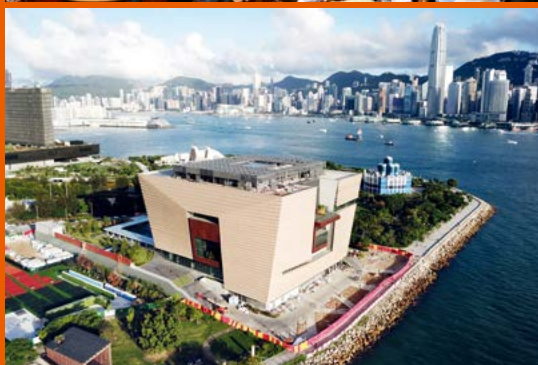


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A Window to the Nation A Welcome to the World

# CHINA PICTORIAL

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January 2023

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## Ringling in the New Year /04

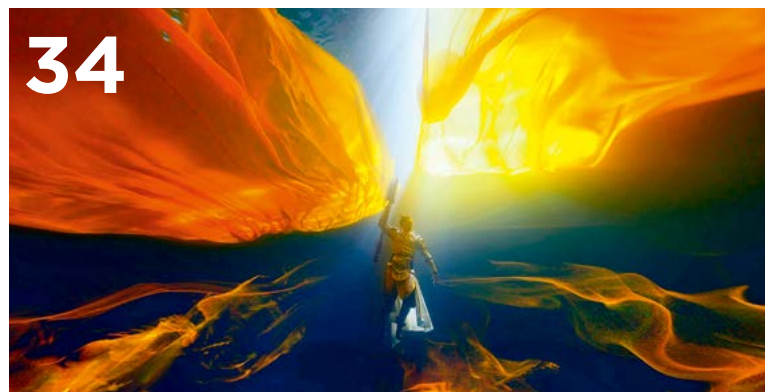


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# Ring in the New Year

Concept by China Pictorial

The year 2022 showcased a resilient and dynamic China, a country with diligent and respectable people making persistent progress in all fields.

People bid farewell to 2022 and welcome 2023 at an immersive firework show over Sky Theatre in Liuyang City, central China's Hunan Province, December 31, 2022. (Photo from VCG)



2022 already passed, and 2023 has arrived. Time moves on but uncertainty has left the world with inertia. Amidst profound changes unseen in a century aggravated by the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the COVID-19 pandemic, the future of the world is in a blur.

The second-largest economy in the world, China tried to inject some certainties as the Communist Party of China (CPC) held its 20th National Congress, mapping out a blueprint for the country's development in the next five years and beyond.

Despite all the hardships, the year 2022 showcased a resilient and dynamic China with its diligent and respectable people making persistent progress in all fields.

### Forging Ahead

China managed to present an extraordinary Winter Olympics by implementing the closed-loop management system amid the pandemic. When the Olympic flame was lit at the National Stadium in Beijing, the world seemed to be able to temporarily escape all the troubles but indulge in athletic spirit across borders.

The Chinese economy has remained the second largest in the world and enjoyed sound development. China's GDP for the whole year is expected to exceed 120 trillion yuan (US\$17.4 trillion). Despite a global food crisis, the country secured a bumper harvest for the 19th year in a row, ensuring the food supply for the Chinese people. In 2022, it continued to consolidate its gains in poverty elimination and advance rural revitalization comprehensively.

Over the past year, the Chinese people worked hard in agriculture, enterprises, communities, schools, hospitals, and research institutes, among other areas. Throughout the year, they devoted due efforts, contributed greatly, and received thick returns.

The Olympic delegation of the People's Republic of China parades into the National Stadium during the opening ceremony of the Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games in Beijing, capital of China, February 4, 2022. (Photo by Chen Jian/China Pictorial)



People watch the launch of a Long March-5B Y3 rocket carrying the Wentian lab module at the beach of Qishui Bay in Wenchang, southern China's Hainan Province, July 24, 2022. About 495 seconds later, the Wentian separated from the rocket and entered the planned orbit. The launch was a complete success. (Photo by Luo Yunfei/CNS)



A C919 large passenger aircraft registered as B-919A takes off from Shanghai Pudong International Airport, bound for Shanghai Hongqiao International Airport in Shanghai, marking delivery of the first C919 aircraft to its first customer, December 9, 2022. (Photo by Wan Quan/China Pictorial)

Shenzhou-13, Shenzhou-14 and Shenzhou-15 soared into space. China's space station was fully completed. The C919, China's first homemade large passenger aircraft, was delivered. And the Baihetan hydropower station went into full operation... None of these achievements would have been possible without the sweat and toil of countless Chinese people. Sparks of talent landed to drive the strength of China.





A nurse checks medical equipment for COVID-19 patients at Peking University People's Hospital in Beijing. With the continuous optimization of epidemic prevention and control measures in line with actual national conditions, China's COVID-19 response has put more emphasis on the protection and treatment of key groups and vulnerable groups, embodying the principle of "putting people and their lives first." (Photo by Duan Wei/China Pictorial)

### Putting People First

Over the past three years, China has always put the people and their lives first by keeping COVID-19 under control while promoting economic and social development. China's recent optimization and adjustment of response measures was based on a scientific assessment of virus mutations and the pandemic situation. Practices in many countries have shown that although the Omicron variant is highly transmissible, its virulence and pathogenicity are weakened. The majority of infected people can fully recover within a short period of time, and the rates of severe cases and mortality have significantly reduced.

China has administered 3.4 billion doses

of COVID-19 vaccines. In this context, 90 percent of all Chinese people, including 86 percent of those aged 60 and above, have been fully vaccinated. China has been vigorously promoting booster shots with a focus on strengthening the vaccination and health management of older people.

"It in no way means giving up the fight against the virus or a complete exit from prevention and control measures," said Li Bin, deputy head of the National Health Commission. "China will continue improving management, services, and guarantees."

With the Spring Festival, the most important festival for Chinese people, just around the corner, a peak infection stretch may ripple across rural areas as countless

people return home for family reunions. China is enhancing its efforts in rural areas to tackle the mounting challenges. According to a document recently released by relevant authorities, comprehensive measures should be dedicated to facilitating the operation of anti-virus systems in the countryside to ensure drug supplies, swift treatment of severe cases, and protection of the elderly and children.

Over the past three years, officials and the general public, particularly medical professionals and community workers, have bravely maintained their posts through it all. China now has entered a new phase of COVID response where tough challenges remain. It is not an easy journey for anyone.


### Chinese Path to Modernization

The report to the 20th CPC National Congress reiterated the Party's goal of building China into a modern socialist country in all respects. The method to reach the goal was also clarified: through the

Chinese path to modernization.

The report listed five characteristic features that make China's modernization drive special, including how it involves the world's largest population and achieves common prosperity for all; seeks harmony between humanity and nature; and promotes peaceful modernization, avoiding the old path of war and colonization.

Chinese-style modernization contains elements common to the modernization processes of all countries, but it also has features unique to China. Common prosperity, which is essential to socialism, is a significant feature of Chinese-style modernization. It refers to the prosperity of all people, not a few.

Rather than a synonym for egalitarianism, common prosperity is more like an antonym of polarization between the rich and poor. The wealth gap is a worldwide problem hindering development in many countries. Hard as it is, China has made progress on that steep front. 



Women from ethnic minorities in Guizhou Province work on embroidery. In 2013, Guizhou launched an embroidering project aiming to promote the development of traditional ethnic handicrafts, preserve the rich histories and cultures of ethnic minorities, and create opportunities for local people to shake off poverty. (Photo by Qin Bin/China Pictorial)



# Memorable Events of 2022

Chinese Modernization  
Dual-Olympic City  
C919  
Rural Revitalization  
25th Anniversary of Hong Kong's Return to the Motherland  
International Wetland Cities  
Openness and Prosperity  
Yuan Globalization  
Meeting in Space  
Food Security  
Chinese-made Electric Vehicles  
A Shared Digital Future  
Optimization of COVID-19 Response

Edited by Zhou Xin

2022 was an unusual year for China.

The 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) was held in October. The report delivered by Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, to the congress unveiled a blueprint for advancing the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation on all fronts through a Chinese path to modernization.

By the end of the third year in the pandemic, China decided to shift the focus of its COVID-19 response strategy from infection control to treatment of severe cases. The country downgraded its level of COVID-19 management from Class A to a less strict Class B in January 2023.

The year 2022 witnessed China's endeavors to open up further. The 24th Olympic Winter Games were held in Beijing in February, making it the only city to host both Summer and Winter Games. The China International Import Expo has been held for five consecutive years in Shanghai.

China hasn't slowed its pace of technological innovation. Chinese astronauts met in the country's space station for the first time. The first C919 large passenger aircraft was delivered to China Eastern Airlines. It was the Chinese civil aviation transport market's first usage of an indigenously-developed mainline jetliner.

The year 2022 also witnessed seven Chinese cities be listed as international wetland cities, making China the country with the most internationally certified wetland cities in the world, a symbolic achievement validating China's decades of efforts in environmental protection.

With vigorous and determined endeavors, China continues to forge ahead.





The 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) opens at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, October 16, 2022. (Photo by Wan Quan/China Pictorial)

## Chinese Modernization

The 20th CPC National Congress was held from October 16 to 22 in Beijing. Chinese modernization as a key term defining China's journey to rejuvenation was finally written into the report to the 20th CPC National Congress. In his report to the congress, Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, underscored the central task of the Party, calling for efforts to advance the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation on all fronts through a Chinese path to modernization. The report to the 20th CPC National Congress describes the Chinese path to modernization as the modernization of a huge population, of common prosperity for all, of material and cultural-ethical advancement, of harmony between humanity and nature and of peaceful development.

*“The Chinese path to modernization and Western modernization are not necessarily mutually exclusive. They can be complementary to each other, with both driving the modernization of human civilization writ large.”*

—Chen Haiming, professor and director of the Center for Global Governance and Law at Xiamen University of Technology



## Dual-Olympic City

The Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games were held from February 4 to 20 last year. Beijing became the first city to host both Summer and Winter Olympic Games. Nearly 3,000 athletes from 91 countries and regions joined this Winter Games. Among the 12 competition venues, five were legacy venues of the Beijing 2008 Summer Olympics. All Beijing 2022 venues have legacy plans in place, ensuring their post-Games multipurpose use all year round.

Chinese skier Gu Ailing competes in the women's freeski big air final at the Big Air Shougang in Beijing, February 8, 2022. (Photo by Chen Jian/*China Pictorial*)

*"It is obvious that the athletes are happy and are more than happy. They are extremely satisfied with the venues, with the Villages, with the services having been offered, and with the safety within the closed loop under these very difficult circumstances."*

—Thomas Bach, president of the International Olympic Committee

# BEIJING 2022



## C919

The first C919 large passenger aircraft was delivered to its first customer, China Eastern Airlines, on December 9, 2022. It was the first time ever for China's civil aviation transport market to purchase an indigenously-developed mainline jetliner.

With registration number B-919A, the aircraft completed its maiden flight from Shanghai Pudong International Airport to Shanghai Hongqiao International Airport during the delivery process. The 164-seater aircraft comes with a two-class cabin layout, consisting of business class and economy class. "The comfort and stability of the aircraft are excellent," said Zhang Chi, deputy general manager of the cabin department of China Eastern Airlines, who took the very first flight. Compared with other planes he has flown in, the C919 is high-end, with little noise during the flight, according to Zhang.

A C919 large passenger aircraft numbered B-919A is ready to fly from Shanghai Pudong International Airport to Shanghai Hongqiao International Airport, marking the delivery of the world's first C919 large passenger aircraft to China Eastern Airlines, its first buyer, December 9, 2022. (Photo by Wan Quan/China Pictorial)

*"China's C919 large passenger aircraft has been offered to the civil aviation market as a new plane with good quality and low price. And the development of the C919 aircraft marks the takeoff of China's aviation industry and large aircraft manufacturing."*

—Shen Haijun, professor at the School of Aerospace Engineering and Applied Mechanics





## Rural Revitalization

2022 was a critical year for China's drive to comprehensively promote rural revitalization and accelerate agricultural and rural modernization during the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-2025). Last February, China unveiled its "No. 1 central document" for 2022, outlining vital tasks to comprehensively push forward rural revitalization. The document vowed to "firmly maintain the bottom lines of guaranteeing China's grain security and ensuring no large-scale return to poverty" and "promote rural development, rural construction, and rural governance in a solid and orderly manner." The report to the 20th CPC National Congress held in October 2022 stated: "The most challenging and arduous tasks we face in building a modern socialist China in all respects remain in our rural areas. We will continue to put agricultural and rural development first, pursue integrated development of urban and rural areas, and facilitate the flows of production factors between them. We will move faster to build up China's strength in agriculture and steadily promote the revitalization of businesses, talent, culture, ecosystems, and organizations in the countryside."

*"With in-depth implementation of the rural revitalization strategy, farmers' sense of gain, happiness, and security has greatly improved. At the same time, it should also be noted that problems of unbalanced and inadequate development in China are still prominent. Promoting common prosperity for farmers and rural areas will be a long-term task. We must keep both feet on the ground, work hard, and strive towards this goal for a long time."*

—Wu Xiao, director-general of the Department of Rural Economy under the National Development and Reform Commission of China



Farmers in Chengkang Village, Anhui Province, dry harvested crops in the sun, August 24, 2022. (Photo from CNS)



A flag-raising ceremony is held by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government at the Golden Bauhinia Square to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Hong Kong's return to the motherland, July 1, 2022. (Photo from Xinhua)

## 25th Anniversary of Hong Kong's Return to the Motherland

The 25th anniversary of Hong Kong's return to the motherland was celebrated on July 1, 2022. John Lee Ka-chiu was sworn in as the sixth-term chief executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. The principle of "one country, two systems" has proved to be the best solution to the historical question of Hong Kong and the best institutional arrangement to ensure Hong Kong's long-term prosperity and stability after its return. Chinese President Xi Jinping delivered an important speech at the celebration, featuring a blueprint for the development of Hong Kong and clarification of the direction of the steady and sustained implementation of the "one country, two systems" principle.

*In 2021, Hong Kong's economy grew to HK\$2.86 trillion (about US\$364 billion), up from HK\$1.37 trillion (about US\$180 billion) in 1997. During the period, its total foreign trade in goods more than tripled to HK\$10.27 trillion (about US\$1.31 trillion). The average life expectancy in Hong Kong in 2021 stood at 83 years for males and 87.7 years for females, compared to 76.8 years and 82.2 years in 1997, respectively.*



## International Wetland Cities

An accreditation ceremony was held during the 14th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP14) to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands on November 3, 2022. Seven Chinese cities received certificates of “international wetland cities,” making China the country with the most. The year 2022 marked the 30th anniversary of China’s accession to the convention. Over the past decades, China has established and improved its legal framework for wetland protection as well as systems for protection management, project planning, and investigation and monitoring and has actively fulfilled its obligations under the convention while continuing to expand international cooperation in this regard.

*“I want to say that in celebrating these 30 years, it’s really been an honor to realize and see the wetlands leadership from China reach beyond the national jurisdiction of China. I look forward to the next 30 years.”*

—Musonda Mumba, secretary-general of the Ramsar Convention at an event titled “China’s 30 Anniversary of Accession to the Ramsar Convention: Achievement and Outlook”

A bird’s-eye view of golden rice fields and beach covered with seepweed in Panjin City, northeastern China’s Liaoning Province, October 5, 2022. On June 9 that year, the official website of the Ramsar Convention unveiled the second group of “international wetland cities.” Seven cities in China including Hefei, Jining, Liangping, Nanchang, Panjin, Wuhan, and Yancheng were listed. (Photo from IC)



A statue of Jinbao, the mascot of the China International Import Expo (CIIE). The fifth CIIE was held in Shanghai from November 5 to 10, 2022. Leading enterprises from various industries joined 284 of the Fortune Global 500 companies in participating in the expo, and a total of 438 new products, technologies and services made representative debuts. Intended turnover reached US\$73.52 billion on a year-by-year basis, hitting a record high. (Photo by Xu Xun/China Pictorial)

## Openness and Prosperity

Entering its fifth edition in 2022, the China International Import Expo (CIIE) in Shanghai has become a vital platform for promoting trade, investment, and global cooperation and a “golden gate” to the vast Chinese market. The fifth CIIE attracted participants from 145 countries, regions, and international organizations. Enterprises from 127 countries and regions were involved, including every member state of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, the world’s largest free trade deal so far. A total of US\$73.52 billion worth of tentative deals were reached for one-year purchases of goods and services at the fifth CIIE, up 3.9 percent year-on-year.

*“The CIIE plays an important role in promoting economic globalization and open trade and thus underscores China’s strategic attitude towards a continuous opening-up policy.”*

—Oliver Zipse, chairman of the Board of Management of BMW AG



## Yuan Globalization

The Chinese currency, the renminbi (RMB), became the fourth most active currency for global payments according to the *2022 RMB Internationalization Report* released by the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank.

Cross-border RMB receipts and payments in non-banking sectors hit a record high of 36.6 trillion yuan (US\$5.1 trillion) in 2021, up 29 percent year-on-year, according to the central bank's report. The net inflow of cross-border RMB settlements stood at 404.47 billion yuan (US\$57.78 billion).

*"In recent years, China's advantages in global industrial chain and supply chain have become more prominent. The opening of China's financial market has progressed steadily. The mechanism for setting the exchange rate for the renminbi has been continuously improved, and cross-border capital flows have been increasingly steady. This is helping China better cope with changes in the external environment."*

—Wang Chunying, deputy administrator and spokesperson of the State Administration of Foreign Exchange of China



A logo for digital renminbi (RMB) services of the Bank of China is displayed during the 2022 China International Fair for Trade in Services in a venue at Beijing's Shougang Industrial Park. (Photo from IC)



After the three astronauts of the Shenzhou-15 manned spacecraft successfully reached the space station, the two teams of astronauts accomplished China's first "space rendezvous." (Photo courtesy of cmse.gov.cn)

## Meeting in Space

Launched on November 24, 2022, China's Shenzhou-15 manned spacecraft successfully docked with the space station combination early on November 30. The spacecraft conducted a fast automated rendezvous and docked with the front port of the space station's Tianhe module at 5:42 a.m. It was the first time for Chinese astronauts aboard the space station to welcome a visit from a crewed spaceship. The Shenzhou-14 manned spacecraft separated from the space station combination at 11:01 a.m. on December 4 and returned to Earth safely. The Shenzhou-14 crew members, Chen Dong, Liu Yang, and Cai Xuzhe, lived and worked in the space station complex for 183 days.

*"China has made such incredible advances, and I just enjoy watching their developments and hope to see us all working together more in the future. It would be my goal that definitely all the space-exploring countries of the world can work together on some projects in the future, maybe building a joint base on the moon or a base on planet Mars."*

—Don Thomas, a retired NASA astronaut



## Food Security

China has been improving its capability of ensuring food security over the past decade, with higher annual grain output and stable market operation. The country's grain output has remained above 650 million tons for seven consecutive years. Chinese President Xi Jinping noted in a written speech at the International Forum on Hybrid Rice Assistance and Global Food Security in Beijing on November 12, 2022 that food security is fundamental to human survival. Half a century ago, hybrid rice was first successfully developed and planted widely in China. Thanks to this technology, China has managed to feed nearly 20 percent of the world's population with less than nine percent of the world's arable land and become the largest food producer and the third-largest food exporter in the world. China will continue to work with all countries in a spirit of solidarity and shared future to increase cooperation on food security and poverty reduction, according to Xi.

*"China is one of the best countries in the world to partner with African countries in fighting food insecurity on the continent because of their own experience and agricultural technology innovations."*

—Egide Karuranga, a Rwandan economist

Nine large harvesters rumble forward in the golden paddy field in Jiangchuan Farm of Beidahuang Agricultural Reclamation Group in Jiamusi, northeastern China's Heilongjiang Province, marking the beginning of the harvest of hundreds of hectares of rice, August 28, 2022. (Photo from IC)



People visit the stand of the Chinese automaker BYD during the Paris Motor Show, October 18, 2022. (Photo from Xinhua)

## Chinese-made Electric Vehicles

BYD has become the world's biggest electric vehicle producer by sales, signaling China's rise in the sector. The Chinese automaker sold 641,000 vehicles in the first six months of 2022, a more than 300 percent jump from the same period of the previous year.

In the first half of 2022, the sales volume of electric vehicles globally surpassed 4.22 million, among which Chinese electric vehicles accounted for over 60 percent, a year-on-year increase of 115 percent. The export volume of electric vehicles from China reached 500,000, a year-on-year increase of 96.7 percent. Sales of China-made electric vehicles have topped the world for several straight years so far.

*"Starting as a niche brand and then becoming mainstream, the development of BYD represents the rise of Chinese automobile brands and the rapid growth of the country's new energy vehicle industry."*

—Wang Chuanfu, founder and president of BYD Company Ltd.





In recent years, the virtual reality (VR) industry has taken root in industrial parks across China. VR industrial clusters have risen in many places, and the scale has been growing. The size of China's VR market doubled from 28.28 billion yuan (US\$4.04 billion) in 2019 to 58.39 billion yuan (US\$8.34 billion) in 2021. (Photo by Qin Bin/China Pictorial)

## A Shared Digital Future

The 2022 World Internet Conference (WIC) Wuzhen Summit, held from November 9 to 11 in Wuzhen, Zhejiang Province, welcomed online and in-person participation to a record 2,100 guests from over 120 countries and regions. The 2022 event was the first annual meeting of the WIC since its inauguration as an international organization earlier that year. Alongside various sub-forums, the 2022 Wuzhen Summit featured the WIC Member Representative Symposium for the first time. The symposium attracted more than 30 WIC member representatives from international organizations, leading global internet firms and industrial bodies.

*“The United Nations family in China is committed to supporting efforts to leverage innovation in information and communications technology to improve the lives of vulnerable populations and accelerate global progress on the Sustainable Development Goals.”*

—Siddharth Chatterjee, UN Resident Coordinator in China

## Optimization of COVID-19 Response

In late 2022, the Chinese government rolled out a string of modified measures based on the evolving pandemic situation and the country's drive to better align anti-COVID efforts with economic and social development. China has shifted the focus of its COVID-19 response strategy from infection control to treatment of severe cases. The shift was made following the weakened pathogenicity of the virus. China's National Health Commission (NHC) announced on December 26 that the country would downgrade its level of COVID-19 management from Class A to a less strict Class B starting from January 8, 2023.

*“China now has the necessary conditions for this policy shift, which include waning virulence of the Omicron variant, mass vaccination of the population, improving capabilities of medical treatment, secured manufacturing and supply of medicines designed to fight the virus, enhanced public health awareness, and growing capabilities in personal protection.”*

—Liang Wannian, head of the COVID-19 response expert panel under the NHC

A train is packed with passengers before the arrival of the 2023 Spring Festival. Some 34.74 million passenger trips were made on January 7, the first day of China's Spring Festival travel rush in 2023, during which many Chinese people would travel to reunite with their families for the Chinese Lunar New Year, which falls on January 22 this year. (Photo by Chen Jian/China Pictorial)





# Cultural Connection Comes Full Circle

*Seed Bank of Chinese Culture*  
*Popular Rural Culture*  
*100 Years of Chinese Animation*  
*New Breakthroughs in Underwater Archeology*  
*Traditional Chinese Tea Rituals*  
*Digital Collection*  
*Cross-border Transaction of Cultural Relics*  
*Hong Kong Palace Museum*  
*Protection of Geological Heritage*  
*70th Anniversary of Beijing People's Art Theater*  
*"Queen of Martial Arts" Returns*  
*Chinese TV Dramas Going Overseas*  
*Women's Rise in Film*

Edited by Gong Haiying

In 2022, various Chinese cultural items repeatedly shot to popularity across a wide range of realms: The TV series *A Lifelong Journey* created a sensation despite depicting the realistic lives of ordinary people. China's animation exploded with new expressions of traditional aesthetics after 100 years of development. The salvage operation of the Yangtze River Estuary No. 2 ancient vessel marked a new breakthrough in underwater archeology. China's traditional tea-making ritual was added to the intangible cultural heritage list of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). In 2022, Chinese civilization continued to welcome exchange and mutual learning with other civilizations through exhibitions of cultural relics and artworks, cross-border transactions, and digital collections.



## Seed Bank of Chinese Culture

On July 23, 2022, the China National Archives of Publications and Culture opened in Beijing. A national pool of bibliography resources and a seed bank of Chinese culture, it consists of the headquarters in Beijing and three branches in Xi'an, Hangzhou, and Guangzhou, respectively. Together, they form a system to inherit and preserve national bibliography resources. The National Archives of Publications and Culture ensures the permanent security of Chinese publications and offers a wide array of bibliography resources with imprints of Chinese civilization from all countries. As a comprehensive cultural venue integrating multiple functions, the institution is consistent with the latest international concept of GLAM (Galleries, Libraries, Archives, and Museums).

*A new platform displaying the image of the country, the China National Archives of Publications and Culture will build a bridge for exchange and mutual learning between China and foreign countries through comprehensive leverage of its characteristics and advantages and open another cultural window for the world to understand China and for China to understand the world."*

—Liu Chengyong, director of the China National Archives of Publications and Culture

Visitors at the Wenhan Ge (Pavilion) in Beijing, headquarters of the China National Archives of Publications and Culture, July 30, 2022. (Photo by Li Xin/Xinhua)





# Popular Rural Culture

In recent years, “local culture fever” has emerged in many places across China. Many traditional villages with rich historical legacies and regional cultural landscapes have regained popularity. People visit traditional villages to experience rural life and soak up the timeless culture they radiate. Largely thanks to its ability to preserve cultural nostalgia, rural culture has become a mainstream trend in Chinese society. The prosperity of rural culture drives and manifests rural revitalization.

Reception Volume and Revenue of China's Agritainment and Rural Tourism, 2016-2020

Year	Individual Trips	Combined Revenue
2016	2.1 billion	570 billion yuan (US\$81 billion)
2017	2.8 billion	740 billion yuan (US\$105 billion)
2018	3 billion	800 billion yuan (US\$114 billion)
2019	3.3 billion	850 billion yuan (US\$121 billion)
2020	2.6 billion	600 billion yuan (US\$85 billion)

(Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of China)

Hougou Village is located in eastern Yuci District, Jinzhong City, Shanxi Province. It preserves the millennia-old spiritual beliefs, production methods, and living conditions of the Han culture in northern China, becoming a “living fossil” of northern folk culture. Here, villagers and tourists watch a dramatic performance on a traditional theater stage in Hougou Village. The theater troupe’s repertoire from the 1950s has been preserved to this day. (Photo courtesy of the Party committee of Dongzhao Township)



# 100 Years of Chinese Animation

The year 2022 marked the centenary of the birth of Chinese animation. Throughout the past century, Chinese animators have integrated traditional Chinese cultural elements such as ink painting, paper-cutting, and puppets into animation. Many animated works with Chinese characteristics have emerged such as *Havoc in Heaven* and *Ne Zha Shaking the Seas*. The Eastern charm of classic works remains engraved in the memories of generations of audiences and continues to influence subsequent creations.

Today, Chinese animation, once marginalized by a massive influx of imported animated works, is set to welcome a revival of sorts. Through re-embracing traditional Chinese culture, it has been endowed with new interpretations and new expressions adapted to contemporary viewers.

Ten Highest-Grossing Animated Films on the Chinese Mainland in 2022

Rank	Animated Film	Country	Box Office (US\$ million)
1	<i>Boonie Bears: Back To Earth</i>	China	142.2
2	<i>New Gods: Yang Jian</i>	China	80.8
3	<i>The Bad Guys</i>	U.S.	48.8
4	<i>Minions: The Rise of Gru</i>	U.S.	34.5
5	<i>Detective Conan: The Bride of Halloween</i>	Japan	25.5
6	<i>One Piece Film: Red</i>	Japan	24.4
7	<i>Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf: Dunk for Future</i>	China	23.3
8	<i>Hotel Transylvania 4</i>	U.S.	17.9
9	<i>I Am What I Am</i>	China	13.8
10	<i>New Happy Dad and Son 5: My Alien Friend</i>	China	12.0

(Source: Maoyan Entertainment)



A still from the Chinese animated film *New Gods: Yang Jian*. The movie offered a new interpretation of the ancient Chinese mythological figure Yang Jian. The film was shortlisted for the 95th Oscar for Best Animated Feature Film.



Utilizing the world's first curved beam non-contact overall migration technology for cultural relics, the ancient ship Yangtze River Estuary No. 2 is successfully salvaged, November 21, 2022.  
(Photo by Jin Liwang/Xinhua)

## New Breakthroughs in Underwater Archeology

A merchant ship dating back to Emperor Tongzhi's reign of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), Yangtze River Estuary No. 2 sank more than 150 years ago. Loaded with rich cultural relics, it is now recognized as one of the largest and best-preserved ancient wooden shipwrecks ever found in China and even the world. The salvage and migration project of the ancient ship is the world's first attempt to carry out archaeological excavation, overall migration, cultural relics protection, and museum construction simultaneously. It is fostering integration of cultural relics protection and technological innovation, leading to a historic breakthrough for China's underwater archeology.

*"The archaeological concepts, techniques, and methods used on Yangtze River Estuary No. 2 represent a milestone in China's underwater archeology, making it an outstanding example of cultural heritage protection."*

—Li Qun, director of the Natural Cultural Heritage Administration

## Traditional Chinese Tea Rituals

On November 29, 2022, the item "Traditional tea processing techniques and associated social practices in China" was inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. This marks China's 43rd item on the intangible cultural heritage list and padded its lead as the country with the most inclusions.

This heritage has been passed down across generations, forming a complete knowledge system with extensive social practices, mature traditional skills, and a wide variety of handmade products. It reflects Chinese values of modesty, harmony, courtesy, and respect. The practices promoted exchanges and mutual learning among civilizations along the Silk Road and played an important role in the sustainable development of human society.

*"The world now has more than 60 tea-growing countries. The tea road paves a path to disseminate Chinese culture."*

—Zhang Hailan, distinguished research fellow at the Institute of Inheritance and Innovation of Fine Traditional Chinese Culture, East China Normal University

The item "Traditional tea processing techniques and associated social practices in China" is examined during the 17th session of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Rabat, Morocco, November 29, 2022.  
(Photo by Xu Supei/Xinhua)





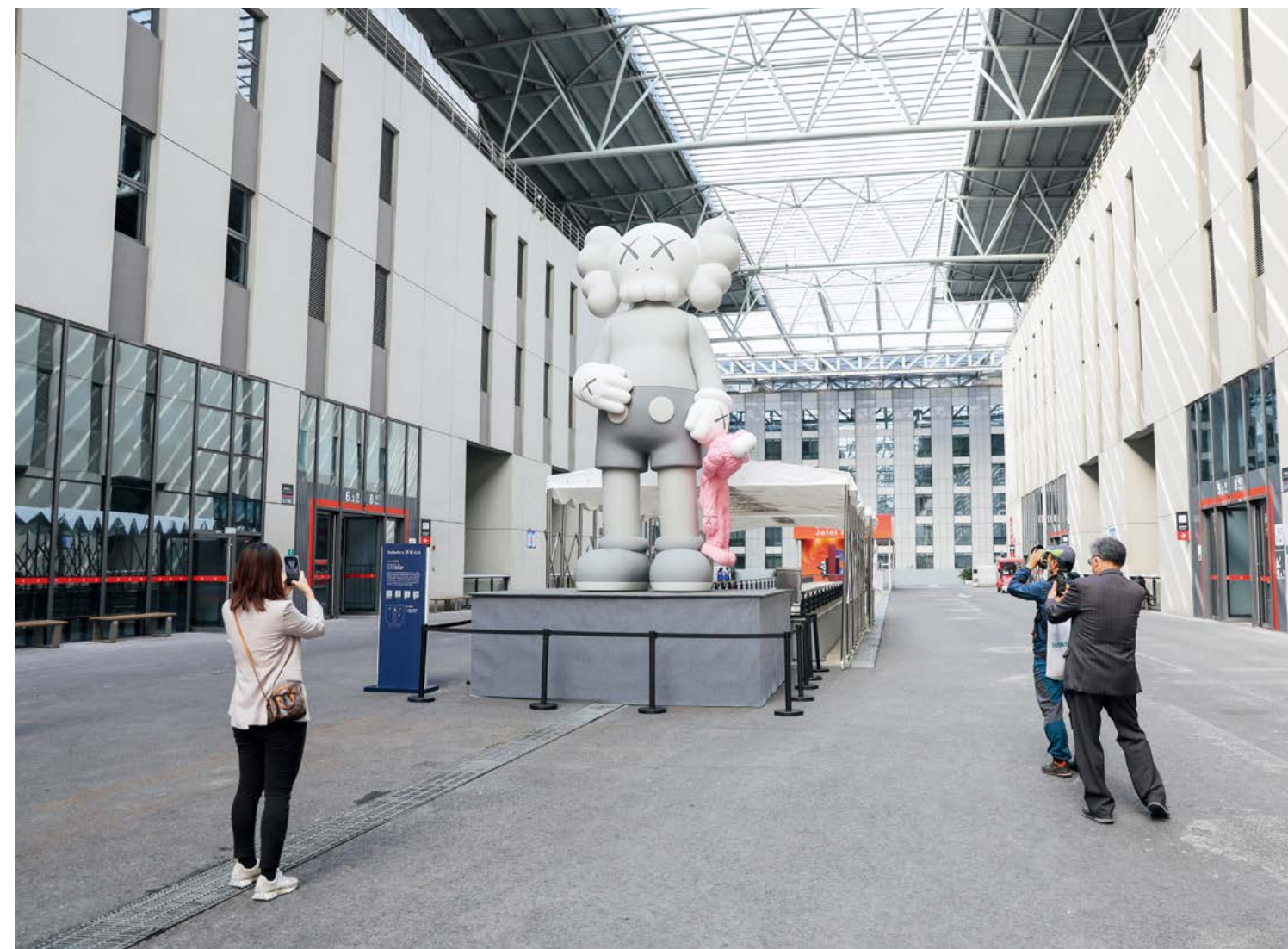
## Digital Collection

In recent years, museums have been delving into digital collections, either by developing their own or joining hands with leading Non-Fungible Token (NFT) platforms. Almost every institution has sought to create a digital rendering of its most prized holding. Digital collections are made with the help of blockchain technology, which can generate unique digital certificates for each and every piece of works. With protected digital copyrights, digital works can be distributed, purchased, collected, or traded. The popularity of digital collections in museums has narrowed the distance between ancient cultural relics and young people, injecting new life into cultural heritage.

*“We must vigorously promote the digitization of museum collections, improve collection databases, and achieve wider spread of basic information.”*

—Li Qun, vice minister of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of China and director of the National Cultural Heritage Administration of China

NFT digital works exhibited at Shougang Industrial Park, one of two venues of the China International Fair for Trade in Services, in Beijing, September 1, 2022. (Photo from IC)



## Cross-border Transaction of Cultural Relics

During the fifth China International Import Expo (CIIE) from November 5 to 10, 2022, purchase intents were reached for 37 cultural relics and artworks brokered by nine overseas exhibitors including Christie's, Sotheby's, and Phillips, with a total turnover of 490 million yuan (US\$70 million). In recent years, Shanghai, Beijing, Hainan, and other Chinese cities and provinces have built international trading centers for cultural relics and artworks, pushing China's cultural relics and art market into increasing maturity, with cross-border transactions in this field becoming more frequent. As a result, the internationalization of the Chinese cultural relics and art market is accelerating. These factors will play a major role in promoting two-way exchange between Chinese and international art markets and nurturing sound development of Chinese and global cultural industries.

Visitors take photos of the sculpture “SHARE” by well-known American artist Brian Donnelly, stylized as KAWS, at the consumer goods exhibition area of the fifth China International Import Expo (CIIE) in Shanghai, November 8, 2022. The five-meter-tall sculpture was the largest single exhibit at this CIIE. (Photo from IC)

Global Auction Turnover of Chinese Cultural Relics and Art since 2014

Year	Total Turnover (US\$ billion)
2014	7.9
2015	7.12
2016	6.74
2017	7.19
2018	6.41
2019	5.74
2020	5.7
2021	7.48

(Source: China Association of Auctioneers and the Ministry of Commerce of China)





The Hong Kong Palace Museum is surrounded by the sea on three sides. Its main structure is a 7-story building. The museum officially opened to the public on July 3, 2022. More than 530,000 people visited within four months. (Photo by Li Gang/Xinhua)

## Hong Kong Palace Museum

The Hong Kong Palace Museum is a creative combination of the splendid traditional Chinese culture represented by the Forbidden City and modern and international Hong Kong. It reflects a closer connection between Hong Kong and the Chinese mainland. Today, the museum has become a window for the dissemination of Chinese culture and a new cultural landmark. It is also playing a pivotal role in enhancing national historical and cultural identity, promoting exchange and mutual learning among civilizations, and expanding the influence of Chinese culture.

*“The Hong Kong Palace Museum is like a ‘super conductor’ to pass on China’s splendid traditional culture to the world.”*  
—Louis Ng Chi-wa, director of the Hong Kong Palace Museum

## Protection of Geological Heritage

On October 26, 2022, the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS) released the list of the first 100 IUGS geological heritage sites around the world. Seven Chinese geological heritage sites, including the “Golden Nails” geological section in Zhejiang Province and the karst stone forest in Yunnan Province, made the list. Geological heritage sites listed by IUGS are key areas with geological relics or processes of international significance. They can be used as global benchmarks for geological studies or regarded as sites of great significance in the history of geoscience. Validation by IUGS shows that a geological heritage site has extraordinary value for international geoscience. It also means that the site has been effectively protected.

Number	Name	Category	Location
017	Ordovician rocks of Mount Qomolangma	Geology and sedimentology	Tibet Autonomous Region in southwestern China/ Nepal
018	Permian-Triassic great extinction and “Golden Nails” geological section	Geology and sedimentology	Changxing County, Zhejiang Province
026	Cambrian fossil Lagerstätte in Chengjiang	Paleontology	Chengjiang City, Yunnan Province
047	Early Cretaceous Rhyolitic Columnar Rock Formation in Hong Kong	Igneous and metamorphic rocks	Hong Kong
072	South Tibetan Detachment System in the Rongbuk Valley	Tectonics	Tibet Autonomous Region
080	Karst Stone Forest	Geomorphology and active geological processes	Yunnan Province
094	Bilutu megadunes and lakes in the Badain Jaran Desert	Geomorphology and active geological processes	Alxa League, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region

(Source: International Union of Geological Sciences)

The Yunnan Stone Forest formed 270 million years ago. With various types of karst landforms such as oddly shaped rock formations, caves, lakes, and waterfalls, the stone forest in Yunnan is one of the most typical and diversified karst plateau ecosystems in the world. (Photo from CFB)







## 70th Anniversary of Beijing People's Art Theater

June 12, 2022 marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of Beijing People's Art Theater. A globally renowned cultural institution, the theater has been committed to telling vivid stories of China with distinctive Chinese style and characteristics for 70 years. The 70-year history of Beijing People's Art Theater is one of persistent exploration and experimentation in Chinese drama. It is also a history of continuous absorption and innovative adaptation of foreign plays and their performance methods, and a history of cultural exchange through the overseas distribution of Chinese theatrical arts. As the most prestigious dramatic theater in China, Beijing People's Art Theater needs to continue to explore and create a more national and contemporary aesthetic system for Chinese drama to optimize its role as an important platform for international cultural exchange and showcasing the charm of Chinese civilization in the new era.

*"We must embrace new opportunities and challenges with a more inclusive attitude and manage the theater with more modern, more scientific, and more advanced concepts and methods. We should make Beijing People's Art Theater a more open and international-minded theater."*

—Ren Ming (1960-2022), former president of Beijing People's Art Theater

A scene from the performance titled "Salute to Drama—In Celebration of the 70th Anniversary of the Founding of Beijing People's Art Theater," June 11, 2022. Beijing People's Art Theater organized a series of activities starting June 5 that year, to celebrate the 70th anniversary of its establishment. Through various online and offline channels, theater lovers interfaced with dramas to celebrate the 70th birthday of the theater. (Photo by Li Chunguang)

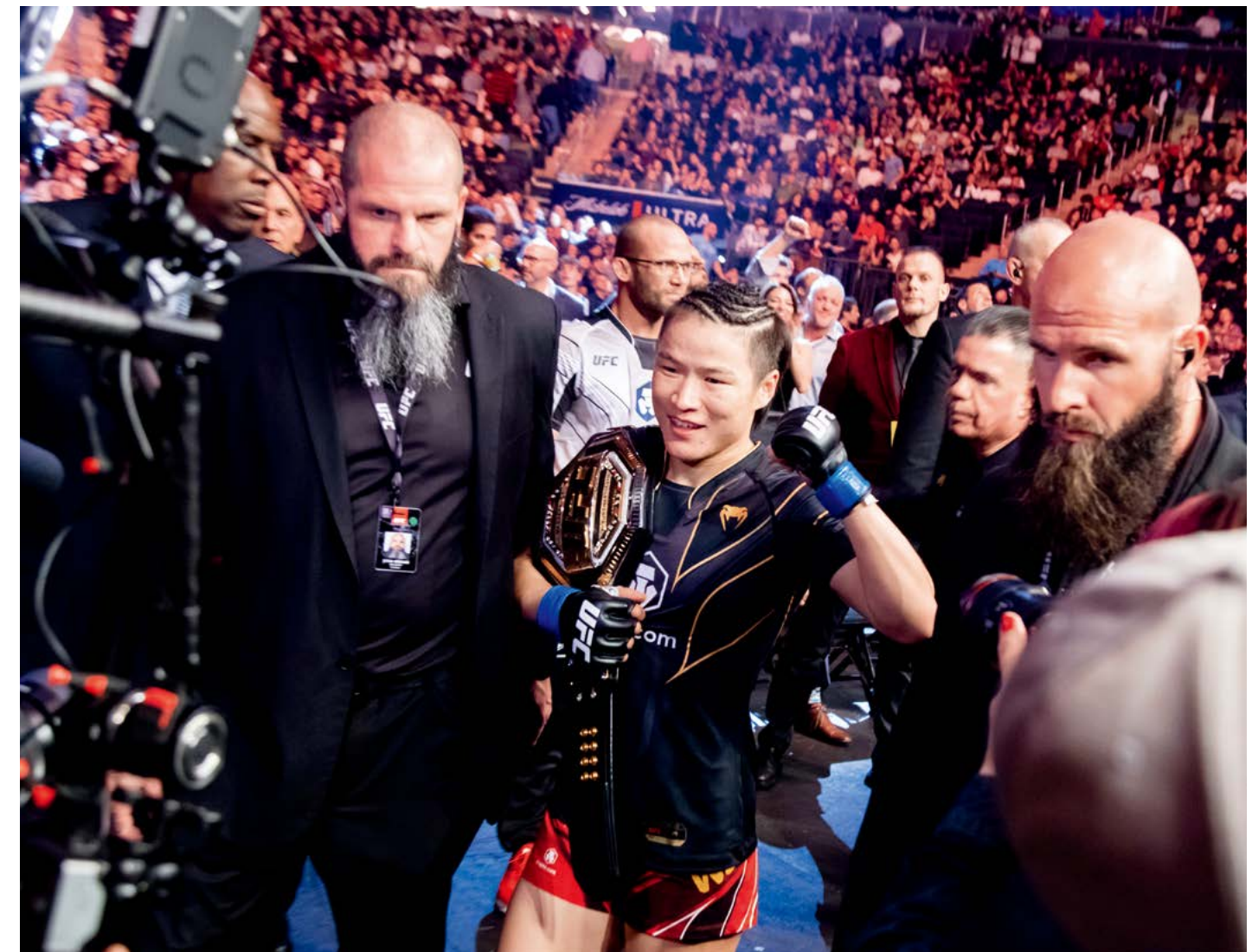
## "Queen of Martial Arts" Returns

In 2022, Zhang Weili, a Chinese professional mixed martial arts athlete and the first Asian champion of the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC), reclaimed the women's strawweight title within a year.

In August 2019, Zhang defeated Brazil's Jessica Andrade in Shenzhen, China, to become the first Asian UFC champion. She successfully defended the title in 2020. But later in 2021, she lost the belt after two losses to American athlete Rose Namajuas. After more than a year away from the competition, she reclaimed the gold belt in November 2022 and became the third fighter in the world to reclaim the women's strawweight championship.

*"I am still far from a legend. A true legend makes continuous breakthroughs and is recognized by everyone."*

—Zhang Weili, China's first UFC champion



Chinese athlete Zhang Weili defeats Carla Esparza via a second-round knockout at UFC 281 in New York, returning to the top of the women's strawweight division, November 12, 2022. (Photo by Guo Ke/Xinhua)



## Chinese TV Dramas Going Overseas

In recent years, Chinese TV dramas have accelerated their pace of “going global.” Disney purchased the overseas distribution rights for the Chinese TV series *A Lifelong Journey* within a month after it began filming. High-quality realistic dramas are receiving wide attention from overseas markets, sparking an emerging trend of Chinese TV dramas “going overseas.” China’s first domestically produced report on the international distribution of such dramas revealed that those which have successfully “gone overseas” tend to feature contemporary realistic stories instead of the more traditional content seen in historical dramas and kung fu dramas.

**“Only unique humanistic instincts will help Chinese film and television works secure a foothold in the international market.”**

—Ding Yaping, director of the Film and Television Art Research Institute of the Chinese National Academy of Arts



Poster for *A Lifelong Journey*. The TV drama reached a primetime rating not recorded by CCTV-1 in the past eight years. Its premiere run drew a total of 371 million viewers.

## Women’s Rise in Film

On November 12, 2022, the 35th Golden Rooster Awards were presented in Xiamen, Fujian Province. Shao Yihui, a 31-year-old female director and screenwriter, won the award for best screenplay for her debut *B for Busy*. In recent years, young female Chinese directors have sprung up like bamboo shoots after a spring rain. Their films have performed well in box office and artistic value alike. According to preliminary statistics, nearly 50 female directors in China have created more than 30 films with box office earnings of more than 100 million yuan (US\$14 million) in the past 20 years—a testament to the strong market influence of female directors. The achievements of these female directors evidence the overall rise of woman power in the film industry, and the influx of female directors has exerted a subtle influence on the structure of the film circle.

**“Chinese films have gained a special flavor and pride because of the participation of female directors. According to preliminary statistics, over the past hundred years, more than 180 Chinese female directors have emerged in China and beyond, a number rarely seen in other countries.”**

—Zhou Xia, a researcher of China Film Art Research Center

A still from *B for Busy*, the debut film of Chinese female director Shao Yihui, born in the 1990s. Three actresses in their 40s and 50s took the bulk of the screen time in this film. *B for Busy* was highly acclaimed for expressing true-to-life feminine discourse, a trend of the times.





# Embracing an “Unrestricted” Tomorrow

Recovery from COVID-19  
Village BA  
Smart Tourism  
Life Skills Classes  
Time Banking  
Revival of Breakdance  
Knowledge-Based Livestreaming  
Rise of Mini-Games  
Digital Pickled Vegetables  
“Liu Genghong Girls”  
Pocket Parks  
Bing Dwen Dwen and Shuey Rhon Rhon  
Ice-Cream Assassins

Edited by Liu Chang

Despite the inconveniences, different Chinese generations showcased the innovation and courage to cope with adversity amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Children in compulsory education learned to taste life in classes for cultivating self-reliant abilities. Young adults achieved professional growth and success through breakdance and knowledge-based livestreaming. Retired folks benefited from the “time banking,” a mutual assistance campaign.

The emergence of the Village BA, the rise of WeChat mini-games, the boom in short videos and mini-series, the growing popularity of online fitness classes, and the evolution of smart tourism evidenced Chinese resilience against mundane lockdowns and the resulting challenges both physically and mentally.

Beijing 2022 mascots Bing Dwen Dwen and Shuey Rhon Rhon warmed public hearts while shining light on the dynamics of China’s winter economy amid the pandemic. Criticism of the so-called “ice-cream assassins” accused of seeking skyrocketing prices showed the necessity of market regulation to ensure sustainable economic development.

Efforts to accelerate construction of pocket parks began in earnest after “keeping a harmonious relationship with nature” became an even stronger consensus during the pandemic.

Now, China’s fight against the pandemic has reached a new stage. The country is working to steer lives back to normal through 10 new prevention and control measures released on December 7, 2022 and has scrapped the quarantine requirement for international arrivals since January 8, 2023. The time for an “unrestricted” tomorrow has arrived.



## Recovery from COVID-19

Lately, an increasing number of Chinese people are recovering from COVID-19 symptoms with help from “magic medicines” including canned yellow peaches and optimism for approaching new experiences.

Travel platforms showed that searches for air tickets to tourist hotspots like China’s Sanya and Harbin jumped as much as seven times after the 10 new prevention and control measures were released on December 7, 2022, with many people seeking to travel around the Lunar New Year holiday in January.

*“Currently, China has administered over three billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines. On this basis, corresponding adjustments have been made as per Omicron development over the past six months. That is how the virus can be controlled while public life and production as well as social and economic development are facilitated.”*

—Sheng Jifang, director of the Department of Infectious Diseases, First Affiliated Hospital of Zhejiang University School of Medicine

An alley in “Guijie” or Dongzhimen Inner Street, a famous food street in Beijing, is decorated with lanterns to welcome diners, January 1, 2023. (Photo by Guo Shasha/China Pictorial)





A bird's-eye view of the semi-final of the "Beautiful Countryside" Basketball League, dubbed "Village BA" by the netizens for its warm atmosphere, in Taipan Township, Taijiang County, in southwestern China's Guizhou Province, August 1, 2022. Thousands of spectators cheered on the impressive performance of players around the basketball court. (Photo from VCG)

## Village BA

Despite a lack of fancy arenas, corporate sponsorships, promotions, or even ticket sales, a new basketball "league" known for spectacular plays emerged to widespread acclaim in China's rural areas, which is popularly called "Village BA" by netizens. Thousands of spectators cheered on the impressive performances. Without any professional or famous players, the Village BA went viral on the internet.

Consolidation of poverty alleviation achievements and promotion of rural revitalization efforts in China in recent years have resulted in accumulating benefits for rural people. Steep improvements in living standards have provided them with more time and money to participate in sports and other cultural activities.

*"The Village BA got more people involved in sports which connected hearts, enhanced sentiments for the countryside, and more importantly, fertilized the soil of Chinese culture."*

—Wang Zhigang, vice chairman and secretary general of the Zhejiang Basketball Association





## Smart Tourism

The COVID-19 pandemic has promoted application of information technology to accelerate smart tourism.

When peach blossoms went into full bloom in Beijing's Pinggu District in April 2022, a 168-hour livestream on Fliggy, Alibaba's travel arm, attracted more than four million viewers.

China's State Council also announced a development plan for the tourism sector during the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-2025) in a circular released on January 20, 2022. It involves promoting smart tourism with digital, networked, and intelligent scenarios and expanding application of new technologies in tourism.

*"New technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data, cloud computing, and 5G plus AR/VR have been deeply integrated with tourism, expanding the boundaries of urban tourism and becoming an important driving force for tourism development. A modern tourism system radiating from smart tourism is taking shape rapidly."*

—Chen Jining, chairman of the Council of World Tourism Cities Federation and former mayor of Beijing

Tourists experience a metaverse project at the Dream Island amusement park in Thousand Islands Lake, a scenic spot in Zhejiang Province, November 28, 2022. (Photo from VCG)





Primary school students make mooncakes at a life skills class in Hohhot, northern China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, September 8, 2022. (Photo from VCG)

## Life Skills Classes

*The Life Skills Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education (2022)* issued by China's Ministry of Education was implemented in the last fall semester.

Life skills classes cover 10 activities ranging from cleaning, clothes organizing, and cooking to pet care and gardening. Students in compulsory education must attend at least one such class fit for their age each week. The move marked a break from the norm in China's education system and a new highlight of education reform aligned with the "double reduction" policy aiming to reduce homework and time spent on extra-curricular classes or after-school private tutoring.

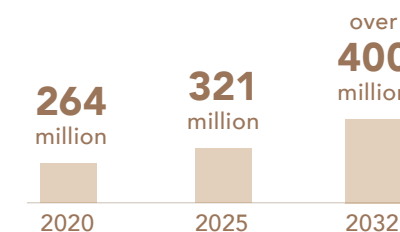
***"Labor education is an indispensable piece of compulsory education. The life skills curriculum fully accounts for the learning ability of each school stage and seeks to cultivate not only life skills but also abilities in self-learning, self-management, and self-planning."***

—Xiong Bingqi, dean of the 21st Century Education Research Institute

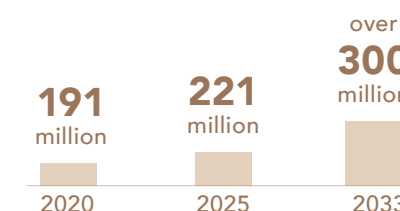
## Time Banking

China has a graying population. Chinese people above the age of 60 already account for a fifth of the nation's population, which is expected to almost double by 2050. "Time banks," among other creative efforts, started getting set up to alleviate a shortage of caregivers. The Beijing Municipal Civil Affairs Bureau, for instance, released an implementation plan for "time banks" which took effect on June 1, 2022. "Time banking" is a mutual assistance model in which volunteers offer services to older citizens in exchange for credits they can tap when their time comes. Specifically, it enables volunteers to accumulate "coins" by providing services to the elderly, with one hour of service earning one "coin."

China's Population Aged 60 and Above



China's Population Aged 65 and Above



(Source: China Population and Development Research Center)

An old man displays a piece of paper-cutting work at Beijing's MEI HOU SI SHI Jingshan Civic Cultural Center, February 3, 2022. (Photo by Qin Bin/China Pictorial)





## Revival of Breakdance

Breakdance regained the public spotlight in China in 2020 when the International Olympic Committee officially added it to the 2024 Paris Olympic Games. Now, people are even looking forward to its rosy future in China.

To date, the China Hip-Hop Union Committee has opened branch affiliates around China to serve some three million street dancers. Breakdance has also been incorporated into China's higher education. Beijing Sports University, for example, launched an experimental breakdancing class in 2020 and recruited students for it from across the nation.

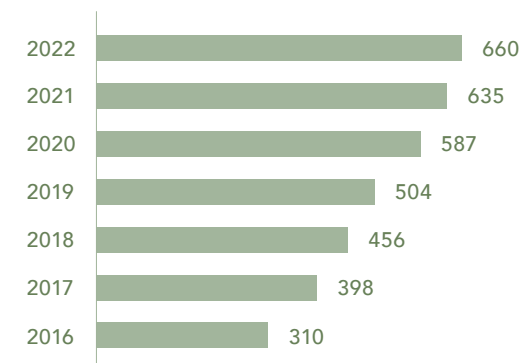
*“With its increasing popularity and Chinese people’s more diverse and open attitudes, breakdance may very well become common public entertainment like group dancing in another 20 years.”*

—Xia Rui, director of the China Hip-Hop Union Committee, China Dancers Association

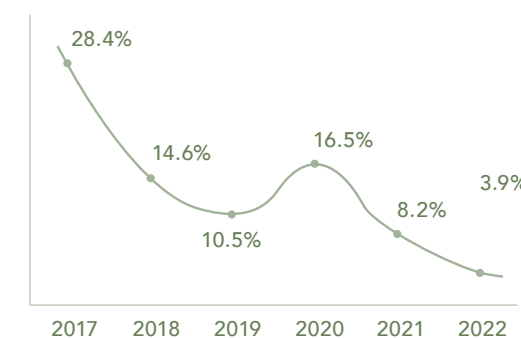
Chinese breakdancer Liu Qingyi shows her energetic breakdance moves at the 2022 Red Bull BC One World Final. (Photo from VCG)



Users of China's E-commerce Livestreaming Sector from 2016 to 2022 (Million)



Annual User Growth Rate of China's E-commerce Livestreaming Sector from 2016 to 2022



(Source: iiMedia Research)



A screenshot shows Dong Yuhui, a livestreamer with Chinese education giant New Oriental, teaching English words while selling agricultural products online. (Photo from Douyin)

## Knowledge-Based Livestreaming

“No need to hurry. It doesn’t matter if you buy the product or not, but do listen to my story.” While scanning through China’s innumerable e-commerce livestream channels, many stop upon hearing Dong Yuhui, a livestreamer now with Chinese education giant New Oriental. Dong is known for dispensing English knowledge and fascinating anecdotes while selling commodities via livestreaming. His unique style of combining a talk-show-like English course with e-commerce livestreaming quickly amassed over 20 million followers in just 20 days. Moreover, it stimulated a spillover effect leading to the popularization of rich content and knowledge-based livestreaming rather than simply pretty faces hawking products.



## Rise of Mini-Games

Yang Le Ge Yang, loosely translated as “Sheep a Sheep,” went viral as a pass-through game on WeChat’s mini program platform in 2022, with a clearance rate of less than 0.1 percent. Those who can eliminate all the tiles win and join the sheep, but if the strip fills with seven blocks, the player loses.

The game’s simple mechanics and social communication nature contributed to its impressive success. It has zero barriers to entry and the difficulty of the higher levels stimulates a desire to share the progress with friends on WeChat, Tencent’s social networking app. The game’s WeChat index, indicating a topic’s popularity on WeChat, hit four million on September 14, 2022. Young Chinese people tend to play easy-to-learn mini-games to relieve stress and battle boredom. However, controversies linked to the flourishing industry have also emerged such as copycatting, collection of user data, and in-game sales.

Gender and Geographical Distribution of WeChat Mini-Game Users, with Main Users Aged 24 to 40 Years

♀ 5 : 5 ♂

First- and Second-Tier Cities 4 : 6 Others

20% Under 24 Years Old

50% Between 24-40 Years Old

30% Over 40 Years Old

(Source: 2022 WeChat Mini Game Growth White Paper)



A screenshot of Yang Le Ge Yang, one of the hottest WeChat mini-games in 2022.

## Digital Pickled Vegetables

The term “*dianzi zhacai*,” literally “digital pickled vegetables,” has started trending among young people in China. It’s an internet slang for short videos that people can watch while eating, which may make food more appetizing.

Many youngsters in China don’t have the luxury of enjoying conversations with friends and family at dining tables because of busy work schedules. Instead, they are accompanied by only 20-to-30-minute “windows.” Some have questioned the value of such videos, pointing out that explainers spoil good films and books and that mini-series aren’t very informative. Most, however, see nothing wrong with harmless fun accompanying a solitary meal after a long day of work.

*“Nowadays, ‘escaping’ the overbearing social demands is a necessary luxury for many people. Broadly speaking, relying on ‘digital pickled vegetables’ to have meals or scrolling down a screen while squatting in a toilet provides a sliver of social isolation, allowing people to ‘reorganize’ society in their own small worlds.”*

—Wang Chengwei, a food sociologist and distinguished professor in the Department of History of Science and Technology and Scientific Archaeology at the University of Science and Technology of China



“嘿，好久不见”  
武林外传  
My own swordsman

A poster for the television series *My Own Swordsman*, one of the most popular “digital pickled vegetables.”



## “Liu Genghong Girls”

Pop singer Liu Genghong from China’s Taiwan region went viral with fitness videos while millions of Shanghai people were stuck at home during last spring’s COVID-19 lockdown. His constant leg patting with “go go go” ignites enthusiasm and imitation especially among females, nicknamed “Liu Genghong Girls.”

The COVID-19 outbreak limited access to gyms and fitness centers, so simple aerobic exercises that did not require equipment were perfect for people stuck at home. Since then, downloads of fitness apps have soared, indicating the growing popularity of online fitness, which was also likely beneficial to epidemic prevention.

Year-on-year increase of the number of fitness videos, followers of fitness trainers, and livestreaming revenues on Douyin in 2021

134%

Number of fitness videos

208%

Followers of fitness trainers

141%

Livestreaming revenues

(Source: Douyin Sports Content Report)



A screenshot shows Liu Genghong and his wife leading the audience to do aerobics in their livestream Douyin channel. (Photo from Douyin)

## Pocket Parks

Pocket parks refer to small outdoor public spaces covering an area of between 400 to 10,000 square meters. China urged efforts to expedite construction of pocket parks across the country to improve the living environment, according to a statement issued by China’s Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development on August 9, 2022.

China aimed to build at least 1,000 pocket parks in 2022. To achieve this goal, each provincial-level region was urged to build at least 40 such parks. Local authorities were asked to prioritize indigenous plants for the parks and give full consideration to the needs of nearby residents when constructing them, the statement added.

*“Due to space limitations, it is increasingly difficult to build large integrated parks in cities. Building pocket parks in old urban areas with dense populations can be an important measure to make up for the shortage of green spaces and the uneven distribution of parks.”*

—Yang Hongyi, deputy head of the Urban Construction Department, China’s Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development

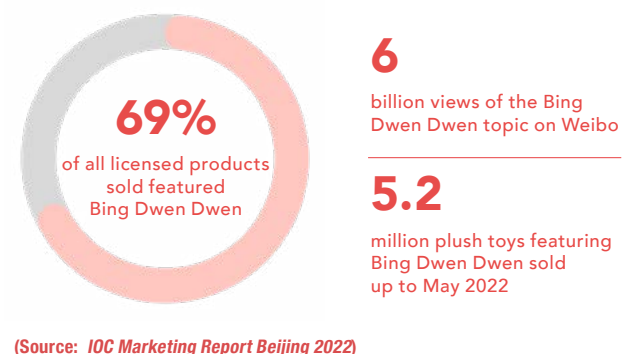


A child plays with bubbles at a pocket park in Shuangqiao District, Chengde City, Hebei Province, May 22, 2022. (Photo from Xinhua)



## Bing Dwen Dwen and Shuey Rhon Rhon

Beijing 2022 mascots Bing Dwen Dwen and Shuey Rhon Rhon have set off a craze in China. About 90,000 pairs of Bing Dwen Dwen and Shuey Rhon Rhon were sold in the two years before the opening of the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics. In the early days after the Games kicked off, buyers had to endure long lines before the products nearly sold out nationwide. Now, the mascots are set to start a new chapter of their legacy. Starting January 1, 2023, the intellectual property rights for mascot Bing Dwen Dwen transfer to the International Olympic Committee (IOC), according to the Beijing Organizing Committee for the 2022 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.



Tourists take photos with Beijing 2022 mascots Bing Dwen Dwen and Shuey Rhon Rhon at Beijing's Shichahai ice rink during the 2022 Spring Festival. (Photo by Qin Bin/China Pictorial)

## Ice-Cream Assassins

The hashtag “*xuegao cike*,” literally “ice-cream assassins,” dominated Chinese social media last summer. It was used when a customer was caught off guard at checkout by exorbitantly expensive ice cream without a price tag. Chinese ice-cream brand Chicecream, also known as Zhong Xue Gao, for example, has been dubbed the “Hermes of ice cream” and holds a prime market position. Most Chicecream popsicles cost about 20 yuan (US\$3) each, with the most expensive reaching nearly 70 yuan (US\$10). Under new state rules effective on July 1, 2022, consumers can file complaints to market regulators if they think products do not match the price label or have no label.

*“Life is like an ice-cream freezer. You never know if the next thing you grab will be an assassin.”*

—A vivid analogy made by a netizen

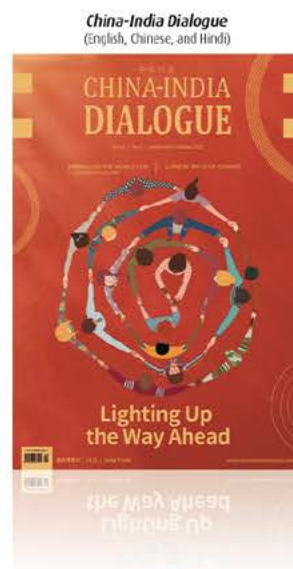


A bar of “ice-cream assassin” sold in Beijing's Yuyuantan Park. (Photo by Liu Chang/China Pictorial)



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