

After 36 hours in captivity in Iraq, seven Chinese men were released this Monday.

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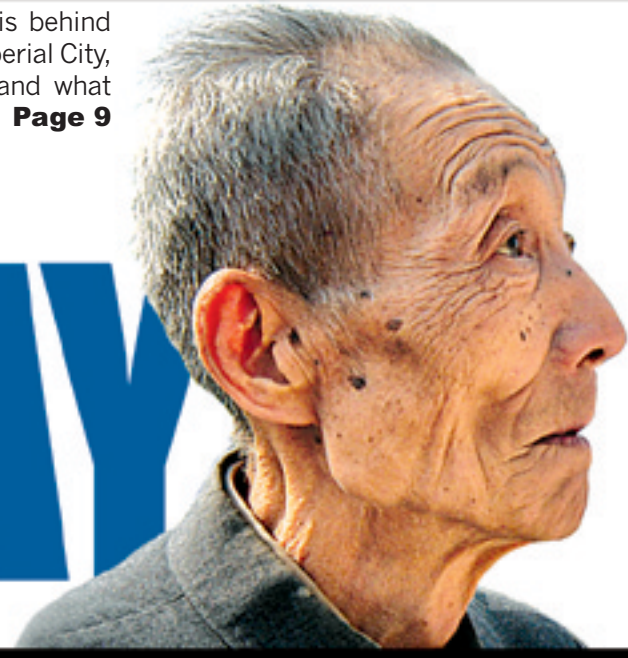
In keeping with the look of the gallery, remnants of the factory's past are smoothly integrated into the decor.

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He knows clearly what is behind every red gate in the Imperial City, what has been rebuilt and what has been renovated.

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# BEIJING TODAY

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## Compensation Sought By Naxi Musician

By Su Wei

Xuan Ke, 74-year-old expert in Naxi folk music and president of the Dayan Naxi Ancient Music Association, says he is confident he will win his defamation lawsuit against Wu Xueyuan, vice president of China's Traditional Music Association and *Arts Criticism*, a Beijing based literary magazine.

On March 25, Xuan filed a complaint to the Yunnan Lijiang Intermediate People's Court, claiming his reputation had been damaged by an article titled *What is Naxi Ancient Music?*, written by Wu and published in the first issue of *Arts Criticism* last September. Besides requesting a public apology from the two defendants, Xuan is demanding compensation of 100,000 yuan from Wu and 1.1 million yuan from the magazine. The case is due to open this Tuesday.

### A brand name?

Xuan Ke describes Wu Xueyuan's article in *Arts Criticism* as slanderous. "For the magazine, an academic one, how can they publish an article to defame a person? Why do they not let me to express my opinion?" he asked.

"I have been a friend of Xuan's for more than 20 years, there is no point for me to defame him," Wu told *Beijing Today* in a telephone interview Tuesday. "My article is an academic essay that seeks to determine what Naxi ancient music really is." He says based on his research, the term "Naxi ancient music" did not appear until 1994, when Xuan Ke changed the name of Lijiang dongjing music played by his Dayan Dongjing Ancient Music Association to Naxi ancient music. "What is referred to by Xuan as Naxi ancient music is actually the name of concert performed by Xuan and his group. It is a commercial brand name," Wu added.

Ma Jun, Xuan's lawyer, says it is the ancient music of the Naxi people that is performed, arguing that the form of an art being performed is not the art itself. "That is the name, the content under the name can be inconsistent," he said. "What Xuan has done over the past two decades is to engage in cultural industrialization. Through Xuan's promotion, people in China and abroad know about the Naxi people and Lijiang."

### Conflicting interpretations

Wu's central point is that Xuan's Naxi ancient music actually mixes three distinct musical forms that each have distinctly different origins and history; *dongjing*, *baisha xiyue* and *remeicuo*.

In his opinion, *dongjing* music, the main component of Xuan's Naxi ancient music, is a version of traditional Han folk music performed by the literati in ancient times to pay tribute to the ancient sages. It was adopted by several minority nationalities in Yunnan, including Zhuang, Bai, Yi and Naxi.

"*Dongjing* music and the way it is performed has retained its Han characteristics, rather than becoming part of the culture of any of those minority



Xuan Ke's Dayan Naxi Ancient Music Association

Photo by Photocom



Xuan Ke Photo by Shao Da

### Xuan Ke and the Dayan Naxi Ancient Music Association

Xuan Ke, president of the Dayan Naxi Ancient Music Association, was born in Lijiang, Yunnan Province, in 1930. He is of the Tibet-Naxi nationality.

The Dayan Naxi Ancient Music Association was officially established in 1987 by Xuan, He Yi'an and Yang Zenglie to carry out research and promote *dongjing* music, as well as to train young players. Since its de-

but concert in July 1988 it has performed all over the world, including in Great Britain, America, Holland, Belgium and Norway.

Xuan has lectured at many universities in China and abroad, on subjects including the Study of Music's Origin and Methodology, Civilization and Culture of the Naxi Nationality, Study on *Dongjing* Music of Lijiang and Study on *Baisha Xiyue*. He has published several theses, including *Music and Dance Originated from the Fear of Our Ancestors* and *Chorus Proceeds Unison*.

nationalities," Wu stressed. "In this regard, *Dongjing* music is nothing more than traditional Han music." *Baisha xiyue*, he says, was originally a Han musical form called *xiyue*. It was introduced to the Naxi people during the Ming Dynasty, developed locally and eventually came to be used as funeral music.

"Today it is actually a regenerated form of Naxi folk music," Wu said. "There are few Naxi people in Yunnan today who can play *baisha xiyue*, even though we have been making efforts to preserve the form since 1960. What is performed by Xuan's orchestra is one particular composition in this musical form, called *Duo*."

As for *remeicuo*, it is simply one

dance song from among a number of original Naxi folk music songs. "In the world heritage application, Xuan only includes one *remeicuo* piece, resulting in a distorted and incomplete description of Naxi folk music," he said.

A complete description of Naxi music culture should include folk song music, dance music, folk musical instruments, as well as the primitive religious *Dongba* song music and musical instruments," said Wu.

As far as Xuan Ke is concerned, "Wu has made a mistake due to his ignorance about the culture. Culture is like a ship, which both loads and unloads some goods each time it stops at a port. The culture of

the past is not the culture of today. Naxi ancient music is Naxi ancient music, that can never be disputed!"

Xuan says that in his understanding, Naxi ancient music is an ancient music of China that is inherited, kept and developed by Naxi people.

Ma Jun added, "In a country of many nationalities, it is impossible to have something which belongs purely to one specific nationality. Therefore it is difficult to distinguish what is part of Han culture and what is part of the minority nationalities' culture."

Xuan Ke writes in a book titled *Xuan Ke and Naxi Ancient Music* that there

are two components of Naxi ancient music. The first is *baisha xiyue* (White Sands and Elegant Music), played on traditional string and woodwind instruments, which was originally performed in honor of Kublai Khan, the first emperor of the Yuan Dynasty.

The other type is *dongjing* music (Cave Scripture Music), a form of Taoist music which was introduced to Yunnan from the central plains during the Ming and Qing Dynasties. According to the article, *dongjing* music has become an intrinsic part of Naxi culture since its introduction from other parts of China.

Xuan is quoted in Nanjing-based *Weekend* on December 3 last year as saying, "Remeicuo, a primitive music without syllabus nor temperament, now has developed a fixed rhythm and expression. The earliest music in the world is combination of songs and dance, so dance can be called music."

When *Beijing Today* contacted *Arts Criticism* on Tuesday, Chen Xiaohong, director of the editorial department said it was not appropriate to make any comment before the case was heard. However in December last year, deputy editor-in-chief Zhao Chunqiang, was quoted in *Weekend* as saying that Xuan was nothing more than "a cultural agent." He said, "Naxi ancient music has become a brand name for Lijiang and there is no doubt it has made a great contribution to economic development there. But the music is not what Xuan claims it to be. It is rather a combination of musical forms."

### Setback for heritage claim

"Although Wu defames me by saying I have been deceiving the public, media and government officials, he is actually attacking the Naxi nationality," Xuan said.

Ma added, "The real reason for Wu to write the article is he wants to prevent Xuan's application for world heritage listing from succeeding. He defames the local government by saying the application is a reflection of local protectionism and narrow nationalism."

"If Xuan only used Naxi ancient music as a brand name for his commercial music performance, I would probably have not said anything," said Wu. "But I could not stand by while government officials in Lijiang applied to have Naxi ancient music listed as a world oral and intangible heritage, including *dongjing* music, *baisha xiyue* and *remeicuo*. The application is a serious issue, we need to stick to that which is scientifically-proven, complete and reliable in order for it to be able to stand for a complete Naxi music culture system. Otherwise, we are not protecting Naxi culture, rather we are dismembering it. Hence we are making Naxi and even China lose its dignity when those international experts find that what is claimed in the application is not true."

(Continued on page 2)

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# Beijing Games Provides Big Business

By Hou Mingxin

A total of 376 projects related to the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games will be promoted at next week's Market Promotion Conference on Olympic Economy, according to a senior official from the Beijing Municipal Planning and Reform Commission.

Liu Jingsheng, director of the commission's Olympic Economy Office, told *Beijing Today*

Wednesday that the projects, worth 135 billion yuan, are in the areas of infrastructure construction and renovation, Olympic venues, high-technology industrialization, education and culture, modern manufacturing, tourism and environmental protection.

According to Liu, the implementation of the Olympic Economy Program will create a huge

demand in the areas of investment, consumption, industries, products and services.

Liu said that between now and 2008, there will be over 280 billion yuan worth of Olympic and related projects in Beijing in need of investment.

"The purpose for us to hold the Market Promotion on Olympic Economy is to introduce the business opportunities arising out of

the Olympic Economy in Beijing. Through the participation of both domestic and foreign enterprises and organizations and their further contribution to Beijing's development, it is our deepest desire that we will utilize a holistic and balanced approach with our economic development, resources and environment to accelerate the modernization of Beijing as an international city," Liu said.

"In order to encourage international enterprises and domestic enterprises outside Beijing to invest in Beijing, we will provide equal policy as local enterprises," Liu said.

According to Liu, an investment company has been set up to collaborate with private investors on project organization and operations.

The commission's statistics

show that as of Wednesday, nearly 300 domestic and overseas enterprises have registered to take part in the conference, and senior managers and representatives from over 30 Fortune 500 firms, including GE, Dell, Boeing, Nortel Networks, Wal-Mart and Kodak will attend.

The conference will be held on April 18 and 19 at the Beijing Hotel.

## Kodak to Share Olympic Experience

By Chu Meng

As a long-standing sponsor of the Olympic Games, Eastman Kodak is going to share market experience and make the most of its involvement in the Beijing Olympic economy, deputy director of public relations Yin Shaogang told *Beijing Today* Tuesday.

Kodak is one of the TOP (The Olympic Partner program) Partners for the 2008 Olympics.

Yin told *Beijing Today* Tuesday that Kodak will, as always, seize the Olympic economic opportunities in the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games to show its first range products and digital technologies, raise awareness of its leading role in the imaging industry.

"Kodak is extremely proud of our support and long-term commitment to the Olympic movement, and we understand the marketing value that the Olympic Games present," said the spokesman.

"We are going to devote significant resources to fulfill Kodak's Olympic sponsorship and we won't overlook the equally important market for the following ten to twenty years as well," he added.

"The Olympics are not only a magnificent sports meeting worldwide, but also a distinguished gathering of enterprises around the globe. The success of 2008 Olympic Games will inevitably enhance China's process of commercialization. In a much more open, transparent and just competitive environment, every single step of the Chinese government and enterprises is closely watched by the whole world," the spokesman said.

## SINOPEC Promises Green Energy for Olympics

By Chu Meng

SINOPEC Beijing Oil Products aims to serve consumers and support the capital's Olympic economic construction by providing high quality environmental friendly energies, Li Zhimin, head of the company's public relations department told *Beijing Today* Wednesday.

As the only representative of the petrochemical industry taking part in the Market Promotion Conference, SINOPEC Beijing Oil Product will highlight its commitment to producing healthy, safe and clean oil.

"We are setting up efficient and convenient end-sale networks of fuel stations and operation points in Beijing. And upon the basis of star-grade administration standard, the company is going to conduct all-round and all-weather services, integrating the fuel filling, repairing, maintenance and sales into an organic whole," the spokesman said. "Both heavy machineries in the construction of Olympic venues and vehicles serving facilities and athletes will create a huge demand for petroleum. So we are very optimistic about the Olympic market."



The National Swimming Center, one of the key Olympic sports venues, is due to be completed in 2006.

Photo by Photocom

By Zhang Bo

Altogether 376 projects will be promoted at the Market Promotion Conference on Olympic Economy conference, including 22 key projects and 354 ordinary projects, aggregate investment for which totals 135 billion yuan.

The projects cover fields of infrastructure, high-tech, modern agriculture and manufacturing, and culture, education, sports and sanitation.

The 22 key projects include the construction of four new subway lines with a total of 87 stations and a total length of 103.5 kilometers and investment of 50 billion yuan; natural gas facility projects with an estimated consumption volume of 226 million cubic meters per year and total investment amounting to 133 million yuan; an 800-bed comprehensive hospital, with the funds needed for buildings, infrastructure facilities and equipment estimated at 855 million yuan; high-tech projects such as a construction project for an electric vehicle powered by a proton exchange membrane fuel cell; energy conservation and environmental projects with total funds of 265.8 million yuan, such as waste and used tire recovery projects and a terrestrial heat exploitation project.

# Olympic Projects Promoted

The 354 ordinary projects consist of infrastructure projects (62 projects, 22.6 billion yuan), modern manufacturing projects (15 projects, 16.3 billion yuan), high-tech projects (197 projects, 10 billion yuan), culture, education, sports and sanitation projects (27 projects, 16.9 billion yuan), commercial and tourism projects (23 projects, 10.4 billion yuan), modern agriculture projects (25 projects, 1.6 billion yuan) and energy conservation and environmental projects (5 projects, 280 million yuan).

The infrastructure projects

high-tech projects, 117 are electronic and information projects, which are the mainstay of Beijing's high-tech industry, such as telecommunications, computers, information technology, digital TV and integrated circuit projects.

The culture, education, sports and sanitation projects cover education facility construction, cooperation in running schools, development of teaching, research and production projects, construction of high level hospitals and reconstruction of district sports centers.

Tourism projects are related mainly to eight suburban folk-custom and ecological tourism projects with funds of 1.5 billion yuan, covering the Peking Man Site at Zhoukoudian, Shangfangshan National Forest Park, Yunjusi Temple and Shidu Scenic spot.

The main purpose of the promotion of modern agriculture projects is to attract funds, technologies and talents, as well as seek cooperative partners in the fields of gardening, fruit processing and livestock processing.

Detailed energy conservation and environment projects and information about related enterprises seeking investments and technologies will also be promoted at the conference.

include: three suburban subway line projects totaling 7.2 billion yuan, 26 highway and urban road projects amounting to 9.1 billion yuan, eight operating concession projects of planned gas stations along the Sixth Ring Road and the Beijing-Chengde Highway, and construction of a natural gas pipeline and sewage treatment plant along the Sixth Ring Road.

The modern manufacturing projects center on the automobile, green food, and environmentally friendly building material industries.

Out of the selected 200

(Continued from page 1)

According to UNESCO's definition, oral and intangible heritage is "the totality of tradition-based creations of a cultural community, expressed by a group of individuals, and recognized as reflecting the expectations of a community."

Wu says his real purpose is to protect Naxi culture, and that there are certain to be conflicts when a culture that has coexisted across several nationalities is defined as belonging to one. "In terms of Dongjing music, I respect all the nationalities in which it is popular. Simply

saying the music belongs to the Naxi nationality will hurt other nationalities," he said. "I want to make it clear that the so called Naxi ancient music, is simply the name of a concert, and should be taken for no more than that." He stressed that the reason Xuan was suing him is that Xuan wants to protect the title of the performance, and thus protect himself.

"The only thing that I want to say about the case is that I believe what I said is consistent with the history and is true. I believe the law is fair and the

judge will arrive at a fair decision. But I have to say it is a pity that an academic discussion has become a legal issue," Wu concluded.

**A renewed debate**

Experts from China's Music Academy, meanwhile, have been unwilling to comment on the case. "Both parties involved are my friends. I can talk about the music from an academic point of view, as I have been engaged in its study for more than ten years, but I do not want to cause any trouble," said one researcher, who preferred to remain anonymous, when con-

tacted by *Beijing Today*.

Deng Jun, of the Music Research Institute of the China Art Research Academy, told *Beijing Today* Tuesday that the case comes as no surprise to him. "The old academic debate on 'Naxi Ancient Music' is raised again," he said.

"Looking at the case objectively, the arguments of the two parties involved are from different stand points," he highlighted. "Arts Criticism" is an academic magazine published by the China Art Research Academy, so it looks at and appraises music from an academic point of

view. Just as no one would doubt or deny the contribution that Xuan has made in the promotion of Naxi nationality music, I think also no one would deny there is a certain commercial relationship between Xuan and his Naxi ancient music."

Li Jinfeng, of China's Traditional Music Association, said, "Another point is that the government should take action to appraise whether projects put forward for World Heritage listing are truly qualified, and prevent such applications being used as a means to further their political agendas."

## GE Glad to be Partner of 2008 Olympics

By Hou Mingxin

"To Beijing, the Olympic Games in 2008 is not only a 17-day sports event, it represents massive development opportunities for the city and the corporations that want to play a part in that growth. GE is fully committed to Beijing with our resources in China and globally," Steve Schneider, GE Vice President, Chairman and CEO of GE China told *Beijing Today* Wednesday through an email interview.

Schneider said GE has a unique position to be an active participant in the Olympic facility construction for the 2008 Games as well as in the expansion of Beijing's infrastructure.

"First, GE is the world's preeminent infrastructure and technology company. Its product and service portfolio aligns well with the need of Beijing to stage a great Olympic Games and to build a great city."

"Second, GE is a global partner of International Olympic Committee for the TOP program in 2005-2012 ... so GE is also a primary sponsor of the Beijing 2008 Games."

"Thirdly, we view ourselves as a strategic partner of China in the way not only in which we sell and make products in China, but also in the areas of sharing best management practices and learning."

## Green Technology for Green Olympics

By Chu Meng

World leading chemical enterprise Rohm and Hass see the Market Promotion Conference on Olympic Economy as a great opportunity to promote their conceptions of developing green and sustainable chemical technologies, Shen Hong, for Rohm and Hass (China)'s government relations department told *Beijing Today* Tuesday.

As one of the leading foreign participants in the conference, Rohm and Hass will highlight their goal of bringing the most advanced and environmentally friendly chemical technologies to China for the Olympics.

"Rohm and Hass Company is always attaching great importance to environment, health, safety and sustainable development conceptions in their operation. We are doing our best to bring people in Beijing a healthier and safer living surrounding, as green as possible," emphasized the spokesman.

Thomas P. Grehl, vice president of Rohm and Hass, said in a recently published speech, "In fact, we prefer taking Beijing Olympic commercial opportunity as a platform to introduce our green chemistry concepts, rather than merely making money."

# Book Giant Opens New Page in Investment

By Sun Yongjian

The Xinhua bookstore chain, China's largest official publishing enterprise, has become a surprising flash point for interest among foreign venture capital investors.

"We are actively promoting the process of shareholding reform. Everyday, we receive lots of offers from domestic and foreign investors interested in getting involved and may pick one or two to do so in the next two to three months," Zhang Yas-

han, the leading cadre of the head store's office, told *Beijing Today* last Friday.

According to a company insider who requested anonymity, several securities firms are overseeing Xinhua bookstore's reform and the company could list on the domestic stock market once reforms are reported to the government in May and then completed.

The source would not reveal the specific names of the firms involved

or details of the reform.

"We will stipulate that we must remain the majority shareholder, but we will welcome all kinds of investment, including foreign capital, to establish a shareholding enterprise. We hope the No. 2 shareholder will be a foreign enterprise," the source said.

In keeping with its World Trade Organization entry promises, China must allow foreign investment in domestic publication retailers by the end of this year.



Photo by Photocom

## Insurance Revenues Take Unprecedented Drop

By Zhao Hongyi

Revenues in China's life insurance sector dropped 2.09 percent in the first quarter of this year, Wu Dingfu, chairman of the China Insurance Regulatory Commission, said at the 2004 China Insurance Industry Forum in Beijing on April 10.

Wu attributed the decline, the first in the sector's two decades of development, to a lack of new, attractive products which led to a wave of price cuts last year and a resulting drop in business income.

"We need to perfect our business and product structures," he told colleagues from the insurance field at the forum.

## Central Bank Boosts Reserve Ratio

By Sun Yongjian

An overabundance of money in the system and other factors have given rise to fears that inflation could strike China's booming economy.

To stem that tide, the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, announced Sunday it would raise domestic commercial banks' deposit reserve ratio to 7.5 percent, a 0.5 hike, effective April 25.

By forcing banks to hold more of their deposits in cash, the move should effectively take about 110 billion yuan out of the financial system.

Some analysts have speculated that the central bank may go the extra step of hiking interest rates if inflation continues to threaten.

## Construction Bank to Tighten Credit Belt

By Xiao Yingying

China Construction Bank announced last Thursday that it would conduct thorough examinations of loans extended to restaurants and entertainment venues nationwide and install mechanisms to drop sub-standard performers. The measures are another of the bank's moves to control and reduce its non-performing assets.

The two sectors have been targeted because both are relatively high risk, characterized by seasonal business swings and significant capital fluidity.

Statistics released by China Construction Bank show that the catering and entertainment venue sectors have higher-than-average rates of defaulting on loans, 40 percent for restaurants in 2003 and 61 percent for entertainment venues.

Wang Dayong, deputy director of the National Development Bank Expert Commission, was quoted as saying that the bank's plan was an innovation from normal methods such as offering differential interest rates.

## Massive Trust Issued to Handle Bad Loans

By Sun Yongjian

The Industrial and Commercial Bank of China announced yesterday the launch of an aggressive project targeted at securitizing and pawning off some of its many non-performing loans.

That project takes the form of a trust cooperatively established by the bank, Credit Suisse First Boston and domestic enterprises CITIC Securities Shareholding Co., and the China Credit Trust Co.

The 8 billion yuan trust is intended to handle 2.6 billion yuan of non-performing loans. In order to protect investors' interests, a profit-guarantee account and clause of partial counter purchase will be included in the product structure.

## City Seeks Advice to Promote Financial Industry

By Zhao Hongyi

The local government is determined to develop the city into a leading domestic financial hub. To realize its ambitious visions, heavyweight figures from the worldwide industry have been invited to provide advice and opinions, Dong Hong, deputy secretary general of the municipal government, said at press briefing Tuesday for the upcoming Beijing International Finance Forum scheduled for May 19.

The forum will be hosted by the municipal government and the country's three financial market supervisors, the China Insurance Regulatory Commission, China Securities Regulation Commission and China Banking Regulatory Commission.

The list of invitees includes senior officials from the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and Organization of Economic Cooperation and

Development, leaders of both domestic and overseas banks and insurance companies, economists, scholars and media reporters.

Aside from development, the regulation and supervision of the financial industry will also be key topics. A fourth issue likely under discussion is how to build flexible mechanisms to allow the local financial industry to better meet the demands of the rapidly growing market.

Last year, Beijing's financial industry, including the banking and insurance fields, posted revenues of 51.3 billion yuan, accounting for 23 percent of the income of the city's service industry and nearly 15 percent of Beijing's 361.19 billion GDP.

Under its WTO accession promises, China must give overseas banks access to conduct renminbi business by the end of this year.

## First Plot of CBD Land Put on Auction Block

By Sherry Tan

A 19,955-square-meter plot of land, the first property from the city's Central Business District available for purchase since the municipal government began commercial land sales earlier this year, was put up for auction by Chaoyang District authorities at the Beijing Land Reserve Center on Tuesday.

US-based real estate services and investment management firm Jones Lang LaSalle has been appointed the exclusive agent of the auctions.

"The government hopes to use the

sale to assess the value of CBD land in the open market, to increase its revenues for the further development of the CBD and to create a fair and transparent land allocation system," said an official from the Beijing Land Reserve Center-CBD Branch who requested anonymity.

The coveted plot is available for a 50-year leasehold tenure and zoned for commercial purposes. A number of other commercial plots in Beijing have been on auction at the center since in March and the current offer will run through early June.



## Chicken Returns to the Table

A vendor shows a chicken to a customer at the Baliqiao market in Beijing on Saturday, after the city allowed the resumption of the live poultry trade. During the outbreak of the disease, the Chinese government used a series of measures to protect areas not affected by bird flu and to control the spread of the disease. Nearly nine million birds have been slaughtered since the first case in the country was confirmed in Dingdang Town, Long'an County in South China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region on January 27.

Photo by Photocom

## Lucent China Brass Canned for Bribery

By Shan Jinliang

Four top leaders of Lucent Technologies China were given the boot by the company's US headquarters last Tuesday after being accused of bribery, the *Beijing Times* reported Tuesday. Replacements should be appointed early next week.

The US telecom equipment maker released a statement this week that it had "found incidents and internal control deficiencies" in its operations in China. That statement continued that the four involved had potentially violated the US' Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, regulations that allow headquarters of American companies to fire corrupt employees in their offices overseas.

The four executives were Lucent China President Jason Chi, Chief Operating Officer Michael Kwan, a financial manager and a marketing executive. Kwan denied the bribery allegations and said his firing had put a terrible dent in his reputation, according to a Tuesday report in the *21st Century Economic Tribune*.

Until a new president is named, Lucent China will report directly to President of Global Sales Robert Warstler, according to the company statement.

Lucent's shares fell two percent on the New York Stock Exchange the morning the news was announced.

The problems in China were disclosed after a probe of Lucent's Saudi Arabia offices led to an internal audit of its operations in 23 other foreign countries, said the statement.

If the bribery allegations prove true, they could result in fines of \$2 million for Lucent and \$100,000 for the four executives involved, in keeping with the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act.

## Haier Plans Takeover for Backdoor HK Listing

By Xiao Yingying

Domestic appliance giant Haier Group announced plans last Tuesday to grab a dominant stake in Hong Kong-based mobile phone maker Haier-CCT Holdings for HK\$1.5 billion (\$193 million) of new shares, convertible bonds and cash. The move has been interpreted as an indirect means for the company to get listed on the Hong Kong stock market.

The group, China's largest appliance maker, said it would inject its HK\$1.03 billion (\$132 million) washing machine operation and other appliance arms into Haier-CCT, thereby upping its equity stake in the unit from 30 percent to a majority 57 percent. CCT Telecom Holdings had been the controlling shareholder in the company.

Following the deal, Haier-CCT will be renamed Haier

Electronics Group Co. and seek a new listing status. However, the success of those efforts will be conditional on approval from the Hong Kong stock exchange, the green light from Haier-CCT's independent shareholders and other factors.

Haier Group President Yang Mianmian was quoted in *Nanfang Daily* on April 8 as saying that the company's true intention was to inject its remaining white goods business into Haier-CCT in order to make it the group's listed flagship in the research, development, manufacturing and selling of white goods, meaning air conditioners, refrigerators, freezers, and front-loading washing machines.

Haier Group is currently listed as an A share in the Shanghai stock exchange.

## Local Merger Creates Tourism Titan

By Zhao Hongyi

With peak tourist season quickly approaching, the local government is preparing to merge three heavy-weight tourism service providers into one new giant company later this month, *Beijing News* reported on Monday.

The three companies involved are travel agent Beijing Capital Tourism Co., luxury goods retailer Beijing New Yansha Holding Co. and famed Beijing duck restaurant chain Beijing Quanjude Co.

The new conglomerate will have over 20 billion yuan in total assets and own nearly all the hotels, restaurants, travel agencies and other tourist service providers along Chang'an Avenue. The purpose of the merger, according to Duan Qiang, chairman of Beijing Capital Tourism and former vice mayor of the city, is to prepare for competition after the arrival of foreign rivals.

According to its promises for World Trade Organiza-

tion entry, China must open the domestic retail industry, including the tourism services sector, to overseas companies by December 11.

Some analysts, however, have questioned the role of the local government in these moves and their effectiveness.

"Simple repackaging cannot solve basic problems and may actually just cause more trouble," Li Fei, assistant professor at the School of Economics and Management under Tsinghua University was quote as saying in the report.

Wang Yongping, vice president of the Beijing-based magazine *Commercial Times* defended the mergers, saying, "The government has to take care of state-owned assets. When you are facing wolves in the front and have a cliff at your back, the only way out is to work together to try to fight your way out."

# Cheney to Promote Nuke Reactors to China

Washington, April 9 (AP) - On a trip to China to talk about high-stakes issues like terrorism and North Korea, US Vice President Dick Cheney will have another task - making a pitch for Westinghouse's US nuclear power technology.

At stake could be billions of dollars in business in coming years and thousands of American jobs. The initial installment of four reactors, costing \$1.5 billion apiece, would also help narrow the huge US trade deficit with China.

No one has ordered a new nuclear power reactor in the United States in three decades and the next one, if it comes, is still years away. So, China is being viewed by the US industry as a potential bonanza.

Some critics are concerned about such technology transfers.

"This pitch could not be more poorly timed," Henry Sokolski, executive director of the Nonproliferation Policy Education Center, told a hearing of the House International Relations Committee recently.

The leading competitors are US-based Westinghouse Electric Co. and a French rival, Areva, which is peddling its next-generation reactor built by its Framatome subsidiary.

China currently has nine operating reactors, including French, Canadian, Russian, and Japanese designs as well as their own model, producing 6,450 megawatts of power.

Even with the surge in reactor construction, nuclear power will only account

for 8 percent of China's future electricity needs. Chinese officials have estimated that by 2020 the country will need an additional 32,000 megawatts from its nuclear industry, or about 32 additional reactors.

(Josef Hebert)

## Comment:

Soon after Cheney's visit to China, the annual meeting of the US-China Joint Commission on Commerce and Trade will be held next week in Washington. Both meetings attach great importance to trade disputes between the two countries.

The meeting, once handled by lower-level officials, has been upgraded to the ministerial level. Chinese Vice Premier Wu Yi will hold talks with US Commerce Secretary Donald Evans and trade representative Robert Zoellick.

The latest trade dispute was a US complaint to the World Trade Organization claiming that China offers its semiconductor industry unfair protection. Other thorny issues include piracy and copyright infringement, and concerns that the Chinese currency is undervalued, giving the country's manufacturers an unfair advantage over foreign competitors.

Wu will raise China's concerns in Washington. One of them is US restrictions on the export to China of so-called dual-use technology goods that might serve military as well as civilian uses - including high-speed computers and some encryption software.

(Xiao Yingying)



US vice president, Dick Cheney, and his wife, Lynne, arrived in Beijing on Tuesday.

Xinhua Photo

## Kim Jong-il to Visit China

Seoul (Reuters) - North Korean leader Kim Jong-il will visit China soon to try to mend a rift between the two traditional communist allies, a South Korean newspaper reported on Monday, quoting diplomatic and government sources.

China has played a key role in trying to persuade North Korea to resolve a dispute over its nuclear programs, although the talks hosted by Beijing have made little headway.

Kim has indicated his wish to visit several senior Chinese officials who have gone to Pyongyang since last October over the nuclear crisis, the *JoongAng Ilbo* newspaper quoted a diplomatic source as saying.

The visit would be Kim's third known trip to Pyongyang's Korean War ally and economic benefactor since coming to power after the death of his father and national founder Kim Il-sung 10 years ago.

Kim's tours of Chinese technology firms, farms and financial markets briefly raised hopes that North Korea would implement Chinese-style market economic reforms. The country introduced price and wage increases in July 2002.

But the anniversary of Kim Il-sung's birthday on April 15, a major North Korean holiday, will likely push the visit back to at least until after the end of the month, the report said.

## Analyst's Take:

North Korea started economic reforms in July 2002.

As the first step, North Korea relaxed controls on wages, allowed a free market to operate, and allowed market prices to fluctuate.

It then established the Sinuiju Special Economic Zone bordering China in September the same year, Mount Kumgang Tourist Zone and Kaesong Industrial Zone later on.

The critical point in North Korea's economic development today is inflation, which is taking off. Finding a way to solve the problem must be one of Kim's purposes in his visit to China.

North Korea started the economic reforms at a time when its economy was in a bad situation. This imposes great obstacles and difficulties. But it has determined to transform itself into an open market with new concepts and economic structures. Therefore, if the outside does not impose undue pressure and obstacles, a new open North Korea is inevitable in the new century.

— Gu Shan, senior editor, China News Service

# Wal-Mart to Continue Expansion

Los Angeles, April 8 (AP) - Wal-Mart officials said they are pressing ahead with plans to open 40 stores in California in the next four to six years, despite a string of setbacks.

The world's largest company spent more than \$1 million trying to persuade residents in the Los Angeles suburb of Inglewood to approve a Tuesday ballot initiative clearing the way for a jumbo-size store. But residents rejected the initiative by a 3-2 margin.

Despite that and other stumbles, the Bentonville, Arkansas-based company is undeterred in its California expansion plans, said Bob McAdam, vice president for corporate affairs.

Though shoppers pack the stores, Wal-Mart has faced opposition throughout the US. The stakes rose in California after the company announced plans in 2002 to open Supercenters there.

Critics say Wal-Mart stores, particularly the roughly 200,000-square-foot Supercenters, lead to jammed roads and worsen suburban

sprawl. Labor unions say they create low-benefit, low-wage jobs and drive mom-and-pop stores out of business.

The company rejects the criticisms, saying its stores benefit consumers and attract other businesses, leading to more jobs.

Tuesday's defeat was at least the second time a majority of voters blocked the company's efforts in the state. Last month, residents in San Marcos, outside San Diego, forced a referendum on a City Council decision to approve

a new store and ultimately overturned it.

Anti-Wal-Mart sentiment lingers in areas where unions are strong and it remains an influential issue with many elected officials. In Los Angeles and other municipalities, city officials have either passed, or are considering, ordinances to block the warehouse-sized stores.

(Alex Veiga)

## Analyst's Take:

Though successful in the US, Canada and Mexico, whose revenues represent 80 percent

of the giant's total, Wal-Mart has had difficulties in exploring the global market.

Condemnation over exploitation of third world workers is a problem.

In 1994, Wal-Mart opened its first store in Hong Kong. But due to a variety of problems it had to withdraw two years later.

In 1996, Wal-Mart entered Indonesia. But in the political turmoil in 1997, the store was looted and destroyed in a fire. Wal-Mart escaped from the country in panic.

Wal-Mart then purchased two retailing companies in Germany. It brought its own operational system into the local channels but this proved a failure and led to losses of hundreds of millions of dollars.

But Wal-Mart has a reliable supplier base and over \$11 billion cash in hand. It still has the strength to expand worldwide. Overseas markets have generated one fifth of the revenue and profit of the giant's total.

— Zhou Dehao, People's Daily reporter in New York

## WAL★MART



AFP Photo

# IMF Warns US on Deficit

Washington, April 15 (AP) - Uncontrolled US budget deficits would pose a serious threat to global prosperity in coming years as rising interest rates depress economic growth in the United States and around the world, the International Monetary Fund warned Wednesday.

The IMF released a new analysis that predicted if nothing is done to get control of the soaring US deficits, it would shave global economic output by 4.2 percent by 2020 and reduce US economic growth by 3.7 percent during the same period.

IMF economists said much of the adverse impact would occur because of increased bor-

rowing demands in the United States to finance the budget deficit. This would drive up US interest rates and interest rates in other countries as the global supply of available capital is reduced, they said.

The IMF's forecast that the US budget deficit will be a significant drag on growth reflected what will occur if there is no improvement in the deficit, which the Bush administration projects will hit \$521 billion this year, a record in dollar terms.

President Bush submitted a budget to Congress this year which projects that he will be able to cut the deficit in half over the next five years, reducing it to a shortfall of \$237 bil-

lion in 2009.

The IMF analysis of the economic impact of the US budget deficits represented the latest in a series of reports in which the 184-nation international lending agency has urged stronger measures to get control of the deficit.

Responding to the study, US Treasury Department spokesman Tony Fratto said the president's tax cuts had helped make the United States an engine of world growth. "Clearly, the global economy is better off because of the strong growth in the United States," Fratto said.

The IMF report conceded that the US deficit, which reflected in part the impact of

President Bush's tax cuts, was useful in helping the United States and the global economy recover from the adverse effects of a number of shocks, such as the 2001 recession, the terrorist attacks and the bursting of the stock market bubble.

However, the IMF said it was important to get the deficit under control now, before rising interest rates greatly increase the cost of servicing government debt.

It also warned that the huge US budget deficit could have other adverse impacts on the US economy such as helping increase the country's foreign trade deficit and putting downward pressure on the US dollar.

(Martin Crutsinger)

## SEC Charges Time

### Warner

Washington, April 14 (Reuters) - The US Securities and Exchange Commission is to formally accuse Time Warner Inc. of improperly booking more than \$400 million in advertising revenue, *The Washington Post* reported on Tuesday.

The case alleges that Time Warner and its America Online unit misled investors about the financial health of AOL by pumping up ad revenue in numerous deals, and by inflating AOL subscriber numbers, the newspaper said.

The improperly booked revenue related mainly to an ad deal with German media company Bertelsmann AG following Time Warner's 2001 merger with America Online Inc.

## Bundesbank Governor Under Pressure

Frankfurt, April 15 (AFP) - The German government is calling for its central bank governor Ernst Welteke to resign.

Last week, Welteke was reported to have allowed Dresdner Bank to pick up the tab for a four-night stay by him and his family in the luxurious Adlon hotel in Berlin.

The Bundesbank's interim chief Juergen Stark and finance minister Hans Eichel are discussing how to handle the affair. Berlin is believed to want to install its own man, Caio Koch-Weser, in Welteke's place.

## DuPont to Cut 3,500 Jobs

### Jobs

New York, April 12 (Reuters) - DuPont, the No. 2 US chemicals maker, said on Monday it will cut 3,500 jobs, or 6 percent of its work force, as part of a previously announced plan to reduce costs by \$900 million in the face of high raw material prices.

The Wilmington, Delaware-based company aims to catch up with larger rival Dow Chemical Co. in the cost-cutting department. It said about 70 percent of the job cuts will come in the United States and Canada and 30 percent overseas, mostly in Western Europe. A spokesman declined to say which businesses would be hit hardest.

(Carolyn Koo)

## McDonald's to Increase Wi-Fi Access

New York, April 13 (Reuters) - McDonald's Corp., the world's largest fast food company, is expected to announce plans on Tuesday to expand the number of restaurants that have Wi-Fi wireless Internet access, the *Wall Street Journal* said.

A Wayport Inc. executive told the *Journal* his company has been chosen to provide the Wi-Fi service in "several thousand" restaurants within 12 months. The service will cost \$2.95 for up to two hours of use. Privately-held Wayport is based in Texas.



Reuters Photo

## Ford Recalls 363,440 Escapes

Detroit, April 13 (Reuters) - Ford Motor Co. is recalling 363,440 of its compact Escape sport utility vehicles to fix what the automaker described on Tuesday as an intermittent engine stalling problem.

Most of the vehicles affected by the recall are from the 2001, 2002 and early 2003 model years and were sold in North America with 3.0 liter V-6 engines, Ford said. It said about 41,440 were sold outside North America, however, including Europe.

Ford said it had received reports of eight alleged minor accidents stemming from the problem, three of which included allegations of minor injuries.

# Shape Up or Ship Out

Company forces employees to make weight limits or face the sack

By Shan Jinliang

Many employees of local appliance retailer Beijing Dazhong Electronics are planning to go on crash diets to slim down for fear of paying a literal price.

Their motivation is a company announcement made last Tuesday that any employees found overweight as of May 1 would face financial penalties.

Workers not within given weight standards in May will have their bonuses "adjusted." Their bonuses will be cut in half the next month and completely negated the third month. Any

employees still not sufficiently slimmed down at that point will be summarily fired.

The company announced that its weight standard was calculated by taking height in centimeters and subtracting 100 to come up with a figure for ideal weight in kilograms. Employees 25 percent heavier than that figure will be deemed "overweight."

Xiao Qin (pseudonym), a Dazhong employee who would currently qualify as overweight, told the *Beijing Times* on Sunday that the bonuses

were crucial, making up two-thirds of staff's annual incomes. She confessed that in order to drop to acceptable weight, she was going to give up meat and start riding a bicycle to work to get exercise.

The stringent policy has received extensive local press coverage, forcing the company to issue an explanation that the limits are actually flexible and solely intended to push employees to care for their personal health.

Wang Yanxing, assistant to Dazhong's chairman, told the

*Beijing Times* that weight has become an important factor determining work quality. "Staff members who don't meet the standard may be fired in the fourth month of the policy," he said, "but they would be allowed to come back if they reach the goal."

He added the company would consider adjusting the treatment of employees that seriously try to measure up but are not successful.

One unnamed employee told *Beijing Youth Daily* on Friday that Dazhong had a corporate

tradition of fitness, as company chairman Wang Dazhong was a sports buff who even rode a bicycle from Beijing to Guangzhou a few years ago.

Pan Feng, a lawyer at the Beijing Baoding Law Firm, was quoted in the *Beijing Times* on Saturday as saying that because weight had no direct connection to sales abilities, the policy was plain discrimination. He added it was a breach of national labor laws and that Dazhong employees could and should submit complaints to local labor authorities.



## Second Lady Inspects Ancient Temple

By Su Wei

Lynne Cheney, wife of US Vice President Dick Cheney, made her first trip to Beijing's Temple of Heaven on Wednesday morning while in China with her husband for a state-level visit.

Walking through the ancient temple, a sacred site where emperors prayed to heaven and their ancestors for good harvests, Mrs. Cheney smiled, waved and shook hands with local park-goers. She even stopped to watch such typical Beijing scenes as a group of elderly men crowded around a heated chess match, others walking with caged birds or playing music and singing.

She spent so much time in Qian Dian, the famed circular Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests, that trailing news photographers got anxious waiting for her to reemerge.

The Cheneys arrived in Beijing on Monday for a three-day visit, Dick Cheney's first trip to China as vice president.

## Stars Warm Market for Cold Mountain

By Dong Nan

Oscar winning actress Renee Zellweger and director Anthony Minghella came to Beijing last weekend to promote their epic film, *Cold Mountain*. On Monday, they met the local media in the run up to the movie's China debut on April 29.



Anthony Minghella and Renee Zellweger both said they loved Chinese films at Monday's press conference. Photos by Huang Liang

Minghella said he was a big fan of and deeply influenced by Chinese films. "I have been very moved by movies directed by Zhang Yimou, Chen Kaige, and Wong Kar Wai. I wish Chinese audiences will be equally moved by *Cold Mountain*," he added.

Zellweger also confessed to loving

the movies of Chinese superstars Zhang Yimou and Gong Li, especially *Raise the Red Lantern*.

The *Bridget Jones's Diary* star won an Oscar this year for best supporting actress for her role in *Cold Mountain*. She was accompanied on the China trip by rocker boyfriend Jack White,

while Minghella brought his wife, a Hong Kong resident.

The two couples went on a private sightseeing tour over the weekend, hitting such sights as the Panjiayuan antique market and the Great Wall. Zellweger returned to the United States on Wednesday.



Photo by Liu Lihua

## Monkey Man

By Wang Xiaoxiao

Squatting inside a small iron cage with a paper monkey mask on his face, animal rights activist Roah Hannidle caused a bit of a scene outside the Beijing China Assembly Hall last Friday afternoon.

The 27-year-old Australian was there to protest the arrival of a medical researcher from the US' Columbia University who conducts experiments on primates that have been

criticized as cruel and inhumane.

Hannidle is a member of the organization People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and has been following the Columbia researcher on a tour across Asia, including Seoul, Taiwan and Beijing. He has since moved on to Taiwan on the same mission.

PETA has been protesting to try to stop the ape experiments since July 2001.

## Local Court Schools Cheating Teachers in Law

By Dong Nan

A few local teachers who conned unwitting parents out of money have been getting a lesson in the power of the law. In the most recent incident, the Beijing Chongwen District People's Court on April 2 ordered a high school teacher from Chongwen to return 3,500 yuan he borrowed from the father of one of his students before May 31.

According to Song Xiujian, the presiding judge on the case, a far more serious case of teacher-perpetrated fraud occurred in the district last year. High school teacher Zhou Hong took advantage of his students' trusting parents by borrowing money and not paying it back. From 2001 to 2002, he cheated nearly 42 people out of approximately 300,000 yuan.

"My son had passed the college entrance exam in 2003, but Zhou Hong, his teacher, did return the 2,000 yuan he borrowed from us in 2002," angry mother Wang Feifei

told *Beijing Youth Daily* on April 2.

She was just one in a chain of parents fooled. In late 2001, Zhou borrowed a total of 20,000 yuan from the parents of student Wang Miaomiao, claiming he needed the money to pay his mortgage.

One of Zhou's favorite excuses for borrowing money was that his mother was sick, had been hurt in a traffic accident or even had died. He even "borrowed" his student's pocket money and then did not return it.

In December last year, the Chongwen court found Zhou guilty of fraud and sentenced him to 12 years in prison.

"In two years, I have only heard of two such cases of teachers borrowing money from students' parents," said Song Xiujian. "In China, teachers are highly respected in society, but there are some who take advantage of that and abuse their power."

(Pseudonyms used for all students and parents)

## Rare Buddha Saved from Shipment Overseas

By Zhou Ying

A rare, ancient sculpture of the Buddha, which Beijing Customers discovered and prevented from being transported overseas on April 2, was identified a national third-grade protected cultural relic by the Cultural Relics Appraisal Bureau on Monday.

The stone sculpture is the top half of a work more than 1,000 years old. It stands over half a meter tall and has exquisitely carved facial features and even traces of its original coloring.

*Beijing Youth Daily* reported that customs officers found the sculpture, wrapped in reams of plastic packing material, in-

side a trunk belong to the manager of a foreign company. They quickly turned it over the appraisal bureau for judgment and protection, Beijing Customs officer Yu Jing told *Beijing Today* on Tuesday.

Yang Wenhui, an expert in Chinese antiquities, said the work is both rare and valuable. "Generally speaking, ancient sculptors colored their images after they carved clothes. But on this one, the clothes were carved directly into the stone, though now the color is fading."

"The original pattern is quite fantastic," Yang added, pointing to traces of yellow color on the Buddha's head and neck. "In these places it used to be col-

ored gold, but it was scraped off."

This sculpture is a fine example of "rural stone carving," an art form that peaked during the Sui and Tang dynasties, when images of the Buddha stood in small temples and shrines all over the country, particularly in Gansu, Shanxi and some southern provinces. "Because of the extent of the damage to this piece, we cannot really determine where it came from," Yang said.

According to Chinese law, attempting to transport protected cultural relic out of the country is a punishable criminal offense. The case is currently under investigation.



Antiquities expert Yang Wenhui inspects the rescued Buddha. Photo by Yu Jiang

## Simian Twins Surprise Park

By Zhou Ying

An endangered golden monkey on Monday bore twins, the first reported case of such a simian double birth ever in the world, at the Beijing Safari Park on Monday.

The Chuan golden monkey is considered "the second national treasure of China" and is a first-grade protected animal, like the giant panda. There are only about 10,000 of the monkeys in China.

Before the historic birth, it was thought the monkeys were not able to have twin babies.

"Both of the babies are males," said Liu Xinchun, deputy director of Beijing Safari Park. He said it was difficult for park veterinarians to determine their gender at first because their mother held them tightly all the time.

Liu said that the two little brothers had passed through the dangerous period right after birth and were in good condition. "They will not appear in public until they have grown enough that it would not endanger their health," he continued.

## Christie's HK Shows Treasures from Spring Auction

By Iris Miao

To drum up interest in the local market, Christie's Hong Kong came to town last Tuesday to show some choice pieces from its Spring Auction. The two-day preview, held at the five-star St. Regis Hotel, featured over 400 items top-notch lots.

Besides usual categories such as ancient, modern and contemporary Chinese paintings, calligraphy works and porcelain, Christie's Hong Kong for the first time included jewelry in its preview shows in Shanghai and Beijing.

"People normally think of Hong Kong as being the main market for jewelry and jadeite jewelry. The Hong Kong market is quite mature, so we'd like to warm things up here and see how the local market reacts," Shane Ng, catalogue of Christie's Hong Kong's jewelry department, told *Beijing Today* Tuesday.

One staggering piece in the category is lot 2166, a diamond and ruby necklace with an estimated price of HK\$4.8 million to HK\$6.4 million.

Among the paintings were important pieces by Zhang Daqian and three works by Beijing-based modern artist Chen Shaomei, directly aimed at appealing to mainland buyers.



By Shan Jinliang

It's traditional for sons and daughters to cry at their parents' funerals. Society sees this as showing their love for their parents. In Wuhan, capital of Hubei Province, a somewhat less traditional activity is becoming common. Families are hiring people to cry at their parents' funerals. Ms. Gao Xiumei, 46, is well-known locally for her professional crying services. Perhaps her gift for the dramatic comes from her parents who were opera performers. She thinks there's nothing strange in this job. Anyway, she needs to make some money for her poor family. Gao cries along with the funeral music, and she leads mourners in their grief.

As China opens up, many new careers and industries are emerging, inspiring both praise and criticism. Now you can find professional exam takers, companies that apologize on behalf of their clients, even companies whose staff are paid to be beaten. People say some of these new careers are challenging China's traditions. Others say it's nothing more than social development.

**Mr. Wang, 47, a retired worker in Beijing**

There's nothing strange in a money-dominated society allowing people to buy anything they want. It's the same with prostitution. But I find it unacceptable to hire someone to cry during a funeral. I would not want to attend such a funeral. I would like to express my own passion and love in the traditional way. If the sons and daughters do not love their parents when they are alive, any kind of funeral is phony.

**Mr. Wang Zhiqiang, 32, a member of China Funerals Association**

I can't accept the idea of professional criers. It shows the lack of love between people. It is sure to be a social setback. Anyway, it is not only through loud crying that people can express their love for the dead. And I think the professional apology companies allow people to avoid being sincere.

**Mr. Wu, 41, a manager in a Beijing IT company**

It is quite normal for society to produce different services and companies, and I can understand things like crying at other people's funerals because some people need the service. It was the same for house moving companies a few years ago; people just come to accept it.

Chinese traditional concepts force people to perform a grand funeral, and the loud crying shows the splendor of the funeral and the deep love for the deceased. I think such big funerals are a big waste of money, and have nothing to do with paying respect to the dead. This new service will be accepted by society after a while, but I am sure it won't become widespread in China.

**Ms. Li, 32, a doctor with Beijing Chaoyang Hospital**

I have to admit, it takes a lot of courage for Ms. Gao to cry at others' funerals, and it is quite understandable regarding her need to make money. But I think it is unacceptable in a moral way. It is insincere to exhibit such so-called grief. I would never hire someone to cry, and I would strongly discourage any of my friends from such a thing. It is normal for a capitalist society to develop through different phases, but such immoral acts will be flushed out eventually.

**Li Heng, 28, an editor with China Science and Technology Publishing House**

Hiring a person to cry at a funeral is hard to imagine. I cannot understand how people can tolerate such a performance. Treating a funeral as a performance is disrespectful to the dead because this kind of behavior is like acting in a play. It's hypocritical.

Secondly, it's disrespectful to the mourners, like buying someone's sympathy with mon-

# Paid to Do Anything?



Gao Xiumei prepares to cry at somebody's funeral.



Gao uses a microphone to express her grief for whoever.

ey. Some false acts can be accepted in life, such as magic arts, or science fiction films. But I cannot accept the act of hiring some to cry at a funeral.

**Mr. Li Xinliang, a post-graduate student majoring in management in Beijing**

I don't have a problem with asking somebody to take part in exams for me. In fact I want to find such a person to beat the various exams arranged by my department, especially the English test, the most difficult one for me. It is a tiresome job for a student to deal with numerous tests. And some of the tests cannot judge a student's learning. A faulty examination system is of course accompanied by some malpractices. But otherwise how can I get a good mark in the exams? What can I do if I still want the scholarship?

**Mr. Zhao Peng, a project engineer with Siemens China**

Everything in the world has its own purpose and it is hard to praise or belittle it. I

have to admit that it is immoral to hire someone to take a test for you. But it's nothing compared with illegal acts like blackmail or murder. However, if one of my friends was hired to take an exam, I would try my best to dissuade him from doing it. There are only two reasons a person would take an exam or lessons for others; one is for money, the other is for friendship. If your friends really care about you, they would not want you to do such a thing.

**Lin Guozhang, a psychology professor with Beijing Normal University**

This phenomenon is part of society's development, and people should think of it from its positive and negatives sides. It could work to make up the deficiencies of the current labor division. We cannot deny it, but we should not allow it to develop either. Some professional apology makers are clogging the channels for person-to-person contact and genuine exchange.



Here comes a crescendo.

By Sun Ming / Zhou Ying

A volunteer service team established by the Students Union of Tsinghua University purchased 100 packages of fruit at a low price for students on April 4. However, the fruit was then confiscated by the Dormitory Administration Office of the university when it was brought back to the Zijing Community where the students live.

The administration office said that the service team had violated the regulations of the university, which state that students are forbidden from engaging in any business activity.

The action of the administration office aroused a predictably indignant reaction from many students.

The Students Union said that the prices at Shuiguowu, the only fruit store in Zijing Community, are always much higher than the average market price. And it's inconvenient for students to buy fruit outside the big community which holds over 20,000 students.

So the volunteer service team got the idea to purchase a batch of fruit from a wholesale market. On April 3, the team released the news on the internet BBS (bulletin board system) of the campus. After requests from the students, the team purchased 100 packages of fruit last Wednesday.

Many students opposed the confiscation and voiced their protests in the BBS of the campus. Under pressure, the administration office changed its mind and returned the fruit to the students on Thursday.

**Ms. Zhang, a staff member with the Press Office of Tsinghua University**

According to the Management Regulations of University Students enacted in 1990, college students (except those from commerce and tourism colleges) should not involve themselves in any trade activity. Students selling fruit can certainly be described as a trade activity because they can make a profit, even though they aimed to provide convenience for their schoolmates.

Also, our university has a clear regulation to forbid students from being involved in trade activities. If students violate the regulations, the university has the right to punish or fine those involved.

It's true that the attitude of the staff of the Dormitory Administration Office was a little bit rude, which is the main reason for the dissatisfaction of the students, I think.

**Gong Mingjun, a teacher**

## One Man's Banana



The only fruit store at Zijing Community of Tsinghua University.

Photo by Pu Feng

**from Beijing Technology and Business University**

The regulation of the university is not reasonable.

The university should respect student's rights to make their own choices. We should not only encourage them to further their education, but also encourage them to be engaged in trade activities.

Also, it's not against any state law for students to be involved in trade.

As grown-ups, university students can take full responsibility for what they do. They can decide what to do as long as it is within the law, and as long as it does not violate the school's interests.

**It is a common phenomenon overseas for students to be involved in trade. If it can enhance student's ability, why not provide them with a way to develop? The university should think over its rules on the trade actions of students, and how to guide them rather than holding them back.**

**Luo Xuan, a staff member from Yangfangdian Industrial and Commercial Bureau**

In China, there is no law prohibiting students from getting involved in trade. However, the students should have got a license from a local industrial and commercial department first before they sold the fruit.

The students from Tsinghua University didn't ask for permission from their university, let alone apply for a license.

The students should be punished. If their university failed to stop their commercial activity, our

industry and commerce department would deal with it.

**Liu Zhusheng, a magazine editor**

Some students fail in trade owing to their lack of experience. Some students can keep a good balance between study and business.

I think that Tsinghua University just wants to monopolize commerce activities within the campus by prohibiting students from doing business. I've heard that in the fruit store of Tsinghua students' community, the price of ordinary kinds of apples is 6.6 yuan per kilogram, 4 yuan higher than outside.

Actually, the real objective of students is anti-monopoly. If they can buy the fruit at market price, they are not violating university regulations. I wonder who entitled the school to monopolize campus commodities?

**Zhang Ning, vice-chairman of the Students' Union of Tsinghua University**

Our university took measures to solve the conflict last week. They returned the fruit.

Now we are investigating the price of several fruit stores on the campus. The prices at all the fruit stores will be the same soon.

I think students should abide by the regulations of their university, so we shouldn't conduct any business activities.

**Wang Weidong, a student from Beijing Politics and Law University**

I think we have enough time and chances to get involved in trade after graduation; why not take this precious time to acquire knowledge. The opportunity to study is more valuable than earning money, because we can earn money in the future, but maybe we won't have the opportunity to study.

After graduation, where will you find excellent teachers, and where will you read such a large amount of books? I'm from a rural area, so I really cherish the chance to study.

**Qian Hui, sophomore at Tsinghua University**

I don't think our university has the right to forbid our business activities. My friends who study in other universities sell fruit and shampoo on the campus in their spare time. It's very common. They can earn money to support their studies. At the same time, they can learn many things about trade.

By Dong Nan

Wages in Beijing rose in 2003 to an average of 25,312 yuan per year, 3,460 yuan more than in 2002, according to the Beijing Statistics Bureau. However, the gap between the best and worst paid is also increasing.

The statistics are based on a recent survey of 72,000 enterprises in Beijing. Here "wages" includes various bonuses, allowances, subsidies, taxes and insurance paid by the employers on behalf of employees as well.

**Pushing up the average**

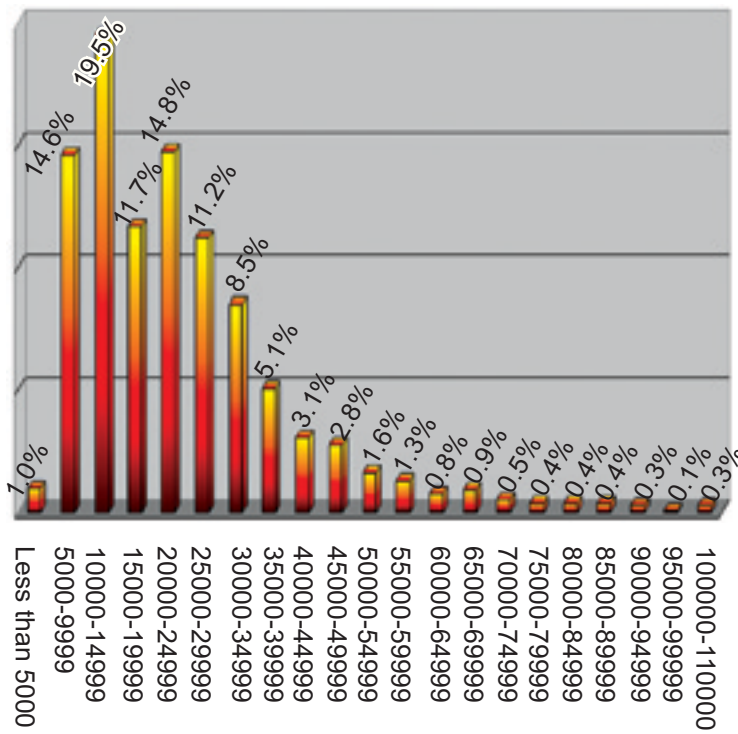
According to Xu Jingchao, chief of the Population and Employment Department, Beijing Statistics Bureau, the main reason for the rapid rise in average wages is the increase in the number of employees earning higher salaries.

The survey highlights two distinct groups of employees. The first group earned wages equal to or higher than the annual average (25,312 yuan). The second group earned less than average. The first group made up 37.8% of the total 4.36 million employees in Beijing, roughly 1.64 million people. In 2002, this group would have made up 36.4% of the city's employees.

Among the 1.64 million,

# The Rich Get Richer

Average annual wage brackets (yuan)



Average annual wages in different industries in 2003

Level	Industries	wages (yuan)
High level	1 Securities	111,705
	2 Insurance	74,437
	3 Tobacco	68,890
	4 Computers	66,254
	5 Agents	59,938
	6 Banking	58,740
	7 Telecommunications and information	51,530
	8 Mapping services	49,471
	9 Other financial industries	48,663
	10 Copyright services	47,817
Middle level	1 Culture and arts	28,501
	2 Lumber, bamboo and grass producing	28,449
	3 Commercial services	25,912
	4 Real estate	25,704
	5 Primary education	25,129
	6 Other education	24,730
	7 Water conservancy management	24,666
	8 Water supply	24,196
	9 Other real estate	23,601
	10 Social welfare	23,192
Low level	1 Furniture manufacturing	12,896
	2 Packaging services	12,876
	3 Leather and fur manufacturing	12,557
	4 Metal mining	11,846
	5 Textile industry	11,349
	6 Agriculture	11,181
	7 Non-metal mining	10,544
	8 Clothes manufacturing	10,306
	9 Chemical fiber manufacturing	9,428
	10 Security services	7,040

590,000 people made between 30,000 and 39,000 yuan; 386,000 people made between 40,000 and 59,000 yuan; 160,000 people made between 60,000 and 99,999 yuan; and 58,000 people raked in more than 100,000 yuan a year.

Last year, the first group earned a total of 70.74 billion yuan. So 37.8% of the people took in 64.4% of the wages paid in the whole city (in 2002, the first group earned 61.7%). Their average annual wage was 42,920 yuan, 5,782 yuan more than in 2002.

Meanwhile, 62.2% of the employees, or 2.71 million people, earned less than the average wage. Their total annual wages amounted to 39.15 billion yuan, 35.6% of the total. The average annual wage of this group of people was 14,420 yuan, 1,225 yuan more than in 2002.

The annual wages of 8,082 enterprises' employees were lower than 5,580 yuan last year, even though this figure was stipulated as the minimum annual wage by Beijing Municipal Government in 2002. Those enterprises had 70,000 employees. However, this number was 35,000 less than in 2002.

Maintenance, paid by enterprises to employees who were not working, did increase slightly last year. This group of people mainly includes temporarily laid-off workers and people who left work for medical reasons. In

2003, Beijing had 324,000 people in this category. Their average annual maintenance was 7,320 yuan, 684 yuan more than in 2002.

**Different industries**

According to the survey, wages had increased across all the 19 major trades in Beijing. However, the gap between the best-paying jobs (finance) and worst-paying (agriculture) had increased sharply. The difference last year between the average salaries in these industries rose to 47,000 yuan, 9,000 more than 2002.

Finance, as usual, offered the best pay (61,713 yuan per year on average), followed by the computer and software industry (53,010 yuan) and electric power, gas and water supply (37,112 yuan). Above-average wages were also available in sports and entertainment jobs, culture, scientific research, sanitation and social welfare, public management and social organizations, education, real estate, leasing and commercial services.

Industries with lower wages were mainly those involving manual labor. The lowest three were construction (16,730 yuan), hotels and catering (16,530 yuan) and agriculture (14,980 yuan).

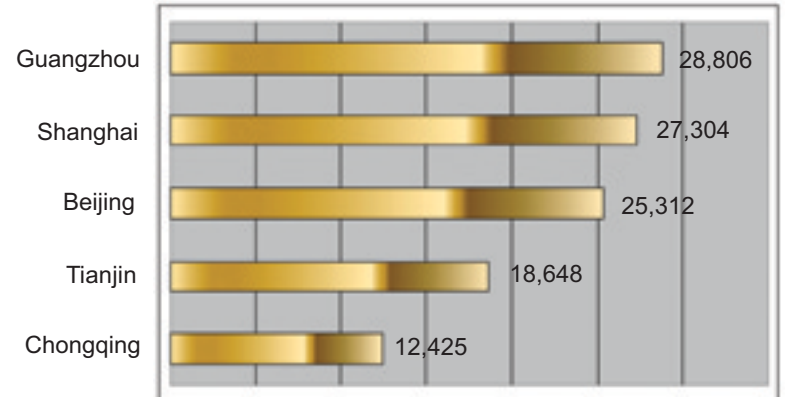
Among employees whose annual wages were lower than the supposed minimum (5,580 yuan), 31.9% were in the manufacturing industry, 14.3% were in construction, 8.1% were in wholesale and retail and 6.3% were in hotels and catering.

The fastest rise in wages from 2002 was in the electric power, gas and water supply industry (29%), followed by finance (22.3%), agriculture (19.1%) and (18%). The average wages of mining industry employees, meanwhile, increased by just 1.6%.

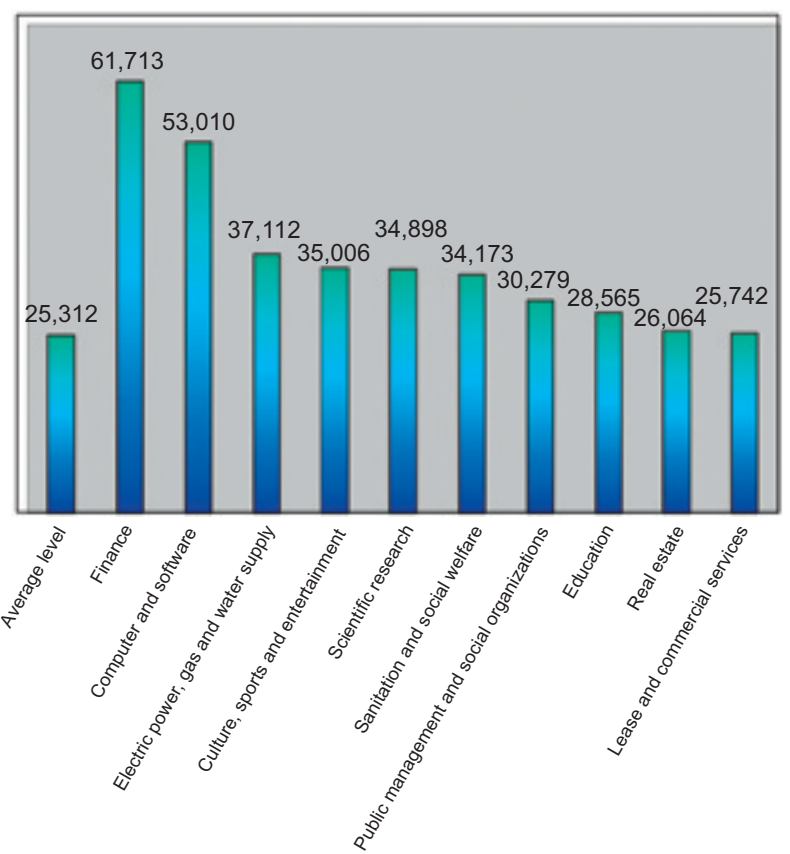
Xu pointed out in her report that some industries were placed under particular strain by the SARS epidemic in the first half of 2003, and the compensating increase in wages was not as high as it perhaps should have been, especially in industries such as sanitation and social welfare.

Employees who were working for foreign funded enterprises enjoyed the highest average annual wages (44,653 yuan), much more than companies funded from Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan (28,517 yuan). Employees in state owned enterprises had an average annual wage of 28,

Average annual wages in five major cities (yuan)



Top 10 industries in average annual wages (yuan)



464 yuan, but they enjoyed the highest growth rate (19.8%). The growth rate of wages in foreign funded enterprises was 13.3%. But the rate for Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan funded enterprises was 4.9% only and had slowed down significantly.

**Various Areas**

Employees in different districts also had different wages. Workers in city districts Dongcheng, Xicheng, Chongwen and Xuanwu earned an average of 29,000 yuan last year; those in the near outskirts (Chaoyang, Fengtai, Shijingshan and Haidian) made 28,000 yuan; and those in further outskirts made 17,000 yuan.

According to Xu, this was because industries with higher wages such as finance and computers were mainly in the city

and near outskirts. For instance, the average employee in Xicheng district earned 32,000 yuan last year. Many manufacturing and producing industries are located in the more distant outskirts, explaining why average wage levels are lower in these areas.

Xu also ranked average wages in five major cities in China. Guangzhou came top, its average citizen pulling in 28,806 yuan a year; Shanghai came second on 27,304; then Beijing (25,312 yuan); Tianjin (18,648 yuan); and Chongqing (12,425 yuan).

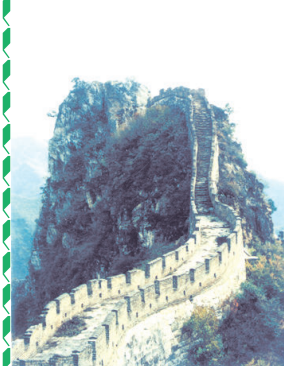
But Beijing's increase in annual wages (15.8%) was the highest, followed by Tianjin (14.7%), Shanghai (14%), Chongqing (13.4%) and Guangzhou (9.9%).

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The captives after their rescue

Xinhua Photo

By Sun Ming / Zhou Ying

After 36 hours in captivity in Iraq, seven Chinese men were released this Monday.

The seven Chinese workers were kidnapped by armed militants on Sunday morning on a highway running from the northern city of Mosul to the southern city of Falluja, which has been a battleground recently between local militias and the occupying forces. The kidnapping crisis is growing, as militants take foreign nationals hostage in order to put pressure on their countries to pull troops out of Iraq. One militia group has promised to kill its Japanese captives unless Japan withdraws its soldiers from the country.

So there were fears for the lives of the Chinese hostages, even though China opposed the war and has no troops in Iraq. Fortunately, the kidnapers handed the seven Chinese hostages to the local Association of Islamic Clerics on Monday night and they were then handed over to the Chinese diplomatic team now working to re-establish the Chinese Embassy in Baghdad.

The seven Chinese men are all from eastern China's Fujian Province. The oldest is 49 and the youngest is 18.

#### Seven Chinese abducted

On Sunday night, Iraq time, a reporter from Al Arabiya channel's Baghdad Bureau revealed a piece of astonishing news to a Chinese correspondent in Baghdad. He said one of his colleagues in Falluja had been told that seven Chinese had been kidnapped.

The reporter in Falluja was told by four foreigners that the kidnapers also abducted seven Asian people on Sunday morning. The hostages were being detained in a secret place near the town. None of the captives were able to speak Arabic or English, and the letters on their passports made the kidnapers confused.

Failing to communicate, the armed militants abducted four members of a medical care team from London to get them to translate. They asked them to assist in identifying the seven people. Finally, they found that the seven had Chinese passports.

#### Rescue

When the Chinese embassy team in Baghdad was informed about the kidnapping on Sunday evening, they immediately held an emergency meeting.

Sun Bigan, the head of the team, called the Iraqi Ministry of the Interior on Monday morning, asking them to help locate and rescue the seven civilians.

On Monday, the Chinese Embassy in Jordan identified the seven Chinese. An official at the embassy said that the seven Chinese entered Iraq from Jordan in the morning on Sunday. They were headed for Baghdad. After further investigation, it turned out two of the seven hostages had been living in Baghdad before, and they went to Jordan last week to receive another five persons from China.

#### Released

On Monday evening, the kidnapers handed over the seven Chinese hostages to the local Association of Islamic Clerics.

"The local Association of Islamic Clerics played a very important role in releasing the Chinese hostages," said Xinhua on Tuesday. The association has great influence, especially in Falluja, and it has helped in securing the release of foreign hostages many times.

"No negotiations were needed and no ransom was paid," Kong Quan, spokesman for the Chinese Foreign Ministry said on Tuesday at a news conference in Beijing.

Kong said the return of the seven

## Kidnapped Chinese Released in Iraq



The family of one of the kidnaped man after hearing of their release

Photo by Photocom

Chinese workers to China depended on two factors: one is their physical condition, which appears to be fairly good, and the other is the situation in Iraq. "We will send them back so long as we can guarantee their safety," said Kong.

A reporter from Xinhua met the seven newly-released Chinese men on Monday evening. Two of the captives had been slightly injured in a traffic accident before they were kidnapped. "Their physical and spiritual condition is generally stable," said Xinhua.

#### Why were they released so soon?

According to the Chinese embassy team in Baghdad, the seven Chinese workers were not mal-treated during their captivity. Two of them had been hurt in a traffic accident and the armed men even treated their injuries.

"They treated us kindly after realizing we were Chinese, and we were not handcuffed. They even give us some water and food," Xue Yougui, one of the seven men told Xinhua on Tuesday.

"It is quite possible they thought the men were Japanese or Korean," said Xue Xu, a member of the embassy team. "They wanted to use them as bargaining chips to get Japanese and Korean troops out of the country"

"The Chinese workers could not speak English or Arabic, which widened the misunderstanding," Zhang Biqing, a researcher at the International Affairs Research Institute of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, told *Beijing Evening Post* on Tuesday.

Li Weijian, the director of Middle East Research at the Shanghai International Affairs Research Institute, told Xinhua on Monday that the militants might have abducted the Chinese hostages to draw large countries' attention to the need for reconstruction in Iraq.

#### Looking for jobs

According to *Dongnan Kuaibao*, a Fujian-based newspaper, all of the seven abducted men had gone to Iraq to look for work, probably in construction. They all come from Pingtan Town in Fujian Province.

Lin Kongming, 18, the youngest of the seven, became a cement worker after finishing junior middle school. His father has a serious heart disease, and his family is poor. "He borrowed some

money and paid 2,380 yuan to an agent who helped him get to Iraq," said Lin's uncle Lin Zhenhua.

The day when he departed, Lin's uncle called from Singapore, hoping to persuade the young man against going to Iraq because of the war. After receiving the call, Lin's father got on his motorbike and chased after Lin but he had already left.

Lin told his mother before he left for Iraq that he would be a cement worker and would make about 5,000 yuan per month.

"What happened was totally unexpected for me. I knew that there had been a war in Iraq but I did not realize how dangerous it was. He just wanted to go abroad to earn some money, and I agreed," she said.

#### Are they legal or not?

Yu Hailin, a member of the Chinese embassy team in Baghdad, told Xinhua on Tuesday that they can not rule out the possibility that the seven Chinese workers left China illegally.

*China Youth Daily* said on Wednesday that each of the seven Chinese workers had paid over 20,000 yuan to some "intermediate agent" and had gone to Iraq dreaming of money.

Two of the seven men, Li Guiwu and Lin Jinping, arrived in Iraq at the end of last year, and the other five left China last Friday.

"An agent told me that the war had ended, and that my son would be a millionaire after arriving there," the father of Lin Jinping told *China Youth Daily* on Tuesday. "But the fact is that when my son arrived there, he found he had been cheated. It is difficult to find work in Iraq. My son worked for a bar as a waiter and the pay was only US\$90 per month."

"We are sure that the seven men did not enter Iraq through a licensed local labor market agency," Mao Gang, the section chief of the Foreign Trade Economic Department in Fujian Province told *Dongnan Kuaibao* on Tuesday.

Mao said that Fujian province does not have any investment projects in Iraq. The 30 licensed labor companies in the province which have gained approval to export labor overseas are not entitled to send workers to Iraq at present.

## We Want Our Land Back!

By Wang Xiaoxiao

Villagers of Zhongjiaying Village under Baishan County, Changping District are waiting anxiously for their day in court after they sued the village committee for illegal land requisition on April 5. This is the second time they've tried to sue the committee following another attempt earlier this year. Over a hundred villagers have signed a petition accusing the village committee and have presented it to the local court.

The villagers say the committee contracted out local land at a suspiciously low price to a planting company which then turned the land over to two brick-kiln plants. Much of the local land has now been ruined and can no longer be cultivated.

The dispute was publicized by *Beijing Star Daily* on Monday, drawing public concern once more to the difficulty peasants in China have in defending their rights.

#### The contract

The committee signed a contract with planting company Mengzushan in 1999 giving Mengzushan an area of 120 mu (about 8 hectares) including cultivated land, economic forest land and non-cultivated land, despite the fact the villagers had an agreement to rent and cultivate the land. According to the contract, Mengzushan was given the rights to plant on this big area of land for 50 years (1999-2049) at a price of 10,000 yuan per year.

However, in the five years since, half of the land had not been used for planting trees. Instead it was used as a clay resource for two nearby brickkilns in 2000. Though the two brickkilns have been shut down, the big pits they dug have made it impossible to plant crops or trees on the land. It seems strange that Mengzushan allowed the this ruining of land it paid for, never mind future generations of villagers not being able to use it. The villagers didn't own the land, they merely rented it beforehand, but now they have nowhere to grow crops. "This used to be the first-class land for our village, providing good soil, abundant water and crops. Now, it's deserted," a villager surnamed Song complained to *Beijing Star Daily*.

#### Some kind of deal?

If the land had been properly used or even rented at a reasonable price, the villagers might not be so angry.

Yang Jianming, one villager, said that Mengzushan's payment to the village committee was equivalent to rent of 90 yuan for each mu of the land per year. The villagers used to pay 300-500 yuan for each mu per year. "Why is it so different between us and the company?" Yang Jianming asked. Besides, according to Land Administration Law, it's strictly forbidden to dig soil and remove it from cultivated land. "Our land is now ruined, how can our children grow crops?" one old villager asked *Beijing Today*. Some of the villagers suggested that there might have been some kind of under-the-table deal between the committee and the company. Otherwise, how come the price was so low?

Su Jianguang, secretary of the village committee, told *Beijing Star Daily* that the price was just that low in the year of 1999 when they signed the contract. Su Lianru, former director of the village committee, one of the signatories of the contract, was unable to explain why the price was so low at that time, however. Zhao Shengli, former secretary of the committee and another signatory of the contract, could not be contacted. Zhang Chunli, a representative of the villagers, told *Beijing Today* that Zhao Shengli had been selling more land around the village to various companies during the past four or five years. All the land was sold at a very low price. However, while the land around them is bartered off on the cheap, the villagers have to make a living anyway they can, sometimes by driving illegal taxis or working on construction sites.

Wang Kai, one of the managers of Mengzushan Company, told *Beijing Today* he thought the price was surprisingly low as well. As to why Mengzushan allowed the brickkilns to take so much soil from their land, Wang Kai said it was an arrangement with the village committee who offered to wave a year's rent if Mengzushan allowed the brickkilns to dig the land. He said he had opposed the decision but failed to prevent it.

#### Why was the contract signed secretly?

The villagers are also angry that the committee didn't ask for their approval before signing the contract. "We didn't know about the contract. When some



Before...



After



Bulldozers try to flatten the pits



Setting a dog on Song Zhiming



Song Zhiming after being attacked

of us discovered our soil was being dug up in 2000 and reported it to the committee, we were told that the land had already been contracted out," Yang Jianming was quoted as saying in *Beijing Star Daily*. Afterwards when the villagers saw the contract, they suspected its validity because, according to Land Administration Law, if land is contracted to non-locals, two thirds of the local villagers or their representatives must agree. Approval must also be sought from the county government. But on the contract there is no seal of the county government.

Su Lianru claimed the villagers were told about the contract but he couldn't remember any particular meeting with them or their representatives. Zheng Xiuzhen, one of the villagers' representatives, dismissed that claim.

#### Villager beaten

Whatever the state of the land now, according to the contract, Mengzushan Company still has the right to decide what to do with it. Now that the villagers are suing the committee, they want the authorities to see what has happened to the land and Wang Kai is helping to preserve the evidence. However, Su Jianguang has tried several times to flatten out the pits. Villagers think he wants to destroy the evidence so they stood in front of the bulldozers to protect the scene. Song Zhiming was among them.

On March 6, Su Jianguang asked someone to cut the electronic wire on the contracted land in order to make it difficult for Wang Kai to guard the land. But the wire was later reconnected by the villagers. Zhao Shengmin, the head of the village committee and some others then arrived at the spot and tried to cut the wire once again. When Song Zhiming was trying to stop the electricians from climbing up the pole, Zhao Shengmin hit him on the nose and kicked him in the face after he had fallen down. Su Shuiquan, son of former village committee director Su Lianru, tried to set a dog on Song as well. Song had to be taken away for medical attention. He said he was sure Su Jianguang had incited the violence against him but Su has denied the charge. An arrest order has been placed for Su Shuiquan but he is still at large.





## Guardian of the Imperial Treasure

By Guo Yuandan

Last Sunday, Liang Kuangzhong, 80, returned to the Palace Museum. He said he felt like an ordinary visitor, but there was something special in his eyes when he touched the marble balustrades and the bronze vats.

To him, the layout of the huge museum is as familiar as his right hand. For Liang spent 53 years of his life keeping the imperial treasures safe amidst the turmoil of China's last century.

He knows clearly what's behind every red gate in the Imperial City, what has been rebuilt and what has been renovated. Though he recognized few staff at the museum, many knew who he was and greeted him warmly.

Liang became a member of the Palace Museum at the age of 17 and he only retired from the job at the age of 70. He witnessed the transfer of the museum's treasures to south China in the 1930s, their division as some were taken to Taiwan by the fleeing Kuomintang, and the eventual return of what remained to Beijing.

Liang's father also worked for the Palace Museum, but he accompanied some of the treasures to Taiwan 55 years ago. Liang was left at home to watch over the remainder. 25 years ago, Liang's son entered the Palace Museum, taking up the family course.

### Moving the treasure

Liang told *Beijing Today* that his life as a curator is firmly in the past. "I'm a little fed up with cultural relics. I spent my whole life around those treasures. When someone visits me and asks me to judge some antique, I usually get quite impatient. But I loved the relics in the Palace Museum while I was working there," he says.

The connection between Liang's family and the Palace Museum started with his great-grandfather who was in charge of the imperial painting studio back in the Qing Dynasty. Both Liang's grandfather and father were painters at the studio.

The Qing Dynasty was overthrown in 1911 and the Palace Museum was established in the Forbidden City in 1925. Liang's father then began to work at the museum.

When Japanese troops invaded north China in 1931, the Kuomintang government decided to move some of the national treasures in the Forbidden City to the south of China. Five groups of relics (altogether 13,000 boxes) were moved to Shanghai in 1933. They were then moved to Nanjing, where the Nanjing Branch of the Palace Museum was founded.

"My mother, two little brothers and I met up with my father in Nanjing in 1937. I still remember the relics storeroom. There were three floors, and the backyard was a deep cave. Many of the treasures were hidden in the cave. I only knew they were national treasures, without realizing how precious they were," Liang recalled. He was 13 years old at that time.

The war against Japan (1937-1945) broke out in earnest

Liang Kuangzhong is the fourth generation of his family to work in the Forbidden City. He witnessed the transfer of the imperial treasures to South China in the 1930s, and guarded them for 53 years.



Photos by Bao Wei

that year and the relics had to be moved again. Along with the treasures from the Forbidden City, Liang and his father were transferred to Baoji, Shannxi Province, and then Hanzhong and finally to Chengdu, Sichuan Province.

During the transfer Liang began to help the staff. "When preparing for the moving, the staff were very busy. It was an interesting thing for me at that time," Liang recalled. "All the way we were attacked by Japanese planes so we had to move all the time." When the treasure and the traveling band of museum staff reached Chengdu in 1941, Liang was inducted as a formal member of staff at the Leshan Office of the Palace Museum. He was 17.

### Boring custody

There were three departments in the Leshan Office of the Palace Museum: the Antique office, the Library office and the Literature office. Liang's father took charge of the Literature office. "My father would spend his time reading books from different dynasties. I was in the Antique office, doing odds and ends at the beginning," Liang says.

Life in the office was extremely boring, especially for a young boy. The storerooms were located in a remote village and life was almost completely isolated from the outside world. But Liang was always optimistic. "I was born active, so I was glad to do anything, no matter what it was." Liang went to inspect different storerooms everyday.

"If some object was destroyed, I would be punished," Liang said. "But I never damaged a single treasure. I treated the relics like my own children." The longer he took care of the treasures, the more responsible he felt for them.

Liang said he gradually became something of an introvert. Since retiring, he's spent much of his time playing cards alone at home.

"Staying with the relics for such a long time, I became an old relic myself. I don't like talking with others. I remembered that I never felt lonely when I worked in that distant village. I listened to the radio or read in my spare time."

### Wandering life

During his time in Sichuan, Liang Kuangzhong kept being moved around. A year after starting at the Leshan office, he was trans-

ferred to the Emei Mountain office of the museum. "Because I was the youngest among the staff, I kept being sent to different places where there was a lack of workers. The names of my children recorded my transfer history. My first son was born in Emei and was named Es-heng. The second was Jiasheng, born in Leshan (which used to be called Jiading). Afterwards, when I returned to Nanjing, I had two more sons and named them Jinsheng and Ningsheng. Back in Beijing, my youngest son was named Yan-sheng (based on the ancient name for Beijing)."

After the war against Japan was over, the cultural relics were ordered to be sent back to Nanjing. Liang and his father returned to the city after eight years in Sichuan. Liang and his family thought that an end to their days of wandering had arrived.

Unexpectedly, the Kuomintang were defeated during the civil war with the Communists (1945-1949), and they decided to transfer some of the cultural relics to Taiwan. "My father was sent to take charge of the cultural relics in the Library office. He brought my mother, two brothers and my eldest son with him to Taiwan. I stayed in Nanjing to take care of what was left behind."

Liang never saw his father and mother again. "After I reached my relatives in Taiwan in the 1980s, my father and mother had already passed away," he says.

10,000 boxes of cultural relics were left in Nanjing. Liang and his colleagues maintained watch over them until their transfer back to Beijing after the liberation. Liang also went back to Beijing in 1953.

Back at home, Liang kept moving from one office to another in the Beijing Palace Museum. "First I was sent to sort out the relics left by Pu Yi, the last emperor of the Qing Dynasty." Liang by now was regarded as an expert on the preservation of cultural relics, following his long experience.

"To be honest, I have no special skills," he says. "I touched the relics everyday, though and practice makes perfect." When experts went to Liang's storeroom, he took notice of what they talked about. After they left, Liang took a good look at the particular object of discussion and tried to remember what had been said. Liang smiled as he said this was how he built up his knowledge of the relics.

Liang's son Jinsheng, 53, is now the director of the Department of Cultural Relics in the Palace Museum. He is the family's fifth generation to work in the Forbidden City. Now Liang hopes that one of his grandsons can continue the family line and become the sixth.

## Shooting Industry

By Elizabeth Atterbury

Photographer Zhou Hai spends a lot of time with a hard hat on. The question of why he needs a protective helmet can be answered by looking at any of the images from his most recent collection of photographs, "The Unbearable Heaviness of Industry."

These photographs are part of an on-going project which Zhou, 34, has been working on for the past seven years. His work has taken him to various provinces in China to photograph steel factories, coal mines and natural gas and petroleum companies. He usually spends two weeks at each location, beginning at the same time as the workers. Loading up his 35 mm Leica camera with black and white film, he documents the activities and landscape of the particular site. The amount of film he shoots at each location varies, though he has gone through as many as 40 rolls in one visit alone.

Born in Guilin, the son of two electronic engineers, Zhou Hai graduated from the Radio Engineering Department at Guangxi University in 1992. He came to Beijing in 1996 to attend the Central University of Nationalities, where he studied photography, black and white and color, for one year. Zhou first became interested in photographing aspects of China's industrial labor force in 1997, when his photography class visited Capital Steel Factory, located in Beijing.

"I was captivated and shocked by the industrial landscape and initially focused on the architecture and structures of the factory. Gradually my attention shifted and I became more focused on the workers," Zhou told *Beijing Today*. Since his first trip to Capital Steel in '97, Zhou has visited factories and companies in Hebei, Henan, Heilongjiang, Liaoning, Shanxi, and Shandong.

Zhou says he does not like to disturb the workers during the day. A good portion of the 66 photographs in "The Unbearable Heaviness of Industry" are candid images of laborers consumed by the rhythm of their working environment: three workers in a mine shaft, pushing a rail wagon with the same exertion it takes to move a stalled car, their bare backs and arms covered in coal; a steel-worker lunging towards a pit, milky smoke rising from below and slats of light streaming down through holes in the factory ceiling.

These photographs that document the natural pulse of industrial work are complimented by a number of more traditional portraits, where the subjects' expressions and body language, as opposed to their environments, become the main focal point. These include an image of three young



Daqing, Heilongjiang December 2000

Photo by Zhou Hai

miners, whose faces and T-shirts are caked in a blackness that goes up their noses, around their eyes, onto their lips. It appears that they have tasted the blackness. In a *New York Times* article last August, Zhou remarked, "I like posed pictures with a certain degree of formality. By posing, you let them reflect their own state of being, their humanity."

While the bulk of Zhou's income is generated from gallery exhibitions and the private sales of his photographs, he says his main motivation is not to make money but rather to raise people's consciousness of such conditions. His first solo exhibition was held in 1999 at the China National Art Museum in Beijing. He has subsequently displayed his work nationally and internationally with solo shows in Nice, France and at 798 Gallery in Beijing. He also participated in the "Asian Photography Exhibition 2003," a group show held in Nagoya, Japan. Zhou's photographs, along with the work of six other Chinese photographers, are currently on display at the art gallery of Bates College in the United States. This show, "Documenting China: Contemporary Photography and Social Change" explores the impact of urbanization and industrialization in the world's most rapidly developing country. In April, Zhou will show his work at the New School University in New York City.

When asked what kind of responses his photographs have generated – whether people react negatively to the images as representative of a dark reality, the underbelly of China's work force – Zhou replied that he doesn't think of it as bad or good.

"I just want to document the truth," he says.

"Now, there is a great number of industrial workers in China, and so many live and work in such conditions," he explains, "but it's inevitable because I think any country pushing to modernize must go through such a period. I think today, in China, the mainstream media doesn't care so much about these people. They are more focused on the modern metropolis. Few people care about the conditions of industrial workers, so that's why I want to record their working and living conditions."

Zhou still stays in contact with some of the workers he has photographed and he says there are times when they speak frequently on the phone. These men are not only the subjects of "The Unbearable Heaviness of Industry," but they are also the critics. Zhou delivers the photographs to the workers via postal mail or in person, as he has paid second visits to some locations.

"Some of the workers really like the photographs, and others dislike them because they are aware of their poor working conditions and they don't like the way their image is projected. Anyway, my objective is to get the attention of other parts of society so they care more about the workers," Zhou remarks.

Zhou spends his time quietly in Beijing when he is not traveling to photograph industrial sites. After he returns from a trip, Zhou spends one month developing his film and selecting the right images. He has recently moved into a new apartment, a sparsely minimalist dwelling in Haidian. One room has been converted into a darkroom, equipped with a trough sink and a projector, necessary components for Zhou to print and enlarge his photographs.

When he is not working on his pictures, Zhou usually stays at home, where he reads books and listens to music. He says that music is very important to him; it helps him think. He enjoys classical music, particularly Beethoven and Bach, and he just started playing the xiao, a Chinese wind instrument. He spends a lot of time alone and when asked if this kind of solitary lifestyle gets lonely, he admits that it does sometimes. "But I enjoy the loneliness. I think loneliness is what makes a person think more about the reality of life."

Zhou Hai

Photo by Elizabeth Atterbury



By Zhang Huan

A project to reduce the residential population of the ancient city of Pingyao, in Shanxi Province, is running into resistance from the locals, according to officials from the Pingyao County tourist bureau.

Famous for its well preserved Ming and Qing dynasty buildings and city wall, Pingyao was listed as a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site in 1997.

In the same year, with a population of almost 50,000 living in the city's 2.25-square-kilometer area, over double the proposed upper limit of 22,000, the county government launched a project to reduce the old town's population by half by 2005.

Seven years later, despite the county government having taken the lead by relocating its own offices to the new town, the population of the old town is still 45,000.

Since 1997, more than 80 offices, including the party committee and the government, have moved out of the ancient town and settled in new premises in the new town. Schools, kindergartens, hospitals and even big stores followed the move, leaving only one hospital, two schools and one kindergarten — the relocation of the Pingyao Middle School alone cost 130 million yuan. Meanwhile over 30 pollution-causing factories and almost 600 coke furnaces around the town have been closed down and more than 30 chimneys demolished.

However while the government has been encouraging people to move out, the growing tourist market is luring people back into the old town. Since its inclusion on the World Cultural Heritage List, tourism has become an increasingly profitable industry. Many residents have renovated their houses and turned them into private hotels, driving up the price of real estate in the old town.

According to Du Chongquan, director of Pingyao County's department of housing management, except for the houses occupied by some units, there are altogether 21,000 privately owned and 14,000 publicly owned houses in the town. Most of the privately owned houses have been owned by the same family for several generations, and the owners are reluctant to sell up and move out, especially given that real estate in the old town is already 10 times the value of that in the new town.

For the publicly owned houses, rent is only 1 yuan per month per square meter, making them an attractive option for people setting up businesses in the old town. Those residents of the public houses in the old town who do opt to buy houses in the new town, rather than return the house to the department that owns it, generally sublet it to newcomers.

The pace of relocating also de-

# Population Problems in Pingyao

While the government has been encouraging people to move out, the growing tourist market is luring people back into the old town.



Pingyao's Nan Dajie

Photo by Photocom

depends on the rate of development of the new town and the consumption level of the residents — the new houses must be affordable for them. However buying a house in the new town is beyond the means of most ordinary residents. Li Dasheng, a truck driver, can earn 700 to 800 yuan a month. He currently lives in the old town, and does not have enough money to buy one of the new houses in the new town, which cost around 1,200 yuan per square meter.

There are two new housing districts presently under construction. It is estimated that at least 400,000 square meters of new housing is required for the 20,000 people still to move out. Local residents are looking to the government for some sort of compensation for moving, however this wish seems unlikely to be fulfilled. In 2003, the county's financial revenue topped 200 million for the first time, while according to a plan laid out in 2002, the development of the new town, the relocation of the residents and the reconstruction of the ancient town will altogether require an investment of more than 2 billion yuan.

Ruan Yisan, a professor of Shanghai's Tongji University was among the first to appeal for the preservation of Pingyao. He believes it is unrealistic to depend only on the government to invest in the protection of cultural relics. "As to the historical buildings, we can treat them differently. Those classed as cultural relics must be well protected, while those not falling into this category have a

high value of investment. No matter whether we sell them or rent them out, as long as the occupiers do not dismantle or reconstruct them casually, any kind of development of the buildings is acceptable."

To raise money for the relocation project, the Pingyao government in 2001 set up a tourist stock company with the government holding the majority of shares. The aim was to get listed on the stock exchange and so raise money from the market. The idea won the support of the provincial government, but because the registered capital of the company is insufficient, the plan has not yet been turned into reality.

Pingyao is not the only well preserved ancient town facing such difficulties. Zhouzhuang in Jiangsu Province, famous for its canal and river scenery recently found itself in a dilemma with a profusion of silk shops threatening to imbalance the appearance and style of the town. The local government eventually had to intercede, demanding that some silk dealers change or suspend their business, and set a schedule for 60 percent of the shops in the ancient town district to move out over the next several years.

## Ancient Temple Reopens

By Guo Yuandan

After a 300 million yuan renovation project, Lidai Diwang Miao, or the Imperial Temple of Emperors of Successive Dynasties, was reopened to the public last weekend.

Originally constructed about 470 years ago, during the reign of Emperor Jiajing of the Ming Dynasty, the temple was used by emperors of both the Ming and Qing to offer sacrifices to their ancestors.

It underwent two periods of renovation in the Qing Dynasty, during the reigns of emperors Yongzheng and Qianlong. From 1929 until early 2000, it was part of Beijing No. 159 Middle School.

The temple's *Jingdechongsheng Hall* contains stone tablets memorializing 188 Chinese emperors. The *jinzhuan* bricks used to pave the floor, the same as those used in the Forbidden City, are finely textured and golden-yellow in col-



Photo by Chen Bai

or. According to Xi Wei, an official from the Xicheng District government present at the re-opening of the temple, *jinzhuan* bricks were made in Yuyao, Suzhou, specially for imperial use.

The renovation was done strictly according to that carried out at the orders of Emperor Qianlong, and only those sections of the temple too damaged to repair have been replaced. The Imperial Temple of Emperors of Successive Dynasties is on the north side of Fuchengmennei Dajie, to the east of Baitasi.

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By Chen Si

Protected for centuries by the heavy hand of tradition, Chinese classic and folk music is showing undeniable signs of going commercial. Leading the charge to market are successful all-women bands, inspired by such star pop-classical musicians as Vanessa Mae, that mix musical prowess with sexy outfits and enthusiastic, tradition-shattering performances.

Among China's several such groups, the 12 Girls Band, otherwise known as Shier Yuefang or Beautiful Energy, is perhaps the most successful and popular. When the band was formed in 2001, the average age of its 12 attractive members was a mere 23. Yet beyond their youth and looks, they all have professional-level skills in playing classical Chinese instruments - some can even play more than 10 instruments.

Using classical Chinese instruments, their music is based on traditional folk tunes spruced up with elements of Western pop. To add to the novelty, the young women appear on stage in racy get-ups and forgo the graceful poise

of traditional performances with dramatic gestures more reminiscent of rock acts.

Wang Xiaojing, creator and agent of the 12 Girls Band, earned his name representing Cui Jian, the "Father of Chinese Rock." "After years of working in pop music, he found China's pop market was pretty weak. It was difficult to move forward during the 1990s, while there was a lot of space to develop Chinese folk music," Jiang Xiaoyu, the 12 Girls Band's publicist, told *Beijing Today*. "So he decided to take folk music and add new elements to it to make it easier for the masses to accept."

It is a concept Wang calls "visual folk music."

Starting out, Wang shrewdly decided to aim his experiment at the Japanese market. He knew that Chinese folk music was popular in that country, that there were no girl bands and that there was clear demand for music aimed at people over 40.

In 2001, Wang headed to Japan to find partners with a videotape of 12 Girls Band performing. After months of rejections, he made a pitch to a vice president of Warner Brothers Japan. The Japanese record executive was immediately intrigued by the band's fresh style and melodic

music, but was not able to convince the regional head office in Hong Kong to pick up the act. So, he resigned, formed his own label, Platia Entertainment, and quickly signed the young women.

*Miracle*, the band's first album under that label, came out last July and has become a smash hit. Sales have topped two million copies and roughly six billion yen (about 400 million yuan). After hitting the top of the Japanese charts, the band was invited to perform on New Year's Eve 2003 on the country's highest-rated TV show, "Kohaku Utagassen" ("Red and White Singing Competition").

*Miracle* has even triggered a tsunami of interest in Chinese classical and folk music. Music stores in Japan are racing through stocks of traditional Chinese instruments such as the *erhu* and *zheng*, according to a story in the March 24 edition of the magazine *Sanlian Life Week*.

Tickets for all the shows in the 12 Girls Band's latest Japanese tour, which started on April 1 and runs through May 9, sold out the first day they were released. More than 3,000 Japanese fans even shelled out to attend the band's concerts in Shanghai and Beijing earlier this year.

The band's success is

certainly due in part to its visual appeal. The young women not only don tight, fashionable outfits, they literally turn classical music on its head by standing up and strumming on their *pipa*, traditionally held upright, sideways like guitar gods.

Yet massive marketing efforts are probably the most potent force behind their popularity. "We have invested 500 million yen to put their albums in conspicuous places in every record store," Wang Xiaojing said in an interview with *Beijing News* in February. "We added a very popular Japanese tune to our song list. Playing what audiences want is the ticket to lots of profit."

Once this year's Japan tour is finished, the band has set its sights on a potentially more lucrative market - the United States. The 12 Girls Band will play at different venues around the country in May and June, directing all the profits bagged in Japan at making it really big in America.

"It would mean more if we sold one million albums in the United States than in Japan," noted Wang.

The ambitious plans of Wang and the band call for aiming their third album, entitled *Dunhuang*, at the European market.

# Big in Japan

All-women Chinese pop-folk band conquers Japan, sets sights on light music world



More than pretty faces? China's 12 Girls Band has developed a huge following in Japan with their poppy folk tunes and racy outfits.

### A trend is born

Once the 12 Girls Band became popular, similar groups predictably starting popping up.

Musical and Beautiful Youth 18 were formed last year. Both feature now-familiar formulas of attractive young women playing different instruments in songs that combine modern music with classic Chinese tunes. Yet they add to the mix by throwing in song, dance and even acrobatics.

In an interview with *Beijing Today*, noted music critic Jin Zhaojun said the girl band phenomena was not new to China, as similar acts appeared in the 1980s. However, the undying rule is that to be successful, bands have to have a novel hook.

"The 12 Girls Band was the first group to give big live shows and show creativity in how the present their performances. The Beijing Red Poppy Ladies Percussion group, formed in 1999, has made a name for itself because they are the only band that exclusively play drums and percussion instruments. Bands that don't have 'a thing' are sure to die fast," Jin told *Beijing Today*.

### Critics speak

As might be expected, critical reaction to the 12 Girls Band and their cohorts is mixed. Regarding guitar-like *pipa* playing and other moves against tradition, Jin said, "The form serves the content. Playing while standing is a way of making the music more informal and familiar, so it can get closer to a larger audience."

Wang Jiyan, critic for *Philharmonic* magazine, is less forgiving and dismisses the groups as profit-driven novelty acts.

"Market success does not mean a band is musically successful. Music is not fashion, after all - mix it up with other things and you just get a mess," he said. "Classical Chinese music has its own set ways of being performed. If those change, can we still call it classical Chinese music?"

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# Beijing Says 'Oui!' to French Film



By Guo Yuandan

The four-day French Film Festival, titled French Film Panorama wound up last Sunday at the Grand Hall of the Chinese Peoples' Political Consultative Conference.

Ten recent French films, which have received little exposure in China, were screened, including Diane Kurys' *Je Reste! (I'm Staying!)*, Martin Valente's *Les Amateurs (Amateurs)*, Marc Esposito's *Le Coeur des Hommes (French Men)*, Jean Becker's *Effroyables Jardins (Strange Gardens)*, and Jacques-Remy Girerd's *La Prophétie des Grenouilles (The Frog Prophecy)*.

According to the organizers, *Amateurs*, *Strange Gardens* and *French Men* proved the most popular with local audiences, with tickets to all three selling out before the screenings.

One audience member commented, "It is an opportunity for Chinese to understand French culture. While enjoying the film, we can learn something about foreign culture and broaden our



horizons." Audiences consisted mostly of students studying French, as well as French residents in Beijing.

French Film Panorama was a major part of the on-going cultural exchange program between China and France. This year marks the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and France, and has been designated China-France Culture Year.

In light of the positive public response to the festival, the organizers say they plan to repeat the event next year.

## WORLDWIDE



Ted Turner

### Ted Turner Receives Star on Walk of Fame

Cable News Network founder, yacht racer, restaurant owner and philanthropist Ted Turner now has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Turner seemed a bit taken aback by all the attention, although he did wink at the crowd a few times when applauded for his ownership of the Atlanta Braves and other accomplishments. "I love show business," he said. "I've been kind of been squeezed out at Time Warner, out of a management role over the last few years."

Turner became vice chairman of Time Warner Inc. in 1996 after the media conglomerate bought Turner Broadcasting System. He left his post in May 2003, after Time Warner merged with America Online, although he still serves on the board of directors. (AP)



John Woo

### Woo's Next Target: Metroid

The acclaimed action director, best known in America for helming high-octane flicks like *Face/Off*, *Mission: Impossible 2* and *Paycheck*, is joining forces with Nintendo to adapt its bestselling Metroid videogame franchise for the big screen. According to the Hollywood Reporter, Woo's production company, Tiger Hill Entertainment, has optioned the film rights and plans to mount Metroid as a potential blockbuster release for 2006.

Metroid is perhaps Nintendo's most popular videogame after Super Mario Bros. Like Tomb Raider, Metroid's story focuses on a female protagonist, sexy bounty hunter Sa-

mus Aran, and her epic battles against the life-sucking Metroids and their master, Mother Brain, for control of the galaxy.

For the movie version, Woo plans to produce and direct a mega-budgeted space spectacle that remains true to the suspense and mystery of the series, while simultaneously satisfying both gamers and the general public. "We are very fortunate that there is such an extensive amount of material to draw upon for the film due to there being so many iterations of the game over the years," Woo told the Reporter. (E! Online)

### Harry Potter Family Left Out of Fourth Film

Boy wizard Harry Potter's evil uncle and aunt have been cut from the fourth movie in the fantasy series. British actors Richard Griffiths and Fiona Shaw were shocked to discover scenes involving their characters Vernon and Petunia Dursley have been scrapped from the film adaptation of J.K. Rowling's fourth book *Harry Potter and The Goblet Of Fire*.

*Sleepy Hollow* star Griffith explains, "Filming had already started on the fourth and Fiona and I asked the producers, 'Are we in it?' and they said, 'Oh, did no one tell you?' The problem is that the fourth book is just too long for a film, so they've done away with our bit - where Harry is at home with the Dursleys - and will just begin with him at school." (IMDB)

### McCartney Dreams of Following in Disney's Footsteps

Music star Paul McCartney has a wish to follow in Walt Disney's footsteps by making a beautiful feature-length animation film. McCartney, who has had the dream since his days with the Beatles, takes what he hopes will be a big step toward his goal with 'Paul McCartney: The Music and Animation Collection,' being released on DVD on April 13. (Reuters)

(Edited by Yu Shanshan)



Paul McCartney

## What's on DVD

By Tom Spearman

### The Matrix Revolutions

Disappointed, confused, still trying to work it out? Sadly, you won't get too many answers from this DVD release, unless you pause it the entire time to ponder the meaning of the ever more baffling script. The film looks great, but the extras are solely about telling you again



and again and again how incredibly clever the technical effects were. (DVD 9)

### The Last Picture Show

Described by Newsweek as the most important film by a young American filmmaker since Citizen Kane, *The Last Picture Show* still holds up as an awesome movie. Now available on DVD 9, the package includes a lengthy, fascinating making-of documentary, featuring frank interviews with director Peter Bogdanovich and cast. It was an occasionally troubled



production, and those involved aren't afraid to talk about it. (DVD 9)

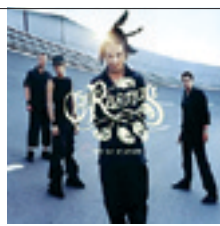
### American Graffiti

It's hard to believe this was directed by the same guy who went on to make *Star Wars*. This beautifully observed and acted tale of coming of age in small-town 60s America, made Hollywood believe that George Lucas really could direct. It also introduced the paying public to future stars like Richard Dreyfuss, Harrison Ford, and, er, Ron Howard. (DVD 9)



## Billboard Singles Top 5

Position	Title	Artist	Album
1	Yeah!	Usher Featuring Lil Jon & Ludacris	Confessions
2	Tipsy	J-Kwon	Hood Hop
3	I Don't Wanna Know	Mario Winans Featuring Enya & P. Diddy	Hurt No More
4	One Call Away	Chingy Featuring J. Weav	Jackpot
5	Burn	Usher	Confessions



## Official UK Singles Chart Top 5

Position	Title	Artist	Album
1	5 Colours In Her Hair	McFly	(CD-Single)
2	Yeah!	Usher Featuring Lil Jon & Ludacris	Confessions
3	In The Shadows	The Rasmus	First Day of My Life
4	Anastacia	Left Outside Alone	(CD-Single)
5	Cha Cha Slide	DJ Casper	The Original Slide Album



Usher continues to dominate Billboard's Hot 100 with "Yeah!" featuring Lil Jon and Ludacris. The single has held the top spot for eight straight weeks. The artist's LaFace/Zomba album "Confessions" holds the same position for

a second-straight week on The Billboard 200.

Challenging Usher for the top spot on the Hot 100 is ... Usher, with the second single from *Confessions*, *Burn*, jumping from 10 to 5 this week.

On the UK Chart, boy band McFly takes the top place with their debut single *Five Colours in Her Hair* for a second straight week, after knocking Usher down to the second place last week. Edited by Wang Xiaoxiao

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# Finger Shopping for Happy Feet

## Online shopping

By Jiang Yongzhu

Sports shoe shopping in Beijing can be difficult. There are many stores, but most have limited stocks of similar choices.

One way to avoid all the trouble is to let your fingers do the shopping and check out the website Allfoot.net, an online sneaker specialist. On offer are shoes for all kinds of sports, from football, basketball and running to more hiking and climbing.

Allfoot.com stocks popular models from all the major brands - Nike, Adidas, Reebok and Converse - and sells them at cut rates. The current top seller on the site is the Nike Air Room Generation, a striking white, black and red shoe with extra ankle support specially designed for rising NBA star LeBron James. The price per pair is 699 yuan, at least 100 less than charged in local stores.

Two other popular choices are the Adidas Predator Mania football shoes (260 yuan) and Nike Air Uptempo Sensation basketball shoes (430 yuan).

There are plenty of shoes that easily tread the line between sports functionality and street-ready fashion. The Country Rip PSM men's running shoe from Adidas (300 yuan) has a distinctive rippled outsole and reflective, multi-colored heel tabs and stripes. Manchester United fans can make their allegiance known by wearing the team's official shoes from Nike (268 yuan). Or, choose an always fashionable classic like the Converse Weapon, comfortable canvas shoes in a range of eye-catching colors that go for 310 yuan a pair.

For shoppers less interested in fashion and more concerned with well-tested reliability, Allfoot.com has a wide range of classic designs. Try the Nike Air Fightposite (698 yuan), hailed as a great improvement in shoemaking since its 1999 debut. The gold shoe has a fully-integrated moulded PU upper, dynamic fit internal sleeve, full-length Zoom Air sock liner and other impressive-sounding components.



Allfoot.com sells Adidas kicks at cut-rate prices - the only thing is you can't try them on first...

## In Over Your Head

By Lisa Lee

The Nanmo hat stand in mall at Oriental Plaza is all but impossible to miss with its 1,000-gallon cowboy hat for a roof. The fun design and good location near the mall's subway entrance ensure this small store is very popular.

Under the big hat is a wide range of caps, fedoras, chapeaus and berets. Now in season are straw hats with delicate flower highlights and wide brims to keep out the rays. These elegant, functional hats are perfect matches for summer skirts and priced from 148 yuan to 360 yuan.

More modern hats feature simple patterns, basic colors and natural materials, such as linen. Linen millenary are ideal for summer, as they are light, breath well and have lots of style. They come in round shapes for women, more blockish styles for men and several colors, the most popular being white and cream. Basic versions start at 98 yuan, while fancier versions adorned with rhinestones fetch up to 198 yuan.

With a line-up that also includes waterproof sports headgear, camouflage caps, cowboy hats and leather chapeaus, Nanmo has a hat to fit nearly any head or style.

Where: No. EE02, basement level 1, the Malls at Oriental Plaza Open: 9:30 am - 9:30 pm Tel: 13911293418



Photo by Lisa Lee

## Got the Blues?

By Sun Ling

For years, the street running north of Dongsì has been a favorite hangout for fashionable youth, as it is lined by loads of small clothes stores that specialize in street, punk and popular wear. Niuzai Ku, the name of which translates to "Jeans Cool," is among these hip boutiques.

While nearly every store on the street stocks jeans of some sort, Niuzai Ku holds its own by offering products from several hard-to-find Hong Kong brands, the most popular of which is Mixed Culture. The company's jeans feature unusually



Photo by Sun Haitao

thick stitching and are all priced at 335 yuan per pair. Mixed Culture's mini-skirts are also attractive, most cut pretty high off the knee and decorated with buttons.

Antinudism in another of Niuzai Ku's featured Hong Kong brands. The jeans are cut lean for women with very slim, model-like figures. Prices range from 235 yuan to 265 yuan.

While the store's name means cool, some of its jeans forgo hip for just plain cute. The Mizu series of jeans target the teenage market with their patches and other colorful decorations. These jeans go for 365 yuan a pair.

Less expensive options are jeans-made in Guangzhou, including a pair with grunge-tastic rips that costs only 135 yuan.

This den of denim also stocks plenty of items to accompany jeans, such as requisite T-shirts. One eye-catching shirt has a light green color with black designs and sequins. There is also a good selection of accessories, such as sunglasses, purses and belts. Shoppers who drop more than 200 yuan in one session are rewarded with store membership cards that promise 10 percent discounts on all future purchases.

Where: No. 447, Dongsì Beidajie, Dongcheng Open: 10 am - 9:30 pm Tel: 6403 4480



## Fit to a T

By Wang Fang

The recently blast of unseasonable heat has made April prime time for stripping down to comfortable t-shirts. Consumers who like their Ts of a personal nature should check out T-Tribe, a small store north of the Third Ring Road that is a t-shirt specialist.

The store is the exclusive local agent of an American clothing chain. Available for purchase or order are T-shirts in over 10,000 styles, from the cool to the cutesy, all priced at around 100 yuan each.

On the dark walls hang a rainbow of shirts, broken into 23 categories such as animals, plants, sports, military and pop stars. According to the shop assistants, shirts printed with babies and small animals are favorites with girls, while boys tend to choose punky patterns of lightening and fire and sports-related Ts, such as one proclaiming, "In this court, the score will be the judge." Sensitive shoppers thinking ahead can pick up a "Special mother" shirt to melt mom's heart on Mother's Day.

If none of the pre-made shirts fit the bill, the store will print personalized ones bearing images provided by customers - a favorite CD cover, a family picture, a personal slogan, whatever. The prices of such items, including the shirt, are the same as the pre-fab versions. Shoppers that buy two shirts at normal price are rewarded with VIP cards entitling them for a lifetime of t-shirt discounts.

Where: Yinghua Dongjie No. 13, near the Sino-Japan Friendship Hospital, Chaoyang Open: 10 am - 10 pm Tel: 6417 2630



Photos by Li Shuzhuan

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Fashion and French food mix at Sit



Loungy Vibes is 798's nightlife hotspot.



The prime perch at Jianghu



Great mural, decent Sichuan food at Chuancai No. 6



Bricks, cakes and cool at At Cafe



Grab a book before heading into Old Factory



Vincent Cafe

# Dashanzi Dining

798 satisfies more than the eyes and mind



The glass-enclosed outer area of Old Factory connects the cafe to the 798 Art Space gallery.

By Lu Pinrou and Joel Kirkhart

The Dashanzi Art District, centered around the renovated 798 factory, has become a local epicenter of art, fashion and alternative lifestyle. It is a great place to spend a weekend day, or night, taking in the culture and indulging in some of the other pleasures that have appeared in the form of interesting restaurants, cafes and bars.

While the area is certainly cafe-centric, there are some more substantial dining options worth investigating. Below are short introductions to several of the district's eating and drinking establishments. Be sure to check in again as the year goes on, as a whole slew of new places are in the works.

With its huge windows and striking sign, it is hard to miss the restaurant-café **Jianghu** on the way into 798. Though it occupies the site of an old military workshop, this joint does not try to cash in on its history, instead it has a funky feel all its own.

The décor is a mishmash of faux Chinese antiques, western stuff and a heavy shot of kitsch, a result of the questionable paintings and a wall of chintzy ceramics at the back. Above all that stands a huge wood platform bearing many tables, including the restaurant's top spot, a cozy, glass-enclosed space over the front door.

One of the specialties of the house is coffee, espresso to be exact, made from Lavazza brand beans and served in authentic Lavazza cups. Jianghu's barristas show off in the "dancing latte", a three-layered drink of coffee, milk and foamed milk that magically defies all efforts to meld together short of vigorous stirring.

Fans of fine tea will be pleased with Jianghu's selection, which includes standards and exotic varieties such as Lapsang Souchong. Being dried over pine needles, not just plain wood, is the secret to this black tea's unusual flavor.

Customers looking for more than drinks can check the bilingual menu, which offers a mix of Western-style dishes. Top off a meal with a selection from the impressive wine list, containing the likes of a 1997 Lafite Rothschild. Just don't try to order beer—it is strictly off the menu in order to preserve the atmosphere, management explained.

**Where:** Dashanzi Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Road, Chaoyang  
**Open:** 11 am - midnight **Tel:** 6431 5190 **Average cost:** 80 yuan per person

Comfortable light, soft music and friendly service make **At**



Meicai kourou at Chuancai No. 6

**Café** a great place for a relaxing break from artistic creation or simply to rest the feet after checking out 798's many galleries.

At Café is divided into three main sections. The front room, home to the bar-like counter and tempting cake display, has simple, modern tables and chairs and a beautiful bench crafted from a split log. A brick wall on one side bears an amusing range of slogans from the factory's heyday.

Two big holes punched through that wall lead into the second room, giving it a playful, post-industrial kind of vibe. There is also a somewhat hidden back room, normally vacant, good for more quiet or intimate encounters.

The café's upstairs area is appointed with cozy red sofas and more characters, slogans and other refound art from 798's past on the walls.

In keeping with its café status, At Cafe serves a full line of high-quality coffees made from Illy-brand beans, fine teas and freshly made juices.

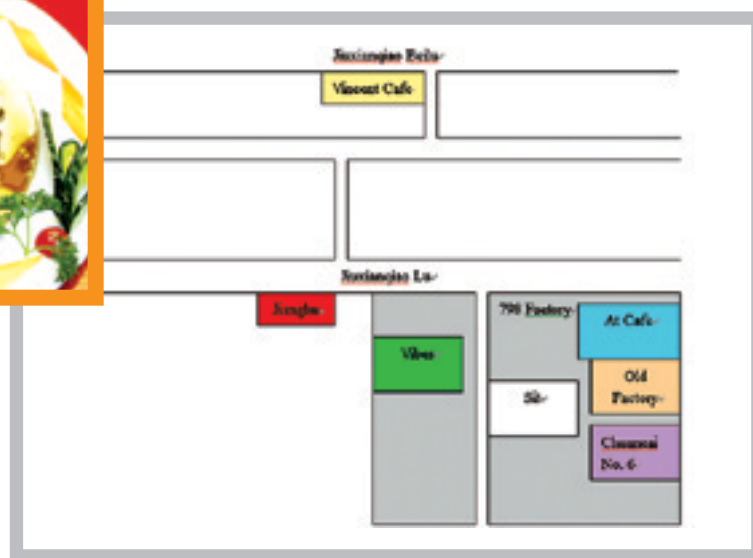
The food menu is not large, but most things are done pretty well. Sandwiches come as multi-layered affairs, artistically cut and served among a sprawl of crisp fries. There are also plenty of pasta options, including a tasty, if not particularly authentic, lasagna. It's hard to imagine a better spot for simply chilling than At Café. Now if they'd only open a similar joint closer to downtown...

**Open:** 11 am - midnight **Tel:** 6438 7264 **Average cost:** 40 yuan per person

Certainly the fanciest eating option at 798 is **Sit (Bashi Zuo)** a highly-styled French restaurant.

Sit occupies a space easily large enough to be a gallery and sparsely decorated with super-hip furniture. However, several of the chairs and tables look like they were designed with fashion more in mind than comfort.

The manager is a passionate fan of French cuisine and changes the restaurant's menu four times a year in keeping with trends and the seasons. The pride of the menu is the goose liver, not served



Note: map not drawn to scale

as paté, but whole and beautiful. Other recommended choices are the Marseilles fish soup, a thick stew full of fresh fish and octopus, and the Chablis sausage with Dijon mustard.

As would be expected, Sit has an impressive wine list, including plenty of champagne, and the well-schooled staff can help steer diners to a good, reasonably priced bottle.

Sit is an unusual restaurant — forgoing any pretensions of being a cozy bistro, it goes all-out to a place for the beautiful people to see and be seen. Pictures on the glass corridor inside the door testify, as uber-model Cindy Crawford has even made an appearance. That makes it a bit of a strange fit in the decidedly artsy 798 scene...

**Open:** 7 pm - midnight **Tel:** 6438 9919 **Average cost:** 200 yuan per person

Tucked at the end of the 798 Art Space gallery is the **Old Factory** bar and restaurant. In keeping with the look of the gallery, remnants of the factory's past are smoothly integrated into the decor. Two metal pillars hanging from the ceiling hold up one table, while other equipment emerges from the floor.

In the center of the space is a large bookshelf stuffed with art magazines and books. The ceiling is low enough to inspire mild claustrophobia, but sitting down it would hardly be a problem.

The menu has its ups and downs. A few pages are filled with rather predictable local Western fare — club sandwiches, spaghetti, fries. Yet it is redeemed by the impressive pizza section, which includes several kinds of pies, and the specials, which range from pastas such as stuffed tortellini to grilled steak and salmon.

Old Factory is less playfully arty than some of its neighbors and more sophisticated for it.

**Open:** 10:30 am - midnight

**Tel:** 6438 4862 **Average cost:** 50 yuan per person

Across the corridor from the 798 Art Space is **Vibes**, a relatively new hit on the city club scene.

Vibes has a spacious, three-floor set up, the downstairs home to the bar and an open floor, the thin second layer the lair of the DJ booth and the third level has two spacious lounge rooms with cool curving glass ceilings and mod furniture.

The drink list is brief but intriguing and prices are reasonable. With regular guest DJ spots and parties, Vibes is the nightlife core of 798. Check out the club's "Arabian night" with live musicians and belly dancers, in honor of the opening of the first Dashanzi International Art Festival, on April 24, starting at 10 pm.

**Open:** 2 pm - late **Tel:** 6437 8082

One of the few eating sites in 798 not to ride the cafe/restaurant division, **Chuancai No. 6** is a full-on specialist in Sichuan cuisine. Artistic inspiration is very evident in the decor, but the food has more humble, home-cooked style.

A worthy starter is the dried tofu with hot oil (*hongyou dougan*), strips of meaty tofu suffused with plenty of spicy, rich oil.

The waitress recommended the spicy chicken (*lazi ji*) as a house special. Stick with that, not the derivative chicken with beer and chili peppers (*pilou lazi ji*), suspiciously light on spice with a muddy flavor.

The classic *meicai kourou*, slices of fatty pork molded over pickled vegetables, is tasty but not very authentic and needs a bit of sauce.

The winners of the dinner were the vegetables. Mashed potatoes with spring onion (*cong-hua tudouni*), nicely lumpy with a pronounced fresh onion flavor, is sure to get gobbled up quick.

Another sure hit is the spicy

stir-fried sliced turnip (*ciangchao luobosi*), cooked fast so the turnip strips are crisp and tender and laced with mild heat.

The restaurant's vaulted ceiling is used to good effect, as the dining is done on a two-layered loft. Furniture is stylish but not garish and strips of fluorescent lights at one end add a modern feel. The star of the show is a huge revolution-style mural painted in tribute to 798's resurrection.

If it's Sichuan fare you want, there are better places to go in Beijing. But diners at or around 798 who want Chinese should check out Chuancai No. 6 — it's cheap, fun and a real alternative to cafe grub.

**Open:** 11 am - 2 pm, 5-10 pm **Tel:** 6432 3577 **Average cost:** 40 yuan per person

North of the main art strip, just around the corner from the China At Seasons Gallery, stands **Vincent Cafe**. Among the area's glut of cafes, Vincent carves out a spot for itself by passing on standard food and specializing in crepes.

The somewhat confusing menu lists crepes in several groups, divided according to number of fillings. They start out with simple basic components of cheese, ham, egg and mushroom, and get progressively more exotic by the specials section. All choices work from a solid base, as the crepes are very well done, thin, light and tasty.

The egg and cheese is a study in impressive simplicity, the egg cooked lightly inside the crepe so its yolk can be spread over the whole thing.

The more elaborate Norwegian is stuffed with tasty, fresh smoked salmon, spinach and cream, but needs a bit more zip. The German comes out just as the menu describes, filled with three breakfast sausages and mustard. Pretty good.

None of these crepes are large enough to stand as a meal to themselves, but they all would be great for an afternoon snack, brunch or even a light dinner if a few were shared.

There is also a range of sweet crepes, topped with jam or ice cream and fancier flambes with fruit and a hit of liquor set aflame.

Vincent Cafe is a pleasant spot, partly because the friendly owners and their popular dog are often there, partly because of its unpretentious feel, partly because of the tasty crepes. The hidden location, however, puts its welcome existence at jeopardy. 798 fans would do well to support this place.

**Open:** 11 am - midnight **Tel:** 8456 4823 **Average cost:** 60 yuan per person

Photos by Li Shuzhuan



One of Old Factory's impressive range of pizzas (40 yuan)

Service



Jingshan Park Mudan Festival

Jingshan Park's eighth Mudan Festival began last Saturday. The show features 35 kinds of spring flowers, with peonies from Gansu, Jiangsu, Zhejiang provinces, and from Japan.

**Where:** Jingshan Park (behind Forbidden City) **When:** till June, 6 am - 9 pm **Admission:** 5 yuan **Tel:** 6404 4071

Grand View Gardens

Water and light shows, traditional performances and Beijing style food and drink at Grand View Gardens.

**Where:** 12 Xijie, Nancaiyuan Xuanwu **When:** till October, 6 - 9 pm **Admission:** 55 yuan **Tel:** 6354 4994

Jams

Get Lucky Bands

Tonight, Tongue (Shetou) will shock the bar. Paned Twin, A4, 718-Sunlei and Wang Fan will be on stage Saturday night. Verse, Perfume (Xiangshui), Pigboat (Qianshui) and Peach (Taose) on April 21. Convenience Store (Bianli Shangdian) and Feiyu on April 22.

**Where:** Get lucky, 1 Dongfang Qicaida Shijie, Laitai Jie Chaoyang **When:** 9 pm **Admission:** 30 yuan **Tel:** 8448 3335

English Rich

Guitarist and singer from England Rich Hill, continues his residency at B2N tomorrow night.

**Where:** B2M, Dongheyan Xiaoqu, Near Yonghegong **When:** April 16, 9 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6426 1091

Nameless Bands

Xishan Laoyao, Wan Xiaoli, Buyi and Glorious Pharmacy (Meihao Yaodian) will perform on April 16. Second Hand Rose follow on April 17

**Where:** Nameless Highland, Yayuncun, Anhuili Area 1, Building 14 Chaoyang **When:** 9 pm **Admission:** 50 yuan **Tel:** 6489 1613

Weekend Parties

French DJ will hold a dance party on Friday, Saturday night is punk night.

**Where:** Loup Chante, Chengfu Lu, Shiweiyang **When:** 9 pm **Admission:** 20 yuan **Tel:** 6276 7355

Activities

YPHH Happy Hour

First through the door will receive a free beer. Tsingtao costs 15 yuan and standard mixed drinks 20 yuan. Lucky draw is sponsored by Evolution Fitness with three memberships and Links Relocations with a bottle of champagne.

**Where:** Kagen, 8 Guanghua Donglu, Chaoyang **When:** April 21, 6:30 pm **Tel:** 6583 6830.

Visit Peking Man Site and Clouds Dwelling Monastery (Chinese Culture Club)

The Peking Man Site at Zhoukoudian is a UNESCO-listed world heritage site. From there we head to Clouds Dwelling Monastery on the hill nearby where a huge collection of Buddhist engravings on stone slabs were unearthed and are now exhibited.

**Where:** meet at 10 am at the Liangma Flower Market, opposite Sunflower Tower **When:** April 18, 10 am - 4:30 pm **Admission:** 120 yuan, including transportation and entry to sites **Tel:** 8462 2081

Beijing Hikers

Visit the tunnels built for guerrilla warfare against the Japanese. Over the hill from the tunnels is a not quite deserted village. Heading on from the village, through a valley with giant weeds, up the hill to come down a prickly slope passing holes in the rock face.

**Where:** Pinggu county, East of Beijing **When:** April 18, meet 8:30 at the Lido Hotel outside Starbucks **Admission:** adults 150 yuan, Children 100 yuan **Tel:** 13910025516

S.W.A.T

Directed by Clark Johnson, starring Samuel L. Jackson, Colin Farrell, Michelle Rodriguez, James Todd Smith. Team commander Hondo (Jackson) is assigned to recruit and train five top-notch officers for a new Special Weapons and Tactics unit (S.W.A.T.). After weeks of rigorous physical training, the

new team is thrown into action when a notorious drug lord, played by Olivier Martinez, offers a \$100 million reward to anyone who can free him from police custody. English with Chinese subtitles.

**Where:** UME International Cineplex, (Huaxing Guoji Yingcheng), 44 Kexueyuan Nanlu, Shuangyushu, Haidian **When:** from April 23 **Tel:** 8211 2851



Movies

The Emperor of Capri

Directed by Luigi Comencini Sonia, starring Totò, Yvonne Sanson, Marisa Merlini, Aldo Giuffrè. A beautiful gold digger mistakes Antonio, a waiter in a Neapolitan hotel, for the Arab prince Bey of Agapur and makes an appointment with him for the following day in Capri. Antonio goes

there behind his wife and mother in law's back. Due to a lucky series of circumstances he really does become the prince of the island.

Italian with English subtitles.

**Where:** Italian Embassy, 2 Dongerjie, Sanlitun **When:** April 22, 7 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6532 2187

Leaving Me Loving You (Da Cheng Xiao Shi)

Directed by Wilson Yip, starring Faye Wong, Leon Lai. This movie is a modern day romantic comedy set in the chic haunts of Shanghai. Xiao Yue, (Faye Wong) plans surprise birthday celebrations for wealthy clients, but is unsuccessful in love. Chinese with English subtitles.

**Where:** Cherry Lane Movies, 29 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang **When:** April 16-17, 8 pm **Admission:** 50 yuan **Tel:** 13901134745

Under a Spell

Directed by Carlos Carrera. Starring Mario Zaragoza and Blanca Guerra. This story, somewhere between reality and magic, tells of an adolescent boy and his friends,

and his love for his teacher, which leads him away from his dreams. It is also the story of the teacher, who believes in a better world, without the obstacles of incomprehension and intolerance. Spanish with English subtitles.

**Where:** Cultural Office of Mexican Embassy, No. 5 Wu Jie Sanlitun **When:** April 21, 7:30 pm **Tel:** 6532 22440



Performance

More from Mahler

China Philharmonic Orchestra performs Mahler's Symphony No. 7 under the baton of Johannes Wildner.

**Where:** Poly Theatre, 14 Dongzhimen Nandajie **Admission:** 50-480 yuan **When:** April 17, 7:30 pm **Tel:** 6506 5345

David Copperfield, yet again

Illusionist David Copperfield is back for another China tour, which will please his fans no end.

**Where:** Capital Gymnasium, 54 Baishiqiao Lu **When:** April 20-25, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 100-1,800 yuan **Tel:** 6833 5552

Broadway in Beijing

A song-and-dance variety by Beijing Guolun New Art Centre, in which

young Chinese dancers will try to recreate Broadway-style dances as well as other styles such as Latin, jazz and Irish tap.

**Where:** Century Theatre, Liangmaqiao Lu **When:** April 22-25, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 120-580 yuan **Tel:** 6466 0032

Choral Songs

China Opera House's Choral Ensemble performs Guest from the Ice Mountain (Bingshan Shang De Laike), The Red Detachment of Women (Hongse Niangzi Jun), Warfare of Underground Tunnels (Didao Zhan) and more.

**Where:** Poly Theatre, 14 Dongzhimen Nandajie **Admission:** 160-800 yuan **When:** April 18, 7:30 pm **Tel:** 6506 5345

Exhibitions



Shapes and Shadows

Hungarian photographer Judit Stowe's solo exhibition of black and white fine art photography.

**Where:** Chen Changfen Art Center, A211, National Library of China, 7 Wenjinjie, Xicheng **When:** April 17 - May 30 (closed Mondays), 10 am - 5 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6612 6999



Feng Feng Oil Painting Exhibition

Feng Feng's oil paintings feature the combination of traditional Chinese culture and abstract art. He makes use of "palace" vermilion, orange, black, green and purple in paintings to create an "emperor" style.

**Where:** Qin Gallery, 1-1E Enjoy Paradise, Huaweili, north of Beijing Curio City **When:** April 17-30, 9:30 am - 7 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8779 0458

Spring Surprise

The finest artists celebrate

the spirit of spring. Horses and the magnificent landscape of Inner Mongolia by Lao Jia, colorful and peaceful natural scenery by Lin Tainxing, the comfortable and tranquil southern life of Fang Xiang; and colorful dreams of the not-yet-forgotten Beijing by Shirley Wu.

**Where:** Creation Gallery, North end of Ritan Donglu **When:** April 19-May 14, 10 am - 7 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8561 7570

Liu Hongbing Solo Exhibition

More than 50 traditional ink and painting works by Liu Hongbing, from Jiangsu Province.

**Where:** New Art Centre, 136 Nanchizi Dajie **When:** April 20-30, 10 am - 5 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6526 8098

Wang Yipeng Oil Painting Exhibition

Wang Yipeng, a professor at the Central Academy of Fine Art, has studied painting for over 50 years. The over 100 oil paintings exhibited feature the different landscapes of old Beijing, Xinjiang, Taiwan and France.

**Where:** Continent Artist Gallery, Yihe Building, 12 Dongshi Lu, Hepingle **When:** April 21 - May 7, 9 am - 5:30 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6448 9639



TV and Radio Highlights

CCTV-9	
Monday - Friday	
Around China	6:30 am
Documentary	8:30 am
Nature and Science	
Chinese Civilization	11:30 am
Cultural Express	4:30 pm
Shanghai Today and	
Chinese Civilization	6 pm
Center Stage	7:30 pm
Sports Scene + Learning	
Chinese	11 pm
Dialogue	12:30 pm
Saturday	
Travelogue	9:30 am
World Insight	11:30 am
Sunday	
China This Week	9:30 am
Business Guide	11:00 am
China Today	11:30 am
China Radio International 91.5 FM	
Monday - Friday	
Easy FM Afternoon	2-7 pm
Fun in Beijing	5:05-5:30 pm
Joy FM	9:05-11 pm
Saturday	
Music Memories	8:05-11 am
Euro Hit 40	12:05-1 pm
Music Sans Frontiers	6:05-8 pm
Joy FM	9:05-11 pm
Sunday	
Music Memories	8:05-11 am
Jazz Beat	6:05-8 pm
Joy FM	9:05-11 pm

Language exchange

Sally, an English major, wants to find a female native English speaker for language exchange. She can also help with shopping in Beijing.

**Email:** snowflowerer@sohu.com

We are glad to receive your feedback. We will print employment, language exchange and accommodation info for individuals. Feel free to email us at bjtodayinfo@ynet.com or call 6590 2521

By Guo Yuandan



## Residence of Qing Scholar Ji Xiaolan

By Zhang Ran

Yuewei Caotang, residence of Ji Xiaolan (1724-1805), the well-known scholar and writer of the Qing Dynasty, is located in Zhushikou Xidajie, Beijing's south.

Ji Xiaolan was born in the Qing Dynasty during the reign of Emperor Yongzheng, in Xian County, Hebei Province. At the age of 31, he passed the imperial examinations and was granted the title of *jushi* (scholar rank). He was appointed to the office of the editor of the *Si Ku Quan Shu* (*The Complete Library in Four Divisions of Knowledge*), where he oversaw the completion of that work, considered to be the classic of the Chinese bibliography.

In his later life, he published the 24-volume *Sketching at Yuewei Caotang*, a collection of and essays about local customs, changes in officialdom, classics and antiques, medicine and astrology, anecdotes, and fox and spirits fairy tales.

Ji Xiaolan's residence, Yuewei Courtyard is a typical Qing Dynasty style courtyard. The original building consisted of three yards and 100 rooms. Now only the western section remains. Visitors to the courtyard are always first attracted by a wisteria planted at the gate. It was planted by Ji Xiaolan, and has flourished for over 200 years. The renowned modern writer Lao She used to sit under this wisteria, drinking tea and enjoying its purple flowers. Every year when it blooms, Jinyang Restaurant, which now owns the courtyard, provides special cakes made from the wisteria flowers.

Stepping inside the yard, one can see traditional Chinese corridors at each wing encircling the middle hall. There were two crab apple trees planted by Ji Xiaolan in the middle of the yard, one of which has died. An inscribed stone stele beside the surviving tree tells the story of how Ji Xiaolan and Wen Luan, his uncle's maid, were childhood companions. They fell in love with each other and made a vow of marriage under a crab apple tree in their hometown. However, Wen Luan's brother separated the lovers, and Wen Luan died not long after. Later Ji Xiaolan married a concubine called Ming Xuan, who resembled his beloved Wen Luan. For the memory of Wen Luan and Ming Xuan, Ji Xiaolan planted the crab apple trees.

Inside the hall, stands a statue made of white marble. It is Ji Xiaolan, smiling, reminding us of

the great scholar full of wisdom and humor. A calligraphy board hangs above the screen, with the words "Yuewei Caotang Jiu Zhi"

(阅微草堂旧址) by Qi Gong, a famous Chinese calligrapher.

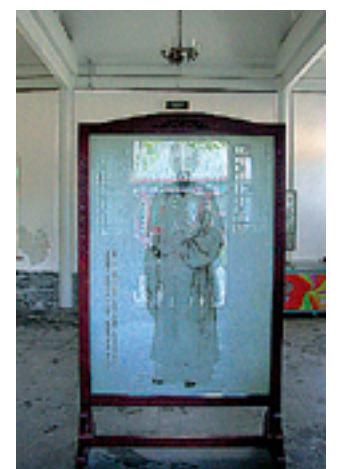
Ji Xiaolan's former residence was originally the residence of General Yue Zhongqi, the 21st



generation descendant of Yue Fei (a hero of the Song Dynasty). Ji Xiaolan lived here for around 30 years, until his death.

In 1936, Mei Lanfang's Fuliancheng Peking Opera Troup purchased the courtyard and used it as dormitory and training center for students. Since 1949, it has been the base for a transportation company, the headquarters of the China National Democratic Construction Association and the Xuanwu District CPC Party School.

On October 1 1959, Jinyang Restaurant opened its business here. The east wing was originally for office, storage and dormitory, on which the present dining hall was built in 1989. In 2001,



Portrait screen of Ji Xiaolan

when Guang'an Dajie was widened, the municipal government ordered that Ji Xiaolan's residence be preserved and restored. This is why Guang'an Dajie curves to southward by 10 meters.

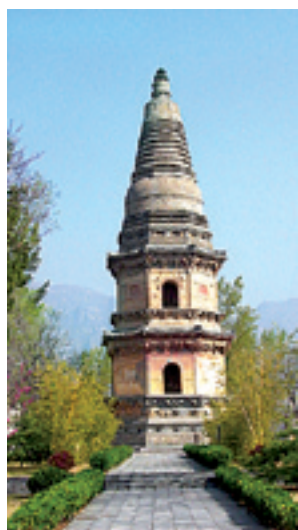
After the restoration, Ji Xiaolan's residence reopened to the public on November 30 last year, while Jinyang Restaurant meanwhile continues to perpetuate Ji Xiaolan's memory.

**Where:** 241 Zhushikou Xidajie, Xuanwu District  
**Open:** 9 am - 4 pm, closed Mondays  
**Admission:** free



Photos by Zheng Shangjie

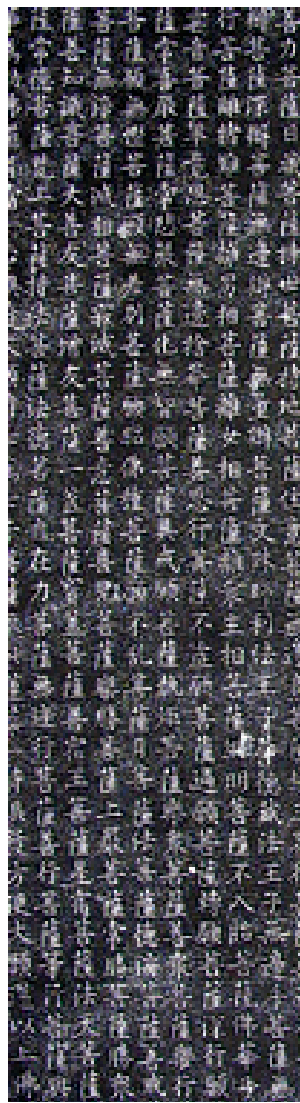
# Temple of Stone Sutras



North Pagoda



Entrance to "1000 Year Old Temple"



By Lü Pinrou

Nestled in the hills southwest of Beijing, 1,700-year-old Yunju Temple is famous for its stone-carved sutras. Since 605, monks at the temple carved 1,122 books of scripture onto over 14,000 stone tablets. The temple is also renowned as a repository of two *sarta*, or Buddha bone fragments, discovered in a cave at the temple in 1981.

In 1961, the State Council announced that Yunju Temple had been selected as one of the first state level key relic protection sites. Now moves are underway to see Yunju Temple listed as world cultural heritage site by UNESCO.

Located at the foot of Baidai Mountain in Fangshan District, Yunju Temple is 70 kilometers from downtown Beijing.

Unlike most Buddhist temples in China, which face south, Yunju faces east. The reason for this is that when the temple was rebuilt in the Yuan Dynasty, the design followed Mongolian custom that has its origins in sun worship.

Yunju Temple has three distinct sections. Visitors usually pass through the middle temples first, then go to the North Pagoda, where one can appreciate the delicate ancient sculptures, and finally the South Pagoda, where the stone sutras are stored.

The middle temples are com-



Making souvenir rubbings of the sutras

Photos by Tian Xiaotong

posed of six halls, each named for the deity worshipped there. The largest contains a red copper statue of Guanyin dating back to the Ming Dynasty. Every year on the eighth day of the fourth lunar month, monks gather here to celebrate the Jade Buddha Festival.

In the Yunju Temple's tiny museum, visitors can see paper sutras written in "tongue blood." According to tradition, tongue blood was less prone to fading than blood from other parts of the body. As a proof of piety, worshippers would prick their tongues and use the blood to write sutras.

Yunju Temple has seven Tang Dynasty pagodas and five Liao

Dynasty pagodas, all in a good state of repair. North Pagoda is a representative building of Yunju Temple, famous for its bell-style structure. On the inside of the walls, many scriptures can be seen. Facing the North Pagoda, visitors can still see the ruins of the South Pagoda, which was destroyed by Japanese troops in World War II.

It was under the ruins of the South Pagoda that the treasure of the stone sutras was found, hidden in a specially prepared scripture grotto. Visitors can now walk downstairs to have a glimpse of the cave where the stone scriptures are preserved in a special nitrogen-filled airtight vault.

Every day at ten o'clock, craftsmen make rubbings from the stone tablets, which are available for sale for between 30 and 70 yuan, depending on the quality.

The 450-meter Stone Sutra Mountain has nine sutra caves. Inside there are stone sutras and stone pillars carved with Buddha figures. It was in Lei Yin Cave that the two *sarta* were found on November 11, 1981. The cave is wide with stone carved sutras on the inside walls. Two pagodas on the Stone Sutra Mountain were built in the Tang Dynasty, some 1,200 years ago. For the short-of-time or short-of-breath, there is a cable car to the top of the mountain.

There is a vegetarian restaurant, and the adjacent Fanghuatuan Hotel offers accommodation with rooms priced from 10 to 200 yuan.

**Admission:** Yunju Temple 30 yuan; Stone Sutra Mountain 10 yuan; Chair lift to the Stone Sutra Mountain 30 yuan

**Getting there:** Take the Jingshi Highway (京石高速公路) toward Fangshan. At the Dongguan Huandao (东关环岛) turn onto the Zhouzhang road, continue for about 15 kilometers until you see a sign marking the turnoff to Yunju Temple. Alternatively, take bus 917 or tourist bus 10 (游10路) from Qianmen and Fuchengmen to Yunju Temple.

**Open:** 8:30 -5:30