

Metro Line 11, the first cross-provincial subway transit in Shanghai, connects Jiading District's Anting Town and Huaqiao Town in neighboring Jiangsu Province. So residents living in the two places become closer to each other.



Jiading residents are bridging the city gap

Tang Ye and Li Xinran

A tale of Jiading and neighboring cities is underway. In Anting, the membership of a choir is open not only to locals, but also to people from Huaqiao Town in neighboring Jiangsu Province.

At the Poly Grand Theater, audiences from Shanghai and Jiangsu sit together. Doctors from Jiading frequent towns in neighboring Jiangsu. At the same time, some patients from Jiangsu also visit Jiading doctors after having heard of their reputation.

It is shown on the map that Jiading and several Jiangsu cities, such as Kunshan, Taicang and Wujiang, are connected through waterways. Regional integration is going on in the area to the benefit of local residents.

A pair of couplets on the Yansi Bridge at Anting Old Street says "two counties intersect when people from all around gather in the town," which depicts the folk exchange between Jiading and Kunshan since ancient times. There's an old Chinese saying "Each place has its own way of supporting its own inhabitants." Jiading and the neighboring cities stay close and belong to the same culture.

Liu Ronggen cycles from Huaqiao to Anting almost every day to watch storytelling at the Laojie Shuchang (Old Street Teahouse). In the audience there are people from Anting as well as folk from Huaqiao like Liu. They speak the same Wu dialect. There is no geographical barrier between them.

After the Laojie Shuchang earned its reputation, people from Anting helped their peers in Huaqiao to build their own *shuchang* (teahouses that avail story telling shows) and introduced them to storytellers. Since then, Antingers also went to Huaqiao to watch storytelling.

Meanwhile, the intellectuals of Anting and Huaqiao jointly established the West Bridge and East Kiosk Culture Promotion Society since *qiao* means bridge in

Chinese and *ting* is for kiosk.

They held exchange activities regularly and started publishing the bimonthly "West Bridge and East Kiosk" from last year. The magazine is about tales of the two towns.

Supported by the government, intellectuals from the two towns hold exhibitions, seminars and courses to enrich the cultural life of local residents.

Comic book artist Wang Wanchun has residences in both Anting and Huaqiao. Sponsored by the government, an itinerant exhibition of Wang's works was initiated at Huaxi Park in Huaqiao in March. It arrived at Jiading Cultural Center and Anting Cultural Center this month.

The culture department of the two towns are also planning 12 other two-town exhibitions this year.

Cultural activities of such kind were initiated many years ago and hence promote communication between people



The bimonthly magazine, "West Bridge and East Kiosk," tells tales of Huaqiao and Anting towns. — Li Zhuoxiang



Residents from Jiading's Anting Town and Jiangsu's Huaqiao Town display the results of a group activity. — Li Zhuoxiang

from the two towns.

A lecturer from a Huaqiao vocational school, Li Shifeng took part in an Anting talent show to perform storytelling or crosstalk for six consecutive years which attracted the attention of Anting storytelling master Huang Zhenliang. Li then joined Huang's team at Huang's invitation.

More than half of the cultural activities to be held in Huaqiao this year are by teams or individuals from Anting.

Li Weihua and some 20 other middle-aged women from Huaqiao visit Anting every week as they are all members of the Anting Choir. People from Huaqiao also play major roles in sports games held in Anting.

Administrative divisions have boundaries but there is no boundary line for high quality social resources. A pattern of sharing and reciprocity

leads to a better life for Jiadingers and their neighbors.

When performances are held at Poly Grand Theater in Jiading, half of the audience is from neighboring cities and towns. Fans from Suzhou flocked to the theater for the premiere of "The Three Sisters-Waiting for Godot."

Apart from cultural exchanges, Jiading shares other resources with neighboring towns. Since the opening of the Eastern Hepatobiliary Surgery Hospital in 2015, it has expanded the service to the entire Yangtze River Delta area and treated countless patients from out of Jiading, particularly from northern Jiangsu.

A shopping mall beside the Metro Line 11 Anting Station attracts thousands of visitors every day. Office workers from Huaqiao enjoy their lunch here while shoppers from Jiangsu pick their beloved items.