



# Olympic flame shines on Qingdao

Five Olympic rings formed by cheering fans



Elders performing drums and gongs to cheer for the torch relay



Cheering squads from sponsors of the torch relay



Cheers for the flame



Qingdao residents drummed and hit gongs to ring in the torch

Photos by Ju Chuanjiang and Ju Chenghao

By ZHAO RUIXUE

The arrival of the Olympic flame yesterday in Qingdao, host city of the summer Olympic sailing competition from August 9 to 23, elevated the coastal city's Olympic atmosphere to another high.

Qingdao was the first stop of the three-day, five-city torch relay in Shandong province.

A total of 259 torchbearers, including workers, students and the physically challenged, participated in the torch relay over a distance of 14.5 km.

After a short ceremony at Qingdao International Olympic Sailing Center began the relay, the city was engulfed in a festive ambience and the sound of cheers.

Zhang Xiaodong, silver medalist of sailing class A390 at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, ran the first leg.

"It is the second time for me to be a torchbearer. But it is the most significant as the Olympics will be held in our country," Zhang Xiaodong told journalists.



The highlight was a 1,000-m relay at sea. The Olympic flame was passed on the Qingdao yacht.

"I was very excited to be the first of the four torchbearers at sea. It was the most memorable time of my life. The honor I felt defies description," Guo Chuan, the skipper of Qingdao yacht, said.

Along the route, about 50 activities including folk dances, drumming and brass bands cheered torchbearers as Chinese national, Beijing Olympics and international Olympics flags waved.

Sites along the route include the sailing center, government hall and Qingdao University.

The final leg was run by Xia Geng, the mayor of the city, who lit a fire cauldron on the beach.

"The sacred flame has brought Qingdao more Olympic enthusiasm," the mayor said.

The Olympic flame then went on to Linyi in the afternoon and is scheduled to travel to Qufu, Taian and Jinan today and tomorrow.



Xia Geng, mayor of Qingdao and chairperson of the Olympics Sailing Committee(Qingdao), lights the cauldron after the torch relay in Qingdao.

## Not just bustling port, city offers history and scenery

By ZHANG YING

Qingdao, a vibrant economic center and port, is also a historic city with rich culture set amid beautiful scenery.

Even as it ranks among China's 10 most economically dynamic cities, Qingdao has been named a "National Civilized City", a "National Model City of Environmental Protection", a "National Sanitary and Garden City" and won the Habitat Environment Prize in China.

Located on the southeast of Shandong Peninsula facing the Yellow Sea, the city is backed by mountains and refreshed by a pleasant climate.

Qingdao's total coastline is 870 km, a quarter of Shandong province's total. The city's borders encompass 10,654 sq km and a population of 8.38 million.

Its climate is moderated by the adjacent ocean, yet it still has distinct seasons.

Long history

Humans inhabited the area as far back as 6,000 years ago.

China's first Emperor Qin Shihuang visited Langyatai, now is a tourist resort in Jiaonan, Qingdao, three times. His subject Xu Fu led a fleet from Langyatai to the Korean Peninsula and Japan.

By the late Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) Qingdao had developed into a bustling town, known as Jiao'ao. The city's opening-up as a trade port dates back 300 years to the reign of Emperor Qianlong. It started on the path to becoming an international city about 100 years ago.

Three decades of reform, opening up and development have resulted in six major indus-

tries based in Qingdao, including electronics and telecommunications, information technology and home appliances.

Qingdao's total GDP surpassed 370 billion yuan in 2007, an increase of 16 percent over the previous year.

Qingdao was selected for special development in the State plan of 1986 and listed among 15 influential sub-provincial cities in 1994.

Ranked at the top for tourism, Qingdao is an entrepôt for visitors and goods entering and leaving China.

The city's annual cargo handling capacity exceeds 300 million tons, while more than 30 million visitors from home and abroad arrive each year.

Enticing environment

Its mountainous surroundings provide a backdrop to verdant growth, red-tiled buildings, clear sky and blue sea.

Architectural styles from 20 European countries bear witness to its past.

The western part of the city is dotted with the former German governor's residence, Catholic and Lutheran churches, and the Badaguan - or Great Eight Passes - scenic area, which contrast sharply with the modern skyscrapers in the city's east.

It has become a world-renowned destination for holidays, business and exhibitions.

The sculpture Wind of May and the Olympic sailing center are highlights of the newly built eastern portion of the city.

Lining the city from east to west, the sea-shore boardwalk passes many scenic spots including Huiquan Square, Sculpture Street, May 4th Square, Music Square and Sculpture Garden.



Zang Aimin, vice-chairperson of the Olympics Sailing Committee (Qingdao), at the torch relay.



Wang Li (right), representative of the Beijing Olympics Organizing Committee, hands the torch to Huang Sheng, deputy-governor of Shandong.

The Olympic Sailing Center in Qingdao



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