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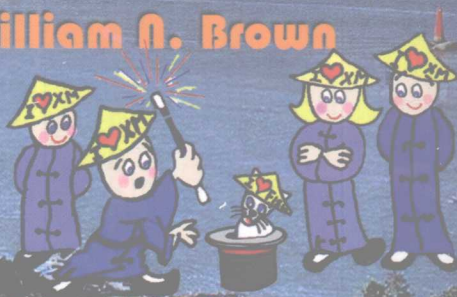
# Magic Xiamen

## -Guide to Xiamen



魅力厦门

by Dr. William N. Brown



厦门大学出版社  
XIAMEN UNIVERSITY PRESS

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## Magic Xiamen

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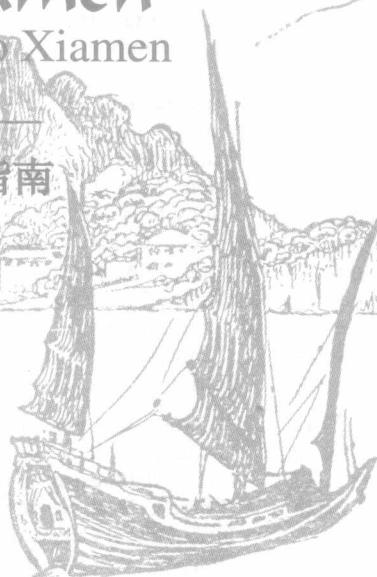
## Guide to Xiamen

### 魅力厦门—— 厦门指南



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Text, drawings, photos, cover design, and  
typesetting by Dr. Bill  
Translation: Master Translation Services  
(MTS): [www.mts.cn](http://www.mts.cn)



**Hundreds of Readers** have sent letters, some of which are included in the back.  
We are reprinting the book anyway.

**Comments?** E-mail: [amoybill@amoymagic.com](mailto:amoybill@amoymagic.com)  
Snail Mail: Dr. Bill Brown, Box 1288, Xiamen Univ.  
Xiamen Fujian, PRC 361005

**Complaints?** Write my wife.

**Warning:** Xiamen changes daily. Phone ahead, or check our websites:  
[www.Amoymagic.com](http://www.Amoymagic.com) (outside China) [www.Amoymagic.mts.cn](http://www.Amoymagic.mts.cn) (in China)  
[www.Xiamenguide.com](http://www.Xiamenguide.com)

Enjoy Amoy!

Dr. Bill 潘维廉

<sup>1</sup> The artwork on this page is from "The Story of the Amoy Mission after 100 Years—1842-1942," by the Reformed Church of America

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<sup>2</sup> "Run your family like you cook small fish: very gently." Chinese Proverb



## Highlights This Edition

**English/Pinyin/Chinese** Most Chinese names are in English, Chinese and Pinyin (拼音) with tone marks. Some may find this distracting, even annoying, but this should help you get around more easily, and perhaps even improve your Chinese a bit. Read how to pronounce pinyin in the “Mad About Mandarin” chapter.

**More historical (and hysterical) insights**, such as proof that Chopin, Bach and Mozart were Chinese (Parks chapter); the secret to why cars roll up hill on Wen Yuan Road’s “Spook Hill”; the true story of how an intrepid Scotsman discovered the deadly Amoy Vampires in the 1870s; the secret to surviving Darwinian driving, etc.

**Common Talk** *Xià mén Daily’s* Wednesday 12-page English supplement, the first of its kind in Fujian, has gone international! Subscribe today, and visit their informative website: [www.common-talk.com](http://www.common-talk.com)

**AXE! Association for Xià mén Expatriates** offers a welcome packet for newly arrived Laowai members, and hosts monthly coffee meetings, sports activities, book club, monthly shopping and cultural trips, and a monthly coffee to raise funds for UNICEF. E-mail Eunice Chau: [qp21@public.xm.fj.cn](mailto:qp21@public.xm.fj.cn) Tel: 13906028020

**Xià mén Shopping!** Gone are the days when we must buy grain in the countryside and grind our own wheat on heavy stone mills. Xià mén sells everything a Lǎowài needs to keep body and soul together. We have two Wal-Mart Supercenters, a German Metro (near the airport), the French chain Carrefour, several Trust-Marts (a Tái wān version of Wal-Mart), many Mǐn Kè lóng s (闽客隆—like a small Trust-Mart), several malls. Check the Shopping chapter.

**Book City** (厦门图书文化城). We used to crave English reading material but now a few bookstores do sell imported novels, magazines, etc. Try the Xīn huá Bookstores, the International Book Store near Xià mén University, or the bookstore in SM Mall (Fú jiàn’s largest). And try the 40+ 02 bookshop/coffeeshops (like a Chinese Barnes & Nobles). And if you can’t find the book you want in Xiamen, order online, because we have excellent internet service.<sup>3</sup>

And speaking of books...



<sup>3</sup> Study without reflection wastes time; reflection without study is dangerous. Confucius





### Books by Bill Brown

*Magic Xiàmén – Guide to Xiàmén* 《魅力厦门》

English and Chinese versions

*Discover Gǔlàngyǔ* 《魅力鼓浪屿》

Bilingual

*Discover Quánzhōu* 《魅力泉州》

Bilingual

*Magic Fújiàn* 《老外看福建》

Bilingual plus MP3 CD

*Fújiàn Adventure* 《魅力福建》

English and Chinese versions

*Magic Sīmíng* 《魅力思明》

Bilingual

*Xiàmén University—Strength of the Nation*

《魅力厦大》

Bilingual

*The Art of Business Warfare* 《企业兵法》

Chinese only

*Organizational Behavior* 《组织行为学》

Chinese Only

### Books by Other Authors

*A Walk About Xiamen* 《行走厦门》

Bilingual, full color (highly recommended)

*Old Photos of Xiamen* 《厦门旧影》

Bilingual (I've bought dozens for friends)

**Where to buy them?** Most less discerning Xiàmén bookstores stock Bill's books; signed copies of all the books are kept in stock at Nissi Bookstore, near Xiàmén Univ. facing the Overseas Chinese Museum. Phone for info (they speak English). Or order online from "Fujian Kids" at [www.amoymagic.com](http://www.amoymagic.com)

**Nissi Bookstore:** # 384 S. Sīmíng Rd. 厦门尼西书屋, 厦门市思明南路 384 号  
TEL/电话: 86-592-8767651 Mobile/手机 13616009337

Website: <http://www.nissi.cn> Email: [nissi.cn@gmail.com](mailto:nissi.cn@gmail.com)



## Acknowledgements

**Susan Marie** I violate protocol by thanking my wife before I thank the Vice Governor, but as you'll learn from the ancient "Henpecked Chinese Jokes" (p.11), Mr. Zhāng probably understands my plight.

I just hope Mr. Zhāng's wife understands.

Thanks, Sue, for your website. Three years ago she knew so little about the internet that she thought HTML was an American health care plan, but she persevered. Visit her [www.amoymagic.com](http://www.amoymagic.com) for more content & pics.



**Fújiàn Vice Governor Zhāng Chāngpíng** (张昌平副省长). Our Vice-Governor (and former mayor) was a great encouragement, and even wrote the Chinese version cover's calligraphy. Thank you, Vice Governor Zhāng.

**And welcome to our new Mayor, Mr. Liú Cìguì.** (刘赐贵). You can reach him through our Mayor's Hotline—968123. (Read about it in Chapter 27).

**Vice Secretary General Cáo Fàng** (曹放) was only 19 years old when he graduated from college in Jiāngxī, and 35 when he moved to Xiàmén in 1998. I marvel at this talented and energetic man's accomplishments. As I rewrote this book, he helped open doors in government and business, and introduced me to young entrepreneurs like David Chia, founder of Firefly Lighting (see Chapter 26).

Thank you, Vice Secretary General Cáo Fàng.



**Mr. Cao Fang**

**MTS**  
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精艺达翻译服务有限公司



**Frank Wei & MTS.** A good translation can make you or break you, especially in China, so MTS has been my translator and website partner for years. Frank is chair of the Translation Service Committee of Xiamen Translator Association, and MTS has been accredited by China Translator's Association as "The Most Trustworthy Translation Company."

Frank is also a web wizard. In 1996 he created China's 2<sup>nd</sup> English website, the award-winning Chinavista.com, and in 2007 joined us in creating [www.xiamenguide.com](http://www.xiamenguide.com). Thanks, Frank.<sup>4</sup>

Visit [www.mts.cn](http://www.mts.cn) for more info.

<sup>4</sup> Only in cold weather do we know the pine to be an evergreen. (Chinese proverb.)





Magic Xiamen

魅力厦门



Thanks to MTS, our translator, and partner with xiamenguide.com

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- > 8年专业服务经验
- > 50多名专职译员、数百兼职译员
- > 《厦门指南》(www.xiamenguide.com)主办单位



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**Pastor Timothy Hào** (Hào Zhìqiáng 蒿志强牧师), of Gǔlàng-yǔ's Trinity Church (鼓浪屿, 三一堂牧师), moved here from Inner Mongolia a decade ago, learned the local dialect, and knows more about local culture and history than most locals. Thank you Pastor Timothy for your help with both *Amoy Magic* and *Discover Gulangyu*. Or as they say in Mongolia, “Баярлалаа!”



**Rev. Timothy Hao**



**Eunice Chau of OrientPlus** (恩加) is a lifesaver for Expats and foreign firms. Her OrientPlus provides business services such as investment project co-ordination, as well as help with home searches, orientation services, settling-in assistance, etc. And Eunice' other firm, Symphony (信而立公司), has the best mineral water in town (see Chapter 21).  
**Orientplus** Tel: 5811891 13906028020 E-mail: Eunice.orientplus@gmail.com  
**Symphony** Tel: 5811621 E-mail: symphony@public.xm.fj.cn.

**Veteran Bushwalker Trish Boman**, the Land Down Under, teaches at Xiàmén Int'l School, and wrote the Xiàmén Bushwalks chapter. Thanks, Trish!

### *Xiamen Daily's* “Common Talk” 《双语周刊》

#### Just what the Doctor ordered...

An English teacher corrected a student who said he had a “prescription” for Common Talk, *Xiamen Daily's* English supplement. But I think the student had it right, because a weekly dose of CT is just what the doctor ordered for us to keep abreast of what's happening in Xiamen, and why (or why not).

I have a good library of historical books on Xiàmén, but to find out what's happening *today*, I rely on CT, the first publication of its kind in Fújiàn. And CT is having a far-reaching influence now that it has gone international. A recent issue posted an old black and white photo submitted by an Overseas Chinese who had sought his Xiamen roots for decades. CT found them within a week.



Whether seeking long lost family, settling down, or just passing through, you need a weekly dose of CT. Get your CT prescription at the post office, or phone 5581799 and a staff member will come right to your door.

**And CT needs you!** Please submit *your* articles and insights about Xiàmén life.

Tel: 0592-5581651 5581649

Add: 1R702 Xiàmén Daily Building, #122 Lǚlǐng Road 厦门市吕岭路 122 号厦门日报报业大厦 1702

室 E-mail: commontalk@tom.com

Website: www.common-talk.com



*Magic Xiamen*

魅力厦门

厦门日报

# Common Talk WEEKLY

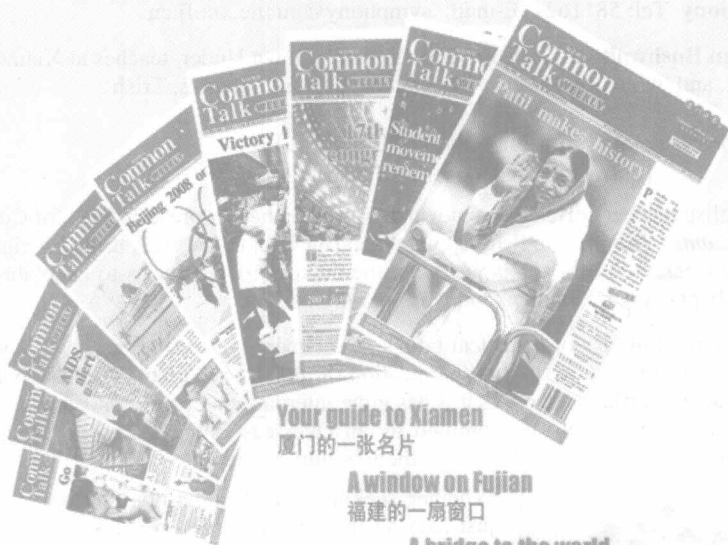
双语周刊

Language Creates Value

语言创造价值

海峡西岸惟一中英新闻周刊  
全国党报首份双语刊物

Common Talk is pleased to work with Dr. Bill Brown in presenting Xiamen to the world and the world to Xiamen.



**Your guide to Xiamen**  
厦门的一张名片

**A window on Fujian**  
福建的一扇窗口

**A bridge to the world**  
南中国连接世界的一座桥梁

**Fujian's only bilingual news**

**Where East and West meet!**

**Local, national and international news and culture**



**Zhū Qíngfú (朱庆福)** Award-winning photographer Zhū Qíngfú provided all of the first Magic Xiàmen's fine color photos but this issue has some of my own, so I've marked Zhū Qíngfú's with ZQF to protect his reputation.

Qíngfú was born in 1963 in Nankang, Jiangxi Province, joined the army in 1980, became a news photographer at *Xiàmen Business News* in Sept. 1994—Nearly 300 of Qíngfú's works have received photographic prizes at home and abroad, and more than 3,000 have been published in various media.

Zhū Qíngfú's positions include: Chief of South Fújiàn Journalist Station of Fújiàn Pictorial, Fellow of China Photographer Association, Fellow of the Worldwide Ethnic Chinese Photographers Society, Honorary Fellow of Los Angeles Photography Society, Executive Director of Fújiàn Photographer Association, Vice Chairman and Honorary Fellow of Fújiàn Youth Photography Association, Vice Chairman of Xiàmen Photographers' Association, and Chairman of Xiàmen Youth Photographers' Association. Read about his dozens of honors on our website: amoymagic.com

Add: South Fujian Journalist Station, Fújiàn Pictorial 《福建画报》  
#28 Húbīn Běi Lù 12/F Jiànyè Bldg. Xiàmen 湖滨北路 28 号建业大厦 12 层  
Tel: (0592) 5073766 8877153 Fax: 5073767  
Email: zqfsy@vip.sina.com



## Supplement

### Amoy Gets the Gold in Livcom<sup>5</sup> 2002!

In 2002, I was honored to be on Xiàmen's team competing in the Livcom finals in Stuttgart, Germany. With over 40 cities from around the world, Xiàmen had some stiff competition, such as Chicago and Phoenix Arizona.

Cities such as Hangzhōu (杭州) had formidable advantages, but no city could possibly match the sheer speed and comprehensiveness of Xiàmen's metamorphosis. Over a 20 year period, Xiàmen was China's #1 city in economic growth, and #2 in environmental sustainability,



Dr. Bill and Alan Smith, Founder of NIB  
(Stuttgart, Germany, Oct. 2002)

<sup>5</sup> Livcom: the "Oscar of Liveable Communities," recognizes environmental excellence in international communities. [www.livcomawards.com](http://www.livcomawards.com)



an amazing feat—and she basically started from scratch!

Xiàmén prospered 700 years ago as part of Quánzhōu, the start of the Silk Road of the Sea. And in the 1920s, Gǔlàngyǔ had more wealthy people than any place on earth except Pasadena, California. But the Japanese razed us in World War II, and Táiwān bombed us after Liberation....

From 1949 until the Opening up and Reform policies of the early 1980s, Běijīng put little money into developing Xiàmén or Fújiàn (why build anything only to have Táiwān bomb it?). During the 1950s and 60s, in all of China, only Xiàmén college students had the slogan, “Pen in one hand, gun in the other!”



**Xiamen University Students Enjoy the Beach! (1950s)**

When we got off the slow

boat to China at Héping Port in 1988, Xiàmén had but one tall building—the harbor’s Seaview (it now has Pizza Hut on its 24<sup>th</sup> floor). Electricity was off several days a week, water was off days at a time, dirt roads were potholed, the city itself was dirty and grimy with soot.

But within a decade Xiàmén had become China’s cleanest city!

Xiàmén was first to broadcast air quality reports, and one of the first to adopt international standards in quality and pollution control. Xiàmén, in short, pioneered many areas in China.

Only after helping spending 8 months preparing the Livcom presentation did I fully grasp the magnitude of Xiàmén’s accomplishments. When I gave the presentation in Stuttgart, I was proud to be a “Xiamenese”, and proud to have a small part in Xiàmén winning gold in the “Oscar of Livable Communities.”

Many thanks to our Xiàmén family for allowing me to participate. And a special thanks to Livcom founder, Mr. Alan Smith, who has since become a dear friend.

Mr. Smith wrote a special introduction to Livcom for *Amoy Magic*, which you can read on the *Amoy Magic* website<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> “Great souls have wills; weak souls only have wishes.” Chinese Proverb



## Chapter 1

### Welcome Lǎowài!

**Lǎowài!** Get used to hearing, “Lǎowài (老外!)” It’s Chinese for “venerable outsider” (foreigner). I just yell back, “Lǎonèi!” (老内, “venerable insider”). When Chinese protest, “No such word!” I say, “There is now.”

Chinese also yell, “Wàiguó Péngyou!” (外国朋友 “foreign friend”)

Maybe they think everyone since Nixon is a Quaker?



**In the Blood** Jestng aside, Chinese do welcome us Lǎowài as Péngyǒu (朋友, friend), and sometimes even as family. Chinese hospitality may be why China gets in your blood for life (rather like malaria). Our entire family has fallen in love with China, and especially Xiàmén (formerly “Amoy”; see page after next). You will too, once you appreciate all that our adopted home has to offer.

**How “Magic Xiamen” Came About** In the early '90s, I hastily improvised a 24-page *Xiamen Survival Guide* for new Lǎowài who staggered

about intoning the **Lǎowài Litany**:

“Where can I buy cheese?” (There wasn’t any.)

“Which toilet paper brand doesn’t burn ones buns?”

“Where are sit-down toilets?” (read “**Dethroned**” at end of chapter).

But Xiàmén’s 5000+ Lǎowài no longer need a “Survival Guide” because life on the Garden Island is no longer “survival” but fun and rewarding. Yet newly arrived Wàiguó Péngyǒu, and even old hands, still have lots of questions, like where to shop, or eat, or beat a weekend retreat. I hope *Magic Xiamen* helps.

**Explore Amoy—and Double Check<sup>1</sup>** Our magical little island changes daily, but *Magic Xiàmén* cannot. So **Call before you go**, because restaurants, shops and tourist sites spring up like mushrooms overnight, and some disappear just as quickly. And visit our websites for the latest.

[www.amoymagic.mts.cn](http://www.amoymagic.mts.cn) (in China) [www.amoymagic.com](http://www.amoymagic.com) (back on earth)

[www.xiamenguide.com](http://www.xiamenguide.com) (in cooperation with MTS—Master Translation)

<sup>1</sup> Fix your roof before it rains; dig your well before you are thirsty. Chinese Proverb

### Why “Amoy”?

After a lecture to 300 students in Zhāngzhōu, a youth leaped to his feet and demanded, “Why do you say ‘Amoy’? Why not ‘Xiàmén’? Huh? Huh?” And he glared like a Red Guard about to plant a dunce cap on a teacher with “old” thinking.

Many Chinese ask this, but seldom so indignantly. So I said, “Why do Chinese say ‘Jiù Jīnshān’ (旧金山) instead of ‘San Francisco’? Huh? Huh?”

“Because Chinese can’t pronounce ‘San Francisco’!” he retorted.

“Enough said,” I replied.

The name “Amoy” was coined after the 1<sup>st</sup> Opium War (1839-42), when Xiàmén was forced opened as a treaty port. A foreigner asked a Fúzhōu customs officer the island’s name and he was told it was called, in the local dialect, “Ah Mo” (like “Amen” spoken through the nose). “Amoy” was as close as foreigners could get, and even today, Overseas Chinese refer to “Amoy”, and Chinese throughout Asia speak not Mǐnnán Dialect but “Amoy Dialect.”

I prefer that foreigners learn to call our island Xiàmén, but I use “Amoy” in the book title because 1) Xiàmén is still hard for foreigners to pronounce, 2) even Overseas Chinese call Xiàmén “Amoy”, and 3) for those with the slightest bit of Asian history under their belt, the very word Amoy conjures up exotic vistas and tales. The world uses “Amoy Soy Sauce,” not Xiàmén Soy Sauce. In Hong Kong, bird flu had an outbreak on Amoy Street, not Xiàmén Street. Malaysia’s Equator Academy of Art is on Amoy Lane, not Xiàmén Lane. And last but not least, the Latin seal of Xiàmén University, which was founded not by foreigners but a Chinese, bears the inscription “Universitatis Amoiensis”—not “Universitatis Xiamenensis”.

So Amoy is not a vocable vestige of foreign imperialism. Amoy is as much a Chinese word as a foreign word, and it sounds a lot more like “Ah Mo” than “Jiù Jīnshān” sounds like San Francisco, so give us a break. But, out of deference to my Chinese hosts, I personally refer to our island as Xiàmén, not Amoy.

As for that minority that still take umbrage at my sparing use of Amoy, I throw down the gauntlet. When Chinese start saying “Washington” instead of “Huáshèngdùn” (华盛顿), or “California” instead of “Jiālífúnyà” (加利福尼亚) or Jiāzhōu (加州), I will axe Amoy from my vocabulary. But until then—get a life, and be glad that visitors from all over the world are again flocking to our island, regardless of what you call her. And...

**Enjoy Amoy!**

<sup>2</sup> Much wealth will not come unless a little first leaves. Chinese Proverb



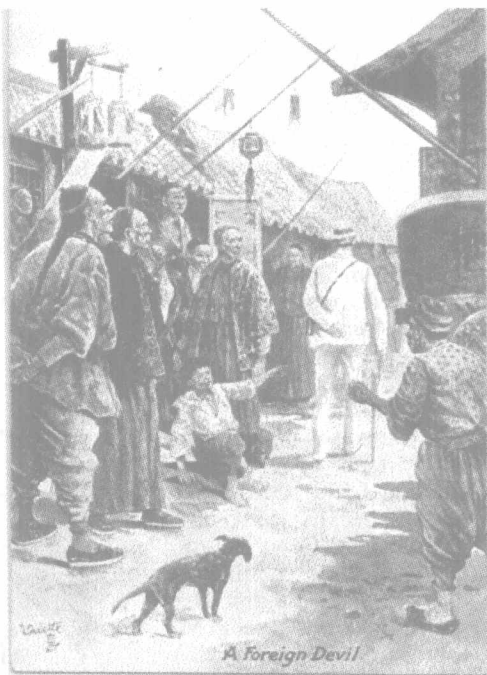


Hopefully, the books and websites will help you better appreciate our city's rich history, culture, and traditions, as well as guide you to key sites, restaurants, stores, etc.. But the best way to get to know Amoy is to explore it on foot, or by bike or bus (check out our double-decker tour busses in "Transportation" chapter).

**Pop Quiz** What Chinese city did a 1999 U.S. Embassy report in Běijīng say was "Greener than Green, a Model of Environmental Achievement?" Which Chinese city won the gold medal in Stuttgart at the 2002 Livcom<sup>3</sup> competition? What was the only city on the planet to receive the 2004 UN Habitat Award? What city was #1 in economic growth *and* #2 in environmental protection for two decades? What city has idyllic weather, clean air (China's first air quality forecasts), beautiful beaches and gardens, sumptuous seafood, a unique marriage of traditional Chinese, European colonial and modern architecture, one of China's best international airports, one of the world's best harbors, China's only key university in a Special Economic Zone—and unlimited business opportunities so you can afford to enjoy all of the above? Nowhere but the "Garden Island" of Xiàmen.

**No Xiàmen, no U.S.A?** Whether you're just passing through or staying awhile, we hope you enjoy our enchanting island, which for centuries has woven her spell over Lǎowài and Lǎonèi alike with her balmy climate, and her rolling green hills dotted with gardens and pagodas and temples. Xiàmen even played a crucial role in American Independence. In Dec. 1773, it was Ānxī Tea shipped out of Xiàmen harbor that was thrown into the sea during the Boston Tea Party.

So had it not been for Xiàmen, the U.S.A. would still be a British colony and our lawyers would be wearing powdered wigs.



<sup>3</sup> Livcom. The "Oscar of Environmental Awards" [www.livcomawards.com](http://www.livcomawards.com)



## Xiàmén at a Glance

**Location:** S.E. China in Fujian Province, opposite Táiwan

117°53'~118°25' E. longitude, 24°25'~24°54' N. latitude

**Population** end of 2005: 2,640,900

(incl. 1,069,000 non permanent residents )

**Nationalities:** Han (汉), Shē (畬), Miáo (苗), Huí (回),

Manchu (Mǎn, 满), Gāoshān (高山), Lǎowài (老外).

**Languages:** Mandarin, Minnán (S. Fújiàn Dialect), Chinglish

**Climate:** Subtropical Marine Monsoon

Avg. Winter Temperature: 55°F

Avg. Summer Temperature: 82°F

Avg. Annual Rainfall: 1,315mm

**Total Land Area:** 1,569.3 km<sup>2</sup> **Island's Area:** 130 km<sup>2</sup>

**Sea Area:** 300+ km<sup>2</sup> **Coastline:** 234 km

**Green Coverage of Developed Areas:** 42%

**Green Space Per Capita** 13.57m<sup>2</sup>

**Avg. Annual Growth of GDP:** 15.3% (as of 2005)

**GDP Per Capita:** Over USD 5,000 (as of 2005)

**Avg. Annual Urban Income<sup>4</sup> in 2005:** RMB 16,403

(up 13.6% over 2004)

**Avg. Annual Rural Income in 2005:** RMB 6,230

(up 10.3% over 2004)

**Average Lifespan:** 78.23

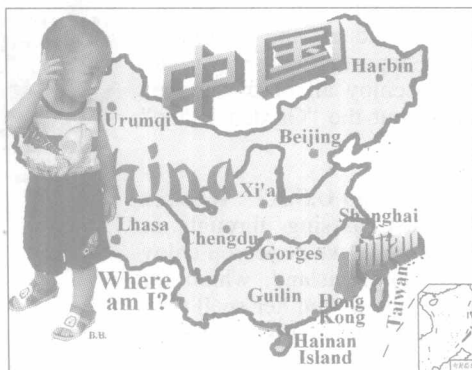
**Avg. Income of XMU**

**Teachers:** enough to  
pay taxes but not  
enough to avoid them.

**Sister Cities:** Cardiff

Shire, UK Sasebo,  
Japan Cebu, Philip-  
pines Baltimore,  
US Wellington, New  
Zealand Penang, Ma-  
laysia, Maroochy Shire,  
Australia Kanaus,  
Lithuania, Guadalajara,  
Mexico, Zoetermeer,  
Netherlands

**Number of Italian Restaurants:** 40+



<sup>4</sup> Those who know when they have enough are wealthy. Chinese Proverb