

MOSAIC

The magic of finding an ancient civilization in your backyard

It's one thing to see history on display behind a museum glass and another to experience it right

beneath the soles of your hiking shoes, just as my husband Jun and I did one afternoon while wandering the hills within sight of the family home in rural Zhejiang.

That ridge, one of a chain of undulating hills that encircled the village, looked like every other we had climbed before. It had the usual assortment of bamboo, pines and

rhododendrons in its canopy. And the sinuous trail we followed swept through the same tangles of bracken ferns, satintail grasses, mugwort and clover we always walked through on our hikes.

But at a small clearing on top, we discovered an astonishing marble historical marker, etched with Chinese characters designating the fertile ground beneath our feet the site of a civilization that flourished 4,000 to 5,000 years ago.

How could such a seemingly ordinary ridge hold such an extraordinary secret? The marker offered scant introduction to the civilization, beyond that it thrived during the Neolithic Age and occu-

ried the crest of that hill. Still, even this historical crumb left behind by a team of archaeologists thrilled me more than gazing upon one of China's national treasures in a museum, because we had stumbled upon it right in the backyard of the village where my husband grew up.

According to Jun, nobody in town had ever mentioned the existence of an ancient find in the hills. As I surveyed the scene surrounding the marker, I wondered, what was this civilization like back in its day? How did they live? Were any of the stones visible around the area evidence of their society as well? Could these people have been Jun's ancestors?

Later, when searching for online information about the site, we learned that archaeologists had discovered a cache of broken pieces of ancient pottery there, including the legs of ding cauldrons.

The team believed this site belonged to Zhejiang's Liangzhu Culture, which recently gained recognition after UNESCO added the archaeological ruins of Liangzhu City to its World Heritage list on July 6.

The scattered pottery fragments recovered by the team, shown in an online photograph, reminded me of lost puzzle pieces forgotten over time, much like the ridge top itself, whose trails were disappearing into

the brush as fewer people roamed them. If the find truly represented Liangzhu Culture, it would only stand with a tiny footnote in history and could never compare to the stunning jade discs that drew countless visitors to the Liangzhu Museum in Hangzhou.

But I didn't mind that our site would never make headlines or rank as one of the greatest finds of the century, because it held a different kind of magic.

That archaeological discovery represented a part of China's glorious 5,000 years of history, and it just happened to emerge from an otherwise unremarkable hill that had quietly witnessed generations

of my husband's family thrive in the village. It's not every day that we encounter such tangible traces of the ancient past in places we have called home.

But when we do, it reminds us that history is hidden all around, even where we least expect it, such as while hiking through just another ridgetop in rural Zhejiang.

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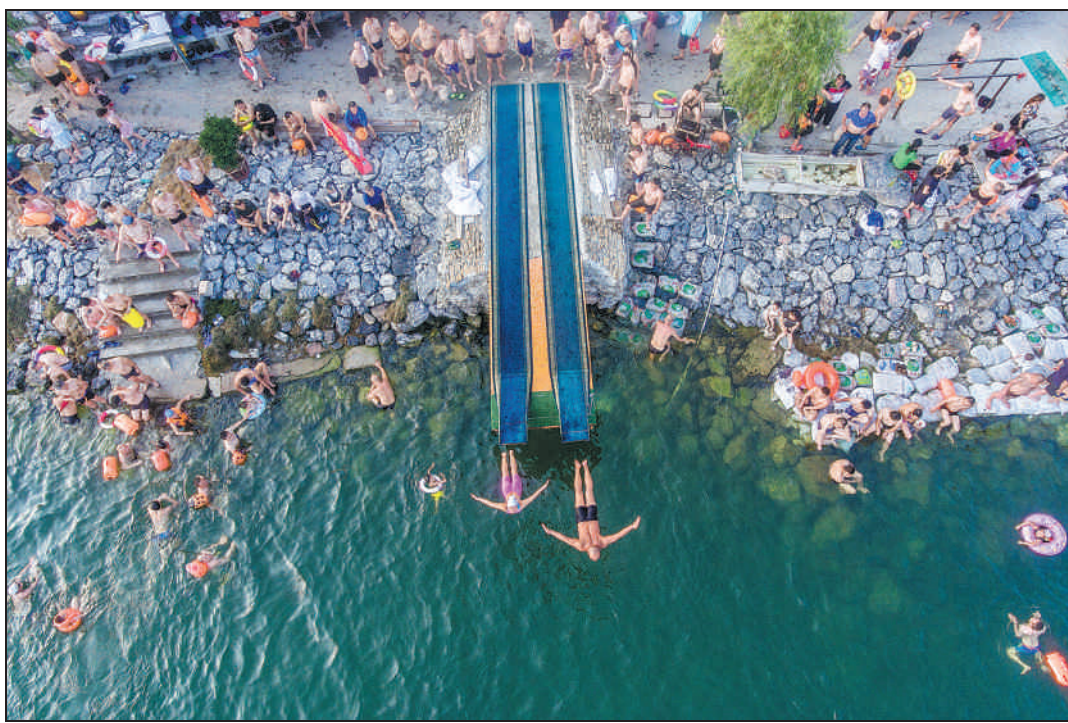
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Candid camera: Flying start

The cooling waters of the Hanjiang River in Xiangyang, Hubei province, prove a tempting treat on Monday.

YANG DONG / FOR CHINA DAILY



This Day, That Year



Editor's note: This year marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of New China.

The China-Association of Southeast Asian Nations dialogue began when former foreign minister Qian Qichen attended the opening session of the 24th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in Kuala Lumpur in July 1991 as a guest of the Malaysian government.

Qian also attended the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference in Singapore in July 1993. An item from China Daily showed him shaking hands with then US Secretary of State War-

ren Christopher on July 25, 1993, during a break from the conference.

In July 1996, China became a full dialogue partner of ASEAN.

The two sides forged a strategic partnership in 2003, bringing cooperation in various fields to new heights.

China and ASEAN signed a free-trade agreement in 2004, and in November, the two sides upgraded the protocol of the agreement to build the largest free-trade zone among developing countries.

In September 2012, China appointed Yang Xiuping as its first resident ambassador to ASEAN and established its Mission to ASEAN in Jakarta.

According to the General Administration of Customs, the trade volume between China and ASEAN increased from less than \$8 billion in 1991 to \$288 billion in the first half of this

year. By the end of last year, China had been the largest trade partner of ASEAN for nine consecutive years, and ASEAN became China's second-largest trading partner in the first six months of this year, overtaking the United States for the first time since 1997.

In the China-ASEAN Strategic Partnership Vision 2030 adopted last year, the two sides agreed to realize a goal of \$1 trillion in two-way trade and \$150 billion in investment by 2020.

China and ASEAN countries are also working toward an early conclusion of the Regional Comprehensive

Qian gives support to EAEC plan in principle



Economic Partnership agreement, which is expected to boost trade and economic integration among ASEAN members and its six trading partners — China, Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand and India.

Initiated in 2012, the project will create one of the world's largest trading blocs, accounting for 45 percent of the world population, 40 percent of global trade and around one-third of the world's GDP.

The newspaper and beyond

On our Sina Weibo

Be good to your parents or else, warns Shaanxi

Authorities in Xunyang county, Shaanxi province, have a warning to residents: Take care of your parents or face punishment. In a sharply worded notice last week, the local government said law enforcement officials, along with the local courts and prosecutors, will punish any "disobedient and unfilial behaviors". The move, according to the notice, is aimed at "promoting traditional Chinese virtues and safeguarding the rights of the elderly." It lists six behaviors that authorities have deemed unfilial toward parents: living in new residences while parents live in "old and dangerous" ones, extorting parents' pensions and other subsidies related to old age, shirking responsibilities, neglect, verbal abuse, and physical abuse. Possible punishments range from a verbal warning to police detention or even formal charges, depending on the severity of the offense. Under Chinese law, failing to take care of aging parents or young children constitutes a criminal offense punishable by up to five years' imprisonment or criminal detention.



British explorer protecting the Great Wall

Few Chinese people know the Great Wall as well as a British adventurer and writer, who has spent much of his life exploring the structure. When, as a schoolboy, William Lindesay announced his ambitious plans to discover more about the Great Wall, nobody took him too seriously. But Lindesay achieved his goal — and much more — by running the length of it. Since 1998, he has organized volunteers to pick up the wall's discarded trash every year.



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Travel: Sri Lanka to issue free visas

Sri Lanka will include China in its free-visa policy, starting from Aug 1, according to the country's Minister of Tourism Development, Wildlife and Christian Religious Affairs, John Amaratunga. China is the second-largest market for Sri Lanka tourism. "Despite the setback from the Easter Sunday attacks, I am sure this year we will be able to achieve our targets," he said. "From Aug 1, Chinese tourists can come to Sri Lanka without a visa fee and we see this as a landmark decision for the tourism industry." Other countries entitled under the free visa policy include India, the Netherlands and certain European countries.

World: Driverless air taxi set to take off

A driverless flying taxi prototype developed in Spain has been unveiled and could be "on the road" within five years. With a capsule cabin measuring 1.8 meters by 2 meters that includes a back door and upper window, the Aerotaxi is powered by four drones — two above and two below — each of which has four engines. It is designed for short trips across

towns and cities, flies at a low altitude, and could be in use once all the necessary testing phases are complete. The first test flights with people inside are expected to be carried out in the United States and Japan, pioneered in major cities such as Los Angeles and Tokyo.



Photos: Leandro Erlich's illusory reality

As summer's sizzle grips China, an exhibition by Argentinian conceptual artist Leandro Erlich at Beijing's Central Academy of Fine Arts' Art Museum may be just what you need to cool down. *The Confines of the Great Void* is a retrospective of Erlich's most famous works, including his landmark pieces *Swimming Pool*, *Rain* and *Building* that continue to mesmerize viewers worldwide. The 46-year-old artist, now living

and working in Buenos Aires and Montevideo, has become increasingly popular around the globe since representing Argentina at the Venice Biennale in 2001 and 2005. Inspired by everyday life and the shared human experience, his work features extensive use of expressive approaches to confront viewers with their conceptual limits. The exhibit runs through Aug 25.

Culture: Lion King evokes memories of filmgoers

Though the original 1994 movie of *The Lion King* was screened more than one year later in China than in the United States, it was still regarded by many Chinese audiences as an entertaining memory off their youth. On July 12, a new version hit Chinese screens, a week earlier than North American cinemas. It has raked in a total of more than 550 million yuan (\$80 million) at the box office since its premiere and led the Chinese box office for almost a week, according to the China Movie Data Information Network.

Online
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What's on

The Grand Mansion Gate

When: July 30 and 31, 7:30 pm

Where: Guangzhou Opera House

It has been 18 years since Chinese director and scriptwriter Guo Baochang made *The Grand Mansion Gate*, a 72-episode TV drama based on the story of his adoptive father.

It tells of the Bai family in Beijing through one of the most politically tumultuous periods of modern Chinese history, spanning from the late Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) up until World War II. The story has been adapted into a Peking Opera of the same name.

In the TV drama, the focus is on Bai Jingqi, who is a rebellious and ambitious young man. He carries the hopes of his family, which run a traditional Chinese medicine store in Beijing.

The Peking Opera version opens with Yang Jiahong, the prostitute who Bai falls in love with. Despite his family's objections, he marries Yang and brings her into the family, where she faces rejection.

New Comic Book Times

When: Aug 1-27, 9:30 am-10:00 pm

Where: Traditional Culture and Arts Center, Beijing

As an ancient art that is deeply steeped in Chinese traditional culture and reflective of the characteristics of the times, Chinese comic books date back to the Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220).

Since then comic books, featuring various subjects and topics, such as *The White Snake*, *The Monkey King* and *Women Generals of the Yang Family*, have accompanied generation after generation of Chinese, seared in their memories of childhood.

Now Beijing Jinxi Culture Media Group is to stage *New Comic Book Times*, which constitutes four exhibition areas: *Century Boys* — *The Comic Book Collection and Circumstantial Experience*, *Ingenuity in the Comic Book Sketches*, *The Comic Book Themed Immersive Experience* and *Future of Comic Book* — *Transboundary Experiment*. It has been put together by Liu Endong, CEO of the group and an ingenious storyteller, to jog the memories of Chinese people.

One Starry Night Out of the Blue

When: Aug 1-4, 6-11, 7:30 pm; Aug 3, 4, 10 and 11, 10:30 am; Aug 3, 4 and 11, 3:30 pm

Where: Shanghai Grand Theater

During the summer vacation, little Lena goes to visit her grandpa, a painter. He loves Lena very much, but sometimes magically disappears down a rabbit hole with each stroke of his brush. Lena has no passion toward painting, and is not interested in the painting album that grandpa sent her. She feels a little bored.

One night, after grandpa falls asleep, Lena falls down her own rabbit hole into a hidden world of classical paintings. Guided by fireflies, she gets on a moon boat. She sails through the *Starry Night* created by Vincent Van Gogh, and enters a fascinating world where the paintings come to life.

She meets the gallery guard, and together they encounter Leonardo da Vinci and also help to capture an escaped ermine

and play a game with the Mona Lisa.

The Pillowman

When: Aug 1-3, 7:30 pm; Aug 3 and 4, 2:30 pm

Where: Beijing Poly Theater

The Chinese version of Martin McDonagh's award-winning *The Pillowman* will hit Beijing.

It tells a story of a writer revealing intriguing plots in the interrogation room when he is accused of serial murders, as the scenes in his novel are very similar to torture murders of local children. Irish-British playwright Martin McDonagh is famous for his dark humor. *The Pillowman* won the Laurence Olivier Awards, and has been performed at the West End and Broadway.

The Librarian

When: Aug 2, 7:30 pm; Aug 3, 10:30 am and 3:30 pm

Where: Super Theater, Beijing

For the last 25 years, Paul-Emile Dumoulin has worked in a municipal library. He is serious and proud, though terribly clumsy. The shelves must be impeccable, publications carefully organized.

But beware, when his passion for books gets a hold of him, he can't help but plunge, head first, into their stories.

Overwhelmed with excitement, he starts doing acrobatics, performing feats of balance, juggling, break dancing and beat boxing.

This Canadian play highlights the power of literature as well as imagination.

Nass Massala Dance Company

When: Aug 2 and 3, 7:30 pm

Where: Shanghai International Dance Center

French Massala Dance Company's production *Nass* dares to challenge contradictory physical states and affirms the fusion between the popular and urban aspects of hip-hop. Sources of inspiration are the regional dances of Morocco, *taskiwine* and *regadda*, as well as the mysticism of the *Gnawa* (ancient spiritual songs).

Nass reveals a universal dimension, the eternal quest of men and women for someplace else, spiritual or physical, using as language the rhythm, that unites and moves the bodies.

The history of the band Nass-el-Ghiwane from the 1970s in North Africa has been a key inspiration to choreographer Fouad Boussouf.

Their lyrics reminded him of the lyrical connection with the anti-establishment current of rap and hip-hop from the same period in the United States.

Giselle

When: Aug 10 and 11, 7:30 pm

Where: National Center for the Performing Arts, Beijing

Since its debut in Paris in 1841, the romantic two-act ballet *Giselle* has traveled all over the world and never lost its popularity with audiences. The Teatro alla Scala Ballet Company from Italy will present the masterpiece in Beijing.

It's a story of love, betrayal and redemption between merry village festivities. *Giselle* continues to move audiences with its charming narrative and the moving performance of its protagonists. It presents a contrast between a bright and cheerful world and a dark, frightful kingdom populated by spirits.