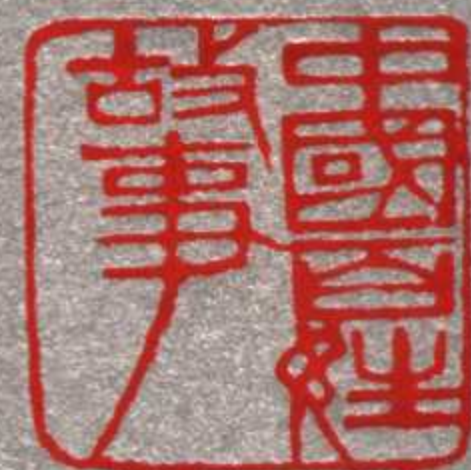


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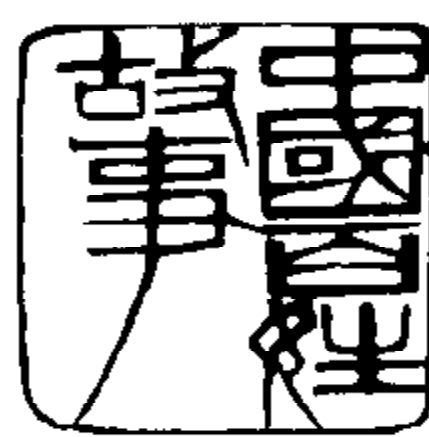
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CHINESE STORIES

Compiled by Jiao Bo
Translated by Zhou Xiaozheng

China Intercontinental Press

The Ordinary Chinese Today

Whenever I visited a foreign country as a Chinese writer, I always had a strong desire: apart from visiting those famous tourist attractions and contacting those famous and important personages, I wanted to go deep into the daily life in that country and have casual chats with the ordinary people of that country. This, I believed, would help me have a better understanding of that country.

Interestingly, almost every foreign friend I received in Beijing also expressed the same desire as mine. Therefore, I would accompany them to roam around in the streets and alleys of the city, sometimes dropping in a small restaurant for some typical Chinese food, sometimes purchasing a lovely souvenir from a roadside grocery stall. I always volunteered to be the interpreter for my foreign friends, to help them communicate with the ordinary Chinese on whatever topics they took an interest in.

As a matter of fact, anyone, no matter which country he or she is from, is somewhat curious about the living conditions of people elsewhere.

Fortunately, now we have this picture book. By reading it, I think, everyone can have his/her curiosity satisfied to some extent.

This picture book, compiled by Jiao Bo, has presented a host of different living conditions of the Chinese today in a natural way. To some extent, it should be regarded as a quite "unique picture book." Many picture books feature picturesque scenes and beautiful things, but this one features the people's lives; many picture books tend to display beauty and the artistic taste of the photographer, but this one pursues truth and tries to display the people's hearts and souls;

many picture books focus on social celebrities and beautiful women, but this one has focused on some very ordinary Chinese, on their life today, their experiences yesterday and their plans for tomorrow...

A Chinese idiom says that "one can learn what a leopard looks like by simply seeing a speckle on its skin," while a folk saying in the country goes that "one can know the change of all seasons by observing the change of a single leaf." Both mean that one can have some basic understanding of the entirety through the study of a part that has a general representation.

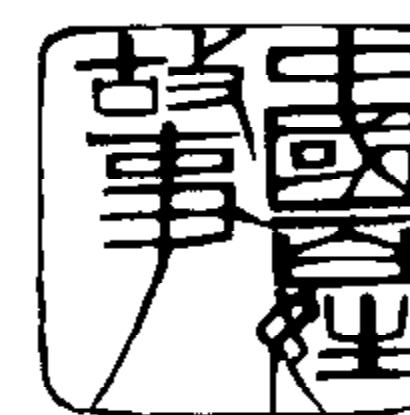
If we compare China to an ancient tree with a long history, then every Chinese, regardless of their sex, age, nationality, trade and experience, should be seen as the leaves on the tree. They are also the roots of this tree. The "reform and opening-up" drive has changed China, and as a result has brought about changes to the life and destiny of every single Chinese. Meanwhile, the changes of the ordinary Chinese have facilitated greater changes to take place in the country.

So is there also beauty in this picture book?

I believe there is.

Let's take Jiao Bo as an example. As a professional photographer, he has taken numerous pictures for his parents living in the countryside in the past 30 years and held a special photo exhibition which deeply touched many of the visitors. Jiao's conducts have prompted many others to ask themselves: as a child, what have I done to reward the great love of my parents?

Another example is that headmaster of that mountain-



By Liang Xiaosheng

top primary school, who overcame all difficulties to stay on just to teach four students. He has displayed the noble nature of education.

And those women who gave up marriage for life to mother the orphans in the “Children’s Village” have brought maternal love to a new height.

Unlike what I have done above, the essays and captions in this picture book didn’t depict the subjects in the photos in a highly emotional way. On the contrary, the book just recorded what kinds of people they were, what they did and why they did it by some plain words and simple narration. However, after reading these words and narration, I couldn’t help getting moved and writing down passionate praises.

I wanted to pay homage to all self-dependent women in this picture book, such as the female shop boss on the Balkor Street of Lhasa, Tibet, or the female fruit grower who started her new career in the countryside after losing her job in the city...

I also wanted to express my heartfelt respect for the entire family of that old craftsman, who sold their woodprint New Year pictures worldwide, for the “child photographer” who entered the children’s jury at a major international photo competition, for those brave young men who cleaned skyscrapers, and for those doctors and nurses who risked their lives to fight the deadly epidemic of SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome). All of them are my lovely compatriots.

As a Chinese writer, I never locked myself in the study to write fictitious stories. Actually, I always have great concerns about China’s reality and very much care about the

fate of the ordinary Chinese. A large proportion of my works, which totaled more than 10 million characters, are about the life of the ordinary people. This has helped me establish an extremely intimate relationship, similar to that between kinsmen, with the ordinary Chinese. Therefore, I think I am in an appropriate position to evaluate this picture book.

In my view, this picture book really deserves the name of “Chinese Stories.”

Besides ordinary people, this picture book also contains the stories of several successful personages with some fame, such as the famous dancer Chen Ailian, President of the Doublestar Shoes Manufacturing Group Wang Hai, and the real estate tycoon Wang Shi. However, these famous people are also quite familiar to us. In China today, successful entrepreneurs like Wang Hai and Wang Shi are mushrooming, and their success in career is of great significance to the further development of China’s reform and opening-up endeavor.

At last, I want to give a simple conclusion: this picture book can be regarded as the “photo records” of the lives of many Chinese.

August 18, 2003, Beijing

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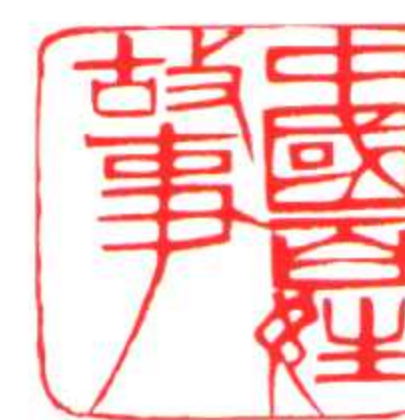
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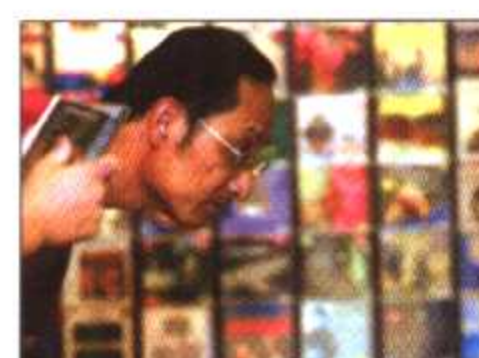
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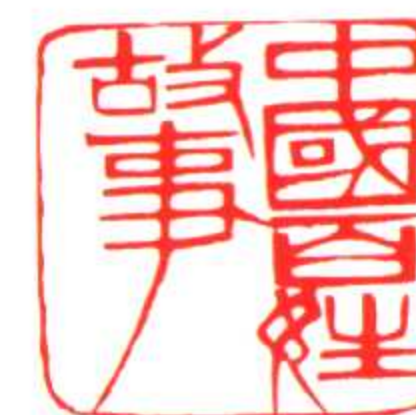
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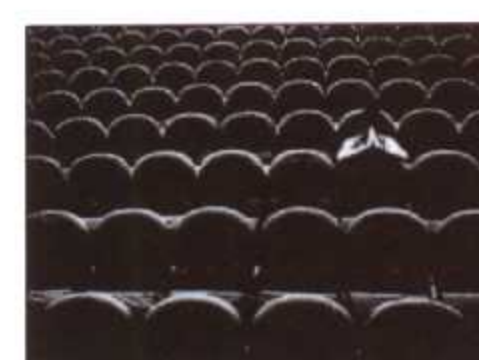
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Photos by Jiao Bo

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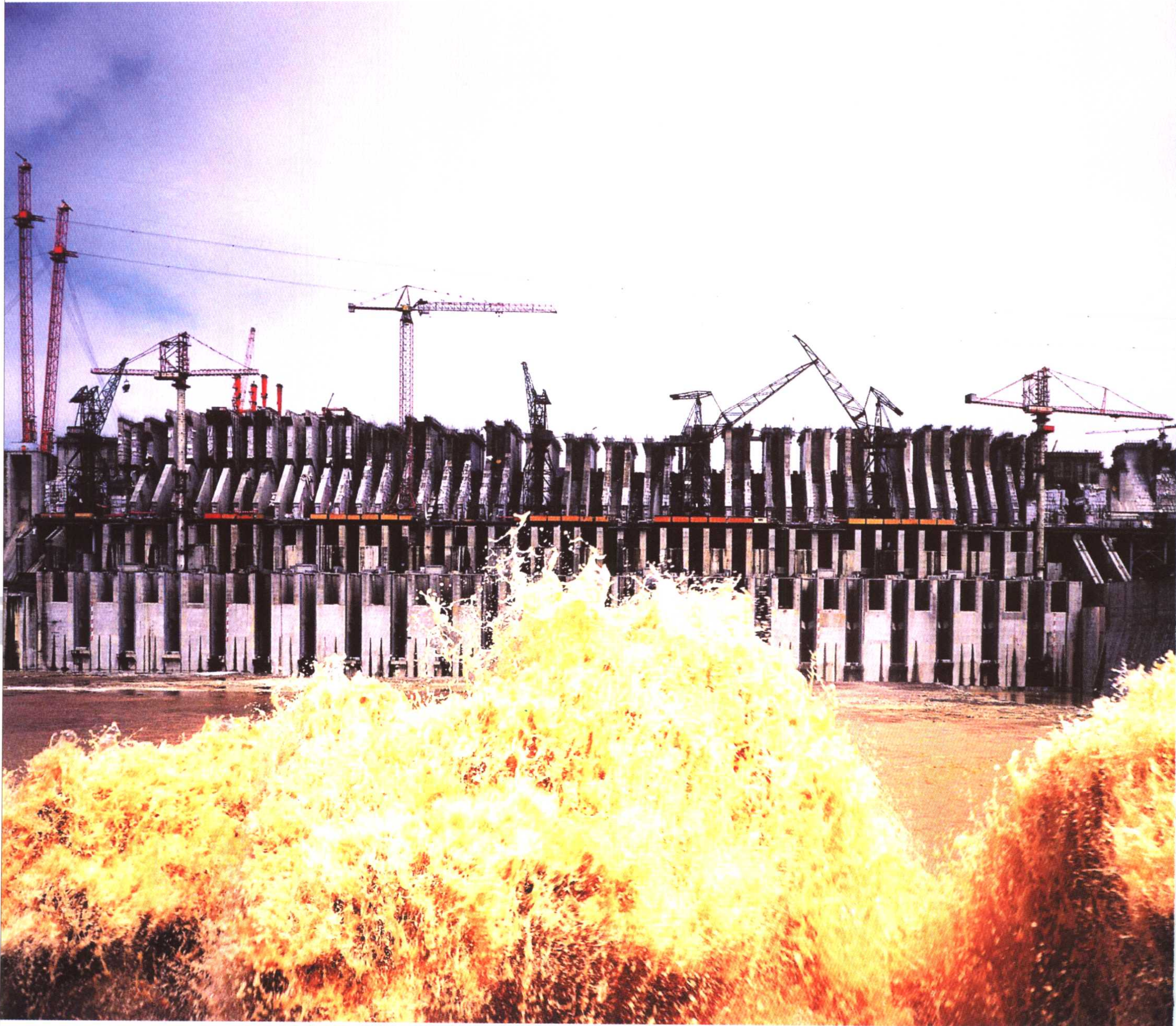
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Goddess**

Photos by Wang Yao

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Constructors of the Three Gorges Project

8



- ④ Washing of a foundation pit of the Three Gorges dam.
(photo by Huang Zhengping)
- ⑤ A full view of the Three Gorges dam construction site.
(photo by Yang Xiaodong)



Photos by Yang Xiaodong & others

On December 14, 1994, the Three Gorges Project, the world's largest hydropower project, was formally launched. With an order from the Chinese Premier, the first tank of concrete was poured into the No.8 foundation pit of the Three Gorges dam. Since that day, construction work has never stopped on the 15.28-square-kilometer construction site, and light has never gone out on the site at night.

It was a dream cherished by several generations of Chinese water conservancy and hydropower experts to build the Three Gorges dam on the Yangtze River, China's longest. Once completed, the project will not only generate power and enhance flood control, but also help improve the navigational conditions along the Yangtze and enable those relocated to make way for the gigantic dam to shake off poverty and lead a better-off life. All elite members of China's water conservancy and hydropower sectors have been mobilized to take part in this historic project, which is destined to add a glorious chapter to the Chinese history.

On the Three Gorges dam construction site, it is quite common to see fathers and sons, husbands and wives working shoulder to shoulder. Wu Huanxia, deputy head of a women's electric welding squad under the No.378 Cooperative Company, and her husband both work on the Three Gorges dam construction site. However, the couple were often assigned to different shifts, with one working in daytime and the other taking the night shift. But they have never complained. Wu's squad completed the welding work on more than 1,100 concrete units involving the power plant building and the five-level Three Gorges ship locks, and was thus honored as one of the "National Advanced Units of Female Workers."

"Quality first" is the motto for all constructors of the Three Gorges dam, and they have been extremely strict with themselves in every link of the project, such as checking the data, drawing the blueprints, the welding of every joint and even the fastening of every screw. Once the quality control personnel found in a random check that one screw bolt on the sluice gate failed to meet the intensity standard, and they immediately ordered the whole batch of some 10,000-strong screw bolts be thoroughly checked out. Wang Hui, an engineer in charge of monitoring the concrete pouring of the Three Gorges permanent ship locks, impressed everyone with his determination to defend the quality of the project. One day Wang found a quality problem with the just-poured concrete wall and demanded an immediate halt of the work. However, some workers, unwilling to see a delay of their work and a waste of materials, had tried to proceed with the concrete pouring. To their surprise, Wang risked his personal safety and jumped onto the truck, forcing the work to stop.

The constructors of the Three Gorges project also displayed a great team spirit. Some constructors said: "On the Three Gorges dam construction site, no work was done by a single unit, and every accomplishment was made through team work." In April, 2001, the Gezhouba Group, which was in charge of the building of the main body of the dam, suffered from a lack of heavy machinery for concrete pouring. Learning this news, the No. 378 Cooperative Company, which used to be a chief rival of the Gezhouba Group on the engineering market, immediately withdrew an imported concrete-pouring machine from its own work site and lent it to the Gezhouba Group. "We are both working on a great undertaking of our nation, and we must do everything to facilitate the progress of the whole project," said Yang Nan'an, general manager of the No. 378 Cooperative Company.

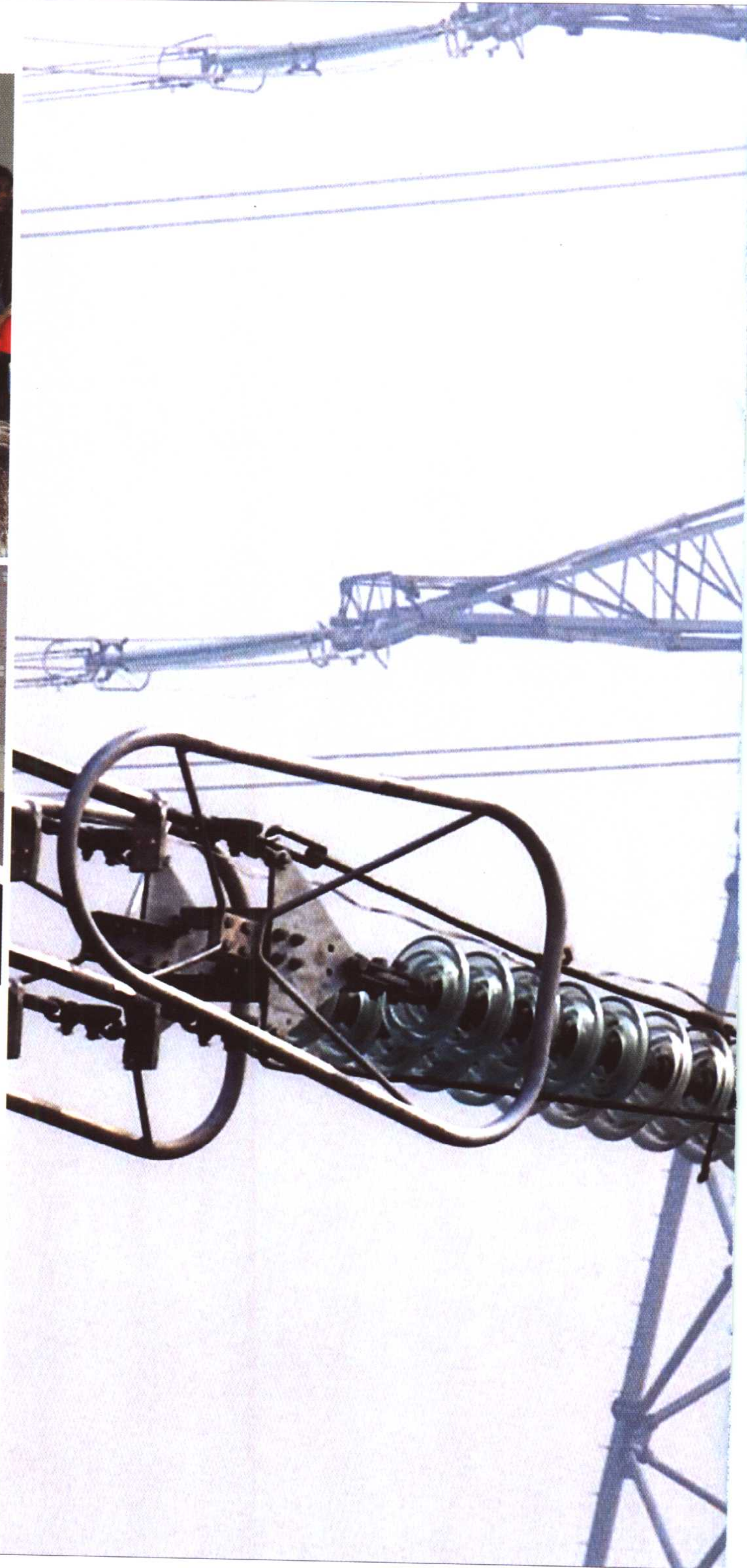
In June, 2003, the Three Gorges Project successfully completed its first-phase water storage, with the water level in the reservoir reaching 135 meters above sea level.





- ④ A simple lunch on the Three Gorges dam construction site. (photo by Yang Xiaodong)
- ⑤ Technicians checking the density of concrete with state-of-the-art devices. (photo by Sun Ronggang)
- ⑥ Constructors of the Three Gorges project braved rains to continue with their work. (photo by Yang Xiaodong)





- ④ Chinese and foreign experts involved in the Three Gorges project discuss technical problems together. (photo by Liu Shuguang)
- ④ At 10:54 p.m., June 24, 2003, the first electricity generated by the Three Gorges power plant was incorporated in the Central China Power Grid. (photo by Li Yonggang)
- ④ Two workers fixing power transfer equipment in the Three Gorges power plant. (photo by Du Huaju)



The “Shoemaking King” in China



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As president of the Qingdao Doublestar Shoes Manufacturing Group, Wang Hai was the founder of a famous brand in China's shoemaking industry: the Qingdao Doublestar. The success of the Doublestar Group has turned Wang, who used to be a poor kid unable to afford a pair of shoes, into a world-famous “Chinese Shoemaking King”.

In 1983, Wang was assigned to serve as the manager of the No. 9 Rubber Plant in Qingdao, a beautiful coastal city in east China's Shandong Province. At that time, the No.9 Rubber Plant, or today's Doublestar Shoes Manufacturing Group, was only a medium-sized State-owned enterprise specialized in manufacturing cheap rubber shoes. When Wang took office, there were some 2 million pairs of rubber shoes, all produced according to state plans under the then planned economic system, piling up in the workshops and warehouses and waiting for customers. As the enterprise faced imminent bankruptcy, Wang and his employees had

to carry these rubber shoes on their backs and went to the countryside to sell them to every village and town. It took a whole year for them to sell all these shoes out.

Wang had racked his brains to find a way to bring his enterprise, along with its 2,000 employees, out of economic troubles. He realized that shoemaking was a labor-intensive industry with meager profits. In the face of the invasion of famous foreign brands and escalating market competition, a domestic shoemaking enterprise must create its own famous brands for survival. Under his influence, the management of the No.9 Rubber Plant decided to shift the production of its old products, such as the outdated rubber shoes, to the township enterprises in the rural areas, while starting a totally new business in the workshops in Qingdao.

According to market demands, Wang and his employees started to make modern-style shoes first by imitation and later through technical renovation and upgrading. By the end of the 1980s, the newly emerged Doublestar Group had taken a leading position in China's shoemaking sector with the capability of manufacturing a series of modern shoes with advanced technologies, such as soccer shoes, basketball shoes, street-dance shoes and special exercise shoes for senior citizens. In 1992, “Doublestar” became the first “nationally famous trademark” in China's shoemaking industry as the group had acquired the ability to manufacture a variety of shoes, including cloth shoes, leather shoes, plastic shoes and professional sports shoes.

Doublestar's success also contributed to China's state-owned enterprises (SOEs) reform, as the group emerged as China's largest state-owned shoemaking enterprise with the best reputation and the highest economic returns. Many small and medium-sized SOEs have viewed Doublestar as their prototype in both management and marketing. For his personal contributions, Wang has won a series of honorary titles, including the National Model Worker, National Outstanding Entrepreneur and National Outstanding Manager.

Meanwhile, Doublestar shoes are also grabbing more and more market shares worldwide, with exports to more than 100 countries and regions including the United States, Japan, Germany, the Middle East, South America and Australia. The group has opened 9 overseas branches and offices in the United States, Hong Kong, Russia, Poland and other countries and regions.

Though already a successful businessman, Wang never changed his longtime habit of looking at the shoes of the passers-by while he was travelling around. It was his sincere wish that more people in the world would be travelling in Doublestar shoes.

- ④ The Double Star Group invested to establish a factory in Yimeng Mountain area. Which was welcomed by the local people. And Wang Hai was happy, too.
- ⑤ Visiting a museum dedicated to the New Fourth Army, a Communist force winning lots of battles against the Japanese invaders in the 1930s and 40s. Wang might be thinking how to become an all-time winner in the market competition.

Photos by Jiao Bo

