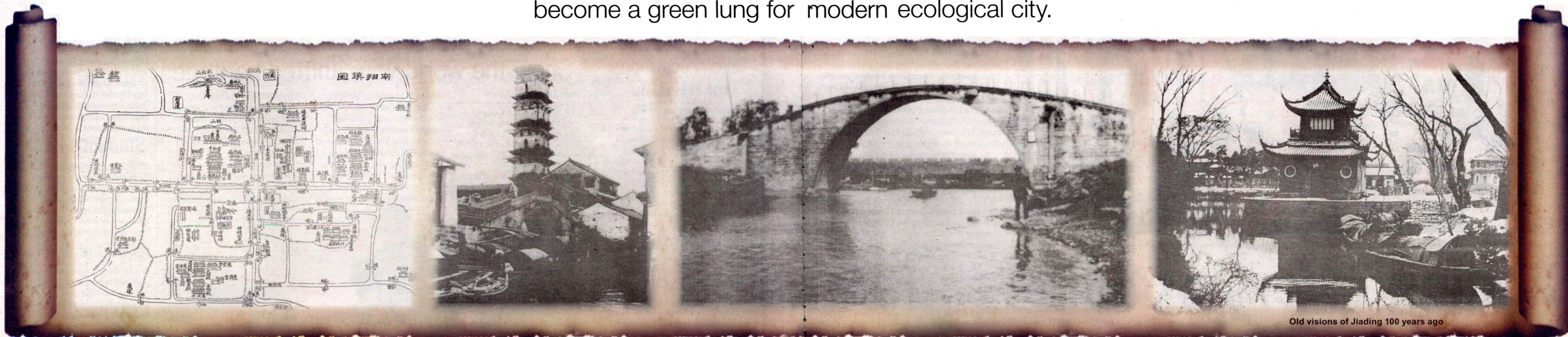


Jiading's ancient city survives to tell tales

A lot of Jiading's ancient buildings still stand while the moat has become a green lung for modern ecological city.



Old visions of Jiading 100 years ago

Green belt follows old moat

Tao Jiming and Chen Qianqing

More than seven centuries after Jiading's city wall was built, much of it has collapsed due to lack of maintenance but the moat is still flowing.

In the early 1960s suggestions were made to construct parks on both sides of the ancient moat.

The idea was adopted by the government in the 1990s and was considered an important part of Jiading's plans to be an ecological park city.

After many years of efforts, a green belt has been established along both sides of the moat, lined with more than 10 kinds of ornamental plants including camphor, ligustrum, metasequoia, sweet osmanthus, lagerstromia and cape jasmine.

The belt is about 7 kilometers long and 80,000 square meters in area.

Along the moat lie eight platforms and one boat wharf. The belt is affectionately called "the green necklace" by Jiading natives. The moat is also connected to several parks.

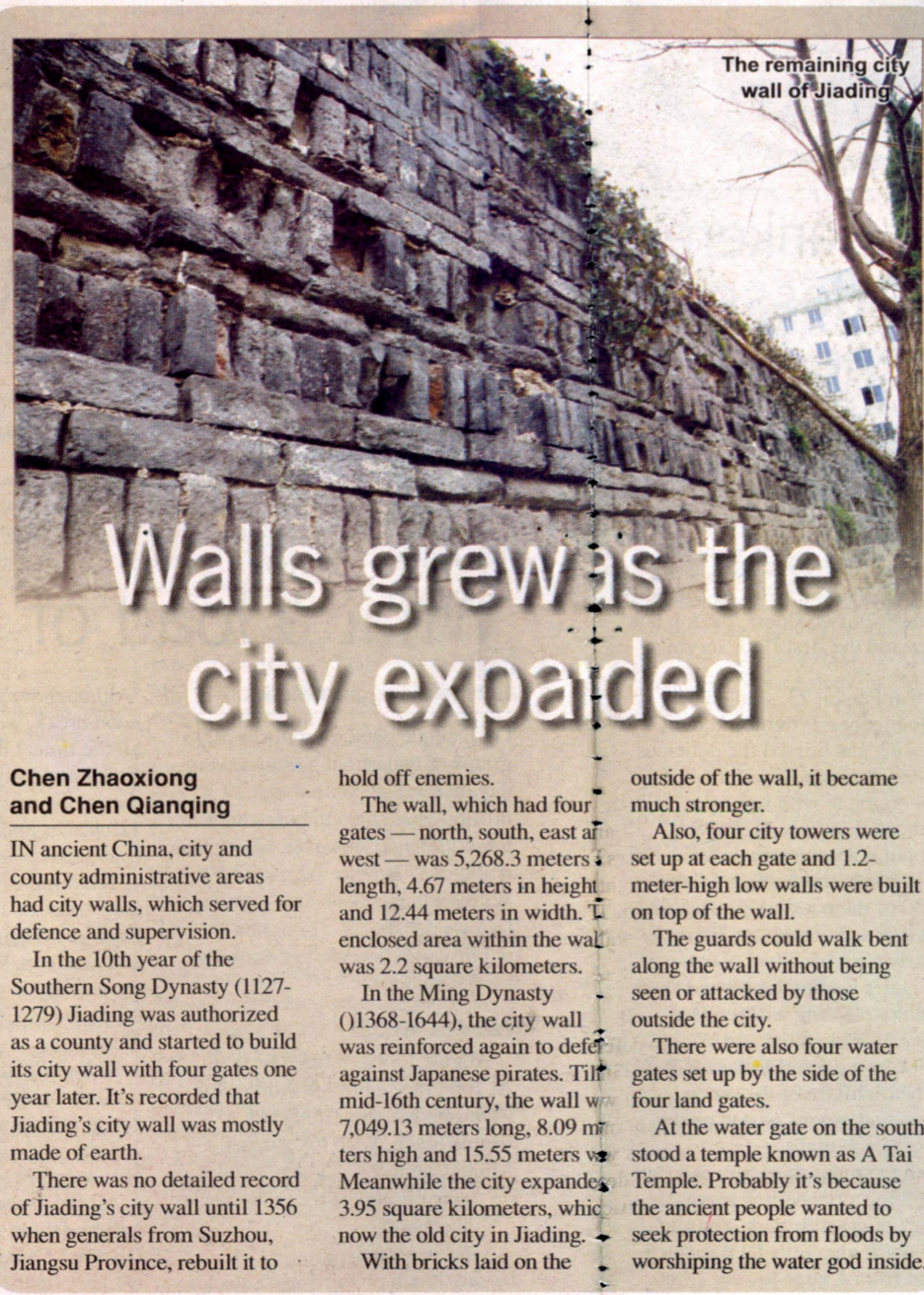
Southeast of the moat stands Wisteria Park, which embodies the friendship between China and Japan. The 10,000-square-meter park showcases more than 400 Japanese wisteria, given by Jiading's sister county in Osaka. In spring, the park and the wisteria attract thousands of visitors.

Near the southern part of the moat lies the Southern Wall Park, which preserves a 150-meter-long section of the ancient city wall as its main feature.

The Ancient Tree Park at the southwest side presents 12 famous ancient trees that are more than 200 years old.



A Jiading resident does morning exercise in a green belt, which is lined with more than 10 kinds of ornamental plants.



The remaining city wall of Jiading

Chen Zhaoxiong and Chen Qianqing

IN ancient China, city and county administrative areas had city walls, which served for defence and supervision.

In the 10th year of the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279) Jiading was authorized as a county and started to build its city wall with four gates one year later. It's recorded that Jiading's city wall was mostly made of earth.

There was no detailed record of Jiading's city wall until 1356 when generals from Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, rebuilt it to

hold off enemies.

The wall, which had four gates — north, south, east and west — was 5,268.3 meters in length, 4.67 meters in height and 12.44 meters in width. It enclosed an area within the wall was 2.2 square kilometers.

In the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), the city wall was reinforced again to defend against Japanese pirates. Till mid-16th century, the wall was 7,049.13 meters long, 8.09 meters high and 15.55 meters wide. Meanwhile the city expanded 3.95 square kilometers, which now the old city in Jiading.

With bricks laid on the

outside of the wall, it became much stronger.

Also, four city towers were set up at each gate and 1.2-meter-high low walls were built on top of the wall.

The guards could walk bent along the wall without being seen or attacked by those outside the city.

There were also four water gates set up by the side of the four land gates.

At the water gate on the south stood a temple known as A Tai Temple. Probably it's because the ancient people wanted to seek protection from floods by worshipping the water god inside.

Original layout still the template

Chen Zhaoxiong and Chen Qianqing

THE layout of Jiading's old city is the same as it was 1,000 years ago. The intersection of the city's two rivers — the Lianqi and Hengli — form a cross, which is encircled by a moat.

The rivers represent Jiading's natural gifts and the moat its human efforts.

Fahua Pagoda, also known as Jinsha Pagoda, stands at the confluence. The 800-year-old pagoda was built more than 10 years before Jiading was established. The seven-floor pagoda is considered the main landmark of Jiading.

Next to the pagoda is an ancient building called Zhu Yun Tang, which has a history of more than 200 years. The wood construction and the stone sculptures at the top of the walls were all from the ancestral hall of the Zhou Family. Inside Zhu Yun Tang displays antiques and cultural relics related to Jiading's past.

On the southern axis of the cross lie Jiading Villa, the Confucius Temple and Huilongtan Park.

Jiading Villa features the Jiading Bamboo Carving Museum and Xuhang Straw Weaving Showroom.

Bamboo carving is a local handicraft with 400 years of history, while straw craftworks can be used daily or as decorative objects. They are considered very environmentally friendly.

Built at the beginning of

Jiading's establishment, the Confucius Temple is almost 800 years old. Every tree and every stone bridge inside the temple represents a legendary tale in history.

Visitors can also take a tour of the Chinese Imperial Examination System Museum, which provides information about the world's earliest and the fairest examination system.

The Lianqi River, the mother river that supplied the people of Jiading, flows from east to west.

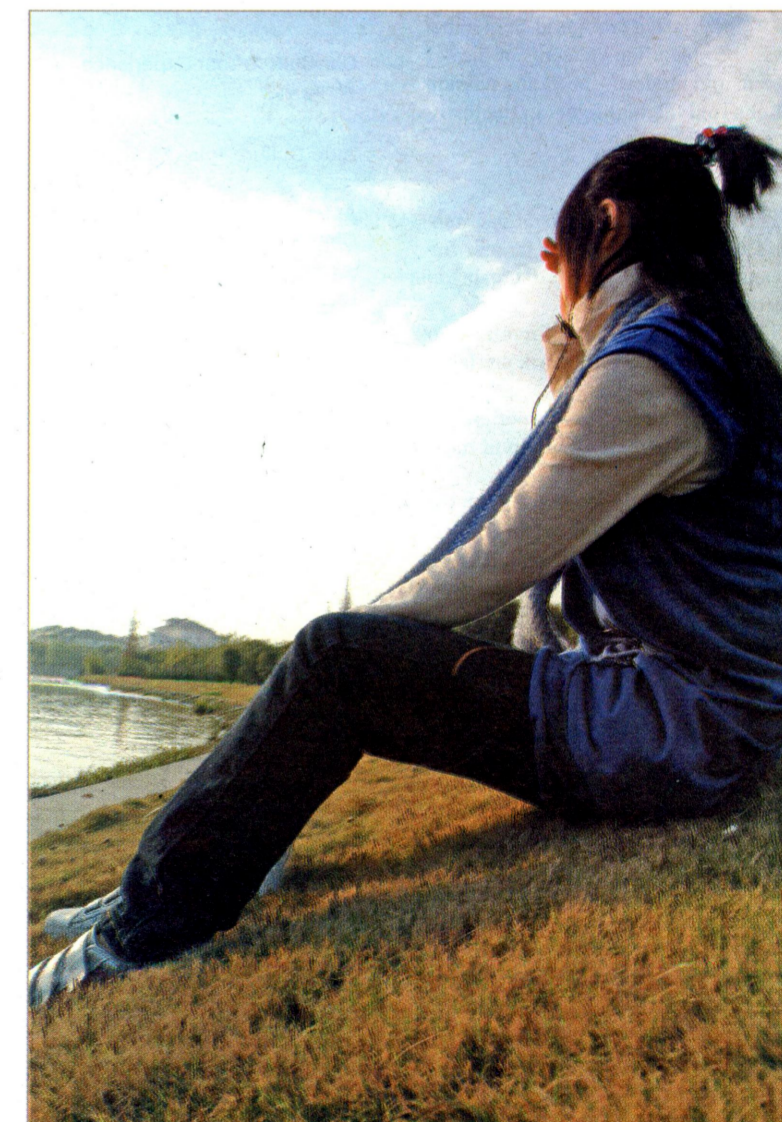
Along both sides of the river visitors can enjoy the view of Jiangnan's typical residences and the street market, which sells all kinds of folk handicrafts and local specialties.

A few minutes walk east along the river is the well-known Jiangnan garden, Qiu Xia Pu. The garden has four sections. One of them is the City's God Temple built in 1371. It's the place where people in Jiading worship the City's God, which was believed to protect the city.

The other three sections feature the ancient gardens of wealthy families in old times. If you are interested in the ancient literature of China, you can spend time here appreciating the calligraphy hanging in the rooms and carved on the walls.

Along the western axis are Si Xian Tang, Zhuang Yuan Fu and the West Gate History and Culture Reserve.

The reserve has many celebrities' former residences.



A Jiading resident looks over the moat.