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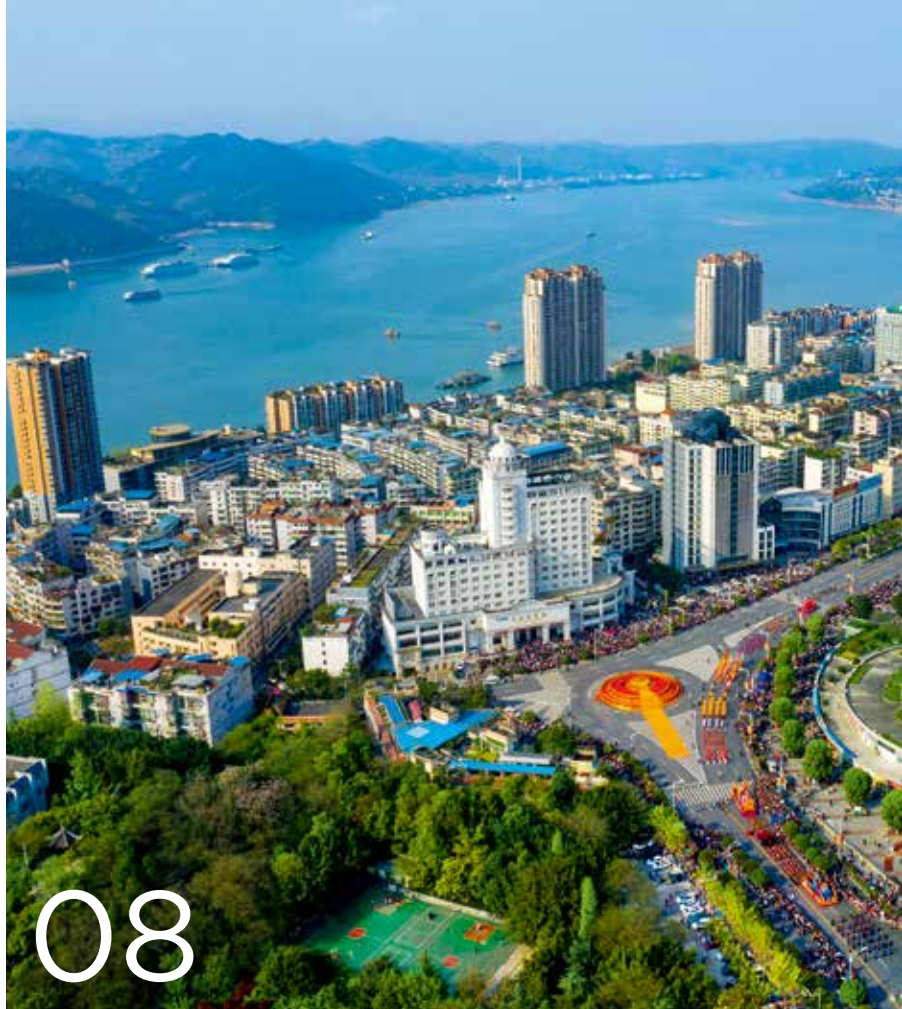
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Cover caption

An aerial view of the terraced fields in Yeliping Village, Sanjian Township, Fengdu County. The village has vigorously developed specialty industries such as rice plantation in recent years, lifting many households out of poverty. by Xu Xun



by Pang Xinglei/Xinhua

Strategic Partner UAE

July 22, Beijing: Chinese President Xi Jinping holds a welcome ceremony for Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, crown prince of Abu Dhabi of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), before their talks.

During his talks with the crown prince, Xi called for joint efforts with the UAE to accelerate the high-quality construction of the Belt and Road as the two countries signed a number of landmark programs for bilateral cooperation.

Recalling his visit to the UAE last July, Xi urged deeper strategic mutual trust and strategic cooperation, stressing that China sees the UAE as an important strategic cooperative partner in the Middle East.

Stellar Debut

July 22, Shanghai: Guests attend the debut ceremony of China's sci-tech innovation board (STAR market) at the Shanghai Stock Exchange (SSE).

The STAR market, China's latest NASDAQ-style high-tech trading board, began operation that day, kicking off a trail-blazing stage of the country's innovation drive and capital market reform. The debut of the first group of 25 listed firms was impressive. At closing, they saw an average increase of about 140 percent, with one surging more than 400 percent.

The new board is China's latest reform attempt to make the A-share market more market-oriented and law-based. First proposed in November 2018, it took only about 260 days to transform the new board from idea into reality.



by Fang Zhe/Xinhua

Liangzhu Artifacts

July 16, Beijing: Visitors to the Palace Museum gaze at artifacts displayed at an exhibition featuring China's newest UNESCO World Heritage site—the Archaeological Ruins of Liangzhu City.

The exhibition, which opened that day titled “Liangzhu and Ancient China: The 5,000-Year Civilization Demonstrated by Jades,” showcases a total of 260 items. A variety of jade objects such as *cong* (jade tubes with quadrilateral exteriors), *bi* (jade disks) and *yue* (axe-shaped jade) are on display. Jade radiates the essence of Liangzhu civilization.

Divided into four sections, the exhibition aims to showcase the ancient regional state of Liangzhu, its civilization and its influence on later culture while highlighting the significance of Liangzhu on the Chinese civilization. The exhibition runs through October 20.



by Guo Shasha

Bridging the Gap

July 7: Closure of the main arch of a bridge linking southwestern China's provinces of Sichuan, Yunnan and Guizhou is finished. The entire bridge will be completed by the end of 2019. Its completion is expected to solve the traffic difficulties for hundreds of thousands of people living in the border area of the three provinces and make great contributions to poverty alleviation in the Wumeng Mountains area.

China has vowed to eradicate absolute poverty by 2020. As the deadline approaches, the country is focusing on the nation's poorest people, who are mainly found deep in the mountains where they battle an adverse natural environment and backward infrastructure.



by Li Xin/VCG

Setting Records in the Water

July 21, Gwangju, South Korea: Sun Yang of China reacts after the men's 400-meter freestyle final at the Gwangju 2019 FINA World Aquatics Championships.

The 27-year-old Olympic champion finished first in the 400-meter freestyle final on the first day of swimming events of the 18th FINA World Aquatics Championships, clocking 3:42.44. It was his fourth consecutive gold medal in the men's 400-meter freestyle at the FINA worlds since 2013.

Two days later, he grabbed his second gold medal by winning the men's 200-meter freestyle final in Gwangju. With the two more golds, Sun became the second-highest world title holder with 11 individual gold medals in world competitions. Michael Phelps of the United States still leads with 15 golds from individual events.



VCG

The Shorter the List, the Greater the Opportunity

Text by Bian Yongzu and Zeng Qingming

Shortening the negative list marks China's latest move towards further opening up.

Three administrative documents released by the Chinese government, *Special Administrative Measures on Access to Foreign Investment* (2019 edition), *Free Trade Zone Special Administrative Measures on Access to Foreign Investment* (2019 edition) and *Catalogue of Industries for Guiding Foreign Investment*, came into effect on July 30, 2019. The latest revision includes new opening-up measures in services (including transportation, value-added telecommunications, infrastructure and culture), manufacturing, mining and agriculture, allowing full foreign ownership in more sectors, with no additional limits added. Three changes highlight the new negative list.

First, China's agricultural sector will be more open to accelerate production and improve quality of agricultural produce to meet rising domestic demand. Despite its historical status as a major agricultural country, China's agricultural sector is not very competitive. Increasing incomes of Chinese people have resulted in skyrocketing demand for quality agricultural goods, while supply has lagged. In the context of rural revitalization strategy, wider opening to foreign investment will exert greater pressure on China's agricultural enterprises so that the technology applied in agricultural production processes will continue to improve due to competition. At the same time, advanced agricultural

technology and agricultural management models can also be introduced to promote comprehensive cooperation in fields like skill training, crop disease prevention and personnel exchange.

Second, the service industry will be less restricted to foreign capital. Contrasted with the manufacturing industry, the pace of opening up of the service industry has been relatively slow, and its development lags far behind public demand in the middle-income era. On this latest negative list, many areas such as domestic shipping agents, gas supply in cities, heat pipe networks, performance brokers, multi-party communications, store-and-forward and call centers no longer require the enterprises to be controlled by Chinese nationals. This offers tremendous opportunities to foreign investors. For example, since the beginning of this year, introduction of foreign investment in the high-tech service industry has increased by 68.9 percent. With new policies of opening up implemented in banking, insurance and logistics industries, not to mention trade, the growth of foreign investment in China will be even faster.

Third, China's opening up of its 5G market will bring surprises. The Chinese government just officially released 5G commercial licenses in June. On the recent negative list, restrictions on foreign investment access related to 5G have been removed. The move demonstrated China's confidence in its

5G technology and proved that China's 5G is not closed but open and integrated. China has established technical cooperation mechanisms with major countries globally, and major international communication equipment manufacturers have participated in China's 5G trials and construction work. The current situation foreshadows openness in the internet era, which is necessary for more mutually beneficial cooperation.

From this negative list, we see China's determination and sincerity to reform itself, expand opening up and promote mutual beneficial cooperation and economic globalization. With foreign investment entering more fields, free trade zones will play an even more important role as the engine attracting foreign investment. And dividends of reform will further expand, injecting new energy and impetus into the world economy.

New technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data, and cloud computing are rapidly changing living and working environments but pose new challenges to governments of all countries. The negative list represents the management concept of "all behaviors without legal prohibition are allowed." The government must not only increase decentralization and reduce intervention in the market, but also improve management concepts and accelerate the pace of building a service-oriented government. After the 18th National Congress of



September 13, 2017: Workers at the free trade zone in Shanghai drive cars unloaded from a ship to a designated parking lot. Xinhua

the Communist Party of China, the Chinese government clearly released the policy of “promoting reform through opening up” to exert a more comprehensive and effective role of opening up in driving domestic reforms while at the same time promoting reform of global governance in a more fair and just direction.

Chinese President Xi Jinping pointed out at the G20 summit in Osaka that the world should embrace development opportunities with greater openness, seek mutual benefit with better cooperation, and guide economic globalization in the right direction. Chinese Premier Li Keqiang pointed out at the Summer Davos held in Dalian that the world should stick to economic globalization and promote trade and investment liberalization and facilitation. Even while the momentum of economic globalization has been seriously ravaged in recent times, China’s understanding of economic globalization as a general trend has not changed. Shortening the negative list is not forced by the outside world, but a new initiative for China’s opening up.

As the negative list becomes shorter and shorter and foreign investment restrictions fewer and fewer, China will continue to increase openness and transparency for foreign investment, create a more open environment for foreign investment and accelerate the integration of high-quality foreign capital with the Chinese market and industries. Foreign companies and capital will embrace not only an increasingly large and open market, but also a constantly improving investment environment. 

Co-author Bian Yongzu is deputy director of the Industrial Department of Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies at Renmin University of China. Co-author Zeng Qingming is an intern research fellow with Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies.

沪伦通

Shanghai-London Stock Connect

Edited by Li Zhuoxi

The Shanghai-London Stock Connect is a two-way depositary receipt mechanism that connects the Shanghai Stock Exchange (SSE) with the London Stock Exchange. Through the mechanism, London-listed corporations are able to issue global depositary receipts (GDRs) in Shanghai, and Shanghai-listed firms can issue GDRs in London.

On June 17, 2019, the China Securities Regulatory Commission (CSRC) and Britain’s Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) made a joint announcement of their approval of the Shanghai and London stock exchanges’ proposal and the official launch of the Shanghai-London Stock Connect. It will enable Shanghai-listed companies to apply to be traded on the new Shanghai Segment of the London Stock Exchange’s Main Market, while companies with a premium listing in London will be able to apply to be traded on the Main Board of the SSE.



June 17, 2019: Information about the Shanghai-London Stock Connect is displayed on an electronic screen at the London Stock Exchange. Xinhua

A depositary receipt is a negotiable certificate issued by intermediaries (usually a bank, called depositary bank or trustee bank) representing shares in a foreign company or bonds traded on a local stock exchange. A Chinese depositary receipt is a certificate issued by a custodial bank that represents a pool of foreign equity traded on Chinese exchanges. GDR is a bank certificate issued in more than one country for shares in a foreign company.

步行友好性


Walkability

Edited by Li Zhuoxi



Footpaths free of obstruction, pedestrian crossings and wide sidewalks are the three most decisive factors for walkability. Zhongguancun Street scored the highest due to its bike lane. VCG

Walkability is an important part of a city’s livability. A pedestrian-friendly street should be smoothly surfaced, lined with shady trees, safe, comfortable and equipped with accessible amenities such as shops and restaurants on both sides of the street.

On May 14, 2019, the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), an international nonprofit environmental organization, and the School of Architecture of Tsinghua University jointly released a report titled “Evaluating the Walkability of Chinese Cities with a Focus on Live-Work-Play Centers.” This report evaluated the performance of streets in 71 live-work-play areas of 50 different cities using nine indicators: pedestrian crossings, greenery, height of surrounding buildings and pavement width, street furniture, buffers between street and sidewalk, width of sidewalks, obstruction of footpaths, sidewalk quality and bike lanes. Zhongguancun Street in Beijing scored the highest for its bike lane. 

Fengdu: Moving Past Poverty

China created a world-shaking economic miracle over four decades of reform and opening up. However, the approach of letting its eastern and southeastern coastal regions develop first came at a price. As the eastern part of China developed in leaps and bounds and began participating in global competition in the digital revolution, many rural areas in the central and western regions are still plagued by relatively

slow growth.

Developed cities with economic prosperity have generated tremendous demand for labor. Due to imbalanced development, countless farmers leave their rural homes in search of jobs in cities. As a result, many “hollowed villages” mainly inhabited by left-behind children, women and the elderly have emerged.

To reverse this trend, the Chinese government has formulated

and implemented a series of development plans to boost economic growth of less-developed regions over the years. China has vowed to eradicate poverty by the end of 2020 after lifting more than 700 million people out of poverty in recent decades.

How will the nation achieve this goal? With this question in mind, we visited Chongqing, a major inland municipality in southwestern China.



An aerial view of Fengdu County. To a large extent, the county retains the characteristics of most rural areas in China. The Yangtze River runs through a forested valley in Fengdu. by Xu Xun

Wins in the West

Poverty Alleviation Efforts in Chongqing's Fengdu County

Text by Verena Menzel

Only strict allocation of resources will ensure that China can overcome imbalanced development by its own strength and achieve the goal of eradicating poverty.

Poverty Behind Pastoral Scenery

A provincial-level municipality directly under the central government, Chongqing is a populous, developed metropolis. However, my destination was not the city proper, but Fengdu County under its administration. To a large extent, Fengdu retains the characteristics of many rural areas in China.

About a two-hour drive from Chongqing International Airport, Fengdu is located deep in the Three Gorges Reservoir area and has a population of 830,000. The Yangtze River wanders through forested valleys in the county, with many places left untouched. Due to frequent rainfall, the air and soil are wet most of the year. Waterfalls often pour down red-earth hillsides.

The picturesque pastoral scenery makes first-time visitors forget that Fengdu remains such an underdeveloped county lagging behind the pace of the times. In 2002, it was cited as a national poverty-stricken county. After 15 years of painstaking effort, it overcame the title in 2017. However, the county still suffers many problems such as markedly imbalanced development between rural and urban areas.

Moreover, Fengdu is plagued by “hollowed villages.” The unfavorable geographical conditions in some areas make it even harder for them to develop modern agriculture. Most of the county’s 30 townships are still lagging severely in economic development.

Based on the county’s actual conditions and specific difficulties, the local government has implemented many innovative measures to solve existing problems and consolidate the achievements made in poverty alleviation, setting an example worth following for other areas.

The Longhe Bridge along the south line of the Shanghai-Chongqing Expressway in Fengdu County. After more than a decade of effort, Fengdu was removed from the list of poverty-stricken counties in 2017. by Xu Xun



Luchunba Village in Sanjian Township has worked out a development plan integrating cultural heritage protection, environmental conservation and economic growth. Not only has the living environment of local villagers considerably improved, but the village's potential for tourism development has become more readily apparent. by Yu Jie

Regaining Vitality

A distance of about 30 kilometers separates the county seat from Luchunba Village, Sanjian Township. After crossing the Longhe River, a branch of the Yangtze River, we reached a residential settlement belonging to the No. 1 Team of the village. The riverside settlement is home to 18 households, but only 10 still have members living here. Because the village lacks job opportunities, nearly half of the local villagers have migrated to cities to work.

“The village has little tilled land, with limited output,” admitted Zhu Xiaodong, vice chief of Sanjian Township. Old buildings dating back to the 1950s and 1960s were of high value for architectural research, but most were dilapidated after decades of weathering. Left-behind villagers were either elderly or

disabled, so they were unable to repair their residences. The small village seemed to be on its last legs.

However, Yang Ming, first secretary for poverty alleviation in the village, got an idea that changed its fate. He surmised that the village could become a popular tourist spot, given its adjacency to the urban areas of Fengdu County as well as Chongqing Municipality, which would benefit local farmers.

Yang, his colleagues and local villagers worked out a development plan integrating cultural heritage protection, environmental conservation and economic growth.

They first used funds from the state to improve the rural living environment to enhance the village's infrastructure and public facilities. They paved roads and parking lots and built flower beds, bamboo bridges over

streams, modern toilets and pavilions linked by zigzagging corridors. Today, Luchunba Village hidden in a picturesque valley is a tourist haven. A rural hotel is under construction on the nearby hillside.

The investment by the government has paid off. Not only has the living environment of local villagers considerably improved, but also the village's potential for tourism development has become apparent. For this reason, local tourism developers were enthusiastic about providing funds to repair old buildings. For instance, a travel company from Fengdu County provided financial support for villagers to repair or renovate residences of historical significance. “If villagers choose to move to cities, they can rent out their repaired and renovated houses to the company for commercial use, and both parties share the profits for

a period,” explained Zhu.

Tourism began to boom quickly in the village, but it will still take some time to fully realize its potential. Villagers are confident the community will become the “green pearl” of Fengdu tourism and the tranquil valley near the village an ideal place for urbanites to escape stress and relax in leisure, with its influence radiating throughout the municipality of Chongqing.

The rapid development of Chinese cities has generated huge amounts of capital, part of which needs to flow to rural areas—through direct investment by enterprises or consumption by tourists from cities—to boost the development of the rural economy. Farmers can earn substantial income by renting out their houses, operating specialty restaurants and selling handicrafts, with no more need to leave their villages.

Bringing Entrepreneurship Back to Villages

It should be noted that alongside capital, migrant workers returning from cities also bring back an entrepreneurial spirit. Zhang Yuan, a native of Tianshui Village in Xingyi Town, Fengdu County, is a representative of local young entrepreneurs.

Born in 1986, Zhang ventured to the cities as a migrant worker after graduating from middle school like many rural youngsters of his generation. In 2003, he arrived in Beijing with his cousin, where he worked as a waiter and then a cook in a restaurant. He tried an online sales job, but it didn’t work out.

In 2015, Zhang decided to return to his hometown, intending to find a bride. He also brought back experience and entrepreneurial skills developed during his 12-year stay in the nation’s capital.

“I can’t stay a migrant worker my whole life,” he declared. “I wanted



Yang Ming (left), first secretary for poverty alleviation in Luchunba Village, Sanjian Township, talks with local villagers. by Yu Jie

a more fulfilling life through a more independent profession, so I made up my mind to start my own business back home.”

Now, Zhang is one of 100 e-commerce brokers working in Fengdu. The program is supported by the local government with an aim to help rural areas keep pace with booming e-commerce in cities.

Online shopping has become an integral part of daily life in Chinese cities. However, many rural areas have yet to benefit from the e-commerce boom. “The primary factor is underdeveloped delivery services in remote villages,” explained Huang Hong, vice director of the Committee on Commerce of Fengdu County.

However, the situation has greatly improved in Fengdu. In 2017, a package distribution center was set up in the county. Packages transported by

large express companies from around the nation arrive at the center before they are sorted for individual couriers to deliver them. Conversely, villagers selling local agricultural products online also distribute them through the center, significantly boosting their price point.

Every day, Zhang and his colleagues load up packages from the distribution center and deliver them to designated villages. Then, they collect agricultural products ordered online, pack them and take them back to the distribution center. They connect local farmers with online market opportunities from around the nation.

“Now, agricultural products arrive at the distribution center within 24 hours after buyers order them online,” Huang beamed. “Then they go to every corner of China.”

Zhang has now had two children



Taiping Town in Fengdu County is noted for its picturesque scenery. Fengdu was removed from the list of poverty-stricken counties in 2017, but it still suffers from markedly imbalanced development between rural and urban areas. by Xu Xun

and his dream of starting a business has come true. “Although my income is similar to working as a migrant worker in big cities, the perks are better—I can live with my family.”

“School for Parents”

Education is the key to wealth creation and equality of opportunity. Over the past few years, Fengdu County has made key achievements in educational development. To narrow the educational gap between the county and larger cities, the local government embraced innovative educational ideas.

The county’s Huwei Town—more specifically, Daxi Village in the town—has accumulated useful experience with innovative education concepts. The village has spared no efforts to promote education. “Compared to its peers in other areas, the village’s school lags

behind in terms of facilities and curriculum,” revealed Hu Xiaofei, vice dean of Moral Education Office of Binjiang Middle School in Fengdu. “Of the village’s 65 children aged three to seventeen, 22 are being raised by grandparents because their parents are working elsewhere.”

China has achieved a giant leap forward over the past four decades, but a massive intergenerational gap persists. “This gap is particularly obvious in educational methods,” explained Qin Jiexiong, vice director of the Trade Union of Binjiang Middle School. He left the city for Daxi Village to work on poverty reduction through promoting education.

“Poverty alleviation through education should have started with these children’s parents,” Qin stressed. “Then, they would have been able to teach their own

children and guide them.” Based on this philosophy, he conceived an educational program not for children but for parents logically called “School for Parents.” Last year, the first “School for Parents” began offering free courses on child education for parents once a month. The courses involve a wide array of topics including how to cultivate team spirit, honesty, self-improvement, independence, responsibility and confidence, how to meet goals in life, how to address setbacks, how to make studying fun and how to nurture morals and ethics.

He Lianhua, 35, is a student at the “School for Parents.” She has two sons, who are five and 15 years old. The older son was mainly raised by his grandparents because his mother worked in a factory in Guangdong Province for eight years and his father worked as a long-distance truck driver. “Over the years,



A sacrificial offering ceremony at the Fengdu Temple Fair in 2019. As one of the most famous places of interests on the Yangtze River tourism corridor, Fengdu County is a treasure trove of Chinese folk culture. On November 11, 2014, the Fengdu Temple Fair, which falls on the third day of the third lunar month every year, was put on China's national intangible cultural heritage list. by Xu Xun

“

Fengdu's successes prove that funds, entrepreneurial spirit and innovative education ideas are all making their way to China's poverty-stricken areas. ”

we felt our older son slipping away from us,” recalled the mother. “He got out of control and refused to obey us. My husband and I were at our wits' end. Thanks to the ‘School for Parents,’ I began to rethink my parenting methods. Its courses helped me better understand myself.

I'm no longer thinking about myself in child education and stopped blaming my son.”

Years spent living in cities helped He Lianhua broaden her vision. She is eager to learn and hopes her children will have a better future. “Farmers need to keep pace with the times to connect with people from other spectrums of society and communicate with them,” she stressed. In her eyes, the “School for Parents” just provides an ideal platform.

To spread innovative education, Qin Jiaxiong compiled relevant textbooks and distributed them in poverty-stricken areas. At the same time, a group of projects like the “School for Parents” program have been carried out around Fengdu.

A Long Way to Go

Fengdu's successes prove that funds, entrepreneurial spirit and innovative education ideas—all

important factors driving development—are all making their way to China's poverty-stricken areas. But there is still a long way to go for the living standards in underdeveloped regions to catch up with developed coastal areas.

From a long-term perspective, only when different regions enjoy equal opportunities and developed areas actively help less-developed places can the whole country achieve coordinated development. Ensuring that China achieves better development and common prosperity requires proactive measures. To this end, we must ensure funds and other resources are properly used where they are most needed and not wasted.

Only strict allocation of resources will ensure that China can overcome imbalanced development by its own strength and achieve the goal of eradicating poverty. ”

Rise of “Ghost City”

Text by Zhang Juan and Ma Li

Over the years, Fengdu County has focused on poverty alleviation and green development. Now, Fengdu is looking to live up to its name which translates to “the land of harvest” through developing various industrial projects for poverty relief.



Fengdu County in southwestern China’s Chongqing Municipality has been known as the “Ghost City” in China because according to superstitious legends, “the dead come to Fengdu and the devils go to hell.” As one of the most famous places of interests on the Yangtze River tourism

corridor, Fengdu is a treasure trove of Chinese folk culture and art integrating Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism.

Many years ago, however, some were uneasy about Fengdu, because of “three fears” of the county: fear of distance, fear of poverty and fear of “ghosts.”

In September 2011, Cao Ling, then deputy chief of Shuangqiao District of Chongqing, visited Fengdu for the first time. “With a population of more than 500,000, the county only has one movie theater,” she reported. “The poverty of the Fengdu people is more of a spiritual issue.” The four-hour



A bird's-eye view of Fengdu County, which is located in the upper reaches of the Yangtze River and the east of Chongqing Municipality, 170 kilometers north of downtown Chongqing. In recent years, driven by the development of local specialty industries, Fengdu has made incredible achievements in poverty alleviation. by Xu Xun

focuses on punishing evil and promoting good as it encourages good deeds and practice of virtues,” Cao explained. “When you visit the county and start to understand it, your fears will seem silly.”

Two months later, Cao became a member of the Standing Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Fengdu County Committee. “Just a few months after assuming office, I saw the government relocate two chemical enterprises that were contributing about half of Fengdu’s GDP to promote greener development along the Yangtze River,” she recalled.

Now, nearly eight years have passed. The number of cinemas in Fengdu has grown to five. And the driving time from Chongqing to Fengdu has been cut to less than two hours.

However, the focus of the local government’s work—poverty alleviation and green development—has

not changed. Today, Fengdu is looking to live up to its name, “the land of harvest,” through various forms of industrial poverty alleviation.

Priceless Clear Waters and Lush Mountains

In April 2019, when inspecting Chongqing, President Xi Jinping stressed that Chongqing should play an exemplary role in promoting the green development of the Yangtze River Economic Belt.

Fengdu is situated in the Three Gorges Reservoir area. The Yangtze River runs through the county for 47 kilometers, and 2,901 square kilometers of its land is rich in rainfall resources. However, the good natural ecological environment was once coupled with substandard ecological conservation.

Chen Xingwen, 56, now owns a seedling base in Daxi Village, Huwei Town of Fengdu County,

drive from Chongqing to reach Fengdu helped her deeply realize the “distance” between the county and downtown Chongqing.

“Poverty” and “distance” limited imaginations about Fengdu. Some even regarded the “Ghost City” as a bleak and horrible place.

“In fact, Fengdu’s ghost culture



Li Xiang, 32, owns an auto parts store in Dudu Township, Fengdu County. In addition to that, he also has a great interest in beekeeping and runs an online store to sell honey. by Xu Xun

after leaving his career managing a plastic factory.

In 1996, Fengdu began to vigorously develop township enterprises. Chen, who had worked in plastic factories for years and thoroughly knew production skills and procedures, established a plastic factory in his hometown. However, plastic factories including Chen's heavily polluted the local environment, making their development unsustainable.

In 2002, Chen changed careers to seedling cultivation. He planted 1.65 acres of land with garden seedlings in Daxi Village.

After years of exploration, Chen's seedling farm has gradually evolved into a green industry that drives the economic development of the whole village. His annual net income from selling seedlings alone reaches more than 100,000 yuan (about US\$14,500).

However, he still wasn't satisfied with this success. Over the past two years, Chen has been helping villagers grow honey pomelo, kumquat, loquat, kiwifruit and other fruit trees on the mountains.

"We want to make good use of our ecological resources to accelerate economic growth, which is our late-mover advantage," Cao stated



Tang Daixiang, a farmer of Xinhechang Village in Wuping Township, Fengdu County, cheerfully harvests potatoes. Tang planted a total of 10 *mu* (each *mu* equals to 0.067 hectare) potatoes this year, with an estimated yield of more than 2,500 kilograms per *mu*. by Yu Jie



An elderly couple hangs corn in front of their house in Dudu Township, Fengdu County. The targeted poverty alleviation and rural revitalization strategies comprehensively carried out in China have stimulated the vitality of rural development of the country. by Xu Xun

with reference to "clear waters and lush mountains." The county is vigorously developing green industries in areas with rich rainfall such as a red pomelo cultivation corridor, a bamboo shoot industrial park, pepper farms and longan picking gardens. "Efforts will be made to build three eco-economic zones in the Yangtze River, Longhe River and Quxi River basins to contribute to the sustained development of the eco-economy of the Yangtze River Economic Belt," she added.

Small Town, Big Business

Nowadays, Hondo beef can be found in most supermarkets in Beijing, Chongqing and Sichuan. In 2009, the Fengdu government joined hands with Zhongheng Xingye Technology Group headquartered

in Beijing to invest 1 billion yuan (about US\$145 million) to found Hondo Company to comprehensively develop beef production.

In four years, the company has become a juggernaut based in Fengdu with influence on the surrounding districts, counties and even provinces. Hondo Company was later granted the title of national leading enterprise in agricultural industrialization. Several other local enterprises such as Xinben and Guangming have also joined the pioneering team to help develop the beef industry in Fengdu.

Driven by big enterprises and good policies, the beef industry in Fengdu now grows vigorously, and local enthusiasm for cattle ranching has spread.

In 2010, Zhang Shengyu, a



A lively local temple fair attracts many visitors. In 2014, the Fengdu Temple Fair was put on the list of national intangible cultural heritage of China, and since then the local tourism industry has been booming. by Xu Xun

successful farmer from Feixiandong Village, Baoluan Town, cooperated with seven families to invest 280,000 yuan (about US\$40,000) to build a ranch with over 1,000 square meters to raise more than 300 cattle.

Now, the annual net income of the ranch has reached 1 million yuan (about US\$145,000).


In 2011, Zhang led formation of the Yantangwan Beef Breeding Cooperative in the village. A total of 22 households joined the cooperative and formed a community with shared interests, taking on roles such as supplying cattle feed and selling beef.

Now, the cooperative earns an annual net income of more than 2 million yuan (about US\$290,000), with each household earning more than 100,000 yuan (about US\$14,500) each year.

Feixiandong was once one of the poorest villages in Fengdu County. Since 2002, villagers have been using the local grassland resources for cattle grazing. After more than 10 years of development, they have successfully shaken off poverty and become a famous center for cattle ranching.

In fact, Feixiandong Village's

story provides just a glimpse of the larger picture. In Fengdu County, beef production has become a pillar industry driving the local economy and an advantageous resource helping local people escape poverty.

Now, Fengdu leverages a complete industry chain integrating grass cultivation, ecological breeding, intensive processing, marketing, technological research and development, which involves more than 6,100 poverty-stricken households raising more than 332,000 cattle. A comprehensive industrial system led by beef production is booming in the county. 

Green Poverty Reduction

Text by Zhang Xue

Overcoming poverty is a “tough battle,” and protecting the Yangtze River is a “protracted war.” In solving the problems of environmental protection and social development at the same time, Fengdu people have demonstrated great wisdom and gained rich experience.



Fengdu County, which prospered along the upper reaches of the Yangtze River, is located in the geographical center of Chongqing Municipality and the central part of the Three Gorges Reservoir area. Boasting a history of more than 1,900 years, the county is covered by rolling mountains with lush greenery that

can be seen from afar. The Yangtze River runs through Fengdu for 47 kilometers, connecting to 55 tributaries there. “No extensive development will be allowed, and all protection efforts must be highly coordinated,” stressed Chinese President Xi Jinping on the development strategy for the Yangtze River Economic Belt. As a county situated on the upper reaches of the Yangtze River, Fengdu considers ecological and environmental protection its solemn duty.

Meanwhile, Fengdu was once a national poverty-stricken county. As early as 2002, it was identified as a key county for poverty alleviation and development. In 2011, it became a pilot county for poverty reduction and development in the Wuling Mountains area, one of the 14 contiguous poverty-stricken areas in China. By the end of 2014, it was home to 19,400 poverty-stricken households of 71,917 people living in 95 impoverished villages. The poverty incidence was 12.1 percent. Thus, Fengdu has been attaching equal importance to Yangtze River protection and poverty reduction over the past few years. In November 2017, Fengdu overcame the title of national poverty-stricken county and its poverty incidence is now 0.67 percent. The county has showed wisdom and gained experience solving problems of environmental protection and social development at the same time.

Two Battles at Once

Clear waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets. Fengdu people understand that “no extensive development, only highly coordinated protection” isn’t about giving up economic development for the sake of protecting the environment. It is more about balancing the relationship between development and protection and developing according to local conditions while maintaining the ecological environment of

the Yangtze River.

Thus, Fengdu formulated and implemented a strategy of “putting ecology first and promoting green development.” It resolutely seeks green and high-quality development with a priority on ecological protection. The county has made its development strategy crystal-clear and insisted on making plans first. Right now, it is carrying forward the productivity distribution plan featuring “one core, two poles and three belts.”

“One core” refers to the development of urban economic drivers including ecological industry, commerce and trade with the planned area in the county seat as the core and avoiding a decentralized industrial layout that may affect the environment. “Two poles” are the two economic growth poles: tourism development in the south and agricultural development in the north on opposite banks of the Yangtze River. This piece of the strategy aims to avoid disorderly and destructive exploitation. “Three belts” are the three ecological economic belts respectively along the Yangtze River, the Quxi and Bixi rivers, and the Longhe River. With efforts to preserve clear waters and green mountains, this move aims to place high-efficiency planting industries in the drainage basin’s rain collection areas.

Under the government’s top-level design, Fengdu has formed an industrial chain around its unique features with focus on beef cattle ranching. Green industries such as tourism, red pomelo production, and bamboo shoot cultivation and processing have also begun to take shape, which have helped facilitate the rise of impoverished households out of poverty.

Green Development of a Pillar Industry

On the way to Fengdu’s Gaojia



One of the four national 4A scenic resorts in Fengdu County, Nantian Lake is surrounded by mountains. The wind power program in the scenic area provides locals with electricity and serves as a well-known tourist attraction. by Xu Xun

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Town, banners advertising “China’s Beef Capital” were waving in the breeze. In recent years, Fengdu’s beef industry has been quietly booming. “Fengdu Beef” has been designated as a national well-known trademark by China’s State Administration for Market Regulation. At present, the county is sparing no efforts to truly embrace the title of “China’s Beef Capital.”

In 2018, about 6,100 poverty-stricken households in Fengdu were involved in cattle ranching. Through the industry, many have risen from poverty.

Guided by green development concepts, Fengdu built its beef industry while adhering to ecological breeding. The county was divided into three zones where cattle ranching is respectively prohibited, restricted and permitted. Organic and non-hazardous treatment of dung has been introduced. Fengdu’s beef industry attaches great importance to ecological conservation.

Located in Gaojia Town, Hondo Beef Cattle Farm was established in 2011. It is the largest single ranch in China today, holding as many as 15,000 cattle at a time. Hondo has established a comprehensive set of management methods to treat dung and prevent pollution: The farm adopted an environmentally friendly treatment mode featuring a circular economy including diversion of rain and sewage, biogas power generation, standardized processing before discharge and oxidation reduction. Large-scale breeding of beef cattle has realized green development.

Not far from the farm is Chongqing Fengzeyuan Fertilizers Co., Ltd., the largest organic fertilizer plant in southwestern China featuring standardized production. Cattle dung from Hondo is directly transported to the plant through pipelines. After fermentation, feces are transformed into organic fertilizers.



An elderly couple works in a field in Jinzhulin Village, Fengdu County. The economic development brought about by China’s nationwide poverty alleviation efforts is revitalizing the small village. by Yu Xiangjun



Five-year-old Tian Haoyang plays in front of his home in Jinzhulin Village, Fengdu County. The house, after renovation by Tian’s father engaged in business, has become one of the few new houses in the village. by Yu Xiangjun

“Harmless treatment and recycled utilization of agricultural waste are fundamental to green development,” declared Wu Dongping, deputy general manager of Fengzeyuan Fertilizers Co., Ltd. The company now cooperates with the Nanjing-based Institute of Soil Science under the Chinese Academy of Sciences. In Fengzeyuan, chicken manure, cattle excrement and residue from mushroom production are mixed with used Chinese medicinal herbs and fermented for 24 hours. The mixture becomes organic fertilizer which can be used for agriculture. This is a key way that recycled utilization of resources and green development are realized. Alongside Hondo, other large ranchers in Fengdu also send their cattle excrement to Fengzeyuan for treatment. Cattle dung, which used to be worthless, now sells for 90

yuan (US\$13) a ton. And the price is going up.

Today, Fengdu is still working feverishly to become the national pilot county for comprehensive utilization of agricultural waste. The current rate of cattle manure treatment and resource utilization has reached 80 percent.

Tourism Facilitates Poverty Reduction

Topographically, Fengdu is dominated by mountainous landforms and rolling hills. Narrow strips of flatland are only found in valleys at altitudes ranging from 175 meters up to 2,000 meters.

An ancient city with a time-honored history and a reputation as the “Ghost City” among Chinese people, Fengdu boasts rich tourism resources. Mingshan Mountain in Fengdu, a national-level scenic spot,



Located in Fengdu County, Xueyu Karst Cave is a famous tourist spot in Chongqing Municipality, with high value for sightseeing and scientific research. Fengdu's tourism development has facilitated local poverty alleviation. by Yu Jie

is usually the first stop for tourists visiting the Three Gorges along the Yangtze River. To further develop its tourism, expand its tourism industrial chain and capitalize on its clear rivers and green mountains, Fengdu is focused on building a tourism industry covering the whole county.

At the Jiuchongtian scenic spot at an elevation of more than 1,000 meters, a suspended glass bridge across the deep valley is hidden in clouds. The scenic spot officially opened in July 2017 as another national 4A scenic resort in Fengdu.

Lianhuadong Village in Shuanglu Township, where the Jiuchongtian scenic spot is located, was once a county-level impoverished village. "Now, villagers develop their own agritainment businesses, sell agricultural products or just work in the scenic spot," explained Chen Guohai, an investor in the Jiuchongtian scenic

spot. Locals can also invest in the scenic spot with land. The scenic spot pays rent to the villagers at a rate of 400 yuan (US\$58) per *mu* (0.067 hectare) of land and 100 yuan (US\$14.5) per *mu* of forest in the first four years after the land transfer. This guarantees income from villagers' investments in the form of land. Starting in the fifth year, villagers will receive dividends from the scenic spot, accounting for 20 percent of its total ticket revenues.

Today, Fengdu is home to four national 4A scenic resorts including Mingshan Mountain, Xueyu Karst Cave, Nantian Lake and Jiuchongtian. In 2014, "Fengdu Temple Fair" was added to the list of China's National Intangible Cultural Heritage. The tourism industry throughout the county has become a new calling card for Fengdu. A picturesque scroll of "green

mountains along the Yangtze River" is slowly unfolding before the eyes of Fengdu people.

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2012, China's has amazed the world with its impressive poverty reduction. According to China's current standards, the country's rural poverty-stricken population dropped from nearly 99 million in 2012 to 16.6 million in 2018. Poverty, a problem that has plagued the country for thousands of years, has now reached its final stretch before total elimination. The nearer the end gets, the harder the journey becomes. In Fengdu today live 3,948 impoverished people in 1,440 households across four poverty-stricken townships and 28 poverty-stricken villages. The fight against poverty in Fengdu is still raging, and the final stage has yet to come. 

Filling the Void

Text by Li Gang

Photographs by Yu Jie

In the process of continuous exploration, the “Qingtian Village Model” provides great ideas for solving the poverty problem.

A renewed building in Qingtian Village, Fengdu County. After consultation with villagers, the formerly dilapidated building was completely renovated into a venue for villagers to hold meetings, have entertainment and watch operas.

Fengdu County in southwestern China's Chongqing Municipality is situated at the heart of the Three Gorges Reservoir area. It is known as a tourist destination

of historical and cultural significance along the Yangtze River, but its mountainous and sparse land has hindered the county's development. In 2002, Fengdu became a key national-level county for poverty alleviation and development. Although it had been removed from the list of poverty-stricken counties by the end of 2017, there are still 28 villages in extreme poverty, which has remained a difficult obstacle to overcome.

A "Hollowed Village"

Qingtian is a severely impoverished village 80 kilometers north of the county seat of Fengdu. According to Liu Dingfu, secretary of the village's Communist Party of China (CPC) branch, Qingtian has a registered population of more than 1,200 people, but fewer than 200 permanent residents aged between 18 and 50 remain in the village. The rest are the elderly and children.

Even middle-aged women were reluctant to stay, knowing that they could earn much more money by working elsewhere. In most circumstances, they are forced to stay to take care of sick seniors.

Currently, Qingtian has 248 registered impoverished people from 61 households. Thanks to unremitting efforts since 2014, a total of 237 people from 56 households in the village have been lifted from poverty. With the rapid progress of urbanization in China, "hollowed villages" in rural areas like Qingtian are becoming increasingly common. Fewer people live in rural areas, fewer young and middle-aged workers stay behind and many houses sit vacant. Some rural villages are almost entirely populated with the old, weak and disabled.

Most aged villagers earn some income by picking up odd jobs. The oldest employed in weeding a tea garden is 75, and the youngest is 54. Their sons, daughters and grandchildren all work outside the county and return only once a year. "Almost everyone is like this, with few exceptions."

To achieve the key goal of eradicating poverty by 2020, targeted poverty alleviation for such "hollowed villages" is vitally important in the critical period of the final stage of the poverty alleviation drive. But without enough young laborers, who will take the lead in helping the poor? As officials across the country continue



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exploring, the “Qingtian Village Model” has provided solid ideas to address the problem.

Qingtian Village Model

The declining population left unused houses throughout the village. Some houses have been renovated and developed by the village committee after consultation with villagers. Others are

dilapidated and need to be renovated and reconstructed. Recently, an old building was completely renovated into a workshop for villagers to hold meetings, have entertainment and watch operas. The originally messy village has taken on a whole new look.

Rural infrastructure is mainly funded by the government. In addition to increasing investment

to improve living conditions, the government also compensates villagers for their labor when they complete construction work. This enables government investment to go directly into the pockets of villagers. The improvement of the rural environment can attract young and middle-aged migrant workers to return home and start businesses. “The villagers stand by the principle



Several men carrying stone paving blocks. All over 60 years old, they earn about 90 yuan (around US\$12) per day per person for their work. Villagers with the ability to work will earn part of their income through labor.

of achieving shared growth through co-governance and collaboration,” declared a township leader stationed in the village.

Last year, the county government attracted investment and transferred villagers’ land to tea enterprises. According to the “3+3+4” cooperative poverty alleviation mechanism, 30 percent of the income over the next three to five years will be



Xu Huajin and his wife Peng Guiying. The couple had been working away from the village for several years. They returned to their hometown to start their own business in 2012 and were allotted land in the village to build a farm for cattle raising. In 2018, sales from their small cattle farm exceeded 300,000 yuan (around US\$43,600). Meanwhile, the couple also passed their farming and sales experience on to other villagers.




The planning map for the village's environmental renovation project.

collected by the village committee (one third of which is allocated to poor households), 40 percent will go directly to villagers, and the enterprises will keep the remaining 30 percent.

“Every household will get a transfer fee of 80 yuan per *mu* (around US\$175 per hectare),” added Liu. “Furthermore, villagers can earn 60 yuan (US\$8.72) per day by doing jobs in tea enterprises such as preparing soil and weeding. Land circulation prevents enterprises from suffering losses in the poverty alleviation model while helping

villagers out of poverty.”

“The key to poverty alleviation is stimulating endogenous dynamics,” revealed Li Wuzhou, a member of the standing committee of the CPC Fengdu County Committee. “A sense of gain and forward vision can push poverty alleviation. The living environment has improved, and the people certainly support the government’s poverty alleviation policy.”

A microcosm of China’s poverty alleviation in rural areas, Qingtian Village is rising like a phoenix from the quagmire of yesterday’s poverty. 

Value Untapped

Text by Wen Qing

Growth of an isolated county in Chongqing mirrors the progress of the poverty alleviation campaign.

Fengdu County in southwestern China's Chongqing Municipality has been paired with Tengzhou in the eastern province of Shandong as part of the ongoing assistance program where a more developed area helps a less developed peer to grow its economy and facilities. The assistance in potato planting is an example of a more developed eastern province helping Fengdu, once one of the poorest counties in China, shake off poverty. by Yu Jie



Every summer, Fengdu, a county in Chongqing Municipality in southwestern China, astonishes visitors with its stunning scenery: a vibrant leafy blanket of trees covers the surrounding mountains while sparkling rivers trickle through deep ravines under the canopy of a clear blue sky speckled with white clouds. When rain arrives, a fine mist covers the landscape, making it seem like a traditional Chinese painting.

Ironically, the landscape added to local people's woes in the past. The towering mountains and steep gorges made the county difficult to reach, and a lack of roads and transport led to a dearth of businesses and factories, which meant very few employment opportunities. The lack of arable land meant farmers could not feed themselves solely through agriculture. Due to all these factors, Fengdu's economy remained stagnant for decades.

Like Fengdu, many places in China have remained trapped in poverty due to disadvantageous geography. It is incredibly difficult for the people living in such places to develop their economy from within because they lack advanced concepts and necessary investment.

However, after the Chinese government set 2020 as the deadline to completely eradicate poverty, the national taskforce for poverty alleviation identified counties with the weakest economies and began working to pull them out of poverty with targeted measures and funds. Fengdu was one of these counties.

A New Life

The changes in Zhang Jisheng's life mirror the changes that transformed Fengdu. The 53-year-old formerly worked as a migrant laborer in developed southeastern provinces. But after his wife developed psychological problems in 2015, he came

back to look after his family. He started planting corn to earn a living, but the income of 2,000 to 3,000 yuan (US\$291-436) per year was woefully insufficient.

To make things worse, his beloved son was also diagnosed with the same condition as his wife, which made Zhang begin to drift to a dark place.

"I contemplated suicide," he admitted. "Dying seemed easier than enduring the torture that life had become."

At this critical juncture, the local committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the local poverty alleviation group stepped in. "We raised the money to send Zhang Jisheng's son to the hospital," reported Zhang Yuqun, a leader of the poverty alleviation group. "He only had to cover about 10 percent of the costs."

Zhang Yuqun has been living in the area for only a short time. She was dispatched to Fengdu specifically to help with poverty alleviation work. She is one of over 459,000 officials and personnel from state-owned

enterprises and public institutions across China to have accepted assignments in regions in poverty since 2015.

Fengdu introduced policies to subsidize the medical expenses of impoverished families registered with the government. Now those families pay no more than 10 percent of costs should anyone fall ill.

"In the countryside, a major illness can send a family into poverty," illustrated Cao Ling, director of the Organization Department of the CPC Fengdu County Committee. "This policy ensures basic medical services for registered poor families and reduces their burden."

With Zhang Yuqun's help, Zhang Jisheng applied for a subsistence allowance earmarked for counties under assistance and received 540 yuan (US\$79) per month in 2015. The allowance rose to 1,050 yuan (US\$153) in 2017. His wife and son too were able to get an additional allowance for the disabled of 200 yuan (US\$29) each month.



The Sichuan pepper is a traditional commercial crop in Zhanpu Township. At harvest, the small town radiates the rich fragrance of ripe peppercorns. by Yu Jie



Living standards of people in Fengdu have been improved a lot as a result of the endeavor of China's poverty alleviation campaign.
by Yu Xiangjun

Self-reliance

The Sichuan pepper is a traditional commercial crop in Zhang Jisheng's hometown of Zhanpu Township. At harvest, the small town radiates the rich fragrance of ripe peppercorns. "Planting Sichuan peppers is friendly to the environment and also pulls farmers out of poverty," beamed Xiang Hailin, head of the township.

In 2015, the local government began encouraging farmers to plant Sichuan peppers and providing them interest-free micro loans. Zhang Jisheng applied for a loan of 30,000 yuan (US\$4,356) to buy fertilizer and pesticides and hire pepper pickers.

"The government pays the interest on the loans, but only if farmers use the money to develop micro businesses," Xiang explained.

Zhang Jisheng's Sichuan pepper harvest brings in about 6,000 yuan (US\$874) per year. But he has also

landed another new job.

"The government offered Zhang Jisheng a job cleaning the village at a salary of 1,700 yuan (US\$278) per month," Zhang Yuqun said. Providing public service jobs to villagers has proved an effective method to increase earnings while ensuring tangible contributions to society, especially in areas with important ecological resources such as grasslands, forests, rivers and lakes.

The local government is also providing poor families with financial and technical support to develop agricultural products with regional characteristics. For example, growing Sichuan peppers created output of 70 million yuan (US\$10.2 million) in Zhanpu last year, lifting 155 local households out of poverty.

While developing industries with local characteristics, Fengdu is also tapping its tourism potential by cashing in on its scenic beauty. In

2017, a private company developed Jiuchongtian, a tourist site featuring a glass skywalk with a breathtaking view of a sea of flowers below. The site has made the once-isolated village known to the outside world and stimulated the local economy.

It has also created opportunities for locals. Liao Changrong, 46, used to work away in big cities. After his village became more developed and tourists began to swarm, he returned home to open a small hotel. Last year, it brought him net income of 200,000 yuan (US\$29,105).

Partnership for Progress

As part of the poverty alleviation strategy, the central government of China encourages developed areas and big enterprises to assist disadvantaged areas. The country has seen growing collaboration between provinces from the developed east and regions of the developing west to eliminate poverty

through the provision of administrative skills, capital and action plans. Fengdu has found a mentor in Zaozhuang, a city in Shandong Province. Zaozhuang is providing the county with advanced experience and technology to grow potatoes.

Tang Daixiang, a 54-year-old farmer who used to grow corn, switched to potatoes thanks to this assistance and earned 14,000 yuan (US\$2,037) from his crop last year, almost 30 times more than his earnings from corn.

The central government of China has paired richer eastern provinces and municipalities such as Guangdong, Jiangsu and Shanghai with underdeveloped western provinces and autonomous regions such as Guizhou, Qinghai and Tibet to cooperate on poverty reduction through governance, capital and talent assistance.

Poverty relief has been high on the government's agenda since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. The effort began to accelerate in 2012 after the CPC Central Committee set the 2020 deadline to eliminate extreme poverty. In 2013, the method of reducing poverty with targeted measures was introduced. Measures include a system tracking every impoverished household and individual to ensure that the poverty alleviation measures chosen for them deliver the desired effect. The approach has become the basic strategy in China's fight against poverty.

Alongside growing the incomes of rural residents earning less than 2,800 yuan (US\$408) annually, the poverty alleviation campaign is also ensuring access to compulsory education for all, basic medical care and safe housing.

By the end of 2018, the poor population in rural areas had decreased from 98.99 million at the end of 2012 to 16.6 million. A total



Kids in Dudu Township ride toy tricycles. Parents' endeavors get them connected to the world outside the mountains, which enhances their future possibilities. by Yu Xiangjun

of 82.39 million people, equivalent to the population of Germany, were lifted out of poverty in only six years.

UN Secretary General António Guterres once noted China's poverty reduction achievements: "We should not forget the fact that China has contributed the most in world poverty alleviation in the past decade."


With poverty still dogging many developing countries, how did China make such an achievement? The answer lies in devising a complete blueprint with clear poverty reduction goals, tracking the poverty-stricken population and implementing the targeted poverty alleviation strategy.

Under this system, local officials are held accountable for their assigned goals, defining quantifiable benchmarks to assess their work. Moreover, financial institutions, state-owned and private enterprises and other members of society have

joined hands with the government on the campaign, making it a nationwide endeavor.

At the 19th CPC National Congress in 2017, Chinese President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, stressed that the CPC has made a solemn promise to bring poor people and poor areas into a moderately prosperous society alongside with the rest of the country.

In Fengdu, local officials are confident they will reach their goal to eradicate extreme poverty by 2020, according to Cao. However, the work will not stop after that. "We will continue to strive for high-quality development every step of the way," she added.

Fengdu's story had a footnote added in 2017, when it passed the national evaluation and inspection and was removed from the list of China's impoverished counties. 

The Power of Sichuan Peppers

Text by Shen Xiaoning

Sichuan peppers, with their unique aroma and flavor, have helped farmers rise from poverty while closely bonding officials and residents in Zhanpu Township, Fengdu County.



Zhang Jisheng cuts and picks Sichuan peppers at home. The government's poverty reduction measures have helped Zhang and his family regain the confidence and courage for a new life. by Yu Jie

Thanks to its distinctive mouth-numbing, spicy flavor, Sichuan cuisine is popular with hundreds of millions of people both in China and around the world. At the heart of Sichuan cuisine is the Sichuan pepper, a spice derived from several species of the genus *Zanthoxylum*. This most commonly used spice in Chinese cuisine creates a tingly numbness in the mouth. Every midsummer, this magical spice ripens for harvest.

In mid-June of this year, plump green peppercorns abounded on densely planted Sichuan pepper trees on the slopes near the southern bank of the Yangtze River in Zhanpu Town, Fengdu County, Chongqing Municipality. The “green pearls,” with unique aroma and flavor, have helped local farmers rise from poverty while bonding officials and residents more closely.

Zhang's New Day

Zhang Jisheng, 53, resides in Baishui Community, Zhanpu Town, where he was the sole provider for the other three members of his family: his wife who couldn't work due to illness, his grade school-aged son and his 90-year-old mother. The whole family survived on a meager annual income of 2,000 to 3,000 yuan (US\$290 to 435) that Zhang Jisheng earned from growing corn.

“In those days, we could only afford to eat rice and corn and dared not imagine eating meat,” Zhang Jisheng recalled. “I often ate smaller portions so everyone else could have more.” Even though the situation was bad, stubborn Zhang Jisheng didn't ask for help from the government or his relatives. The year 2015 was particularly bad for him. His mother died, and his son fell ill. One blow after another shattered Zhang Jisheng, pushing him to the verge of collapse. “I felt completely



June 21, 2019: Densely planted Sichuan pepper trees are found on hills in Zhanpu Town, Fengdu County. Pepper cultivation serves as a poverty alleviation industry in Zhanpu. IC



Sichuan peppers, with a distinctive mouth-numbing and spicy flavor at the heart of Sichuan cuisine, help locals in Zhanpu Town shake off poverty. by Yu Jie

hopeless,” he admitted.

As Zhang Jisheng was at the end of his rope, Zhang Yuqun, who is responsible for poverty alleviation work in Baishui Community, arrived at his door. The 48-year-old Zhang Yuqun is an official with

the government of Zhanpu Town. When China launched its nationwide targeted poverty alleviation campaign in 2014, she was appointed head of the poverty relief team for Baishui Community. Alongside four team members, she spent one year visiting all the 900-plus households in the community to learn about the living conditions of each family and compile files on the poor. During such visits, she discovered Zhang Jisheng’s plight. “I was shocked when I arrived at the home of Zhang Jisheng and learned of his situation,” Zhang Yuqun gasped. “The house was quite bare. Moreover, it was dilapidated and in dire need of repairs. The roof leaked badly during rain. And some members in his family were ill. His household

was the poorest in the community.” Zhang Yuqun immediately reported this situation to Ran Hailong, Party chief of Baishui Community. They decided to help Zhang Jisheng overcome his difficulties as soon as possible.

Soon, Ran applied for a subsistence allowance for Zhang Jisheng’s family, which provided them a subsidy of 180 yuan (US\$26) per month. Although it was a relatively small sum, it was still a big help for the family.

In early 2016, thanks to Ran’s efforts, a new house was built for Zhang Jisheng in the community in just one month. Zhang Yuqun and other village officials bought furniture and daily necessities and helped Zhang Jisheng’s family move into the new home. On moving day,

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Zhang Jisheng was greatly moved and became quite emotional.

With poverty alleviation officials' help, Zhang Jisheng soon planted 0.1 hectare of Sichuan peppers with high economic potential and applied for disability benefits of 200 yuan

(US\$29) per person per month for his wife and son. Ran also helped Zhang Jisheng land a job cleaning village streets for a monthly income of 1,700 yuan (US\$247). Along with a rise in the subsistence allowance to 350 yuan (US\$51) per person per



To date, the pepper industry has helped lift 155 of the 261 poverty-stricken households in Zhanpu Town out of poverty. courtesy of Fengdu County Publicity Department



Zhanpu Town designated Sichuan pepper cultivation as a poverty alleviation industry in 2014. Now, the industry has produced an impressive output value. by Yu Jie



month, his family's annual income in 2018 exceeded 38,000 yuan (US\$5,517), a tenfold increase over a few years ago.

In January 2019, with the help of Zhang Yuqun and others, Zhang Jisheng was granted a loan of 30,000 yuan (US\$4,356) to start his own Sichuan pepper field. "Starting in 2015, the government of Fengdu County worked with several banks to provide microcredit with subsidized interest for poverty-stricken households in the county, which aimed to help them develop industry. Over the past four years, Zhanpu Town has issued loans totaling 6.06 million yuan (US\$880,000). Poverty-stricken residents who receive the loans only need to repay the principal," explained 39-year-old Xiang Hailin, head of Zhanpu Town. "The



Zhanpu Town now manages a total of more than 740 hectares of Sichuan pepper fields. The practice shows that clear waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets. by Cheng Bo

interest is covered by the government and banks. Officials responsible for poverty alleviation work also need to teach the poor how to apply for a loan and give them advice on using the loan reasonably.”

Zhang Jisheng used his loan to buy fertilizer and pesticide and hire help. His Sichuan pepper planting business gradually took shape. He became determined to pay off the loan by the end of this year so the government doesn't have to shoulder too much interest.

Wealth of a Village

“In 2014, Zhanpu designated Sichuan pepper cultivation as a poverty alleviation industry and by 2015, large-scale plantation had begun,” recounted Xiang Hailin. “Today, the town manages a total of

more than 740 hectares of Sichuan pepper fields that produced an output value of more than 70 million yuan (US\$10.16 million) in 2018. The pepper industry has helped lift 155 of 261 poverty-stricken households in the town out of poverty. Practice has demonstrated that planting Sichuan peppers aligns with the green development concept that ‘clear waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets.’ It protects the environment of the Three Gorges Reservoir area and helps locals shake off poverty.”


Today, 71 people in 36 families still live in poverty in Zhanpu. Most are unable to work because of disability or illness. Xiang believes that they will overcome poverty through the subsistence allowance as a basic guarantee. “We are

confident that we will meet our goal of lifting all the poor in Zhanpu out of poverty by 2020,” he declared.

Xiang also revealed that some locals worried that policies benefiting farmers would end if all the poverty alleviation goals were met. He assured them that China's central government has promised that good policies would remain in effect even after poverty alleviation goals are achieved to ensure policies continue benefiting farmers. Moreover, after the completion of poverty alleviation tasks, China's rural revitalization strategy will continue to boost rural development to a higher level.

Xiang has more long-term plans along with completing poverty reduction tasks on time. Shortly after taking his post as head of Zhanpu Town, he proposed creating a beautiful Zhanpu with clean and beautiful houses, neatly arranged facilities, courtyards with flowers and plants and civilized residents. In May 2019, the town government provided 10 complimentary Chinese rose saplings for each rural family, encouraging people to plant the flowers in waste containers placed at random or to decorate their courtyards. Xiang called this campaign “turning waste into treasure by planting flowers and grass.”

“We encouraged this because we hoped to inspire more people to commit to improving the environment and keeping it neat,” Xiang said. “Farmers must emerge from poverty in both economic and spiritual terms. Creating a beautiful living environment will inspire the drive to shake off poverty and inject them with new hope.”

Although local officials admit that their accomplishments are far from earth-shaking, such “petty things” are accumulating into major changes in Zhanpu Town. 

E-commerce in the Mountains

Text by Zhao Wenqi

The Fengdu government is working to connect the entire county with an e-commerce service network as it encourages young active farmers to sell online.

Born in 1986, Zhang Yuan worked as a cook in Beijing before he quit in 2015 to start a business back in his hometown in Fengdu County, southwestern China's Chongqing Municipality.

After receiving e-commerce training organized by the local government, Zhang realized that developing rural e-commerce had great potential. He soon established a village-level e-commerce service station and became an e-commerce retailer.

Located in southwestern China, 99 percent of the land in Fengdu County is covered by mountains, making transportation quite inconvenient. Limited by poor geographical conditions, local farmers used to have meager market access. They could hardly sell agricultural products at a decent price and had to feed their heavy spoilage to pigs.

"Why not buy the farmers' products and package them nicely to sell online?" Zhang thought.

Zhang's hometown, Tianshui Village in Xingyi Town, is 500 meters above sea level, making it quite suitable for pumpkin cultivation.

To persuade villagers to grow pumpkins en masse suitable for



E-commerce retailer Zhang Yuan standing in front of the shelves of local agricultural products. by Han Xinhao

online sales, Zhang carried the seeds over the mountains himself to place in villagers' hands and gave them technical guidance free of charge.

At first, many farmers doubted him. "Pumpkins are everywhere," they declared. "Why would anyone buy from your site?"

"I guess you'll find out when I sell out," Zhang replied with confidence.


Thanks to his sound judgment of the market conditions, in the summer of 2018, the pumpkins he collected from the farmers became an online hit and attracted as many as 200 orders a day. This year, many more farmers approached him to ask for pumpkin seeds and instruction in planting methods.

In the process of starting his business, Zhang received


considerable technical support from the local government. Now, his online store is developing fast and his product line has expanded beyond pumpkins to include a variety of local specialties, such as sweet potatoes, peanuts, rice and pears.

To solve the farmers' poverty problems and take agricultural products to the market, the Fengdu government is working to connect the entire county with an e-commerce service network as it encourages young active farmers to become online retailers.



His online store is developing fast and his product line has expanded beyond pumpkins to include a variety of local specialties such as sweet potatoes, peanuts, rice and pears. 

In addition to buying wholesale agricultural products and distributing them widely, e-commerce retailers also play logistics roles as they transport goods from villages to the distribution center in the county seat.

It used to take three to five days for express delivery between the village and the county seat, but now it takes less than two days, which has greatly accelerated the development of rural e-commerce in the mountains. 

Most of the land in Fengdu County is covered by mountains, making transportation inconvenient and hindering access from the outside. by Xu Xun

Poverty Reduction Miracles

Text by Li Gang

What is the secret behind China's success in poverty reduction? Fengdu can offer a hint.

China's battle against poverty has reached the final stretch. In November 2012, the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) set the goal of completing the construction of a moderately prosperous society in all respects by 2020. Lifting all impoverished people out of poverty is a key task for the country. "We will make sure that no one is left behind on our way to prosperity," stressed Chinese President Xi Jinping, signaling that China's fight against poverty would not end until the battle is over.

The poor population in rural areas dropped from 98.99 million in 2012 to 16.6 million in 2018, lifting

82.39 million out of poverty and cutting the poverty incidence rate from 10.2 to 1.7 percent. China has created a miracle in poverty alleviation. What is the secret behind the country's success in poverty reduction? Fengdu has some answers.

Top Design + Grassroots Practice

Bidding farewell to their families, many officials from cities were posted in Fengdu to engage in poverty reduction work. They can be seen in poor mountain villages, working and eating with locals. In order to help people escape poverty, they brainstorm strategies as they visit and talk to villagers.

Once a poor villager calls, the officials immediately go to help. "Even if it's a problem we cannot

solve at the moment, we still go to the spot," says one of the officials. "Villagers are reassured just by seeing us."

Poverty eradication has been driving grassroots officials' career devotion and making their lives more meaningful. Meanwhile, the promotion system of the Chinese government gives incentive to officials who could be promoted due to outstanding performances in poverty alleviation. The responsibility system, regulation system, policy system, working mechanism and social mobilization system have all been set up in accordance with the top design of the Chinese government.

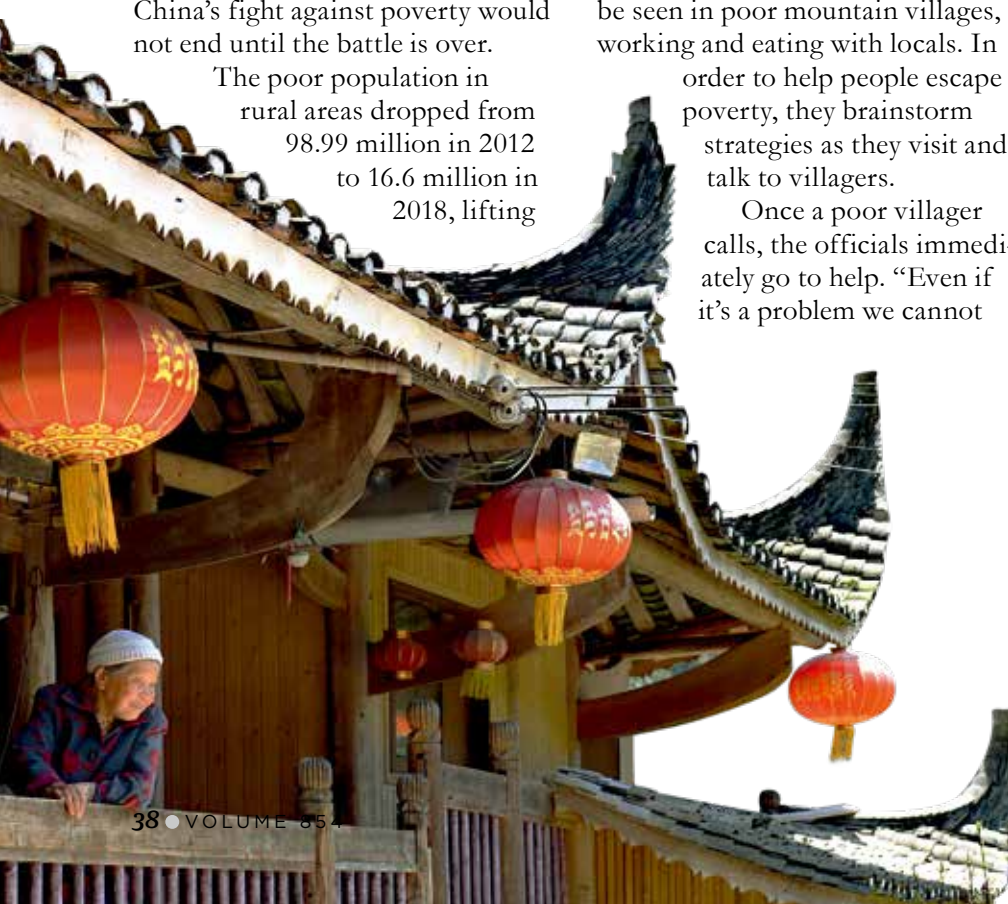
Poverty reduction requires skills and methodology in addition to enthusiasm. Since the Chinese government launched the targeted poverty alleviation strategy, many officials have been trained in poverty alleviation techniques—7.79 million person-times in 2018. And 94.2 percent of trainees are grassroots officials from the county level or below.

Flexible and Practical Wisdom

During his June 2015 visit to Guizhou Province, Chinese President Xi Jinping emphasized the targeted approach to alleviating poverty, which he believes will determine the success of the country's poverty alleviation drive. Targeted poverty alleviation has always been the focus of China's work in this field. In each individual town and village, poverty-combating officials at all levels must consider the actual local conditions and prescribe remedies accordingly.

Based on the unique geographical, demographic and productive

A century-old wood structure has been renovated into a family hotel in Dudu Township. by Yu Xiangjun





Wuping Town has introduced disease-resistant potatoes from Tengzhou City of Shandong Province in an effort to help local farmers work their way out of poverty. by Yu Jie



Fengdu County has brought many local products to online retailing platforms, introducing the development mode of "online selling + enterprises + farming cooperatives." by Yu Jie

conditions of different townships and villages in Fengdu County and their respective causes for poverty, local officials floated a variety of targeted ideas to fight poverty, eventually achieving fruitful results.


Qingtian Village, for example, is home mainly to left-behind seniors and children because most working-age residents went to cities

for higher-paying jobs. So, local officials encouraged the transfer of contracted land-use rights to tea enterprises, which pay for the land use while hiring local villagers to work in tea gardens to augment their income.

Yang Mei, vice director of the village committee of Daxi, brought home-grown arrow-root powder,

mulberry wine and local produce such as loquats, honey pomelos and chestnuts to online retailing platforms, introducing the development mode of "online selling + enterprises + farming cooperatives," which has benefited 385 households in the village.

Baishui Community in Zhanpu Town has planted more than 660 hectares of Sichuan peppers on a slope near the Yangtze River. Baishui Sichuan Pepper has become an established brand, and pepper cultivation is now developing into a pillar industry for local poverty reduction. Wuping Town introduced virus-free potatoes from Tengzhou City of Shandong Province. As the potatoes ripened on more than 90 hectares of land this year, local planters earned 5.6 million yuan (US\$810,000).

Additionally, the Fengdu beef industry has helped 6,100 poverty-stricken families. And the county is intensely promoting tourism, which has turned the villagers into shareholders earning dividends. 

Joseph Graves Staging the World

Interviewed by Gong Haiying and Xu Shuyuan

Photographs courtesy of Seven Ages Productions unless otherwise credited

The relationship between America and China in theater has long been stronger than most realize, and theater is a universal way of communicating.

Joseph Graves is a famous American theater director. He arrived in China in 2002 and is now focusing on introducing cross-cultural plays to China and promoting theater education. by Chen Jian



放牛班的春天

中文版音乐剧

全国巡演及“最美男童声”海选正式启动

开学快乐

Joseph Graves is a famous American theater director and Shakespeare expert who has worked in both the United States and the United Kingdom. As an actor, he has performed several seminal Shakespearean roles including King Lear, Hamlet, Macbeth, Richard III, Othello, Iago and Romeo. As a director, his plays have been staged in London, New York and Los Angeles.

Graves arrived in China in 2002 to take positions as art director of Seven Ages Productions and artistic director of Peking University's Institute of World Theater and Film. Graves hasn't missed a beat of his career since. He has directed and acted in dozens of plays including many Shakespeare titles and other classics as well as musicals, dramas and operas. Among the works, 15 plays were debuted in China. In May 2012, Seven Ages staged *Man of La Mancha* as its first musical. Since then, Seven Ages successfully "localized" a series of classical Broadway musicals, such as *Avenue Q*, *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* and *The Sound of Music*. The company has staged nearly 1,000 performances and performed in over 50 cities in China for over a million patrons, cumulatively.

Recently, *China Pictorial* (CP) sat down for an exclusive interview with Graves, who is now focusing on introducing cross-cultural plays to China.

CP: *Les Choristes* was originally an award-winning movie, which was well received after it was adapted into a French play. Why did you choose to adapt this French musical for China as your most recent work?

Joseph Graves: The decision happened over some time. When we decide to do a musical, the Seven Ages team gets together to talk



The actor playing Clément Mathieu (first left) and the children playing his students rehearse a chorus for the play *Les Choristes*.

about various musicals and stories we like. The first thing we look for is powerful stories that every culture can relate to, especially those with universal elements like music and love.

We tried to stay relatively close to the story that French producer Christophe Barratier originally told, but cultural idiosyncrasies will always emerge during the process of adapting a script, as some content would only resonate with French spectators. So we changed the script to make it accessible to our audience in China.

CP: You are also frequently exposed to Peking Opera, Kunqu Opera and other local forms of Chinese drama, and have introduced cross-cultural plays such as *Our Town* staged at the People's Experimental Center in 2004. What do you think is the artistic value of cross-cultural plays?

Graves: *Our Town* was the third or fourth cross-cultural play I did. I believe that it may be the most important play in American theater history because it revolutionized the way theater works are performed. Here's the story: In 1920, notable

Peking Opera artist Mei Lanfang wanted to introduce Peking Opera to the world. So he created a one-man Peking Opera show and toured New York, Paris, and many Western countries. The performance was well received all over the world and introduced a style that Western audience had not previously seen. In New York, a young writer was sitting in the audience named Thornton Wilder. He thought that Mei's performance was what real theater works should be like. It was something that had not been done but should be done in America. Because he was so moved by Mei, he developed *Our Town* based on his idea of what Peking Opera was like. That play, which is maybe the most important play ever written in terms of the impact of theater on our audience, would have never been created without Chinese theater artists. So the relationship between America and China in theater is a lot stronger to begin with than most people are aware, and theater is a universal way of communicating.

Despite different languages, cultures, and approaches to acting, we all share the same form of theatrical expression. When I bring



A still from the Chinese adaptation of the play *Les Choristes*. The protagonist, Clément Mathieu, plans to form a choir and asks the students to demonstrate their voices.



A still from the Chinese adaptation of the play *Les Choristes* shows the mischievous students in Mathieu's class.

Western and Eastern artists together, there's always a process of learning from each other. And in general, the magic of traditional Chinese opera is how they control their bodies beautifully, which has become almost a lost art in the West. Conversely, there is an internal approach and deep emotional expression that Chinese actors can learn from their Western counterparts. So we often blend styles, and the great artistic value is when actors from different regions appreciate their differences and learn from each other.

CP: How do you balance entertainment and the artistic values of a play?

Graves: This is really an important subject. Shakespeare is widely considered the greatest playwright in the West. He was an artistic genius, but nobody knew that when he first started writing plays to entertain an audience. The thing about artistry in the theater is that you can't have art without entertainment first. *Our Town*, for instance, is a hugely entertaining play: You sit on the edge of your seat and want to know what

happens next. For me, clarity is art. As directors, we're supposed to find stories we love and try to tell them as clearly and passionately as possible. Entertainment and art are not two sides of a coin. Art happens on top of what entertains and engages our thoughts magically.

A play doesn't really come alive until you add the audience. The audience gives energy to the actors, and in the best of circumstances, a spiritual relationship is formed between them. Theatrical art is impossible without participation from both the audience and artists.

CP: Have you noticed changes in the Chinese theater market since you first arrived in 2002?

Graves: There has been a huge transformation. When I came in 2002, musicals wouldn't have worked with the Chinese audience. Across the decade, Chinese people became more exposed to Western culture through videos and companies coming to the country. This development has opened the door for musical theater, which I always expected would flourish in China eventually because Chinese people love and live in music. I believe that introducing Western musicals to China was a natural step, but without early educational work and exposure to this form of art, there wouldn't be an audience. There are probably 700 million people in China who are smart and well-educated but completely unaware of what theater is like because they have never been exposed to it. So part of the work we do is to continue to reach out to cities and regions that lack theaters, present scenes from our plays and introduce them. Locals tend to show great interest in our work. Unlike anywhere else in the world, China's market for musical theater is vast. But considerable educational work is needed to let people know that musical theater is fun.




A still from the Chinese adaptation of the play *Les Choristes* shows Pierre catching up to the dismissed Mathieu at the gate of the school Fond de l'Étang ("Bottom of the Pond").

CP: As the artistic director of Peking University's Institute of World Theater and Film, you have done a lot of work in theater education. How do you think education has influenced Chinese students and plays?

Graves: Chinese theater education is quite different from what American students receive. One of the hugest differences is found in higher education. Almost every university in America has a handful of performing arts courses that mostly focus on music and

dance. Yet almost no university in China offers such classes other than institutions like the Central Academy of Drama and the Shanghai Theater Academy, where students aim to become professionals. But that kind of education only reaches a very small group of students. Students in China lack courses designed to expose people to theater rather than create professional actors or directors. Such classes are a vital form of creative education and a key aspect of liberal arts education. Those

who have received art education understand and analyze things differently.

One of the great things that happened in China over the last five years is that the departments of education at both central and local levels have reintroduced drama and dance into elementary schools, junior high schools and high schools. Today, many more students are being exposed to theater. There is still a shortage of teachers trained to provide this kind of education, but the efforts are there and really growing. 



Wangyedian Experimental Forest Farm: Exploring Sustainable Forestry

Text by Zhou Chenliang Photographs by Xu Xun, Chen Jian and Zhang Ye

Wangyedian Experimental Forest Farm provides a typical demonstration case for multifunctional forestry as it amasses valuable experience in sustainable forest management to be used by peers throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

Only 310 kilometers from Beijing is Wangyedian Experimental Forest Farm, a wealth of flourishing trees dotting a chain of mountains in southwestern Harqin Banner in Chifeng City, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. Acting as a green shelter, trees growing in the forest farm protect northern China from the sandstorms from Khorchin, one of the largest sandy areas in the country.

The forest farm was founded in 1956. Back then, the locale featured only barren mountains, and now it is overwhelmingly green. For 63 years, Wangyedian Experimental Forest Farm has passed the green baton from generation to generation.

From Bald to Green

In the early days after the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, mountains and hills accounted for 50 percent of the land of Harqin Banner with only 3.3 percent of forest coverage rate. Vegetation was seriously deteriorating, causing great losses of water and soil and making natural disasters more frequent. In 1952, the forestry administrative office welcomed its first director, Shen Shixiang. Facing

tough conditions, Shen led several colleagues to mobilize local people to plant trees, successively setting up 15 seedling breeding stations in mountains, which produced over 10 million saplings the next year.

"In those days, we had nothing," recalls Xing Yulin, now in his 90s. "We rented five rooms as offices and even our pickaxes were borrowed from local villagers. The whole mountain was just stone and barren land. And it often suffered torrential flooding during the rainy season."

Shen and his colleagues didn't give up. In the spring of 1964, the forest farm planted over 400 hectares of Chinese pines and larch trees with a survival rate reaching 85 percent in the year when they were planted. From 1957 to 1978, the forest farm maintained the pace of planting 667 hectares of trees each year. Across those two decades, a total of about 12,300 hectares of planted trees increased the forest coverage rate to over 80 percent. By 1981, all the suitable land for forest had turned green.

Made-to-Order Forest

The traditional forestry industry primarily focused on output of quality timber. So, logging

As the first Chinese project sponsored by APFNet, Wangyedian Experimental Forest Farm is crisscrossed by villagers' woodland and farmland. The forest farm is focusing on coordinating the economic benefits, ecological benefits and social benefits of forestry. by Chen Jian



Ninety-year-old Xing Yulin has witnessed the whole process of Wangyedian turning from the formerly barren mountains to a vast green forest after the continuous efforts of several generations. by Xu Xun

● ECOLOGY

companies often performed clear cutting which devastated both the forest and surrounding ecology. So for a while, Wangyedian, like other state-owned forest farms, was plagued by low-quality forest structure, low recoverable resources and vulnerable forest functionality.

Modern sustainable forestry places emphasis on the multiple functions of the forest by selective cutting and targeted tree selection, enhancing the value of each tree. “Today, after selective cutting, we plant precious broad-leaf species to fill the forest gap,” explains Ma Chenggong, director of the Multifunctional Forest Management Demonstration Project sponsored by the Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation (APFNet) in Wangyedian. “Then the forest can be slowly converted into a multi-aged, diverse forest with mixed species mimicking a natural forest to produce economic value while guaranteeing ecological value.”

It took eight years for Wangyedian to set up a preliminary multifunctional forest demonstration zone combining man-made forest and close-to-nature forest. In 2011, APFNet launched the first phase of the project: “Construction of Multifunctional Forest Management Demonstration” in



The Meilin nursery garden in Wangyedian serves as a demonstration station for multifunctional forestry, growing 2 million larch seedlings. by Xu Xun



The forest coverage rate of Wangyedian Experimental Forest Farm has reached as high as 92.1 percent from the 3.3 percent in 1949. by Xu Xun



The flourishing forest has not only improved the local environment but also nurtured local people by giving them forest products. by Xu Xun



Zhang Yonghua (left), a resident from Dongjuzi Village in Meilin Town, runs an edible fungus planting cooperative. Wangyedian Experimental Forest Farm is creating more ecological dividends for local people.
by Xu Xun

Wangyedian Experimental Forest Farm due to its advantageous location, efficient management and rich forest resources.

“Now the forest coverage rate of our forest farm is as high as 92.1 percent, so we have almost no more suitable land left for afforestation,” Ma continues. “Without any more room for advances in quantity, we have to focus on improvements in quality. Our cooperation with APFNet to introduce close-to-nature forest management is this kind of exploration and innovation.”

Green Mountain Value

A total of 18 administrative villages surround Wangyedian, home to 35,000 people. How can a forest farm both protect the environment and help poverty reduction while giving full play to the role of multifunctional forestry? To expand residents' income channels, the forest farm provides free non-wood forest products under the trees for the villagers. Local villagers can collect forest by-products such as fungi, edible plants, medicinal plants and forest seeds.


“The better the forest grows, the more it offers to us,” grins 54-year-old Mr. Shao, a resident in

Dadian Village.

According to him, the popular spring wild vegetables are brackens and bitter buds. In summer, people collect mushrooms and wild herbs. In autumn, they look for hazelnuts and pine nuts. In winter, locals use twigs from chaste trees to weave utensils and use cutting residues to plant mushrooms. According to statistics, these “freebies” have helped increase annual per capita income of farmers living around the forest by more than 2,000 yuan (US\$300).

Zhang Yonghua, a resident from Dongjuzi Village in Meilin Town, runs an edible fungus planting cooperative. His greenhouse grows monkey-head mushroom and other fungi. “Prices are good this year,” grins Zhang. “The purchase price for fresh mushrooms increased by more than two yuan (US\$0.29) per kilogram. The favorable forest climate in Wangyedian is especially suitable to grow fungi. Many of our products have been exported to Japan and Europe.”

The multiple functions of the forest, the renewal of management concepts and means, the momentum of harmonious development in the community and the sincere effort to return wealth to the people are creating more ecological dividends for Wangyedian Experimental Forest Farm. Today, different styles of cabins peek out from behind the trees and colorful flowers. During summer, various outdoor activities like hiking, cycling and camping are attracting countless tourists seeking getaways.

“While cultivating and protecting forest resources, we strive to optimize the state-owned forest farm's role in providing greater ecological products for society and more attractive benefits for the public,” declares Zhao Hui, head of Wangyedian Experimental Forest Farm. 

Water Tech at the Expo

Text by Nathan Bennett Photographs by Chen Jian



The array of water management technologies on display at the Beijing International Horticultural Exhibition provide a catalogue of options for city planners and developers worldwide to consider as they manage water usage.



The sunken water courtyard in the China Pavilion.



The shade umbrellas outside the International Pavilion double as rainwater collectors.

The Beijing International Horticultural Exhibition (hereinafter “Beijing Expo”) is showcasing technology supporting its theme, “Live Green, Live Better.” Technological advancements not only make life more convenient but also facilitate greater harmony with nature. We rely on nature for many things, but like roommates living together in the same apartment, we can make it easier for each other to get along. While electricity, wireless connectivity, and 5G make for easy touchpoints in a discussion of technology, what about water management?

A good point to begin with is the difference between science and technology. Science is the systematic study and accumulation of knowledge about life, the universe, and everything. Technology is the implementation of that knowledge to make things and do things. Science studies the speed of light, and technology turns on the light. Electricity and WiFi make for easy demonstrations of technology because they represent the closest approach we can make to real magic in this world, but technology

to manage water purification, storage and utilization comes much closer to vital human needs than 5G.

While 5G is revolutionizing communication, it operates on a level not directly catering to basic human needs. Water management does. Accordingly, water management technology is prominent among the technologies being tried out at the Beijing Expo.

Water management technology includes construction methods and the employment of specially chosen plants for water retention and pollutant filtration, so water management especially works out the integration of human construction and nature. Including both active and passive methods, the technology displayed at the Beijing Expo exemplifies the forward thinking required to achieve integration with nature.

Running out of water is not the only problem for water management technology to deal with: the July 2012 flooding in Beijing gave the city a very personal motivation to implement appropriate water management technologies. Overwhelmed drainage systems do

not lead only to flooded industries, businesses, and homes and damaged human interests. Urban water runoff is already somewhat polluted, but flood waters overleaping the normal bounds of stormwater drainage carry extra pollutants into the rivers where runoff eventually goes.

While typical water issues for Beijing include increased demand for water resources in an already dry northern China, climate change means larger storms with more rain all at once. No one likes to drink from a fire hose, and not even a dry city benefits from a flood. Aside from water issues facing Beijing, traditionally wet and rainy southern China needs all the modern drainage technology that it can get because urbanization pressure leads developers to pave over the natural features that formerly mitigated flooding. Smart development requires integration with nature, not just shoving it aside or cutting it out altogether.

The centerpiece of the Beijing Expo is the China Pavilion. Like many of the buildings featured at the expo, the China Pavilion features roof rainwater capture and

subterranean storage capacities. Outdoor wooden plank walkways feature water drainage gaps to collect rainwater for watering the terraces bracing the sides of the building. The terraces themselves insulate the China Pavilion from cold and heat, reducing the need for extra watering in hot times of the year. Reducing the extremes of hot and cold also moderates energy requirements for heating and cooling.

Nature requires an array of cycles and processes to maintain and replenish the resources human society draws upon. Where rainwater collection reduces the amount of rain that can replenish groundwater supplies taken up for irrigation, human society demands availability of water for tangible, appreciable use. In integrating with nature, intelligent application of ecological technology can introduce an element of efficiency into the progression of water toward its final resting place in aquifers or the sea.

The China Pavilion is a proof of concept for the use of rainwater for on-the-spot beautification of urban architecture. The terraces insulating the sides of the pavilion are watered with the rainwater collected from the roof and as the water makes its way to its final resting place in the natural cycle, it gives life to the plants beautifying the pavilion. In cities, rainwater that washes off concrete and glass tower blocks could be retained in like fashion to green up otherwise bleak cities.

The International Pavilion features a forest of shade umbrellas which double as rainwater collectors, showing one of the most important principles of innovation and task unification in a single feature. This intuitively implemented technique, ubiquitous in the park, clearly demonstrates how clear forward thinking can improve city management of resources and

the aggregate proceeds of rooftop water collectors can contribute to a city's water efficiency.

Water management technology is a very traditional part of ancient societies. The India Pavilion offers a model of stepwells found in that country, showing how since ancient times water was made available in times of drought. Stepwells connected to surrounding reservoirs and groundwater, and series of steps facilitated access down to the current level of water. By turning to their own ancient cultures, nations can find internal motivation to implement water management technology.

Two aspects of water management are the retention and the purification of water resources. It is not enough simply to hold the water in storage tanks, and getting the most use out of water resources involves retaining it for urban environmental benefit and human enjoyment. Maintaining trees along the roads or watering city parks sustains natural environments for city-dwelling animals and provides natural scenery for people to enjoy. As water passes through plants and soils, various contaminants are




At the Beijing Expo, it is possible to see water technology in use that helps ensure the availability of water for future generations to enjoy.

filtered out.

The Grant Associates rain garden is one practical example of gardens constructed to manage and purify urban runoff. By contributing a habitat for animal life, the rain garden reveals the potential for integrated water management schemes to enrich urban environments. A sustainable, low-maintenance urban forest provides greenery while gradually releasing accumulated storm runoff to ease weather impact on city drainage systems. The International Bamboo and Rattan Organization (INBAR) contributed a garden demonstrating the value of bamboo and rattan to improve soil conditions, reduce water runoff, and provide economically valuable products from plant life integrated into water management plans.

Many needs intersect in water management: human thirst, urban drainage, industrial and agricultural usage, animal and plant life, and others. The increasing world population allows little margin for inefficiency in water usage, and natural processes cannot keep pace with the construction of cities and towns. Pandas can't decree it, dolphins can't organize it, and trees can't weigh in at all. Humanity will have to arrange it from beginning to end.

The array of water management technologies on display at the Beijing Expo provide a catalogue of options for city planners and developers worldwide to consider as they manage water usage, whether they are flooded or drying out. In a time of stability, before we hit emergency conditions, the world can come together at the Beijing Expo to plan how to manage increasingly limited water resources for the future so that we can face times of greater environmental strain with confidence. 

The Era of FacePay

Text by Ru Yuan

Face-scanning payment services are quietly sweeping across China. The wave has already created new occupations, promoted development of related manufacturing industries and changed lifestyles.



March 15, 2015: Alibaba founder and chairman Jack Ma makes a presentation on face-scanning payment technology during the opening of the CeBIT trade fair, an internationally renowned computer and software expo, in Hanover, Germany. VCG

Zhang Haiyang's work doesn't seem that difficult. After plugging in the face-scanning payment machine, connecting it to the wireless internet and adjusting the scanner, the job is almost done. If snags are avoided, installation and debugging of a face-scanning payment machine can be completed in about 30 minutes. The official name of Zhang's job is "installation and debugging personnel for the Internet of Things." It was one of the 13 new occupations identified in a document jointly released by China's Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, National Bureau of Statistics and State Administration for Market Regulation in April 2019.

Face-scanning payment services are quietly sweeping across China. The wave has already created new occupations, promoted development of related manufacturing industries and changed lifestyles.

An Industrial Chain in the Making

"Paying with your face" is more convenient than one might imagine. A customer has his or her face scanned by a facial recognition payment device shaped like an iPad. The camera on the device collects facial information for identity recognition and the payment goes through. The payment is directly deducted from the consumer's account. In most cases, a face-scanning payment is completed within 10 seconds. A first-time user needs to enter a phone number linked to his or her payment instrument, which may take a bit more time.

In August 2018, Alipay, a third-party mobile and online payment platform launched by China's internet giant Alibaba Group, announced the large-scale commercial rollout of its new facial payment technology. In December 2018, Alipay delivered



Zhang Haiyang (right) installs a face-scanning payment machine for a client. In recent years, an increasing number of businesses are embracing the new service. by Lin Hongxian



Workers are busy producing face-scanning payment machines in a Shenzhen factory. The complicated production process excludes many smaller manufacturers. by Lin Hongxian

its "Dragonfly" facial recognition point-of-sale (POS) system, the first pay-with-face system used by human cashiers. Now, "Dragonfly" devices can be found in more than 300 Chinese cities. In March 2019, WeChat, a popular instant messaging app developed by another large Chinese internet company Tencent, launched its own face-scanning payment device called "Frog." In just one year, face-scanning payment, which is more convenient

than mobile payment and bypasses the need for a user's device, has spread widely in China. Behind the new payment option, a huge industrial chain is emerging.

For equipment manufacturers, it is not easy to produce face-scanning payment machines or components and parts. According to industry insiders, the testing requirements for face-scanning payment machines are even higher than those of Apple phones. In terms of production,



February 2019: A customer has her face scanned by a face recognition system to pay for her purchase at a KFC restaurant in Nantong City, Jiangsu Province. IC

a face-scanning machine has to pass more than 40 procedures from moulding in the beginning to the packaging in the end, including optical testing, aging testing, high temperature testing, camera quality testing, drop testing and latency testing. Such a complicated production process keeps small and medium-sized manufacturers out of the game.

Shenzhen-based Orbbec makes structured-light 3D cameras used on Alipay's "Dragonfly" devices. In September 2017, diners could already pay with their faces at KFC's health-conscious eatery Kpro in the MIXC Shopping Mall in Hangzhou. It was the first restaurant to accept face-scanning payment in the world, and the infrared 3D cameras installed on its face-scanning

payment machines were made by Orbbec. In December 2018 when Alipay released "Dragonfly" and announced the use of structured-light 3D camera on the device, more people began to look towards Orbbec which is devoted to 3D sensing and artificial intelligence (AI) vision technology. "The release of the 'Dragonfly' gained Orbbec massive attention because in the field of structural optical technology, Orbbec is the fourth manufacturer on the planet to be capable of mass production of 3D sensors for consumer use after only Apple, Microsoft and Intel," explains an industry insider.

Fast-changing Payment

In recent years, China has seen earth-shaking changes in payment

methods. From paper money, bank cards, third-party payments and mobile payments to face-scanning payment, paying in China has become increasingly convenient and fast. This situation is particularly true today, especially against the backdrop of the fast development of AI and 5G. Today, China's cashless society is developing at break-neck speed.

According to *E-Commerce in China 2018* released by China's Ministry of Commerce in May 2019, in 2018, online payments made by non-bank payment institutions in China exceeded 208 trillion yuan (US\$30.3 trillion), an increase of more than 45 percent over the previous year. In 2017, the amount of online payments made by non-bank payment institutions



January 7, 2019: A passenger has her face scanned to pay her bus fare in Jinhua City, Zhejiang Province. The new technology will become more prevalent across China as it is now used on public transportation and in shopping centers. IC

“

In terms of production, a face-scanning machine has to pass more than 40 procedures from moulding in the beginning to the packaging in the end, including optical testing, aging testing, high temperature testing, camera quality testing, drop testing and latency testing. ”

also increased by more than 44 percent year-on-year. Online payments conducted by non-bank institutions have increased rapidly over the past two years. Non-bank payment institutions mainly refer

to third-party online payment platforms. Among them, Alipay and WeChat Pay remain the two biggest players. Both providers' huge volume of transactions demonstrates vast numbers of

users, customer loyalty and transaction frequency. By the end of 2018, Alipay's global users topped one billion including 650 million monthly active users. WeChat Pay's users now number 800 million, who together conduct an average of more than 1.2 billion transactions every day.

With mature and large-scale mobile payments as prerequisite, application of face-scanning payment service is a lifestyle improvement brought by the development of cutting-edge technologies like AI. The advantages of the new payment mode are obvious. It is faster, requires fewer operating fees and frees customers from payment difficulties in various awkward situations. For example, face-scanning payment is handy if a customer forgets to bring a wallet or mobile phone or lacks a signal or battery power.

As for the question whether face-scanning payment technology is safe, a concern which once drew considerable public attention, the outlook has become more positive thanks to the development of advanced technologies including AI, machine vision and 3D sensing. “The first time a consumer uses the face-scanning payment function, the device collects biological information unique to that person,” stresses Zhang Haiyang. Since a 2D image cannot record the depth information of a specific face, fake photos, videos or a molded face could fool the system. However, the structured-light 3D camera can comprehensively scan the face information, which makes it virtually impossible to trick.

“With more and more industries and businesses embracing face-scanning payment services, my colleagues and I are confident this will become a new way of life,” Zhang adds. ☞



2000 ▶▶ 2009

Millennial Dawn

Concept by *China Pictorial*

Edited by Li Zhuoxi

The period from 2000 to 2009 was critical for China's development. The country's various undertakings started paying off in a big way. The reform and opening up produced fruitful results, the national economy continued to develop quickly and healthily, and living standards improved across the board. Major strategic ideas such as the Scientific Outlook on Development were formed, driving the country toward a more harmonious society. During the period, many indicators including regional coordination, living standards, environmental protection and scientific and technological innovation registered remarkable achievements, and social security and cultural undertakings achieved positive results, unfolding a grand blueprint for building a moderately prosperous society in all respects.



Xinhua

2000: Western China Development

On January 10, 2000, construction of the second line project of the Baoji-Lanzhou section of the Lanzhou-Lianyungang Railway officially kicked off in Tianshui City, Gansu Province. It was the first Chinese railway project of the new millennium and a prelude to the development of western China.

On December 27, 2000, the *Circular of the State Council Concerning Several Policies on Carrying out the Development of China's Vast Western Regions* was released before coming into effect on January 1, 2001. It marked a substantial step in China's implementation of the strategy to develop its western regions. The strategy has made a major and far-reaching impact on the economic and social development of western China.

2001: China's Accession to the WTO

On the afternoon of November 10, 2001, the fourth ministerial conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO) held in Doha, Qatar unanimously approved China's entry into the WTO. China signed the WTO Accession Protocol. Thirty days later, China officially became a WTO member.

China's accession to the WTO brought a huge market of 1.3 billion people into the global trading system. It enabled China, the largest developing country on the planet, to gradually integrate into the international economic system and participate in global competition. Since then, China's economic reforms have entered a new phase featuring closer connections to the world economic and trade system.



CFB



Xinhua

2002: The First BFA Annual Conference

The first annual conference of the Boao Forum for Asia (BFA) was held from April 12 to 13, 2002. More than 2,000 government officials, experts, scholars, and business people from 48 countries and regions including China, Japan, South Korea and Thailand attended the conference. The BFA is a non-governmental and non-profit international organization, and holds its annual conference regularly in the coastal town of Boao, in China's southern province of Hainan. It is the first international conference organization located in China and has received extensive attention from all over the world.



Xinhua

2003: Shenzhou V Manned Spacecraft

On October 15, 2003, a Long March-2F carrier rocket lifted the Shenzhou V manned spacecraft, independently developed by China, into space from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in Gansu Province. The spacecraft carried Yang Liwei, the first Chinese astronaut into space, and entered a pre-selected orbit. It was the first manned space mission carried out by China, marking a historic breakthrough in the country's manned spaceflight program. China became the third country in the world to independently conduct manned spaceflights after the Soviet Union and the United States.

2004: West-to-East Natural Gas Pipeline

January 1, 2004: An operator at Shanghai's Baihe First Station for the West-to-East Natural Gas Transmission Project opens a valve to release the natural gas flow. That day, the project commenced commercial supply of natural gas to Shanghai, marking its successful completion and operation.

The West-to-East Natural Gas Transmission Project runs from Lunnan in the Tarim Basin in western China to Shanghai in eastern China. Composed of the longest gas pipelines with the largest caliber in the country, it was an iconic construction project to usher in the "Western China Development" strategy.

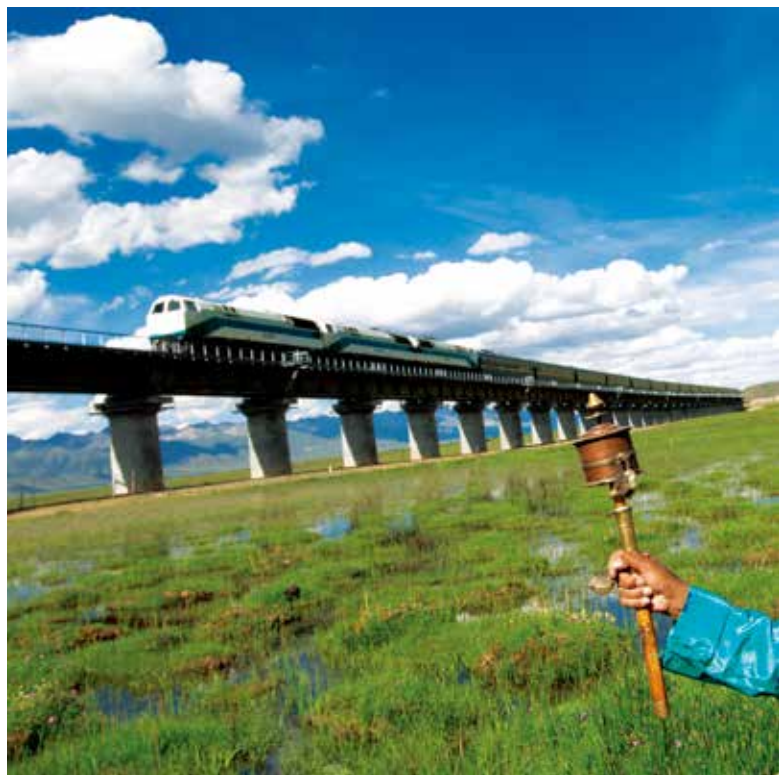


Xinhua

2005: Completion of the Qinghai-Tibet Railway

On October 15, 2005, construction of the Qinghai-Tibet Railway was completed. A national Class-1 railway connecting Xining in Qinghai Province to Lhasa in the Tibet Autonomous Region, the Qinghai-Tibet Railway was one of China's four major projects in the new century. The longest railway on a plateau with the highest altitude in the world, it was the first railroad to connect Tibet with other parts of China.

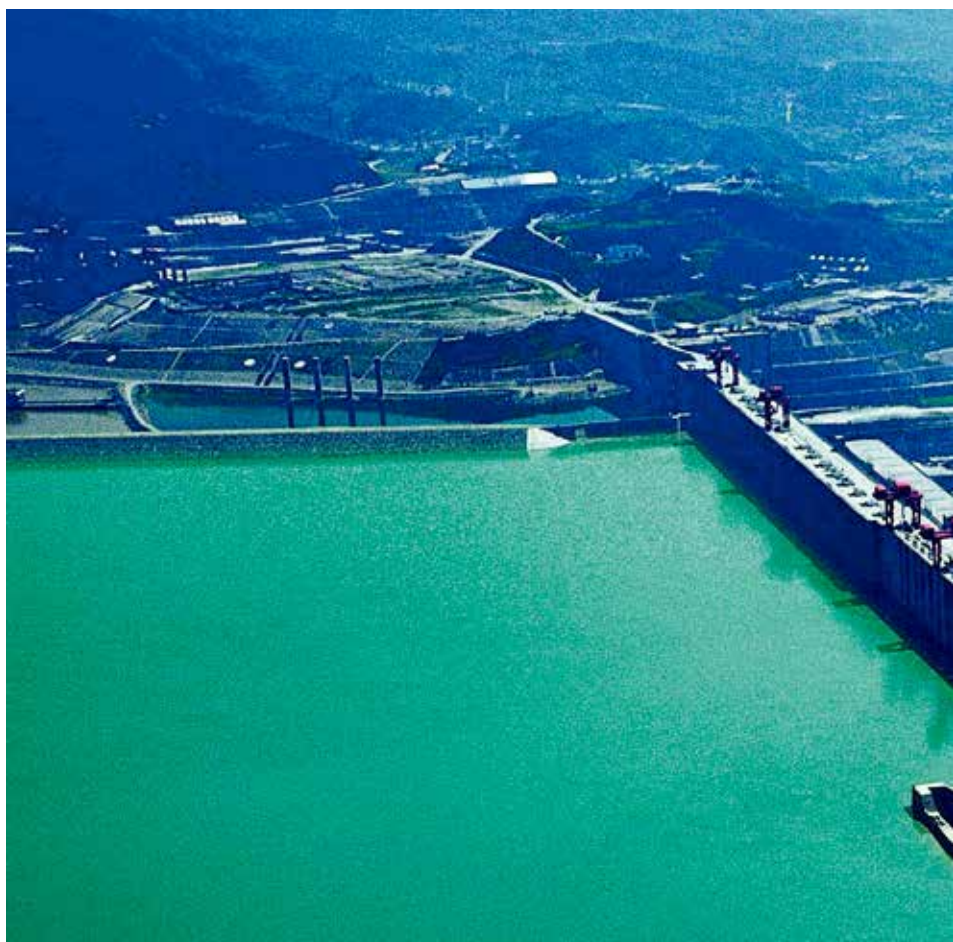
In building this railway traversing the high-altitude plateau known for its harsh natural conditions, Chinese construction workers overcame three universal challenges: construction on permafrost, cold and oxygen deficiency and ecological fragility. By overcoming those challenges, they made great progress in the history of world railway construction. The Qinghai-Tibet Railway has made a wide and far-reaching impact in changing the poor and backward plateau, promoting unity and common prosperity among all Chinese ethnic groups and boosting the rapid and sound social and economic development of both Qinghai and Tibet.



2006: Completion of the Three Gorges Dam

The Three Gorges Dam, located in Yichang City, Hubei Province, serves as the main body of the Three Gorges Hydropower Station, the largest hydroelectric project in the world. Construction officially commenced on December 14, 1994 and was completed on May 20, 2006.

The Three Gorges Dam is the world's largest water conservancy project, and many of its engineering design indicators broke world records. It is also the most comprehensive water conservancy hub in the world. A water project with maximum comprehensive benefits, it has played an active role and produced optimal results in 10 aspects such as flood control, power generation, shipping, aquaculture, tourism, South-to-North Water Diversion, water supply and irrigation; outperforming many giant power stations in the world.





Xinhua

2007: China's First Lunar Mission

China's lunar probe program, named Chang'e after the Chinese goddess of the moon, was formally launched in 2004. The program consists of three stages: unmanned lunar probes, manned lunar landing and construction of a moon base. At 6:05 p.m. on October 24, 2007, China's first lunar orbiting satellite, Chang'e-1, was successfully launched. On November 26, 2007, China National Space Administration released the first picture of the moon sent back by the Chang'e-1 satellite.

The success of the Chang'e-1 mission is considered the third milestone of China's space exploration following the first artificial satellite and the first manned spaceflight. It opened a new field for China's space engineering and accumulated substantial experience for the country to carry out further deep-space exploration.



Xinhua






2008: Beijing Olympics

On August 8, 2008, the 29th Olympic Games opened at the Chinese capital of Beijing. Over 10,000 athletes from 204 countries and regions participated in the Games, setting 38 new world records and 85 Olympic records. The Beijing Olympics fulfilled China's long-cherished dream, presenting the country's greater confidence and openness.

2009: Sevan Driller

On June 28, 2009, Sevan Driller, the world's first cylinder-shaped deep-sea crude oil rig and bulk storage platform independently constructed by China, was unveiled at a launch ceremony. It was a high-end, cutting-edge product harnessing the most advanced technologies in offshore oil drilling platforms at that time. The project greatly improved China's marine engineering capabilities. 



Xinhua



Xinhua



Discovering a Real China, compiled by Jean Loh and published by Beijing United Publishing Co., Ltd. in April 2019, is a book based on photos of China taken by French photographer Bruno Barbey.

Discovering a Real China

Bruno Barbey endeavors to discover China as it is.

This book presents over 300 color photos shot by French photographer Bruno Barbey, which captured many historic moments in China both before and after its reform and opening up.

1973: Primary-school students greet French President Pompidou at Tian'anmen Square, Beijing.





1973: Boats on the Yangtze River, Nanjing.

In 1973 when then-French President Georges Pompidou made a formal visit to China, Barbey came along as an accompanying journalist. He brought Kodachrome film and became the first photographer to shoot China in blazing color.

Since then, Barbey has frequented China, exploring Beijing, Shanghai, Sichuan Province, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, Hong Kong, Macao and other places in the country. He has documented not only the meeting scenes of Chinese and French leaders, but also lives of many ordinary Chinese people with his camera. Many of his photos arouse memories of the past, which are better preserved on color negatives than back-and-white.

World-renowned photography critic and curator Jean Loh shared a story in the preface of the book. In 1973, Barbey snapped a girl who was waving a red scarf in the rain to see off French President Pompidou at Shanghai's Hongqiao Airport. In 2006, the girl, still living in Shanghai though in her 50s, read a report about Barbey and identified herself in the image. She managed to visit Barbey in France, and in 2016 Barbey personally gave her a print of that photo with his signature.

Dong Qiang, dean of the Department of French Language and Literature at Peking University and a lifetime foreign corresponding member of France's Academy of Moral and Political Sciences, wrote in the preface that Barbey endeavored to discover China as it is. "His photographs take me back to the China of my childhood," claims Dong. "His eyes, like a flowing mirror surveying the world, gaze into China several times, not only to record our colorful past but also to reflect on our diversity, confusion and hope."

Bruno Barbey was born in 1941 in Morocco and joined the Magnum photo agency in the 1960s. He served as vice chairman of Magnum Europe



1973: Workers greet French President Pompidou, Shanghai.

from 1978 to 1979, and then as chairman of the photo agency from 1992 to 1995. His photographic works are famous for cohesive use of color. He has traveled five continents and witnessed countless military conflicts. His photographs have also been published in many magazines worldwide and collected by many museums.

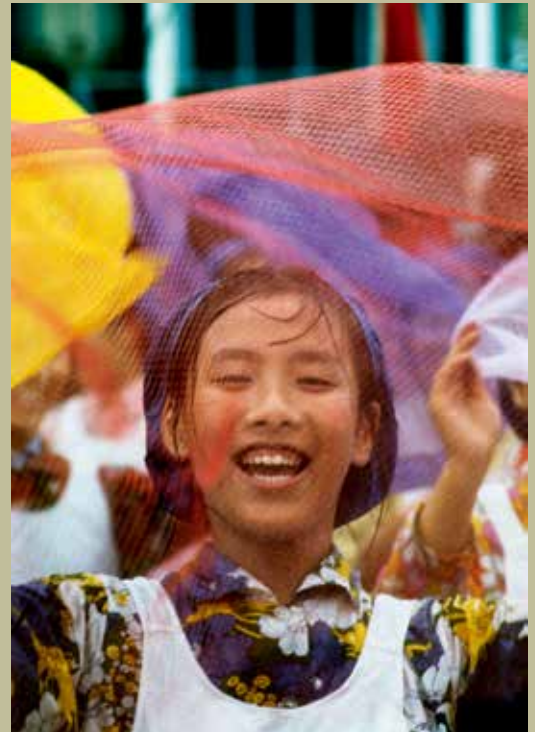
Born in Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City), French curator Jean Loh now resides in Shanghai. He has curated the exhibitions of many famous photographers like Marc Ribound, Bruno Barbey and Claude Sluben. Loh is a member of the editorial board of *Trans Asia Photographic Review* and a member of the nominating board for the Lucie Awards. He has also served as the editor for over 20 photo books.



1980: Yu Garden, Shanghai.



1973: Taking photos on the Great Wall, Beijing.



1973: Wang Xiaoya waves a red scarf in the rain to see off French President Pompidou at Shanghai's Hongqiao Airport.

China through Bruno Barbey's Lens

Text by Jean Loh

Although countless Westerners have visited China, few photographers have really entered China as Bruno Barbey did. Over the past six decades, untold numbers of Western photographers have shot China. Some made personal travel missions, some were working on long-term reports and others even lived in China for many years. Those photographers include Robert Capa, Barbey's most outstanding predecessor at the Magnum photo agency, who, from February 16 to September 22, 1938, snapped photos of the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression, Henri Cartier-Bresson, who came to Beijing and Shanghai from December 1948 to January

1949 to witness the transfer of government in China (Bresson published *From One China to the Other* in 1954 with a preface by existentialist philosopher Sartre) and Marc Riboud, the first Western photographer to arrive in the newly-founded People's Republic of China who made three historic visits to China in 1957, 1965 and 1971.

These three masters are famous for black-and-white photos. The documentary images

of official Chinese photojournalists were also black-and-white. For this reason, when the Chinese audience saw Bruno Barbey's color pictures for the first time, they were particularly excited because the visual records of the first 30 years after the founding of the People's Republic of China were mostly black-and-white. Barbey revealed a vividly colorful China. His works created the illusion that what was recorded in those photos seem to have

happened in China just yesterday.

Another major difference is that Barbey's photographs of China contrast with those captured during investigative missions and seem more like scenes from a road trip movie as if he was on a journey to understand China. Some may wonder about his goal or intended theme. One thing is certain: His explorative journey has not yet been completed. Barbey continues to crisscross China because he is obsessed with the vast,



2016: Wang Xiaoya meets with Bruno Barbey in France.

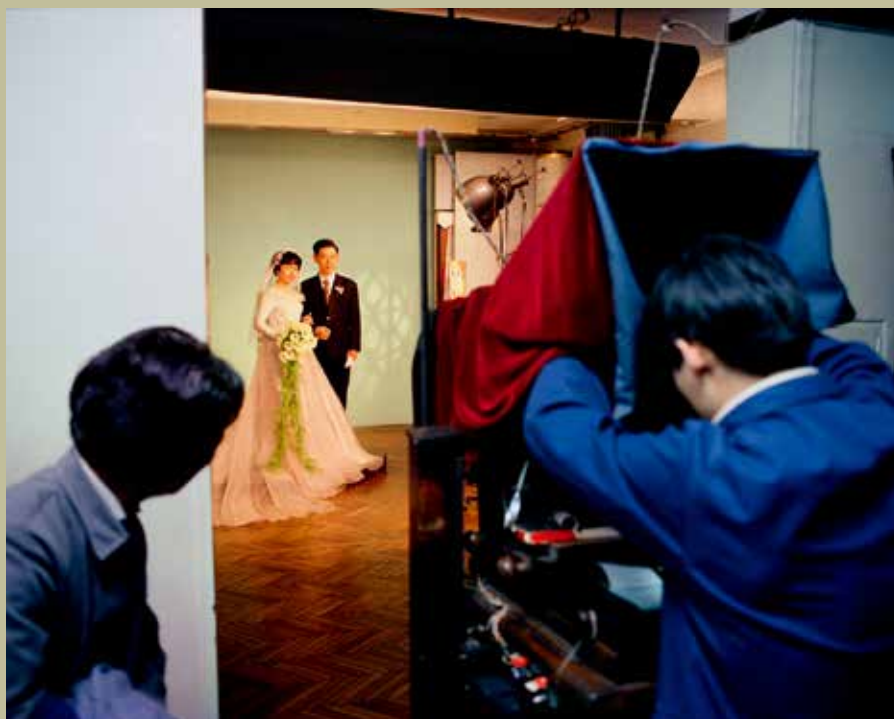


1980: Morning exercise in a field, Shanghai.





1980: Accordion lesson at Shanghai Children's Center, Shanghai.



1980: Wedding photo, Shanghai.

ever-changing and multi-faceted country, and continues to feel the need to explore it more deeply.

Barbey's China is the subject he chose to examine and show to us. In his eyes, Beijing, Shanghai, Sichuan Province, and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region are all distinct. His Kodachrome negatives from the 1970s and 1980s captured the dry air of Beijing as well as the wet alleys of Shanghai, which was divided into Pudong and Puxi areas by the Huangpu River. We followed Barbey to Sichuan and Guangxi and witnessed both the geographical and metaphorical distances between China's urban and rural areas.

Barbey did maintain the neutral attitude of his predecessors Bresson and Marc Riboud.




2010: A couple hug on the Bund, Shanghai.

He had no preconceptions or prejudices when approaching China. He only read literature about China in the French Archives in Paris. Victor Segalen, a French sinologist, poet and archaeologist, visited China three times between 1909 and 1917. In his book *Journey to the Land of the Real*, Segalen described a hesitancy to distinguish between an imaginary China and a real China—concerns that the language at a Frenchman's disposal is insufficient to do justice to the complexity and authenticity of the country and its culture. Barbey, however, chose to use the camera's viewfinder to describe a real China from a proper distance and a neutral angle. He went through roll after roll of film to

showcase a kaleidoscopic China: the ancient capital of Beijing, the metropolis of Shanghai, the Eurasian Macao, Kashgar on the Silk Road and fashionable and modern Hong Kong, as well as the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, Yunnan Province and Qingdao, popular tourist destinations for the emerging middle class.

Barbey's journey spanned not only a vast geography, but also a long period of time: 1973 to 2017, which presented a great challenge for him. China of the 1980s was very different from China of the 1970s when he first visited, not to mention China in 2010 and China today. For example, in 1973, he saw the public and thousands of students welcoming the French president

as well as thousands of workers lining up in conformity under the publicity board of *Angang Constitution*. In 1980, China began to show more individualization. Through his series of wedding photos, Barbey shined a light on the process of the Chinese people paying more attention to individual identity.

This book is the culmination of Barbey's observation and concern for China and its people for more than four decades. It is the result of his patient and skillful shooting. He hasn't made any conclusions or snapped the final picture because he remains fascinated by the constant changes in China that have always surprised him. What has Bruno Barbey been chasing in China? A spirit, a soul, or a kind of national situation? 



Art Speaks Across Cultures

Text by Yi Mei

Photographs courtesy of the National Museum of China

The exhibition “Jean Schlumberger: Twentieth-Century Treasures from the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts” is showing at the National Museum of China with 123 ornamental pieces by French jewelry designer Jean Schlumberger.

Leaves (necklace), 1956, turquoise, diamonds, 18-karat gold, platinum, 3.81 × 35.56 cm, collected in the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

This exhibition marks the first cultural exchange event under a Five-Year Cooperation Framework

signed between the National Museum of China and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA) in the United States.

Art Legacy

Thanks to the generosity of Rachel Lambert Mellon who made a substantial contribution to VMFA through her donation of jewelry and objects d'art personally commissioned from French-born surrealist jeweler and designer Jean Schlumberger, VMFA now holds the most comprehensive public collection by this renowned French designer—works of art marked by a dedication to perfection and beauty, dazzling imagination and clarity of vision. Unlike other designers, Schlumberger drew his greatest inspiration from flora and fauna in nature, exploring ways to unite the beauty of nature with the art of human imagination. In the process, he re-defined jewelry design in the 20th century.

“Jean Schlumberger’s work is the most popular exhibition in our museum,” says Dr. Michael R. Taylor, curator at VMFA. “This is the first time that this collection

has left the United States. We are honored to share these treasures with visitors to the National Museum of China. They are really more than jewelry in the sense that they show how art speaks across cultures.”

Eleven ancient Chinese personal adornments such as a hairpin, a necklace and court beads from the collection of the National Museum of China open the exhibition to foreshadow the 20th century’s glittering and charming jewelry emerging from the hands of Jean Schlumberger.

“We presented ancient Chinese jewelry featuring a variety of materials and techniques to complement Schlumberger’s works,” explains Pan Qing, curator at the National Museum of China. “Jewelry-making is a time-honored tradition and an art form that has been passed down across centuries. Because of the very strong and hard material of gemstones, they can be passed down over centuries and remain the same today.”



Hummingbird (brooch), 1962-63, diamonds, pink diamonds, emeralds, sapphires, ruby, black enamel, 18-karat gold, platinum, 11.43 × 6.99 × 1.91 cm, collected in the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.



Mermaids (candlesticks), 1969, enamel, black lacquer, 18-karat gold, 18.57 × 8.89 × 11.43 cm, collected in the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.



Flower Pot, 1960, amethyst, emeralds, diamonds, black garnet ore, 18-, 20- and 22-karat gold, terracotta, 18.42 × 10.16 × 10.16 cm, collected in the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.



Chinese Mandarin Court
Necklace, dating back to the
Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), la-
pis lazuli, amethyst, red glass
beads, 136 cm, collected in the
National Museum of China.

Beyond Art

“More than jewelry, the pieces are manifestations of culture,” declares Pan. “We hope to create an East-West dialogue between Chinese artifacts and Schlumberger’s works, which all express aspirations for beauty even across the distant centuries from each other.”

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the United States. At a point when relations between the two countries are facing some challenges, strengthening understanding between peoples could ease the situation.

“We are presenting this joint collection of treasures to convey the message that art is a medium for conversing emotions and a tool for bridging people-to-people ties,” says Wang Chunfa, director of the

National Museum of China. “Cultural exchange can deepen mutual understanding and enhance mutual trust.”

The five-year partnership agreement between the National Museum of China and VMFA aims to leverage collection exchange to enhance cultural exchange and professional development, and enable the two institutions to share best practices in all areas of museum operations.

“As museums in China and the United States, the ability to share art and collections of beautiful objects helps foster greater understanding of Chinese culture in Americans as well as Chinese understanding of American culture,” remarks Alex Nyerges, director and CEO of VMFA. “These exchange programs will bring our two peoples closer together and foster mutual understanding and appreciation that can help us cooperate better at the global level.” 



Coronet Ring, ca. 1960, model 1958, fancy colored diamond (25 carats), diamonds, 18-karat gold, 2.7 × 2.06 × 1.75 cm, collected in the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.



Bird on a Rock (brooch), 1965, lapis lazuli, white and colored diamonds, ruby, 18-karat gold, platinum, 5.72 × 4.45 × 1.91 cm, collected in the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.



Centerpiece, 1970, black lacquer, enamel, 18-karat gold, 39.3 cm in height, 25.4 cm in diameter, collected in the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.



Jellyfish (brooch), 1967, moonstones, diamonds, sapphires, 18-karat gold, platinum, 7.62 × 6.99 × 1.91 cm, collected in the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

An Indian's Take on Beijing

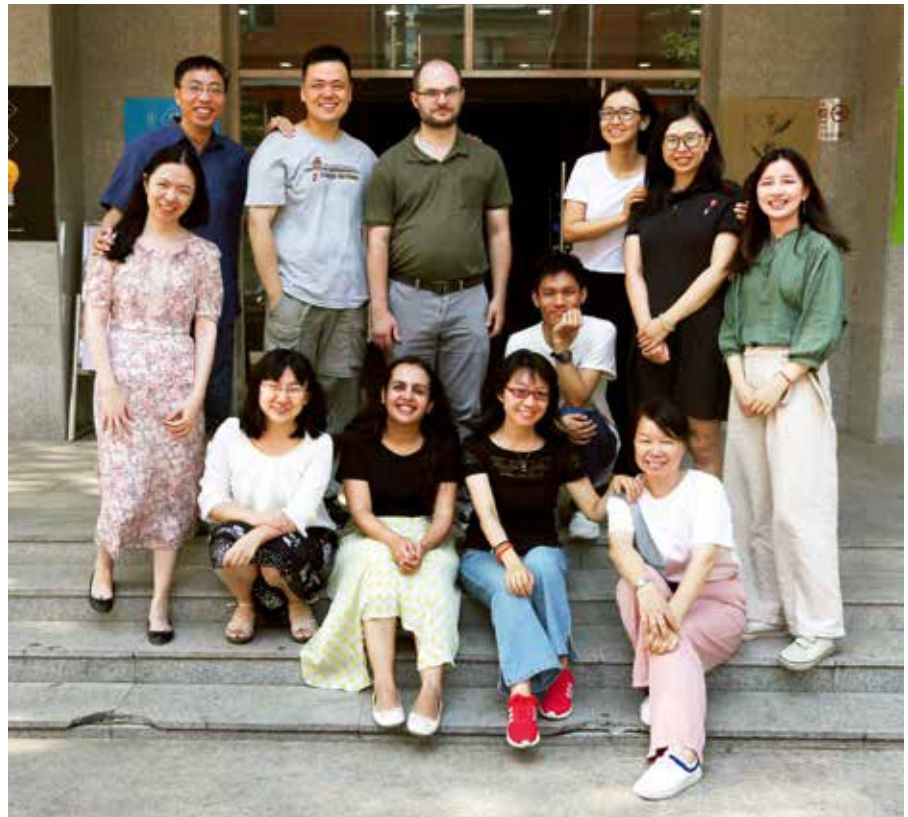
Text by Mithila Phadke

The more I zoomed in on the little details that make life in China so distinct—those missed by a tourist's eyes—the more I began to feel at home.

On my way back to India after my first-ever visit to China—a month-long backpacking trip across the country—I found myself upset at the proposition that it would likely be my last. During my layover in the Hong Kong airport, I sat morosely swiping through the hundreds of pictures from Beijing, Guilin, Chengdu, and Yellow Mountain on my phone, wishing I could stay longer, just a little bit longer, and experience the country as a resident instead of as a tourist.

The universe has a way of surprising you when you least expect it. Or maybe it was that I wished so hard to go back that destiny had little choice. Just a few months later, I was back in Beijing as a full-time salaried, apartment-dwelling, grumbling-about-tourists-during-Golden-Week member of the population. I registered Taobao and Ele.me accounts (“*Ni de waimai daole!*” one of the first Chinese sentences I learned: “Your takeout food has arrived”), much to the chagrin of my bank account. I worshipped at the altar of WeChat, spending at least sixty percent of my day finding and adding new stickers to my collection.

I grumbled about being forced to pay cash in other countries when traveling after becoming so used to scanning a QR code for everything.



July 2019: The author with her colleagues. by Duan Wei

“I thought this was the 21st century,” I sulked while paying in paper bills from ancient times. I started pining for WeChat and Alipay.

During inevitable dinnertime debates about northern vs southern China, I found myself obliged to vociferously defend the former as though I had lived there my entire

life and once nearly hit someone over the head with a *chuan'er* (barbecue) stick. I was delighted to discover that actual Chinese food in China was absolutely nothing like the neon-orange “Chinese food” I had grown up eating back home, “Chindian” as we called it. In China, food involves so much more than noodles and

dumplings (though I would happily subsist on just those two for years). After learning about the Eight Major Cuisines of China, I once embarked on a weeks-long project to cook a dish from each culinary school. It was the most I ever cooked in my entire life.

After a vehement struggle, I finally got acclimated to mealtimes much earlier than I was used to in India. Back home, lunch is eaten around 1 p.m., and it's perfectly regular to sit down at the dinner table around 9 or 9:30 p.m. Before I got used to the new schedule, I was aided by considerable mid-meal snacking—11:30 a.m. was practically still breakfast time for me! Something I thoroughly failed to embrace was a ferocious cultural disdain for air-conditioning. Oh well. Thankfully, my intrepid little desk fan helps greatly. Now if only I could carry it everywhere with me. To be fair, I'm sure there's already one such contraption available in the vast virtual aisles of Taobao.

I guzzled mug after mug of scalding hot water throughout the day (in every season), ate my own weight in *jiaozi* (Chinese dumplings) and learned to leap out of the way of a speeding *waimai* (takeout food) delivery guy. Developing the skill to avoid speeding bikers is how I'm still alive to type this today. That and hot water, of course.

The more I navigated the little details missed by tourists' eyes that make life in China distinct, the more I began to feel at home. That Chinese and Indian customs, habits, preferences share several parallels certainly helped. Many things about familial expectations and cultural norms that perplexed my Western friends were old hat to me. Even the infamous *chabuduo* culture has an Indian counterpart: *jugaad*. Beijing's (very tentatively) organized chaos reminded me of Mumbai. The way

social relationships functioned, even similarities in our palates... such pockets of similarity provided great comfort during my first few months in China thousands of miles from home. Even the rush hour battle on the subway felt familiar. But I learned quickly not to assume I could handle spicy food because I had grown up eating it. Chili peppers in China are a whole different level of fiery and I experienced this first-hand after ordering *malatang* (a kind of spicy hot pot) extra-spicy. I think that meal may have very possibly taken a grenade to my sinuses for life.

But more than any cultural (or culinary) aspect, the thing that truly made Beijing feel like home was simple: the people. Warm colleagues taught me much, and wonderful friends, both Chinese and other expats, always had my back and accompanied me on some memorable trips. Nina taught me to fold dumplings, Yan introduced me to the unsuspected horrors of *baijiu* (distilled liquor), and Cici and Dave guided me on a hike along the unrestored Jinshanling section of the Great Wall. Nancy flew with me to Vietnam, and Erica who took care of me when I hurt my ankle and could barely walk.


The brutal summer heat was made bearable by regular doses of extremely milky and sweet milk tea I bought from a small store right outside my office building. My visits became so often that the shopkeeper would have my drink ready by the time I reached the door. For the couple of minutes I was in her shop, I'd practice my meager Chinese with the extremely chatty *laoban* (literally "boss"), which is what Chinese people call the owner of a shop, and find myself looking up new words in advance so I could expand my chats with her—very, very slowly. Now, if other customers are in the shop, she



The author at her favorite spicy hot pot restaurant in Beijing. courtesy of the author

introduces me as the “pretty Indian girl,” a phrase I must admit I'm thoroughly pleased about.

I'd have similar broken conversations with the old couple who lived next door. Often, when they'd get watermelon, one would knock on our door with a bowl heaping with watermelon slices. Once they delivered an entire watermelon to me and my roommate. It was the size of a (very heavy) football. We loved those visits. In the mornings when leaving for work, I'd sometimes run into the elderly man taking a brisk walk around the community garden or his wife returning from a bike ride. We'd always wave and smile at each other, and when I went out of town, they took care of my plant.

My years in Beijing and China would not have been nearly as memorable, special or fun without the bonds I made. The people I met are what will stay with me long after my time in China ends—hopefully until I can meet them again. 

Xinjiang Relics Exhibition

July 7 - September 9, 2019
National Museum of China, Beijing

This exhibition showcases a total of 191 cultural relics from the pre-Qin period (2100-221 B.C.) to the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368). The exhibited pieces, all excavated from north-western China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, include pottery, metal works, textiles, wooden wares, paper, Buddha statues and glass works.

Some official documents and records on display show various ethnic languages from the Han (206 B.C.-220 A.D.) and Tang (618-907) dynasties to help visitors better understand Xinjiang's historical and cultural features and the region's position and role in the diverse and integrated pattern of Chinese culture.

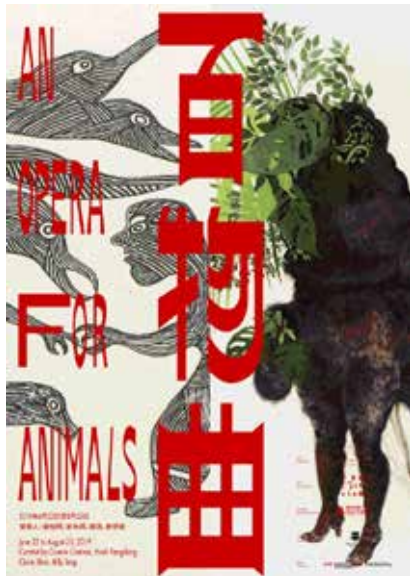


A painted double-ear pot, dating back to 3,800 to 3,600 years ago, collected by Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region Museum. by Liu Tong

An Opera for Animals

June 22 - August 25, 2019
Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai

Featuring works of more than 50 contemporary artists from China and beyond, the exhibition breaks down boundaries between different genres of opera and traces the development process of the form of art to explore how primitive culture closely linked to animals and nature can be presented in modern institutions and how new possibilities can be created through the integration of different cultures.



Poster for the exhibition "An Opera for Animals."

Duet: A Tan Ping Retrospective

June 15 - September 22, 2019
Yuz Museum, Shanghai

This exhibition looks back on artist Tan Ping's 35-year career through more than 40 works including paintings, prints, field paintings and videos. Tracing the artist's growth path, living style and thinking process, it marks the changes in his art style with the development of the times.

Tan Ping is an artist, educator and vice president of the Chinese National Academy of Arts. He graduated from the Central Academy of Fine Arts in 1984, studied in Germany in the late 1980s and received a master's degree and a Meisterschule degree. He was awarded an honorary doctorate by Kingston University.

His works have been collected by many important art galleries and museums including those in the United States and Germany as well as China.





A painted Bodhisattva head, dating back to the period from the Northern and Southern Dynasties (420-581) to the Tang Dynasty (618-907), collected by the National Museum of China. by Liu Tong



A painted pottery warrior on horse, from the Tang Dynasty (618-907), collected by Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Museum. by Liu Tong




Poster for the exhibition "Duet: A Tan Ping Retrospective."

Alternative Worlds

July 13 - August 12, 2019
CAFA Art Museum, Beijing

The exhibition is the first solo exhibition in China to display works created by Microsoft's AI robot Xiaoice. Emulating six female artists from different generations, countries and backgrounds, the robot created hundreds of paintings in various styles.

Xiaoice is reportedly the first AI system focusing on EQ, "emotional intelligence," which is one of the most complicated concepts in science. It is able to simulate singers, poets, painters and other creative professionals.

After spending 22 months studying the works of 236 famous painting masters from the past 400 years, Xiaoice was already able to independently create 100-percent original paintings inspired by text or other sources. 



Poster for the exhibition "Alternative Worlds."

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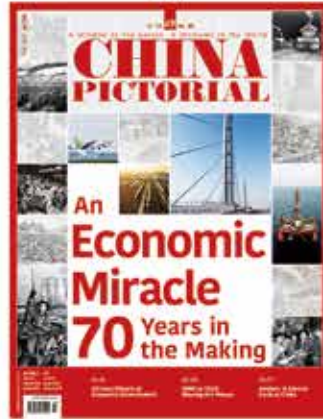
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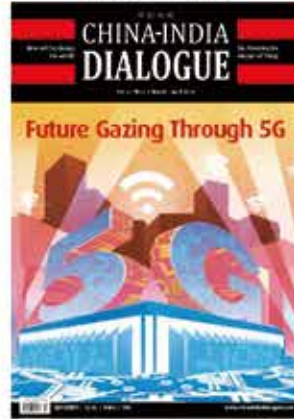
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