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CHINA ON CAMERA

Chen Xiaobo

Pu Zhuang

新星出版社 NEW STAR PRESS



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Time Will Wait for No One, But Wait for Beautiful Moments and Inspiring Books

Chen Xiaobo

Upon my graduation from college in 1983, I began to work with the Photography Department of Xinhua News Agency. And ever since I have never left here and photography has become my life-long pursuit.

In the past 30 years my friends and I have witnessed many milestone events about photography in China, and our shared experiences have become a valuable asset to me. As a photo-reportage editor for over 30 years, I keep a close eye on the growing healthy ethos of documentary photography, and enjoy close companionship with fellow photographers. After becoming a veteran photo editor, with access to rich photo resources and

social networks, I am determined to make a difference about the photography sector in China by integrating all available resources. I want to find a path that stimulate scritical thinking and helps promote photography as a disciplineat the same time. So the case study on photographers has becomes the thing which I am willing to do wholeheartedly.

To me, these carefully selected seven photographers are not heroes; but on the magic land of China, they choose to stand with the common people and record their ups and downs, struggle for survival and sorts of sentiments with the lens. In the era with great significance in Chinese history, these photographers have captured the beautiful moments of Chinese lifestyle and the kaleidoscopic facets of society with their cameras.

There are too many circumstances in which we have to compromise and let others make arrangement for us, but I am really lucky to be committed to the thing I love. "You must have something exciting to do, which makes you jump out of bed every morning."On this account, I'm so happy. I have long got used to staying away from annoying trivialities that would consume too much of my time and energy. I treasure and feel grateful for what I have. I concentrate on my work, ignoring the end results, as I believe Man proposes and God disposes. Book editing and writing book are what I am capable of. I feel overjoyed whenever I lay my

hand on a newly published book of mine. Why not to go ahead with the enjoyable pursuit?

Time will wait for no one, but wait for beautiful moments and inspiring books. I hope that many years later my daughter can pick up a few books authored by her mother from our giant bookshelf, where she can understand better about the road that has been taken by her mother, her mother's thoughts, and more importantly, her mother's joy and sorrow deep in her heart...

Preface

CHINA ON CAMERA is a book that consists of close to 100 photos by seven photographers, including a detailed introduction to their lives and work.

Growing up in the period when China experienced the most important changes in its history, these seven photographers used their cameras to record the changes that were taking place in China and the lives of Chinese people during these years. Each of them tells compelling stories about Chinese history, Chinese people and society in general.

In the period from the 1950s to the 1970s, Chinese photography served the needs and interests of political power and government ideology. As a result, many images and stories vital to an understanding of Chinese history were not recorded. Since the 1980s, however, Chinese photographers have become increasingly aware of this loss, and have done a lot of hard work to make up for

this decades-long omission.

These seven photographers reveal in their work the essence of their personalities. A number of characteristics are common to all of them: solidarity with the people; sympathy for the plight of the poor; support for positive government action; willingness to uncover the ugly aspects of society; and a total commitment to truth and integrity. They offer readers a unique insight into history, an insight that will still be of great value in 100 years.

In the photographic history of China, these photographers have played a key role. But their contribution lies not only in the photographs you see in this book. It lies perhaps more importantly in the sincerity and honesty that characterizes all their works.

Chen Xiaobo

Fu Yongjun

A Tree, a Lake, a City



Fu Yongjun

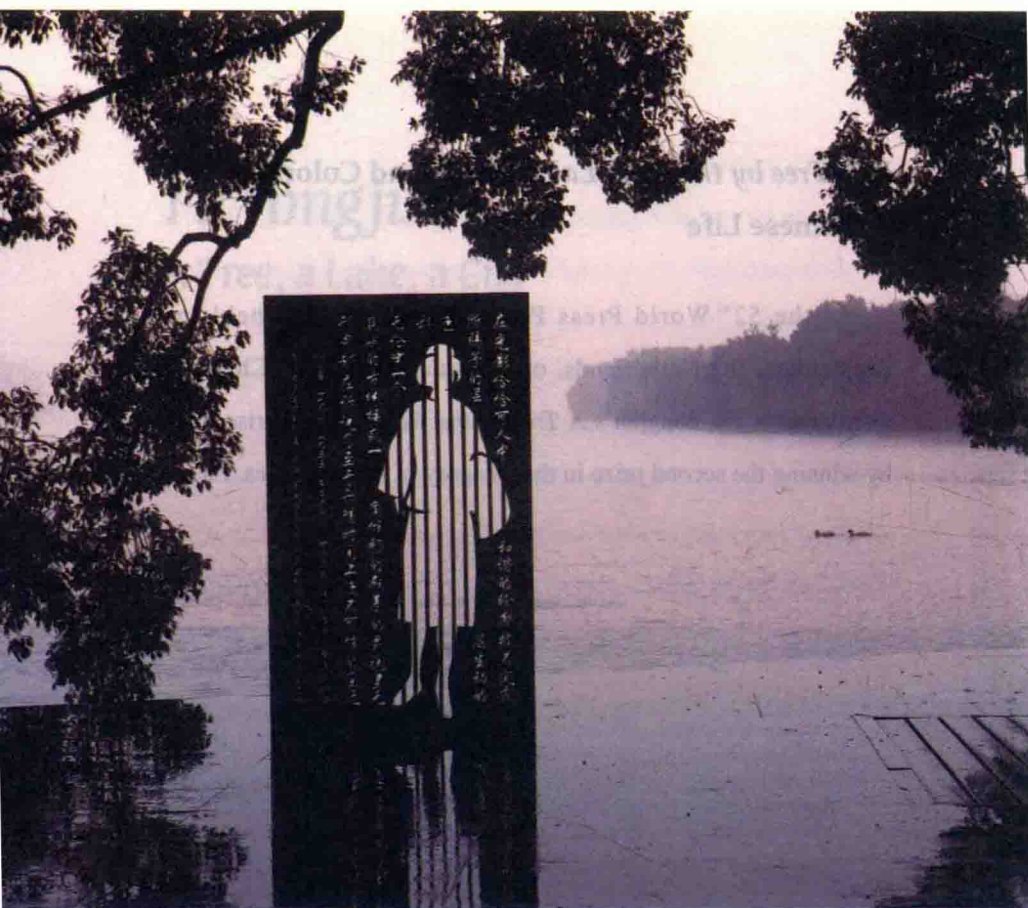
Fu Yongjun was born in a small county in Zhejiang Province in the late 1960s. He is director of the Photography Department of *City Express* based in Hangzhou. Previously he had been a driver, policeman and office worker. He has seen too many unfortunate people. Calling more people to help others by photographing has been his basic creed. He has lived and worked in Hangzhou for nine years. Most of his work is about daily life and ordinary people. The animation of urban life in China can be seen in his photos. In 2009, the World Press Photo (WPP) awarded him a prize in the nature category for his work *A Tree by the West Lake*, as his photos truly reflect the harmony between human beings and nature in a Chinese city.

I. *A Tree by the West Lake*: Lively and Colorful Chinese Life

At the 52nd World Press Photo (WPP) Awards held in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, on February 13, 2009, Chinese photographer Fu Yongjun's *A Tree by the West Lake* surprised all by winning the second prize in the category of nature stories. Fu is

A cute snowman left by some dating lovers by the lake. (2008)





Lin Huiyin, talented writer and architect, looking out over the West Lake each day: This is the most beautiful statue by the lake. (2009)

Director of the Photography Department of the Hangzhou-based City Express.

WPP Awards were traditionally given to works devoted to major events such as emergency ones, and it was the first-ever prize given to work reflecting the harmony between human beings

and nature in a Chinese city. Talking about the why, the judges said: “We see the animated urban life of China in the photos.”

The WPP Awards have since 1955 attracted tens of thousands of photographic works from dozens of countries, and are recognized as the most representative and authoritative press photo award in the world. The prize-winning photos bear witness to the times and to history.

“The prize my work won is a prize given by the world to China,” Fu said, adding that it shows the world’s approval and admiration for Hangzhou, a city in Zhejiang Province with scenic beauty admired by many in the world.

As early as ten years ago when Fu Yongjun had just begun working in Hangzhou, he immediately fell in love with the city and started to take photos of the West Lake.

“The West Lake, an important part of the city, is a must-see place for travelers from home and abroad, as well as for residents in the city. It is also an important part of my life,” he said. “I took photos with no definite objective at that time. But as time went by, I developed a growing archive of photos.”

Five years ago, he embarked on a planned photography project and identified a peach tree as a “spot for me to come into contact with ordinary people by the West Lake”.

Every time he wandered around the West Lake, he stopped by

the same tree, taking photos of it with the same camera from the same distance. After having taken more than 1,000 pictures of the tree from the same angle, he suddenly found that the photos which featured quite ordinary scenes, colors and light were infused with an aura of vividness and great fascination.

"There were many trees of this kind around the lake, and almost all of them had no great defining characteristic and this also included the peach tree I took photos of," Fu said.

"It just happened to some people who gathered together by the peach tree to do morning exercise, sit quietly or feed the birds every time he photographed it."

Fu said the photographers should not just concentrate on famous names or big news. "In daily life, there are always many interesting and meaningful objects just waiting to be discovered. The best photographs are of the most familiar objects which are right in front of me."

The West Lake banks are covered with peach and weeping willow trees. In spring, with the lakeside sparkling in the morning dew, birds cheerfully chirping among swaying willow branches, the scent of peach blossoms wafting through the air, one will question whether he is in the midst of paradise. Frequent visitors to the West Lake know the tree well.

"This tree by the lake is full of the characteristics of the times