

## Jiading's early ties and prizes at World Expo

IN 1851, the first World Expo was held in London. For the past 158 years, the event has continuously showcased mankind's new developments and dynamic inventions. The ancient Chinese town of

Jiading has featured honorably in early Expo history and has many prizes to commemorate its moments of glory. In 1905, resident Xu Jiaxiang was appointed as an assistant official to

the chief of the Chinese delegation to the World Expo in Liege, Belgium. In 1911, another Jiading resident Wu Zonglian headed China's government delegation to the World Expo in Turin, Italy. In 1926, "Buddha's

Hand" MSG developed by another Jiadingese, Wu Yunchu, won a top Expo award in Philadelphia. This issue, we examine Jiading's early ties and prize winners at World Expos over the past 100 years.

## How Gu's spirited efforts won French praise in 1937

Hu Baofang and Wang Jie

GU Weijun, the renowned modern diplomat was born in Jiading. His memorial hall, sited in a two-story traditional building in his hometown, memorializes Gu's great contributions to China's modern diplomatic history.

In 1998, the district government also put a small building inside the courtyard of Fa Hua Tower to explain Gu's legendary stories to the public. The World Expo 1937 Paris medal which was awarded to Gu by the French Government for his contributions is also showcased in the hall.

But few would relate this medal with World Expo, because the words carved on it are different from what might be imagined. Because the World Expo 1937 Paris was called the International Art and Technology Expo 1937 Paris and this is what the medal is for.

The medal is made of yellow copper with a diameter of 13 centimeters and a thickness of 0.5 centimeters. There are three legendary figures carved in the center with two trees in between. On the left is the French word "republic" while on the right is the word "France." At the bottom, also in French, is "Gu Weijun, Ambassador of China to France."

In 1935, the French government



The front and back of the medal Gu Weijun won for his Paris efforts.

invited the Chinese government to participate in the World Expo 1938 Paris, but the invitation was refused. However the World Culture Cooperation Association French branch and celebrities both in China and France, including the Chinese immigrants in France, all believed that China should not be absent from such a big-scaled event.

With their support, the World Culture Cooperation China branch decided to establish an association and opened its office in Shanghai.

After the office's opening, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic China appointed the Chinese ambassador to France, Gu Weijun, to a co-ordination role, and

Gu immediately started to approach the French Government. He shuttled among the four departments of the different ministries of France in two months, and finally persuaded the French government to provide two free exhibition areas for China.

In March 1937, Gu reported the result to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China and pressed the importance of China's participation. Gu believed that the World Expo would help China to absorb the advanced technology of other countries and promote development of his motherland.

With support and help from the public, exhibition objects arrived in Shanghai at the end of March and the beginning of April. The

association also appointed its staff to inspect the exhibition objects in the middle of April. Everything seemed to go smoothly. The newspapers even published relevant stories. But the situation changed dramatically in May as money promised by the government couldn't be paid. Gu Weijun was told the association should give up.

Gu was so anxious when hearing this. He replied that all details had been settled with the French government which had promised to give China special treatment. The exhibition place was under construction.

So he kept talking to the association but the political situation in China worsened at the beginning of June, and the association had to abandon its plan to join World Expo in Paris.

To this day, all the historical materials and various publications indicates that China didn't attend the 1937 World Expo. But the medal tells another story. Gu, together with other Chinese immigrants and students in France, attended the event, something that had previously been done by people from other countries.

Today it doesn't matter whether China attended the World Expo Paris 1937 or not, but Gu's spirit in promoting the World Expo in China is unforgettable.



An Expo enthusiastic Jiading senior citizen smiles happily for the tourist's camera during early preparations for the event.

## Soy sauce and wine in Expo ties

Chen Zhaoxiong and Wang Jie

LOOKING back in history, we find Jiading has a century-old tie with the World Expo. One hundred years ago, Jiading was still under the jurisdiction of Jiangsu Province.

For this reason, its earliest exhibition at World Expo all marked their products made in Jiangsu. Sitting outside the western gate of Jiading at that time was a big winner of World Expo awards — Huang Huiji Sauce Mill.

Huiji Sauce Mill was located at Xiang Street, south of the Lianqi River and of the Xianghua Bridge outside the western gate. The workshop stood right behind its store's six rooms along the street. Its exact establishment year and the full name of its founder fallen into oblivion over the years, but existing documents show that it was founded in the 70s (during the reign of Emperor Tongzhe Qing Dynasty) by someone surnamed Huang Anhui Province.

Apart from its main business of soy sauce,

it also produced wine and vinegar. Since its store and workshop sat right next to each other, it retailed its products directly. In its heyday, the mill covered an area of 1.73 hectares and employed nearly 100 workers. On the large ground behind the store stood many pots for making sauce, as well as over 30 warehouses storing a myriad of wine jars and sauce jars.

Although the mill was closed 50 years ago, there are still many such pots and jars left by the Lianqi River. Later, the Luohan Dish made in Nanxiang and the wood engravings from Jiading-based Zhangwenyu Studio and Shiwenxiu Studio also received awards at Expos, only to arouse a feeling of nostalgia among overseas Jiading people.

Some Jiading people have also helped Chinese exhibitors to participate in the World Expo. One of them was diplomat Wu Zonglian living outside the western gate. In 1909, he was appointed by the Qing government as its imperial envoy to Italy, equivalent to an ambassador to Europe. It was because of all his efforts of mediation that the war-ridden Qing government finally sent a delegation to the World Expo in Turin, Italy in 1911.

Wu himself headed the government delegation, while his son Wu Kuangshi supervised its

organization and liaison. Thanks to their efforts, China scooped 266 awards at this Expo. Among those award winners were the soy sauce (gold medal) and radix trichosanthes (silver medal) made by Huang Huiji. Wu Kuangshi attended the award ceremony and immediately sent a letter of congratulation to Huiji Mill in Jiading.

Wu Yunchu, a relative of Wu Zonglian and Wu Kuangshi, was the founder of "Buddha's Hand," a popular MSG brand that won Expo medals three times during 1920-30s (see story below). He also took a seat on the appraisal board at the World Expo in Chicago in 1933. Former Chinese Ambassador Gu Weijun (a.k.a Wellington Koo) accepted the assignment from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to negotiate with the French organizers about China's participation in the World Expo in Paris in 1937 (see story left).

After spending over two months shuttling between the two countries more than 10 times, he finally convinced the French organizers to allow free use of two exhibition rooms in the international pavilion by Chinese participants. To commend his efforts, the French government rewarded him a medal of the International Art and Technology Expo 1937 Paris.

## Wu a winning hand in the food seasoning business

Yu Zhiying and Wang Jie

TODAY'S seasoning market has become saturated with numerous products such as chicken essence, vegetable essence and mushroom essence.

Despite many alternatives, the delicious taste of the MSG (sodium salt) called "Buddha's Hand" is irreplaceable for elders in Shanghai. Over the past decades, this brand produced by Shanghai Tianchu MSG Plant has remained the top choice of families in Shanghai and other parts of China.

Its flavor has fascinated not only the nation but also World Expo. Having won three Expo awards, it remains one of the few Shanghai brands to have been so awarded. "Buddha's Hand" is the earliest

MSG brand in China. Wu Yunchu, a local entrepreneur known as the Chinese Father of MSG, established in Shanghai in 1923. Shortly after its birth, the brand won back the MSG market previously monopolized by Japanese firms through original advertising and innovative packaging.

no time, it became one of the signature made-in-China products and household brands across the country. Scooping awards three times as a made-in-China product at the World Expo, Buddha's Hand has shone as a star of China's food industry and as a pride of national industries.

In 1926, Buddha's Hand participated in World Expo in Philadelphia. Its genuine Chinese origin and strong touch of Eastern art in packaging won over many visitors as well as the appraisal board, which awarded its producer, Tianchu MSG Plant, for "contributions to the improvement of food".

Thanks to its outstanding quality and ingenious advertising, Buddha's Hand scooped another top award.

Wu Yunchu (1891-1953), born in Jiading, was a chemical engineer, industrialist, founder of China's chlor-alkali industry, and boss of the Tian-series conglomerate (consisting of Tianchu MSG Plant, Tianyuan Chemical Plant, Tiansheng Pottery and Tianli Nitrogen Plant).

In the 1920-30s, he invented a cost-efficient method for producing MSG and later established his plants for making MSG, chlor-alkali products, acid-proof pottery as well as ammonia and nitric acid, all of which were the first of their kinds in China.

During 1926-27, this inventor of Buddha's Hand filed patent

## Ancient myths depicted in jade culture tributes



The Aurora Pavilion demonstrates traditional Chinese jade culture.

AURORA Pavilion, the first pavilion for a Taiwanese enterprise since the start of Expos, is gaining increasing public attention as the opening of World Expo 2010 Shanghai China looms.

The pavilion was built by Aurora Furniture Co Ltd, a branch of Taiwan-based Aurora Group in Jiading. With its theme of "Chinese Jade Culture, City's New Styles," it will demonstrate the traditional Chinese jade culture with modern cutting-edge technologies.

Myths of Red Hill Jade Figures

Red Hill is located close to the Yingjin River in the northeast suburb of Chifeng City, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. In ancient times, as the story goes, nine fairies broke the rules of the heaven and made the West Queen very angry. So in a panic, the nine fairies accidentally knocked over a rouge box and the rouge sprinkled over the hill, creating nine red peaks. Later it was named "Red Hill."

At the top of the Aurora Pavilion is a pair of 6-meter-high Red Hill jade figures, which can be dated back to the Red Hill period (4000 BC to 3000 BC). In ancient times, such figures were used to worship heaven and sometimes were a token of protection. The figure has a human body and the head of a dragon with four horns and two ears which resembles the rays of the sun or the God of Sun.

First Dragon in China

The C-shaped jade dragon, originally called Red Hill jade dragon, is renowned as the "First Dragon in China." With a shape resembling the capitalized English letter "C," the dragon was carved from an entire jade using techniques such as full relief and bas-relief. This well-polished relic epitomizes the outstanding techniques of jade carving in that age, and also

plays an important role in the study of the primitive religions in ancient China as well as the evolution of the image of Chinese dragon.

Jade Mountain — Cream of a Thousand Years' Jade Carving Skill

Carved with the technique of full relief, the jade mountain depicts various clear-cut and well-arranged elements including forests, humans, birds, animals and creeks, each with distinctive and vivid images. Such a sculpture is usually permeated with the techniques of painting, no matter the terms of its overall image, general layout or the arrangement of elements.

Innovative Expo Souvenirs

The exhibitor at the Aurora Pavilion has also designed a souvenir series called "Aurora Jade Collection — Four, Five & Six." "Four" means the "four treasures of the study" (brush, ink, paper and ink-stone). "Five" refers to the five Confucian virtues (benevolence, righteousness, manners, wisdom and credibility), while "Six" refers to six classical arts in ancient China (rites, music, archery, riding, writing and arithmetic). The corresponding souvenirs have been designed and will be sold in the pavilion.



Jade exhibit in Aurora Pavilion.

## Pavilion to highlight straw-weaving art

Staff Reporters

AMONG the theme pavilions at World Expo 2010 Shanghai China, there will be a "pavilion inside a pavilion" — the Pavilion of Public Participation. Covering an area of 1,200 square meters, the contents will take visitors back to the days when Chinese people contributed their efforts to the application and preparation period for the Expo.

It will also present a beautiful picture of the bright future of Expo. In this pavilion, the "Show Space" project will fully exhibit the charms of the straw-weaving art of Xuhang, Jiading.

The straw-weaving art of Xuhang has a long history. Back in the Tang Dynasty (618-907), local governors had already included such handicrafts in their lists of tributes to the royal family. In the early 20th century, the exchange between Eastern and Western straw-weaving cultures started growing.

In 1914, an Italian firm employed two locals of Xuhang, Wang Jihe and Zhu Shilin, as its agents to purchase straw-weaving products from local farmers for export to Southeast Asia, Europe and America. This marked the entry of Xuhang's straw-weaving art into the world market.

In 1953, straw sandals designed and crafted by Li Yueqin with a peace dove pattern won a medal at Leipzig Trade Fair. In 1956, China Central Newsreel and Documentary Studio produced the film "Straw-weaving of Jiading." In 1957, straw-weaving artists from Xuhang were invited to the National Representative Conference of Industrial Arts.

Due to the increasing influence of this art and its escalating artistic values, Xuhang Town was named in 1994 by the Ministry of Culture as a "Hometown of Chinese Folk Art." In 2008, the art was included in China's List of Intangible Cultural Heritage.



The straw-weaving art of Xuhang will be exhibited in the Pavilion of Public Participation.

There is a beautiful tale about the origin of the straw-weaving art of Xuhang. A long time ago, an intelligent, fair-looking and kind-hearted girl lived in a poor family by the Xinjing Pond in Xuhang.

Her wedding was coming, but she could not even afford a pair of shoes and she was distressed at the possible embarrassment of getting married bare-footed. One day, when she grazed cattle on a riverside meadow, she could not help bursting into muffled tears. Suddenly, her old cow, which had accompanied her for years, licked her foot. The girl looked down and found that the cow had fetched a handful of golden colored straw for her. Inspired by this old companion, the girl wove the straw into

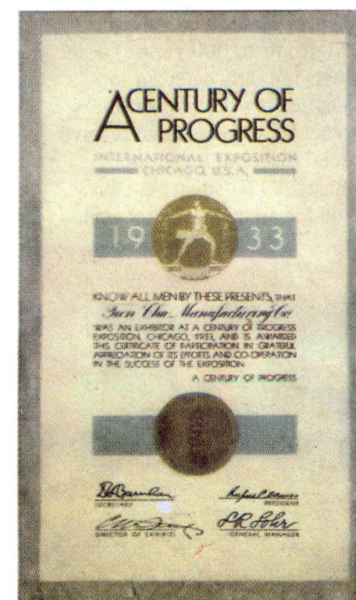
a pair of beautiful sandals and later wore them at her wedding. This caused a sensation. Other girls started learning how to make straw sandals. To commemorate this ingenious girl who invented the straw-weaving art, local people renamed the village "Puxie Village" ("Straw-sandal Village") and honored the girl as the "Fairy of Straw-weaving".

In the beginning, Xuhang artisans focused on straw sandals (commonly known as "puxie"). Later, they expanded the scope to include other articles of daily use such as handbags, baskets, saucers, trays and cup holders.

Today, the straw-weaving art of Xuhang has become a great treasure of Chinese folk art.



Above: The award certificate for "Buddha's Hand" at the World Expo in Liege, Belgium. Right: "Buddha's Hand" certificate from World Expo Chicago.



applications for the recipe and production techniques with authorities of Britain, France and the United States. This was the first time for a Chinese to apply for, and win, foreign patents for Chinese chemical products.