

# the Messenger

## 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF CRI

Looking Back At Radio  
Beijing 25 Years Ago



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# Editor's Message


In May 1990, CRI's English Service started the bimonthly four-color newsletter "The Messenger" with an eye on strengthening ties with listeners. The publication was delivered to overseas listeners and to foreigners in China who work at embassies or consulates, foreign-owned and joint-venture companies, as well as students, teachers, journalists and tourists, or those who request it. It brought them information about Radio Beijing's (the former name of CRI) activities and future plans.

"The Messenger" has since evolved with a fresher appearance to reflect the tremendous changes in CRI's content and highlight China's breathtaking transformation over the past three decades. The current issue traces the roots of China's overseas broadcasting to mark the 70th anniversary of CRI. It also includes first-hand travel stories from our reporters across the Tea Road, a historic route that connected European Russia to Siberia and China.

All of the staff working on "The Messenger" will continue to strive for excellence because we believe that is what you deserve.

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# FIRST OVERSEAS BROADCASTING ANNOUNCERS

Text from CRIENGLISH.com

## Marking the 70th anniversary of the establishment of China Radio International



China's overseas broadcasting started from a cave in Yan'an on December 3, 1941. On that day, Japanese-Chinese announcer Hara Kiyosi rode to the studio on a donkey.

At 8:40pm local time on September 11, 1947, the voice of liberated China reached the outside world in an English-language broadcast for the first time. It came from a cave in the small village of Shahe, nestling in the Taihang Mountains, north China. The news was first read by a young pigtailed woman named Wei Lin who is now 87. Conditions there were so primitive that Ms. Wei often had to carry a flashlight to the cave studio to scare away wolves.

"The studio was in a doorless cave with no proper equipment," said Ms. Wei, "and only had a kerosene lantern for lighting. Whenever we started broadcasting, we had to hang up a coarse felt blanket to keep out the bleating of nearby sheep". There were no tape recorders then and the only music they could use was a phonograph recording of the Triumphal March from the opera Aida. Other songs were simply played into the microphone and broadcast.

Wei Lin retired in 1983, but volunteered to do part-time work for our English Service. She could still be heard on the air occasionally conducting the programs of Chinese Sayings and Stories and Culture in China until 1994.

Wei has seen the rickety wartime broadcasting station evolve into Radio Beijing, then again transform into its contemporary identity, CRI. During these years, she herself became a first-rate English announcer. ■

The photo shows the former site of the backup station of Shanbei Xinhua Broadcasting Station, in Shahe Village of Shexian County in Hebei Province. CRI's English radio service was launched at this station on September 11, 1947, marking the beginning of China's English broadcasting to overseas listeners. [Photo by Liang Tao]



The photo shows the former site of the No.1 Studio of Shanbei Xinhua Broadcasting Station. Wei Lin, CRI's first English-language broadcaster, used to broadcast news about the Communist-held areas to the world during the civil war. [Photo by Liang Tao]

The photo shows the former site of the No.2 Studio of Shanbei Xinhua Broadcasting Station. Part of the studio has collapsed. [Photo by Liang Tao]



▲ Hara Kiyosi, Back in Yan'an in the 1990s



▲ Former CRI Director-General Zhang Zhenhua (left) and Wei Lin (right) at the special ceremony for her 50 years of broadcasting.



▲ The birthplace of CRI's English Service — Shahe Village, Shexian County, Hebei Province (September 11, 1947)



Wei Lin, CRI's First Female English Announcer

Today, September eleventh, marks the premiere broadcast in a new series of regular daily English language newscasts, presented by New China News Agency and designed to inform our English speaking friends on Chinese affairs. It is our aim to present over this station every evening at eight forty a'clock, or twenty forty hours, Shanghai time, a concise, factual picture of Chinese events, in the belief that such material is not readily available elsewhere to the English-speaking world. We plan to bring to our radio audience the March of China-- one-fifth of humanity--over all obstacles towards a new democratic life, which profoundly affects the future course of world events. Our aim is to serve you--we heartily invite your suggestions and criticisms. Station XMGU broadcasts daily on a wavelength of forty metres, at a frequency of seven five zero zero kilocycles. This broadcast is simultaneously retransmitted by Shensi-Chahar-Hopei station XGMO, on thirty-five metres at a frequency of eight six six zero kilocycles, and Hanten station XGHT, at forty-nine point two metres, on a frequency of six zero nine six kilocycles. Now first, here are the headlines in today's news: XINXIN Peoples Army recovers ten North Shensi cities. Thirty-Third Division wins, Hu Tsung-Shen is on the spot in North Shensi. From Seoul present to T'ung K'un in Manchuria.

▲ A copy of the first English broadcast script (September 11, 1947)



Japanese-Chinese announcer Hara Kiyosi rode to the studio on a donkey on December 3, 1941.



◀ Wei Lin, CRI's First Female English Announcer

# LOOKING BACK AT RADIO BEIJING 25 YEARS AGO

By Caroline Frantzis, Foreign Expert 1985-87

Back in 1985, I was working as a journalist for BBC Radio in London, England. Some of my friends thought I was nuts to turn down a long-anticipated promotion I had just been offered to run a satellite studio for a new BBC radio station and instead go off to Beijing, China to work as a Foreign Expert for Radio Beijing's English Language Service. It was without doubt a fantastic experience and I never had any regrets about leaving the BBC.

At that time, Radio Beijing was based in the Broadcasting Ministry, located on Fuxingmenwai Dajie near the center of town. It was an imposing Soviet-style building, ten stories high, tiered like a wedding cake and topped with a transmitter. Parts of the interior reminded me of some of the older sections of the BBC's main radio building in London, Broadcasting House—lots of wood paneling and old-fashioned sound baffles on the walls. One of the main radio studios was in the process of being rebuilt to convert it from mono to stereo.

When I arrived, the organization had undergone a name change transition from Radio Peking to Radio Beijing. In 1982, the International Organization for Standardization had adopted Pinyin as the international standard for transliterating Chinese. By 1985 the Pinyin System was beginning to replace the Yale and Wade-Giles Romanization Systems in the West. Thus Peking (the Wade-Giles transliteration) was out and Beijing (the Pinyin version) was in. The station was known in Mandarin as zhongguo guoji guangbo diantai, which is much closer in meaning to what it is currently called in English—China Radio International. I was welcomed to my new position as Foreign Expert by



Caroline Frantzis visited CRI building on November 23, 2011.



Caption: The Broadcasting Ministry on Fuxingmenwai Dajie at night. This was where Radio Beijing was based when Caroline was working there as a Foreign Expert from 1985 to 1987.

Zhang Qingnian, Director of the English Department. My immediate boss, however, was Xu Hua-zhen. Both women provided me with a lot of help during my two-year stay in Beijing and I always found them patient, knowledgeable and good-humored.

Radio Beijing's English language service broadcast not only various programs worldwide, but also offered a daily one hour

program, the Capital Service, for foreign residents and visitors in Beijing. Although Radio Beijing was mainly aimed at listeners from abroad, its programs were very popular within China as many Chinese were very keen to learn English. The older people that I worked with at Radio Beijing tended to be fluent in Russian, but the younger ones focused on English. This reflected China's cooling relations with the Soviet Union and the growing ties between China and the West, particularly the United States. I was told that there were three main reasons why relations with the Soviet Union were worsening at that time—Russian involvement in Kampuchea (Cambodia), Russian troops in Afghanistan, and border disputes, particularly the fact that a large number of Soviet troops were massed on the extensive border between the two countries.

The stories Radio Beijing covered were very varied. For example, one focused on renewed interest in Confucius (Kongzi) and the repairing and renovation of Confucian temples. Another was an interview with Deng Xiaoping's son, Deng Pufang, who was wheelchair-bound and had become an advocate for the disabled in China. In 1985, fashion designer Yves St. Laurent visited Beijing to officially open a retrospective exhibition of his work at the National Art Gallery, so we ran a report on that. I remember thinking that it was rather ironic that such an exhibition would take place in a city where so many of the people went to work in baggy Mao suits and did not appear to be in the slightest bit fashion-conscious. One Sunday later that year we did a special broadcast at Purple Bamboo Park (Zizhuyuan) in Beijing where more than 400 listeners showed up to enthusiastically greet the hosts of Radio

Beijing's English language programs. The event was featured in the China Daily, at that time China's only national English language newspaper.

During my time at Radio Beijing, I presented and produced the weekly Cooking Show, which gave me a wonderful opportunity to sample some of the best cuisine in Beijing. It was aired on both the overseas broadcast and the Capital Service. Xu Hua-zhen was invaluable as my interpreter. For the program, I chose the broadcasting name of Jo Lee because I liked the fact that it also worked as the Chinese name, Zhou Li. Each show would cover a different recipe from chefs in local restaurants and hotels, so that listeners could learn how to make the dish in their own homes. Many of the hotels I visited are still in business—for example the Jinglun, the Jianguo, the Minzu and the Great Wall. However I also obtained some of the recipes from staff at Radio Beijing. I only remember one disaster—I was interviewing a coworker and dear friend (he shall remain nameless!) about a favorite eggplant recipe he liked to make, but when we tried the dish he had cooked, it tasted terrible. He had put in way too much salt! Luckily we could salvage the show by adjusting the amount of salt in the ingredients list. I can still remember recording the tasting of the dish, when we both had to pretend that the flavor was delicious.

Nowadays computerized non-linear editing is the norm. At the BBC in the 1980s, I was accustomed to editing my tapes by cutting and splicing. At Radio Beijing recording tape was considered too expensive to waste this way, and so dub editing was used. The studios had huge Russian machines from the 1950s. The timers on them were as big as old-fashioned wind-up alarm clocks. Reporters would manage to achieve amazingly accurate edits by a fascinating technique of holding the tape away from the recording head for a fraction of a second and then releasing it.

Radio Beijing offered several trips for Foreign Experts. In 1976, a magnitude 7.8 earthquake hit Tangshan, in northeastern China, destroying the city and killing more than 240,000 people. This was the deadliest earthquake of the twentieth century. We visited Tangshan on the tenth anniversary of the quake to report on the rebuilding of the city and interview survivors of the quake. On a lighter note, we also visited Baoding to do a story on the famous Baoding exercise balls. I remember seeing several old men there who were able to rotate five of these

balls simultaneously in both hands. Very impressive!

In 1986 I became involved in a controversy at Radio Beijing. There were plans to switch the Capital Service to FM and drop its 1251 kHz medium wave broadcasts. I had a letter published in the China Daily expressing my dismay at this. As a foreign expert, I was concerned that, although FM would give a much clearer signal, a large amount of listeners did not possess FM receivers and would be forced to spend money on a new radio. I urged Radio Beijing's engineering department to retain the AM service in addition to broadcasting on FM. Shortly afterwards another letter appeared in the China Daily from a listener who agreed with my opinion. He wrote that he had a pocket-sized medium wave radio to which he often listened while walking or waiting in line, as did many of his colleagues. No pocket-sized FM radio was available so far, he said, and thus he would no longer have the enjoyment of listening to Radio Beijing's English programs if they were only broadcast on FM. However, I was not successful in my campaign. The final letter on this subject that the China Daily published applauded Radio Beijing's decision to drop medium wave. This listener expressed his desire that the broadcaster's voice should be as clear as possible and described how prior to the change he had to press his ear to the loudspeaker to separate the information he wanted from all the interference. He added that the new FM broadcast had a clear signal that allowed people studying English to hear the language better and obtain world news promptly. Finally he said that a new FM radio would only cost about 20 yuan and that most of his classmates had one. So that was the end of Radio Beijing's medium wave service.

There was another new development in 1986—China's national TV network, CCTV, began broadcasting programs in English for the first time. My husband, Bruce, and I were invited to participate in a special CCTV show for Spring Festival that year. Bruce performed Wu style tai chi to the sound of a pop song by a British band called Bronski Beat. After a few bars of the music, he began transforming the tai chi movements into dance. We were told this led to an interest in tai chi disco dancing! I performed a comic poem, first in the British regional accent of Cockney, and then in Standard English. Unfortunately, due to time constraints, the Standard English version was cut from the program. I suspected that the Cockney version was too difficult to follow

for anyone except native English speakers, so most likely, few of the viewers understood a word I was saying!

The host of the show was Peng Wenlan, who was completely bilingual, having been educated in England. I met her again in unusual circumstances later that year. We had both been invited to the British Embassy in Beijing to attend a garden party in honor of the Queen and Prince Philip. All the guests lined up around a rectangular lawn as the Queen graciously walked by everyone, followed by two rather frumpy-looking ladies-in-waiting, each carrying enormous handbags. One of the few people that the Queen actually shook hands with and talked to was Peng, the host of the new English language program on CCTV. The British monarch had long wanted to come to China. The 1984 agreement that Britain would hand Hong Kong back to China when the lease expired in 1997 allowed an opportunity for Britain to arrange this historic royal visit to Beijing, Shanghai, Xian, Kunming and Guangzhou in October 1986. Apparently, however, ordinary Chinese people tended to confuse the Queen for British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, the "Iron Lady" who had signed the Hong Kong deal.

Most of the Foreign Experts from the West were housed at the Friendship Hotel, a bus ride away. My husband and I opted to stay in the rather more spartan Foreign Experts Building, which was within the Broadcasting Ministry compound—much more convenient for getting to work and for visiting the center of town. However, there were many more restrictions at the Foreign Experts' Building. For example, all visitors had to check in with a Public Security Officer at the entrance, filling out a form and checking out with an officer when they left. No visitors except relatives were allowed to stay overnight. Every so often, the Public Security Officer would not be at his post when one of our visitors left, and in this case we would receive a phone call from him at 11 pm claiming that we still had a visitor in our room and we would have to explain that this was not so.

The streets of Beijing were a sea of bicycles, with most of the riders wearing the regulation navy blue or olive green work clothes. I remember hearing that Beijing at that time had a population of slightly over seven and a half million, with four million bicycles. I was surprised to see that none of the bikes had lights. One local resident told me that this had arisen from the chaos of the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to

1976. Before that time, there had been lights on bicycles. However, during the Cultural Revolution cyclists would not obey traffic signals and would ride through red lights. In addition people stopped using lights on their bicycles, and so factories stopped making them, and by the 1980s it was felt that there were too many bicycles on the streets for it to be practical to fit them with lights. There were very few cars, most of which belonged to work units rather than individuals. The rear and side windows would have curtains so that the passengers could not be seen from the outside. The buses were extremely crowded all day long. Several mornings a week, before I went to work at Radio Beijing, I would take the bus to Yuetan Park to learn simplified tai chi. People of all ages were practicing there—youngsters doing wushu and kung fu, old people doing qigong and tai chi. One old woman would always be there doing a full split, stretching her leg up against a tree, displaying more flexibility than you would see in teenagers in the West. I was probably the worst student in the tai chi class, particularly since my Chinese was not too proficient, but nevertheless it was a lot of fun. I finished the basic class and went on to learn the tai chi sword form. Thankfully I was



Caroline interviews a hotel chef for the Cooking Show, with Xu Hua-zhen acting as interpreter.



Caroline talks to Radio Beijing listeners at Purple Bamboo Park.



This group photo of Radio Beijing's English Service staff and Foreign Experts was taken on the steps of the main entrance to the Broadcasting Ministry. Clearly a lot of people in the photo weren't ready for the shot, including Caroline, who is turned towards her colleague in the front row rather than facing the camera.

able to buy a telescopic sword that would fold into a small case when not in use, otherwise it would have been difficult to carry on the bus. I would practice the tai chi sword form in my room at the Foreign Experts' building, but there wasn't quite enough space. Every so often I would hit the refrigerator with the sword by mistake, and I'm afraid that I left a few dents in it as a result!

During my first winter in Beijing, I would see huge piles of cabbages stacked up at street corners. In fact this was the only vegetable available at that time of year. However the following winter was completely different. As a result of economic reforms and their effects on farming and food processing, there was much more variety. I have to say that I really appreciated having choices other than cabbage at every meal!

All the shops, restaurants and street vendors would use an abacus to calculate how much money was owed. The abacus was always the same style—wooden beads on a dark wooden frame about sixteen inches wide and nine inches high. I never saw a cash register anywhere in the city.

At that time there were two forms of currency in China—renminbi, used by the Chinese people, and Foreign Exchange Certificates (FEC), which visitors from other countries received when they changed money. Only FEC were accepted

in the Friendship Stores, where luxury items and Western brands of alcohol and cigarettes were on sale. Foreign Exchange Certificates were phased out in 1995. They had pictures of scenery and historic sites on the front, while renminbi notes had revolutionary art—smiling peasants and workers, along with farming and industrial machinery. Radio Beijing gave me my salary in renminbi. The first time I was paid I was surprised to receive a large stack of 10 yuan notes. Whilst FEC were available in denominations of up to 100 yuan, at that time the highest value note in renminbi was 10 yuan. I was wearing a locally-bought cotton jersey tracksuit, and the pockets were too small to accommodate the money, so I put it inside my pants instead. My husband, Bruce, who was fluent in Mandarin, was studying internal martial arts, Taoist meditation and Chinese medicine. After work that day I accompanied him to see his main teacher, who lived in small one-room building off a courtyard which was down a hutong near Tiananmen Square.

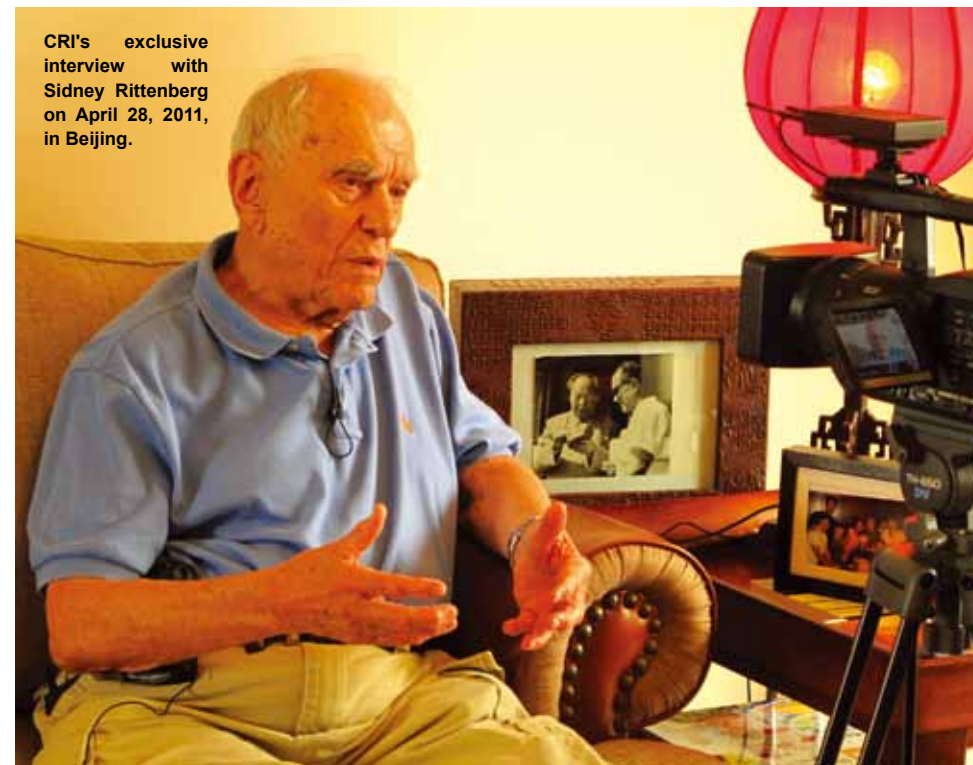
I visited the communal outdoor toilet there and totally forgot that I had all the money in my pants. Luckily it didn't fall into the murky depths but instead got caught on the sloping concrete above. Thankfully the local residents were prepared for this kind of disaster. An old woman who had seen what had happened went off to get a huge pair of tongs. She rescued the bank notes and washed out each one under a tap that was next to the outhouse. Needless to say, I never made the same mistake again!

My interest in China was initially spurred by my father, who published English translations of scientific journals. He had several friends within the scientific community in Beijing, and invited me to accompany him on a business trip to China in 1984. Our hosts in Beijing, knowing my background in broadcasting, arranged for me to visit Radio Beijing, and as a result I found out that a Foreign Expert position was available. Before this time, I had not even been aware that it was possible for

foreigners to work there. My family's connections with China and Chinese culture continue to flourish. Drawing on more than a decade of training in China, my husband Bruce has written several books about tai chi, meditation and related subjects, and teaches Chinese arts worldwide. Our two sons enjoy training with their father. Our oldest is studying Chinese medicine. He has an internship in acupuncture with someone I became good friends with while I was working as a Foreign Expert in Beijing, as he was training there at the time. Our youngest son is studying international relations at St. Andrews University in Scotland. He has a strong interest in Asian affairs, and is doing a year abroad at Renmin University in Beijing. Inspired by my experience as a Foreign Expert at Radio Beijing more than 25 years ago, he has also been thrilled to have had the opportunity to do an internship at China Radio International. I am delighted to see him following in my footsteps. ■

# SIDNEY RITTENBERG AND CHINA

Text by Cui Hong and Liu Bing / Photo by Cui Hong



CRI's exclusive interview with Sidney Rittenberg on April 28, 2011, in Beijing.

Sidney Rittenberg, an American journalist, interpreter and scholar who lived in China from 1944 to 1979, was one of the founders of English-language broadcasting in China. He is 90 years old this year, which also happens to be the 90th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China (CPC). He is the only American citizen who joined the CPC.

Rittenberg was born on August 14, 1921. His Chinese name is Li Dunbai. During his years in China, he worked closely with People's Republic of China (PRC) founder Mao Zedong, military leader Zhu De and statesman Zhou Enlai -- all of whom he personally knew. He joined the CPC in Yan'an in 1947. Two senior CPC officials, Li Xiannian and Wang Zhen, were his formal introducers, as required by the CPC Constitution. He was the only non-Chinese CPC member at the time.

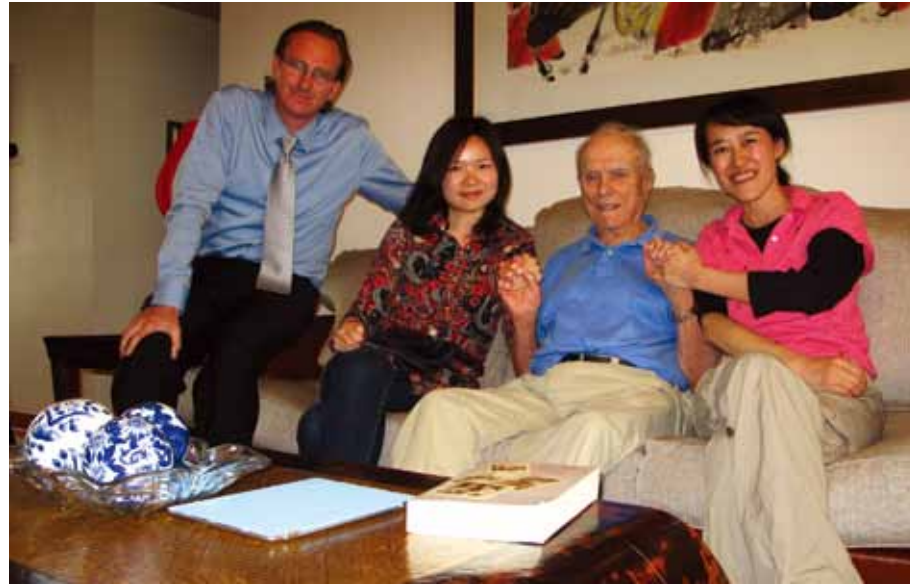
In 1947, Rittenberg was the first foreign expert of the English Service of Shanbei Xinhua Broadcasting Station that broadcast under the call letters XNCR from Shahe Village in Shexian County, Hebei

Province. This marked the beginning of China's English-language broadcasts for overseas listeners. Rittenberg later worked for Radio Peking (the former name of CRI) for many years.

In March 1980, Rittenberg returned to the United States. He and his wife, Wang Yulin, operate Rittenberg Associates Incorporated, a consulting firm that provides assistance to businesses who work with Chinese companies. Rittenberg's connections and experience in China have enabled him to run a successful consultancy business representing some of the world's biggest brands such as Intel, Levi Strauss, Microsoft, Hughes Aircraft and Teledesic.

In 1993, Rittenberg wrote a book entitled "The Man Who Stayed Behind" with the assistance of Amanda Bennett. It recounts the years he spent in China. In 2006, the book was translated into Chinese and published in Shanghai.

Rittenberg currently lives on Fox Island in Washington state, but visits China once a year. During his most recent trip in April 2011, he granted China Radio International an exclusive interview. Despite his age,



From left to right, CRI reporter Lance Crayon, editor Liu Bing, Sidney Rittenberg and photographer Cui Hong pose for a photo after the interview on April 28, 2011, in Beijing.

Rittenberg was brilliant, smart, funny and still sharp as a tack. He talked about China's changes through the years. We did a video recording of our interview with Rittenberg

who is always very friendly to China and the Chinese people. The video is on our website at CRIENGLISH.com. ■

# A BRIEF INTRO TO CHINA RADIO INTERNATIONAL

China Radio International (CRI) was founded on December 3, 1941. CRI aims to introduce China to the rest of the world, introduce the world to China, report global affairs to the world, and promote understanding and friendship between the Chinese and peoples from other countries. CRI is China's only state-level radio and television media organization specializing in international communications.

CRI has undergone a great transformation from a traditional single-platform media organization using shortwave broadcasts to an international multimedia entity that incorporates all mass communication means. At present, CRI uses 61 languages in its overseas reporting work and broadcasts a daily total of 2,700-plus programming hours. CRI has nearly 70 overseas, full frequency



round entry into the new media field by CRI that has a history of 70 years. CRI has thus taken a decisive step towards establishing a modern, comprehensive and innovative international media group.

During the next five years and beyond, CRI will further accelerate the transformation of its media business and work hard to build itself into an international media group supported by modern technology through comprehensive communication channels. It will focus on new media as its developmental core backed by a solid financial footing, a large number of language services for a broad and diverse audience, and a powerful influence that extends around the globe. ■

# THE CHANG MANOR OF SCHOLARLY TEA MERCHANTS

Text / Photo by Duan Xuelian

When you walk up to the front of the Chang Manor, it looks no different than one of the entrances to Beijing's Summer Palace, or one of the many historical stone structures in China. But step inside, and you're in for a surprise.

manor's tour guides, it usually takes two hours to cover the whole manor by foot. It was the largest family residence among the Shanxi merchants in the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). The Chang family is best known for their success in trading tea with Russia and

attend school, the Chang family was a thorough advocate of the academics. As a result, during its 200 years of prosperity, the family produced large numbers of scholars, educators and politicians. Although the offspring of the Chang family are scattered



The gardens of Chang Manor resemble those in southern China in their delicateness.



The streets and historical houses are featured in many TV shows.



The highest tower of the manor stands by the bank of sparkling lake water.



The main street divides the manor into two major parts. What remains today is the northern wing of the architectural group.



The Family Academy of Chang Manor showcases a collection of calligraphy works by family members and masters at that time.



The autumn scenery in the gardens is popular with young couples who come to shoot their wedding photos.

The first thing you see when you walk in is a street, not lined with houses, but little shops with stone facades making tourists feel like they are in a self-sufficient village. But this is a family manor, in fact the estate is 600,000-square meters, but only a quarter is open to the public. What remains now is only the north wing, but tourists are often taken aback by the size of the place. Qin Chunrong, a Chinese tourist on a school trip from Changzhi, a city not far from Chang Manor, said "the manor is so big, which is very much unexpected."

According to Wang Ting, one of the

Mongolia during that time.

However, when you tour their family home, their role as prosperous businessmen is far less obvious than their Confucius values, such as education and dutiful respect for their elders. This is proven by the strict layout of the Family Academy - the largest civil learning institute in China.

The Chang family believed that better educated people made better merchants. The academy serves as a family school which taught not only men, but also women, and even daughter-in-laws. In a feudal society when most women were not allowed to

across China and overseas today, most of them live by their intellectual heritage.

71-year old Chang family descendant, Chang Shixuan, said the knowledge gave his ancestors foresight into business opportunities. Which is why, when it came to international trade, they became the most successful tea merchants.

When you stroll through the Family Academy, you will see extravagant decorations including wood and rock carvings. But, the academy also houses an array of family members' works and a rare collection of calligraphies by Chinese

emperors and empresses.

Adjacent to the Family Academy are the gardens. Hiding in the back of the solemn high houses, the gardens open a whole new prospect of Chang Manor.

With delicate arching bridges, decorative walls overflowing with carvings and artificial rocks, the gardens take you away from north China. The travel brochure explains that as the Chang merchants bought tea from southern cities, they were inspired by the local architecture, and built those elements into their family gardens. As they established business in Russia and Mongolia, more inspiration was acquired. One of the gardens' gates even resembles a European door.

But what distinguishes the Chang family gardens from those in southern China is its large scale. The trees and lakes seemed double sized and the pebbled lanes meandering through the gardens stretch to infinity.

The picturesque scenery in the gardens

is popular with young tourists. Many couples came a long way to take their wedding pictures. "The autumn foliage serves as a wonderful backdrop to my wedding photos," said one of the brides, draped in a lavish white wedding gown.

A five-story tower marks the highest point of the manor. The balcony on top opens to a view of the surrounding farmland and the flat plains unfolding into the horizon. Tourists can also get a panoramic view of the manor.

The historical houses of Chang Manor are also catching the eye of directors. It's one of China's first tourist sites to open its doors to the film industry. So far, the manor was featured in a series of TV hits, including the popular show "Qiao Family Courtyard," chronicling the career of Shanxi merchants in the late Qing dynasty.

Yet, the potential of tourism development in Chang's Manor is still to be discovered. Zhao Jiguang, general director of the company administrating the scenic site said they've been holding exhibitions

on old films and photography to enrich the manor's contents. According to Zhao, it's the official partner of the Pingyao International Photography Festival.

A chain of services is developed to attract more tourists. Direct buses bring tourists to the manor daily from Taiyuan, capital city of Shanxi province which is within one hour's drive to the manor. Entrance ticket to the manor costs 60 yuan per person while seniors and students enjoy half discount. There are restaurants inside and out of the manor and tourists can book hotels through the company's hotline 0354-2756292 in Taiyuan and Jinzhong city. The manor can also hold conferences, with meeting rooms large enough for 100 people. Souvenirshops in the manor sell miniature wood and stone carvings and local food specialties. Near the entrance gate, tourists can examine old black and white photos of the Chang family while sipping a cup of hot tea. ■

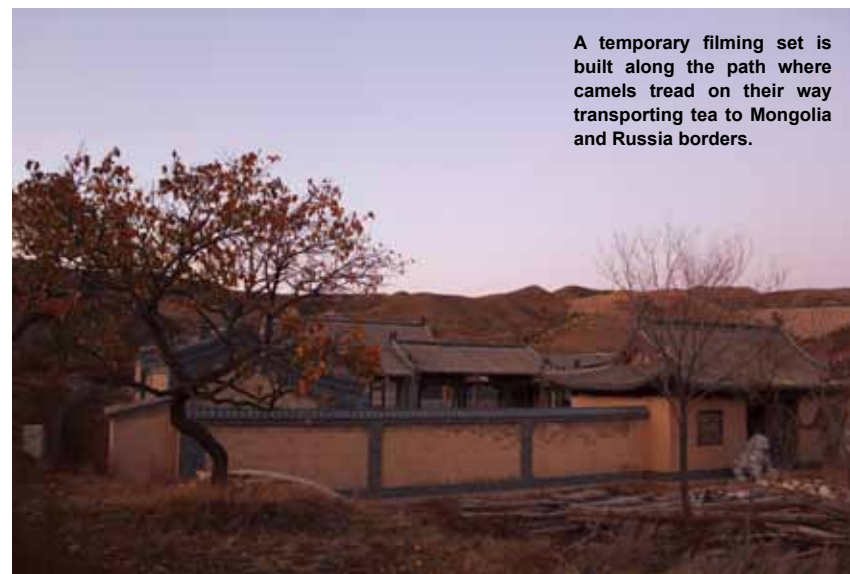
Camels used to be the major means of transportation along the Tea Road which spans China's Shanxi province, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region and further into Mongolia and Russia. But soon sport utility vehicles (SUVs) may take the place of animals and revive this once prosperous trade route.

A group of historical experts and avid travelers, supported by local governments in cities along the Tea Road, have been exploring the route once again in order to open up an international travel route for tourists with their own means of transportation.

Private travel by tourists using their own cars is an emerging trend with great market potential and the Tea Road appears to be an ideal route for these forms of travel, explains Wang Jun, the director of the Tourism Bureau of Yuquan District in Hohhot, the capital city of Inner Mongolia.

As the initiator of the project, Wang has a great interest in the history of the Tea Road and has made many investigative trips along the route. Speaking from personal experiences, Wang said the charm of the travel route lies in the experience of being part of the majestic and varied natural world and following the footsteps of the tea merchants.

In the mid and late Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), merchants from Shanxi province came to Hohhot and developed a booming tea business. They set up stores



A temporary filming set is built along the path where camels tread on their way transporting tea to Mongolia and Russia borders.



Wang Jun, director of the Tourism Bureau of Yuquan District in Hohhot, capital city of Inner Mongolia, talks to CRI reporters about the Tea Road travel route project.



CRI reporters interview Wang Jun inside the remaining courtyard of Da Sheng Kui, the largest business establishment started by Shanxi merchants in Hohhot.

and shops and used camels to transport tea to border cities in Mongolia and Russia. Thus, their heroic journeys were crucial in establishing what has come to be called the Tea Road.

The proposal to turn the trail into a route for tourists who have their own vehicles has been under research since 2007 and it will be introduced as a travel product next year. The target customers are those who prefer independent travelling over packaged tours.

"I think the travel route based on Tea Road holds great appeal to foreign tourists," Wang said, "they like self-designed travel and they are also interested in Chinese culture."

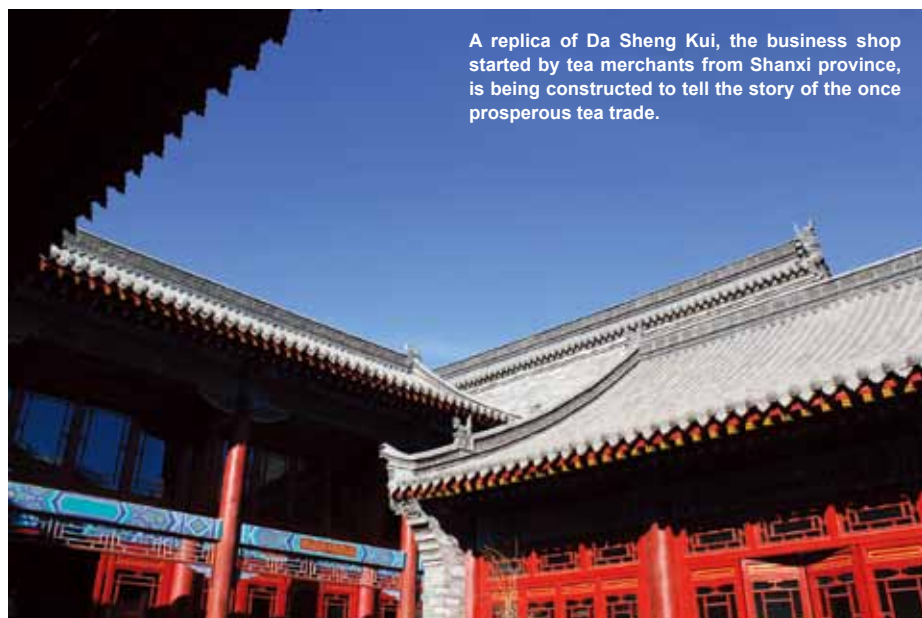
Preparation for the launch of the route is in full swing. The project has received support from Mongolia and Russia on their governments' part. Stopover camps have been set up along the way and even a special form of automobile has been designed to cater for the rough road conditions. A magazine telling stories of the trips along the Tea Road is set to be published regularly.

But the Tea Road travel route is only a small part of a larger scheme. "The Tea Road has such a rich history that a lot remains to be rediscovered," Wang said.

Another project she is supervising is the renovation of Da Sheng

# FROM CAMELS TO SUVs, THE TRAVELERS ON TEA ROAD THEN AND TODAY

Text / Photo by Duan Xuelian



A replica of Da Sheng Kui, the business shop started by tea merchants from Shanxi province, is being constructed to tell the story of the once prosperous tea trade.



The inside of the filming set was arranged according to the descriptions in historical files.

Kui, the largest tea business establishment in Hohhot which was set up by the tea merchants from Shanxi.

Right beside the 310-year-old heritage building located in the Yuquan district of Hohhot, the construction of a new cluster of buildings is under way. It is to be the replica of Da Sheng Kui and a set for the filming of a documentary-drama featuring the rise and fall of this business asset.

Wang Xinmin, the director of the TV series, believes Da Sheng Kui is a valuable piece of the history of the Tea Road and it contains significant insights into that particular period of history.

What inspired the director, however,

was the peaceful co-existence of Shanxi merchants and the local Mongolian ethnic people. "The Mongolian minority is a great nationality in that they accepted the Han culture and even drew from the bordering nations such as Mongolia and Russia," Wang said.

The first installment of the trio saga has been completed and is expected to debut later this year.

It is the wish of the heirs of Da Sheng Kui to tell the stories of their forefathers through the docu-drama and pass down the spirit of the Tea Road by re-branding it as a travel route.

Chen Yi, the third son of the last

shopkeeper of Da Sheng Kui has made essential contributions in restoring a genuine picture of the business establishment. His father's last words were an appeal to restore the family business name. Chen has donated numerous precious files such as account books and other family heirlooms to support the construction of the new Da Sheng Kui.

Once completed, the place will be opened to tourists and serve as a key destination for Tea Road travelers.

A number of other Tea Road ruins including the tracks where camels used to pass are also being renovated to welcome tourists. ■

border inspection station in Manzhouli is open around the clock to ensure convenient entry. Local stores, ranging from modern shopping centers to family boutiques all willingly accept Russian Rubles as payment.

The latest statistics show that 99 percent of foreign tourists in Manzhouli are from Russia. The city is connected with Russian cities including Chita, Irkutsk, Krasnoyarsk and Ulan-Ude by air and a cross-country railway which links Moscow and Beijing runs through Manzhouli on a weekly basis.

As Russian tourists consider Manzhouli an ideal shopping destination, Chinese visitors are finding the border city the perfect place to experience foreign lifestyles.

With gaudy baroque style buildings bordering the streets, Russian restaurants serving Borscht (red soup), black bread and baked salmon, shops selling Russian crafts such as wine glasses and gem-decorated hand mirrors, and perhaps most significantly, travel agencies offering tours to border cities in Russia, Manzhouli couldn't be more attractive to Chinese tourists.

In March, 2008, Manzhouli resumed the customs procedures which grant Chinese tourists permission to cross over the border and travel to Russia with an effective visa.

"There are two ways to attain the visa, one is applying it through your local embassy, the other is to register at the travel agencies in Manzhouli which will help tourists apply for a temporary visa valid only within the travelling dates," explained Huang Guoqing,

deputy director of the Manzhouli Tourism Bureau.

The special visa policy has essentially boosted the tourism industry in Manzhouli. According to Huang, domestic tourists

Russia.

Every year around Christmas in December, Manzhouli is turned into a festive venue for the Ice and Snow Festival and the China-Russia-Mongolia Beauty Pageant.

A festival featuring food delicacies from China, Russia and Mongolia is also held in June. This year a new theme event is introduced showcasing the wedding ceremony traditions in China, Russia and Mongolia inside the newly completed church in the suburbs of the city.

In 2009, tourism officials from Mongolia visited Manzhouli and other cities along the Tea Road intended to renew the historical business road as an international travel route, Huang Guoqing said. "On the Tourism Bureau's part, we have been actively participating in the research of the Tea Road travel route, it would be another significant promotion of Manzhouli's historical and cultural resources once finished," he said.

Although Manzhouli's tea export has shrunk substantially, there are many small businesses thriving on Russian buyers.

Hu Jianbao, owner of the Southern Tea House in downtown Manzhouli, said that half of his customers are Russians.

Russian customers' knowledge on Chinese tea has also broadened. "They (Russian customers) used to only buy black tea, but in recent years, more and more Russian buyers are inquiring about different categories of tea such as Tieguan Yin and Dahongpao," Hu said. He

established his tea business in Manzhouli in 1997 and now he has made friends with many Russian patrons.

In this modern tea trader's eye, the cause of spreading Chinese tea and tea culture is far from fulfilled. ■

# MANZHOU LI, THE GO-BETWEEN CITY OF BORDER TOURISM

Text / Photo by Duan Xuelian

If it were a person, then Manzhouli would be a matchmaker, or the go-between. Three hundred years ago, when the Tea Road is in its heyday, Manzhouli was where merchants from inland Chinese cities sold tea to Russian buyers.

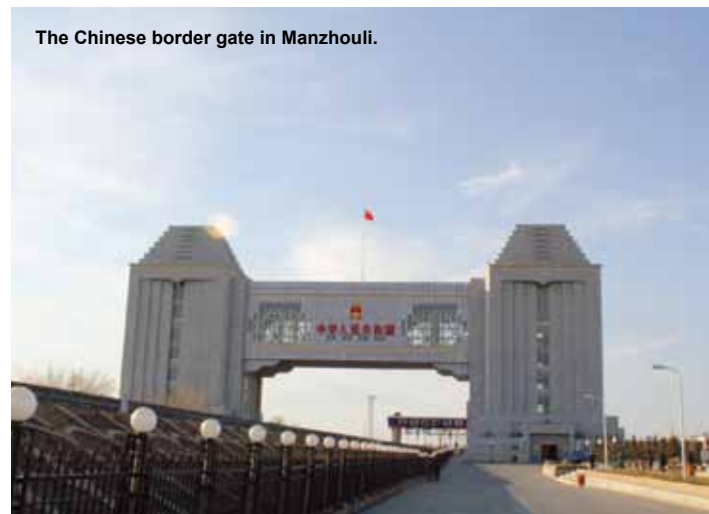
Company. He says it was to be expected, because "Manzhouli is a shopping paradise for Russians who live near the border."

Over 70 percent of the travel company's Russian customers are here to shop, Guo added. As one of the ten Manzhouli-based

One of the company's Russian partners, Dolgopolova Yulia, whose hometown Krasnokamensk is only one hour and a half's drive from Manzhouli, spends four weekdays working in Manzhouli on average. As a tour guide, she brings 30-40 Russian tourists to



The fairytale-like colored Russian style architecture standing beside the Matryoshka Doll Square is the Russian Art Museum. The Matryoshka Doll Square exhibits matryoshka dolls in various shapes and sizes.



The Chinese border gate in Manzhouli.

Today, trade has extended in such diversity and scale that almost all the shops in the city are marked by bilingual signs in Mandarin Chinese and Russian.

This transformation has been witnessed by Guo Yuanping, general manager of the Huaxia International Travel Service

travel agencies authorized for international travel operations, Guo's company receives more than 70 thousand Russian tourists each year.

During the peak times in July and August, the company has to extend its opening hours from 7:00 am to 10 pm.

Manzhouli regularly on Wednesdays and Fridays.

"Manzhouli is also my hometown now," Yulia said through her Chinese translator.

Indeed, Manzhouli is so accommodating to Russian tourists that the



The newly constructed church in Manzhouli serves as the main venue for a festival showcasing the wedding traditions in China, Russia and Mongolia.



A statue of a Russian family of three — fathers, a mother and a child, carrying shopping bags is located in the business district of Manzhouli to mark the increasing number of Russian shoppers in Manzhouli.

to Manzhouli reached 3.542 million by September, 2011, a nearly ten percent increase over last year's number.

To play its advantage to the fullest, Manzhouli has been organizing international events in conjunction with Mongolia and

# MODERN MERCHANTS ON THE ANCIENT TEA ROAD

Text / Photo by Zhang Zhang



Sha Rula (L) and Liu Shali display a banner which reads "Tea lovers under heaven are from one family" during an interview in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia on October 16, 2011. They hope Chinese tea products can regain the top place in the international market one day.

Inner Mongolian native Sha Rula's wish, is to open Chinese-style tea houses in the cities along the ancient Tea Road that leads from Shanxi to Eastern Europe.

In this way, he wants to spread Chinese tea culture and more importantly, restore the former eminence of the country's tea industry overseas.

"China has been famous for tea culture since ancient times and has a long history of tea exports. But today, even the country's total tea sales are far less than that of Lipton, the world's largest tea maker."

Sha said there were up to 170,000 camels in Hohhot, a key traffic hub, for tea transport when China dominated the international tea market during the prime period of the Tea Road, even more than the city's population in the same period.

But today, China is only the third largest tea exporter worldwide after Sri Lanka and Kenya. It exports \$600 million's worth of tea products per year on average, accounting for 18 percent of the global tea

export volume.

Sha started his tea business by chance three years ago. At that time, he was to organize a Tea Road expo abroad sponsored by a leading domestic enterprise.

But later, he found a "tragic" phenomenon.

"China produces the best tea in the world, while the most expensive tea products around the globe are all made from Chinese tea leaves. But in the international tea market, Chinese tea brands are still uncompetitive and have little influence."

In his eyes, the lack of government support and preferential policies has hindered the development of tea manufacturing in the country and dampened tea makers' efforts for a larger share of the international market.

As a member of China Tea Friend Association (CTFA), Sha once visited Russian cities along the Tea Road with his close friend and business partner Liu Shali.

Liu was deeply impressed with the long-lasting influence of the tea road

overseas and still remembers a commemorative festival they encountered during their tour in Irkutsk, one of the largest cities in Siberia that used to be a stop on the ancient route.

"The Tea Road Carnival lasted for a week. All the performers were dressed in ancient styles of clothing for a play which represented the international tea trade between China and Russia more than two centuries ago."

The two nations are looking forward to favorable policies for the tea industry - the kind of policies that foreign nations have attached great importance to since ancient times but have gained little favor in China.

Sha Rula suggests that the government hold Chinese tea expos abroad, take measures to boost the tea business overseas and pay more attention to publicity efforts for the country's tea products around the world.

"We can publicize Chinese tea culture and products worldwide in a similar way to how we are promoting Confucius Institutes internationally."

Liu Shali is excited to see the growing sales of tea drinks in China, while carbonated beverages have become less popular. He is also confident in their current attempts to open a tea house in Ulan Bator, Mongolia.

"There is an annual expo in Ulan Bator held jointly by China, Russia and Mongolia. We won the golden prize there last year for the popularity of our tea products. We received about 1,000 visits per day and in the end we were able to sell all of our stock."

Both Liu and Sha are anticipating success abroad, though there is still a long way to go. They also hope that more people around the world will one day buy Chinese tea products instead of Lipton's tea. ■

# MODERN PROSPERITY IN AN ANCIENT TOWN

Text / Photo by Zhang Zhang

Sitting on the border between China and Russia, Manzhouli has depended on international trade since ancient times.

"The Manzhouli Customs supervised \$9.81 billion worth of imports and exports last year, compared with \$6.485 billion in

As foreigners swarm in, mostly from Russia, the city has also made remarkable headway in improving its urban infrastructure and commercial services.

Yao Xin came to the city in 2003 and now works as the general manager of Manzhouli Shopping Center, the largest shopping mall in the city. He is deeply impressed with the city's rapid progress.

"When I arrived here, the city looked tidy but dull. But now, most streets have been renovated in the European style, while more and more high-rise buildings have also been erected."

The city's rapid development not only makes it attractive to foreigners, but also benefits local enterprises.

Yu Yingrui is the deputy director of Friendship Group Corp., a regional influential enterprise that has attracted a large group of patrons from Russia.

"Our company has been

known to residents within a radius of 1,000 kilometers of Manzhouli. Some of our customers come from as far away as Azerbaijan and Armenia. Our brand is popular among Russian visitors and our cooperation with Russian partners is running well."

Yu's enterprise opened its first department store in Manzhouli on August 8, 1999. At that time they rented a space covering 5000 square meters. Now the company owns three chain stores with the main one covering 20,000 square meters.

They have also entered the tourism, catering and hotel industries, with a turnover exceeding 300 million yuan (\$47 million) compared to around 10 million yuan a decade ago.

Yu said the city's boom is down to its growth strategy rather than its unique geographic position.

"The outward-oriented city has



During an interview on October 19, 2011, Yao Xin, says he is upbeat about the future of Manzhouli and his enterprise during an interview on October 19, 2011.



The Deputy Director of Friendship Group Corp., Yu Yingrui, general manager of Manzhouli Shopping Center, says he has witnessed great changes in the city.

Some believe business here can be traced back to the middle Qing Dynasty when Chinese and Russian merchants bartered over tea and silverware. At that time the town was a part of Russia named Manchzhuriya.

The city's modern history began in the early 20th century as the China Far East Railway was completed in 1901 linking China's northeast area with Siberia and the Russian Far East. The town also got the current name Manzhouli from that time on.

After being designated as a trading center in 1905 by the Republic of China government, the local economy blossomed. More than a century of development has seen Manzhouli grow into China's largest land port entry.

However, Manzhouli Customs officer, Wang Weizhong, says the town is gradually recovering after a tough period during the global economic crisis.

2009. The increase shows the city's recovered from the economic crisis smoothly."

Wang said that timber and minerals are now the biggest imports from Russia. China's main exports the other way include fruit, vegetables and light industry products.

With a new logistics zone expected to be put into operation in coming years, the city's annual cargo handling capacity is to exceed the current figure of 30 million tons per year.

As the foreign trade booms, Manzhouli attracts an increasing number of tourists from both home and abroad.

According to the local tourism bureau, over two and a half million tourists visited the city in the first seven months of 2011, up more than five percent compared to the same period last year. The number of foreign tourists during the same time this year was over six hundred thousand.

made every effort to meet the demands of Russian and Mongolian merchants. It offers a rich variety of domestic products made in inner lands such as Guangzhou and Harbin and develops its industries in line with the requirements of foreign trade, which are particularly favorable to small and medium-sized foreign clients."

He also supports the government's efforts to standardize the market and rein in

the "grey customs clearance," which he says has boosted legitimate enterprises like his company.

Yu believes the city's prosperity can only be sustained by a booming internal trade. So he hopes the local authorities can adopt more international standards to boost trade.

That now seems likely to happen because the city has recently been selected

for a national program to further open up the economy.

Now, the company is targeting the overseas market with related market analysis almost completed.

Yu said he's already contacted local governments of Chita, Irkutsk, and Ulan-Ude in Russia and hopes to start doing business with them soon. ■

# TEA ROAD AND THE INHERITED GLORY OF A FAMILY

Text / Photo by Zhang Zhang

Without Shanxi merchants, the Tea Road wouldn't have existed. Without the tea trade, the success of Shanxi merchants wouldn't have had the same impact on Chinese and world history.

Foreign trade through the Tea Road lasted for nearly 300 years until the early 20th century. It cemented economic ties between China and Serbian and European Russia and also built an enduring reputation for Shanxi merchants, who were responsible for an unparalleled commercial culture in ancient China.

The Chang family used to be a leading tea trader in Shanxi and have been widely recognized as the major explorers of the Tea Road.

Zhao Jiguang runs a tourist attraction today at the renovated mansion of the Chang family in Yuci, Shanxi Province. In his eyes, the Changs were responsible for some remarkable accomplishments.

"Their most important contribution was to open an international trade route that shared almost equal prominence with the Silk Road that prospered in the Han and Tang Dynasties."

As China's second international trade channel after the Silk Road, the Tea Road stretched more than 6,000 kilometers from Wuyi Mountain in southeastern Fujian Province to Maimaicheng, a trading outpost across the Kyakhta River from the Russian town of Kyakhta during the Qing Empire's rule of Mongolia.

As trade on this road rapidly developed, the family separated the tea transactions from their traditional businesses of grain farming

and the sales of fur and mountain products.

From that point on, their tea business kicked into full gear.

"In its heyday, the family once contributed 40 percent of the country's tea export volume that made up nine tenths of the Qing government revenue at that time," said Zhao Jiguang.

Chang Shixuan, a descendant of the family, ascribed the success of his forefathers to the correct judgment of the situation and a sagacious decision to switch from their traditional businesses to the tea trade.

"Tea products accounted for the largest portion of Chinese exports at that time and brought tremendous profits. But there were few people engaged in the international tea trade."

The 70-year-old Chang family member remains deeply impressed with the persistence of his ancestors that helped make the family outstanding in the tea export business.

"The market at Maimaicheng and Kyakhta was shut down three times due to unrest in the border area or fire emergencies. Many merchants quit the business for fear

of future risks, but my family held on and benefitted later from higher margins in the trade."

Today, more than 3,000 descendants of the Chang family live all over the world. But like most offspring of other ancient Shanxi merchant clans, few of them manage businesses as large as those run by their

forefathers.

The Chang family's mansion used to cover an area of 600,000 square meters, but only one quarter remains. Despite this, its majesty still persists.

Now retired, Chang Shixuan rarely returns. Every time he goes there, he must battle with mixed emotions over the glorious

past of the family.

He appreciated his ancestors not only for their exploits in trade, but also for the great importance they attached to education, a point that distinguished the family from any other merchant clans in Shanxi. ■

# IMPACT OF GUANGDONG AND HUBEI ON XINHAI REVOLUTION

Text / Photo by Zhang Xu

While the Xinhai Revolution, or 1911 Revolution, took place in south China's Guangdong Province, the revolt actually got its start in Hubei Province, a researcher at Guangdong Archives Bureau said on September 20, 2011.

Zhao Xiulei made the remarks during an archival exhibition to mark the centenary of the Xinhai Revolution in Guangzhou, capital of Guangdong Province.

According to Zhao, in the middle of the 19th century, the Opium War compelled Guangdong Province to rebel against foreign invaders. Because of its special natural and cultural environment, Guangdong became China's first province to become acquainted with western culture. Guangdong absorbed capitalism and became the most important source of China's modern revolution.

Sun Yat-sen from Guangdong's Xiangshan called on patriots to take action to rescue the endangered Chinese and build a strong motherland. Although Sun led 10 armed uprisings from 1895 to 1911, they all

failed. Meanwhile in Hubei, the bourgeois

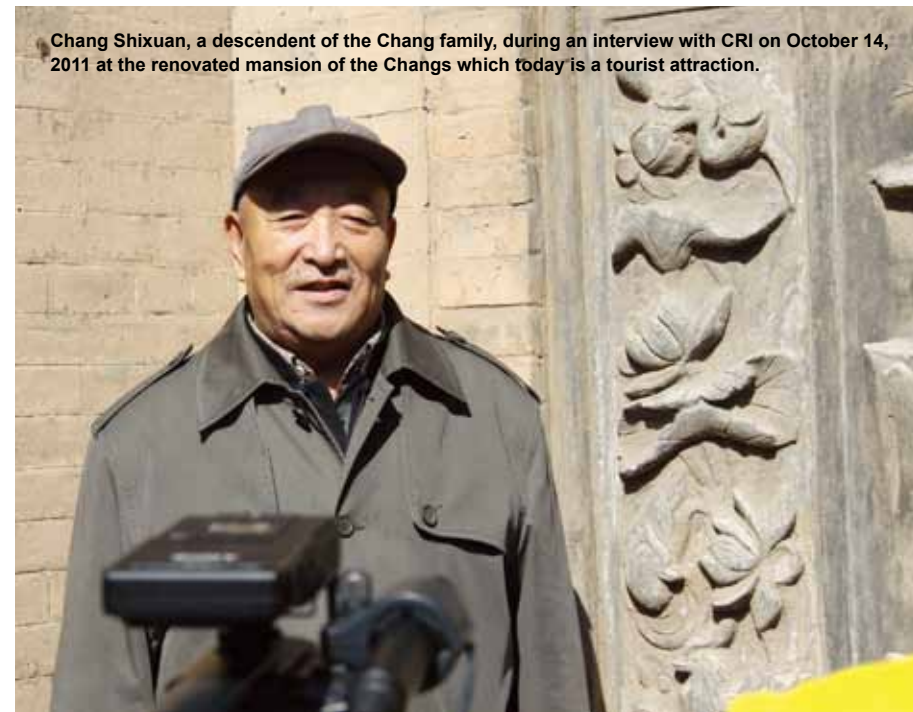
China's last imperial dynasty.

When asked why the Rise of Wuchang

was such a success, Zhao said many factors led to it. After the Treaty of Tianjin in 1858, western countries including Britain, Germany, France, Japan and United States invaded Hubei, and the province's natural economic structure gradually disappeared. While many peasants and handicraftsmen lost their jobs, Hubei made advancements in modern enterprise, education and the military.

Zhao also noted two other reasons for Hubei's successful democratic revolution. First, local leader Duan Fang led part of the army to put down the uprising in southwest China's Sichuan Province, so that its defensive

strength was weakened. Second, Qing Dynasty officials hunted revolutionary party members in Wuchang after a failed bomb attempt, and soldiers associated with the revolution feared being arrested. ■



Chang Shixuan, a descendant of the Chang family, during an interview with CRI on October 14, 2011 at the renovated mansion of the Changs which today is a tourist attraction.



This photo taken on September 20, 2011, shows part of an archival exhibition about the Xinhai Revolution, or 1911 Revolution, in Guangzhou, south China's Guangdong Province.



This photo taken on September 20, 2011, shows a historic document at an archival exhibition of the Xinhai Revolution, or 1911 Revolution, in Guangzhou, south China's Guangdong Province.

# PHOTO EXHIBITION REVEALS OVERSEAS CHINESE'S CONTRIBUTION TO XINHAI REVOLUTION

Text / Photo by Zhang Xu



This photo taken on September 21, 2011 shows a bronze figure of Sun Yat-sen, leader of Xinhai Revolution, at the Guangdong Overseas Chinese Museum in Guangzhou, south China's Guangdong province.

South China's Guangdong province was one of the most important provinces during the Xinhai Revolution, which finally led to the overthrow of China's last imperial dynasty, the Qing.

As part of a series of activities being held in the province to mark the centenary of the Xinhai Revolution, the Guangdong Overseas Chinese Museum is holding a photo exhibition of the Xinhai Revolution highlighting the contributions made from Chinese citizens who were abroad at that time.

Through historic photos, documents and original artifacts, the exhibition shows historical evidence that overseas Chinese established revolutionary organizations, published newspapers and magazines,

collected money for the revolution and joined the uprisings during the Xinhai Revolution.

Du Ziming, whose grandfather's only brother is Du Fengshu, a Chinese citizen who lived in Singapore and was one of the 72 Martyrs of Huanghuagang Uprising in April 1911 during the Xinhai Revolution, is attending the exhibition's opening ceremony with his wife Liang Li'e. Du Fengshu's descendants have just donated Du Fengshu's relics including a ceramic rice jar and a red wooden desk to the Guangdong Overseas Chinese Museum.

"We believe the museum will preserve them better. We hope Du's heroic story will be passed down from generation to generation and more people will get to know Du's contribution to Xinhai Revolution." Liang

Li'e says.

Wu Ruicheng, a director with Guangdong Overseas Chinese Affairs Office, notes that overseas Chinese played a very important role in the Xinhai Revolution.

First, they were the revolution's direct organizers; many revolutionary organizations including the Revive China Society and the Revolutionary Alliance were founded outside China. Then, overseas Chinese were the revolution's direct supporters. Xinhai Revolution leader Sun Yat-sen considered Chinese citizens living overseas as the mother of the revolution, because they were the ones who provided much of the financing. It's believed that overseas Chinese donated around ten million Hong Kong dollars to the revolution. In addition to this, many overseas Chinese were direct participants in the revolution. Many overseas

Chinese returned to China to join the revolution. For example, among the 72 Martyrs of Huanghuagang Uprising, there were more than 20 overseas Chinese.

Wu says, "We will never forget what the overseas Chinese did during the Xinhai Revolution. We should pay more attention to the descendants of Xinhai Revolution to make sure that they feel that their forefathers' contributions are not in vain. Thanks to their contribution, China is now becoming more and more powerful."

Chinese-Australian Chen Heshui says he learned a lot after visiting the exhibition.

"I have lived in Australia for 30 years and I didn't know much about the relationship overseas Chinese people had with the Xinhai Revolution. Now I've learned that

many overseas Chinese joined the Xinhai Revolution and they not only financed the revolution but also sacrificed a lot for the revolution. I am greatly touched by their efforts and have gained a lot from this." Chen says.

Yang Wenkai, the president of a

Chinese newspaper Chubun in Japan, thinks that the Xinhai Revolution and Sun Yat-sen's efforts connected Chinese people on both sides of the Taiwan Straits.

"The celebration of the Xinhai Revolution is one of the best things you can do to honor Sun's will and encourage

patriotism. As members of the overseas Chinese media, we should keep Sun Yat-sen's instructions in mind, honor his spirit, and seize the historical opportunity to contribute to China's reunification!" Yang says. ■

# HAPPY TOWN IN SUN YAT-SEN'S HOMETOWN

Text / Photo by Zhang Xu



This photo taken on September 22, 2011, shows a private residential building in Xiaolan town, Zhongshan city, south China's Guangdong province.

some of which have given birth to famous Chinese brands such as Vantage and Avlight. Moreover, the city boasts China's only town-located "tertiary class A hospital", or the highest level under China's hospital grading system.

Peng Zhihui, the township party secretary, told CRI that happiness is not just a town slogan, but comes from the town's emphasis on social welfare issues, including employment, medical care and old-age support.

"In Xiaolan, anyone who wants to work can get a job," Peng said. "Among more than 160,000 local people, we have 93,000 workers. Every year, we help members of the labor force to find a job, and now only 2,000 people are unemployed. To encourage employment, the town provides subsidies to low-income families. In any family with a monthly per capita income of less than 800 yuan, each family member can receive a 100-yuan government subsidy."

As for medical insurance, all residents have at least one policy. More than 90 percent of Xiaolan residents are covered by two medical insurance policies. They pay only 290 yuan annually for the two health insurance



Doctors work at Xiaolan's tertiary class A hospital in Zhongshan city, south China's Guangdong Province, on September 22, 2011.



Children read books at a community culture and sports center in Xiaolan town, Zhongshan city, south China's Guangdong province, on September 22, 2011.



This photo taken on September 22, 2011, shows part of a park in a residential district in Xiaolan town, Zhongshan city, south China's Guangdong province.

Zhongshan city in south China's Guangdong province has been named in honor of its famous resident Sun Yat-sen who led the Xinhai Revolution which overthrew China's last imperial dynasty.

Xiaolan is only a small town in Zhongshan city, but its GDP reached 17.9 billion yuan (2.8 billion U.S. dollars) in 2010. Among all of its 40,000 households, 28,000 have owned business enterprises,

policies, and more than 90 percent of their medical fees can be refunded.

Male residents over 60 and women over 55 can receive monthly pensions of more than 1,103 yuan. Peng also stressed that people in urban and rural areas can enjoy the same welfare policies in Xiaolan.

Moreover, Xiaolan attaches importance

to migrant workers who make up half the town's population.

"They can buy medical and old-age insurance here," Peng said. "We encourage migrant workers to obtain our hukou, or household registration certificate, through hard work. The government often asks enterprises to treat migrant workers kindly

and organize cultural and sports activities for them."

Peng said that with Xiaolan's rapid economic development and welfare policies, he believes the town has entered a period of sound development. ■

year's ceremony explained the rituals of the ceremony. "On the new year's day, Qiang people blow horns and fire shots into the sky, while people from other places bring food as offerings to God, and place white stones and cypress branches on the sacrificial altar. In doing so, people pray for good luck and exorcise evils."

"After the ceremony, Qiang people drink zaju liquor and dance around the bonfire." Yang added.

People dance and dance to the beat of the folk song. Shibi, the most prestigious

member of the Qiang nationality speaks people's wishes to God and prays for peace among human beings.

In 2008, the 5.12 Earthquake led to the deaths of 30 thousand people from the Qiang Ethnic Group in Beichuan County, accounting for one tenth of the entire Qiang population. As the Qiang nationality does not possess a written language, Qiang culture was damaged immensely as a result of the earthquake. Soon after, the government implemented policies intended to rescue the culture of the Qiang people.

The history of the Qiang Nationality dates back some 3 thousand years ago. Its culture was passed down orally. Fortunately, thanks to the support of the government and related cultural organizations, Qiang culture has managed to survive the earthquake, despite losing a large proportion of its population. Now, in the new Beichuan County, the fabulous culture of the Qiang Ethnic Group is attracting more and more people than ever before. ■

# QIANG PEOPLE CELEBRATE NEW YEAR IN BEICHUAN COUNTY

Text / Photo by Cui Chaoqun



Shibi, the shaman of the Qiang Nationality, dances in front of the altar, whispering old Qiang folk songs. A sacrificial ceremony was held in Beichuan County on October 27 to celebrate the new year of the Qiang Nationality.



This photo shows the sacrificial altar used during the ceremony held in Beichuan County on October 27 to celebrate the new year of the Qiang Nationality.

Thick white smoke rises into the sky; its choking scent dominating the air as people in animal fur dance around in a circle. This is the sacrificial ceremony of the Qiang Ethnic Group.

The Qiang Ethnic Group is one of China's 55 ethnic minority groups. According to the Chinese lunar calendar, the first day of

October represents New Year for the Qiang nationality (the date falls on October 27 this year). On this special day, the Qiang people often hold a sacrificial ceremony to celebrate the occasion.

This year, the ceremony was held at Banaqia Square in Beichuan County. Shibi, the shaman of the Qiang Ethnic Group,

danced in front of the altar, whispering old Qiang folk songs. Qiang people dance around the altar and yell, setting light to the branches of cypress trees which creates a thick plume of smoke which rises into the air. It is said that through the smoke, God can hear the voices of the Qiang People.

Yang Huawu, the organizer of this



Three Qiang people stand by the altar during a sacrificial ceremony held in Beichuan County on October 27 to celebrate the new year of the Qiang Nationality.



The Qiang people dance in a circle around the altar during a sacrificial ceremony held in Beichuan County on October 27 to celebrate the new year of the Qiang Nationality.



Shibi, the shaman of the Qiang Nationality, dances in front of the altar, whispering old Qiang folk songs. A sacrificial ceremony was held in Beichuan County on October 27 to celebrate the new year of the Qiang Nationality.



Qiang people stand by the altar and sing Qiang folk songs during the sacrificial ceremony held in Beichuan County on October 27 to celebrate the new year of the Qiang Nationality.

# BEAT THE FREEZE IN BEIJING'S BEST HOT SPRINGS

Beijing is a city so overloaded with rich history, that it's no surprise many attractions fall under the radar. It's a little known fact that the Beijing area has more hot springs than you can shake a finger at. This isn't a bad thing, as the more popular ones have been known to handle as many as 5,000 bathers a day. But bathers beware: Not all springs are created equal. The hot springs range from luxurious to...less than luxurious, to put it mildly. CRI presents a few of some tried and true hot spring experiences, each offering everything your body and mind need to soak, soothe, rub or pound tension into oblivion.

## CHUNHUIYUAN HOT SPRINGS RESORT

Text / Photo by William Wang

The entrance to the Chunhuiyuan Hot Springs Resort is modern and elegant, setting the tone straight away for the kind of hot spring it is and the clientele who frequent it. Indeed, since its 1997 opening, this hot spring has catered largely to South Korean and Japanese tourists. This is high praise indeed considering that the Japanese themselves have undisputedly perfected the art of the hot spring.

Chunhuiyuan is a smaller set up than many of Beijing's offerings. Its 10 hot spring pools are all outdoors, clustered around the periphery of a small lake. In one of the larger pools, a party of 25 can lounge comfortably, while as few as three slender friends can get intimate in a small one. Trellises shade spaced out lawn chairs, and a few trees punctuate the area. There's plenty of open sky, so you can lose yourself in the sun or stars.

The waters have different scents, but frankly, it's hard to smell much difference among them. They also have different subdued hues, although it's doubtful that the colors actually mean or represent anything. It's a bit unclear what's in the waters, although you can intuit clues from their names, which range from "chocolate" to "sedative." Villas stretch out along the lake in a wing, offering (for a price) private pools for groups. If you prefer to bathe in total privacy, the adjacent hotel has rooms with private spas.

The interior of the main building is a pleasantly open space, housing the massage section, indoor swimming pool and an open eating area. The food is Chinese, reasonably priced and very tasty. Freshly squeezed juice is also available. The second floor is home to a slightly ritzy hot pot restaurant.

Come nighttime, you have two options: Tilt your head back, let your feet float upward and lose yourself in the stars; or settle into the swanky bar lounge a few paces away. The only things dirty here are the martinis.

### Steamy and Dreamy

The smaller scale of this spring lends itself to intimacy. It's



Lake view from the spa



Chunhuiyuan Hot Springs Resort

definitely one of the choice picks if you're looking for a spot to take your date. This classy hot spring doesn't stray from its focus: relaxation. The space isn't cluttered with time-killing novelties or games.

### The Cold Reality

Beautiful as it is, the indoor pool is too small to do much more

## FENG SHAN: HOT SPRING OVERLOAD

Text / Photo by William Wang

Feng Shan has been a mainstay of the Beijing hot spring scene since its inception in 2001. Two levels of indoor pools create the illusion of an expansive tropical rainforest. A bit of true greenery is nestled into the plastic forest (the occasional banana can be picked), and fountains are scattered among the 50 pools of mineral water. The shadows of the faux cave are where the medicinal waters are found, each containing a floating bag of Chinese herbs. Even traditional Chinese board game tables await challengers in their own pool of steaming water.

Children may prefer to frolic among the water-spouting statues, but the peaceful spa experience is to be found outside. Most of the 18 outdoor pools are cozily nestled into the side of the hill where views of the surrounding mountains can be lazily appreciated. The pools themselves are artfully designed and filled with tinted waters. (Staffers say there are herbs in the water, but which herbs are colored electric blue?) A cold pool and hot stone beds are also available, although the beds were tepid at best when I was there.

The enormity of the spa makes it easy to while away long hours, but if you tire of the springs, there's plenty of opportunities to take a break. There's a cafeteria offering complimentary milk tea, cakes and cookies. Upstairs dozens of people can be found napping or watching TV in what should be a foot massage area. The adjacent movie theater also screens Chinese and western titles. If you want to burn a few calories, the exercise facilities here are better than the ones at most other hot spring spas. The swimming pool could possibly be Olympic size, and it is bordered by a collection of shiny exercise machines.

Steamy and dreamy: Feng Shan is the clear choice for anyone diagnosed with ADD. The vast indoor environment seems to have a surprise around every corner, be it fresh flower petals floating in a series of pools or a shower of hot rain drizzling bathers below.

The cold reality: A distant 50 kilometers from the heart of Beijing, Feng Shan is not the most conveniently located hot spring. The reverberating sounds of water, people and music in its indoor area make enjoying a peaceful experience difficult. Also, regardless of each pool's posted temperature, many of the outdoor pools were more warm than hot. Infrared saunas have been added as an afterthought, but their style and placement are not inviting. The small amount of information in English isn't particularly informative and is limited mostly to poetic names like Red Crown Crane Pool. Finally, Feng Shan's ticket price is definitely higher than those of any of the reviewed competitors.

than splash around in. Nobody comes to Chunhuiyuan to work out. Also, because this place is focused on relaxation, there are no time-killing novelties or games.

Basic ticket price: 168 RMB

Address: Yuzhuang Village, Gaoliying Town, Shunyi District. (About 1 hour north of Beijing on bus 942 from Dongzhimen)

Tel: 86 10 6945 4433



Green hot spring pool



Water fountain

Basic ticket price: 268 RMB

Address: 10 Mangshan Lu, Changping district

Chinese address: 昌平区蟒山路10号

Tel: 6071 1188

Directions: From Jishuitan station, take bus 888 to the final stop.

# JIUHUA RESORT: OLD SCHOOL

Text / Photo by William Wang

Opened in 1998, Jiuhua was Beijing area's first outdoor hot spring, and today it remains the largest. A respect for history is evident in its Qing dynasty architecture and décor. Jiuhua feels less like a hot spring, and more like an emperor's summer garden.

One of its highlights is a pool which includes a waterfall cascading down a rock staircase, leading up to a smaller, hotter pool. Bridges and winding pathways slither around a variety of water basins. A feeling of openness reigns over the space, particularly over the massive outdoor swimming pool. A couple of pools have televisions to help guests whittle away the hours. The indoor pool area is a blue oasis, while the upstairs houses the requisite KTV floor. Oddly sandwiched between them is the Tibetan floor spa, housing Tibetan masseurs, baths and Buddha statues.

But the key thing that separates Jiuhua from the rest is its waters, which can be so saturated with herbs that at 30 cm deep, everything fades into sepia opacity. The different herbal scents were much more noticeable than those at other spas, all of them quite pleasant. Jiuhua was the first Beijing area spring to add medicinal herbs to its mineral waters, and people can choose their pool according to the conditions they desire. English signage may be strangely translated, but you'll get some idea of what's in each pool and what the health benefits are. Medicinal ingredients include goodies like tree bark and ginseng. Even the saunas offer their own varieties of herbal goodness. For purists, there are plenty of pools filled with clear spring water as well.

The mornings are a time when elderly customers in particular, like to frequent the spring, beating the crowds for some communal chitchat and a soak. Here alone will you feel that many people really do come here primarily for health reasons. Also, a traditional Chinese medicine doctor is always on hand to check patrons' health, prescribe medicines, and possibly assign a certain amount of time in specific pools.

This winter, a package deal is available for Jundu Shan ski resort and Jiuhua together.

## Steamy and Dreamy

Bask in the environment of a massive Chinese hot spring like none other. Let those herbs permeate your skin and joints, while you and a bunch of old folks cheer on the national team, as shown on the outdoor TV. And don't miss your massage, which is included in this base price.

## The Cold Reality

The Jiuhua Resort area is so big that a monorail is needed to travel its perimeter, so on weekends, and even late into the evenings it can get busy. On one occasion, 5000 people went



Elephants guarding the pool



Mud Baths

through in a day. This isn't the place to get zenned out, but that could still work for you if you want a raging party instead of a relaxing party.

**Cost:** 198 rmb, including a 30 minute massage.

**Address:** Xiaotangshan, Changping District

**Tel:** 86 10 6178 2288

**Directions:** Take subway Line 5 to the northern end of the line. From there it's a 15 minute taxi ride. ■

# The Girl in the Photos

Text by Allie Johnson

## PART ONE: THE ANNOUNCEMENT

Wang Weiguo is an actor with the National Theatre Company of China. For more than a decade, he's been carrying over 20 photographs belonging to someone he has never met. CRI's English Service needs your help to solve this mystery.

"Twelve years ago, I was walking around Panjiayuan flea market when I saw these photos. I was just buying picture frames, but when I got home I realized that the photos in all the frames were of one person," Wang Weiguo said.

Since then, he has been searching for her.

"I think the person must have lost them when she left China, or maybe she accidentally sold her things. Because the photos depict a woman's whole life, from when she was a baby to an adult. There's no way that she would so easily get rid of them or that she wouldn't want them."

In the most recent photos, the woman is in her mid-twenties, with shoulder-length, wavy blonde hair and blue eyes. She is slender and of average height. In one of the photos, she and two other women are in traditional Norwegian dresses. They are holding Norwegian flags.

Wang Weiguo has recently brought the photos to CRI's English Service. CRI had posted them on our website.

"I truly hope that through this method, I can return these photos to their rightful owner. Because over the past decade, they have become a huge source of anxiety for

me. Every time I move houses, I have to take them with me. I think it would be wrong to just get rid of them. Because maybe in some far-off place, there is a person desperately searching for them," Wang Weiguo added.

You can help Wang Weiguo in his quest. Go to [english.cri.cn](http://english.cri.cn). If you can identify the girl, or anyone else in photographs, please



A lost photo of Joanna Syson in China

loves flea markets. He pores through them, looking for treasures.

He's found precious vases, jade, old paintings. But one winter day in 1999, he found something else, which caught his attention.

"Suddenly, I saw an ancient Chinese photo frame. It was very unusual. The frame was held together without a single nail, and the wood was beautiful, so I decided to buy it. Then I realized something strange. The photo in the frame was of a little Western girl. I thought this was so fascinating! The frame was ancient Chinese, but inside was this sweet little Western child!"

The photo is black and white. The girl is no more than ten years old, but wearing elegant makeup and a huge black feather boa. Her chin is held high, like a Vogue fashion model, and her eyes are piercing.

"This little girl really had something remarkable about her. Her face and her eyes – they're so distinctive," Wang recalled.

The vendor asked if Wang wanted more picture frames. Since he was moving into a new house, he bought all the

frames she had.

"It wasn't until I got home and laid out the frames that I realized. Not only did all the frames have a photo inside – they were all the same person. From when she was a little child until she became an adult – they document an entire life."

There are photos of her with a man with a long white moustache, and with a girl who

## PART TWO: THE GIRL IN THE PHOTOS

Wang Weiguo is an actor with the National Theatre Company of China. He

looks like her sister. In some, she's a young woman with long blonde hair, laughing with her friends.

One shows her as a wide-eyed baby with her mother. They're curled together on a swathe of white fur. Her mother's hair is tousled and dirty blonde, and she's smiling at something off camera. She's stunningly beautiful.

"I thought they must be lost by accident, because nobody would casually

dead end.

Wang went to newspapers and TV stations in Beijing. They told him the story was pointless.

Every time Wang moved homes, he took the photos with him. Twelve years went by.

Then in December 2010, Wang turned to the internet. CRI's English Service posted the photos online with a video about Wang's quest, and asked the WORLD for help.

The clue that cracked the code was

Norway burned down in a massive fire and all our family photos burned. And so therefore obviously these pictures become even more valuable than one could ever imagine." Joanna told CRI.

Now, Wang can relax.

He said: "I suddenly breathed a sigh of relief. I felt as if I had been carrying an enormous load, and I could finally put it down. I really believe heaven will not disappoint the person who tries."

But his duty isn't quite done yet. Not until Joanna Syson comes to Beijing to pick up the photos.

And when she does, Wang, and her memories will be waiting.

### PART THREE: THE TIES THAT BIND

Panjiayuan flea market in Beijing holds a special place in Joanna Syson's heart.

"My first date with my son's father, we were out having dinner, we went to Houhai and walked around, and then after that we went to the early morning market in Panjiayuan. And walked around there for hours. And I know it well. It's incredible – I remember it still being dark when we were there, and walking around, very romantically, our first date, really." Joanna recalled.

Wang Weiguo loves that market too.

"I'm a big collector of classical Chinese artifacts. I collect old tools, and cups, things like that.

So I go to Panjiayuan quite often, to see what I can find."

The two of them could not have known how that market would bring them together. That's where Wang Weiguo stumbled on the photos documenting Joanna Syson's life, from childhood to adulthood.

That was in 1999.

Joanna had arrived in Beijing five years earlier. She came to study Chinese, and make a documentary film.

"So I was working on a film called Children of Beijing Opera, and I was living in Beijing for 5 years and sort of created a home in Anhuaqiao, and that's where all these pictures were."

But in 1999, Joanna had to rush back to Norway to edit the film she had been working



Norwegian citizen Joanna Syson came to CRI for the lost-and-found story on August 17, 2011.

throw away the photos that recorded their lives. I thought the person who lost them must be very worried, but would have no idea where to find their photos. So I thought I have a duty to find the owner and return every lost one of these photos. If I don't, she'll regret it for life." Wang told CRI.

Wang called his friend, a police officer. He asked if any foreigners had reported losing their photos. The officer searched through every record in Beijing for the past year. Nothing.

He showed them to every foreigner he knew in Beijing. No one knew her.

Wang kept searching for clues. A picture of the sister said "Ella" on the back. Another had a Norwegian flag in it. Wang asked a Norwegian theatre company to get their embassy involved. But that was also a

photo of the girl's mother. A woman in Norway recognized her as the late movie star, Julia Ege.

Ege was Miss Norway 1962. In the 70s, she played the beautiful seductress in a slew of British comedies and horror films. She was even a James Bond Girl.

Ege had two daughters. Ella, and Joanna. Joanna is the girl in the photos.

Joanna was very excited when she knew her photos were found.

"I can't believe they've been found again. It's quite incredible...it's extraordinary. There's no other way of putting it."

It turns out Wang Weiguo couldn't have known just how much these photos would mean to Joanna. .

"A couple of years ago, about a year before my mother passed away, our house in

on all those years. She left her most personal belongings in a container at a friends' house – including the photos. She promised to come back in 3 months.

"But the film editing went on and on, and I didn't manage to come back for six months or so, I think. And when I did, everything was gone. I couldn't find the friend either, and it was just gone. I went around trying to find out what had happened to all my belongings, but nobody knew." Joanna said.



Joanna eventually realized the friend must have left the country.

"I'm just assuming that he had to leave in a hurry. Because I haven't heard a word from him since. Nothing. I couldn't find him again."

However he left, he would have had to dump Joanna's stuff.

"It was just gone. I was absolutely devastated at the time. I just couldn't believe it." Joanna recalled.

Those photos turned up in Panjiayuan just months after Joanna first left for Norway. By the time she came back to Beijing, Wang Weiguo had probably already started his search.

Wang kept those photos for 12 years. He'd take them out sometimes and wonder about this blonde girl and the people in her

life.

"We're from two different worlds. Our language isn't the same, our habits aren't the same. Our ways of thinking aren't the same." He said.

But somehow, their different worlds kept intersecting. Wang Weiguo is an actor, for stage and screen. Joanna is a film editor. And it's because of her movie star mother, the late Julia Ege, that someone identified Joanna's photos online.

And her late mother, Julia Ege, was a

someone would take such care of these photos in Beijing because the people there just have that special quality, I have to say. And luckily one of those people found my photos."

Wang Weiguo's biggest wish is to deliver the photos to Joanna personally. He knows exactly what he wants to say to her first.

"I'll say, I have known you for a very long time. I have already known you for twelve whole years."

This summer, he'll get the chance.

movie star – including in Hong Kong kungfu flicks.

Those coincidences made Wang believe it was the God's will that pulled them together.

"It's too strange! It's really very strange. When I found out her mother was a famous actress, I thought it was so bizarre. And when I found out that Joanna also works in film, I thought it was even more bizarre. I thought it's as if there was some kind of heavenly magnet pulling us together."

Joanna lives in London now. When she heard that her pictures had been found, she was in shock. But at the same time, it made sense.

Joanna said: "Beijing is one of those places that it has such soul, it has such character. It doesn't surprise me utterly that

Joanna plans to go to Beijing, and meet the man who has taken care of her precious items for so long. She doesn't know what she'll say when they meet, but she does have a message for him now.

"Mr Wang Weiguo, I first want to apologize. My Chinese isn't very good these days. But my meaning is very clear. I want to express my most profound gratitude to you for having taken care of these photographs for such a long time. You must be a very good person. And I look very much forward to meeting him."

She plans to take him out for dinner, and introduce him to her 9 year old son. And maybe, just maybe, they'll find themselves back at the flea market where it all started. ■

# LOST ROMAN LEGION IN CHINA ?

Text by Yang Yong

In a remote and fairly nondescript village named Zhelaizhai, Yongchang County in northwest China's Gansu province, 35-year-old Luo Ying has distinctively European features: a higher and more pronounced nose bridge than most Chinese, deeper eye sockets and lighter colors in his pupils, as well as wavy hair.

"My features attract attention in public places like lounges and karaoke bars, especially my nose, eyes and hair. Girls like to talk to me. They are curious to find out what race I am. When I tell them I am Chinese, they don't believe me. They say, 'it's impossible!'"

Luo Ying's family has been living in Zhelaizhai for generations and one third of his fellow villagers, have Caucasian physical features, ranging from aquiline noses, blond hair, blue eyes and heights of over 1.82 meters.

38-year-old Sun Jianjun and 51-year-old Song Guorong are among them. For years, they were bothered by the lighter color of their hair.

"Since my childhood, I have been called yellow hair."

"The village elders have a saying. They say we are descendants of yellow haired barbarians. Historically, we have been known by other names as well."

While getting used to these disreputable nicknames, villagers in Zhelaizhai are eager to find out who are their real ancestors...

In recent years, they are thrilled by an astonishing theory that they might be the descendants of a lost Roman legion.

The theory was first promoted in the 1950s by Homer Dubs, a professor of Chinese history at Oxford University, who made connection between a Chinese county called Liqian with ancient Rome.

When professor Dubs was translating a history book of China's Han Dynasty, he found that a township named Liqian was established in Han China in 36BC to settle captives. Liqian was the term the ancient Chinese used for the Roman Empire and archaeologists believe the ancient Liqian city

is situated in present-day Zhelaizhai.

"According to historical references, Liqian was in existence for 600 years. However, by the 20th century, it vanished and was mentioned only in scholarly texts. But Liqian still remains in the folklore of the local people."

Professor Dubs suggested the inhabitants were descendants from a lost Roman troop that had been commanded by Marcus Licinius Crassus.

At the time of the First Triumvirate, Marcus Licinius Crassus, one of the 'triumvirs' then ruling Rome, was in dire need of a new military victory to win back some political prestige over his two strong rivals – his friend Julius Caesar, and the general Pompeius Magnus. Crassus was once wise and lucky, but his decision to take on the Parthians – the Iranian civilization situated between the Roman Empire and Han China – was a huge blunder, for he underestimated the task of fighting the fierce eastern army.

In 53 BC, as they penetrated the hot plain of Carrhae, Crassus' 7 legions of 50,000 men became exposed to the mobile Parthian cavalry.

Wang Mengxian, a Chinese historian from Yongchang Museum describes the battle.

"Eventually the formation broke and the legionaries were slaughtered by the raining arrows. Thousands of Roman soldiers perished on the battle field. Apart from a few survivors who fled home, some 10,000 were taken prisoner."

The fate of the captured soldiers remained a mystery.

While researching the 'Han Shu' by Chinese historian Ban Gu (32-92 AD), Professor Dubs discovered that Cheng Tang, one of the Chinese generals who fought the Huns in the battle of Zhizhi (present-day Zhabul, Uzbekistan) in 36 B.C. had recorded soldiers battling in a kind of 'fish-scale' formation that had never been seen before. This tactic, which utilized shields for the first row to cover their bodies and the following rows to cover their heads, was

known as the Testudo (Tortoise Shell), used by Roman Legions throughout the empire.

Professor Dubs suggested that these soldiers may be the lost Legionnaires that had wandered eastward and become mercenaries. They were captured by General Cheng Tang and brought back to China. Around that time, records indicate that a township named after Rome was established in the area. If these theories are true, then these Roman soldiers settled there alongside the Huns, and have been there ever since.

Some mud wall remains can still be seen inside Zhelaizhai. A stone carved with the Chinese characters "Liqian Site" was installed by the local government in front of some local ruins in remembrance of the lost Roman township. Luo Ying says the wall was badly damaged by villagers for mud material to build their own houses in the 1980s, before everyone realized that this was no ordinary wall.

"The wall is much shorter now than it was before. The wall was originally over 10 metres high and several hundred metres long. This is all that's left of the fortress."

In 2003, 99 tombs dating back to the Han Dynasty were found near the village containing skeletons of very tall people facing westward. Cao Shengkui, an archeologist from Yongchang Museum says this was not the common burial practice of the Chinese and the lengths of these bodies were much taller than the Chinese people of that time. One of these skeletons was kept in the museum.

"This skeleton belongs to a male body and is around 1.8 meters tall. He has high eyebrows and cheekbones, indicating that he could have been from another ethnic group. There is a dark patch on the side of the skull. It indicates an injury with a blunt force, such as a hammer or a rock."

Today, in many ways, the descendants of the Romans still live a life like their ancestors. They make pancakes with pork and vegetable pieces on the surface which are very much like Pizza. They also make steamed bread in the shape of an ox head,

which they call "ox nose", and this is used for sacrificial offerings even during the traditional Chinese Spring Festival. When herding, as was typical of the ancient Romans, they like to drive bulls together to enjoy the occasional fight ...

text simply says 'formed up like the scales of a fish', a metaphor used several times in ancient literature meaning 'closely packed'. So the phrase should translate as 'in close formation'. The text also goes on to say that these soldiers were performing weapons

place-names in ancient literature which would be read Lijian in modern Mandarin Chinese. One of these (not the place in Gansu) was the name of a country in the west which was very probably Hyrcania on the Caspian Sea."

Scientists recently conducted a DNA blood test on 91 of the villagers. The results suggested that 67% of some villagers' DNA was Caucasian in origin, and their blood also contained mid-Asian and other European elements too, generating a new interest in the "Lost Legion" connection.

Sun Jianjun says the test shows 45% of his DNA is Caucasian, and he is a descendant of Liqian people (Romans).

Coupled with Zhelaizhai's special location on the renowned ancient Silk Road, limited DNA test results, however, are still hard to convince Professor Glen.

"It is only to be expected that inhabitants of places on the Silk Road in Gansu should have some elements of Central Asian ancestry after so many centuries of traffic along that route."

Song Guorong's DNA has Caucasian origins as well.

"It's not scientific to narrow the genealogy of ancient Romans to just the people from the Italian peninsula. Ancient Rome was a colossal empire consisting of people from a wide range of places, including present-day Egypt, France, Spain and even some parts of Asia. Their military could hire soldiers from different places too."

Different views and arguments don't seem to ignite local people's enthusiasm and sense of pride quite as much.

According to Dong Li, the vice mayor of Yongchang County, a commercial street themed on Rome is now under construction and a film studio is also on the county's future blueprints. With regard to whether the villagers are descendants of the lost Roman legion or not, Dong says it is a mystery and where the glamour is.

"As for the theory that Zhelaizhai inhabitants are descended from Romans, we have a number of historical sources to support it. But we don't have enough material evidence at present. Villagers of Zhelaizhai could merely be descendants of East-West cultural exchanges along the Silk Road. I suggest people come to Zhelaizhai for themselves and make up their own minds." ■



A Zhelaizhai villager [Photo courtesy of Yongchang Museum]

Despite this suggestive history, there haven't been any other archaeological discoveries linking the area to ancient Rome as yet. Song Guorong says that there are possible explanations for this.

"The captured soldiers must have been demilitarized before they were taken back. That's why nothing was left."

But these theories, along with their Caucasian features, habits and other evidence are enough to convince these people that they are the descendants of Roman Warriors. Luo Ying is no exception, so he changed his name.

"My first name Luo is taken from the word Roman. My second name Ying means hero."

Zhelaizhai is in the spotlight. Historians and archeologists have come here for more evidence and to do research. With a lack of evidence indicating the contrary, some of them agree with Professor Dubs' theory.

However, Oxford University Professor of Chinese History, Glen Dudbridge, says the evidence for a Roman presence in Han China is just not there.

"There is no reason to see the formation described in Han shu as the same as the Roman testudo. The Chinese

drill, which they could hardly do if they were hiding behind or under shields."

Professor Zhang Defang from the Gansu Archeology Institute has participated in archaeological projects in Gansu for years and discovered hundreds of ancient Chinese bamboo scrolls. He opposes the theory linking the name of the township – Liqian with ancient Rome.

"According to our research, 14 of the bamboo scrolls that do mention Liqian, make no mention of Roman captives. Based on these records, we know that Liqian existed as early as 60 BC. This was 7 years before the Romans fought the Parthians and 24 years before the battle between Cheng Tang and Zhi Zhi."

Also as for the place name Liqian, Professor Glen says that there has been more research into the pronunciation of these ancient Chinese words. He also says that these characters do not suggest any connection with the Han Dynasty term for the Roman Empire.

"The attempt to read the name Liqian, or Lijian, as equivalent to Alexandria is no longer supported by modern scholarship. There is confusion between two different

# PIK Highlights in the Final Season of 2011

Text by Chen Mo and Shang Yufei / Photo Yang Jingjie and Zhang He



PIK team at the Beijing Foreign Language Festival held in the Beijing Working People's Cultural Palace in mid-October. From left to right: Chen Cong, Chen Mo, Xu Yang, Yang Jingjie, Zheng Chenguang.

"People in the Know" is a stimulating news talk show. The program invites both Chinese and foreign experts to discuss news in the areas of domestic and international politics, economy, diplomacy, science, culture and sports. "People in the Know" is on air at 1pm every weekday on FM91.5 in Beijing and a dozen of major cities here in China. It could also be heard in Asia Pacific, North America, Europe and Africa.

In this season, we interview great interviewees about hot issues in China and the World. Here are their opinions on the stories you may be interested in:

## 1911 Revolution

Rebecca Karl, Associate Professor of East Asian Studies at New York University and currently a visiting professor at Tsinghua University in Beijing, says:

As a historian, I think there are certain historical logic and certain contingency to all of it. But the revolution was a very important event to break apart the dynastic system and to push China into a new direction. The revolution was very logical, historical outcome of the forces, from outside and from

within.

Program was on air on October 10, 2011.

## Occupy Wall Street Movement

Thomas Myers, Principal of The T. A. Myers & Co. a forensic accounting and litigation support firm in Denver, US, says:

The main reason of 'Occupying Wall Street' is that the protesters are frustrated with the economical conditions that they can bear today. Now there are thousands of protesters and maybe they were waiting for the Obama administration to meet the way out of the economical trap. The unemployment rate has remained consistently high. I think that Obama had some suggestions, but (due to) the political situation in the US right now, the Republican basically would say no to anything that Obama suggested. That's very difficult to get anything accomplished. However, the movement would

also affect the US domestic policies to some extent.

Program was on air on October 19, 2011.

## Security in Mekong River Area

Zhao Gancheng, Senior Fellow and Director of South Asia Studies with the Shanghai Institute for International Studies, says:

Mekong River is an international river.

China would like to use this water passage to build up a closer connection with our South-East Asia neighbors. We have seen trade here, which is good, benefiting all the parties. But this brutal killing is a clear sign to reflect the situation and reality of this area and it is not the only case showing the bad security there. This case is a warning, calling for all the parties to work out a more effective way to build up a security network.

Program was on air on October 21, 2011.

## China Restored its Lawful Seat in the UN-1

Shi Yanhua, famous interpreter and diplomat, former Counselor of the Chinese Mission to the United Nations, says:

It took 22 years for China to enter the United Nations again. I think it was mainly because the balance of power. At that time (there were) 131 members of United Nations, among which only 64 had diplomatic ties with China. So the United States took advantage of its strength in the United Nations to block China's re-entry. (But things improved a bit after Kissinger paid a secret visit to China.) When the news came, saying that the resolution was to restore China's

seat in the United Nations, Chairman Mao Zedong said it was our African brothers who carried us into the United Nations.

Program was on air on October 24, 2011.

## China Restored its Lawful Seat in the UN-4

Valerie Amos, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, says:

The focus is on the disaster

preparedness and how the countries in the Asia Pacific region work more effectively together to deal with these issues of disaster preparedness and learn from each other. And China's experience over the last few years are really strengthening and enhancing. Its capacity of dealing with the disasters was the example being used.

This is also about continuing to learn. It's about using new technology. In Shanghai, I visited the exhibition where I was able to see so many of advances in new technology that will help and assist in the mediate after months of disasters. So I think the learning never stops. So it does better than it was that we know can be even better.

Program was on air on October 27, 2011.



Chinese famous interpreter and diplomat Shi Yanhua (left) with PIK host Zheng Chenguang (middle) and producer Chen Mo (right).

## China Restored its Lawful Seat in the UN-5

Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, Director-General, United Nations Office at Geneva, and also the Under-Secretary-General says:

The modern international situation is quite complicated. There are many challenges and there are many problems. The target of Millennium Development Goals of UN is to advance the social economical development, first of all of poor countries, and in this

context, China is doing very well. In 2015, all of the countries should report to the UN what they have done. China succeeded to taking 500 million people out of poverty within 10 years. It's a huge result and outcome of social economical policy of Chinese government.

We are celebrating the restoration of the legal seat of China to the UN. And within the 40 years, China played constructive role in the UN, providing persistent supports to this universal organization and we are very much grateful. China understands clearly its responsibility and obligation to the UN. I'm very happy to point out that China is implementing its duties and obligations as the permanent member of the Security Council.

Program was on air on October 28, 2011.

## Asian Economy in the Eyes of Justin Lin Yifu

Justin Lin Yifu, senior vice president and chief economist of the World Bank, says:

The three major challenges that China faces are, first is income disparities, second is certainly how to complete the transition to a market economy. The third one is, as a responsible member of the global economy, how to manage the globalization.

I don't think today China can save the capitalism. The

economic development in China helped the country and also made contribution to the global growth. That kind of sayings captured something, but it's not the truth.

Program was on air on November 9, 2011. ■

# Ask Pingping and Jules: Laba Festival

P: 你好 (Nǐ Hǎo). Welcome to "Ask Pingping and Jules", your bridge to Chinese culture. I'm Pingping.

J: 你好 (Nǐ Hǎo). I'm Jules. Wo shi Zhu Li An. Pingping, time flies and it's already the end of the year. According to the lunar calendar, many festivals are coming up. So, today we'll talk about the Laba Festival. Pingping, can you tell us a little bit about that?

P: Of course. Laba is celebrated on the eighth day of the last lunar month. It refers to the traditional start of celebrations for the Chinese New Year. 腊(Là) in Chinese means the 12th lunar month and 八(bā) means eight.

J: What were the origins of this festival?

P: Legends about the origins of this festivity abound. One holds that over 3,000 years ago sacrificial rites called La (腊) were held in the twelfth lunar month when people offered up their praise to the gods of the heaven and earth. By the way, Jules, do you know what Chinese eat on Laba Festival?

J: I was told that Laba porridge is a must eat. It is made with local produce such

as water chestnuts, ginkgo fruits, chestnuts, lotus seeds and red beans which are added to the rice. If you like eating sweet food, you can put sugar in it. The porridge then tastes wonderfully sweet.

P: Northerners prefer to use glutinous rice, red beans, dates, lotus seeds, dried longan pulp, pine nuts and other dried fruits in their porridge. But do you know what the southerners on this festival?

J: Well, I used to live in the south of China. So I think there they like a salty porridge prepared with rice, soybeans, peanuts, broad beans, taro, walnuts, vegetables and diced meat. Some people like to add cinnamon and other condiments to inject more flavor. When cooking it, controlling the heat is of great importance in the outcome. To start, the flame must be high, but the fire is then turned down to let the porridge simmer until it begins to emit a very delicious smell. The process is time-consuming but not complex.

P: That's true. Laba porridge is not only easy to prepare, but also a nutritious winter food because it contains amino acids, protein and other vitamins people need. Cooked

nuts and dried fruit are good for smoothing nerves, nourishing one's heart and vitality, and strengthening the spleen. Perhaps that is why it is also called 八宝 (bābǎo, Eight Treasure) porridge.

J: With all these materials being ready, I'm wondering how long does it normally take to cook Laba porridge.

P: To save time you'd better marinate the materials like nuts first, and this may take an hour or two. As for the cooking process, there may be another half an hour at least. The longer, the better. Just to make sure there is enough water boiling.

J: Clear now. Another custom is to prepare Laba vinegar for Jiaozzi on New Year's Eve. People will peel garlic and add that to the vinegar. It will then develop a distinctive flavor.

P: Ok. Now time is up. We'll see you next time. If you've got any comments or suggestions, please contact us at crienglish.com or send an email to

J: askpingpingandjules@cri.com.cn.

P: Bye everyone.

J: 再见! (zàijiàn)

was a love for China growing inside me since my first encounter of that special letter I had received first time in my life. Actually nobody had written any letter in my name before! It was such a joy. In 2003 I left Nepal and spent 2 years in Israel on volunteering. Then in 2005 I came to UK. I had few online friends through various social platforms. One of them was from China. We exchanged emails for some time and it felt that there is something special about this friendship. I had deep love and respect already grown inside me towards China and its people. My friend in China was also excited to know that I actually know lots of things about China already. So I decided to pay a visit to my dream land and to meet my newly made friend as well. 3rd week of January 2006, I was greeted by Ms. Xi Zheng outside the Banyan Airport in Guangzhou, China. Though I couldn't make it to the childhood dream city of Lasha but I spent really exciting time during my a month long trip to China. I really wish I could make to CRI office but passing by its old building of Radio Beijing time was the nearest thing I could do then. After 4 years, exactly on Valentine's Day morning on 14th February 2010, my wife (Yes, you guessed it right) gave birth to our beautiful baby boy! It was such an incredible feelings to be dad for the first time. We mixed our name to name our baby as

Xibu Poudel (mixing my 'bu' into her xi). Now Xibu is growing happy & healthy. I shared my personal story because I think CRI played great role behind it. I'm very grateful to be friend of CRI and through CRI now a relative to China as well. Thank you CRI. I am so happy to spend some time together of your past 70 years and may God bless me to spend another 70 years to come!!!

Bishnubabu Poudel  
Nepal

Happy Birthday CRI! If China is the Middle Kingdom, then CRI is the middle ground. What is the middle ground? In Europe and America in times past, the village marketplace was called the middle ground. It was a place where everyone could come to buy and sell regardless of social class, ethnic background, or income. Everyone was free to talk and share stories and news about their family or far away events in a comfortable accepting setting. CRI is our village marketplace today. Everyday millions of listeners tune in or click

on CRI to hear fair and balanced reporting from around the world. The interesting music and culture about China is always a joy to hear and so informative. And the presenters are so friendly and knowledgeable. Just like meeting old friends in the marketplace. Thank you CRI. I appreciate what you do very much. And as a community leader, it is my wish to come and visit China to experience Chinese hospitality for myself. And then return home and share my impressions and memories about my visit to the Middle Kingdom in the marketplace of my village.

Daniel J Cesar  
USA

Dear CRI, It's a great pleasure to take part in your 70th anniversary contest as I have been a friend of your station for almost one-third of that time. I first listened to Radio Beijing in 1987. At the time, in the pre-Internet era, shortwave radio was one of the very few ways that one could receive information

## Mailbag

directly from other parts of the world. At the time, I was only 14 years old and I was really eager to learn about the world. China still seemed quite mysterious at the time, and there was very little information to hand about your country. That's what made listening to Radio Beijing such a great pleasure, as I quickly started to learn about the vast land of China, its many ethnic groups, vibrant culture, rich history and rapid development. I was such an avid listener that I can actually still remember the time and frequency of the broadcast (2000 UTC on 11500 kHz) and I also remember that the signal was so loud and clear. It always made me so happy to think that I was listening to radio programmes directly from China. Over the years I have witnessed the development of your station, from Radio Beijing to CRI, and also from the old HQ at Fuxingmen to the current HQ at Shijingshan. I have also witnessed the development of your station into a comprehensive multi-media broadcaster with very high professional standards. CRI means a lot to me as it was the first contact I had with

the country that I now call home. Twenty-four years since I first tuned into Radio Beijing as a 14-year-old, I now live in Beijing and both my wife and son are Chinese. Thank you for introducing me to this wonderful country. CRI will always have a special place in my heart! Warmest regards and happy birthday.

Ian Morrison  
UK

First of all, I would like to commemorate CRI on spectacular 70th years of remarkable achievement of providing us we listeners globally with accurate, objective and comprehensive programs. You deliver wonderful programs, through couples of media platforms: Radio and Internet. That's why I consistently rely on your authoritative source of news.

For seven decades, you show unconditional love, passion and commitment to positively audiences globally. You provided your listeners with straightforward news and information, you broadcast in several languages and you allowed your earnest listeners to know the actual China and its culture and costume. I was honored to witness this 70 golden years of success. What most impressed me with CRI your commitment toward your audiences throughout this 70 years.

I had been an ardent admirer and avid listener of CRI for the past 20 years. I said yes. I can honestly say my listening experiences have been unprecedented and rewarding. I have found listening to be liberating and breathtaking. The last 20 years have given me an abundance of unforgettable. If I am to describe CRI in five words I must say accurate, objective, dependable, comprehensive and unique.

Finally, I would like to thank all the co-listeners and CRI staffs who have taken time of their crowded schedules to make special contributions to CRI 70th anniversary of establishing our great and beloved station. Your support, enthusiasm and encouragement toward me will continue to be a driving force of inspiration for me over the next years of my life. Thank you. Cheers.

Abdulkadir Ibrahim  
Nigeria

### Notes:

"Ask Pingping and Jules" is produced by CRI. It aims to introduce certain aspects of Chinese culture to foreigners. If you'd like to listen to the audio version of this program, please log on to [www.crienglish.com](http://www.crienglish.com) and click on "Learn Chinese." There you can find other interesting episodes.

Jules Page, one half of 'Ask Ping ping and Jules', can be heard contributing to the on-air presentation of 'China Now' and through reports and interviews on CRI English. 'China Now' is a daily three hour magazine style program focusing on what's really going on in China today. It can be heard in various countries and regions, including places in Africa, Australasia, South East Asia and North America. It can be accessed through [cribeyondbeijing.com](http://cribeyondbeijing.com)

It's all started from my tender age when I was still in primary school around early 1990s, I was about 12, 13 years old first time I heard about Radio Beijing. The vivid memory never gets fade of that moment while I was thrilled to hold a postcard, a very bright colourful butterfly made of thinnest paper ever I could imagine and few other brochures about Radio Beijing and some information about China. I have that postcard of a coconut ornament and that pretty butterfly still safe with me after nearly 22 years! Then I don't know anything much about

China or its culture except a vague picture of my imagination after reading a famous poetry literature in Nepali language, the Muna-Madan, written by our greatest poet Laxmi Prasad Devkota where he explains the beauty of golden roofed temples in that city of Lasha to the other side of mighty Himalayas. Long later I came to know the fact the poet himself never been to the place! So my imagination of China, Lasha city and the Potala Palace all were based in someone else's imagination. I started listening Radio Beijing's Nepali service

regularly and write back my thoughts, took parts in competitions and spread the message about it among my friends. We formed a local listeners' club in village and encourage more friends to tune to the radio programs. I progressed in learning Hindi and little bit English as well and I had won several prizes from CRI's Nepali, Hindi & English services by the time I started my university. During this period I certainly acquired much more knowledge about China and its people, the culture and history through CRI as well as there

# CRI WINS ABU PRIZE

On August 17, a Norwegian woman reunited with a collection of photographs that she lost in China more than a decade ago.

In 1999, Joanna Syson was studying and working in Beijing when she suddenly had to return to Norway to edit a documentary film. She stored all her belongings with a friend, promising to come back three months later to collect them. But the film editing went longer than expected, and Syson didn't return to China for six months.

"By the time I came back, everything had been lost," recalls Syson. "It was just gone. I went around trying to find out what happened to all of my belongings, but nobody knew. I couldn't find my friend either. He'd just disappeared. I was absolutely devastated."

Among her lost belongings were the original prints of her childhood and family photos.

"Our house in Norway burned down in a massive fire," says Syson. "And all of our family photos burned. Pretty much everything we owned went up in flames. And so therefore, obviously, these picture become more valuable than one could ever imagine."

Syson thought her precious photos were lost forever. But in the spring of 2011, China Radio International (CRI) contacted her to let her know that some of them had been found.

In 1999, Wang Weiguo, an actor with the National Theatre Company of China, found them at the Panjiayuan flea

market in Beijing. Wang said he was moving to a new home and shopping for picture frames.

"When I saw these photos for the first time, I knew they must have been lost by accident, because nobody would casually throw away photographs which record their lives," says Wang. "I thought the girl who lost them must be very worried. So I felt that I had to find her and return them to her."

For the past 12 years, Wang has been searching for the owner. He contacted the Beijing police to see if anyone had filed a report for lost photos, but that was a dead end. He showed the photos to every foreigner he knew in Beijing, but nobody recognized the woman in the photos. Wang even contacted other media outlets for help, but they told him that his search for the owner of these photos was pointless.

It wasn't until CRI posted the photographs on their English language website that the mystery was solved. Someone recognized Joanna Syson's mother, the late Julie Ege, in one of the photos. Ege was a famous Norwegian actress and model and former James Bond girl.

Joanna Syson flown from her current home in London, England to Beijing. She collected her long lost photographs and meet Wang Weiguo at a special ceremony at China Radio International in Beijing.

CRIENGLISH.com won the radio external broadcasts award of ABU prize 2011 for the story "The Girl In The Photos".



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中国国际广播电台  
CHINA RADIO INTERNATIONAL

Director-General: Wang Gengnian



Director: Yang Lei

The Messenger is free of charge. For extra copies, further information and sending in your contributions, please contact:

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