



NEWS

600 stone dishes

Displayed in Kunming Pan-Asian Stone Expo

By LI YUECHUN

Recently, the 2015 China Kunming Pan-Asian Stone Expo was held in Kunming. 22 foreign countries and regions participated, a record high in the history of the exhibition. And for the first time Austria, Australia, Cambodia, Egypt, the Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Poland, South Korea and Laos made their presence.

As a highlight of the Stone Expo, a natural stone "feast" brought by stone collector Luo Qinqian was a real eye-opener. On a huge round table, seven meters in diameter, 600 vivid and mouth-watering stone "dishes" were displayed. They included steam pot chicken, quail eggs, roast duck, fish, lime-preserved eggs and sliced potatoes. Accordingly, Luo is from Hunan province, China and has spent 20 years collecting these artistic renderings.

Since its inception in 2007, the China Kunming Pan-Asian Stone Expo has been held annually. Through continuous exploration and practice, it has become an important global and domestic platform for exchanges of stone culture. It is also the largest, most specialized and most influential stone exhibition in all of Asia.

2,052 individual trees

Given DNA barcodes in Xishuangbanna Tropical Botanical Garden

By YANG ZHIGAO

Recently, researchers at the Xishuangbanna Tropical Botanical Garden, Chinese Academy of Sciences, have set up a DNA barcode database for tropical Chinese trees. The DNA barcode fragments of 2,052 individual trees that fall into 76 families, 259 genera and 655 species.

Since 2008, the Plant Phylogenetics and Conservation Group of Xishuangbanna Tropical Botanical Garden has carried out a study on the DNA barcodes of tropical trees of different vegetation types within the Xishuangbanna National Nature Reserve. With the DNA barcodes, a species can quickly be identified through a DNA sequence, providing an extremely effective and reliable method for the conservation of biological diversity.

The researchers, using certain new methods and combining traditional morphological observation with experts' identification, also found 99 wrongly identified individual trees and made necessary corrections. The establishment of the first DNA barcode database of tropical Chinese tree species has provided a powerful tool for large-scale biodiversity surveys. Meanwhile, it has also made it possible to protect rare and endangered species in the region and collected basic data for the quick identification of invasive alien species.

YUNNAN MEMORY



The wreckage of a C-53 transport plane is displayed at the Hump Memorial Hall in Nujiang Lisu Autonomous Prefecture. It crashed in 1943 and its wreckage was discovered in 1996. Photo by Liu Jianhua

Editor's note: On July 7, 1937, Japan launched a full-scale invasion of China. In the Chinese people's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression, Yunnan was one of the three major battlefields as well as the great rear area. Especially in the province's western areas, people made great sacrifices and contributions to the final victory in the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression. With recent editions of "Beautiful Yunnan", we have been publishing a series of reports themed "A War of Resistance by the Whole Nation - Yunnan Memory". And we have been finding and interviewing the living generals and soldiers of the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression and their relatives. Their stories will provide multiple perspectives for us to view the War and help us remember history and the martyrs, while cherishing peace and building a better future.

The Hump, an air route guarded with lives

By LANG JINGJING

In May 1942, the Japanese army invaded Yunnan from Myanmar, occupying the west bank of the Nujiang River. They cut off the Burma Road, the final overland lifeline in China's defensive efforts, rendering China completely isolated from its international allies.

At that critical moment, China and the US blazed an air route—the Hump from Assam in India to Kunming in China, ensuring China of continuous access to international supplies.

With a total length of 800 kilometers, the Hump stretched over 'no-fly zones' including the towering Himalayas and the Gaoligong and Hengduan mountain ranges. Flying conditions were extremely perilous. During its three-years of operation from 1942 to 1945, more than 600 aircrafts crashed and 1,500 pilots were killed or went missing.

On July 3rd, 2015, the all-media interviewing group of the Yunnan Daily Press Group visited the Hump Memorial Hall in Nujiang Lisu Autonomous Prefecture to collect historic traces of the Hump still remaining and to pay tribute to heroic martyrs involved in establishing the Hump route.

The Hump Memorial Hall is China's only exhibition hall displaying the wreckage of a Hump aircraft. As soon as we entered the Hall, a dark green C-53 transport plane caught our eyes.

In 1943, the C-53 transport plane took off from Kunming Wujiaaba Airport and headed for India. When it flew over Fengxueyakou—known as 'Wind and Snow Pass'—near Pianma Town, Nujiang Prefecture, the plane crashed into the boundless primeval forest. All 3 crewmembers have remained missing until now. The American captain, Jimmy Fox, was only 24 years old at the time of

the crash.

China and the US made joint efforts in search of the missing cabin crew. But no result had been yielded until one day in June 1996, when a Myanmar hunter discovered the wreckage in the no-man's land in the thick forest. It was later confirmed that the plane crashed 137 meters away from the No. 9 and No. 10 boundary markers on the Chinese side of the Sino-Myanmar border.

The salvage turned out to be a long-term endeavor by local people. They watched over the relic around the clock for more than 540 days and eventually moved the plane out of the forest in five months. Qu Tiancheng, a young man of the Nu minority, lost his life during the watch-over.

According to Li Jianquan, a local who also joined the salvage efforts, Qu Tiancheng and a middle-aged man were assigned to watch the

wreckage after its discovery. Before heavy snows sealed the mountain in the winter of 1998, the mid-aged left the mountain to fetch some food. Days later, he returned, only to find the pass blocked by heavy snow. Two months later, the snow melted, but Qu Tiancheng had died because of severe cold and lack of food.

Again, Qu Tiancheng lost his life at the age of 24, the same age as that of the American captain Jimmy Fox.

"During the rescue, because no vehicle could be driven in, what the villagers had to do was to cut down trees all the way to the site, pave a temporary path with the wood, and move the plane out with timber rollers," remembered Li Jianquan. "Inch by inch, step by step, the wreckage was eventually pulled out of the thick forest."

The plane wreckage was finally carried to Pianma where the Hump Memorial Hall, through efforts by concerned parties, was established.

ONE BELT AND ONE ROAD

Myanmar students seek learning opportunities in China

By AYE MIN SOE

For Myanmar university students with an interest in Chinese language and culture, a growing number of scholarships and exchange programmes are providing opportunities to study in the neighbouring economic power.

There are currently around 100 Myanmar students attending Yunnan Normal University (YNNU) in Kunming, Yunnan Province.

Most are from Chinese language schools in Myanmar and have won scholarships from the university, according to Sai Kham Par, a third-year student of Chinese language and culture from southern Shan State, Myanmar.

International Economy and Trade is reportedly the favourite subject for Myanmar students attending YNNU.

About 40 of them are enrolled at Yangon University and study-

ing at YNNU under an exchange programme. Additionally, a number of Yangon University faculty members are doing doctorate studies there.

In 2014, more than 2,200 international students attended YNNU and at present the university has 1,705 international students from all over the world, more than any other university in Yunnan.

Nearly 2,500 students learned foreign languages from Southeast Asian countries at the university last year. Thai language is the most popular Southeast Asian language, followed by the Myanmar language.

YNNU is a higher institution co-funded by the Ministry of Education and Yunnan Provincial Government, and also one of the 100 universities funded by the National Key Project for the Quality Enhancement of the Higher Institutions in Central and West China. (Source: GNLM)

Hilton expands presence in Yunnan



Bruce McKenzie, Senior Vice President of Operations, Greater China & Mongolia, Hilton Worldwide. Provided by Hilton

By ZU HONGBING

"Hilton will open 2 more hotels in Yunnan this year," said Bruce McKenzie, Senior Vice President of Operations, Greater China & Mongolia of Hilton Worldwide in Kunming, capital of Yunnan province in an interview with reporters last Thursday. By the end of this year, Hilton will have a total of 4 hotels open in Yunnan, according to him.

Last September, Hilton made its first presence in Lijiang, a city located in northwest Yunnan and famous for its booming tourism industry. This April, the Hilton Fuxian Lake, a Hilton Hotels and Resorts, got open on the bank of Fuxian Lake in Yuxi City, which is recognized as the Lake Geneva in the East for its clean water and beautiful landscapes.

The two new Hilton brand hotels to open in Yunnan this year will be in Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture and Dali City respectively. According to McKenzie, Hilton will make more expansions in Yunnan market. Hopefully in the following years, there will be Hilton hotels open in Kunming and Shangri-la, a mysterious land described by the English writer James Hilton in his novel *Lost Horizon*.

"I am very excited about our growth in Yunnan" said McKen-

zie. In the past years, Yunnan has made a lot of progress in economic growth. Last year, its GDP grew by 8.1 percent, much higher than that of China as a whole and 286 million travelers, both domestic and foreign, came to the province.

Following this trend, many domestic and international hotel brands alike have made their presence in Yunnan, including Hilton, IHG, Marriot, Pullman and Wyndham. It is expected that by the end of this year, there will be 60 international brand hotels in the province.

Hilton, recognizing the competitiveness, is bringing more of its brands to Yunnan to meet different needs of customers. Right now, besides its top brands, it has introduced Hilton Garden Inn to target Yunnan's middle market. "And we have more plans for that," said McKenzie.

According to *Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road*, Yunnan will be built into a pivot of China's opening up to South Asia and Southeast Asia. As Yunnan is getting more connected with South and Southeast Asia, there will be more travels among the areas. "That will also create more opportunities for hospitality industries," McKenzie said.

FOREIGNERS IN YUNNAN

Zawahir's story of stones

By LIU ZIYU

At the Sri Lankan Pavilion of this year's China-South Asia Expo, I met Zawahir, managing partner of Ceylon Beauty Gems Fine Collections. He has closely cropped hair, bushy eyebrows, large eyes, a strong build and a sonorous voice, and looked trustworthy.

"These stones are really beautiful!" Hearing my compliments, Zawahir was very pleased: "Yes! Sri Lankan stones are well known in the world. The royal families of the United Kingdom and other countries like them very much!" Taking out a few precious stones and an inspection light, he began to teach me. After a few minutes, Zawahir had introduced to me

"I have not only made some Yunnan friends that love Sri Lankan gems but also taken some of them to Sri Lanka to study the gem industry."
—Zawahir

several types of them, including sapphires, pigeon blood rubies and opals.

At that time, a woman was passing Zawahir's booth when she suddenly waved to him in surprise. It turned out that the lady had met

and become friends with Zawahir in Sri Lanka a few years ago because of gems, and she had not expected to come across him at the China-South Asia Expo in Kunming. Zawahir told me that not only has he made some Yunnan friends that love Sri Lankan gems but has also taken some of them to Sri Lanka to study the gem industry.

After barely half an hour, Zawahir's sincerity and love of Yunnan had shortened the distance between us. We were chatting heartily when he turned and said something to a colleague, who left and came back soon with a box of black tea. Zawahir handed the tea to me and said "I am very happy to meet another Chinese

friend today. Sri Lanka is famous for gems as well as tea. I hope you will like this small gift." I was so surprised that I did not know what to say except to offer my thanks. In a joking tone, I said to Zawahir that perhaps Sri Lanka was not only famous for its tea and gems. He asked with interest "What else?" he asked. I replied: "Beautiful scenery and friendly people." Hearing this, he had a good laugh.

Zawahir told me that besides his gem business, he had come to Yunnan to see the beautiful scenery. It seemed that his "story of stones" would continue. I believe that he will come to Yunnan again and again, and I hope to tell him my country's "story of stones" next time.