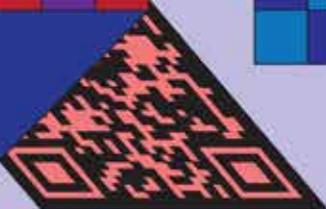


April 2018

THE

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# NANJINGER



*Convenience*  
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APRIL 2018

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## Introducing some of our contributors, editors & designers

Our Editor-in-chief and Music Critic, Frank Hossack, has been a radio host and producer for the past 34 years, the past 25 of which working in media in China, in the process winning four New York Festivals awards for his work, in the categories Best Top 40 Format, Best Editing, Best Director and Best Culture & The Arts.

贺福是我们杂志的编辑和音乐评论员，在过去的34年里一直从事电台主持和电台制片的工作。在中国有近25年的媒体工作经验。工作期间他曾经四次获得过纽约传媒艺术节大奖，分别是世界前40强节目奖，最佳编辑奖，最佳导演奖以及最佳文化艺术奖。

As an Australian journalist living in Nanjing for many years, Renée Gray has a background in research, print and online publishing, taking great pleasure in discovering more about Nanjing with every article. 作为在南京居住多年的澳大利亚新闻工作者，Renée Gray有着调研以及印刷品和线上出版物的工作背景。她总是乐于在每篇文章里发现关于南京的内容。

Matthew Stedman has spent years living and working in China. He has sold Chinese tea in the UK, and loves discussing the miraculous leaf with new (and suspicious) audiences. He however never feels happier than when researching the product here in beautiful South China.

Matthew Stedman在中国生活工作了多年。多年在中英两国从事茶叶贸易的他，喜欢和新读者讨论神奇的东方树叶(虽然有时他的读者保持怀疑态度)。没什么比在美丽的江南走访品尝各种茶叶更让他开心的事了。

Legal columnist Carlo D'Andrea is Chair of the Legal & Competition Working group of the European Union Chamber of Commerce in China; Shanghai Chapter, Coordinator of the Nanjing Working Group of the Italian Chamber of Commerce in China and has taught Chinese law (commercial and contractual) at Rome 3 University.

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Roy Ingram has over 25 years experience working as an artist and Creative Director. His early career was with agencies in London but for the past eight years he has lived and worked in Nanjing.

Roy先生有着超过25年的创意总监和艺术家的工作经历。他早期的职业生涯是在伦敦的一家机构里开始的，但是在八年前他决定来到南京生活工作。

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“Convenience”

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# Convenience Store

*The blue-white strip lights slip-slide above  
his head*

*As he floats down another empty aisle-  
filled*

*With goods prepared for his convenience.*

*Sweets and treats, flour for baking, pills  
For aching limbs and steadily the shopping  
trolley fills*

*Beyond wants, beyond desires- filling for  
his convenience.*

*Hypnotized with eyes wide open- mind  
wide shut*

*He nods vague tokens of appreciation  
Of the miles of aisles of hopelessness-  
shelved for his convenience.*

*And still lights pulse and muzak fades with  
a siren's calm.*

*He feels at home- neither too warm or too  
cold,*

*In a vast cattle mart- prepped for his  
convenience.*

*"The goods on sale are there, don't sweat  
it,*

*Pay at the counter. No cash? Flash the  
card, type the magic number.*

*No need for you to worry; we are here -for  
your every convenience."*

*Empty check out girls smiling, sliding  
goods across conveyer belts.*

*Are we not all on our own conveyer belt,  
waiting, to be slid*

*From life to stale nothingness, a taste of  
which we have just been sold*

*Prepackaged-for our convenience?*

*By Maitiu Brallaghan '18*

# EDITORIAL

## Gold for the Price of Silver

**T**his City of Convenience in which we live offers us hitherto unimagined possibilities to live a fulfilled life.

Or does it?

In this issue, the real price we pay for that 3-hour commute to Beijing, that “3D car park” or that walk deep underground so that we can be collectively squeezed and pumped through long dark tunnels (p10).

Elsewhere, by 2025 childhood obesity in China is set to be three times that of

the swelling USA, and apps are a large part of the problem (p12).

Then there is our New Order’s so called “win-win”, something we could also call “justified selfishness”. Could the fact that we help others only when it serves our own purpose be the possible downfall of civilisation (p17)?

Welcome to “Convenience” from The Nanjinger.

*Ed.*

# DISTRIBUTION

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This magazine is part of a family of English publications that together reach a large proportion of the foreign population living in Nanjing, along with a good dash of locals, comprising:

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City Guide  
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/'pæliətɪv/ /keɪ(r)/

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# Inter-Personal Communication in an *Era of* *Dystopian* *Convenience*

**Wow, your Chinese is very good**, remarked the supermarket checkout employee. “Your pronunciation is very standard, better than ours”, chimed in her giggling colleague on the adjacent cash register. “How long have you been in China?” “Longer than you”, I say, using my favourite China line for the third time that week. “Where are you from?”

**Blah, blah, blah...** Later, upon returning from a mid-morning meeting downtown, we found the little scrap of paper under the car’s driver-side windscreen wiper. On it was scrawled, “I’m the parking guy. Have gone to lunch. Please call me when you come back: My number is....”

Elsewhere, The Nanjinger’s Executive Editor, **Renée Gray Beaumont**, recalls for us some of her own experience when dealing with Nanjing’s transportation system.

“I used to get the number 34 bus to and from work every day. Most of the drivers were miserable and it was clear they hated their job. But there was one who stood out from the rest. Nearing old age, he would always take the time to give me a smile and a nod of the head. This gesture made my hellish bus experience all the more bearable and I was very grateful for that.”

Over on the iron way, the Nanjing–Beijing sleeper, train number 1462 (it’s not worthy of a letter prefix) departs at 4:45pm and arrives in Beijing, its “pukuai” (普快) designation being somewhat of a misnomer, some 18 hours 1 minute later.

Those 18 hours are also fairly noisy, and clanky, with the train stopping at half the stations between here and Beijing. Yet, it is along this sweaty, dirty ride, that one can be invited into a stranger’s cabin, to sit and chat a while, to even escape to the dining car with the English speaking one and quaff beers late into a rattly night.

These four stories all date from a time that is really not so long ago. A time of considerable inconvenience, some might argue.

They may well be right too, as it is time to bring our story bang up to date, with their modern era equivalents.

For this age of expediency has brought us convenience stores that are unstaffed (pictured). Creations of the online retailers, who view brick and mortar stores as modern evils, here is where it is intended that we shop in the future.

Convenient; yes, when the technology works.  
Disconcerting; definitely.

While such stores remain few and far between, at least for the moment, on a grander scale, Nanjing-based retailer and convenience store operator Suguo has also recently introduced self-service checkouts at many of its larger branches. Enter your phone number associated with your Suguo VIP account, scan your items, select payment by WeChat, Alipay or what have you, open the APP and let your phone be scanned. Done.

Elsewhere, the parking guy has become all-but extinct. In this super age of the Mall, parking, for the most part, is now a subterranean affair.

Until recently, underground parking facilities featured a person in a booth at the entrance, one whose sole job was to present a card to an entering car, and extract cash from it upon exit.

That person is now unemployed.

They’ve been replaced, by a QR code.

Now, number plate recognition technology takes note of the car upon entry. Prior to exiting, the driver scans a QR code, usually semi-conveniently located, enters their car number plate number and makes an online payment. Done.

As more and more Metro lines open, so it has become

the de facto form of public transportation. For nothing moves large numbers of people around than underground tunnels through which trains zoom every 3 minutes. In 2017, there were close to 1 billion passenger journeys made on the Nanjing metro system.

There, standing shoulder to shoulder, Nanjing Metro TV tries desperately in vain to distract passengers from their cellphones.

On the Metro’s high-speed cousins, the 18-hour marathon to Beijing is now a 3-hour commute. But just as with the Metro, distractions are few and far between. Noteworthy, though, are perhaps the man speaking way too loudly and obnoxiously on his phone, together with the disembodied announcement informing passengers that failing to comply with the Railway Bureau’s regulations may affect their credit rating.

It’s all very, very convenient. To a degree that is almost dystopian.

The Oxford English Dictionary describes a dystopia as, “An imagined state or society in which there is great suffering or injustice, typically one that is totalitarian or post-apocalyptic”.

## *You have now arrived at your destination.*

It is also a convenience that begs bigger questions to be asked. Is this a two-way street? Have we deliberately created all this convenience as a means to avoid inter-personal communication? If so, when Artificial Intelligence does take over the world, will we only be able to sigh and say that we brought it on ourselves?

Back on the buses, Renée concludes her story.

“When Christmas came around, I wrote him a card and gave it to him one day. In return, he waited until he saw me next and handed me a box of chocolates with a small note that read ‘Merry Christmas’. I still don’t know his name to this day but I will never forget his face and our lovely, human interaction.”

Facing the reality of today, the coin has two sides. For the foreigners who don’t speak Chinese, this lack of inter-personal communication is a bonus. Simply sit down in the restaurant and point at the menu. When finished eating, sign the imaginary check in the air, then hold out one’s phone to be scanned.

***That’s convenience for you. And China is all the worse for it.*** 🇨🇳

## *Chubby China's Bulge Battle with Killer Apps*

Famine

to

Feast

*By Renée Gray Beaumont*

***In 1982, a mere 7 percent of China's population was obese. By 1992, that had risen to 15 percent and in 2012, the number of people clinically obese reached 300 million, according to the Chinese Ministry of Health.***

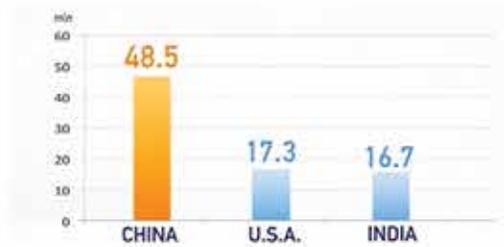
**F**amously lean and agile; feasting was certainly reserved only for the 2 weeks a year that the country is encouraged to indulge. Look at the statistics of any urban, developed city in China these days (some 40 years later) and you are guaranteed to see a large proportion of young people suffering from a host of illnesses that have resulted from two things: convenience and affluence.

What ever happened to the thought that was, ***"Well if I can't have it, then I can't have it",*** or ***"If I want that snack, I'll have to walk to the shop to get it; if I don't walk to the shop, then I obviously didn't want it that much".*** What has happened to living with the fact that we cannot always have everything that we want?

## Famine to *Feast*



Childhood Obesity in China



Childhood Obesity by 2025

It is understandable that, for a nation of people who not that long ago suffered unbearable hardships, would now want nothing more but to relish in her new convenient lifestyle. That said, for the children of the 1990s or 2000s, there is no such excuse. Professionals blame a poor diet, no activity and a lack of awareness and understanding passed down from parents as the main cause of China's rise in obesity. Yet, there are other rising factors at play.

"The obesity epidemic in China may also have its roots in the prevailing social attitudes towards body fatness. In Chinese culture, there is still a widespread belief that excess body fat represents health and prosperity. This is perhaps a consequence of China's recent history, where famine and chronic malnutrition caused the deaths of millions of people in the 1950s", writes Chief professor Wu Yangfeng in the journal article "Overweight and Obesity in China".

***With wealth, Chinese health has suffered. The country has become so rich, so fast and its appetite for food and extravagance has grown exponentially.***

Along with the fact that people just are not cooking anymore, restaurants are closing down and making way for a new kind of service that has taken over the market; the delivery app service. While for some, ordering in can be an inconvenience, for most people, it is the best thing since boiled rice.

Now, you do not even need to leave your house, as fast, cheap food can be delivered within 30 minutes, straight to your door, three, four, five times a day. Not only do these apps deliver food, but alcohol too, medicines and groceries, online shopping and more. The convenience of these apps is killing China and no one is even noticing.

China is now second only to the United States when it comes to obesity,<sup>β</sup> with a staggering 30 percent of its population obese. Saddest of all are China's childhood obesity statistics; according to the World Obesity Federation one out of every six boys and one out of every eleven girls are obese. It is also predicted that by 2025, 48.5 percent of children in China will suffer from obesity, a number published by the US National Library of Medicine.

Then there is the knowledge that obesity not only affects Chinese children of primary school age, but kindergarten also. "Pediatric overweight and obesity has become a major public health problem in China... Chinese preschool children had a high prevalence of overweight and obesity, and demonstrated poor sleep and physical activity habits", conclude contributing scholars in a journal article entitled "The Relationship Between Obesity, Sleep and Physical Activity in Chinese Preschool Children".

Fat camps are on the rise too, while China tries to control worsening health problems related to the sharp rise in obesity related illnesses. These include hypertension, diabetes, fatty liver, chronic back and neck pain. However as entrepreneurship continues to flourish in China, so do the unregulated and dangerous technologies of convenience.

Discussing her thoughts on delivery apps with The Nanjinger is Human Resources worker Leslie Lee, "I've been using delivery apps for around 3 years. I usually order my lunch and afternoon tea using the apps, my father cooks me dinner most nights. Before the apps came about I would walk somewhere close to the office and get lunch there. I like using the apps, they're cheap and convenient".

## Famine to *Feast*



Conversely CFO Angela W spoke of her dislike for so called "convenience apps" and how she wishes to distance herself from it all. "I try to use these apps as little as possible because I don't want to be controlled by AI. I can see my friends becoming addicted to it. I feel my data and personal details have all been stolen, I don't like it".

Albee Zhang writing for Physorg says, "Users of meal-ordering platforms tripled in 2 years to 343 million in 2017, the China Internet Network Information Center said, the vast majority using mobile apps...Delivery platforms have raised billions in venture capital and are said to be burning cash via discounts to grab market share, with growth rates expected to slow...But the industry impact will deepen".

***While the fattest of them all are slowly realising that their next meal order could mean a stroke or death, some are rushing to the nearest fat camp, gym, nutritionist and acupuncturist in order to help curb their weight gain.*** For a nation that has traditionally followed a very nutritious low fat diet for thousands of years, it seems ironic that dietetics awareness regarding the dangers of take out is in dire need.

School children now speak of nutrition classes, but how much and what exactly they are being taught remains unknown. Jamie Oliver famously took action in the early 2000s when the UK started suffering from a childhood obesity epidemic; he aimed at teaching children about the foods they were eating and educated both children and parents in how to rediscover cooking again.

Perhaps China too needs a reintroduction to cooking?

People living in the most affluent of areas in China, such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou have already begun to see food delivery and the quality of it for what it really is; a killer. As a result, there is a growing awareness amongst first tierers to seek healthier better options, and like everything in China, this has given way to a new kind of business.

And entertainment. The Fat Artistic Troupe is a group of four overweight Chinese ladies who appeared on State broadcaster CCTV as long ago as 2015 ,in the hopes of breaking taboos and changing people's perceptions of obesity.

According to a study by Nielsen Global Health & Wellness, "Rising awareness of health is a rising consumer trend in [the] Chinese market, and this could translate into real opportunity for manufacturers... Nearly 45 percent of the Chinese respondents consider themselves overweight... There is a tremendous opportunity for food manufacturers and retailers to lead a healthy movement by providing the products and services that consumers want and need".

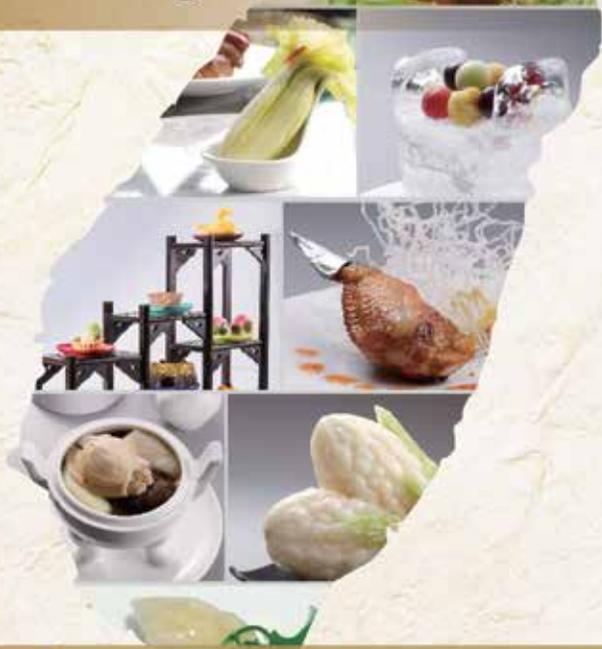
Thus, as China continues to rise, so does its waistline. Perhaps with a mountain of awareness, the right teachings and a squandering of traditional thoughts and behaviour, along with new trends in food manufacturing, China can continue to maintain its slender, elegant and wise posture on the world's stage. 



# Greetings from Taiwan



Celebrate the 35th Anniversary  
of Jinling Hotel Nanjing



Nostalgia is a narrow strait separating me on this side and you the other. However, except for the nostalgia, there are still warm-hearted greetings coming from the other side of the strait.

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BEERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD



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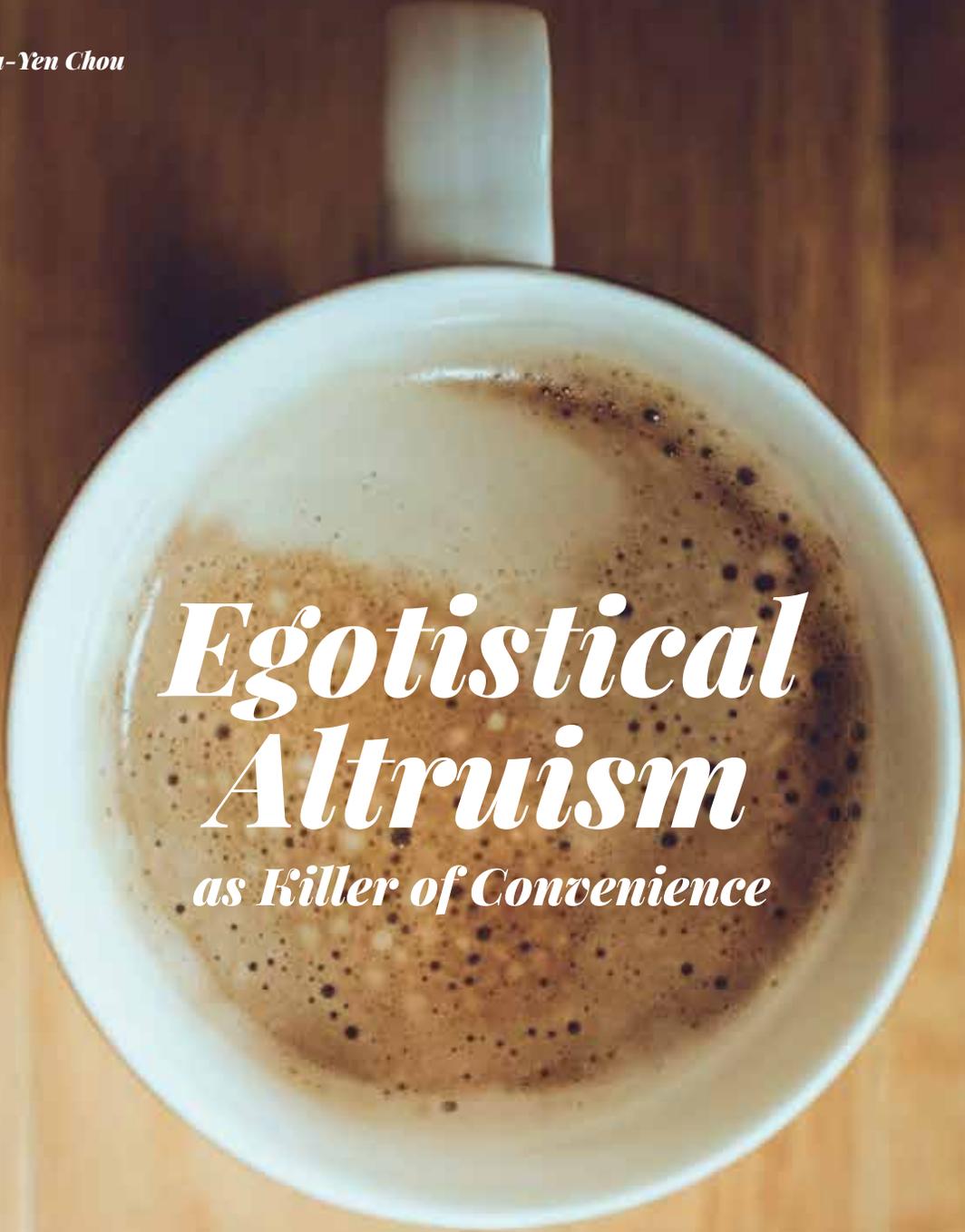
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KITCHEN OPEN DAILY UNTIL MIDNIGHT

By Mu-Yen Chou



# *Egotistical Altruism as Killer of Convenience*

Isn't it convenient to think that every morning there would be a cup of coffee simply waiting for you to climb out of bed and make? And no, it didn't *just* come from the supermarket down the street; no, it didn't *just* come from a bag with some beans; no, it didn't *just* come from a plant; no, didn't just come from Africa. In truth, the origin of coffee beans is unknown. A general consensus is that it came from Ethiopia. This is important knowledge, as it raises quite the query when you ponder how coffee in liquid form would come to conveniently make its way to China.

*Short answer, globalisation.*

*Long answer.*

Through trade and commerce between people of different nationalities and backgrounds around the world, all collaborating to bring you a cup of coffee 7,047 kilometres or 4,378 miles just before the birds start chirping in the morning. Of course, nowadays coffee may be grown in places other than Ethiopia, but I would like to think it's the romantic gesture that counts.

## EGOTISTICAL ALTRUISM

**Point is** only through globalisation is this type of convenience possible. The era of globalisation has been afoot for many years, yet it clear that the trend has not always been synonymous with progress. Convenience can easily become the method for laziness and ignorance. So, the question is, when does convenience become too convenient?

In China, the positive effects of globalisation can be felt with an increasing presence in all its fields. Since Deng Xiaoping's 1978 contribution to opening modern China's market to the outside world, China has morphed into one of the most developed nations through commerce. This is evident from the many time lapse videos I'm sure you have seen of urban Shanghai or Beijing, with their towering skyscrapers and cars on busy streets that have been reduced to streaks of light. China has also since given rise to many large companies by accepting products that have been globalised to China. Companies such as Xiaomi and Alibaba are examples of companies that will be in competition with foreign firms outside China. They will be inspired by others, innovate, and in turn inspire other companies in other parts of the world just as it went for them. Each improvement will make our lives all the more convenient. In the field of science, CERN, the European nuclear physics organisation is also planning to globalise to China. Planning the construction of an improved Hadron Collider three times larger than the collider in Europe. This will bring forth the collaboration of hundreds of universities, laboratories, and engineers from around the globe in an attempt to further understand the world. All of this demonstrates the power globalisation has on making our lives better.

The extent of globalisation's effect is far from straightforward, though. A problem globalisation brings up is the link between the increased quality of life and the resultant increase in the consumption of natural resources. Anybody who has lived in the urban areas of China can see that behind the bravado lies a mountain of trash. Norms such as the single use of plastic bags in the supermarkets or the discarding of perfectly usable phones because it is not the newest version. Or even something as small as purchasing an over packaged piece of candy. As far as I am concerned, making me work through four layers of wrapping just to get to a single piece of candy doesn't

make sense, but what would I know, I only buy the stuff. Yet I digress. More could be said when looking into the effect of globalisation on culture. Paired with an introduction of new ideas and values is also an increase in discriminatory thinking. Psychologist Henri Tajfel contended that everybody belongs to a "ingroup", and there exists competition with other "outgroups" as a source of self-esteem; a behaviour that can be intensified through globalisation. The additional exposure to a multitude of new cultures makes people feel swamped, and increases the chance of discrimination. Globalisation is a useful tool, but also makes it possible to make the lives of people harder.

The conundrum here is that nature dictates convenience and comfort, but almost simultaneously developing alongside globalisation is a temporary mindset that follows the route of egotistical altruism. A mindset that justifies selfishness, by making decisions to help others based on the benefits it would provide for yourself. Don't get me wrong; this has advanced the quality of life of people around the world, and largely eradicated geopolitical violence as natural resources can simply be traded. The problem is, though, that at some point, the resources of the world will not be enough to sustain everyone, so that everybody will benefit from exchanges. At some point, countries will start to isolate themselves from the rest of the world because it is more beneficial to store resources up for themselves, and care for their own groups. We are already near the threshold where this mindset is no longer sustainable. As our consumption of the world's resources goes on unchecked, so the trash piles up, natural resources become limited and countries isolated. The world will then make a clear distinction between the people who have everything and the people who do not, and there will be no way to breach the divide because trade will have become extinct. A universe not unlike the dystopias written in novels.

So, the question now remains is should we persist in trying to find new methods to sustain our altruistic society, or should we abandon our old values and adopt a new ideology? Is it too idealistic to think that this could be based on genuine goodness, and truly sharing for the benefit of others. For being selfless can change the course of human history.

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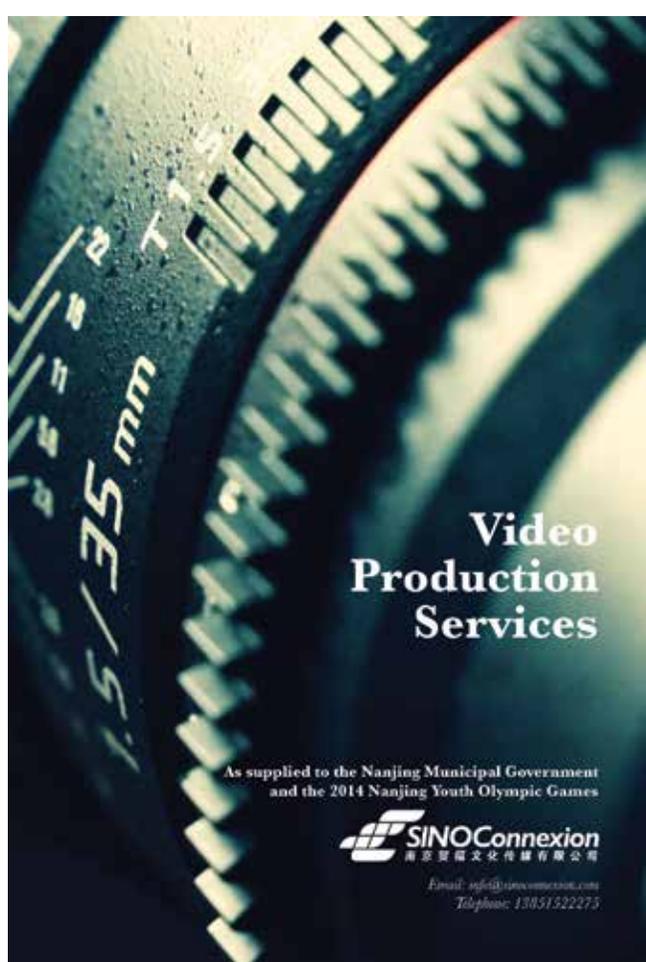
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# Chomping Thru China

With Renée Gray Beaumont

## Spring Bamboo Shoots

If you were anything like me, when you first arrived in China, you would never have known that one can actually eat bamboo. Scaffolding sure, furniture of course, heck even bedding why not, but as a food, it seemed absurd. However, after having spent some time getting used to the idea, I've jumped on the bamboo band wagon (so to speak), and have chomped my way into finding out everything there is to know about how the Chinese cook with bamboo.

That we are actually eating indeed comes from the shoots that sprout up alongside the bamboo plant itself, and as it is one of the fastest growing vegetables, supply is never short. Resembling little black gnomes, they belong to the Bambusoideae subfamily of grass, and in spring and early summer (in some parts of China, winter too) they are plucked and harvested for the kitchen.

The Chinese refer to bamboo shoots as "zhu sun jian" or "sun jian", but mostly as simply "sun". Once it has been yanked from the earth, its outside layer resembles a corn husk. It is then stripped back layer by layer until its smallest part remains; this is the part that is then boiled four or five times. Boiling the fresh bamboo, or soaking it overnight, comes highly recommended, for it contains cyanide that needs to be eliminated before it can be eaten!

Culinary usage of bamboo in Chinese cuisine dates back to literature that emerged during the Tang dynasty (618CE-907CE), works that specifically extoll the plant's great health benefits. Today's findings conclude that the eating of bamboo can provide an array of nutritional value, such as being diet friendly, as a result of its low calorie, sugar and fat content. It is high in protein, vitamins, minerals and fiber, while bamboo is also said to aid weight loss, heart health, cholesterol balance, cancer treatment, bowel movement, while being an anti-inflammatory and more.

In China, we can buy canned, packaged, or fresh bamboo. The packaged kind I find in Suguo, sitting amongst the mushrooms in the fresh produce section. I believe these have been soaked, thus making them ready to eat, and I find them delicious. I simply open the package, pour out the water and add it straight to my wok or pot. I believe the canned version works the same way. However, as mentioned above, be sure to boil the bamboo four or five times if you have opted to buy it fresh, in order to rid it of toxins.

The Chinese (and people all over Asia, for that matter) tend to either stir-fry the bamboo or boil it in soup. Bamboo is a versatile vegetable with which to cook, in terms of its flavour-ability aspects. Naturally, found exclusively in Asian cooking, almost any other flavours can be added to bamboo. If presented in large strips, it is usually soft, yet crisp in texture, but not chewy. If the bamboo comes shredded, then it may feel textually somewhat similar to mushroom. 🍵

### Some common Chinese bamboo dishes:

- Sichuan spring bamboo shoot stir fried with pork slices
- Pickled bamboo shoots and duck soup
- Braised spring bamboo shoots
- Laotian bamboo salad
- Soup with pork, bean sprouts, bamboo shoots, and mushrooms
- Braised tofu with mushroom and bamboo shoots
- Menma (Seasoned Bamboo Shoots) with Ramen
- Bamboo dumpling fillers



## Sea Tea *From the Mountains of Qingdao*

*Let me tell you about this green tea I'm drinking.*

Laoshan tea (崂山茶). It's all a bit of a mystery. But, as these leaves unravel (slowly), I'm building up more of a picture.

Let's be honest; Baidu is helping out as well.

This tea was a gift from a friend, who, like the tea, hails from Shandong, that peninsula jutting out from the east of China. It's not North China. But Shandong is distinctly "northern" in tea terms; further north than Henan, home of the previous, most-northerly tea plantation mentioned in Strainer, Xinyang Magian (信阳毛尖).

Tea growing benefits from southern climes (that's why it doesn't grow in Wales), and tea also benefits from altitude, which normally depends on central location within a large landmass; the world's tallest mountains do not overlook the sea.

Yet, Shandong is a coastal province, and the Laoshan mountain range, just east of Qingdao, clearly borders the sea. We're used to thinking of tea fields looking down on lakes or even a "sea of clouds". Perhaps this is the closest thing to a real "sea tea".

Altitude is achieved, it seems; Baidu's photographs suggest these fields overlook the sea from a great height. It's a rocky landscape, but also a very green one. I see the pictures of the production facilities - those earnest blue roofs of industry.

Drinking this tea, I am aware of two distinct phases. There's a very biscuity first cup. This biscuity, sweet pea quality is apparent from

the smell of the dried leaves. Now, sometimes, I can retain this quality by feeding the leaves progressively cooler water with each steeping. But that's not working here.

There's an astringency that defines the experience of drinking this tea. It overrides the sweet sensations from the second steeping onwards, and that's a slight disappointment to this drinker.

The leaves actually remain tangled for a long time; unlike, say, lu'an guapian (六安瓜片), another green tea with a "biscuity" opening. But it doesn't feel to me that these dark green leaves are coyly concealing their charms; there's little incentive to persevere with them ad infinitum. Actually, for today's drinking, I have chosen to replace the leaves with new ones, rather than just adding water.

Maybe I will grow to love this green tea while finishing the bag in the freezer. But for now I'm more intrigued by its provenance and miniature-oolong-like appearance than blown away by its flavour.

It's not a famous tea in China. Perhaps, like our local yuhua cha (雨花茶), the smallness of the planting region makes it difficult to achieve economies of scale or to reach that tipping point in the public consciousness. Shandong province does produce a more famous green tea, rizhao cha (sunshine tea; 日照茶). That's a topic for a future Strainer.

Sorry to say, Laoshan tea doesn't taste of sea salt or sea weed. Nothing like it. But, if you hold your ear close to the teacup, you can hear the sea! 



# Why is **red** not always *lucky* in China?

FOR ARTS SAKE  
with *Francesca Leiper*

Let me guess you've heard once or twice that the colour red in China is a symbol of happiness and good luck. Red packets stuffed with red banknotes shower China's crimson clad brides as firecrackers ping and pop into a carpet of ruby confetti. Xi Jinping speaks against a backdrop of vermilion drapes and rippling red flags, but a stone's throw from the scarlet washed walls of the Forbidden City.

## The colour **red** in China comes in scores.

While the Romans used cinnabar, a highly toxic mineral, to rouge their villa frescos, China turned to iron-based pigments, which were equally poisonous. Even worse, as time goes on the iron oxidises turning red hues into jet black. At the caves of Dunhuang in Gansu province the effect is most peculiar. Buddhas and Bodhisattvas whose skin was once painted a light pink, instead look like they've hailed from Africa with dark skin on their faces and bodies.

From a change in colour to a change in perception, the Chinese concept of the colour red has not always been the same. What if I told you that the Forbidden City walls are in fact not red, but purple? That's right, purple. The palace in Chinese is known as (zijin Cheng), which literally means "Purple Forbidden City". While the colour itself hasn't changed, the maroon shade was known in imperial China as purple and was associated with the higher realms of the Celestial Emperor.

Red was a favourite colour of emperors who hoped its auspicious qualities would bring prosperity and success to their reign. More recently in China, red has strong political connotations and is associated with revolution and the Communist Party.

The red star is a symbol of communist ideology and featured heavily in the material culture of Mao's China. It is used in the emblem of the People's Liberation Army as well as the logo of China's famous baijiu brand, Hongxing Erguotou. But I certainly wouldn't associate a hangover from that stuff with happiness and joy!

On the contrary, in 1997 when Hong Kong was returned to China, the colour red was hastily covered up. Iconic red post boxes were lathered in shades of green and purple days after the British handover in attempt to paint over the city's colonial past.

The French who imported ceramics from China and desperately tried to imitate them, showed a particular preference for a lighter shade on the spectrum. They found rosy pink to have an exceptionally Oriental flavour. When the Chinese first saw the colour, they found it so peculiar that it was given the name yangcai meaning 'foreign colour'. They eventually adopted it to produce and sell famille rose porcelain back to Europe.

As for paintings, it has even been shown that those containing the colour red sell better at auction, and with Chinese buyers taking an increasingly large slice of the art market, their preference for the lucky colour is pushing up the value of this vibrant shade.

Today the colour red might be the dreaded PM 2.5 number as it sours over 150 or the notice that tells you there will be construction on your building for the next four months. But while the fashion or function of red may always be changing in China, the colour most certainly looks set to stay. 



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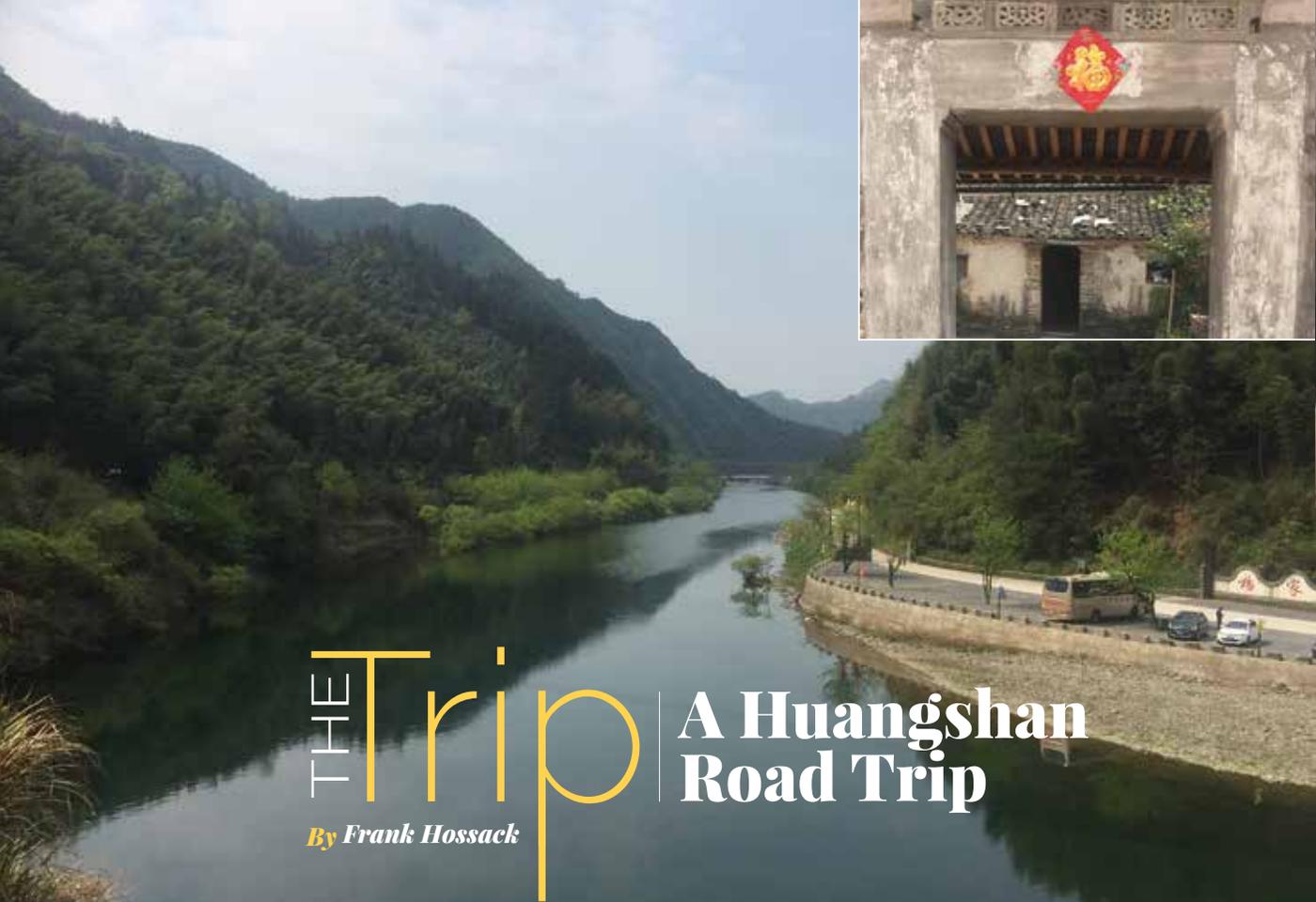


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# THE Trip | A Huangshan Road Trip

By Frank Hossack



*The word “Taiping” is virtually a cliché. As a place name, this is the local equivalent of Springfield in the USA; no less than 47 towns in China go by the moniker. Then the name pops up in Taiping Insurance, Haerbin Taiping International Airport, the Taiping Ocean; the Pacific as it is known in Chinese, and of course the Nanjing-initiated Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864).*

*Top*s, however, for The Nanjinger now, is Taiping Lake in Anhui province, just a 3-hour drive southwest from Nanjing. Surrounded by mountains, it is hard to believe this body of water is a creation of humankind. While we only found this out after the fact, such has not diluted a very pleasant memory of a place that served as the perfect base for a road trip skirting the mighty Huangshan that is, understandably, one of the biggest attractions (metaphorically and literally) in China, surrounded, as it is, by one 5A-rated spot after the other.

## The Trip - *Huangshan Road*



The mountains start not long after one turns on to G3 expressway that links Beijing with Fujian province and, one day, ultimately and somewhat controversially, Taipei in Taiwan. Hence, it's Jingtai (京台) moniker. Together with the mountains, comes the lush green that is a by product of those rainy mists that envelop Huangshan in any self-respecting painting of the beast.

The Taiping Lake Bridge appropriately marks one's arrival at the lake, and is considered sufficiently worthy of note by Wikipedia to see it featured in the encyclopedia entry for the road that is just shy of 2,000 km long.

Thence, to our hotel. The onomatopoeiacally-named Pinecone hotel consists of many "cones" that rise majestically from the steep bluff on the lake's southern shore. Built by the Greenland conglomerate (the people who brought us Nanjing's tallest building, Zifeng Tower) and then leased to private landlords, these generous rooms of varying sizes (our family room was a whopping 70 square metres with an additional wraparound balcony a good 20 metres length) are of the self catering variety, albeit without any cooking utensils provided. It's bring your own, or go out. We didn't know in advance and so, it was the latter.

Yet, this was to be no hardship, as there are a plethora of restaurants nearby (but not walking distance) for lunch or dinner and the stunning Taiping Lake Crown Plaza that sits on stilts as the breakfast option.

Day 2 was to be action packed, with our initial stop of Hongcun Village, famed as the set for *Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon*. But we would first have to get there. The back road from Taiping Lake started out innocently enough, not dissimilar to many in the countryside around Nanjing. Then the mountains become bigger, and they are closer together too. Breath-taking views are complimented by the little villages that dot the valley floors, bathed, at this time of year, in a patchwork ablaze with yellow rape flowers.

The road itself was by now serving up its own kind of beauty, with large sections little more than bedrock.

With those behind us, next it was the hairpin bends that serve for a mountain pass, covered with a dense foliage the morning spring sun would barely penetrate.

Hongcun village is 900 years old, and the reason for the crowds and the filmmakers, is that much of it is still as it was in Ming dynasty. Many of the traditional courtyards remain, still lived in and tended to by a resident population of approximately 1,500, many of whom rent out their upper rooms to intrepid travelers seeking a genuine taste of ancient China that is becoming increasingly rare.

Back on the road, and in the knowledge our time was limited, we were still not going to come all this way without at least a look at Huangshan itself. With the attraction's southern entrance, the Chinese have done themselves proud; the mountain rises majestically behind while the gate itself, making our Nanjing's Purple Mountain look positively scruffy by comparison.

Then, on, to the Jiulong Waterfalls. A pleasant walk aside the river's lower reaches and minor falls gives way to a 400-step, steep climb to a summit offering a picture postcard view of the falls' force majeure. A significant positive is, while Hongcun was teeming, visitor numbers to these falls were reduced to levels best described as "acceptable".

With that, it became time to hit the hairpins once again, and now they meant business. Thankfully, local people in this neck of the woods are better drivers, and know how to handle the switchbacks with unnerving confidence. This correspondent can say with confidence that life expectancy on these roads for the average Nanjing driver might not go beyond many minutes.

We close, as we opened, with a comparison to the USA. For our jaunt to Taiping Lake and its environs served to illustrate that China, like its sister across the Pacific, has, awaiting to be discovered, an almost inexhaustible supply of road trips that offer majesty, beauty and insight that few other countries can match. 🇨🇳

# OUR SPACE

**GASTRONOMY** By Renée Gray Beaumont

## Throw Another Shrimp on the Chinese Dollar

**S**haping up to be Nanjing's swankier, slightly posher and newer version of 1912 is Catherine Park. The new development sits adjacent to Nanjing's tallest building, the Zifeng Tower, and is just off the Gulou roundabout near the square, diagonally across from Jiangsu TV.

Until not so long ago, the long awaited fun park was home only to Starbucks, Decathlon, Momentum and some plastic children's rides. However, taking a stroll through the park on a rather balmy afternoon this spring has knocked The Nanjinger's socks off.

Not only has Pho Joy moved in downstairs, but the park is also now home to a plush new cinema, and somewhat of a culdesac that neatly packs in about 7 restaurants and bars including Revolucion and Cherry, and situated above these is Australian restaurant Vision.

Owner Jerry took delight in informing the Nanjinger of his world famous chef, Japanese native, Kinsan, who has lived in Australia for over 30 years. Kinsan, or Ikuei Arakane,



is the executive chief of Vision. Running restaurants in Melbourne and putting in regular appearances on the Japanese Iron Chef show; yep, you guessed it, his food at Vision stacks up.

Asking Jerry what he considers Australian cuisine to be, seafood was his reply. Steak and seafood certainly do feature heavily on the menu, with fresh local oysters topped with frozen grapefruit a fresh delight. Paired with crepe wrapped crab together with lightly toasted goose liver and you have yourself a first class starter right there.

Delighting The Nanjinger with a taste of the menu's variety, we next sampled creamy mushroom pasta and spaghetti Bolognese, both to western standards in taste. For our mains, an Australian Angus steak and sea bass with vegetables, all washed down nicely with a bottle of crisp South Australian fine Sauvignon Blanc.

Call me old fashioned, but I expect to be asked how my steak should be cooked, especially if I'm paying over ¥300 for it. Furthermore, at a restaurant where, at the very least, my bill is to come to around ¥600, this would be considered rubbing shoulders with the finer dining experience one expects. Ergo, wait staff should know when to remove finished dishes and when to supply fresh cutlery.

Vision has set its sights high with its world class cuisine, and a Taiwanese award-winning cocktail maker. Its decor screams Chinese millennial glitz and glamour, which, to some, may resemble the inside of a KTV.

Its outdoor seating area is sublime with a 360 view of the city and comfortable seating. Staff are friendly and everyday menu options such as fish and chips at ¥55 and a beer are available. Vision is exactly what its name implies; step inside and experience first hand what post go's Chinese fine dining is all about. 🍴



COMMUNITY By Stacy Dahl

# Southern Capital Seized by Girl Power

Girl Gone International (GGI), a non-profit international community, based in over 140 cities around the world the community is solely for women, and has now made its way to Nanjing. GGI hosted its launch event at Finnegans Wake Irish Bar on 31 March. At a private room upstairs, cocktails flowed as an opportunity to become acquainted. With ages ranging from between 20 to 50 years, the event was truly international with women attending from the United States, England, Australia, Canada, and South Africa.

"We chose an evening of cocktails as the choice for this event because it is casual and easy for the ladies to get to know each other", stated Kate Hill, Nanjing's GGI Support Manager.



Although the turnout for the event was exceptional and a majority of the women left with a smile on their face, the event still could have used a little sprucing up when it came to creativity. A fun activity at the beginning, in order to help break the ice, and perhaps throughout the evening to help fill awkward silences, may have been beneficial.

"It was really refreshing to get together with a bunch of expat women from all over the world and from different occupations. The event was really relaxed and I hope the next one will also have a good turnout and have a bit more guided interaction", said 28-year-old expat Kristine from the United States.

As the night progressed, conversations ranged from silly to serious. Some women discussed how it is meaningful being adults with newfound confidence and freedom in comparison to their teenage years. Other women had more light-hearted conversations, on topics such as restaurants to avoid in Nanjing that may result in food poisoning.

"GGI is a good forum for us to share the resources we have with each other and have the opportunity to come to the group when we need company. I love that it is an organization by women and for women", stated Dawn from South Africa.

Taylor Jones, Community Manager for Nanjing, hopes that GGI can be a great source for support, friendship and just an all-around relaxing time for women, as well as a place to ask questions so that women who are new to Nanjing are not navigating life abroad completely blind.

With Girl Gone International's launch event a success, the Nanjing women who were in attendance are excited to meet up again. Future events will include wine and canvassing nights, clothing swaps, a hiking day and much more.

Contact GGI in Nanjing via WeChat; ID: reno375 

HEALTH By Renée Gray Beaumont

# Feeling the Current on the Needle

As the medical community along all points between the East and West is still divided between whether or not acupuncture indeed has any sound scientific evidence at all as to its results, The Nanjinger was referred to an acupuncture specialist in Nanjing after complaining of chronic stomach problems.

Almost naturally, on the first visit to the hospital, scepticism was high, as the idea of being poked with loads of needles, with an electric current attached across two of them, was a rather frightening one. However, doctor Xu Guojie in her no nonsense way professionally and quickly pressed the needles into my skin and it was all over in a matter of seconds.

As stomach problems were what this trusty mag was there for, the doctor put the needles into my stomach, wrists, knees and ankles. Small electric cables were later attached to two of the needles which seemingly pump electricity through the needle and into the body.

With my very little knowledge of how acupuncture works, I am working off of the basis that Qi (energy) needs to be moved around the body in order to correct and balance one's ying and yang. So, when my stomach began moving around and making strange noises before finally settling down, you might understand my surprise.

My stomach problems began to resolve some weeks after acupuncture treatment. However, much more immediate effects included better sleep, alertness and a general relaxed feeling. Even though the results have not been dramatic, and a placebo effect could be at play, I have come away from the experience feeling much better for it.

With the hospital located downtown and doctor Xu, educated at Nanjing university, and coming highly sought after, every day her section of the hospital is brimming with people morning and night, Chinese and foreign alike.



Foreigners, including children, have been coming to Dr. Xu for some time now and speak very highly of her work.

A Brazilian mother of two at Nanjing International School has been taking her daughter to see Dr. Xu for a treatment, and says, "I love the work she has done on my daughter, she is very patient with her. Chiropractors in Shanghai are amazed at how quickly she has recovered and I put that down to her treatments here".

As the clinic is run through the hospital there is no commercial gain driving profit, no up selling of any sort. Dr. Xu simply believes she can help and she has that reputation. So, if you are interested in trying acupuncture, then head on down to the Nanjing University No.2 Chinese Traditional Medicine hospital and ask for Dr. Xu Guojie.

**Nanjing University No.2 Traditional Chinese Medicine Hospital (Acupuncture Dept.) 江苏南京市鼓楼区美家园121号 南京医科大学第二附属医院 (美家园)** 📍

**GASTRONOMY** By Stacy Dahl

## Boundless Celebration of Vegetables!

**W**hen first arriving at Wujié (大蔬无界) restaurant, I was immediately won over by the charming décor and cozy atmosphere. The friendly waitress sat us down at a table, and instead of your average restaurant chair, we were provided with the comfortable padded variety, with plush throw pillows plopped behind our backs. Seated and comfortable, we were ready to dive into Wujié's brand new spring menu!

First, an appetiser dressed to impress. On one dish were three different items that created a party in my mouth, with their vastly different flavours. The Sichuan-style North-Eastern golden oyster mushroom packed just the right amount of spice, the beetroot jelly with avocado cream offered a nice surprising crunch, while the radish wrapped pickled purple cabbage roll completed the trio with its sweet and tangy flavour.

Quickly becoming my favourite dish was that which came next. It looked like meatballs, it tasted like meatballs; however, it was not meatballs. It was Kungpao-style, Chinese mountain yam and maitake mushroom balls with macadamia nuts, all on a bed of asparagus. It's a perfect substitute for those who are trying to reduce their meat intake, or for parents trying to trick their children into eating something healthy.

Sichuan-style, non-wrapped lion's mane mushroom and Chinese yam also played mind tricks on me with its surprising similarity to fish. Bursting with colour and flavour, this is the winning vegetarian dish for all fish lovers.

*Branded Content*

Next, we were given a dish that screamed exotic; Gorgon fruit, red quinoa and celery stuffed morel mushroom. The morel mushroom has the perfect balance of salty yet savoury, while the crunchy red quinoa on top left me wanting more.

The end of the meal is what I call spoiled rotten, with the waitress bringing out not one but two dishes for dessert. The first; avocado mousse with a French pastry sprinkled with fresh fruit. In other words, an opportunity to treat yourself without the later feeling of regret. The second; chocolate molten lava cake with homemade vanilla ice cream. The cherry on top of any and every ice cream sundae.

From appetiser to dessert, Wujié's new spring menu is an experience that both vegetarians and meat lovers can savour. Wujié Vegetarian is a place where all six tastes of food live in harmony and customers can leave feeling more than content with the healthy dishes they have eaten. 📍



**Wujié is located at 6F, Deji Plaza Phase 2, 18 Zhongshan Lu 新街口中山路18号德基广场6楼F617 Tel: 86777661 / 86777662**



Athletic carnivals are a chance for students to demonstrate their athletic skills and sportsmanship in a fun environment, as was the case at the annual EtonHouse International School Sports Day. Students showcased their running, throwing and jumping skills in front of a large crowd of cheering parents and their guests.



# Tug of War

24 March, 2018



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# *We are the Champions*

**26-28 March, 2018**

The British School of Nanjing (BSN) and Nanjing International School (NIS) co-hosted the inaugural Nanjing Junior School Games, in which over 100 children from schools far and wide competed over 3 days in athletics, swimming and football. A superb effort was made by Shangfang Primary School, Chalu Primary School, EtonHouse Nanjing, Canadian International School Hefei and International School Moscow, together with BSN and NIS.



Cicero said, "A room without books is like a body without a soul". Well, if that is true, then what about a school without a library? Not something that staff and children at the Tibi Tibi Elementary School in the Philippines will have to worry about anymore, thanks to those who came together to raise ¥15,000 through live music, raffles, auctions, and even a bit of stand-up at Luga's Bar in 1912 by Baijia Lake.

# Wrapped up in Books

24 March, 2018



# Our First 100 Days

8 March, 2018

Nanjing Echo International School preschoolers celebrated their 100th day of school by participating in a fashion show, for which each child designed a T-shirt flaunting 100 items representing each day completed so far this school year. They sauntered and swayed, showing off all of their hard work and creativity for parents and teachers to enjoy, a celebratory day of laughter, excitement and fun for all!



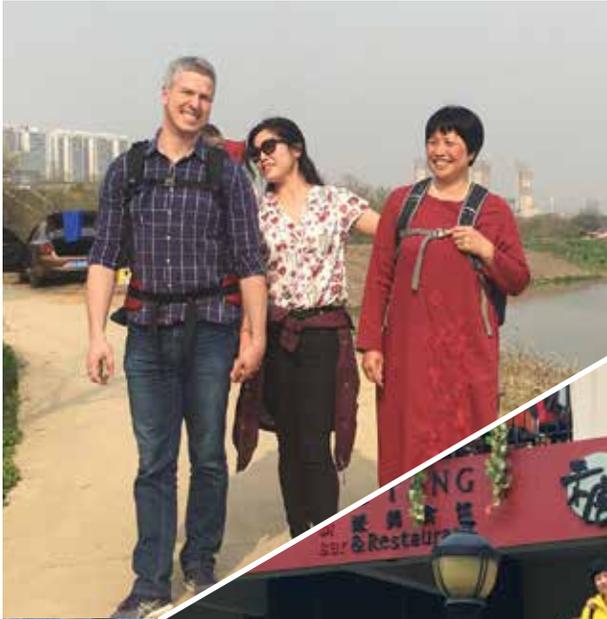
With the leadership of Director Ms. Heidi, a huge cast front stage, back stage and in the lighting and sound booth, demonstrated what hard work, talent development and a shared purpose can bring, when students in grades two thru five at Nanjing International School put on a fantastic show, in which they were expressive, energetic and enthusiastic throughout their time on stage.

# Seussical

8 March, 2018



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A keen bunch of runners and walkers met, on what felt like the start of summer, to follow a trail that took the Nanjing Hash House Harriers to the banks of Baijia lake and along a river path to check out the plum blossom in full bloom. The hare for the day, notorious for his extra long trails, did not disappoint, but the cool breeze and a cold beer made for a very pleasant day out.



# Keep on Running

25 March, 2018



Year 1 and 2 students in The British School of Nanjing performed a production of the modern day adaptation, by Roald Dahl, of the classic Jack and the Bean Stalk. The audience was enthralled in the humorous tale told by singing and actions choreographed by the students themselves.

# Fe Fi Fo Fum

30 March, 2018



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## *Digital Life's Necessary Changing State*

The increased convenience of new technologies can be taken advantage of, or perhaps worse, utilised for nefarious purposes. Therefore proper policy and regulation is required. While such may not seem a vital tool for our convenience, we shall see that as the world becomes smaller and more digitised, it is more necessary than ever, in order to protect our own personal interests, as well as society as a whole.

### *Limiting Our Spending; Protect Our Interests*

QR Codes, or Quick Response Codes, are ubiquitous in Chinese daily life. There is now a QR code for nearly every form of expenditure in our modern lives. As people in China have become increasingly more reliant on the usage of QR codes for payment, it has become necessary for China's financial institutions to begin to regulate in this area, especially as it is rife for potential fraud.

In March of last year, it was reported by the South China Morning Post that approximately ¥90 million had been stolen via QR Codes by fraudsters in Guangdong. This was accomplished by replacing the actual legitimate QR codes with ones containing a type of virus designed to latch onto the user's device and drain money from the accounts of the user. In an effort to combat this, the People's Bank of China has begun to propose the Circular of the People's Bank of China on Issuing the Standards for Barcode Payment Business (for Trial Implementation), together with other regulations for the users of QR Codes in the future.

Firstly, there will be a daily limit on the amount that a user may spend while scanning a QR code, or a payment cap. Initial limits begin at ¥500, although this can be increased to ¥5,000 if certain authentication procedures are followed by the user. Furthermore, the People's Bank of China will require all stores, shops, restaurants, etc. to obtain a license to use a QR code to legally collect payment.

These payment caps came into effect officially on 1 April, and are seemingly just the start, as the People's Bank of China also wants to see additional measures taken to ensure customers safety in the use of QR Codes. Such prospective provisions include expiration dates, regular updates and encryption for the kind of so-called "static" QR Codes, common in restaurants and cafés, that never change and are thus particularly vulnerable to fraud. China's top QR Code payment processors, Alipay and WeChatPay, have both come out in full support of the regulations, showcasing a clear willingness to allow the industry to grow and become more efficient and safe.

### *China Back on Two Wheels Again*

"The Flying Pigeon" was once one of the country's most recognisable symbols and the convenient use of QR codes to unlock and pay for the service has also been an important factor. However, with an estimated 4.5 million bike share users in Shanghai alone, the rapid boom of the usage of shared bikes has led to numerous public nuisance issues.

Therefore, a list of industry standards was released in July of last year by the Ministry of Transport requesting local governments to punish individuals who park their bicycles outside of permitted areas or in any way vandalise the bikes; it is also stated that the bikes must be properly distributed across the cities in order to avoid excessive build-ups in specific areas. These provisions help to alleviate the piling up of bikes in random areas of the city streets and actually go even further by specifying a service life of 3 years for all share bikes, while demanding that bike sharing companies hire at least one maintenance employee to be in charge for every 200 bikes.

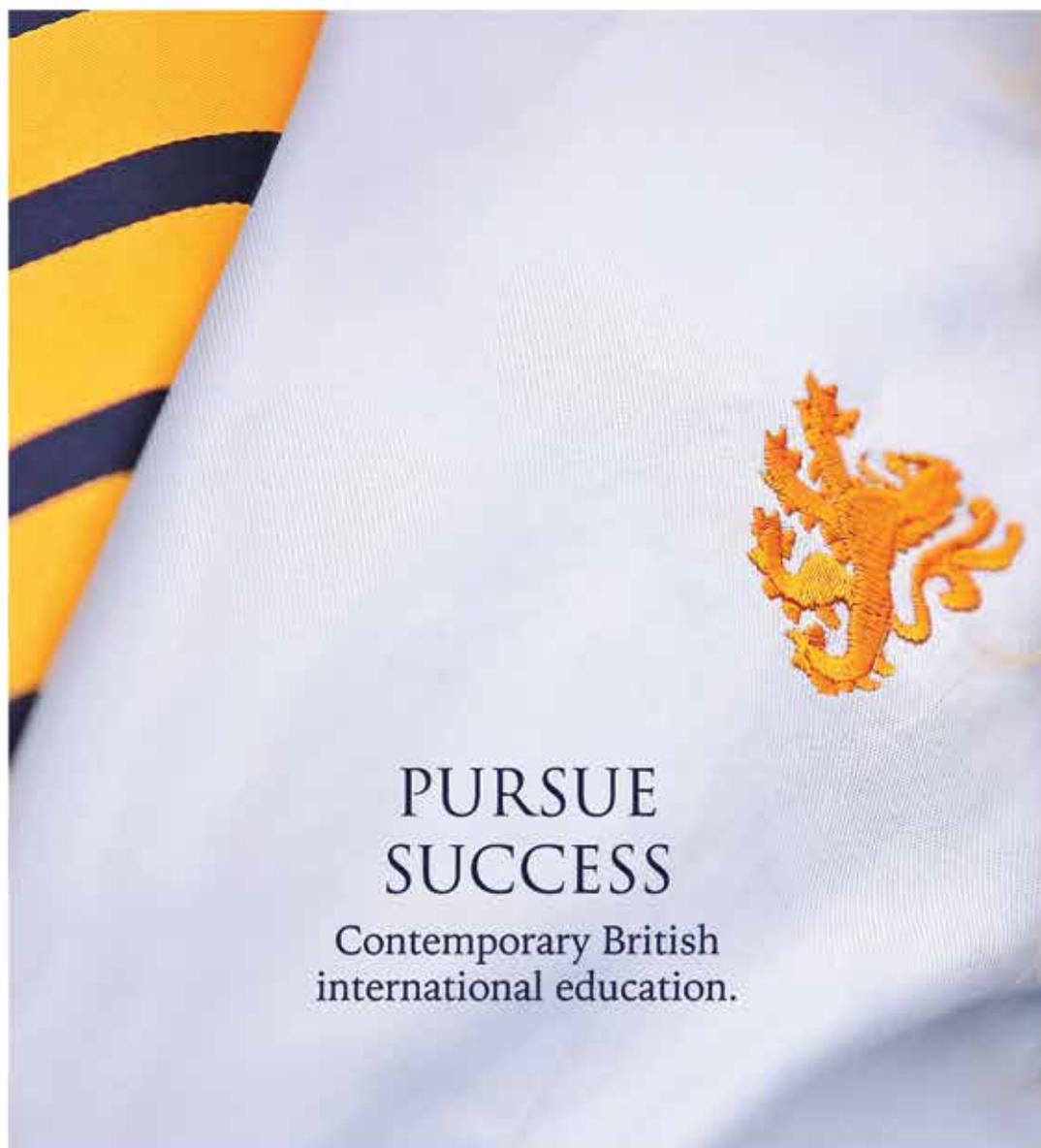
Regulation of some of our modern forms of convenience is therefore essential for our own personal security as well as to assist in alleviating any potentially unforeseen social issues that may arise with these new technologies. 📱

### **DISCLAIMER**

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