

YOUTH



Six entertainers — (front, from left) cross-talk performer Yue Yunpeng, actor Chen Feiyu, singer Huang Zitao, and actors (back, from left) Lin Gengxin, Zhang Ruoyun and Wang Yanlin — experience the life of ordinary workers on *The New Journey*. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Journey to grassroots

Online reality show takes six celebrities on a road far from stardom, **Xing Wen** reports.

“The reality show has displayed the lives of people from multiple social classes and let us notice ordinary people’s passion for their dreams.”

Yin Hong, vice-chairman of China Literature and Art Critics Association

The classic novel *Journey to the West* is beloved by generations of Chinese readers. Based on the pilgrimage of the Buddhist monk Xuanzang to India in the 7th century, the novel by Wu Cheng'en in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) gives a detailed and imaginative description of how Xuanzang and his apprentices overcome innumerable hardships throughout the journey.

For Yan Min, a scriptwriter and reality show director, it's the most influential novel among readers of all age groups in China.

“It uses mythology to give approachable descriptions of the social customs and the public code of conduct at that time,” he says, adding that the novel brings readers closer to vivid stories of grassroots life back then.

The director, known for his ability to create hit reality shows, decided to pay tribute to the novel and interpret it through doing what he is good at.

Many of his previous works, such as the talent shows *Rap for Youth* and *Theater for Living*, have won more than 9 points out of 10 on the review platform Douban.

His capability to turn entertainment into expressive and thought-provoking shows is widely recognized by viewers.

This time, he has directed a new reality show, a bold interpretation of the world in *Journey to the West*, by which he aims to enable viewers to

see how individuals at the grassroots manage to make a living in the country.

The online reality show, titled *The New Journey*, has invited celebrities, namely, pop star Huang Zitao, cross-talk performer Yue Yunpeng, as well as actors Zhang Ruoyun, Wang Yanlin, Lin Gengxin and Chen Feiyu, to travel from the east to the west in southern China, enabling the audience to follow the camera to see the customs, cultures and lives of people in different places. The show has been aired on the streaming platform Tencent Video since last month.

Their route passes through Guangdong province, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, Hainan, Yunnan, Guizhou and Sichuan provinces.

Throughout the journey, they have to overcome various hardships and get to think about the true meaning of life.

Yan says the country's great advancement in the past few decades is owed to the hard work of numerous ordinary people, and he hopes that the reality show can more or less present the daily lives of people that are usually not noticed by the public.

Speaking of the reason why the six celebrities have been chosen by the show to take the adventure, Yan says all are performers in their 20s or 30s, who have the potential to grow to be the nucleus of the country's performing arts industry.

“Compared to the elder generations, the younger performers, who have their lives going along nicely, are more likely to lack the opportunity to experience and to live a life with all the ups and downs,” Yan says. “I hope we can create a space in the show where they can observe and experience the aspects of life they're not familiar with.”

As the show's second episode portrayed, before the six men embarked on the journey, they went to Shenzhen in Guangdong where they had to earn travel expenses by

doing the work of property agents, assembly-line workers, security guards, demolition workers, as well as deliverymen who have to load and unload trucks manually.

For instance, Huang and Chen sat by the roadside before daybreak with other migrant workers, waiting for employers who come to find part-timers to do physical jobs. A van came to a halt near them, from which a man got off and shouted, “Two hundred yuan (\$31) for eight hours to dismantle a stage in Shekou port area.”

Getting to know that the wage was pretty good for part-time labor work in Shenzhen, Huang and Chen jumped into the van with 10 other workers.

Separately, after finishing the day's exhausting work of unloading parcels for a logistic warehouse that is located far away from Shenzhen's downtown area, Lin and Wang felt starved.

To save money, they went to a grocery store to buy two bowls of instant noodles for dinner and later rode rental bikes for 30 kilometers to get back to their temporary accommodation — a shabby dorm for which each person paid 15 yuan a night. There, they lived with other part-timers who displayed tenacity when facing arduous work.

“The reality show has displayed the lives of people from multiple social classes and let us notice ordinary people's passion for their dreams,” comments Yin Hong, vice-chairman of the China Literature and Art Critics Association.

Gao Guiwu, a professor with the school of journalism and communication in Renmin University of China, says the reality show is good at grasping enlightenment and creative ideas in traditional culture and forming profound insights into real life, which might inspire China's reality show production in the future.

Contact the writer at xingwen@chinadaily.com.cn

Program for children encourages families

NAIROBI — Liu Yimenghan, a Chinese youth, says his affinity for the sprawling Mathare slums, on the eastern fringes of Nairobi, began when he embarked on a journey in his college years in the area by acting as a volunteer math teacher for one year and later feeling the urge to continue and upscale his charity work there.

“I had a community service lesson at college and had my community service in Mathare. So, it was my first time in Mathare, and I felt that maybe there was something I could do through my capabilities,” says Liu, 27.

Liu moved with his family to Kenya at the age of 13, and studying in the East African nation up to tertiary level equipped him with an in-depth grasp of local communities — their culture, beliefs and value systems. His charity work has nourished the dreams of children in Mathare, an area Liu prefers to call the “Mathare community.”

The co-founder of Dream Building Service Association, a nongovernmental organization founded in 2014, now regards Mathare — Nairobi's second-largest urban slum area — as his second home, despite its rampant poverty, crime and environmental pollution.

He says soon after converting classrooms made of iron sheets into ones made of bricks in Mathare, his work evolved to focus on providing food, scholarships, mentorship and talent development to the children.

Liu says scholarships are provided every semester and aim to motivate children from poor backgrounds and their parents to value education since it is the gateway to success.

Thanks to the efforts of DBSA in the past eight years, three schools in Mathare have been renovated, where children have had free meals and received scholarships.

During an interview at Mathare Light Center, one of the renovated schools, Liu says a partnership with Chinese charities and online fundraising have ensured the sustainability of the charity work, for instance, a feeding program.

The implementation of the school feeding program has involved contracting local suppliers of staple foods who deliver them to schools for preparation into dishes by hired chefs. The chefs prepare two meals a day — breakfast consisting of porridge and lunch made of local staple foods like rice and beans.

Liu says meat, eggs and fruits are provided to the children once a week, hence improving their nutritional status while discouraging absenteeism from school.

During the lunch break at Mathare Light Center, children line up at the kitchen door to receive their free meals — *ugali*, a local cuisine, and some vegetables and beef.

Kevin Oluoch, the deputy head teacher of the Mathare Light Center, says DBSA has provided free meals at the school since 2017, adding that the feeding program has helped the children grow because they come from vulnerable families, which cannot afford lunch and breakfast.

Oluoch says free meals have been a draw to the pupils from poor households. This school has seen an increasing number of students.

“The children get the energy to learn once they get food here in school,” says Oluoch, stressing that parents are also happy to have their children fed in school, easing pressure on their meager daily wages.

Since 2016, DBSA has started to hold talent shows, soccer matches, art exhibitions, youth training and other projects in Mathare to help children pursue their dreams.

Some of these activities have been suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the feeding program is the main charity work still operating now.

Liu says DBSA's charity projects have covered six countries in Africa, namely Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Malawi and Nigeria, and the feeding program has covered more than 40 schools across the six countries.

XINHUA



Above: Liu Yimenghan has been devoted to helping poor children in Nairobi, Kenya, over the past eight years. Left: A child studies at a renovated school in Nairobi, which is a part of the charity work Liu has been engaged in. PHOTOS BY DONG JIANGHUI / XINHUA

International Education Column If you are interested in this, please contact: i.education@chinadaily.com.cn

US UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX BUSINESS SCHOOL

Join a UK top ranked Business School

1st in the UK for Accounting & Finance Graduate prospects on track. Complete University Guide 2022

13th in the UK for Business and Economics. Times Higher Education World Rankings 2022

Times Higher Education Awards 2021 - Business School of the Year Finalist

Accounting • Finance • Banking • Business Studies • MBA
Development Economics • Econometrics • Energy • Human Resource Management • Global Supply Chain Management • Innovation Studies
Leadership • Marketing • Policy • Sustainability • Trade

TO FIND OUT MORE VISIT:
www.sussex.ac.uk/business-school
Or email China@sussex.ac.uk

CONNECT WITH US ON WECHAT AND SINA WEIBO

法国雷恩商学院

全球精英商学院 · 纯英文授课 · 国际化校园 · 雷恩 · 巴黎

文凭均受中国教育部认证
55% 国际学生比例 95% 资深国际教授

2022 秋季招生项目

- 精英大学项目: 管理学硕士 + 理学硕士双学位 (或海外交换)
- 本硕连读: HBBA
- 二年制荣誉工商管理学士 + 双硕士 (PGE+MSc)
- IBPM 三年制管理学学士项目 (各年级均可申请入学)
- MSc 理学硕士项目 (15 个专业)
- 高管课程 (IMBA/EMBA/Executive MSc)

了解更多详情
雷恩商学院管理组微信
DIY 你的入学申请

rennes-sb.cn

Be U.

Be a RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS LEADER

Be part of the HKBU School of Business, where responsible business leaders are nurtured.

bus.hkbu.edu.hk/responsible-leader