Road Exhibition. We can do this exhibition in the National Museum in Delhi and maybe in the Palace Museum and anywhere else in China.

Another good theme is silk. Direct contact between China and India was ongoing from the first or second Century B.C. to late medieval times either via the Maritime Silk Road or land roads. But new evidence suggests that interaction may have begun even earlier. Silk was the primary export from China via the Silk Road. Now we have found silk in India that dates back



Workshop on Shahnameh: story telling and oral tradition. Courtesy of the National Museum in New Delhi.



Amitabha statue commissioned by Dong Qin, dating back to 584 A.D. (the fourth year of the Kaihuang reign of the Sui Dynasty), gilt bronze unearthed in the South Bali Village of Xi'an, Shaanxi Province in 1974, 41x29x24cm, housed in Xi'an Museum.

Buddha head, 5th Century, bluff sandstone, 15.27x10.16x10.16cm, housed in the Archaeological Museum, Sarnath, Uttar Pradesh.



Siva Bust, 5th Century, red sandstone unearthed in Mathura, Uttar Pradesh, 20x25x15cm, housed in the Government Museum, Mathura, Uttar Pradesh.



Statue of a couple, 5th Century, bluff sandstone unearthed from Varanasi, 26.5x18x13cm, housed in Bharat Kala Bhawan, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.



Seated Buddha, Tang Dynasty, stone, housed in the Research Academy of the Longmen Grottoes.



some 5,000 years. Although we are not quite clear if the silk was from China or there were simultaneous developments in China and India, there was definitely some connection. We have also found evidence of Jinanxiu (济南绣), a type of Chinese silk, in Sanskrit. These types of evidence must be explored further—in disciplines such as archaeology. History is essential to inspire research.

When we organized the Treasures of Ancient China in India last time, we focused on the idea of showing objects that people in India hadn't got a chance to see, for example, pottery. As we understand, China was able to make very good pottery in the 9th Century during the Tang Dynasty (618-907) and India should have had high demand for chinaware during that period of time.

CP: What of India's experience in heritage conservation and excavation should China learn from?

Mani: China and India can learn from each other. In India, conservation is a state subject. But both the ASI and the state archaeology department have limitations. The state governments have meager funds. The ASI has a shortage of manpower, and its attention is frequently diverted to other countries like Indonesia, Myanmar, Vietnam and Cambodia, where Indian archaeologists are working. The best conservators have been sent to review. The governmental process is full of roadblocks to getting sanctions and approvals, things like that. Even when funds are actually ample, procedural delays still impede the work. In India, we still use the conservation manual that was finalized and published by director general of the ASI in 1921. International charters were not even available at that time.

Moreover, I have found that in many

countries, the principles of conservation are not followed strictly. That is the case with China too. In China, the mindset is more about renovation. Renovations are also being done by some of our colleagues in India, but they're going against the principles too. Basically, we don't believe in renovation. We only believe in conservation. If you have a dilapidated structure, you have to keep it as it is. All you can do is ensure that it doesn't further deteriorate and stays as close as possible to how you found it. Not only in China, but also in Iran and other countries, if there are some dilapidated structures and blueprints are available, the entire thing is renovated. Do you replace everything to restore it to new or save the evidence of what once was? There is a difference between India and China.

CP: How do you think technology will influence cooperation between India and China?

Mani: We can do much more now. This evening I was just sitting with a company that was showing how to record an area with drones as well as 3D scanning for back-ups. In the last three or four years, we have started performing such high tech work. If Chinese experts are interested, they can also do it in India like they have done in China's Tibet. They beautifully documented the sites there. If they come, they can document sites like Ellora where we have large caves and cave temples. That would not only be very exciting for the public but also a permanent enhancement of the records.

CP: In an interview with Indian media, you mentioned that you have learned of sites from travel accounts of various travelers, including Chinese. Can you give us an example?

Mani: As we all know, Faxian and Xuanzang visited India. They mentioned a

number of particular Buddhist sites and cities that unfortunately are little known today simply because they're not there anymore. You follow their route and direction, you come across big sites and you can also cross-reference names in those sites, and sometimes they match with old names, but sometimes they have changed. With the correct information and archeological records at the sites, you can locate new ancient sites. A well-trained archeologist can identify the period of time or area of new findings. A good command of knowledge about culture and literature would greatly help archeologists in locating the sites.

CP: Do you feel any difference between cooperation with Chinese museums and working with Western museums?

Mani: We are more interested in cooperation with countries of Southeast Asia because of a common origin of culture. Western countries and even the West Asian countries have completely different cultures. We should first know more of our own local culture. India is already a large country, and China is even larger. If we cooperate in areas ranging from culture to economics, we can become the greatest region of the world. If we can facilitate communication and exchanges between peoples of Asia, that would be a great start.

CP: How did you find politics poses its influence on cultural cooperation between our two countries?

Mani: Of course. We have to ensure mutual understanding. Once we develop mutual understanding, we can also develop cultural exchange in other fields. But we first have to have mutual understanding in politics. At the moment, China and India have relatively good relations. If we can develop this relationship further, it would benefit both countries. 47

Literature 2.0

Edited by Zhou Xin

In March 2016, 34-year-old online writer Zhang Wei, who goes by the penname Tangjia Sanshao, became the first Chinese author to earn more than 100 million yuan (about US\$14.5 million) a year. He topped the Chinese Online Writers Rich List for the fourth consecutive year with royalties of 110 million yuan (around US\$16 million). Within less than two decades, China's online literature has grown from a handful of writers sharing works online to daily publication volume equal to annual publications of a medium-sized publishing house. The volume of online literature readers has grown to over 300 million in China. Experts estimate that the value of the online literature industry this year will reach as high as 9 billion yuan (US\$1.3 billion).

Rapid Rise

Generally, online literature refers to works ranging from short stories to full

novels that are published and consumed online. Common subject matter includes time travel, science fiction, fantasy, game-based fiction, and mystery fiction. Of the many outstanding writers that have emerged from online literature, Tangjia Sanshao is renowned for his persistent diligence: He has written seven to eight thousand words every day for 10 consecutive years. The fantasy novel *Coiling Dragon* by Zhu Hongzhi, whose penname is I Eat Tomatoes, accumulated viewership of 80 million within 13 months after it was published online. Zhou Dedong, former editor-in-chief of *Youth Digest* (one of the most popular digest magazines among young people in China), has been praised as the godfather of China's cliffhangers for his popular online horror novels.

From the publication of the first online work to its current mammoth state, the development of Chinese online literature can be divided into three phases.

The period from 1998 to 2002 can be called the nascent phase. From March to May of 1998, Tsai Chih-heng's serial *The First Intimate Contact* was reposted by many famous websites. This novel introduced the concept of "online literature" to many for the first time. This novel is still considered one of the founding fathers of the trend.

From then on, more and more writers began to publish serials online, and others began to share poetry as well as prose.

Online literature entered a phase of explosive growth from 2002 to 2010. The VIP mode of monetizing work created by Qidian.com, an online literature site, turned out to be a watershed move, and other websites quickly followed suit, making online literature an emerging industry with great potential. Common writers could make a living by writing online. In the period of less than a decade, the online literature industry drew nearly 100,000 writers and almost 50 million readers.

Over the same period, fantasy novels went mainstream. Entertainment elements of Japanese comics and Hollywood movies were combined with local culture in the novels. "At first, there was no obvious difference between online literature and traditional literature," remarked famous Chinese writer Cai Jun. "Except for *The First Intimate Contact*, which was about cyber love, most online works were just traditional literature published online. But now many online serials are very long stories about tomb robbery or time travel."

Since 2010, China's online literature has merged with rise of mobile devices and made paper books near obsolete.

Online readership continues growing and the threshold to be a writer has further dropped. Smartphones have facilitated both reading and payment. Writers have more sources of income and channels to contribute. However, breakthroughs on content are yet to come.

Online literature, which was originally read by only a few people, is now widespread and commercial. Three major factors contributed to its rise:

First, it is inclusive. Many who dream of becoming a professional writer or simply enjoy writing as a hobby can easily publish work online without constraints of the traditional publication sector. By the end of December 2015, China's online literature websites had signed 2.5 million writers.

Second, writers and their readers can interact online instantly. The moment new chapters are released, readers can comment immediately. Fans always encourage the writer, raise questions or express how they hope the plot will unfold, making writing a more interactive process.

Third, consumption of online literature resembles that of fast food in many ways. "When reading online fiction, I don't need to think about it too hard," remarked one online reader. "It's just entertainment." In this regard, the industry is similar to TV and movies. The majority of online works deserve to be read only once. Few works have been called classics or maintained long-term popularity.

Problems and Prospects

After rampant growth of online literature over the past two decades, some problems have emerged, which beg special attention.

First, excellent work is extremely rare, considering the massive volume. Although hundreds of millions of words are published every day, Wu Wenhui, CEO of China Reading Limited, pointed out that online



Online writer Tangjia Sanshao (penname of Zhang Wei) poses for a picture with fans after a February 2016 public appearance. CFP


literature, which is enjoying prosperity, struggles with a shortage of outstanding original works and persistent plagiarism.

Second, over-commercialization harms the spirit of literature. The economic gains of online literature cannot be achieved without commercialization, and many online writers tend to focus on potential earnings first and foremost. Click-through rate becomes the top metric for online literature. It has become increasingly common that online writers haphazardly insert words into an established template that caters to the demands of fans and publishers.

And online literature has suffered severely from piracy. According to statistics, online literature endures annual losses of over 10 billion yuan (US\$1.45 billion) due to piracy. Some writers complained that a newly released chapter is often available on pirating website within minutes. "Many writers cannot make a living because their income is all lost to piracy," noted Yang Chen, editor-in-chief of the online literature site Chuangshi.qq.com.

Every emerging sector needs time to grow. Compared to classical literature that

has existed for thousands of years and contemporary and modern literature that has been around in its current form for at least 100 years, the mechanisms of the online literature industry are not mature. However, some experts believe that online literature is rising because its output remains massive, its sustainability is encouraging and there is still huge space for its growth. With the changes of time and developments of technology, online literature itself will see constant change. According to its trajectory, online literature will be the mainstream of contemporary Chinese literature within 10 years.

"In spite of various problems, China's online literature is marching towards maturity," remarked Zhou Zhixiong, a postdoctoral fellow at the Department of Chinese Language and Literature of Peking University and director of the Institute of Online Literature of Shandong Normal University. "Readers are always making choices and writers who survive this selection process are of the highest quality. The emergence of works that can rival *Harry Potter* and *The Lord of the Rings* will just take time." 



The online literature section of Wangfujing Bookstore attracts many young readers. IC



In the summer of 1965, Dylan recorded *Highway 61 Revisited*, which was one of the most important records in the history of American music. IC

Think Twice: It's All Right

Text by Nancy Gong

On October 13, 2016, the Swedish Academy awarded Bob Dylan, an American songwriter, singer, artist, and writer, the Nobel Prize in Literature for his poetic expression in the strong tradition of American music.

On the evening of October 22, China Book Industry Market Data Service Company published a list of the most influential Nobel laureates in Literature in China since 1998, and Dylan topped the list.

A legendary figure in music history, Dylan, born in 1941, is considered one of the most influential singers and songwriters in both folk and pop music. Not only did his work lead the transformation of American country music in the 1960s, but much of his most celebrated work became anthems for American civil rights, anti-war and student movements. He fused music with his own personal insight on social problems in a poetic form. He was previously nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1996 and 2006.

Over five decades have passed since Dylan's first solo album was released in 1961. Across the 55 years, Dylan has won myriad prizes in the United States and the world as a whole for music and literature, including the Grammys Lifetime Achievement Award, one of the world's top honors for musicians, an Oscar for Best Original Song and a Golden Globe Award.

Dylan is an extensively published writer as well. His notable books include the hyper-realistic novel *Tarantula* and autobiography *Chronicles*. He won the Pulitzer Prize Special Citations and Awards in 2008.

Dylan was first introduced to China's mainland as a writer more than as a musician. In 1978, *The Glory and the Dream: A Narrative History of America, 1932-1972* was published in China, in which author William Manchester mentioned Dylan many times. In 1985, Chinese publishers released *Gates of Eden* by well-known American scholar Morris Dickstein, who devoted an entire chapter to Dylan.

Dylan was endowed with stunning creativity. He has released 37 solo studio albums and 240 records of all types. His music was introduced to China during the 1980s, an era in which his solo albums could be found on the shelves of video stores, and covers of his songs, mostly by Asian artists, were all over the radio.

In the latter part of the decade and early half of the 1990s, Dylan's stories were recounted in Chinese musical journals such as *Music Heaven* and *Audio-Video World*. Because his music was never officially published in China, it was only accessible through bootlegs of originals from the United States, leading Chinese music fans to head first into the world of music from Europe and America, with Dylan as a driving force. True fans wouldn't hesitate to plunk down exorbitant prices for any latest arrival with his name and such enthusiasts became the backbone forces of China's rock 'n' roll as well as some of its most respected music critics.



October 13, 2016: Dylan's works are displayed at the Swedish Academy of Literature. That day, he was awarded the 2016 Nobel Prize in Literature. CFP



May 29, 2012: U.S. President Barack Obama grants Bob Dylan the Medal of Freedom, an honor for civilians who have made outstanding contributions in realms of science, culture, sports, and social activities. IC

Nevertheless, few fans knew much about him due to limited dissemination. “I was introduced to him by songs such as ‘Under the Red Sky’ from the albums released during the 1980s and 90s instead of his classics of the 1960s,” explains Zhang Xiaozhou, an eminent Chinese music critic. “Frankly, I was not that impressed because they were not his standouts.”

Yuan Yue, a Chinese columnist who received a master’s degree from the Biological Department of Arizona State University, fondly remembers buying a collection of Dylan records in 1992. “My roommate Andy danced to Dylan’s music after I played some of his other hits including ‘Like a Rolling Stone.’ I later learned the song evolved from a song composed during the 1960s, ‘Positively 4th Street.’ When he started playing rock and roll, Dylan was criticized by folk music fans. He only wanted to express his anger at folk music circles in New York.”

“The addition of electricity only made him more popular,” continues Yuan. “I was totally amazed. I then realized that Dylan

was far beyond the folk singer of ‘Blowing in the Wind.’”

From that moment, Yuan became a true fan of Dylan. In 2008, he published the book *American Folk Music: The Stories*, in which he devoted six chapters to the songs and stories of Dylan. “It is the most detailed, objective introduction to Dylan I’ve ever read in China, with comprehensive details of his wisdom and weaknesses,” commented Wang Xiaofeng, a noted Chinese music critic.

Four specific books played a huge hand in introducing Dylan to China: *Chronicles* written in 2006 and published in Chinese in March 2015; *The Old, Weird America* by Greit Marcus, a famous American music critic and culture researcher; *Who is That Man? In Search of the Real Bob Dylan* by David Dalton, a distinguished American scholar in culture and history; and *Down the Highway: The Life of Bob Dylan* by Howard Sounes, a British writer. These books were never bestsellers, but they explored the music and life of Dylan from different angles.



April 6, 2011: A Bob Dylan show is held at Beijing Workers’ Gymnasium, attracting some 3,000 Chinese fans, almost the same as the Rolling Stones drew in Shanghai in 2014. IC

Why don’t more Chinese people know about Bob Dylan? “His musical aesthetics don’t mesh despite the fact that he was one of the earliest Western singers introduced to China,” opines Wang Xiaofeng. “His singing style is primitive and rugged and his lyrics were greatly influenced by European and

American literature as well as French symbolism and the American ‘lost generation,’ which are odd, abstract, and hard to follow.”

Dylan has never stopped performing. Since 1988 when he began his “Never Ending Tour,” he has gone on stage an average of about 100 performances annually. So far, he has played

more than 2,300 shows around the world.

In 2011, about 3,000 Chinese fans attended a Dylan show at Beijing Workers’ Gymnasium, almost the same as the Rolling Stones drew in Shanghai in 2014, including Cui Jian, China’s “father of rock ‘n’ roll.”

“Those who were dying to be considered

icons of their eras are all washed up today,” remarked Cui. “Dylan has always kept a low profile and committed himself to performing, from his first song to today. His extensive body of work has exerted a profound influence on the philosophies of all people of the world.”



Books

The Only Child

by Guo Jing, China CITIC Press,
September 2016

Acclaimed by the *Wall Street Journal* as a best book of 2015 and the *New York Times* as one of the Best Illustrated Books of 2015, *The Only Child* by Chinese artist Guo Jing was finally published in her home country in September 2016.

The combination of picture book and graphic novel takes place in Taiyuan, a typical northern Chinese city. The 100-plus-page wordless book of pencil illustrations begins with the adventures of a six-year-old girl who falls asleep on a bus and ends up lost in the woods, alone. Then, like Alice down the rabbit hole, the child descends into a wondrous world wherein she befriends a deer and an infant cloud and is swallowed and shot out of a huge whale. And in the end, she is safe home.

The Only Child is the debut work of Guo, who was born in 1983 and grew up in Taiyuan, the setting of her book. Guo revealed that the story was inspired by her own childhood experience. "I fell asleep on a bus and got off in a totally unfamiliar place," she recalled. "I was so scared and lonely. I think many people have experienced this kind of moment in their lives. And I want to share my feelings with them." The only child in her family, Guo started working on the book three years ago after quitting a job as an illustrator in Singapore. To better focus on the project, she moved back to Taiyuan and devoted a year and a half to the work.

In 2014, Guo closed a deal with Schwartz and Wade, a new arm to Random House Children's Books family of imprints, soon after finishing the work. The book was so well-received in the United States that it sold out on Amazon two weeks after its release as critics compared it to modern classics such as Shaun Tan's *The Arrival* and Raymond Briggs's *The Snowman*. *USA Today* declared it "an expansive and ageless book full of wonder, sadness, and wild bursts of imagination," and the *New York Times* called it "a dreamy, wordless debut," to cite two of its many glowing reviews.

However, aside from all the praise, extensive and heavy discussion was inspired by its topic: "The Only Child." China's one-child policy, which officially ended in 2015, was introduced in the late 1970s. It prevented a sharp population rise in China, but many sociologists and

psychologists believe that the policy cast far-reaching impact on generations that followed. What did the author want to say about this? Does the book focus only on a narrow group? How did the author's identity as an only child influence her creation? *China Pictorial* sat down with Guo Jing to discuss these questions.

China Pictorial (CP): What led you and your editors to decide on this name *The Only Child*?

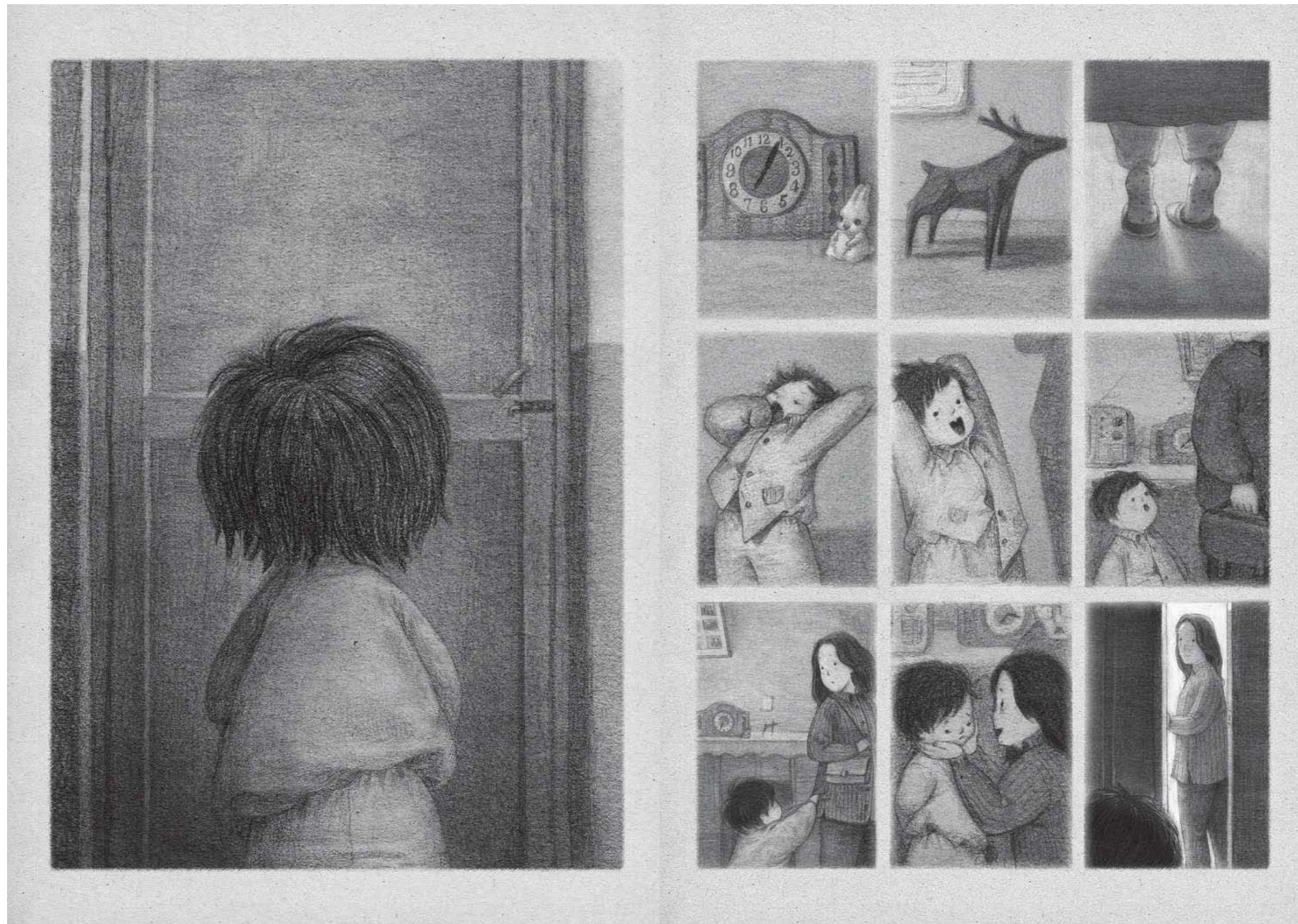
Guo: When the book was published in the United States, we were very careful about choosing the name. In the United States, leaving a kid at home alone is against the law. Because the book doesn't have any words, its name must set the stage. Thus, by naming the book *The Only Child*, we are informing readers that the story happened in China decades ago, in the mid-1980s, and trying to clear misunderstandings that could arise. By setting the story in that specific period, we not only wanted to provide background information, but also to spark memories of specific generations in China.

Moreover, we named the book *The Only Child* because it is one of the first books from the perspective of a Chinese only child to tell the story of her peers. My little heroine in the book is lonely. I hope to inspire readers who are always busy in this wild and lonely world to slow down and spend more time with the ones they love.

CP: Some critics and readers argue that your book focuses on the loneliness of China's only children, while others say it portrays common childhood feelings of everyone, only children or not.

Guo: I think that's an interesting characteristic of my book. Things that resonate with readers start reflecting their own feelings and thoughts. The thing I most want to convey with the book is that as individuals, we are born lonely. We have to endure and experience quite a lot in our limited lifespan, and loneliness is a major facet. Such loneliness is not exclusive to China's only children. It is embedded in everyone and persists throughout our entire lives. However, the feelings of loneliness play a key role in this crazy world, maintaining our identities. I admire people who struggle to grasp their dreams while experiencing loneliness. But life is much larger than loneliness.

Guo signs autographs for young readers in Berlin.



CP: Is the book primarily about loneliness?

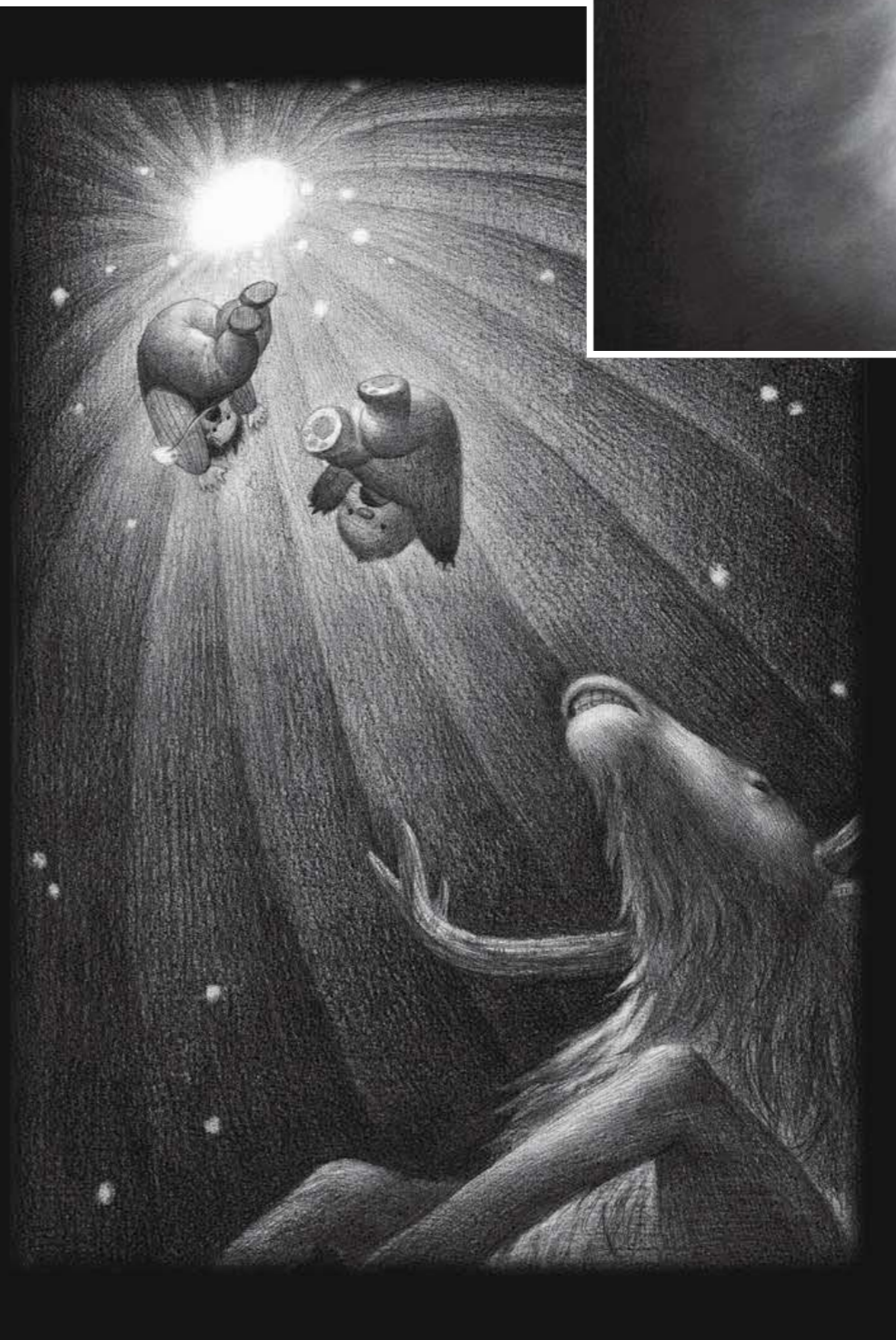
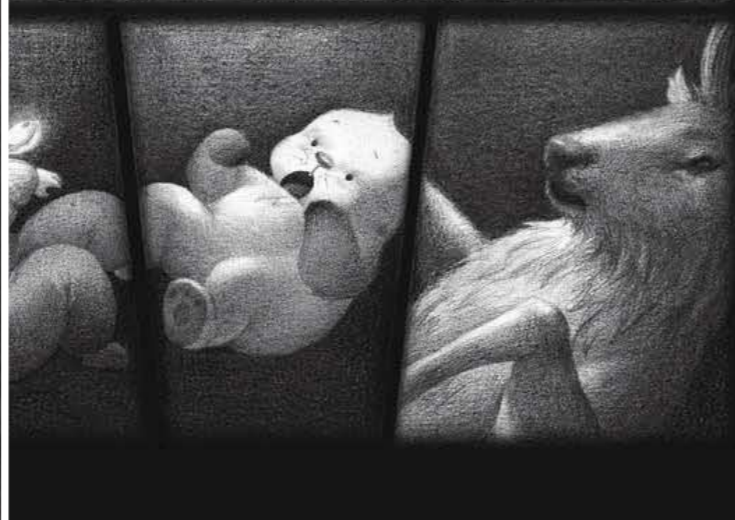
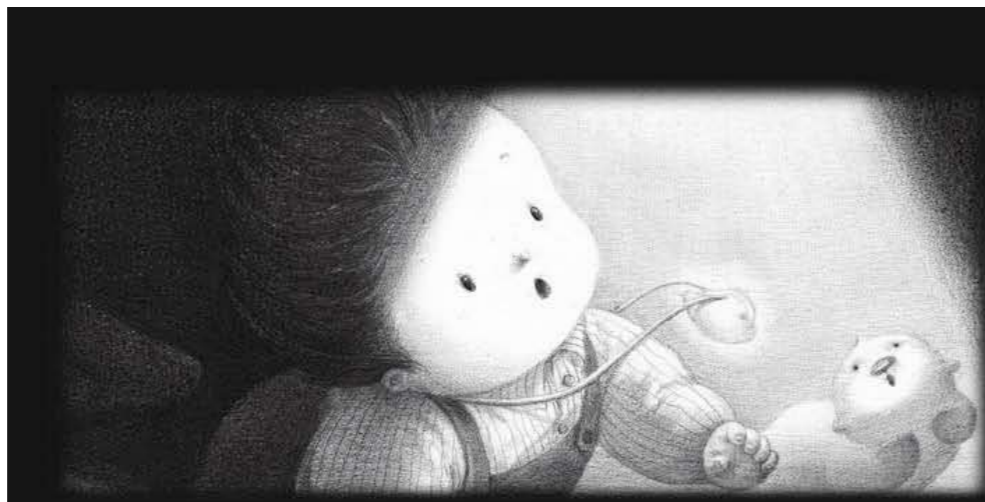
Guo: It's about a lot of different values. I hope that readers also appreciate values such as love, courage, and adventure. Everyone, young and old, should embark on adventures. We learn from various kinds of "journeys" and realize the insignificance of an individual in our world. When we return from journeys, we know more about ourselves.

CP: Your book has been warmly embraced by both young and mature readers. Did you have a target demographic when you were working on it?

Guo: No, I didn't have a specific group in my mind. I just wanted to draw for myself when I started. I think that a work created from the heart can resonate with everyone in the world.

CP: Your pencil book is uniquely all black and white. What led to that decision?

Guo: To Chinese people, black-and-white pictures inspire a strong sense of the times. For my generation, black-and-white brings people back to their childhood immediately. It's a soft, simple, yet powerful color combination that symbolizes a return of childhood.




CP: The little girl encounters a deer, a baby cloud, and a whale. What do they represent?

Guo: I grew up in a typical Chinese family with a stern father and a compassionate mother. Some emotional distance between my dad and me made me a little insecure. The deer is a strong creature that connotes prosperity and serenity in Chinese culture; it is the protector and spiritual leader of the little girl in the book. For me, the deer in the book is meant to be paternal, while bringing kids warmth and security. I truly believe that everyone needs such a figure.

Baby cloud is a lovely character. If you read carefully, you will notice I set its age near that of my little protagonist. It represents friends and siblings.

And don't forget the whale. In my book, every character is tiny compared to the whale, just like every of us in the face of destiny. The whale stands for human destiny, which moves to the light sometimes and throws us into darkness at others. Facing the unknown road ahead, the only way out is to keep going. I consider the whale a metaphor for my own experience.

CP: Which international illustrators, artists and works inspired you?

Guo: Many classics influenced me as an illustrator. Great art nourishes its makers' descendants with the life wisdom of their creators. Vincent van Gogh, Australian artist Shaun Tan, and Japanese artist Hayao Miyazaki are the three great masters who gave me the most inspiration. In the future, I'll be more focused on producing work as vivid and alive as everything they did. 

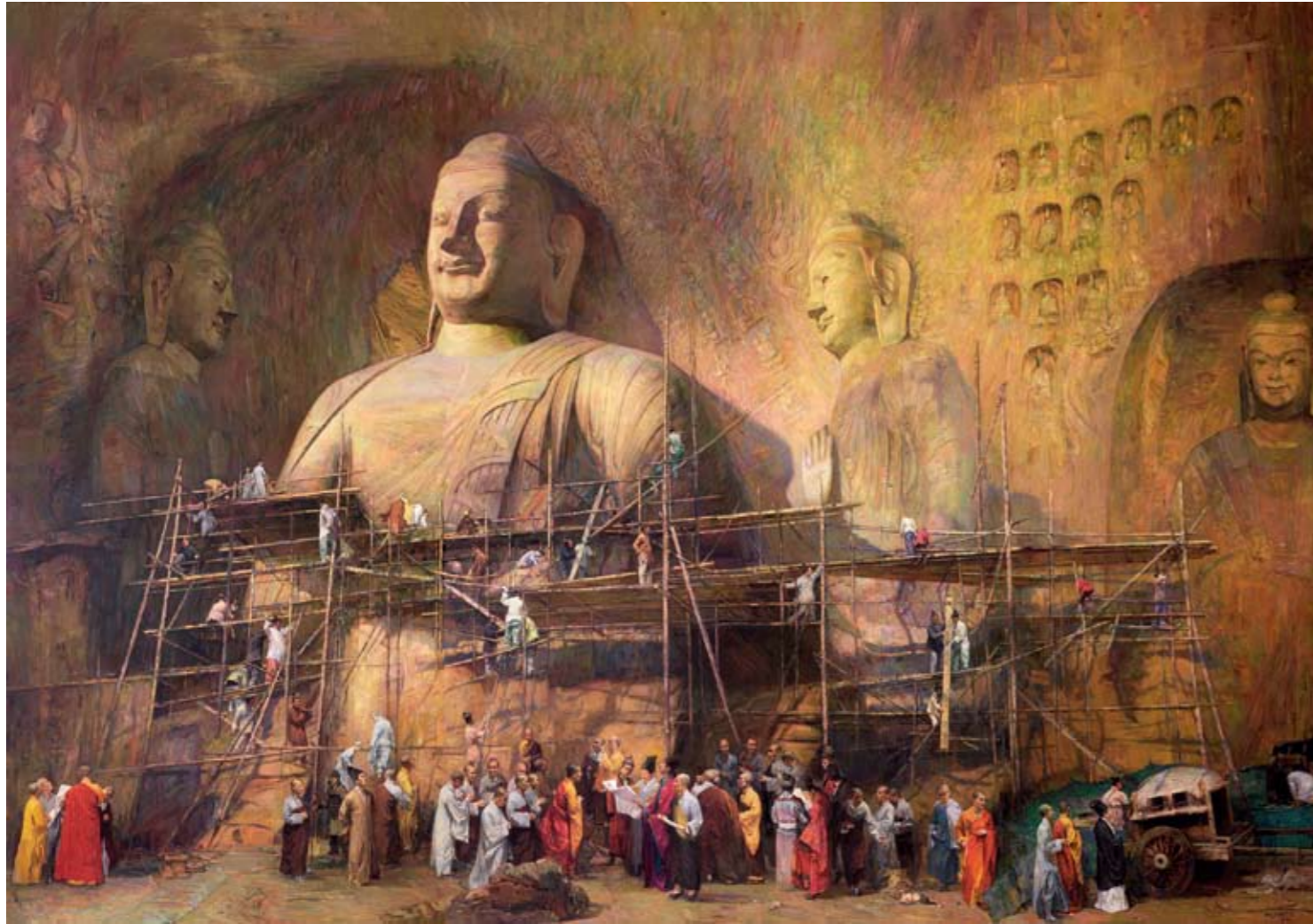
“Chinese Epic” Art Exhibition

The event is the culmination of five years of painstaking efforts to create a fine arts program featuring Chinese civilization and history. On display are 146 pieces in eight exhibition halls, wherein visitors can admire China's latest achievements in history-themed art.

Launched in December 2011, the program covers traditional Chinese painting, oil painting, prints, and sculptures, and features 150 key themes concerning major historical events, trailblazers and achievements in civilization spanning from the Hemudu Culture of remote antiquity to 1840 China. Everything displayed, work by nearly 300 artists, will be acquired for the National Museum of China's permanent collection.

November 20 – December 11, 2016
National Museum of China, Beijing

The Art of Grottoes by Zhang Junming,
oil painting, 469×669 cm, 2016.



Painted-Pottery Culture of Yangshao
by Guo Beiping, 510×379 cm, 2016.



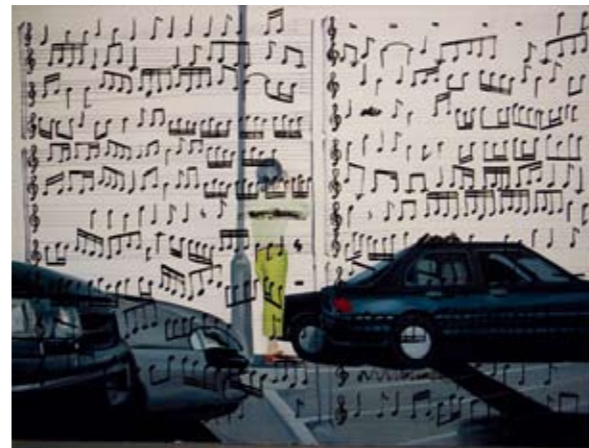
Qu Yuan and The Songs of Chu by Feng
Yuan, Chinese painting, 550×394 cm, 2016.

LOVE AIJING Solo Exhibition, New York

Born in 1969 in Liaoning Province, Ai Jing became famous across China in the early 1990s as a singer-composer and gained international acclaim after releasing five solo albums. Ai began to paint in 1999 and started showing work in modern Chinese art exhibitions in 2007.

This show features 22 pieces of work including the installation *My Mother and My Hometown*, sculpture *I Love Heavy Metal*, and paintings including *I Love, I Love Color*, and *Walking in the Sun*, a showcase of her artistic exploration that traces the footprints of her progress in visual art.

November 16 – December 30, 2016
Marlborough Gallery, New York



Requiem, animation, 7'21", 2007.

acoustic-optical tunnel, a space resembling a scientist's study but featuring paintings of various rare species of animals inspired by the Natural History Museum. The exhibition reflects his capability to control other artistic media.

November 19, 2016 – January 15, 2017
Yuz Museum, Shanghai

Zhang's Observation – Zhang Guangyuan Architectural Photography Exhibition

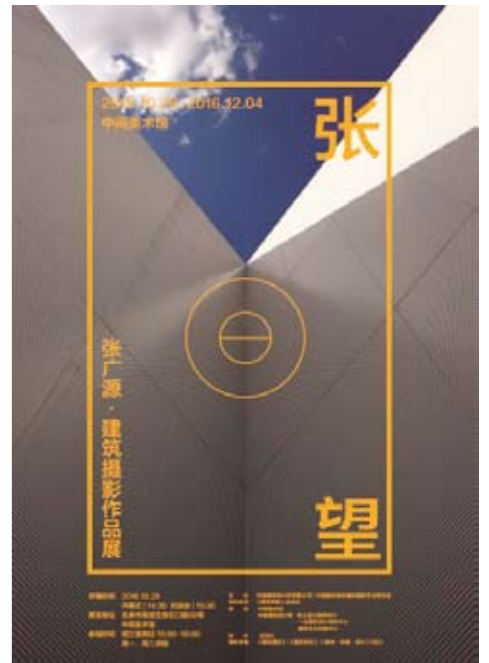
In more than 30 years working in photography, Zhang Guangyuan with China Architecture Design & Research Group has experienced changes from black-and-white to color, from film to digital. The buildings he photographed have become increasingly modern and fashionable. From another angle, his photographic work is one of the best records of the development of architecture in China over the last three decades.

This exhibition, of photography as well as plans drawn by Chinese architects, was jointly organized and prepared by a group of Chinese architects. Zhang has used his camera to recount stories of architecture in China and express his passion for and confidence in the architectural designers in the country.

October 29 – December 4, 2016
Inside-Out Art Museum, Beijing



My Mother and My Hometown, used woolen
yarn, fiberglass, silica gel, 1,600×600 cm, 2012.



A poster for Zhang's Observation: Zhang
Guangyuan Architectural Photography Exhibition.



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CHENGZI ANCIENT VILLAGE

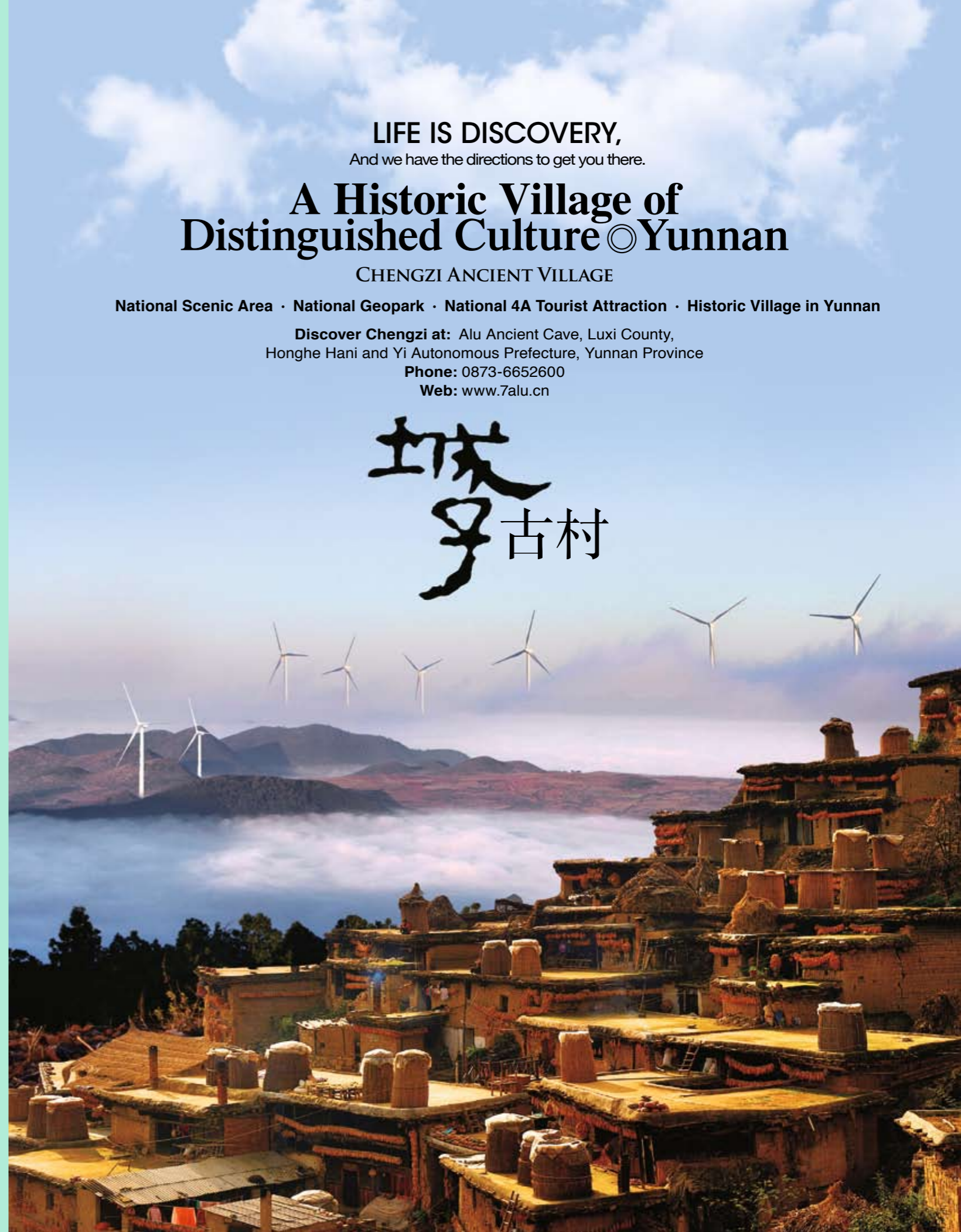
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