



CAI CHUNYING / CHINADAILY

Chi Wang visits the China Daily studio in New York.

US librarian urges deeper engagement with China

By TAN YINGZI in Washington
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At age 80, Chi Wang, the former head of the Library of Congress' Chinese section in Washington, still has a dream — to open an office in China to enhance the country's cultural interaction with the United States.

Wang helped turn the Chinese section into one of the best library collections of its kind outside Asia, with about 1 million books, newspapers, magazines and films.

The Library of Congress had only 300,000 volumes in its China collection when Wang began working there in 1957.

"It is my dream to set up a library field office in China. It would be just a small center with two or three American librarians to work directly with local Chinese counterparts," Wang said, while discussing his new book, *Building A Better Chinese Collection for the Library of Congress*.

The office, he said, could buy books directly from publishers in China and help US scholars conduct research there.

Officially a research site for the US Congress, the library is the biggest in the world and since 1962, has maintained offices abroad that acquire, catalog and preserve archival and research materials. The library has offices in New Delhi, Cairo, Rio de Janeiro, Jakarta, Nairobi and Islamabad.

"But why not in China?" Wang said, repeating a question he asked the library's leadership many times during his tenure.

From the 1970s until his retirement in 2004, Wang traveled to China twice a year to buy books for the library. But no one has taken up the task since his retirement, leaving the responsibility solely in the hands of book dealers.

"Nowadays, it's easier to get books from China, but it's difficult to tell the book dealers what kind of books we want to have," he said.

Wang, who emigrated to the US at age 17, started his career at the library with the goal of building a better Chinese collection.

He recalled that in 1968, when diplomatic ties between the US and China had not been re-established, Wang was asked to write to then-premier Zhou Enlai on the library's behalf, hoping to establish book exchanges with China.

"We got permission from the State Department, and they hoped we could get results," Wang said.

While Beijing did not respond to the request, Wang sensed that Washington had begun to soften its policy toward China. "Otherwise, they wouldn't have allowed me to write a letter to China," he said. "I thought that very soon something would happen in bilateral relations."

In 1972, Wang was invited by the Chinese government to visit. Shortly after former US president Richard Nixon's historic trip, Wang traveled to the capital to re-establish a publication exchange between the Library of Congress and the National Library of China, Fudan University and Sun Yat-Sen University.

A year later, Wang organized the first US visit by a delegation of Chinese librarians, who were greeted by Nixon at the White House. In 1979, he helped arrange the first trip to China by American librarians, led by William Welsh, the deputy librarian of Congress.

"These exchanges had a major impact on Americans' understanding of China," he said. "At that time, Americans had a huge interest in China. No matter how different the political and social conditions in China were, the US wanted to work with China."

Today, Wang says, the Library of Congress' interest in China seems to have waned.

In 2005 the library's new Asia division chief abolished the Japanese, Chinese, Korean and South Asia sections, a move Wang finds troubling.

He suggests that the library should rebuild the Chinese section to better serve US citizens' interest in China, which has not waned.

Chengzhi Wang, head of the Chinese section at Columbia University's CV Starr East Asian Library in New York, said the demand for Chinese materials in the US is huge, given the language's popularity among students.

"Most of the libraries in the US, including public ones, have paid great attention to their Chinese collections. But imports from the Chinese mainland can't meet demand here," he said.

Ditch the tour guide, hit the road

Young Chinese savor independent travel in the United States

By WANG JINGSHU in New York
for China Daily

After a 13-hour flight from Shanghai, Aileen Zhang is fatigued but eager to begin her first trip abroad.

She lands at San Francisco International Airport, retrieves her luggage from the carousel and passes through US Customs. Then it's off to the car rental counter to pick up the car she reserved online from her home in China.

"It's very popular among our generation to travel around by renting vehicles," said Zhang, a software engineer in her late 20s. "Travel agencies might give people well-organized schedules, but what I want is a leisurely trip that's more free — not to rush from one tourist spot to another."

During July, she stopped in Los Angeles and other cities along California's Pacific Coast Highway before driving inland to Salt Lake City, Las Vegas and Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming before ending up at Yellowstone National Park, which straddles three states.

Tourism from China to the US has been on the rise since 2007, when the State Department relaxed its rules to make it easier for Chinese citizens to get short-term visas. The trend is expected to continue: About 1.1 million Chinese visited the US in 2011, and the number is projected to reach 3.2 million visitors in 2016, according to the Commerce Department's Office of Travel and Tourism Industries.

"There is an explosion of travelers coming from China to the US," said Skip Hull, vice-president of CIC Research Inc, which conducts surveys on behalf of the federal government and private companies.

Washington's increase in the number of visa slots available to applicants in China this year is also helping push numbers to record highs, including scores of younger Chinese who prefer to travel by rental car, Hull said.

"Similar to the 1980s and Japan, there is a huge volume of independent travelers from China visiting the US," he said. "We think that, over time, there will be many more younger Chinese traveling on their own instead of depending on travel agencies."

Among travelers to the US who rent cars, the top three countries of origin in 2011 were Britain, Germany and Japan, according to a report by the Commerce Department's International Trade Administration. China didn't appear in the report because its sample size was less than 400 renters, but Hull is sure the



PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Software engineer Aileen Zhang tours the US in her rented Chevrolet automobile.

number will jump, especially given the "motorized generation" of Chinese in their 20s and early 30s.

"It would be lame to travel around the US other than by driving," said Yang Liu, a 28-year-old from Beijing who is planning a trip to the US in September. "There are so many desirable places in the US, and traveling by yourself, by car, is a good way to get around and see the real America."

Yang, who hopes to experience a "typical American lifestyle" during her visit, said, "The last thing I want to do is follow tour guides who organize everything while I just take photos in arranged places with people from my home country."

China's younger generation "doesn't share the same cultural history as the older generations in terms of automobiles," said Hull. The country's fast-growing auto industry acclimated Chinese youth to driving and cars from an early age, instilling a desire to explore the world "on their own."

Independent travelers from China ranged in age from 28 to 45, according to data compiled by Qyer.com, a popular website on which users share anecdotes and information about their trips, such as route planning, sights, hotels, restaurants and car rentals.

Arranging one's itinerary beforehand based on information gleaned from the Internet is crucial, said Yang, who previously planned trips to Italy and Greece by herself. She finds the information available from fellow independent travelers on Qyer.com "very useful".

"The best pizza place we went to in Italy was mentioned in a post online. There is no way the travel agencies would take you to that kind of place," she says.

It's a challenge to visit an unfamiliar place, let alone a country, on your own. But in the digital age, with information just clicks or screen-touches away, the discovery can be fun and relatively easy.

"We spent two months planning our trip," said Feng Dan, who traveled

around several big West Coast cities.

Information available online is comprehensive, including the US visa application process as well as airline, car rental and hotel reservations, she said.

Traveling by car is a great way to see sights away from big cities and well-worn tourist attractions, said Feng, who appreciates the convenient US interstate highway system.

"I like to grab the wheel and search for the real beauty the country presents on the road. I still remember the endless, crystal-clear blue sky and white curves along the coast when we were driving down the Pacific Coast Highway" and the scenic 17-Mile Drive in Northern California.

Driving in the US is a much different experience than hitting the road in China, said Zhang, the visitor from Shanghai, who savors breathtaking views while behind the wheel.

"Driving in Chinese cities can be very intense sometimes," she says. "Cars are squeezing on the road in heavily populated cities and people sometimes will suddenly jump out in the street, but people in the US tend to stick to traffic rules."

American movies and television have fueled many Chinese visitors' dreams of independent travel, she said.

"Although this is my first time visiting the US, I have familiar feelings while driving down the road. It was thrilling to see many yellow (Chevrolet) Camaros on the street because it reminds me of my favorite American drama, *Hawaii Five-0*."

Feng, who was impressed by the natural beauty viewed on her journey as well as the multicultural culture of the US, cautioned that safety concerns can put a damper on the exhilaration of travel.

"Someone broke into our car and stole our bags and cash, as well as passports, when we parked around the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco," she recalls. "Luckily, the Chinese consulate in San Francisco helped us get new passports in a short time, so we didn't miss our return flight."

Young, bilingual Chinese have high expectations about the quality of their travel, particularly when tour guides and group excursions aren't in the picture.

"It takes more time to travel independently," said Ji Tingting, marketing manager for Qyer.com. "But people value relaxation and entertainment on their trip over the desire to visit as many attractions as they can."

Feng recalls not having practiced her English since graduating from college, "but I picked it up during the trip, and we had a great time while chatting with local people."

Said Yang: "The language barrier might be a problem if you're going to Europe, but my trip to Italy and Greece proved that as long as you're an English speaker, you can go anywhere you want."

Londoners get the chance to discover Jiangsu

By MU QIAN
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On the heels of Beijing Culture Week, another series of Chinese cultural events with a regional focus has kicked off in the UK — the Discover Jiangsu Culture Week, which opened on Wednesday at Central Hall Westminster in central London.

"People in China and the UK enjoy a long-standing friendship, despite their geographical distance," said Cao Weixing, vice-governor of East China's Jiangsu province. "A case in point was the establishment of the sister city arrangement between Jiangsu province and Essex County in 1992."

Both regions have benefited greatly from their cooperation in the fields of economy, education, culture, tourism, environmental protection and human resources training, Cao said.

"We shared a little bit of Chinese history with a Terracotta Warriors exhibition in Essex four years ago, when China magnificently hosted the Olympic Games," says Kevin Bentley of Essex County Council. "That link carries on to this Olympiad — a precious jade exhibition is being held at the Colchester and Ipswich Museum Center of Essex."

The exhibition, titled Chinese Treasures, consists of 70 pieces of jade, pottery, bronze, china and lacquer from Nanjing Museum, in the capital city of Jiangsu province.

The Discover Jiangsu Culture Week also includes a number of



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CAO WEIXING
VICE-GOVERNOR OF JIANGSU PROVINCE, WHICH HAS HAD A SISTER CITY ARRANGEMENT WITH BRITAIN'S ESSEX COUNTY SINCE 1992.

other exhibitions.

The Jinling Paintings Exhibition features more than 60 oil paintings and traditional Chinese paintings by award-winning young Chinese artists. A Tale of Two Cities — Nanjing Meets London, compares Nanjing and London, and showcases Yunjin brocade and Buddhist sutra printing. The Great Wall — Photographs Then and Now juxtaposes old and new pictures of the wall from the last 140 years by both Chinese and Western photographers.

The government of Jiangsu province chose to hold the culture week during the London 2012 Olympic Games in order to promote the 2014 Youth Olympic Games, which will be held in Nanjing.

Gerhard Heiberg, chairman of the International Olympic Committee Marketing Commission, says the culture week is a great way to promote Jiangsu

and announce that everyone is welcome in Nanjing, especially in 2014.

"I have been to Nanjing many times, and I think it's a won-

derful, beautiful city," Heiberg says. "I'm sure the 2014 Youth Olympic Games will be a great success for Nanjing, for Jiangsu and for the International Olym-

pic Committee."

Discover Jiangsu has toured more than 20 countries, including the US, France, Germany, Russia, Poland and Japan.

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