The people of France have tasted the oriental flavour of China during the past year and China is now enjoying the culture and arts of France, with the start of France Culture Year on October 10th.

French president Jacques Chirac, who was on a state visit to China, helped launch the highly anticipated French Culture Year in China, aside from his usual diplomatic tour of duty.

A performance of the well-known French stunt flying team Patrouille de France, an electronic concert by Jean-Michel Jarre, an exhibition of the Life of Charles de Gaulle, a collection of French impressionist art works - all of these are responsible for a strong French presence in China's present cultural climate. Three months after the conclusion of the China Culture Year in France, French artists are now bringing their great talents and excellent works to the Chinese people.

Many Chinese people still remember how during this year's Spring Festival the Eiffel Tower was cloaked in red to celebrate France's China Culture Year, and how a grand Chinese cultural performance along the Champs-Elysees brought excitement to the French public.

Commemorating in Paris during October 2003, the China Culture Year lasted ten months before coming to an end this July after a variety of cultural activities, including art exhibitions, song and dance performances, antique exhibitions, films and fashion displays.

"The statistics show that more than 60% of the French people favor Chinese culture, which demonstrates that the China Culture Year has had some positive effect among the French public," said Zhang Xiaoming, Deputy Director of Cultural Research Center with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

France and China can be seen to share a number of similarities in respect to history and culture. The western country has the bitter memory of being ravaged politically, economically and militarily, but its culture has never been subdued, leaving it with experiences to which China can very easily relate. The famous modern scholar Gu Hongming once said that only the French can really understand Chinese people and Chinese culture, a view that is still shared by many French and Chinese.

"They have old relation," said Jeanraphael Peytregnet from the French embassy in Beijing. "I think that's the common ground. They understand each other because of the duration of our history, and the importance of our respective culture. We are influencing neighboring countries. We share the same idea of culture diversity. We believe every culture is worth to learn and can have positive influence towards the others."

Three months after the conclusion of the China Culture Year in France, it was the turn of the France Culture Year to begin in Beijing with an extravagant show by France's electronic Jean-Michel Jarre in the Forbidden City.

Typically, most Chinese people's gut impression of France is simply of a romantic country, but the staging of various exhibitions and music performances is making many have second thoughts. The modern music and advanced techniques employed in many of the French events make it clear that this is a modern country inspired by innovation and creation.

Elsewhere in Beijing, fifty-one precious paintings of various French impressionistic artists, mainly from the Museum D'Orsay, are making their debut in the China Art Gallery.

Furthermore, a French fashion show celebrating the last century, and a huge buffet to be held on the Great Wall are introducing Chinese people to the most famous western country for fashion and food.

Apart from Beijing, over 200 cultural activities will be held over the coming year in Hong Kong, Shanghai and other major cities across China.

Jeanraphael Peytregnet from the French embassy is delighted to see how enthusiastic Chinese people are towards these shows.

"It is just a beginning, but it is very encouraging if you look at the people visiting the exhibition of impressionist, if you look at the coverage of media in general. I think it is already very impressive."

"The two countries may have a long history of cultural exchanges, but in the past China was still little known or understood overseas. Hopefully this is now changing, with Deputy Director Zhang Xiaoming believing that cultural influence increases as a country grows in strength. He gives his view on China's presently unbalanced international situation.

"China has such a long history and rich cultural tradition, but its cultural influence in the present world does not yet match its heritage."

At the beginning of 20th century, translated Chinese literature was introduced into France, bringing with it Chinese drama, Chinese everyday life, Chinese folk customs and Chinese philosophy. Towards the end of the same century, Chen Kaige's film "Farewell, My Concubine" shared the honors at 1993's Cannes Film Festival, an achievement which helped to give Chinese films and directors access to the French market. Exchanges have accelerated in recent years and this culture year should serve as another healthy shot in the arm.

"The success of China Culture Year in France marks a new stage in the partnership between China and France," said Chinese Culture Minister Sun Jiazheng. The enthusiasm of French people toward Chinese culture is not only because of the charm of ancient Chinese culture, but also because of the great achievements obtained by the Chinese people during the past two decades since the opening and reforms."
The 22nd or 23rd day of December every year is the shortest day and longest night of the year in the northern hemisphere. After that day, also known as the Winter Solstice, the days become longer. As the ancient Chinese thought, the yang, or muscular, positive things will become stronger and stronger after this day, so it should be celebrated.

It is called the Dong Zhi Festival, or the Winter Solstice Festival. This literally means the "arrival (zhī) of winter" (dòng). Dong Zhi is the second most important festival of the Chinese calendar and is considered the thanksgiving of the Chinese calendar. Dong Zhi is the last festival of the year. Coinciding with the winter solstice, it's a time for the entire family to get together to celebrate the past year.

The Winter Solstice became a festival during the Han Dynasty (206 BC-220 AD) and thrived in the Tang and Song dynasties (618-1279). The Han people regarded Winter Solstice as a "Winter Festival", so officials would organize celebrations.

On this day, both officials and common people rest. Relatives and friends share delicious food with each other. In the Tang and Song dynasties, the Winter Solstice was a day to offer sacrifices to Heaven and ancestors. Emperors would go to suburbs to worship the Heaven, while common people offered sacrifices to their deceased parents or other relatives. The Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) even had the record that "Winter Solstice is as formal as the Spring Festival," showing the great importance attached to this day.

In some parts of Northern China, people eat dumpling soup on this day; while residents of other places eat dumplings, to keep away the winter frost. In parts of South China, the whole family will get together to have a meal made of red-bean and glutinous rice to drive away ghosts and other evil things. In other places, people eat tangyuan, a kind of stuffed small dumpling ball made of glutinous rice flour. The Winter Solstice rice dumplings can be used as sacrifices to ancestors, or gifts for friends and relatives. The Taiwan people even have the custom of offering nine-layer cakes to their ancestors. They make cakes in the shape of a chicken, duck, tortoise, pig, cow or sheep with glutinous rice flour and steam them on different layers of a pot. These animals all signify auspiciousness in Chinese tradition. People of the same surname or family clan gather at their ancestral temples to worship their ancestors in age order. After the sacrificial ceremony, there is always a grand banquet. (Ning Yan)

Mailbag

I have been listening to CRI for quite a number of years - in fact the first time I picked up your radio station was 32 years ago. It was quite exciting in those days to listen to radio from a country so far away. We in Europe knew very little about China in those days. Things have changed in all those years but it is still fascinating to listen to your programs. I want to thank you for "The Messenger" which I have been receiving for many years. Also special thanks to you for the "Q&A in China", which you have been sending to me. I think this is really a great idea to put together some of the questions you have been receiving from you listeners in a booklet. There is so much interesting information about your country in these books. (Karl Pichler, Austria)

It is with gladness and enthusiasm I am writing this letter. I acknowledge the receipt of the messenger you've sent to me. Reading the messenger has enabled me to know more about the interesting Chinese culture. I desire to learn Chinese language because I've started saving money to visit china. CRI is the best station for every radio listener. I really want to tell you I have introduced CRI to many people. Now they are regular listeners. (Aminu Idris, Nigeria)

As a regular listener of your broadcasts, I would like to tell you that I am very much enjoying listening your programs, which are full of information, interest and knowledge about the China and the rest of the world. CRI's news and reports are the best way for me to remain in closer touch and all informed about China and its various aspects and the events taking place in and around China. Also there is no hesitation for me to say that your news and reports are always fast, up-to-date and in-depth and analysis are always proved to be on the target and to the point. On the other hand, your feature programs are very nice source for us to know all about China, its various things including culture, history, sports, politics, business, etc. (Azam Soomro, Pakistan)

I have listened to CRI for nearly a year and my son is also a listener. I especially enjoy the news programs in the evening (Central European Time) because of the different perspective it gives of world events compared to the western media. I try to listen to the news on CRI on most evenings. I have also just discovered your splendid web site and I shall be spending some time exploring it on a regular basis. (Michael Bailey, UK)

I eagerly listen to your programs. I saw your webpage, it is very interesting with a lot of information. I read some interesting top news in the main page. The news tells us the latest news around the world. Reading the news in the web page is very super. I will continuously listen to your programs by radio and web page. (S. Venketesan, India)

I enjoy learning more about other countries and cultures. That's why I listen to the CRI on shortwave radio. I did not know that 9% of the population was made up of ethnic minorities. It's very interesting to know about China's economic growth which I think is good for China and the rest of the world. Peace through prosperity! (Richard D'angelo, USA)

CRI is the most important radio station not only in the far east but also in the whole world. Excellent reports from china, top actual news from China and the whole world marks this radio station. (Georg Pleschberger, Austria)

The contest on 55 Years of New China,... in my opinion, offers a new and deep insight over 55 years of a big country which showed the entire world that sheer determination, along with strong ideals and proper policies, could make dreams come true and in so doing make the world we all live in a better world for everybody. (Spinelli Danieli, Italy)

I'm a student from England, And I'd like to say thanks to all of the CRI team, for their wonderful and accurate analysis of the world's events and insight into the Chinese way of life. It is of great interest to me, and I hope to visit your great nation sometime soon. (Matty Tail, UK)

Updated Broadcast Times and Frequencies for English Language

(Reflects most recent changes made to broadcasting schedule)

( Beginning at November 28, 2004)

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http://www.crienglish.com
Heart Is the Key

by Sportswriter Liang Tao

Blind Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli says "even if your speed is faster than the wind, your movement more agile than a leopard, your swimming smoother than a dolphin’s, these are not enough to prove that you are greater than others unless you can understand that the heart is the strongest part of a body.”

This is a striking description of the Paralympic athletes in Athens.

For twelve days in September, the Athens Olympic Stadium was the center of action for the world’s greatest Paralympic athletes, and what a show they put on!

If anyone doubts the ever-improving standards, just think of this: no fewer than 135 world records were broken. Many athletes remarked on how they had underestimated the competition and vowed to start preparing immediately for Beijing Games in four years time.

China, host of the 2008 Summer Olympics, achieved historic glory in the August Olympics and then dominated the medals race at the Paralympic Games, which ended on September 28th.

The Chinese, who came close to the United States in the medal standings at the able-bodied Athens Games, took 141 Paralympics medals - 63 gold, 46 silver and 32 bronze. No other nation had more than 100 medals.

Chinese Paralympic officials and athletes attribute the nation’s strong showing to government support and training, which is expected to increase before 2008.

"I think first it is the Chinese government support," said Liu Guoyong, one of the delegation’s leaders. “There are more athletes than in Sydney.”

In Athens, about 200 Chinese athletes competed for Paralympic medals in 11 sports, up from eight sports in Sydney.

The 200 Paralympic athletes and 86 coaches and officials constitute the country’s largest turn of the delegation’s leaders. “There are more athletes than in Sydney.”

In 1991, she was sent to a handicapped acrobatic troupe in Shenyang, the capital of northeast China's Liaoning Province. She spent four years traveling with the troupe. The wonderful feats that so impressed the audiences were the result of indescribably hard training.

In 1996, Zhang learnt that the 4th China Games for the Handicapped Games would be held in Dalian and that athletes with excellent records could be settle down in Dalian as permanent residents. So she stayed in Dalian and found her husband here, who is a coach and trained the long jump and high jump gold medalists at the 4th China Games for the Handicapped.

In Beijing, she became a gold medalist at the Paralympic Games, the 27-year-old said, "I expected to win the gold medal and I was sure that I was capable of breaking the world record. But I can do even better.”

As with Zhang Haiyuan, behind every Paralympic athlete there is an impressive and inspiring story. Each story confirms the famous saying: Genius is 10 percent inspiration and 90 percent perspiration.

All-in-all, the 2004 Paralympic Games offered first class athletic competition and those who attended and witnessed will remember their experience for a lifetime.

Moreover, about 300 observers from the Beijing Olympic organizing committee traveled to Athens during the Paralympics to learn from the local organizers. China will establish eight Paralympic training centers.

All Chinese people look forward to a similar or even more fantastic performance when Beijing hosts the games in four years time.

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Zhang Haiyuan, one of seven handicapped athletes from northeast China’s port city of Dalian, broke the world record to win the gold medal in Women’s Long Jump-F42.

Uniped Zhang, born in 1977, lost her left leg during a traffic accident in the age of six. After her ten-year-old brother died of cancer, her parents divorced due to the pressure of the two tragedies. Junior Zhang grew up as a strong willed young lady with her mother.

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It was very exciting,” said Zhang, “I screamed and jumped after winning a point to encourage myself.”

Guo Xijing, Zhang’s coach, couldn’t stop her tears. “It’s too hard, too hard…”

“She is already 47 and a little bit fat,” said Guo. “To conquer all this, she had to work twice, even three times as hard as the others.”

Yes, anyone who attended the Paralympic Games here will have immediately been impressed by the athleticism of the participants.

Every Paralympic athlete, if he or she wants to emerge and will be feted on returning to his or her homeland, has much more to overcome than the able-bodied.

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Learn Chinese Now!

Dear friends, so glad you are still there reading the article of "Learn Chinese Now!" This time we are going to learn two useful word phrases and two sentence structures that are related to weather conditions. The first one is "天气变得越来越..." (tiānqì biàn de yuè lái yuè...) which means "The weather becomes..." and the second one is "越来越..." (yuè lái yuè...) which means "... becoming more and more..."

The autumn has already come here in Beijing. And it becomes cooler and cooler. (秋天到了，天气变得越来越凉快了。) You can also say "秋天到了。天气变...越来越..." (Qiūtiān dào le. Tiānqì biàn de yuè lái yuè...). The weather turns hotter and hotter. (天气变得越来越热了。) You can also say "天气变得越来越热了。" (Tiānqì biàn de yuè lái yuè...)

From the sentences above you can draw such a general conclusion that usually an adjective describing the degree of a thing follows "变得...". Yes. You got it.

Another is "越来越" (yuè lái yuè, more and more). "越来越" denotes an idea that the degree of something deepens as the time goes on. For example, the tree grows taller and taller. (树长得越来越高了。(Shù zhǎng de yuè lái yuè gāo le).) She is becoming more and more beautiful. (她长得越来越漂亮了。) (Tā zhǎng de yuè lái yuè piàolàng le.) His Chinese becomes better and better. (他的汉语越来越好...) (Tā de Hányǔ yuè lái yuè hǎoběi le.)

So, got the answer? Right. Home wasn’t home without a pig.

One more thing. When someone died, people would put a slaughtered pig for the deceased under the eaves and in front of the house, but home always means home, never mortuary or abattoir!

Next comes the character 安 (ān, peaceful, quiet). We have the same roof as in 家, but instead of having a pig under it, we have a 女人, a woman. In the oracle bones (甲骨文, jiǎguìwén), the one on the bronze inscriptions (銅文, tóngwén), the second one (乙骨文, yǐguìwén) look like (very small) houses with something inside. The looks rather like a howling dog in its kennel! But in fact, the "dog" is a pig, and the way it was written evolved as in the following characters.

In the lesser script (小篆, xiǎozhuàn), the (canine!) pig has changed into the literary form of 猪 (zhū). This character expresses the meaning of demand. It’s used by the older delivering a demand to the younger, or the superior to the inferior as far as the social position is referred to. For instance, your parents may say "感 冒了，要吃药。" (Gǎnmào le, yào chī yào. Do take medicine when you’ve caught a cold.) to you. The boss may speak to his employee like this, 要提高工作效率 (Yào tígāo gōngzuò xiètuō. Do enhance your working efficiency).

One more thing. When someone died, people would put a slaughtered pig for the deceased under the eaves and in front of the house, but home always means home, never mortuary or abattoir!

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The pomegranate dish reminded me of the task for their red sweet seeds and so I didn’t feel hungry any longer and began to pay glasses of beer before meals. After three glasses of beer, I arrived at the hotel, it was already lunchtime. The department officials at the train station, who also dispatched a bus to take us to a hotel. When we arrived in Zaozhuang, which means “Chinese date village” and is widely regarded as the “South Gate” of Shandong Province. Getting off the train, I was so astonished that Zaozhuang, which I supposed to be a small town or a village, is developing so rapidly that it rivals big cities in terms of modernization, tall buildings, convenient transport and such. But the place disappointed me a little, since I had imagined I could have an interesting and somewhat adventurous village experience.

My disappointment remained until, along with other reporters, I was warmly welcomed by local publicity department officials at the train station, who also dispatched a bus to take us to a hotel. When we arrived at the hotel, it was already lunchtime. The first feast in the Zaozhuang Hotel was enough for me to see how hospitable Zaozhuang people are. A famous local custom is inviting guests to drink three glasses of beer before meals. After three glasses of alcohol, I thought I would be able to attack the mouth-watering dishes with my chopsticks, but my attempts to gratify my appetite were continually interrupted, as I had to respond to toasts by local officials and friends. My stomach was soon filled with beer, so I didn’t feel hungry any longer and began to pay attention to the dishes with my eyes, rather than my mouth. Some were made of fruit. One of the most attractive dishes was made of pomegranates, with their red sweet seeds and - would you believe it - fried eggs!

The pomegranate dish reminded me of the task for my visit to cover Zaozhuang’s annual international pomegranate festival, which the local leaders believe is a good opportunity to explore the market potential for this nourishing fruit. Actually, the local people get quite excited when explaining the value of their pomegranates. In their eyes, every tiny part of this thick-skinned round fruit, with its reddish center full of sweet seeds, is valuable. They told me the skin, after being dried, is used as an important traditional Chinese medicine, which is available in nearly all Chinese medicine shops. It’s as popular as mint. The coats between the layers are also herbal in effect. And the seeds are an excellent cure for stomach ache.

The next day, on my way to the Yincheng Pomegranate Orchard, which has been developed into a tourist spot, I found the road a scene of hustle and bustle with rural vendors busy bargaining for a variety of local specialties, such as Chinese chestnut, walnut and chestnut. Breathing the fresh air and enjoying the sights of the rural fair, which was an entirely new world to me, I felt greatly refreshed. Most of my companions on the journey were from Beijing, and simply loved these agricultural commodities. A very pretty bonsai captured my attention. Noticing my curiosity to learn about the bonsai, a local friend told me that some smart locals plant pomegranate trees in flowerpots to make bonsai, and these miniature pomegranate trees sell well, with most customers coming from elsewhere.

After a half hour drive, our bus stopped in front of the entrance to the orchard. Before we entered, the rhythmic sound of beating drums came to our ears. We saw the performers as soon as we went in. The performers were all local women in colorful ethnic costumes, joyfully beating waist drums to please visitors as well as entertain themselves. Behind the performers were several pomegranate trees. The tempting ripe fruits were within reach if we stretched our arms, and I couldn’t wait to touch them. With his face wreathed in smiles, the local tourist guide proudly explained to me how the pleasant weather contributes to making Zaozhuang a production base for many types of fruit, including pears, grapes, apples, pomegranates and Chinese dates, also known as jujubes. He added that with plenty of sunshine and an average temperature of 14 degrees centigrade, the city now produces some 200 thousand tons of various fruits every year. Looking far into the distance, at the other side of a river, I could make out a forest of pomegranate trees, and could imagine the branches bending down with the weight of the fruits.

The local officials prepared two boxes of pomegranates for us on the eve of our departure as a special gift, and said they would be very happy if we could re-visit Zaozhuang city soon. I didn’t expect we’d depart so soon and was reluctant to leave. After all, three days was too short for me to have an in-depth look at the city, which, as a fruit production base, is developing at a good pace. All of sudden, blind and deaf British writer Helen Keller’s Three Days to See flashed into my mind, especially the part in which she was so eager to gain eyesight, even if only for a limited time.

Three days flashed by, and I had a similar feeling, as if for a limited time I had to use my eyes to record everything about this wonderful place. But no matter how many pleasant things I will keep in my memory, one thing is for sure, that my companions and I wish the people of Zaozhuang continuing prosperity in the years to come. (Xu Fei)

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Shen Che and His Affinity with World Folklore Culture

Ambassador for the UNESCO’s “Mondialogo”, Initiator of Humanity Photo Award (HPA), President of the China Folklore Photographic Association (CFPA).

These impressive titles belong to none other but the gentleman Shen Che.

As what his given name suggests (Che in Chinese means clear or limpid), Shen Che has a very clear appearance and a very clear mind. In his late fifties and a bit overweight, Shen is very healthy, robust and easy-going. Smiling seems to be in his nature. But, judging by the above-mentioned titles and his vast experience, he is no ordinary person.

Shen Che was born and bred in Shanghai. What made him special and win his first fame was his 15,000km-long bicycle adventure around China. Starting from Shanghai in 1980, the two-year trip was a fruitful one. He visited more than 20 Chinese ethnic groups and shot a great number of valuable photos of local folk cultures. Then he spent his time sorting out his pictures and began preparations for the establishment of the Chinese Folklore Photographic Association (CFPA). At the same time, he has also made several successful trips in 17 years to study folklore in more than 20 countries. His book “Travel Alone” was a sensation throughout China.

Perhaps the greatest of Shen’s achievements is that he founded the CFPA and had it recognized by UNESCO and made an inseparable part of world folklore heritage. He even expanded the CFPA to include a world wide Humanity Photo Award, an international photographic contest open not only to professional photographers, but also to amateurs, to all who love to photograph, record, explore and study folk cultures and phenomena.

Our reporter Kong Xiaoting talked with Shen Che.

Q: It’s really hard to quit a job, especially when it was regarded as a ‘Golden Bowl’ during the 1980’s. There are reports comparing your resignation to the present laid off workers. In this sense, to some extent you can be seen as the first person to be "laid off" in China, but you laid yourself off. What led to your decision?

A: Firstly, it’s because I like photography very much, but there were too many letters which I had always tried to cast off. Secondly, when I was teaching in Shanghai Education College (now merged into East China Normal University), I shot many Hakka films, and was thus able to dabble in some folklore. This made me want to know more. Also, the work load in the college was too light for the energetic young guy I was then. Although a teacher of film shooting, I couldn’t be wholly dedicated to the mission I like so much. Filming is very complicated, speaking both from the aspects of time and technique, and not all the staff in the college were willing to contribute to the work. But for me, to do it well, I have to dedicate all my time and energy to that. So I was forced to quit my job.

In addition, I was living in the large city of Shanghai, but, compared with the spacious and beautiful Chinese territory, it’s only a very very small dot. This also inspired me to go out, to learn more about the outside world.

I was full of confidence in my success, despite the uncertain future. I wanted to record Chinese folk culture through my own eyes.

Q: Among all the peoples and places you visited, what has been the strongest impact on you?

A: Well... It’s hard to say. Since all of these cultures are part or a branch of the 5,000 year old Chinese civilization, they should be treated as an integral whole. Only by being blended together can they make a complete big Chinese culture.

As time passes, my knowledge of different Chinese ethnic groups is increasing. My understanding of Chinese culture is also improved. This has helped me form an endless desire to learn more. People say I was beginning to carving out my own business when I quit my job and left for the outside world. Actually, I was enjoying my work. For me, it’s not the kind of hardship or adventure that out-siders conceive. Instead, it’s complete enjoyment, enjoying my interest and my work as well.

If I should single out some most impressive things here, I would like to share with you the story of the Du Long (a Chinese ethnic group). Once I got very sick when I was in the Du Long River Valley; the local people were worried and they dug herbal medicines to treat my disease. If not for their nourishment and heartfelt care, I would have never been able to leave the Du Long River village to seek my future success. That’s really impressive.

From this and more other experiences, I discovered the highest ambit of folklore photography is not taking photographs or the pictures themselves: It lies in the communication of feelings and passions with people from different ethnic groups. (Actually, you can find many more moving stories in his book Travel Alone)

Q: Almost all people find your works valuable, highly impressive and enlightening? What do you think of your own works and the nomination pictures?

A: My criteria are becoming more objective. With my 20 years’ experience, I have found a new definition for the function of folklore photo works. Besides being a means to urge the public to preserve folklore heritage, pictures should also help to record the world heritage. We won’t be able to preserve all the heritage just by the work of a social organization, but through our recording work, at least, on the one hand, we help to leave abundant precious world heritage and also present scenes to later generations.

The third task is to promote the awareness of the government and public to protect the folklore heritage. The true safeguarding force comes from the government, together with public protection measures. The most valuable works are those which strive to save world heritages. With globalization, large amounts of world heritage, especially intangible heritage, vanish.

We also find a new social responsibility in our work, the responsibility for protecting the world heritage. All newcomers are willing to shoulder this social responsibility as they register as our members. We are the only social organization in China which strives to salvage folklore culture. We are now working hard to establish a very effective world wide folklore picture database. Our members at home and abroad and our Chinese peers, with the most numerous cameras in the world, are trying hard to turn their lens from beautiful scenery and girls to record the surrounding culture, possibly culture on the edge of extinction.

Q: You have done really great work for mankind and for the protection of the world heritage. What is the object of CFPA, or HPA?

A: We are working to meet three needs of the world: The needs from all countries: All countries want peace and want their culture to be protected. It’s a most important element.

The second need comes from society. Not all the world’s citizens are able to travel widely. But we can share the world by pictures with our kin and friends. And thirdly, the need falls to the photographers themselves. They can’t just shoot commercial or purely aesthetic pictures. The lenses themselves should exult their own cultural might.

Q: You are honored with many impressive titles. But I found the most moving thing is your exquisite works and feelings. How do you balance these two aspects?

A: One’s personal career is easily culminated. Many say I have made my fame and all I need to do is to keep at the height of my fame. However, for me, all these titles are just meaningless formats. I have converted my personal business into a global endeavour. I don’t care about the form. What I really want, my ultimate target, is to build up a world folklore photo database so that later generations can see our present life and culture. It’s the true cultural heritage that belongs to the whole human world.

http://www.cnenglish.com
One Year of Radio Daze

First write some news, then read Reports From Developing Countries, host an online Corner, add in CRI Roundup, and then start producing Voices From Other Lands.

What sort of a recipe is that? Well it’s the recipe I’ve been cooking in, over my time at CRI! So—how did it taste?

Slightly less than a year ago, I wrote an article for The Messenger called “From Behind the Radio to Behind the Scenes.” I described how, as a shortwave listener, I had been influenced by CRI’s programmes back in the early 90s. I learned Chinese in university, and came to live in Beijing. Now, one year on, I am heading to Europe! This is mostly for family reasons, and truth be told, I suspect I will be back in China very soon.

What an opportunity CRI has given me! Learning about news, then learning about broadcasting, then becoming a broadcaster! All these have meant I’m very busy, and have had less and less time for Dixing, or even listening to the radio at all. That didn’t stop me, though, from spending more than a month’s wages on an Icom R-75 communicators receiver. Perhaps some of you are shocked at the waste of this, and I can understand that reaction. I am not a very experienced DXer, and even now, months later, I have a lot to learn about the finer points of tuning a signal for the best clarity, that is, to copy DX signals. But more than that is the problem that my flat is in a very electrically noisy location. It does have a balcony though, so that’s where my dipole and my noise went. The usual answer to local noise is a loop antenna, a type of aerial that picks out the magnetic part of an electromagnetic signal, and leaves lots of the slushy noise and interference behind. But if you remember my last article, you’ll know that s soldering and the like is a bit beyond me, so the only successful loop I’ve made is computer ribbon cable on a hula-hoop, and at times isn’t much better than the 20 metre dipole.

One of the exciting developments in broadcasting during my time at CRI has been Digital Radio Mondiale. In June and July, CRI did some test transmissions from our big 11,000 W transmission site in Xinjiang. Unfortunately most went on air while I was either at work or asleep! One time I tuned in, and heard a weak signal, unmistakably that of DRM. I also tested a few other DRM signals before those public tests started, but as I don’t have the requisite reception facilities, I’ve no idea who it was.

Another fun side to being an SWL in China is the low cost of radio equipment! My little Book, on a humble dial-up internet connection, has provided hours and hours of radio listening pleasure. And some huge phone bills too…

I love radio, I love listening to it, I love making it. But when I think of all the equipment I have, and the people I’ve met because of radio, I must say that I am among the lucky few. There are no doubt some of you reading this, who have a regular shortwave radio, and aspire to getting a WorldSpace receiver. Perhaps some of you only ever use a computer in internet cafes, or have never used one. Yes, there is a digital divide on our planet, just as much as there is a technological divide. I am one of the lucky ones. So I hope that through my work at CRI, in particular on the Reports From Developing Countries team, I have been able to give something back. And at least the structures are in place for that: CRI has great signals, in most parts of the world, on shortwave and sometimes mediumwave. CRI is, I know, proud to boom out on shortwave. Perhaps coming from the rapidly developing world, we Europeans have no idea what it’s like; there are more aware than most of the roles of change and stability, and this helps us keep a more listener-friendly policy in this respect.”

And so, as my voice fades out on shortwave for the time being, let me wish you all. Good listening! (Connor Walsh)

http://www.crienglish.com

Portables. So far I’ve only bought one, a Degen 1102, and I’m very pleased with its performance. It matches up very well with my old faithful, a Sony ICF-7600GR. The 1102 doesn’t have a synchronous detector like the Sony, for picking up interference from nearby stations, but it does have a choice of Wide or Narrow, which can help some bit. The interesting thing on this front is that Degen will reportedly bring out a pocket multiband radio with synchronous AM this winter! That’s very exciting for people who live abroad and want to keep up with broadcasts in their own language, which may not be available locally. I have an AM/FM pocket radio from Degen, which I almost always have with me.

Another pocket radio I use is a Perstel BluNote, a very small headphones-only DAB set. DAB refers to the Eureka 147 standard of digital radio, a different standard from DRM. Currently the band III test transmissions in Beijing are off air, so I haven’t heard much on it, but I still take the little radio with me when I go out for inter-

views, in case there’s something new in the airwaves.

And then there’s WorldSpace. Some of you may have heard my interview with the head of WorldSpace in China, Mike Ma, on Voices From Other Lands in June. WorldSpace is a really convenient system to use in this part of the world. Every morning before starting work I can get a fix of RTE from Ireland and Radio Sweden via the World Radio

Network.

Not a bad little collection of equipment, don’t you think? Sometimes I look over my radio stuff, and am struck by just how prevalent digital technology is in my life. Of course I make programmes for CRI, so there is usually a Minidisc recorder lying around too, and that is digital too. And don’t I forget one of the most capable digital radios the

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And so, as my voice fades out on shortwave for the time being, let me wish you all. Good listening! (Connor Walsh)
Shanghai on the Maglev

I was quite confused when I arrived in Shanghai that warm night in late autumn. The bright neon lights, the narrow lanes, the convenience stores, where was it? It looks like New York, where neon lights outline huge shopping centers; it smells like home, where I enjoy walking while munching a snack; and it feels like Tokyo, where I’m welcomed by smiling shop assistants in the small but tidy convenience stores. Shanghai is such a weird city, where modern and traditional ways of living match and exist peacefully. In the dazzling shopping malls along the famous Huaihai Road, I can always catch the latest fashions, just like elsewhere in the world, but meanwhile, old tailors never stop their sewing, and long-legged beauties dressed in cheongsams are always the center of attention. A spectacular view in the bustling commercial centers is stylish ladies shoulder to shoulder with old flower sellers (but NOT you’ll find it in the cities across China), who are promoting their hand-made white magnolias. At a time when many historic cities are trying to make a facelift and losing their traditions, the old Shanghai is still there, as it was decades ago.

Much evidence can be found here of its history as a major center in the Far East. In the famous Bund Area alongside the Huangpu River, the mother river of Shanghai, stands a collection of stately art deco buildings from the 1920s and 30s that call to mind the city skyline in China seem filled with cranes and scaffolding, and he can feel the power beneath. In Shanghai, big events come one after another. The F1 Grand Prix China Stop in September, the World Expo in six years’ time, all part of a series of activities that will add extra luster to China’s biggest and the most populous city, just like the Maglev, which links the Pudong International Airport to the downtown area at more than 250 miles an hour: it is yet one more proof of Shanghai’s embrace of technology and change.

In this year’s Shanghai International Film Festival, a movie titled Shanghai Story left me a very deep impression. It tells how a wealthy old family evolves with time, reflecting moral conflicts between generations. I see ‘Shanghai stories’ taking place around me everyday, and I know how the generations treat life differently, but still, I enjoy the differences, just like I like both the old and the modern side of the city, despite the conflicts, being a member of it and witnessing its changes is full of excitement. (Lin Lin)

Photo Notes:
[1] A standard Shanghai Pose! No visit to Shanghai is complete without a walk along the Bund Area, where the designs on one side of the river demonstrate its modern glamour, while the other side traces its memory as the Paris of the East.

[2] At May’s Global Conference on Poverty Reduction, Shanghai is building itself into a regional convention center. Easy traffic and spacious venues make it a top selection for exhibitors from home and abroad. At least one professional exhibition is held in Shanghai every day. And the forthcoming WHO regional summit, the F1 Grand Prix China Stop, the 2010 World Expo ... Shanghai is expecting much, much more.

[3] With an Indonesian navy captain on its maiden China voyage. Shanghai was born as a port city, and it still is today. In addition to handling cargoes, Shanghai Port also serves as a key platform for naval exchanges. Although I’m terribly sick due to the rolling waves when the photographer is shooting the film, I feel proud on a real warship.

[4] Aaahh the night in Shanghai, especially once the lights are on, outlining the architectural legacy of multicultural designs, recalling its noble heyday of early last century.

Shanghai is Shanghai. It’s always striving for the top. Shanghai is tough. It’s courageous enough to say NO when facing criticism from the central government on its auto policy. It persists in its exclusive decision to issue car license plates by auction, in an attempt to control the growth in the number of private cars.

Like many cities in China, Shanghai an on-the-make place. In the winter of 2003, six writers from China and the UK set off from Shanghai on a two-week trip by train to observe China. One of the writers told me the city skylines in China seem filled with cranes and scaffolding, and he can feel the power beneath. In Shanghai, big events come one after another. The F1 Grand Prix China Stop in September, the World Expo in six years’ time, all part of a series of activities that will add extra luster to China’s biggest and the most populous city, just like the Maglev, which links the Pudong International Airport to the downtown area at more than 250 miles an hour: it is yet one more proof of Shanghai’s embrace of technology and change.

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