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Beijing flavor preserved

Like Shakespeare is to England, Goethe to Germany and Cervantes to Spain. The giant of 20th century Chinese literature is famous for using Beijing colloquialisms in his works and depicting the capital's customs and lifestyle.

To celebrate the late writer's 111th birthday, artists have adapted five of his short stories into a play. It is also an effort to preserve old Beijing, which has lost its traditional architecture and culture to rapid urbanization.

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Beijing private schools lack sufficient security



Additional police and armed guards work in shifts at public schools in Beijing.

IC Photos

By Chu Meng

Some private schools and foreign-run schools continue to have insufficient security measures even as the government has dispatched additional police and armed guards to monitor local kindergartens and primary schools in the wake of attacks against Chinese school children in the last two months, *Beijing Today* reporters discovered.

"No police officer stands guard at our gate every day like in local kindergartens ... There are police officers patrolling the streets all the time, but they seem to be monitoring street security," said Sun Jingyi, an employee at the registration office of Etonkids International Kindergarten's CBD campus. "But we've always had our own security guards."

"And we ask visitors for an ID, which is necessary for them to be able to enter the gate."

A *Beijing Today* inspection of 10 private kindergartens in the south revealed that Beijing Spring Garden, Ming Jia Garden and Ming Liu kindergartens and Hong Huang Lan Bilingual Kindergarten have no security guards. People can easily



Security guards hired by PSB wait for their orders.

enter their gates and approach the children in the playground.

International schools like the Cana-

dian International School of Beijing, The French School Beijing, the Japanese School of Beijing and the Korean International School in Beijing have not been included in the municipal government's enhanced security measures following the school attacks that have killed 17 and wounded 70: police officers posted at school gates.

Wu Heping, spokesman for the Public Security Bureau (PSB), admitted at a news conference last Friday that the police cannot protect every school. But he assured the public that security measures will be enhanced at all schools, including those in private migrant schools and remote villages.

Yang Xiaogang, an officer at the PSB's Fengtai substation, echoed the challenges Wu mentioned. "It is difficult to protect so many places. Besides officers from the bureau, we have also hired more than 2,000 professional security guards for about 500 kindergartens, primary and high schools in Beijing. Thousands more guards are needed for the remaining 4,500 kindergartens, primary schools and high schools, including private and foreign-run ones."

Draft law allows consumers 'right to regret'

By Zhang Dongya

The Law of China on the Protection of Consumers' Rights and Interests is being revised 16 years after it was enacted.

According to its second draft released last week, the law will add a provision allowing dissatisfied customers to be refunded for goods purchased at non-traditional outlets such as over the phone, by post and through door-to-door sales. Consumers can return the goods within 30 days from the date of receipt and cannot be charged by vendors for the cost of return shipping, except for items that cannot be resold.

Domestic media said the revisions allowed consumers the "right to regret." Online stores, however, reacted negatively to the draft law, saying it favored consumers while hurting sellers.

Guan Hui, an online book seller, said 30 days was enough time to finish a book. "How then can I make money if buyers return books they've finished?"

An online survey by Sina.com, one of the country's main news portals, revealed that 70 percent of respondents supported the revisions while 50 percent doubted they could be implemented.

Some said that since many products sold online are defective, they definitely cannot be resold and would thus require the buyer to pay for return shipping — a contradiction in the draft law.

Liu Junhai, vice president of the China Consumers' Association, said the "right to regret" is a concept that is already losing ground in Western countries. "US consumer laws allow a person three working days to cancel a sale, while in European countries it is seven days," he said.

Some brands on the mainland, especially foreign ones like H&M and Uniqlo, allow customers 30 days to return goods.

"Consumers are not as devils as some think," Sun Shu, a blogger, said. "If people get the product they order, most of them will not return it ... But more information needs to be added to say what kinds of goods and shops are covered. So far, online retailers look to suffer the most."

The first draft of the revised law containing a similar provision, released last year, also generated debate. It said the "right to regret" would be applied under the following four situations: online purchases, payment before a contract is signed, door-to-door sales and block big sales such as purchasing a car or house.

Revisions to the consumer law are expected to be completed next year. Beijing leaders are also planning to improve the legal system protecting consumers' rights by amending laws such as the Advertising Law and the Law Against Competition by Inappropriate Means.

Beijing Zoo restaurant offers wild-animal meat

By Chu Meng

For 500 yuan, visitors to the Beijing Zoo's Bin Feng Tang restaurant can get a wild-animal set lunch including ostrich meat, hippo feet, crocodile tail and antelope soup.

The meal, which has versions from 100 to 1,000 yuan, need to be ordered two days in advance to guarantee supply, a waitress at the restaurant said, adding: "It's better to have at least six people at the table, otherwise it would be too wasteful."

The Beijing Museum of Natural History, which works closely with the zoo, confirmed the serving of wild-animal meat at the restaurant. "It was opened by the zoo in 2004 and their business is good," Han Mengyan, a staff with the museum's specimen depart-

ment, said.

He said in 2008 the restaurant began offering in 2008 more than 20 types of wild-animal dishes, including kangaroo and peacock meat.

The Beijing Forestry Bureau granted Bin Feng Tang a license to serve wild-animal meat. "Their animal meat come from legal breeding centers and pass quality inspection before sale. No truly wild animals were killed for their meat," said Liu Ying, an officer from the parks administration's public relations office. She said her office monitors all restaurants inside the capital's public parks.

Some zoo visitors, however, continue to have misgivings.

"I will never let my kid have wild animal

meat, especially inside a zoo. Isn't it a place for parents to teach children to love animals? Eating wild-animal meat in a zoo is like burning books in a library," said Zhao Lei, mother of a 3-year-old boy.

A netizen named Brendon praised the restaurant's classical architecture and lovely garden, but said "the food here, I mean, wild-animal meat on the menu, is too odd for me."

Zheng Yu, an officer from the animal protection center of the Beijing Museum of Natural History, said the Beijing Zoo is sending a contradictory message with the restaurant. "The crucial thing is not whether the animals are specially bred or not for their meat. It is that the zoo should set an example of animal protection."

Doing business in China? Learn the culture first

By Han Manman

Amid the recent global economic downturn, an increasing number of Western multinationals are turning their attention to China, where the population is massive and growth is certain.

A handful of companies from developed markets have had success in China, but many more have failed because they simply imported their US or European business model without carefully considering the situation in China.

The companies are left asking themselves, "How do we achieve growth and what are our biggest challenges?" There's a big pie, but eating it isn't a very easy thing to do. If we can get metaphorical for a moment – instead of with forks, perhaps a different set of utensils might make the difference.

More and more, foreign companies doing business in China are beginning to realize the importance of listening to the locals and understanding the complex fabric in this land of opportunity. Beyond the economic disparities between the West and China, there are political, cultural and societal differences that must be understood before profit can be achieved.

Listening to the local voice

In late April, a group of company executives from Colgate-Palmolive, Corning, John Deere and Rolls-Royce went to Shanghai for a 10-day workshop, part of the Global Leadership 2020 Consortium, offered by Tuck Executive Education at Dartmouth College (TEEDC). The workshop aimed to help participants understand the many dimensions of China.

"Our clients tell us that success in China is an imperative. Even though these companies all have some business in China, the executives are focused on developing a long-term strategy in this market," said Clark Callahan, executive director of TEEDC, adding that the executives wish to learn more about the country, not just from a business point of view but also from a cultural perspective.

During their 10-day journey of discovery, the executives spoke with local business leaders and politicians about the intricacies and customs of doing business in the region. They also ventured out to experience the local cultures and speak directly with farmers and business owners from small villages outside the city. The rural village environment is quite different from the business environment in Beijing or Shanghai, so exposure to both is essential.

"That is how to fully embody the 'global mindset,'" Callahan said. "Through talking with the locals, executives gained a deeper understanding of the people, the culture and their needs. Adapting to the culture through immersion is the best way to learn."

Like Tuck, many other top business schools have launched programs that incorporate Chinese cultural lessons. Executives from developed nations are starting to realize that cultural immersion could be the key to success in the Chinese market, and so demand for such programs is rapidly increasing.

A big cake but hard to eat

With the rapid growth of China's economy, more and more international com-



Some Western companies send their staff to take part in traditional Chinese dragon boat races as a way of understanding local culture.

panies are rushing to establish businesses on the mainland, viewing its 1.3 billion people as a potential bonanza. Even in this economically gloomy period, they feel optimistic about the opportunities in this country.

According to a survey by the American Chamber of Commerce last month, China is a highly desirable destination for investment and a major global priority for US companies.

More than 90 percent of the surveyed companies said they were optimistic about their outlook for the next five years in China. Nearly 80 percent said their company will expand investment in China this year, and more than 50 percent indicated that investment growth would exceed 10 percent.

If someone goes to China but doesn't want to immerse himself in the culture and learn the life here, he probably will not be suitable to try a business here and also won't be successful in the China market. You need to learn from the place you are in in order to benefit from it.

Edward Tse, chairman of global management consultants Booz & Co. in China, also said even though many foreign companies express concerns about the regulatory environment and issues such as government procurement and innovation, they now have little choice but to enter China since it is emerging as the key market of the 21st century.

"For most foreign companies, it is not about whether to enter China, but having the right China strategy," Tse said, adding that he has witnessed many wrong China strategies made by foreign executives due to lack of understanding of the country's cultural background.

Bertelsmann AG is one of those cases in failure. The German media giant closed all of its branded retail bookstores in China two years ago due to big financial losses. While it claimed the main reason for its withdrawal was the growth in online book sales and increasing competition from local companies, some insiders said the company's unfamiliarity with Chinese culture and Chinese customers' purchasing habits were the true culprits of its demise.

"China is a big cake, but not easy to eat," said Wu Changqi, professor of strategic management at Peking University's Guanghua School of Management. "The Chinese



Understanding the specialties of the Chinese market is very important for company decision-makers.

market has never been an easy market for multinationals. Companies that have come to China have always needed to do a lot of homework and preparation."

Learn from market's diversity

So how does one make it easier to do business in China? Callahan said the most important thing is the desire to know the country and learn from it.

He said some Western executives he's met complained that they were struggling despite having an interest in the country and a genuine desire to do business here. They were struggling because of things like food and transportation, Callahan said.

He said when he told a successful American businessman in Shanghai about these complaints, the man's reply was, "My experience is: if someone goes to China but doesn't want to immerse himself in the culture and learn the life here, he probably will not be suited to trying a business here and also won't be successful in the China market. You need to learn from the place you are in in order to benefit from it."

Understanding the specialties of the China market is also very important,

Tse said.

He said since the market is unique and very complicated, international companies cannot recycle old business strategies, even if they were well-received elsewhere.

"They need to have a deep understanding of Chinese culture before making decisions," Tse said, adding that understanding relates to not just China's business culture but also its social background, history and people.

The reason Buick, often considered a grandpa's car in the US, became hugely successful in China was because executives familiarized themselves with Chinese culture and the psychology of Chinese customers, Tse said.

Most companies that do well in China have their own understanding of the country's culture. Li Yuantai, president of the China branch of the South Korea-based tire giant Kumho, said the diversity of the culture here is one of the big lessons that must be learned. China is a fragmented market, and each place has its own unique cultural background.

"Your experience in doing business in Beijing would be vastly different from that of doing business in Shanghai or Shenyang," said Li, an ethnic South Korean. "It would be useless to generalize by using the phrase 'Chinese business culture.'"

He said after doing business with Beijing companies for years, he has become very familiar with their culture of drinking during business negotiations. However, when he drinks while doing business in Shanghai, the effect is the complete opposite: Shanghai's businessmen feel uncomfortable.

Through more than 10 years of experience in China, Li is able to summarize some principles for doing business with Chinese companies from different areas. Beijingers, for instance, have a little bit of bravado and pay more attention to *guanxi*, or the importance of personal relationships; Shanghai businessmen are cautious and sensitive; Guangdong businessmen pay more attention to contracts than businessmen from anywhere else.

"China is an important place to understand. If you don't innovate in this emerging market, someone else will," Callahan said.

Growing pains of twentysomething Mr. Nurses



By Li Zhixin

Last Wednesday was the 98th International Nurse Day, but many male nurses were not too excited to celebrate this anniversary — because there aren't that many male nurses to celebrate.

According to statistics from the Ministry of Health, there are 2.18 million registered nurses in China, and among them, only 20,000 are male.

Nursing is still an emerging profession in the country, and those born in the 1980s are the torchbearers at the head of the pack.

Popular in the hospital

Sun Yangguang, a 22-year-old man, spent his first International Nurse Day in Tiantan Hospital as busy as usual.

He has been an intern in the hospital for almost a year and will become a full-time employee after graduation from Capital University of Medical Sciences (CUMS) this July.

Three years ago, he chose to major in nursing merely because he thought it would be easy to find a job after graduation. "Eighty percent of college boys in the nursing department were transferred in from other majors because they failed to achieve an adequate admission score," Sun said. There are 150 students in his department, and among them, only 28 are guys.

Despite the worsening overall employment prospects for Chinese college graduates, almost all the male graduates with Sun's major are employed at leading hospitals. "Compared with graduates of other medical subjects, we are lucky dogs for getting offers from hospitals; you can't imagine how hard it is for a medical student to get an offer to be a doctor in a hospital," Sun said. "It takes them at least 10 years of clinical practice in addition to getting a PhD."

"We guys are very popular in the nursing department," he said. "The hospital officials and doctors usually give us special attention because they take us as a disadvantaged group. It's probably because the number of male nurses is so tiny. But

as the proverb says, the rarer a thing, the more it is precious."

Five years ago, there was only one male nurse in Tiantan Hospital. Now, there are more than 20, according to Wang Caiyun, head of the nursing department.

It is the same story in many other hospitals. "Some important departments like the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), the Emergency Room and surgery department give priority to male candidates," said Wu Xinjuan, head of the nursing department at Xiehe Hospital. "Departments that get male nurses always feel lucky, given that they are so scarce in this country."

Sun has rotated between each department in the hospital during his internship. He loves his job, though he thinks it is more suited to women. "The nursing department has been a place for women, but the participation of guys makes the atmosphere of the place sprightlier," he said.

But what hospital officials and doctors value are male nurses' physical advantages. "For example, when it comes to lifting or helping move patients, male nurses are always more handy than females," said Wei Jingyun, deputy secretary of the CUMS Nursing School. "Male nurses can handle emergency situations more calmly and be of great assistance fixing medical equipment, making them especially popular in ICUs, operating rooms, psychiatry wards and emergency departments."

Frequent embarrassment

Although many love the profession, young male nurses often encounter embarrassing situations.

Shi Cheng, 22, who also works at Tiantan Hospital, said it makes him uncomfortable when new patients mistake him as a doctor. "There is no uniform for our male nurse, so we dress in doctor's overalls," he said. "But I dislike it when people call me doctor because the title falls short of reality."

Meanwhile, Sun dislikes it when people call him a male nurse. "I sup-

pose it's because 'nurse' is a much feminized title," he said. "I'd rather people call me a hospital worker."

And then there are the things they deal with from female patients.

Zhao Xiaokai, 25, who works at Beijing Cancer Hospital, has been denied dozens of times from giving injections by female patients. "Some women are extremely rude, which makes me strongly upset," he said.

He said once a female patient

even lodged a complaint against him by claiming his attitude was bad just because his masculine voice was harsh. "I prefer to work in a department where there are fewer female patients," he said.

In the gynecology department, challenges emerge constantly. "Most female patients are unwilling to let male nurses do the examinations," Sun said. "They just excuse themselves to the ladies room and ask the head nurse for a female nurse."

Brain drain is serious

Sun said nursing is really challenging; it is not simply about patient care or taking orders from doctors. "The job strengthens my communication skills and professional techniques necessary for taking care of patients," he said.

He said he is happiest about his work when it gets appreciated by patients. "A simple word of encouragement like, 'You have done a great job, or, 'You are even more brilliant than female nurses, will give us much motivation,'" he said.

However, like other male nurses,

Sun is not about to work as a nurse for a long time. "After all, it can't be my lifelong career," he said. "As a man, I am under pressure to support my family, but this current job can't make me realize my wish because our salary is too low."

Sun said the income of male nurses in large cities like Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou is about 3,000 to 4,000 yuan per month, while it is only about 1,000 yuan in many mid-sized and small cities.

What's worse, the profession even affects some guys' personal life.

Ma Hui, a 26-year-old man in Shandong Province, has been working for a county hospital for more than three years. He has been frustrated in his search for girlfriends simply because of this career. "Local people hold prejudices against my job," he said. "They always think nursing is low-end and a feminine job."

He has been introduced to girls several times, but once they find out he is a nurse, they won't talk to him anymore. "So I am planning to go into business after quitting the job this year," he said.

According to a poll by bbs.malenurse.cn, 86 percent of male nurses are now unemployed and considering a career change. "Although the supply still falls short of hospital demand, male nurses tend to change jobs after two to three years of working in hospitals," said Cheng Gen, deputy director of the nursing department at Beijing Anding Hospital. He was among only two of seven male graduates from his school who is still working as a nurse. "Pharmaceutical sales representative is the position they usually tend to seek."



Male nurses are as careful as female nurses.

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BEIJING TODAY

When markets turn bearish...

Domestic investors explore new ways of making easy money

As the property market cools and the stock market turns bearish, domestic investors are hunting for new ways to make easy money. Garlic, which beat gold last year as the new hot asset, is the target, while gold prices hit a record high among investors seeking a safe haven. Traditional Chinese medicines are also catching investors' attention.

Garlic craze is back

Garlic was priced at 13.5 yuan (\$1.98) per kilogram on Wednesday in a supermarket in Chaoyang District, more than 1 yuan for each bulb.

Speculators have been trading garlic for profit, resulting in sudden price hikes since the end of last year, said a veteran garlic dealer using the alias Qin Bin.

"I've never seen such drastic price hikes in my 20 years of experience in the business," Qin said.

The National Bureau of Statistics said last Tuesday that the wholesale price of garlic skyrocketed more than tenfold from a year earlier to about 12.2 yuan per kilogram at the end of April, while average vegetable prices in April surged about 25 percent from a year ago.

As the property market cools, the vegetable market has been heating up, said Dai Zhongjiu, director of the Beijing-based China Vegetable Circulation Association.

"Speculating on property? No, speculating on garlic promises more and quicker profits," a speculator who gave his name as Zhang Ling told Guangzhou's *Southern Metropolis Daily*.

Zhang has earned 2 million yuan since the end of last year, using 500,000 yuan of seed money.

He said most of his friends wanted to invest in garlic with the money they had prepared for the property market, as their enthusiasm for buying houses has been dampened by the government's latest real-estate policies.

The country has taken a series of measures in recent weeks to rein in soaring property prices. The authorities have issued regulations on advance sales of new property developments, introduced new curbs on loans for third home purchases and raised minimum down payments for second homes.

Agro-product speculation

Besides garlic, the prices of other agricultural products have increased greatly in the past several months.

The price of beans in Guangzhou climbed to 26 to 30 yuan a kilogram, from 8 to 10 yuan, while garlic hit 20 yuan a kilogram, the Guangzhou Price Bureau said on May 12.

Prices of 48 vegetables rose in Guangzhou, and out of 77 vegetables whose prices are tracked, prices of 15 of those more than doubled.

Garlic speculation has created many riches in Jinxiang County, the well-known garlic growing area in Shandong Province.

"Many bought their own cars recently - one day I found about 40 new cars in our county," said a Jinxiang county official. "Sales people show respect to buyers from Jinxiang, as they pay in cash."

Most of the cars cost 100,000 to 200,000 yuan.

Beijing investors are switching to produce as the stock market gets bearish and real estate faces policy regulations, said Wen Feng, an analyst at Beijing Orient Agribusiness Consultant.

"Produce is overtaking property as the best way to make money."

Wenzhou investors turn to gold

Many Wenzhou residents who used to be keen on investing in real estate nationwide have now looked to gold as a new channel to absorb their cash.

"One of my Wenzhou townsmen bought



As the property market cools, the vegetable market is heating up.

IC Photo

gold worth 14 million yuan the other day," said Tao Xingyi, president of Jinding Group, which focuses on gold investment consultancy and high-end gold trading.

Tao was born in Zhejiang Province's Wenzhou, which is famous for entrepreneurship.

Tao said the number of customers who came to his company to inquire about gold investment jumped three to four times recently.

He said Wenzhou investors came in groups, with at least four to five persons in a group.

Among these, within just one month, three groups came to buy gold. Each took away gold worth more than 10 million yuan.

Returns on investment in the stock market and the real-estate market are not as high as gold, as gold is a special investment channel and an internationally accepted currency that can be used to hedge credit and inflation risks, Wen said.

Wen estimated that if the government continues to curb the property market and the stock markets stay bearish, more money will flow into the gold market.

It is hard to calculate how much of Wenzhou's capital has left the property market in favor of the gold market, but the proportion is quite small, Wen said.

Gold prices are high, so not many investors will buy in, he said.

Investing in Chinese medicine,

Traditional Chinese Medicines (TCM) have also been picked by speculators, and their prices have been increasing since May.

"In the past 10 days, all kinds of Chinese herbal medicines have seen an increase in prices," said a medicine dealer surnamed Jiang in Xiamen, Fujian Province.

Prices of some herbs, like campanulaceae and notopterygium, have more than doubled since the end of last year, Jiang was quoted by local media as saying.

Jiang has just returned from an herbs trading center in Bozhou, Anhui Province, and said he found many new buyers. Jiang said he believed them to be those who have exited from the property or stock markets.

Jiang said there were some buyers from Wenzhou. He hinted that Wenzhou people are always sensitive to the market.

Some insiders considered the steep price hikes to be rare. Analysts estimated that increase in demand for TCMs, coupled with low supply, makes TCM a new channel for investment.

The output of TCMs has been negatively influenced by low prices in previous years and bad weather conditions that make it hard for TCMs to grow, Wen said.

(Beijing Today/Agencies)

Capital starts car rental service at subway station

By Huang Daohen

China Auto Rental announced Tuesday that along with the Beijing subway authority, it will begin providing car rental services at the city's main subway stations later this month.

The subway stations Shuangjing, Sihui, Tiantongyuan, Bagou and Dazhongshi will have car rental branches, said Lu Zhengyao, president and founder of China Auto Rental.

The rental process is simple, requiring only an ID card, driver's license and credit card, according to the company. The price will vary depending on car models. Renting the equivalent of a taxi will cost 200 yuan per day.

Lu said he was optimistic about the country's car rental business, and the cooperation with Beijing subway was the company's first move to set up a national network.

Established in Beijing in 2007, the company now has 4,000 cars and more than 200 service branches across the country.

Industry experts agreed with Lu. As foreign companies increasingly flock to China, attracted by the world's most promising economy, the demand of rental cars is bound to soar, said Wen Yijun, analyst with Oriental Securities, which specializes in the auto industry.

"Considering the cost of management, foreign companies are willing to rent cars rather than buy cars," Wen said.

Besides, the country's rapidly expanding economy and the relatively low level of vehicle ownership per capita also mean a prosperous market for car rental firms, Wen said.

Statistics from the Beijing municipal government show there are about 240 state-owned or private car rental companies that own more than 20,000 cars in the city.

Across the country, there are more than 3,000 companies with a fleet of nearly 100,000 cars, with operating revenues approaching 10 billion yuan.

Wen said by 2015, that revenue might reach 180 billion yuan.

But he said there are still many obstacles in the way of the industry's growth.

One hurdle for rental firms is the low-cost taxi service, Wen said. Like most developing countries, taxi fares in China are low, just 10 yuan for the first 3 kilometers in Beijing.

Rental firms also face threats from unlicensed taxis. Partial statistics say that there might be as many as 60,000 illegal taxis in Beijing, roughly the same as the number of licensed cabs.

Besides, the competition is also growing as more international car rental companies target the Chinese market, Wen said.

Some of the world's largest car rental companies, such as Hertz and Avis, have already started business in China.

"Compared with foreign car rental companies that have worldwide operation, domestic firms usually lag behind, and their services have yet to be improved," Wen said.

Record-high applications for high school prodigy class

By Zhao Hongyi

At least 1,700 pupils took the entrance exams Monday to qualify for Beijing No. 8 Middle School's "prodigy class." There were 500 more applicants than last year, a record high in the class's 25-year history.

The school will select 200 of the 10-year-olds to take the second round of exams, of whom 60 will be chosen to join a week of trial lessons to see if they can adapt to the special teaching methods. Only 30 will actually get into the program that begins in early September. After six months' probation, those who cannot make the grade will be transferred to regular classes.

Students in the prodigy class graduate high school four years earlier than their peers, or complete in four years eight years' worth of education: two years of elementary school, three years of middle school and three years of senior high school. Then they are on to the national college entrance examinations (*gaokao*), and if successful, university at the age of 14.

Last year, 10 of the 24 class members who took the college entrance exams were accepted by either Peking University or Tsinghua University. The rest made it into top universities as well.

"Parents today pay more attention to the education of their kids," Tai Feng, principal of Beijing No. 8 Middle School, said. "To finish within four years classes worth eight years is a worthy effort!"

But there have been criticism that the program emphasizes academics to the detriment of children's normal psychological growth. The school denies this, saying it understands very well the significance of holistic development.



More than 1,700 pupils around 10 years old took the entrance examination for the prodigy class.

CFP Photo

"We care about children's psychological issues," Zhao Daheng, director of the prodigy class, said. "Many parents send their children to apply at the age of 6. We decline them since we assess both their study and life skills. To those who make it, we offer preparatory courses and guidance services."

The school has been receiving more and more applications from students in other provinces, including Guangdong and Sichuan. After assessing the non-Beijing students' compatibility with the curriculum and their accommodation needs, the school declined their applications.

Comment

Concerned with children's psychological health

In 1978, the University of Science and Technology of China established the first "genius class" for children. Afterwards, 12 universities followed suit. But the students experienced various problems – academic and psychological – and large numbers dropped out of the programs each year. The 12 universities have since abolished the classes.

Only a small number of "genius students" actually finish the program on time. Most have to return to the normal class if they cannot pass the college entrance examinations. Shouldn't we put more

emphasis on children's psychological health?

– Wang Chuantao,
middle-school teacher

Child's decision to join or not

Whether the program is beneficial or a drawback, parents should discuss with their children the implication of joining it and try to prepare them for the challenges. In the end, it should be the child's decision to take or not the qualifying exams for the prodigy class; parents should not force their children to take the exams.

In addition, the prodigy class should train the children holistically, not simply turn them into robots that

will ace the national college entrance exams.

– Anita Jorgensteld,
foreign student in Beijing

Opportunity to learn

victory and failure

I don't have any objections to the program as long as it is run well. We cannot deny genius exists in every society, and it's an interesting process to determine who these people are. Children who make it into this elite circle should use the opportunity to truly know themselves and also prepare for failure. After all, life is a series of victories and failures.

– Anders Hejlsberg,
Swedish expat in Beijing

Hepatitis B carriers city-hop to organize dinners

By Zhang Dongya

A woman with hepatitis B has spent the last two months dining with urbanites across the country in a campaign to educate the public that the disease cannot be transmitted through regular everyday activities. Her dinner stops have included Shanghai, Guangzhou, Suzhou, Nanjing and Wuhan – where she said she "successfully treated 14 people."

The 32-year-old, who calls herself "Chucao" (hoeing weeds), is an overseas returnee who dis-

covered she had hepatitis B, or HBV, during a pre-high school physical examination.

Her family panicked when they learned of the disease and tried everything to cure her – while keeping her HBV a secret.

When she failed the national college entrance examinations (*gaokao*), Chucao decided to attend college in Japan, where hepatitis B does not carry the same stigma it does in China. The disease is caused by a virus that persists in the blood and is transmitted

by sexual contact, blood transfusion and ingestion of contaminated blood or other bodily fluids.

Chucao returned to China in March and teamed up with other HBV carriers to publicize scientific knowledge about the disease. The group has traveled to 11 cities and organized activities like dinners with non-infected people.

Chucao often takes the job of carrying around commercial centers a big poster reading, "Would you like to have dinner with Chucao – a HBV carrier?"

In Suzhou and Nanjing, only one person agreed to dine with them. Fortunately, they found four in Shanghai and eight in Guangzhou. But one attendee in Guangzhou did not eat. "He just had some tea," Chucao said.

In Wuhan, 14 signed up, including Zhang Xiangsheng, a doctor of traditional Chinese medicine. Zhang, 67, emphasized that healthy people who have dinner with HBV carriers are in no danger of getting infected with the virus since transmission does

not occur through routine contact. Zhang said he had dinner for more than 10 years with a colleague with HBV without suffering any adverse effects.

Chucao's group used disposable plates and utensils even in restaurants. During the course of the meal, some of the attendees opened up about having HBV themselves.

"It is getting better, which shows our activities and effort work," Chucao told Wuhan's *Chutian Metropolis Daily*.

Comment

Self-preservation is main concern

Despite knowing I won't get infected, I'm still a bit scared to dine with people who have HBV. I think it's an automatic mental reaction related to self-preservation and not bias.

– Chris Chen, playwright

Raising awareness a brave move

The woman is very brave to create greater awareness for a disease that is so common yet not often discussed. I think she and her fellow carriers are brave to put themselves in the spotlight

even though some people discriminate against them.

I don't mind dining with people with AIDS or hepatitis B. I might get a bit nervous because I've never had a close friend with the disease, but I trust science, which tells me I'll be safe.

– Thomas,
American living in Beijing

More government action needed

HBV carriers are still stigmatized in Chinese society. The government should do more to publicize scientific knowledge about diseases such as

HBV and AIDS to battle discrimination against carriers. Regulations are also needed in relation to schools and companies who refuse to enroll or hire carriers.

– Edward Wang,
employee of a
state-owned company

American kung fu master wins reputation in China

By Han Manman

"Kick me, speed up! Good! Kick me again!"

The booming Western voice resounding in a Jeet Kune Do gym in the city of Changsha belongs to a white-skinned man with many moles, Mike Rutter, a second-generation apprentice of Bruce Lee and current vice president for the China Jeet Kune Do (JKD) International Federation.

Rutter was invited to China last month for a six-week JKD training camp as part of activities to commemorate Bruce Lee's 70th birthday. The students at the camp are coaches from different JKD gyms in Hunan and Shandong provinces.

Known among friends as "the world's oldest teenager," the 51-year-old Rutter is popular among Chinese students who always refer to him by his Chinese name "Lu Yu Long."

"He is so energetic and willing to offer all the knowledge he has about JKD," said a student surnamed Zeng.

Rutter said that JKG, a style of martial arts created by Lee, is a mixture of principles of early boxing and European fencing, with some Western grappling applied to kung fu. And a JKD artist should be proficient at punching and striking, kicking, evading, trapping an opponent's hands, takedowns, throws and grappling on the ground.

Rutter took an interest in Chinese martial arts at an early age, at a time when he was always getting bullied at school. After watching Kato Lee's first public role in the TV serial *The Green Hornet* and James Bond movies at the theater, the little boy developed a dream to become a Kato- or Bond-like hero. Then he would no longer fear bullies.

At that time, kung fu was not well known in the US, and there were few places one could learn it. As a result, Rutter, when he was 12 years old, chose to take judo lessons.

Two years later, after watching *Enter the Dragon*, Lee's last completed film, Rutter realized that he would do martial



Mike Rutter, a second-generation apprentice of Bruce Lee

Photo provided by Mike Rutter

arts for life.

Over the next two or three years, as the world mourned the death of Lee, interest in martial arts and Asian culture spread rapidly, especially in the US.

"No one can measure the impact Bruce Lee had on the world. I believe it is immense, at least for me," Rutter said. "I collected all the Bruce Lee books I could and really wanted to learn his art, but there were still no instructors in my hometown in Minnesota."

Years passed, but Rutter never gave up the dream of learning JKD. His chance finally came in 1993, when he participated in a JKD workshop where he met Ted Wong, Lee's favorite student and the master's closest friend.

"The first thing Ted Wong did was, in front of everyone else, point to me and challenge me to punch him," Rutter said. "I could not, even though he was easily moving in and tagging me. Suddenly, I knew I had found a mentor, a *shifu* who could teach me what I needed to learn."

To get Wong to accept him as an apprentice, Rutter drove long distances to Wong's seminars in different parts of the US.

It was expensive to travel, but Rutter said his wife, Gail, was very understanding. Rutter's sincerity eventually moved Wong to accept him as an apprentice.

"I was focusing on learning Jeet Kune Do after that, not developing a career," Rutter said. "Gail was holding down the fort with a steady job, much like Linda Lee did for her husband at times." In 2000, Rutter was fully certified by Wong as a JKD instructor.

Besides the instructional work, Rutter is currently working on a book about JKD training drills, which may be published in China soon. He is also preparing to write his fourth novel, a romance-adventure featuring martial arts.

"I'm also considering doing some movie work, either choreography or in front of the camera," Rutter said. "I believe I would make a great bad guy for a Chinese martial arts film."



Eivind Aadland, chief conductor of Trondheim Symphony Orchestra

Photo by Zhang Yu

Norwegian symphony conductor to 'breathe' with music in Beijing

By Chu Meng

Eivind Aadland, described as "a conductor breathing with the music and his players," is touring China with the Norway-based Trondheim Symphony Orchestra (TSO). He arrived Wednesday and will conduct TSO's Symphony and Choir at the Beijing Century Theater tonight.

"In an increasingly international society, the exchange of cultural values is very important," said Aadland, TSO's chief conductor and artistic director. "I

love frequently touring different countries with different cultural interpretations of music."

Nearly 20 years ago, when Aadland was music director of the European Union Chamber Orchestra, he performed in the Great Hall of the People. "I have wonderful memories from this concert," he said. "And I am very much looking forward to performing in China again."

He also has extensive experience working with several Chinese musicians

in Europe over the past 10 years. "Chinese musicians have been more and more remarkable on European stages these years," he said. "They not only have the ability to derive rich nourishment from the European art field, but they also can preserve the Oriental artistic tradition. They are the strength of future symphony development."

Eivind is 54 years old but looks much younger, like someone in his early-40s. He regularly does outdoor activities and keeps

a young spirit. When he is not working, he loves to go jogging in the summer and skiing in the winter.

Music is a very big part of his life, but he is also a passionate collector of contemporary art. "In my art collection, I have a wonderful work by the Chinese artist Qiu Anxiang," he said proudly.

Recently, he tried his hand at conducting an opera. One of his favorite operas is Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*. "But there is quite a long way for me to go," he said.

Innovations workshop marks 60 years of bilateral ties

By Liang Meilan

Sweden and China celebrated six decades of diplomatic relations this month with a series of events, including the launch of Sweden's first official website for Chinese users, an innovation workshop and a technology exhibition.

First among websites

Sweden was the first Western country to establish diplomatic ties with the People's Republic, so it is fitting that it also be the first to launch a website specifically designed for Chinese users.

Sweden.cn was unveiled May 15 at D Lounge club in Sanlitun by Swedish Ambassador Mikael Lindstrom and Stefan Geens, the site designer and chief creative director of the Shanghai Expo's Sweden Pavilion.

"There is much information on various countries in Chinese on the Internet. But this is the first time that someone has made the site in China, made it the way Chinese people want and put it on a Chinese server," Lindstrom said.

Like consumer products such as soft drinks and computers, a country should also have a website to showcase its "brand value," Geens said. "Only through daily updated information online can we let others know the country more intimately... Chinese people have a positive image of Sweden, but they don't know much about the country, therefore the website is really needed."

The site allows netizens to listen to popular Swedish music; find information about study, work, business and travel in the Scandinavian country; learn about the country's famed designers, fashion icons, athletes, inventions and even recipes. The articles are original Chinese pieces and not merely translations of English or Swedish, Geens said.

He said users can "collect" their favorite parts of Sweden.cn and share them on Chinese social-networking sites like Douban, Kaixin001 and Renren. He said



A workshop participant introduces the multifunctional hook she designed.

Photo by Jeffrey Lan



Energy - Measuring Clock Photo provided by Interactive Institute

the site is independent of the Swedish Embassy's own website.

Race to Innovation

The celebration of bilateral ties also included the annual

workshop 72-Hour Race to Innovation, which teaches participants how to transform ideas into products and get them into the market within 72 hours.

The model was developed by Professor Kaj Mikos based on the idea that innovations are indispensable to staying competitive in the global market and that speed is a key factor. This year's theme was "Improving Daily Life."

Ten Swedish and Chinese participants - with diverse backgrounds, including sports, the arts, academia, media and business - were divided into two groups and tasked to come up with new product ideas within three days.

The exercise resulted in the birth of more than a hundred ideas on May 19, the workshop's closing day. Sixteen were approved for patenting.

Six of the most promising products were presented by their designers to the media: a USB wire holder, a mall-map positioning application for smart phones, a double-layer glass window sheet, a genetically

modified food tester, an anti-spill cover for containers and a multifunctional hook.

"It is even more amazing that these came from teams whose members were strangers at the start of the workshop," Mikos said. "Now they will work together for the rest of their lives toward a common goal."

Visual Voltage exhibition

The China Science and Technology Museum is showcasing until Sunday groundbreaking Swedish inventions in *Visual Voltage*, an environmental initiative and the product of years of interdisciplinary research at Sweden's Interactive Institute.

The exhibition, which opened April 9, shows that climate-change issues are not only a concern of politicians and environmentalists but also of contemporary visual artists and designers. The items on display include many for everyday use: an energy-measuring clock, a laundry lamp and an energy curtain.

The most popular is probably the energy clock designed by Looove Broms and his partners. "The stylish clock does not tell you what time it is but alerts you to how much energy your home is using," a museum guide said. "The clock operates on a 24-hour cycle to measure energy use. The larger the pattern on the face, the more energy you are consuming."

Magnus Jonsson, project manager of the Interactive Institute, said the exhibition "enables visitors to explore various forms of energy and reflect on energy consumption in everyday life." He said some 50,000 people worldwide have already seen the exhibition or participated in related workshops.

The Interactive Institute, located in the city of Kista, is a Swedish experimental-media research institute that combines expertise in art, design and technology to conduct applied research and innovation, its site says.

Monkey King drawings by Czech artist published

By Li Zhixin

A new chapter in the history of Chinese-Czech cultural exchanges was written May 11 with the launch of a picture book on the Monkey King by the late Czech painter Zdenek Sklenar. The illustrations of one of China's most popular literary characters were brought to the country by Sklenar's nephew and the Czech Embassy.

Sklenar, born in 1910, visited China in 1955 and fell in love with the landscape and culture. "My uncle drew strong inspiration from Chinese landscape-painting traditions. After his return from China, these elements began to appear repeatedly in his paintings," said the artist's nephew and



Czech and Chinese Monkey Kings meet in Beijing.

Photo provided by Zhou Jing

namesake, more popularly known as Sklenar Junior.

"His interest in Chinese culture evolved into a deep, lifelong passion and provided an ever-

present inspiration for his own creative output," he said. These included illustrations of the Monkey King, hero of the classic novel *Journey to the West* by Wu

Cheng'en (1500-1582).

Generations and generations of Chinese people grew up on tales of the clever and upright monkey, and the character has been adapted into various art forms including animation, Peking Opera and TV dramas. "For the Czechs, the only way they got to know the Monkey King was through my uncle's paintings," Sklenar Junior said.

He said it was his uncle's fervent wish to have his Monkey King illustrations shared with the Chinese people. "Now my uncle's connection with China is revived more than 20 years after his death," he said.

Libor Secka, the Czech ambassador, praised Sklenar's contri-

butions to Sino-Czech cultural ties, saying: "Sklenar's illustrations are a vivid example of links between European and Chinese cultural traditions... His Monkey King returning to China is a reminder of the exceptional, exciting, open and artistically precious connection between the cultures and societies of China and the Czech Republic."

The picture book's launch was held in Beihai Park, one of the places the late painter frequented to gain artistic inspiration.

Illustrations of Sklenar's Monkey King are on display at the ongoing World Expo in Shanghai and has been a hit with Chinese visitors.

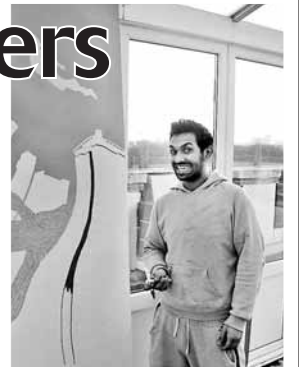
British, Chinese volunteers exchange communities

By *Chu Meng*

The UK-based Volunteer Service Overseas (VSO) and the Volunteers of China Association of Social Workers' Community last month launched a three-year volunteer exchange program to promote communication, understanding and long-term ties between volunteers in China and Britain.

One of their first projects was bringing to Beijing 15 VSO members to work with local communities for three weeks. The British volunteers were joined by 15 Chinese counterparts who had just finished their own three weeks of work in London.

"Britain has a well-developed community-service structure backed up by decades of experience. Community service on the resumé of a British university graduate is as important as an award from the Mathematics Olympiad is in China," said Chen Kui, the program's director. "Through the program, we want more Chinese people to learn what community service is about and for more young people to get involved."



Tony Machenzie, a British volunteer, displays his painting. Photo by Hu Jian



British volunteers are learning to keep order of passengers at a bus station on Chang'an Avenue. CFP/Photo

Beijing community service

Caroline Pitchaim, 26, a primary school teacher and one of the British participants, called her Beijing trip a "life-changing experience."

Pitchaim's school granted her a 19-month sabbatical when she decided to join VSO's China program. She brought her expertise in continuing professional development to the teachers at Beijing Chunlei Migrant Children School in Haidian District. There she worked with primary-school English teachers who in turn oversaw the professional development of teachers in up to 18 migrant schools in the capital.

Pitchaim's role involved designing and facilitating training sessions for the teachers. The topics she discussed included setting up an English section in school libraries, conducting English workshops, developing effective management styles and responding to the needs of special education students.

Through her help, the school produced a new curriculum that aims to make teaching methods more student-centered. "There was a strong emphasis on participatory methods and for some teachers this was a real change, as 'chalk and talk' was the only method they had ever experienced in English classes," Pitchaim said.

Another British participant was 24-year-old Simon Brown, who had eight years of volunteer

experience in East London. His post in Beijing was for adviser at a newly opened center for disabled residents in Jianguo community, Chaoyang District. "My work included teaching residents basic nursing skills for their disabled neighbors and giving psychological support to patients, like reading to them and taking them on short tours," he said.

Brown said the experience showed him the contrast between community work in Beijing and London. In Britain, Brown said such community centers are usually run by non-government organizations, and half of their workers are volunteers like students and residents. "But in China, the responsibilities of a community-level NGO are shouldered by the local government ... This is good intervention from government leaders, but they lack volunteers who should take responsibility in serving their neighbors."

Direction of community service in China

Community service in the UK has a history of about half a century. In the late 1950s and early 60s, community service earned itself recognition as a distinct occupation. By the 80s, most community workers were involved in either youth work or adult education. Some 60 percent volunteered on a regular basis.

Volunteer work in Britain primarily aims to help identify the needs of communities and find the most effective ways to meet



Wang Xinghua finishes a painting class for local homeless children with his British partner, Martyr Matthew, in London. Photo by Hu Jian



Simon Brown teaches Beijing students basic skills to take care of disabled neighbors. Photo by Feng Jing

those needs, said Hu Jian, a Chinese program director with VSO and a scholar on Britain's history of volunteerism.

As the fabric of society changed, Hu said volunteerism matured, incorporating neighborhood work, closer relations between residents and service providers, better inter-agency coordination and policy planning and formulation.

He said volunteerism also helped empower people to call on available resources to meet their needs. The effort is divided into five main approaches: community action, development, organization, social planning and service extension. "Among them, community

development is the most important and the one most needed by Chinese communities," Hu said.

The scholar said a well-developed community-service structure constitutes the essence of an intellectual city. Through mutual support between volunteers and office workers, a community can strengthen cooperation, problem-solving skills and capacity for self-representation. "Eventually, it can promote collective action to bring a community's needs to the attention of political decision-makers," Hu said, adding this is the original intent and ultimate reason for the existence of community service.

Chinese volunteers in London

Wang Xinghua, a teacher of painting at Tsinghua University, considers himself lucky. He was among the 15 people chosen from thousands of applicants to join the Chinese-British volunteer exchange program to London. He was assigned to Newham, Simon Brown's East London community, to teach painting to local teenagers.

Wang said his British partner, Martyr Matthew, made his brief stay in the UK capital unforgettable. Matthew, who was born in France and moved to Britain for college in 2003, has been teaching British children painting in his attic studio since graduation.

"You know some of them suffer from depression, some have criminal records and some are homeless," Wang said of the

children. "But he believes that through his efforts, these children can become more optimistic and happy. He asked me to call him 'Artist Martyr.' What a lovely man," Wang said wistfully.

Chen Kui, the exchange program's director, said Chinese volunteers' collaboration with British counterparts helps them see the weaknesses and roadblocks to the development of volunteerism in China. In Western countries such as Britain, he said community service already has a tried and tested structure, organizations and their employees offer volunteers necessary training and guidance supported by empirical data.

"But our biggest weakness is the public's lack of spontaneity and sustainability," Chen said. "In cities, government does all the policy making, guidance and implementation. Volunteer groups are organized by government offices only for specific events and not for a long-term project."

"What China's community service sector needs to develop is office workers partnering with volunteers," he said, echoing Hu Jian's suggestion.

Meanwhile, Wang still cannot forget the work of some of his British students: flying men, a strong hand aiming an arrow at the sky, a bright sun in a colorful garden.

"During the trip I understood more clearly what community service meant," Wang said. "And I'm sure I learned more from the children than they ever learned from me."

Free car-wash coupons to promote water conservation

By Liang Meilan

The municipal government and private organizations are giving away some 36,000 free car-wash coupons through June 15 that can be used in 15 washing stations around town.

Car owners as well as cab drivers are entitled to a coupon each, which can be obtained from the Municipal Water Saving Office, Beijing Water Conservation Exhibition Hall, Workers' Stadium and the parking lot of the Beijing Zoo. Recipients will also receive a "save water" sticker for their cars.

The free car wash, which will use recycled water, is part of the municipal government's program for Water Conservation Promotion Week and is sponsored by the Beijing Water Authority, the local car-wash industry and several auto clubs.

"To promote water conservation and a green and low-carbon lifestyle, the government is focusing on car washing habits," Cheng Jing, director of the Beijing Water



Choose car-wash companies that use recycled water. CFP Photo

Authority, said. "Water conservation and improving the efficiency of water usage are vital to coping with the severe water shortage in the city."

According to statistics released by the municipal water authority, Beijing's per capita water reserve is 300 cubic meters, far below the international standard of 1,000 cubic meters.

"Many drivers don't realize that they're having their cars washed

with fresh tap water at illegal, privately-owned car wash stations," Yu Yaning, head of the water authority's media and publicity division, said, adding that these shops are becoming popular since they only charge 5 yuan per wash. "This little convenience for drivers actually results in severe water wastage," he said.

Yu said that according to studies, 100 to 160 liters of water are used when cars are washed with fresh water; the amount dips to 10 to 18 liters with recycled-water car-wash systems.

"A big challenge in this industry is the privately-owned, unauthorized washing stations scattered throughout the city. Some are seemingly professional shops, while some are temporary stalls run by laid-off workers or migrant laborers," Yu said.

"Most of them use water from taps in their homes or stolen from irrigation infrastructure in public areas," he said.

Car-wash stations are only

given business permits by the government if they are equipped with recycled water car-wash systems, said Wang Bin, operation and planning director of Yuefu Automobile Detailing Company.

Wang said licensed car-wash businesses are charged 61.60 yuan for every ton of fresh water they use, while their unlicensed counterparts get away with paying only 6 yuan per ton. "But licensed stations charge their customers only 10 yuan," or twice the cost at unlicensed car-wash stations, he said.

To find out more about where to get the car-wash coupons, call the Beijing Water Authority at 6855 6606.

Some car-wash companies with various branches around town that accept the coupons:

Yuefu Automobile Detailing Company

Tel: 6284 0810

Aiyihang Automobile Service Company

Tel: 400 885 6600

More children taking kung-fu lessons following school attacks



Self-defense courses are now taught in primary schools nationwide. CFP Photo

By Annie Wei

Parents in town have signed up their children for kung-fu classes following six knife attacks in mainland schools within the last two months. A dozen kung-fu schools in Xicheng, Chaoyang and Haidian districts have reported a surge in students in recent weeks, primarily among children ages 7 to 10.

Changzhen Guoshuguan, a leading kung-fu school for children, last Monday started a training camp where participants learn how to assess danger, escape, defend themselves and quickly organize a group to fight attackers.

The class teaches children how to

protect themselves using backpacks, water containers and school supplies. Zhao Xiaohang, one of the trainers, introduced some basic self-defense moves like throwing hot water at the assailant, using a schoolbag to block a knife attack and stabbing back with a pen. But he reminded the children that the best solution was to run and shout for help from grownups or authorities.

Jiang Min, a parent who enrolled her daughter at Changzhen, says she believes the program is the most practical and effective method the girl can use to defend herself against an attack.

Zhao said that children who

have studied self-defense have proven calmer in the face of danger and have managed to keep themselves unhurt.

Media reports say the school attackers used everyday objects like kitchen knives, meat cleavers and hammers against their victims, leaving dozens of children dead or wounded. The police have tightened security at kindergartens and primary schools nationwide, assigning more security personnel with some installing video cameras.

Changzhen Guoshuguan

Where: Room 103, Xuezhixuan, Xuezhixuan Building 6,

Xueqing Lu, Haidian District

Tel: 8275 5321

Web: goodwushu.com

Other kung-fu schools in town

Brother International Martial Arts Club Beijing

Where: Stadium of Beijing Language and Culture University (BLCU), 15 Xueyuan Lu, Haidian District

Tel: 13691384566

Shaolin and Tai Chi House

Where: Fusion Fitness gym, 2/F of BLCU stadium, 15 Xueyuan Lu, Haidian District

Email:

xieqingtuan@hotmail.com

ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to: weiyang@ynet.com

I've been living in Beijing for some time and am not happy that I have to either buy bottled water or boil tap water that leaves a thick deposit at the bottom of the pot. I think the ideal solution for me would be to get a water filtration unit you attach to the sink. It would save time and money and be better for the environment. Do you know where I can buy such equipment?

You might have noticed there are drinking fountains in most residential communities in town. We think purified water from those sources is still much safer than boiled tap water. You can use a stored-value card or coins to turn the drinking fountains on. The companies that operate them also provide filtration units for households. One of the most popular suppliers is Come Join Healthy Water System, which you can call at 6566 7735.

I recently got another tattoo and have been looking for the antibiotic ointment Cicatrin, which I used the last time. I don't think the Vaseline ointment that my Chinese tattoo artist told me to use to help the healing is effective. Do you think there's a place that sells the ointment I need?

You might be able to find it at foreign-run hospitals and clinics such as Beijing United Family Hospital (tel. 5927 7000) and Vista Clinic (tel. 8529 6618). If they don't have it, you can try using an Australian-made antibiotic ointment called Bepanthen, often used to treat baby rashes. It's available at Vista Clinic.

I've always wanted to learn the art of glass blowing and am curious if there are any training workshops in town. I hear it's a difficult technique and would love to at least see a demonstration.

Near the Mutianyu Great Wall is a place called Schoolhouse Glass, which provides lessons and glass-blowing demonstrations at 1 pm and 3 pm daily. It also sells fine glass pieces. You can call the shop at 6162 6506.

I heard INTRO is a good outdoor music event in town. Do you know when it happens?

There is an INTRO outdoor music party at 798 Art District every May, starting at noon. For details, go to page 18 of this issue.

(By Liang Meilan)

Preserving Beijing flavor

By He Jianwei

A writer is like the business card of a city or a country. Like Shakespeare to England, Goethe to Germany and Cervantes to Spain, Lao She, a giant of 20th century literature, is regarded as the scribe of Beijing, famous for using colloquial Beijing speech in his works and for depicting the local customs and lifestyles.

To commemorate the late writer's 111th birthday, artists have adapted five of his short stories into a play. It is also another way of preserving traditional Beijing, which has lost its traditional architecture and culture in the process of urbanization.



"Assuming Office" reveals the tension and tenuous boundaries between criminals and those in authority.



In "The Death, Dealing Spear," the fortune of an armed escort dwindles after the introduction of firearms

In "Liu's Compound," an ill-fated girl contemplates suicide under the constant bullying of her husband and in-laws.

Adapting Lao She for the stage



There are three important elements in Lao She's works: the city, as the stage and setting of his stories; a certain type of character, the Beijing native, who is an integral part of the city; and humor, used to examine the city.

Regarded as an important Chinese playwright and novelist in the 20th century, Lao portrays ordinary people, revealing a deep sympathy for their plight. His works played a crucial role in connecting Beijing's local culture with national issues.

The play *Forbidden* was a monumental success, earning Lao She a Chinese drama depicting 700 characters living in a 60-year-long period and mirroring the social turmoil from the Hundred Days Reform in 1898 to the end of World War II.

A "Beijing flavor," evoked through his descriptions of the city's landscape, local customs, manners of the characters and use of local language, is found from beginning to end.

Besides his plays, many of his novels were adapted for television. One of his most commonly adapted for movies and television.

Besides his plays, many of his novels were adapted for television. One of his most commonly adapted for movies and television.

"We are not confident about our culture... We must think about the balance between urbanization and tradition, globalization and diversity."

Lao She was fond of his short stories. One of his favorites was "The Death Dealing Spear." When he was in the US, he turned the story into a play for the local college students. He also adapted "Monsieur Choulet."

into the one-act play *Mr. Mighty on the Train*. So Shu decided to adapt more of his father's short stories for the stage.

In the end of 2008, Shu ran into stage director Lin Zhonghua and discussed the possibility of adapting Lao She's *Peony Pavilion* in Beijing and asked them for a stage adaptation of Lao She's short stories.

A few days later, Lin and Wong paid a visit to Shu's house and asked for his suggestion.

Shu made a list of short stories and settled on five. The production will be titled *Five Acts of Lao She's Short Stories*.

All five short stories depict ordinary people in Chinese society, in the rupture and redemption. In "Liu's Compound," an ill-fated girl contemplates suicide under the constant bullying of her husband and in-laws. In "The Death Dealing Spear," the fortune of an armed escort dwindles after the introduction of firearms.

"Assuming Office" reveals the tension and tenuous boundaries between criminals and those in authority. "Fruit" follows the destructive affair between an aspiring amateur actor eager to turn professional and the man who helps him; and "Ménge à Trois" is a psychological drama about two war buddies who decide to share

one woman as wife. He wrote the script for those short stories," said Wang, the producer and playwright. "The language in his play is full of Beijing colloquialisms, but his short stories were written in a narrative way. How to write the dialogue with colloquialisms is a tough problem for me."

The play debuted in March at the 2010 Hong Kong Arts Festival. For the first time, Hong Kong people who speak Cantonese understood the humor of Beijing colloquialism," said Lin Yida, a writer and playwright of Beijing lifestyles.

As a Beijing native, Liu uses local colloquialisms in his works. But towards the end of his life, he felt that people wanted to get rid of "Beijing flavor."

In 2002, Liu wrote a TV drama script first called "Hutong Garden" for the audience in southern China. He would not understand, so the name changed to "Seeking for Her Thousands of Times Among a Big Crowd."

"We are not confident about our culture," Liu said. "Lao She's works are popular not only in Beijing, but also in other cities in China, although his works typically have Beijing flavor. We must think about the balance between urbanization and tradition."

The idea of Lao She's short stories is a chance to remind people of the need to preserve Beijing flavor.

Shu has been insistent in advocating the protection of traditional Beijing culture in recent years, especially ancient architecture and the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal, starting at Beijing, and passing through five provinces, which finished construction during the Su Dynasty (581-618).

"I'm glad to see more people are aware of the importance of cultural diversity." "Fruit" follows the destructive affair between an aspiring amateur actor eager to turn professional and the man who helps him.

Photos provided by POLOARTS

Five Acts of Life: Lao She's Short Stories

Where:

Producer:

Director:

When:

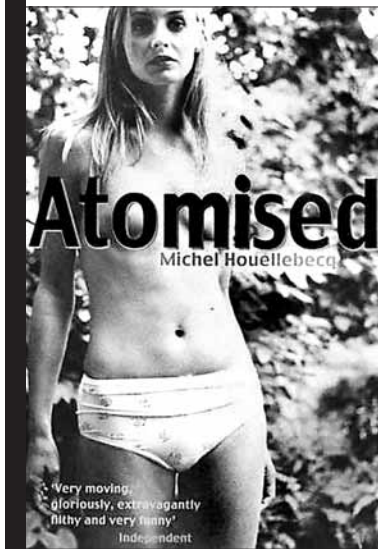
Admission:

90-1280 yuan

6409 6477, 6407 6499

Insight into human pathos

A controversial French writer deals with modernity



Last Sunday, the controversial writer talked about his works at the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA). About the criticism levied against him, he said, "I always mock myself (due to the fact) that the press does not like me."

In contrast with the sharp words in his works, the author looks more "well-behaved." Settling into his sofa, Houellebecq goes deep in thought sometimes, with his Argus eyes opening before he speaks.

He concludes that the disconnect between scholars, media and public in the French literary scene has caused controversies. The intellectuals at universities do not care about what the media has covered; journalists are not interested in the experts' theoretical research; and the public is not concerned about what the media has written and what the experts studied.

Like George Orwell in *Animal Farm* and 1984 and Aldous Huxley in *Brave New World*, Houellebecq expresses his philosophy of life in terms of satire against a contemporary society. But Houellebecq's society is more recognizable as our own, with its computers, globalization and terrorism.

A recurrent theme in Houellebecq's novels is the intrusion of free-market economics into human relationships and sexuality.

His first novel, *Extension of the Domain of the Struggle*, alludes to economic competition extending into the search for relationships. As the book says, a free market has winners and losers, and the same applies to relationships in a society that does not enforce monogamy.

Westerners of both sexes already seek exotic locations and climates by visiting developing countries in organized trips. *Platform* tells of an aging male arts administrator engag-

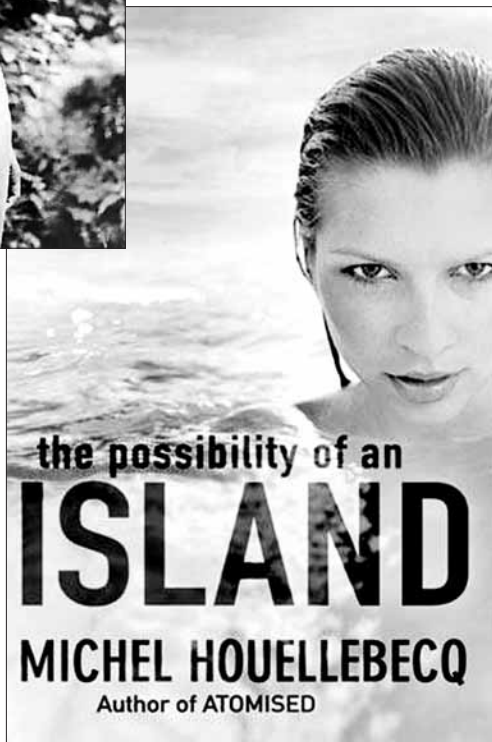
By He Jianwei

There is no writer quite like Michel Houellebecq. Some praise him as a writer in the tradition of literary provocation, going back to Marquis de Sade and Baudelaire; others criticize him as a peddler of sleaze and shock.

Houellebecq's works always deal with human pathos related to sex and the spirit. His novels and poetry are said to have helped introduce a new style to the French literary scene. On the other hand, his almost pornographic sexual descriptions are a frequent target of criticism.



Michel Houellebecq



Like George Orwell in *Animal Farm* and 1984 and Aldous Huxley in *Brave New World*, Houellebecq expresses his philosophy of life in terms of satire against a contemporary society. But Houellebecq's society is more recognizable as our own, with its computers, globalization and terrorism.

ing in sex tourism in Thailand. The novel has been criticized for its controversial content, including sexual elements some consider to be seamy, such as bisexuality and polyamory, and opinions some consider offensive to Islam.

Born on the French island of Reunion in 1958, Houellebecq has a science background. He graduated as an agronomical engineer in 1980, but he eventually found a job as a computer administrator in Paris. His novels reflect his concern about humanity's struggle against modernity – relationships between nature, science and humanity.

In his second novel, *Atomised* – also known as *The*

Elementary Particles – published in 1998, the author tells the story of two half-brothers, Michel and Bruno, and their mental struggle against their situations in modern society.

At the end of the book, the sexual reproduction of the human race is replaced by cloning. The point is that humans are just particles, and just as bodies decay, they can also be created.

The book won the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award in 2002, making Houellebecq the first French writer who has won the prize.

His most popular novel is *The Possibility of an Island*. In 2008, he adapted it into a film, and the first lady of France,

Carla Bruni, put it into a song.

It also deals with cloning. Daniel is a successful comedian who cannot seem to enjoy life despite his wealth. He gets bored with his hedonist lifestyle but cannot escape from it either. Meanwhile, he is disgruntled with the current state of society and philosophizes about the nature of sex and love.

His two clones, Daniels 24 and 25, live uneventful lives as hermits in an apocalyptic world far away in the future. They live in a time when the human species has been destroyed by climate change and nuclear war.

The two clones are confronted with the life of the first Daniel and have different views about their predecessor. Scattered around are the remnants of tourist resorts, cities and consumer items and some natural humans living in small tribes without any knowledge of the past or of civilization.

It seems that Houellebecq creates utopia where neo-humans live. But "island" doesn't mean a geographical noun. My 'island' is in terms of time, not space," the author says.

He admits he draws influence from German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer, who believed that emotional, physical and sexual desires can never be fulfilled.

At the end of *The Possibility of an Island*, only Daniel and a cloned dog exist in the new world. Houellebecq thought "living alone" was a neutral end – not positive or negative.

But when he re-read the final paragraph last Sunday, he said, "It is not as negative as the readers thought. Life itself is real."

Although he is one of the important contemporary novelists in France, he cannot escape the viciousness of the literary scene – a popular novel does not receive high acclaim from critics.

"The phenomenon was totally different in the 1980s literary scene in France," he said. "If the detective and science fictions were bestsellers, they also received good reputations." He also gave an example of rock music in the 1960s and 70s, which were popular and also became classics.

Although he deals with many modern problems in his books, Houellebecq denied he has the ability to propose a way of solving the problems. "I prefer to depict the problems, and there's no more that I have to pen," he said.

Timezone 8 book listing

Timezone 8 is a Hong Kong-based publisher, distributor and retailer of books on contemporary art, architecture, photography and design. This week, it recommends three new titles to *Beijing Today* readers.



The Road Map of Painting

Edited by Shu Yang, 159pp, Timezone 8, \$30

This book features works by three of China's most sought-after contemporary painters: Li Dafang, who paints disturbing scenes of decay; Shi Xinning, who imagines a nuclear plume over Robert Smithson's vast earthwork "Spiral Jetty"; and Zhang Xiaotao, who imbues used condoms, dead rats and rotting strawberries with an upbeat pop sensibility.



Yuan Shun

Edited by Feng Boyi and Snejana Krastava, 120pp, Timezone 8, \$45

This first in-depth monograph is published for Yuan Shun's first solo exhibition in 20 years. Born in 1961 in Shanghai, Yuan was included in the influential *China/Avant-Garde Art Exhibition* in Beijing in 1989. His work encompasses photography, installation, video and performance, and draws on the metaphysical tradition in Chinese art.



Bradley McCallum & Jacqueline Tarry: Whitewash

By David Spalding, 77pp, Timezone 8, \$30

A collaborative artist team since 1998, Bradley McCallum and Jacqueline Tarry deal with issues of marginalization, race and social justice. Their large-scale public projects, sculptures, photographic/video works and self-portrait challenge audiences to face these issues in the community and in the family.

(By He Jianwei)

Mix and match for summer festivals

By Wang Yu

Summer is coming, the season for music festivals. INTRO, one of the best electric music festivals in China, will be on tomorrow. Compared with the other events, such as the MIDI and Strawberry festivals that happened over May Day holiday, INTRO's rave party will be crazier, with dancers moving their bodies to big beats. It is another opportunity for you to be the toast of the crowd. With that in mind, we did some research on what you should wear to stand out.

Ladies' fashion

More colors

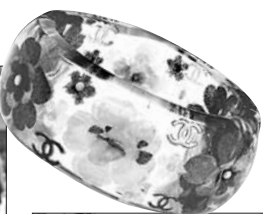
Adding more colors seems to be the easiest method. However, good taste and a bit of courage are necessary to avoid looking like a high school teenager and getting laughed at.

"If you want to be easily recognized among the other dancers, just leave your ordinary dark-colored T-shirts, jeans or strap top at home," says Twiggy Song, editor of the Chinese *Cosmopolitan*. "Try yellow, red, green and blue as your theme colors. However, you won't be a party queen in a simple yellow or mixed-color dress. Always pay attention to the cut and details of your clothes."

It is OK to wear big brands even at music festivals. However, cheap pieces from outlets like the Zoo Market are also helpful, especially if you are a crazy dancer. When you can't piece together something that came from a bargain or costume shop, just try to DIY (do it yourself). Skilled girls can make a Lady Gaga costume within three days – but is there anyone brave enough



Alessandra Ambrosio at Coachella Festival



A fish-net dress makes you stand out in a crowd.

a bikini suit inside. Choose a fishnet dress as your outfit, and photos of you will soon find their way onto local fashion websites.

Student florals

Technically, a student floral is the kind of flowery, off-the-body little dress you find worn by 20-something slackers with messy hair in pub gardens. That is also why female rockers like Courtney Love and Kelly Osbourne wear it. But it is hard to identify what is true "student floral."

"Just find some cloth with big flower patterns on them," Song says. "Again, don't pick up the dark colors. Here, red, light purple and pink are good choices. If your shirt is made of silk, that will be even better."

Boots

Converse shoes are over, especially in Beijing – they will not add to your point but only make you look like a college student. Native festivals are not Glastonbury, either, so fashionably designed rain boots are not useful and your feet may end up feeling uncomfortable.

Paris Hilton is the only one who wore ballet boots at Coachella. Hi-top boots and hefty boots are the new trend at festivals. There are also boxing boots and cowboy boots for the ladies. Last year, there was a woman at INTRO

who wore a leg-wrap shoe instead of boots, which successfully attracted quite a bit of attention, though in a sense she looked like a character straight out of *World of Warcraft*.

Accessories

Ever since Woodstock, Bohemian has been the way to go at these types of festivals. Feather earrings, silver rings and bracelets are essential. Oversized accessories still rock. A pearl necklace pendant hanging between the collarbones will be another highlight on you.

Finally, never forget the sunglasses, which can elevate your style.

Ultra-shorts

From Kate Moss to Alessandra Ambrosio, we have seen many celebrities wandering around the muddy grasslands at Glastonbury or Coachella, all of them with one thing in common: their denim shorts.

Shorts have been a festival staple for years, but this year you have to go shorter. Judging by the latest photos taken

from this year's Coachella Festival, the charmingly monickered "poke" shorts – denim cutoffs so brief that the cotton pocket lining peeps out at the upper thigh – have come into vogue.

Of course you can also make it "extremely short" by wearing



Gentlemen's fashion

button once you join the dancing crowd."

One principle is never wear oversized polos. After all, this is not a hip-hop festival.

The skinny fit

Skinny pants are still the best choice for slim guys because once they wear shorts, they look too thin to carry out the style. Dark skinnies make a young man look taller, more decent and with a rock-

er's sense of cool. Red and deep purple are also recommended. Here, denim is not the only material for all.

Not everyone fits into skinny pants, but at least you have to pick something to make you look slim. Otherwise you are just another tourist who blends into the crowd.

The shoes

From the street fashion photos taken around local hangouts, we see brogue shoes

are becoming more and more popular in China. They also work in festivals. However, the ground at the venues can be harmful to leather brogues, which can be costly.

But instead of wearing your old shoes, give vintage sports shoes a try. And of course the boots if you are going to a festival on the grass in the rainy season. Moreover, it is better to be bare-footed than caught in a pair of beach shoes.



Polos are a good choice for music fans.

Be classic

"Unlike my suggestion for ladies, I think boys are never suited for colorful outfits, especially in public – it can only make you look stupid," Song says. "T-shirts with some music-style pattern are essential. However, why not try the shirts and polos? Unfasten the top



Kate Moss and Pete Doherty at Glastonbury

Bedroom luxurious essentials

By Annie Wei

The bedroom is the place to relax one's soul and body, and should be decorated with extra care. If you've missed giving yours a spring cleaning, then don't wait much longer to give it some early summer attention.



Dux bed, 156,000 yuan
Photo provided by Dux

The queen of beds

By Zhang Dongya

People spend about a third of their life in bed yet do not pay much attention to the quality of their beds. Dux, a Swedish producer of upholstered furniture and beddings, has been trying to change this mindset for the last 80 years.

Founded in 1926, the company's crowning achievement are its beds with spring coils made from Swedish steel – the product of ceaseless research and development since its inception.

"The ideal bed is pliable yet gives support and feels comfortable while adapting to the natural contours of the body," the company said in a press release. It said beds that are too hard or too soft actually harm the spine's natural curve.

The unique system of Dux beds allows the springs to adapt to the user's body shape. It is flexible enough to let the shoulders and hips sink in, but resilient enough to support the lower back. It is also designed to reduce pressure on the spine and help blood circulation by evenly distributing body weight.

This has helped the company win the contract to supply beds in 200 suites at Dubai's Burj Al Arab Hotel, one of the world's foremost luxury hotels. Dux is also the choice of international celebrities including David Beckham and Madonna. The retail price for one of the most expensive Dux bed is around 38,000 yuan.

At its newest Beijing shop at Seasons Place Shopping Center, which opened last week, the most popular model is the Dux 8888, which goes for 156,000 yuan.

The shop also offers trial beds, which customers can bring home and use for 15 to 30 days.

"Our purpose is to give more people high-quality sleep and lifestyle," said Henrik Ljung, CEO of Dux and the third-generation head of the family-owned company. "We have successfully won the trust of Shanghai elite, which gives us confidence with Beijing."

Dux also offers bedclothes, bed lamps and pillows with spring coils under the line Duxiana, as well as towels, chairs and vases.

The company currently has eight stores on the mainland, including in Shanghai, Hangzhou and Shenzhen.

Dux has two factories in Sweden, which produces its furniture, mattresses as well as seat springs for Volvo automobiles and Swedish trains.

Duxiana – Chaoyang
Where: Easy Home, Room 411, Fifth Hall, 65 Beisihuan Dong Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 10 am – 7 pm, 10 am – 8 pm (weekends)
Tel: 8463 6708

Duxiana – Xicheng
Where: L 407, Beijing Seasons Place Shopping Center, 2 Jinchengfang Jie, Xicheng District

Open: 10 am – 9 pm
Tel: 6629 0288

Bed lamps that boost immunity and relaxation

By Liang Meilan

Salt is more than a cooking ingredient. Liu Jie discovered just how much more when she designed lamps using Himalayan salt rocks formed millions of years ago.

Liu, 34, calls her creations Salt-Crystal Lamps from the salt rocks' translucent, pinkish color, and produces them through her Jie Billion Decoration Company. Liu says the rocks, mined in the southern hills of the Himalayas, have a purity of 98 percent and contains around 80 minerals and ions.

The salt rocks are cut and then artfully glued onto lamps made of iron, ceramic, glass, walnut shells, rattan and resin. "We now have several hundred lamp patterns picked from different factories. We collaborate with many artists to design exquisite lamps that cater to both Chinese and Western home furnishing styles," Liu says.

Some of the lamps use fine salt rocks from Pakistan, which are ground into smaller blocks. Liu



Salt-Crystal lamp, several hundred to thousand yuan

Photo by Liu Jie

says her favorite are "lamps that have large salt rocks and those in dark colors."

The lamps use electric filament bulbs usually covered with salt blocks. "When the bulb is turned on, its white light goes through the pinky salt blocks and become warm-toned orangey pink, which has a calming effect," Liu says. She says the lamps emit an electromagnetic wave called Schuman light wave, an effective tool in emotion management and long used in German psychotherapy.

Another healing benefit comes

from negative ions, produced when the salt rocks become heated. "We call them natural ion generators. They create a balanced environment of ions that is health-friendly," Liu says.

The chemical reaction between sodium in the salt rocks and hydrogen and oxygen in the air also helps purify the air – beneficial to people who have asthma and allergies. "Many studies conducted by health professionals have found that salt-rock lamps are useful in improving the immune system," Liu says.

The Salt-Crystal Lamps cost several hundred to several thousand yuan. Liu's company also offers customized designs.

Where to buy:

Home furnishing section of Solana Mall, 6 Chaoyanggongyuan Lu, Chaoyang District

Room 1, Decoration Hall, Liangma Flower Market, 8 Dongshanhuan Bei Lu, Chaoyang District
Tel: 15811188206

Fragrant luxury

By Annie Wei

The scent from burning fine candles can help a person relax, feel more energetic or stimulate creativity. One source of luxury candles is True Grace, a British brand, available at Lane Crawford.

We recommend three of its most popular fragrances: fig, amber and blackcurrant (550 yuan each). The candles are hand-made using 100 percent natural wax. Their smell is not overpowering even though fragrance makes up 10 percent of each candle. Each candle can burn for approximately 40 hours.

True Grace

Where: 3/F, Lane Crawford, 2 Jinchengfang Jie, Xicheng District

Open: 10 am – 10 pm
Tel: 6622 0808



True Grace candle, 550 yuan
Photo provided by Lane Crawford

Fresh coffee magic and practical cooking lessons



Peter Kende, CEO of Itaffe Beijing, introduces 13 coffee blends and an easy-to-use machine.

By Annie Wei

The downside of warm weather is that everyone now wants to dine outside, crowding restaurant terraces, street-side cafes and outdoor grills. To avoid the crush, why not prepare a hearty home-made meal for yourself and friends, capped by a cup of rich brewed coffee.

Food writer Eileen Wen Mooney shares some simple yet appetizing recipes for summer, while Itaffe, a cafe offering North Italian specialties, shares the secrets to making fresh, great-tasting coffee.

Photos by Dragon Wang

For serious coffee drinkers only

This is what disappointment means to a serious coffee drinker: anticipating a rich, aromatic brew only to discover that the bag of ground coffee has gone stale and is better suited for the trash.

Keeping ground coffee fresh can become a problem at any shop – even global chains – if the grains are not stored in vacuum containers and then placed in the refrigerator.

Itaffe, a new brand near the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), which specializes in North Italian coffee, offers another nifty solution: freshly ground coffee in 7-gram sealed vacuum bags.

The place also sells professional-grade coffee machines, with models specifically for individual use, small offices and restaurants. The most popular is the juicer-sized La Piccola Sara Steam (7,690 yuan) with taps for coffee and milk froth, and a tube for sucking in packaged fresh milk. Atop the machine is a warmer that can accommodate up to five cups at a time.

Coffee aficionados will adore Itaffe's 13 blends, from the inexpensive Americano (5 yuan) to the pricier Jamaica Blue (45 yuan), all of which are available decaffeinated. The shop also serves five flavors of strong tea.

Most imported coffee brands are associated with dark roasted beans, strong taste and rich aroma; Itaffe's brews are milder, more suited to the Chinese taste, which prefers light coffee over bitter ones.

"There is no good coffee or bad coffee.

It depends on the taste of different people," says Peter Kende, CEO of Itaffe Beijing, who has been in the coffee business for 21 years and who learned the trade as a child playing in his father's cafes in Hungary.

Kende moved to China last year and decided to continue with the coffee business. What sealed his decision was getting a bad cup of coffee near the Great Wall when he and his family visited the capital after the Beijing Olympics.

Besides its coffee, Kende says he is especially proud of Itaffe's ground coffee in environmentally-friendly paper bags, which helps the contents stay fresh for up to two years.

The shop also sells coffee beans at 100 yuan for a 250-gram tin. Kende suggests buying in as little quantity as needed for optimum results. "Although it is more expensive to buy in small quantities, the taste you get is better." When vacuum-packed ground coffee is opened, its quality will quickly deteriorate within three days if not properly stored, Kende says.

To give the best customer service, Itaffe offers after-sales service for their coffee machines.

Itaffe Coffee

Where: Room 605, Tower 2, Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) 4, 1 Xiangheyuan Lu, Dongcheng District

Open: 9 am – 6 pm

Tel: 8438 8516

Web: itaffe.com

Free-range chicken

Sisters' Kitchen in Central Park says it only serves free-range chicken, fowl not kept in coops but allowed to roam the countryside of Tianjin and Shandong, eating natural grains like corn, soybeans and seabuckthorn fruits.

Unlike in the past, Sisters' Kitchen no longer sells dressed chicken. But it does serve lip-smacking dishes like roasted Osaka garlic chicken (28 yuan) and charcoal-grilled skewers including chicken thighs, wings, gizzard and skin (12 yuan for two sticks).

It also offers two set menus: Mexican chicken roll (8 yuan) and quarter chicken and skewers with rice (18 yuan).

Sisters' Kitchen

Where: C-4, Wantong Center, Jia 6, Chaoyangmen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

Open: 9 am – 5 pm

Tel: 5904 7500, (delivery 6533 6751)

Web: sisterskitchen.cn

Note: Free-range chicken is available at 28 yuan for every 500 grams at Sanyuanli market (Shunyuan Jie, Dong Sanhuan, Chaoyang District, Open 9 am – 5 pm)

Eileen's Kitchen

Good cooking is a product of experience – whether of the cook or the cook's teacher. So it is good news for Beijingers that Eileen Wen Mooney, author of *Beijing Eats* and freelance food writer specializing in Chinese food, has finally decided to give cooking classes.

In her spacious kitchen in her home near Jianguomen subway station, Mooney teaches both Western and Chinese cooking several times a week, depending on student demand.

As a food writer, Mooney regularly evaluates restaurant dishes and tests as many recipes as her busy schedule allows. Her class introduces some of the best recipes she has found for our stress-filled fast-paced life, like grilled chicken breast, potato leek soup and salad (see recipes below.)

"After cooking for years and years, you can easily tell which ones are good," Mooney says.

During a conversation with *Beijing Today* two weeks ago, Mooney also shared some economical tips for kitchen novices. A whole chicken, she says, is equivalent to four dishes: the skin can be deep-fried, the breast can be made into kung pao chicken, the thighs can be roasted with herbs like star anise and the bones can be used to make chicken broth.

"Sometimes food is tasteless because the meat is not marinated long enough," she says while preparing grilled chicken breast. She suggested chicken meat be marinated for at least an hour, if not overnight.

To learn more about Mooney's cooking classes and recipes, visit eileeneats.com.

Eileen recipes

Leek potato soup

- 2-3 tablespoons butter or olive oil
- 1/8 cup onion, diced
- 4 leeks, washed and sliced
- 4 ribs celery
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 4 cups water or chicken stock
- 3-4 potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly-ground black pepper

In a large pot, heat the butter or olive oil over medium heat.

Add the diced onion and sliced leeks. Cook over moderate heat for five to seven minutes, stirring frequently until they become tender and fragrant.

Pour the water or chicken stock, and add the potatoes. Cover and simmer until the potatoes are tender when poked with a fork. Season with salt if necessary.

Pour potato soup into a blender and blend until creamy. Swirl some heavy cream over the soup just before serving. (Makes 4-6 servings.)

Salad

Combine mixed green-leaf salad with diced red pepper, yellow pepper, cherry tomato, sliced cucumber, and slices of grilled chicken. Sprinkle some toasted walnut just before serving with French dressing. (Makes 4-6 servings.)

French dressing

- 2 tablespoons apple cider or white vinegar
- 1 tablespoon dijon mustard
- 1/2 teaspoon sea salt
- 1/2 teaspoon caster sugar
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil or olive oil

Combine vinegar, mustard, salt and sugar in a small ceramic bowl. Whisk until well combined. Add oil to the vinegar mixture in a slow, steady stream, whisking constantly until dressing thickens slightly. Season with pepper.



Cafe fare, home-made coffee from Itaffe



Leek potato soup



Salad

Photos by Teresa Mooney



Garlic-roasted chicken, 28 yuan

CFP Photo

Techno beat extravaganza is back

By Wang Yu

Last year's INTRO opened the country's doors to electronic music festivals. Since then, more Chinese people have fallen in love with the genre; to them it is no longer just a reminder of remixed pop songs often heard in nightclubs. So INTRO's return this Saturday promises to be an event to remember.

"This year we are setting up one more stage - three stages in total," says Wang Miao, managing director of Acupuncture Records, the organizer. "The number of performers will almost double to 40, involving more electronic music styles."

The reason for the festival's name is that it's an introduction on two levels. First, it introduces Chinese people to an electronic music festival and the culture, spirit and lifestyle behind the genre. Second, it gives



international artists and foreign media a look at China's growing electronic scene.

"I know quite a few people who got hooked on electronic music at last year's festival and have become regulars at our club," says Wang, referring to Lantern, a

nightclub owned by Acupuncture. "We're witnessing a really fast growth in the electronic scene here, and artists, reporters and other people in the industry overseas constantly contact us."

Local artists, still fighting for a bigger audi-

ence, will get another boost at the festival this weekend. The lineup consists of more than 40 top DJs and VJs on the Main Stage, the Welcome Stage and the Lives Stage.

Last year's after-party was canceled by the authorities at the last minute, so this weekend

the revelry is going to be split among three venues: Lantern in Sanlitun, Coco Banana by Workers' Stadium and LAN Club on Jianguomen.

Besides the one-day festival, INTRO 2010 has also presented various cultural activities in the run-up: a DJ remix competition, film screenings, providing electronic music at Modern Sky's Strawberry Music Festival, an open DJ/VJ workshop series and a number of warm-up parties.

INTRO 2010

Where: 751 D-Park, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: May 22, starts at noon

Admission: 200 yuan

Tel: 13810347555

(English service)

Ticket booking:

piaowutong.com

Upcoming

Lecture

Into the Blue

The talk will be given by Guo Chuan, captain of the *Qiangdao* sailboat and the first Chinese national to compete in the Volvo Ocean Race, in 2008.

Where: Dandel Art Space, Beijing Image Base, Building 1, 3 Guangqu Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 10-11:30 pm

Admission: 30 yuan

Tel: 6770 8966

Stage in June

Concert

Daniel Harding and the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: June 11, 7:30 pm

Admission: 180-980 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Joshua Bell and the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields Chamber Orchestra

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: June 24, 7:30 pm

Admission: 180-680 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Dance

B-Boyz & Ballerina

Where: PLA Theater, 60 Dengshengmen Dajie, Xicheng District

When: June 4-13, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-880 yuan

Tel: 8322 0726

Beyond

Where: 46 Theater, 46 Fangjia Hutong, Dongcheng District

When: June 3-5, 7:30 pm

Admission: 50-280 yuan

Tel: 6417 0058

Marlet by Beijing Contemporary Dance Theater

Where: Multi-Purpose Theater of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: June 19-20,

7:30 pm

Admission: 160-280 yuan

Tel: 6275 0000

Drama

Thunder and Rain

Where: Peking University Hall, 5 Yiheyuan Lu, Haidian District

When: June 5, 7 pm

Admission: 80-150 yuan

Tel: 6275 8452

Musical

Love, Crazy

Where: Haidian Theater, 28 Zhongguancun Dajie, Haidian District

When: June 2-6, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-880 yuan

Tel: 6405 4842

Opera

Verdi's La Traviata

Where: Opera House of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: June 1-6, 7:30 pm

Admission: 180-680 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

(By He Jianwei)

5 Friday, May 21

Exhibition Zhang Huan - Free Tiger Returns to Mountains

Zhang, known for his ability to work in multiple mediums, will be showcasing his ash paintings and cowhide sculptures.

Where: Pace Beijing, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until July 20, daily

except Monday, 10 am - 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5978 9786

Movie

Giulia non esce la sera (Giulia Doesn't Date at Night, 2009)

A young novelist is intrigued by his daughter's swimming instructor. When he asks her out, he learns that she does not date at night and is serving a sentence for a crime of passion.

Where: Italian Cultural Institute, 2 Dong Er Jie, Sanli-

tun Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 7:30 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6532 2187

Nightlife



Marnie Stern 2010 China Tour

The US musician and songwriter has received acclaim for her finger-tapping guitar play and other technical skills.

Where: Yugongyishan, 3-2 Zhangzizhong Lu, Dongcheng District

When: 9 pm

Admission: 100 yuan

advance purchase, 150 yuan at the door

Tel: 6404 2711

6 Saturday, May 22

Exhibition Watermelon Mountain

In his latest works, Shi Yanliang paints how the village of one's childhood becomes the city in adults' dreams.

Where: Hanmo Art Gallery, 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until June 23, daily

except Monday, 10 am - 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5878 9915

Movie

The Naked Island (1960) and Deep Rising (1998)

The first is a Japanese film that deals with the intolerably hard life of a family of four, the only inhabitants of a very small island in the Setonaikai archipelago. Several times a day, they row over to the neighboring island to fetch water for their miserable fields. The second is a horror film directed by Stephen Sommers - best

known for the *Mummy*. When a band of ruthless hijackers board the world's most luxurious cruise ship, they're shocked to discover the passengers have mysteriously vanished.

Where: China Film Archive, 3 Wenhuiyuan Lu, Xiaoxituan, Haidian District

When: 1 pm

Admission: 30 yuan for two films

Tel: 8229 6153

Nightlife

Ajinai Band

The band performs Mongolian folk music using a horse-head fiddle, a bowed stringed instrument with a scroll carved like a horse's head.

Where: Jianghu Bar, 7 Dongmianhua Hutong, Jiadaokou Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 9:30 pm

Admission: 40 yuan

advance purchase, 50 yuan at the door

Tel: 6401 4611

7 Sunday, May 23

Nightlife The Red and White Fairy Tale - Dream II

This stage performance, directed by Ziru Zheng Blaize, combines Peking Opera with modern dance.

Where: The Temple Hotel Beijing, 23 Shatan Bei Jie, Wusi Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 6:30 pm

Admission: 120 yuan

Tel: 13366871530

Kite

Kite is an acoustic quartet that plays original folk music inspired by European, African-

American and Asian traditions.

Where: VA Cafe and Bar, 13 Wudaoying Hutong, Dongcheng District

When: 9:30 pm

Admission: 40 yuan

Tel: 5844 3638

Exhibition



Morning Glory

Cheng Yong's oil paintings reflect the loneliness of the soul.

Where: Mountain Art Beijing & Frank Lin Art Center, 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until June 20, daily

except Monday, 10 am - 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5978 9558

Movie

Watching For (2008)

This documentary shows the reunion of a couple 50 years after the husband fled the mainland in 1949, leaving his wife in their hometown.

Where: Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA), 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 7 pm

Admission: 15 yuan

Tel: 8459 9269



Heal your headache without drugs

By Li Zhixin

Headaches are a common complaint. Many people's first response is to reach for the aspirin, paracetamol or ibuprofen to treat it, but they don't realize that taking these drugs frequently can lead to more headaches in the long run.

Painkiller overuse can trigger headaches

According to the British Medical Association's *Drug and Therapeutics Bulletin*, which publishes independent advice for doctors, painkillers may be part of the problem if people get very frequent headaches. "If you get a headache on 15 days a month or more and have been taking painkillers a similar number of times without seeing an improvement, it's possible that the painkillers are making your headaches worse."

These drugs include: aspirin, paracetamol, anti-inflammatory painkillers like ibuprofen and diclofenac, a strong painkiller called codeine (low doses are available over the counter in combination with other painkillers) and migraine drugs called triptans.

The study found that some people who get headaches from medication overuse take around 114 doses of simple painkillers per month. However, triptan drugs may lead to more headaches when just 18 doses are taken each month. "It seems to be regular use that's the problem, rather than quantity. Taking a low dose every day is more likely to cause

headaches than taking a high dose once a week," the researchers said. "It may take several years of excessive medication use before you develop medication overuse headaches."

Taking painkillers regularly can lead to changes in the electrical pathways in the brain that carry pain signals. These changes can make people more sensitive to headaches. On top of this problem, codeine is addictive, which means patients can get unpleasant withdrawal symptoms when they stop taking it. These withdrawal symptoms may also play a part in causing headaches.

Taking triptan drugs for a long time may weaken the brain's natural systems for dealing with pain. "If you find yourself taking painkillers regularly, perhaps for several different reasons, and notice they stop working as well as they used to, it's a good idea to talk to your doctor. If you're combining prescription and over-the-counter painkillers, it's also worth asking your doctor if there might be a better approach to treating headaches," the researchers suggested.

Natural remedies for a headache

There are natural remedies that work without reaching for the old pill bottle. "Treatment for headaches is generally focused on relieving the pain, we've all had them and when we do get a headache, we will do almost anything to get rid of it. However, even more important than relieving the pain is to consider the root causes of some headaches. By discovering the cause, then reoccurrence of the headache can be avoided or can help lessen the severity," said Chen Xinyuan, a doctor at the acupuncture and moxibustion department of Huguosi Hospital of Chinese Medicine.

1. Give up foods that trigger headache. Holistic physicians often ask one simple question of headache patients that is overlooked by specialist doctors — Can you give up dairy products in your diet? Some people react adversely to milk, butter, cheese and cream. "Giving up dairy might solve your headache without any strong prescription drugs. In addition, you can avoid foods containing chemicals like nitrites and sulfites, which dilate capillaries in the brain, increasing blood flow and causing pain," Chen said.

Some of the trigger foods are processed meat products, red wine, caffeine, ice cream, and sometimes chocolate and gum.

2. Herbal therapy. Chen said some headaches may be accompanied by nausea, which can make you feel even worse. By first taking care of the nausea, the pain of the headache may be easier to treat. Many nausea patients found that drinking peach juice or apricot nectar has helped alleviate nausea.

Ginger has been used for centuries in China to treat nausea, vomiting, headaches and many other ailments. "Ginger is a proven anti-nausea remedy that matches or surpasses drugs such as Dramamine," he said. "Two to 4 grams of ginger a day for migraines. You can also make ginger tea by simmering a couple slices of fresh ginger root in a cup of

water for about 15 minutes."

Drink an herbal tea like chamomile helps to relieve headaches.

Peppermint oil is also effective in reducing headaches. "Put a few drops of peppermint essential oil into the bath or rub a few drops on your temples, the nape of the neck and the hairline, and afterward you will feel relief within 15 minutes," he said.

Rosemary, lavender and chamomile are other essential oils that may also help ease your headaches.

3. Acupressure or acupuncture. Acupuncture has been used very successfully to relieve chronic headaches and migraines.

Give yourself a mini-massage at the first sign of pain. Using the pads of your fingers, press gently and rub the scalp, back of the neck, temples and shoulders.

Using this technique will help to relieve pressure and pain associated with a tense headache. Press the area for 30 seconds, three times in a row, while breathing deeply.

Wearing a magnet necklace also works for headaches.

4. Apply heat or cold, or alternate between the two. Take a hot bath or shower, or place a hot, wet washcloth or heating pad on the back of your neck. Place an ice pack on your forehead, the back of your neck or the top of your head.

You can also divert blood flow from your head to your toes. Place an ice pack under the back of your neck and take a footbath meanwhile. "Cooling the blood flow through your neck while warming your feet can sometimes halt the pain-causing dilation that's occurring in your head," he said. "Holding something warm in your hands or something very cold, like ice cubes, may also stimulate blood flow."

5. Take supplements if you get headaches frequently. Calcium and magnesium relieve muscular tension, the enzyme bromelain reduces inflammation and glucosamine sulfate can help relieve pain.



CFP Photo

Tips: Keep a headache diary

It is a good habit to keep a headache diary. "By keeping a diary, you will be able to notice patterns that seem to be responsible for your headache. Also, rate them on a zero-to-three scale of intensity: no headache, mild headache, moderate to severe headache, to incapacitating headaches," Chen said. "Start to look at what food you are eating. Many foods can trigger headaches. To help find out which foods bring on your headaches, make notes about what

you eat and drink each day."

A headache usually occurs three to 12 hours after eating a trigger food, so look back as far as 24 hours before the headache occurred to see what might have caused it. Women should begin tracking their monthly periods, as well as their use of hormone-replacement medications or oral contraceptives as a possible cause of headaches. Patients can then show this diary or calendar to their doctor.

A lazy vacation in the west

Leisurely pace and amazing food in Chengdu beckon to stressed out urbanites



The Thatched Cottage of Du Fu is one of the best places in Chengdu to enjoy a cup of tea.

CFP Photo

By Wang Yu

Never go to Sichuan in your youth, goes an ancient Chinese saying. The rationale: the province is so rich in natural resources and delectable food that old people feared the younger ones would become so comfortable with life they'd lose their drive and career ambitions.

But in this pressure-filled, workaholic world, the comfort that Sichuan offers is only too welcome among urbanites needing a break from the mind-numbing routine of fulfilling responsibilities and expectations.

Beijing Today begins an exploration of Sichuan in its capital Chengdu, two-and-a-half hours from the capital by plane.



A drink shop at Kuanzhai Xiangzi



The cafe at the panda base



A typical restaurant in Chengdu
Photos by Song Nannan

Cup of tea in an ancient garden

A perfect vacation in a new place is about not rushing from one tourist spot to another – which can exhaust the traveler and necessitate another holiday to recover. To really get to know the soul of a place, a visitor should follow the locals' daily routine. In Chengdu, this means moving unhurriedly and enjoying every moment of the day, including breakfast and the cup of afternoon tea.

Thatched Cottage of Du Fu, located beside the Flower-Bathing Brook in Chengdu's west, is a must on the tourist itinerary. It is the former residence of Du Fu, one of the most brilliant poets of the Tang Dynasty (618-907), who fled to Chengdu from Xi'an in 759 to escape the An Shi Rebellion. During his four years at Thatched Cottage, Du composed more than 240 poems that are now considered national treasures.

The estate covers 24 hectares, with Fan'an Temple in the east and Plum Garden to the west. It takes visitors about two hours to tour the entire place, but many are loathe to leave the lovely and tranquil sanctuary. If this is so, take a seat in the garden, order a pot of tea and watch the locals play mahjong under the trees.

Chengdu does not see too many sunny days, so when the sun does make an appearance, it is not uncommon for city residents to miss work and enjoy the outdoors. We may be in the 21st century, but a part of Chengdu remains in a time when life was simpler and little joys were part of everyday life.

Home of pandas

Sichuan is synonymous with the panda, so a trip to the provincial capital would not be complete without a visit to the Chengdu Panda Base. The base, located on the northern outskirts, is China's leading institution for panda research and breeding. What few people know is that it is also a beautiful park open to the public (admission 58 yuan).

The base is at the foot of a mountain – among many that surround Chengdu – so it is cooler than the city center. Visitors can walk along the stone steps from the gate to the panda pens at the top of a hill. It is a pleasure to walk under the shelter of bamboos and trees, while the smell of trees and flowers bring visitors back to the bosom of nature. People who cannot make the trek up can hop on a golf cart that seats 10 people (10 yuan for a round trip).

The pandas are kept in various sections of the base. Visitors can pay to hold a baby panda – the cubs are usually not allowed outdoors – and the money will go toward panda preservation programs. Lucky tourists may see older pandas doing their daily morning exercise; most of the time, they can be found in their pens eating or playing with their caretakers.

The base also houses more than 90 species of birds and red pandas, a spirited member of the raccoon and weasel family.

Getting there: There are several bus lines to the panda base from Zhaojiesi bus station, on Chengdu's north.



A resident of the Chengdu Panda Base is busy as usual.



Red Pandas, a member of the raccoon and weasel family, can also be found at the base.

Continued on page 21...



... continued from page 20

A night in the town

Chengdu is famous for its spicy hot pot, something that locals say they cannot live without. Tourists are better off finding street-side hot-pot shops than expensive restaurants. Many of the former have no walls or glass windows, so diners get to enjoy the food along with the street scene.

One of the most popular types of hot pot now is "chuan chuan," meat or vegetables on a stick (usually 0.10 yuan each) dipped in room-temperature chili oil before being eaten.

For traditional hot pot, locals love the dip that is made of sesame oil, oyster sauce, garlic and coriander. They believe the mixture protects the stomach lining from food that is too hot and spicy. This is a cholesterol-laden treat, but it is so good that diners always forget the dietitian's reminders.

Cold beer or soybean milk best complements a hot-pot meal.

After dinner, check out Kuanzhai Xiangzi, Chengdu's version of Nan Luoguxiang. The popular tourist haunt consists of three streets lined with restored old architecture. Would it be a surprise that there's a Starbucks in the area?

The streets are well laid out, with restaurants, pubs and cafes clustered near the main entrance and the back streets largely empty. Visitors usually sit around tables beside the street. If it showers, shop owners immediately come out with beach umbrellas.

Though Kuanzhai is one of the hottest night spots in the city, the drinks are quite inexpensive – about 15 yuan for a Bud. In this atmosphere, it is easy to stay out till midnight and wish the Chengdu holiday would last twice as long.



Playing mahjong is a big part of Chengdu life. CFP Photo



Kuanzhai Xiangzi showcases the traditional architecture of Chengdu.

Other attractions

History buffs should not miss Wuhou Temple, built in memory of Zhuge Liang, a well-known strategist and statesman during the Three Kingdoms Period (220-280). There is also a museum in honor of one of the kingdoms, the Kingdom of Shu, which established its capital in Chengdu.

Travel notes:

1. There are numerous flights daily between Beijing Capital Airport and Chengdu's Shuangliu Airport. A round-trip ticket, booked at least a week before the trip, can cost as little as 1,600 yuan.

2. Cab rides in Chengdu are cheaper than in Beijing, but a trip from the airport to the city center will still cost at least 50 yuan. A cheaper option (3 yuan) is to take a bus from the airport to the train station downtown.

3. Chengdu, located in one of China's four "basins," is more humid than Beijing, so bring cooler clothing. Also fill up on water regularly.

4. A single room in budget hotel chains like City Inn or 7 Days Inn costs around 170 yuan.



Photos by Song Nannan



2010年5月20日

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Dining



Mediterranean Theme Nights

Coffee Garden presents the Mediterranean Enticements every Thursday night. The dinner buffet will showcase a wide range of culinary specialties from Spain, Italy, Greece and North Africa, complemented with a regional wine to introduce diners to a vibrant Mediterranean culture. The Coffee Garden's culinary team, led by Executive Chef Roland Hofmann, captures the region's finest flavors in dozens of classical recipes.

Where: Shangri-La's Kerry Centre Hotel Beijing, 1 Guanghua Lu, Chaoyang District
Tel: 8565 2088



Singapore Seafood Festival

Indulge in the culinary offerings of savory Singapore cuisine at Singapore Seafood Festival at CBD. Tuck into perennial favorites Chilli crab, crispy squides, drunken prawns and more while you sip on Singapore's critically acclaimed Tiger Beer.

Where: CBD, Grand Millennium Beijing, 7 Dongshanhuan Zhong Lu, Chaoyang District
When: June 4-13
Cost: 166 yuan per person (lunch buffet), 216

yuan per person (dinner buffet), 298 yuan per person (Sunday brunch buffet)
Tel: 6530 9383



Happy Father's Day

Dad loves you and guides you each and every day. It's your turn to show how much you love him. Let's celebrate this important and joyous Father's Day at Valley Cafe in Crowne Plaza Beijing Zhongguancun, where dad is treated to an impressive variety of buffet selections.

Where: Valley Cafe, Crowne Plaza Beijing Zhongguancun, 106 Zhichun Lu, Haidian District
Tel: 5993 8888



Authentic American Sunday Roast

Indulge in a carefree Sunday that starts with a good old-fashioned lazy Sunday Roast with family and friends. Reviving American classics with a contemporary flair, sample an array of your favorite starters and soups; indulge in unlimited servings of prime beef rib and other "cuts" right at your table; and complete this gourmet experience with a delicious selection of traditional puddings, pies and other temptations. And on a lazy Sunday afternoon, nobody will blame you for indulging in an impressive selection of Bourbon whiskies and premium wines.

Where: One East, Hilton Beijing, 1 Dongfang Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Every Sunday, noon - 3 pm
Cost: 178 yuan per person (three-course set lunch), add 98 yuan per person for the wine buffet; subject to 15 percent surcharge
Tel: 5865 5030

Hotel

New Executive Chef at Sofitel Wanda Beijing

Sofitel Wanda Beijing is pleased to announce Christian Werdenberg as the new Executive Chef of the hotel. Werdenberg, a native of Switzerland, brings 26 years experience in the "art of cuisine." He has worked for several 5-star hotels across the world such as Hilton Abu Dhabi, Tokyo and Zurich and Sofitel Philippines Plaza (Manila, Philippines). In 2009, he joined Singapore Island Country Club the most prestigious golf and country club in Singapore and the region.

Where: Sofitel Wanda Beijing, 93 Jianguo Lu, Chaoyang District
Tel: 8599 6666

Earn As You Stay Best Available Rate

Until August 31, China World Hotel Beijing offers guests the opportunity to earn daily credits of 200 yuan for every day they stay based on the hotel's "Earn As you Stay Best Available Rate" deal. Guests can redeem the daily credit of 200 yuan immediately or during subsequent visits. The credit is valid until December 31 and may be used against room rates or for any hotel service, including food and beverage, laundry and massage treatments.

For reservations, visit shangrila.com/en/property/beijing/chinaworld/rooms.

Aviation

Successful launch of KLM Hangzhou-Amsterdam service

KLM Royal Dutch Airlines celebrated the launch of its new non-stop flight service between Hangzhou and Amsterdam on May 9. The new service, operated with Boeing 777-200ER aircraft with 35 seats in World Business Class and 283 seats in economy class, is offered three times a week. Flight KL882 departs from Hangzhou at 1:35 pm every Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday and arrives at 7:10 pm on the same day in Schiphol Airport. The return flight KL881 departs from Schiphol Airport at 3:05 pm every Monday, Wednesday and Saturday and arrives at 7:30 am the following day in Hangzhou.

For more information, visit airfrance.com.cn.

Jetstar to launch Singapore's first long-haul, low-fare airline

Jetstar has unveiled plans to launch Singapore's first long-haul, low-fare airline with services from Changi Airport commencing in late-2010. The low-fares leader will operate its next two A330-200 aircrafts from Singapore and will create up to 200 new aviation jobs across its growing Pan Asian network, including pilots, cabin crew, engineers and airport customer-service staff. Jetstar presently flies up to 2,000 weekly flights to 57 destinations with a fleet of 61 aircrafts across the Asia Pacific Region.

Event



Enjoy of World Cup with Best Brews Summer BBQ

With the great success of Best Brews BBQ in 2009, Four Points by Sheraton Beijing, Haidian, continues the exciting outdoor beer festival this year. The Best Brews outdoor barbecue promotion will be held at 6-10 pm every Friday starting from June 4 to the end of August. With the South Africa World Cup to be held this summer, the hotel will add a series of soccer-themed games during the BBQ. Guests can enjoy up to 16 types of local, regional and international beers together with a variety of popular barbecues 130 yuan net per person. The event will be held in the hotel's garden, where live band performances and lucky draws will be carried out.

Where: Aloft Beijing, 25 Yuanda Lu, Haidian District
Tel: 8889 8000

Charity

Marco Polo Parkside Beijing Supports Beijing Third Deaf School

Marco Polo Parkside Beijing sent a van full of school supplies to Beijing Third Deaf School on May 10. The school supplies, with a value of over 7,000 yuan, were purchased with money raised at the hotel's Lighting Ceremony in December 2009. Since its foundation in 2007, Marco Polo Parkside Beijing has been supporting several special education organizations in Beijing, including Third Deaf School and Sun Village, which shelters children whose parents are in prison.

For more information, visit beijing.parkside.marcopolohotels.com.

(By Sun Feng)

Chinglish story

This column focuses on Chinglish mistakes in our daily life. If you have any experiences to share, send them to Wang Yu at wangyu2008@ynet.com.



Don't say your boss is 'out to lunch'

By Huang Daohen

A position at a multinational company is an enviable job. There, you get to exchange ideas and experiences with great minds from around the world; the generous salary does not hurt either. However, the frequent exposure to native English speakers is a double-edged sword: it can quickly improve your English skills but also put you in risky situations.

My friend Jenner, who works for a US law firm in Beijing, knows the situation well.

On a recent workday morning, Jenner and some colleagues were assigned to do research on a new project. The work was tedious, so when lunchtime arrived, they were overjoyed to get a break and began animatedly discussing where to eat.

Suddenly, the company director,

Michael, showed up. Since he rarely came down from his top-floor office, everyone calmed down, expecting an important announcement.

Jenner, who just finished a phone call, wanted to make a polite comment to the big boss and said, "Out to lunch?"

Michael paused, then grinned: "Yes, I'm actually daydreaming."

After Michael spoke to staff and left, some of Jenner's foreign colleagues whispered to each other and laughed. Jenner had the distinct feeling they were discussing her and felt bewildered.

A helpful colleague explained the situation to Jenner a few days later. "Out to lunch," she said, is an idiom that means "not in touch with real world, not right in the head or inattentive." Or, as Michael said, "I'm actually daydreaming."

It was no wonder that when Jenner

called up Michael's office to ask for advice on a problem, his American executive assistant jokingly said, "I'm sorry, but he cannot get cracking with this problem right now since he's out to lunch."

Jeff, a US expat who teaches English at a Beijing university, said that since lunch can also be used as a verb, it is all right to say "out to lunch" as an abbreviation of "he's out of the office for lunch." Still, Jeff said, it would be better to just say, "He's at lunch," "He's away at lunch" or "He's not back from lunch yet."

Jenner later told me, "I'm lucky Michael didn't feel insulted and give me the boot." She said she recently learned the expression "give someone the boot," meaning "to fire someone." It is in no way related to shopping, just so you remember.

Chinglish on the way

This column aims to identify Chinglish in public areas. If you see any Chinglish signs, please send a picture of it to wangyu2008@ynet.com together with your name and address.

Do not disorder rubbish here

By Tiffany Tan

While I was waiting for a bus to work early this week, an elderly man on a tricycle stopped in front of the bus stop's garbage bin and began digging inside with his gloved right hand. I knew what he was after: plastic beverage bottles that he can sell to recycling shops. He had gloves on, which was a good line of defense against germs and protection I rarely see in the business — but then he began scratching his nose with his gloved hand. That to me was quite an unforgettable sight.



So an hour later, when the editor of this page showed me the picture above, I immediately thought, "Ah, they're tell-

ing the plastic-bottle collectors not to mess with the garbage here, since that can be distracting to tourists."

"No," the page editor said when I told him how I interpreted the sign, "it means do not throw your rubbish here." I look at the Chinese characters, and sure enough, that's what they say. The Chinglish sign got me there.

The English translation is truly a message that's more suited to those who dig for recyclable materials inside garbage bins. "Do not disorder rubbish here; do it somewhere else, or wait for the tourists to leave."

Blacklist

This is a column of words or phrases commonly misused by Chinese speakers. If you're planning to be an English teacher, reporter or employee of a multinational company, then watch out for this page each week.

1. This did not used to happen.

Professor Zhu Shida (ZS): Is this a very queer sentence? Is it wrong or right? First of all, let us see how the word "used" is used. "Used to" indicates a customary act, being accustomed to; for instance, He is used to hardships. Eskimos are used to cold weather. It also means "was or were accustomed to; formerly did." For example, He used to come at 10 o'clock, but now comes at noon. Then, what should we do if it is a negative sentence? We may say: He is not used to hardships. Eskimos are not used to hot weather. He used to not come at noon. However, in a negative sentence pattern, it may also be, mostly in conversational English: He did not used to come at noon. Or, He usedn't come at noon. So, "This did not used to happen" is all right.

Native speaker Anthony Tao (AT): "Usedn't"? That's one creative contraction if I've seen one, i.e. that's the first time I've seen't. Not recommended, of course, for use. Ever. But otherwise the professor is correct.

2. I look forever to find his kite in the cloudless blue sky.

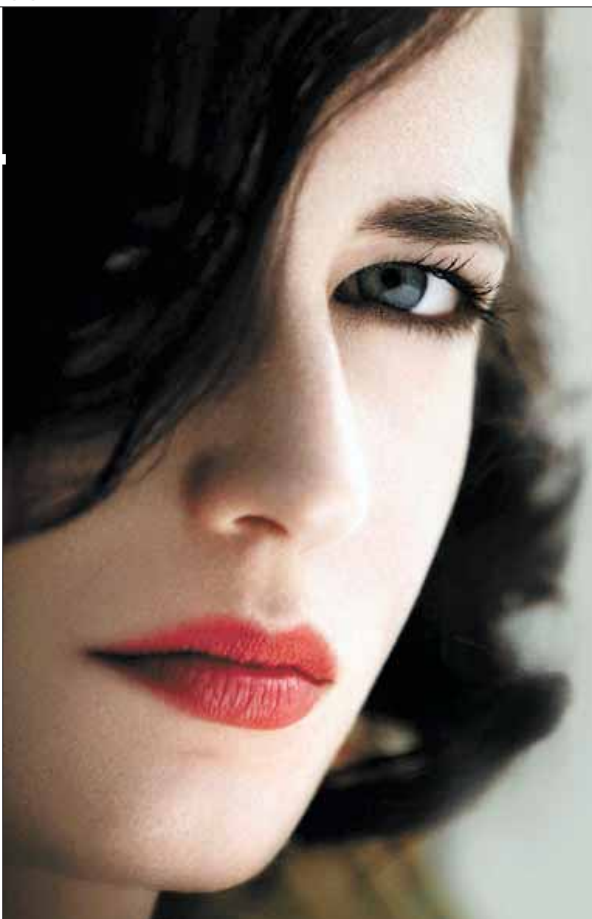
ZS: As we know, "forever" means "for always, without ever coming to an end." For instance, Nobody lives forever. "Forever honored and forever mourned," as in Alexander Pope's words. It also means "always, all the time." For instance, Some girls in my class are forever talking. She is forever talking to me that I should take more exercise. It implies that she is so incessantly wordy that you almost get annoyed. Now, let us come to the sample sentence. How can one look at the sky eternally? Isn't that mad? Well, here it means otherwise. It is in a conversational style. It means "for a long time." In this sense, we can understand what it means. It means I look at the sky for a very, very long time to finally find the elusive kite.

AT: I'm not exactly sure what the speaker is saying. It can be one of two things: "I am forever looking to find his kite in the cloudless blue sky," meaning whenever there is a blue sky, the speaker looks to find a kite, perhaps like the narrator in *Kite Runner*, whose relationship with kites has been indelibly ingrained in his soul and psyche; or, "I've been looking forever to find his kite in the cloudless blue sky," which means he's currently searching for a kite — and has been scanning the sky for a while — but can't find it. Unfortunately, the use of "look forever" in the sample sense isn't very conversational; if anything, it's poetic, like, "I look forever to find my lost days," implying a keen sense of longing.

3. Whereas and where

ZS: We know that "whereas" is a conjunction which means "on the contrary; but; while." It marks a turn in tone. For instance, Some children like school whereas others do not. She is diligent whereas he is lazy. "Whereas" is used in very formal legal English, meaning "considering that ..." For instance, Whereas the people are worried about the ever-warming climate, this body pledges to take the following actions ... However, sometimes we find "where" in place of "whereas." We may just as well say: Some children like school where others do not. She is diligent where he is lazy. However, this is conversational style. In standard formal English writing, you will have to use "whereas" if you wish to express a turn in tone.

Anthony: I agree.



Movie of the week

For most men, this movie will reveal the worlds of women in ways they can never imagine.

Director Jordan Scott, daughter of *Gladiator* director Ridley Scott, proves she is no less talented than her father in this movie. Working in spite of the script, the colors of each scene perfectly guide the story to an innocent and shocking ending.

The movie also features Eva Green, who has established herself as one of the sexiest and smartest actresses on screen. This time she plays the role of a private-school teacher who lives only in her imagination. Without Green, the movie loses half of its charm.

Synopsis

Within the confines of a strict, all-girls English boarding school, some cliquy students join the swim team not only to pass time but also to be close to their swimming instructor, the enigmatic yet charismatic Miss G. While Miss G initially encourages their idolization and cracks made about her, the teacher's attention quickly focuses on the arrival of an exotic and beautiful Spanish pupil, Fiamma. As the new girl rebuffs her classmates and further rejects Miss G's advances, her teammates begin to grow jealous of Miss G's fascination with Fiamma and resent the latter's disdain of their instructor, leading to Fiamma's inexplicable disappearance.

Cracks

(2009)



Scene 1

(The students are practicing diving with Miss G.)

Miss G (G): That's it. Feet together. Arms straight, eyes forward. You are sinew and muscle, cutting through air and water. With grace, with form, with agility!

Fuzzy, you can do better than that.

Fuzzy: I had seconds of porridge and toast for breakfast and now I feel a bit queer (1).

G: Fuzzy. Is that the most important thing in life? Porridge?

Fuzzy: No, Miss G.

G: Then what is? Think.

Fuzzy: God, Miss G.

G: No, Rosie?

Rosie: Being kind to all God's creatures?

G: No, you're missing the point, dear. Poppy?

Poppy: Death.

G: In life, Poppy! Di?

Di (D): Desire, Miss G.

G: Yes! Thank you, Radfield! The most important thing in life is desire. You can achieve anything you want. The world is yours for the taking (2). Nothing is impossible for you, my girls. All you need is to desire it. Do you have desire?

All students: Yes, Miss G.

Scene 2

(Miss G and the girls take a morning swim.)

D: Miss G learnt this game in India.

Fiamma (F): Really? I love India. When were you



there?

G: A few years ago.

D: Miss G, tell Fiamma about how you rode on elephants with rajas!

G: Oh, Di, we've all heard that story before. I'd rather hear about Fiamma's adventures.

F: I haven't had adventures. I just traveled with my father.

D: Miss G traveled alone.

F: Really?

G: I was a bit of a scandal in my day. I remember one captain who was quite loath to

(3) having an unaccompanied woman on board. It caused such a stir (4), I was forced to disembark at the next port.

Where else have you been, Fiamma?

F: Abyssinia, Somaliland, the Dodecanese. And Paris. Paris is filthy. Do you care for Paris?

G: I love to travel. One day I shall have to resume my exploration of the world. It's in our blood, isn't it?

You're not like the other girls. They're still waiting for their lives to begin. But not

you. But you can go whenever you choose.

F: Why do you stay?

G: I stay for my girls, of course. When they leave, so shall I.

Scene 3

(Di talks with Fiamma at night. Fiamma knows Miss G's problem, which makes the teacher nervous.)

D: You shouldn't be so bloody superior all the time. You're making her miserable, you know.

And ruining the team. If we're to be lumbered with you, you have to learn the happiness of the team is more important than your own.

F: I have no interest in being part of your team. I'm not even meant to be here.

D: Well, you're here now! So you had better make the best of it and stop being so bloody selfish.

F: I'm not selfish. I just want to go home.

D: Don't you think we all want to go home?

Vocabulary

1. queer: here it means feeling slightly ill

2. for the taking: easily available

3. be loath to: be unwilling to

4. stir: here it means commotion or ruckus

(By Wang Yu)

