



EXCHANGE

Zhaotong girl wrote to Queen Elizabeth II Her Majesty replied

BY SHEN SHIXUN

Ma Siwen is a 18-year-old girl studying at No. 1 High School in Zhaotong City, Yunnan Province. In her letter to Queen Elizabeth II, she lavishly recommended Zhaotong and invited Her Majesty to come as a guest. Queen Elizabeth II was impressed with the girl's sincerity and enthusiasm. Her Majesty replied, wishing to hear more from Ma Siwen.

According to Ma Siwen, when she was studying last September, she learnt that Queen Elizabeth II is already the longest-serving monarch in British history, and that the Queen and the royal family love and often share happy moments with common people. Ma Siwen and her classmate Zou Wei decided to write a letter to Her Majesty.

On January 3, 2016, an English letter addressed to Ma Siwen arrived at the school mailroom, autographed by secretary of Queen

Elizabeth II.

On January 5, the letter from Queen Elizabeth II was translated into Chinese and read aloud to Ma Siwen's class by Chen Dan, a Chinese language teacher at the school.

Upon receiving the letter from Queen Elizabeth II, Ma Siwen was excited for many days, just as if she had won a lottery jackpot. Now Ma Siwen and her classmate are considering how to write a reply. The idea is to express thanks, enclose several scenic and food postcards and write something on the postcards introducing Zhaotong's attractions, specialties, history and culture, so that Her Majesty and British friends will learn more about Zhaotong. They plan to post the letter on Chinese New Year's Day and put some newly released monkey stamps on the envelope. They will wish Queen Elizabeth II and the royal family good luck and happiness in a Chinese way.

Further Reading:

Ma Siwen's first letter (Abstract)

"Dear Queen Elizabeth II, I am Ma Siwen, a student of Class 464 of No. 1 High School in Zhaotong City, Yunnan Province, China. I congratulate Your Majesty on

becoming the longest-serving monarch in British history. I warmly welcome you to my hometown—Zhaotong City. Please do not mind if there are some grammatical mistakes in the letter."

Queen Elizabeth II's reply (autographed by secretary)

"Dear Siwen. The Queen wishes me to write and thank you for your letter in which you tell Her Majesty a little about yourself and where you live. Although

unable to reply to you personally, The Queen was interested to hear of your hometown of Zhaotong City in Yunnan Province and I am to thank you once again, for your thoughtfulness in writing as you did."

LOW CARBON



A low-carbon wedding

On the afternoon of January 12, a "grand" electric bicycle wedding was held in Kunming. A total of 100 electric bicycles followed a festively decorated electric bicycle, on which the bride and groom headed happily towards a happy marriage.

The groom Ye Jingxian is a salesperson of an electric bicycle brand. The bride Liu Linglin lives in Kunming and once bought an electric bicycle from the groom before they fell in love with each other. To commemorate the electric bicycle's role in their love and call on more people to protect the environment, they held a simple yet stylish low-carbon wedding.

Photo by Zhou Mingjia

DIGIT

7 ports

in Yunnan designated as ports of entry for grain imports

BY LIAO XINGYANG

The General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ) of China recently announced the country's ports of entry and inspection for grain imports. On the list are seven ports in Yunnan, namely Ruih, Wanding, Hekou, Mohan, Tianbao, Mengding and Houqiao (Tengchong). Among them, Tianbao is the only port designated as an inspection point for the import of cassava.

As an important area of China facing South and Southeast Asia, Yunnan has 25 counties (cities) bordering Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam. In order to effectively prevent and reduce foreign pests and other potential security risks from grain imports, China AQSIQ and other relevant ministries require that key sensitive goods must be imported via designated ports of entry starting last year. Detailed standards and strict rules have been prescribed for the construction and appraisal of designated ports of entry.

70 centimeters

Robotic telescope jointly built by China and Thailand put into use

BY YAO BING

A 70-centimeter robotic telescope built jointly by China and Thailand has been put into operation in Yunnan Province, a local scientist said Wednesday.

The telescope, which was installed at an observation station at Yunnan Observatory in Lijiang city, was completed last December, said Qian Shengbang, a research fellow with the observatory.

At low latitudes, Lijiang enjoys high atmospheric transparency. "[This means] the telescope can help us conduct long-term monitoring of the southern sky to see the movements and evolution, and search for special celestial bodies such as black holes or brown dwarfs," he said.

The telescope has been tested and the data, Qian noted, acquired will be used to inform time-series photometry.

Yunnan Observatory has collaborated with Thailand for more than two decades. (Xinhua News Agency)

7 routes

Yunnan boasts seven China Self-Drive Tourism Routes

BY ZHU HAI

Recently, the "China Self-drive Tourism Routes 2015" selection panel announced a total of 36 high-quality routes, of which seven are in Yunnan. They include Yuanjiang, Xishuangbanna, Xundian, Dongchuan Red Land, Anning Tangchuan, the Lugu Lake and the Three Parallel Rivers self-drive routes.

The selection is designed to identify 36 high-quality routes for Chinese self-drive enthusiasts. The routes are first recommended by 36 self-drive tourism experts and are then voted on by millions of internet users. This year, the Yuanjiang route as a top-three self-drive route under the delicious food category; the Xishuangbanna and Xundian routes were voted top-three self-drive routes under the parent-child category; the Dongchuan Red Land route was voted a top-three self-drive route under the photography category; the Anning Tangchuan route was voted a top-three self-drive route under the meditation category; the Lugu Lake route was a top-three self-drive routes under the leisure category; and the Three Parallel Rivers route was a top-three self-drive route under the geography category.

RESEARCH

Spud studies to be offered in Yunnan

BY YUE RANRAN

Yunnan Normal university confirmed recently that it would establish a department dedicated to potato studies.

The university begun potato research in the 1970s and has since led the field within the province.

The university held a meeting on a potato college in November. In December last year, Yunnan Normal University signed a strategic framework agreement with an institute for genome research under the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences, deciding to set up two majors -- potato genome studies and genetic breeding.

A university employee said the college is not yet open for enrollment.

China is the world's largest potato producer, with a planting area of 5.6 million hectares. The country is increasing potato production to make it a staple food, better ensuring food security as it faces tight supplies of farmland, water and labor. (Xinhua News Agency)

FOREIGNERS IN YUNNAN

Jansen: A Dutchman running a website in Kunming

BY DUAN XIAORUI and LIU YANQIN

Speaking both Mandarin and Kunming dialect, adept with chopsticks, this foreigner is from the Netherlands and his name is Yereth Jansen.

Jansen has been living in Kunming for more than six years and knows this city inside out. He likes collecting intriguing information and tasting various foods. He runs the English website GoKunming.com, hoping that more foreigners can learn

about Kunming through his eyes. Today, GoKunming.com has become an important guide for foreigners touring Kunming. At present, the site registers 300,000 page views per month, 34 percent of which are from overseas.

According to Jansen, GoKunming.com is run by a team of five people from different countries: an editor who updates the website content on a daily basis; a forum administrator in charge of the forum's daily maintenance; an event promoter who collects and posts infor-

mation about various events in Kunming; and a micro-blog and WeChat administrator. As CEO, Jansen is mainly responsible for the website design and operational management. Every day, GoKunming.com publishes information collected from main media, micro-blogs and WeChat on all sorts of events in Yunnan. It also provides a free platform on which users can publish their own ideas. Today, many foreigners in Kunming regard the site as their "online home."

Jansen already had a plan for the future development of GoKunming.com. "We will 'encircle cities from rural areas'. The Art of War tells me that a website also needs a strategy." He hopes to expand from small and medium cities to big cities and set up similar sites in Nanjing, Hangzhou and other places.

Jansen is concerned about Kunming's development including the progress of metro construction. Jansen is already an "Old Kunminger", but he still likes walking around the city. He hopes to learn more about Kunming and better understand its people and culture.

DISCOVER YUNNAN

Angelic voices of a farmers' choir

BY OUYANG XIAOSHU

Xiaoshuijing Village is located at an altitude of 2,350 meters in Yunnan Province's Fumin County. All of its 470 plus villagers belong to the Miao ethnic group. In the 1930s, foreign missionaries set up a church here and formed a choir.

In Xiaoshuijing Village, many farmers are also singers. The most ordinary things become radiant with the singing of the simple villagers. The singing style has been passed down from generation to generation. The lyrics are in the Miao language and the elements of Miao folk songs are integrated, making this farmers' choir unique and non-replicable.

Over the past century, the Western choral art has constantly evolved, but in Xiaoshuijing Village, it has retained the traditional skills and methods of older Western church choirs. Today, many domestic and foreign musicologists come here to study the choral art. The villagers' amazing voices make many people think they must have accepted professional training, but here any villager who loves music and has a good voice can join the choir.

The Xiaoshuijing Ethnic Farmers' Choir has maintained about 60 members since its establishment. Currently, the youngest member is 13 years old and the oldest member is over 40. Professionally, it is a four-part

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“The choir practices for one or two hours on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday evenings.”

Li De

Deputy head of Xiaoshuijing Ethnic Farmers' Choir

mixed choir, and the singing method is neither bel canto singing nor folk singing.

None of its members have received professional training, and their skills have been passed down from generation to generation by word of mouth. In particular, the four-part a cappella singing has reached a high level and is referred to as a "living fossil of Baroque choral music" by international vocal music experts.

"The choir practices for one or two hours on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday evenings," said Li De, deputy head of Xiaoshuijing Ethnic Farmers' Choir. Without professional training, it is a unspoken understanding that has glued members into one.

In recent years, the Xiaoshuijing Ethnic Farmers Choir has become increasingly well-known. It has attracted many domestic and foreign tourists to visit the village.



Yansen receives an interview from Yunnan TV during the 2015 Best of Kunming Awarding Ceremony held by Gokunming.com a few days ago. Photo by He Xinwen