

Photo by YU NAN

Full of smiles: Boys and girls cheerfully dance at their new kindergarten at Women and Children's Training Centre in Zhangxian County



by ZHANG XIAOYUAN

A dream come true: People in Zhangxian County can now retrieve water from their own yard instead of having to carry water from miles away

Feeding the poor with knowledge

Campaign to eradicate poverty creates positive results in Gansu

By YU NAN
China Daily Staff

At the end of 1998, the Chinese central government launched a campaign to help rid state-level destitute counties of poverty. The All China Women's Federation (ACWF) was up to help the campaign in Zhangxian County, Northwest China's Gansu Province. Three years have now passed, and thankfully the people in the county are now living quite different lives. Recently, China Daily reporter Yu Nan visited the remote, poor villages and wrote the following story.

Li Yingfang, 36, seldom ventured out of her home village to visit the county of Zhangxian County, Northwest China's Gansu Province.

She considered herself "blind" even though she was not medically wrong with her eyesight. This was because Yingfang could not read.

Road and bus signs confused her and she worried that she would lose her way if she travelled alone.

However, two years later she joyfully announces that she is no longer "blind," and that she finally knows which bus to take by reading the bus stop signs.

"Now I can sign my name on my children's homework," the mother of two said with pride.

Li's pride is justified and well-deserved as there are still at least 2,203 illiterate women in Zhangxian County, out of an adult female population of 89,990. In their daily lives the women live with what they consider to be embarrassing encounters due to the fact that they cannot read.

Li is just one of the 600 people who have reaped the tremendous benefits from an anti-illiteracy project that has run over the past two years. The project consists of a seven-month class for local illiterate women from each of the poorest villages.

In Suyouyou Village, one of 10 villages in the county that is still

without electricity, women sit and listen attentively to their teachers under fading light from a kerosene lamp. So determined are these women that they were seldom absent from the three evening classes each week.

The programme, now running into its third year, has been sponsored by Hong Kong Cedar Foundation and Rural Women Knowledge All magazine.

The classes have proved to be popular among the local rural women, and many claim enthusiastically that the class has had a huge impact on their lives.

During the class sessions, Li and the other women have not only memorized at least 100 common Chinese characters but they have also learned how to do simple calculations, as well as also been taught modern, technical knowledge about planting crops, fertilizers and pesticide, and some basic knowledge about hygiene.

Another important factor is that women attending the class could get a small loan, so that their children can afford to return to school.

Top students in the literacy class have also had opportunities to go to Beijing to receive further training.

Such literacy classes have given Li and other women not only knowledge but, above all, a confidence that they did not know they possessed.

"I went to sell the vegetables I planted once and I was often cheated because I didn't know how to count the money," said Ma Guifang. "I have not been to the market without my husband since. But now I can bargain with customers."

The women have also become keen supporters of school education. "Most women have expressed their determination to send their children to school whether they are short of cash or not," said Zhang Xiaoyuan, an ACWF officer from Beijing who is now working in Zhangxian

County to co-ordinate the aid projects.

Mother cistern

The literacy classes empower the local rural women from poverty-stricken families with knowledge, and the project has provided families living in rural mountainous areas with more hope that they will eventually leave poverty behind. Fresh, clean water, which many of us take for granted as we turn on our taps full blast, is a day-to-day worry for most local villagers in Zhangxian.

Maquanshan Village is about a 20-minute bus ride away from the county and is also one of the most arid villages in the county. Sitting on the mountaintop, the village has only one winding path go through.

There is a well-known saying in the county which perhaps gives an accurate description of what the area is like: "Do not marry off your girls to the Maquan Mountain if you do not want her to carry water every day."

There is only one river and that can be found at the foot of the mountain. Villagers have to walk for four hours up and down the mountain in order to carry one or two buckets of water. In other villages, horses and donkeys do the job.

"The water we carry can only be used for basic daily needs such as cooking and washing," said Wang Yuansheng, the head of the village. "There is no extra water for planting vegetables, raising horses and chickens, or even for a bath once a year."

The hard life that these villagers endure prevents some girls from marrying men in the village. About 70 per cent of the men in the village are single.

It is estimated that about 5 million people in Gansu Province suffer from a severe lack of water, just like villagers in Maquanshan. Among the thirsty population, more than 60 per cent are women and children.

The women these villages tend to collect little water there is, as they can usually be found working the fields all day.

Last year ACWF initiated a project called "Mother Cistern," with hope of raising money to mothers and their children in arid north-western areas.

Around 11 million yuan (US\$14.15 million) has been donated to the "Mother Cistern" fund, which is run by the China Women's Development Foundation.

Zhangxian county was one of the first county receive funds — 500,000 yuan (US\$60,975) in the first phase.

Raw materials such as cement, sand and plating amount were provided to the county while an institute has also been set up to guide the villagers in building the cistern.

The fresh rainwater tank collects rain from the rainy season, 80 per cent of the total annual rainfall arrives in the region.

The water is clean and clear through two filters into the cistern, can be safely drunk.

Now, vegetables, grain and even the cistern is irrigated in a drought, it is no longer a problem.

"Cisterns have saved the whole village," said Wang Yuansheng, "our old child can get water to walk miles from my child."

Training centre for local women and children in Zhangxian County

"This project will be the next step for the county and it should boost the local economy," said Zhang Xiaoyuan.

TODAY'S RADIO

- AM 640 kHz**
09:00 Popular CD
19:00 Children's Club
00:10 Midnight Stars
- FM 90.0 MHz (all stereo)**
06:30 Music Breakfast
08:30 Auto CD
09:00 Music and Audio System
12:00 Song of the Century
12:00 Happy 30 Minutes
22:00 Auto CD
- FM 87.6 MHz (all stereo)**
08:30 Happy songs
09:00 New Albums
09:30 Famous songs and music
- 11:00 Western Music On Line
13:30 Chinese new folk music
14:00 Radio play
16:30 Classic Music Story
17:00 Exploring the Unlimited
20:30 Music Dinner
21:00 Peking Opera excerpts
00:30 Famous songs and music
- AM 603 kHz**
06:57 Weather report
07:00 News
08:30 Reading Time
10:00 Community & Life
12:00 Legal Times
18:00 Travelling Guide
20:10 English pop songs

TODAY'S TELEVISION

- CCTV-1 Channel 2**
13:00 Oriental Horizon
19:56 Science Express
20:06 Serial: The Judge (23)
21:00 News Roundup
- CCTV-2 Channel 8**
10:30 Road to Health
11:20 Life
17:05 Stock Market
19:25 Live broadcast of the 9th National Games
- CCTV-3 Channel 15**
13:30 Wonderful Time
18:30 Elementary Art
19:30 World Arts
20:33 Dance World
22:40 Late News
- CCTV-4 Channel 32**
09:05 Serial: Snowy Village (17)
10:10 Taiwan Scope
12:30 China Report
17:20 Special report of the 9th National Games
18:30 Focus Today
19:30 Chinese Art
20:30 Across the Strait
21:00 China News
- CCTV-6 Channel 18**
11:30 Documentary
18:29 Documentary: Movie Encyclopedia
21:15 Screen Watch
21:36 Oriental Theatre
- CCTV-8 Channel 29**
07:20 Film and TV songs
11:05 Animal World
19:00 World Culture Square
- 19:53 Studio Express
21:48 Everyday Jiayi
- BTV-1 Channel 6**
11:53 Hello the World
17:45 Beijing Express
18:30 News: Weather
19:58 Serial: Pearl Tower (12)
21:50 Focus Today
23:19 Warm Family
- BTV-2 Channel 21**
13:45 Screen Archives
17:30 Animation World
18:57 Entertainment Live
19:40 Serial: Scorpion (17, 18)
22:53 Global Sports
- BTV-3 Channel 27**
11:25 Golden Times
19:30 Net Age
20:05 Chic
20:40 Science Education Express
21:00 News
- BTV-4 Channel 17**
12:00 Serial: Sister Ma (71)
12:30 Special Focus
19:03 World Archives
19:32 Serial: The History of the Communist Party of China
- BTV-6 Channel 19**
09:05 Live broadcast of 2001 NBA
18:05 Report of the 9th National Games
- BTV-7 Channel 24**
12:30 Specialist Clinic
14:30 Modern Times
18:00 National Geographic Channel
21:00 New Diet
22:35 Community
23:35 Sunshine Culture

WHAT'S ON

Acrobatic Show
Chaoyang Theatre is a theatre which specializes in acrobatics all the year round. Many top acrobatic artists from all over the country are invited to perform for the Chinese and foreign tourists.
Venue: Chaoyang Theatre, 36 Dongguanmen Beilu, Chaoyang District, Beijing
Time: 7:15 pm, nightly
Telephone: 6507-2421, 6507-1818

STAGE
Romeo and Juliet: Germany's largest and most profitable opera house, Deutsche Oper am Rhein, will perform the innovative ballet "Romeo and Juliet" in Beijing. In an original twist, the troupe has taken the context of this tale from the Italian Renaissance to the period between 1920 and 1930. The intense, moving love scenes and exciting choreography make this work a triumph.
Time: 7:30 pm, December 1, 2
Place: Beijing Exhibition Centre Theatre
Tel: 6532-0168, 6532-5805

Authentic Viennese operetta:
"The Merry Widow" in a production of the Operettenbuehne Wien, one of the best reputed operetta stages in Europe, will come to China again. You will enjoy the well-known and original Viennese operetta in Beijing — two acts, staged by 45 accomplished artists including the famous artistic conductor, Heinz Hellberg and major soloists from Vienna Opera Houses. Elisabeth Flechl will incarnate the young, pretty and rich Hanna Glawari.
Time: 7:30 pm, December 1, 2
Place: Beijing 21st Century Theatre
Tel: 6463-6572, 6463-6628

Russian "Swan Lake": The State Academic Bolshoi Theatre ballet troupe from Russia will stage "Swan Lake" in Beijing.
It will perform a version created by choreographer Yuri Grigorovich. Established in 1776, the theatre has grown into a world leader.
It has fostered a large number of world-renowned artists, such as Ananiashvili Nina and Galina Ulanova.
The theatre made its first visit to China in 1956.
Time: 7:30 pm, November 15-18
Place: Beizhan Theatre, 135, Xiwai Dajie, Xicheng District
Tel: 6835-1383

Habits die hard: The China Children's Theatre will put an Austrian drama on stage.
The drama "The Force of Habit," written by Thomas Bernhard, is

about the stories within a small circus which tours Europe all year round.
It tries to reveal human nature via the conflicts among different circus members. Themes include the circus owner's autocratic control on other members, the resistance of the members, and other performers' laughing at and bullying the clown.
Time: 7:15 pm daily until November 20
Place: China Children's Theatre, Donghuanmen, Wangfujing
Tel: 6603-7019, 6524-1831

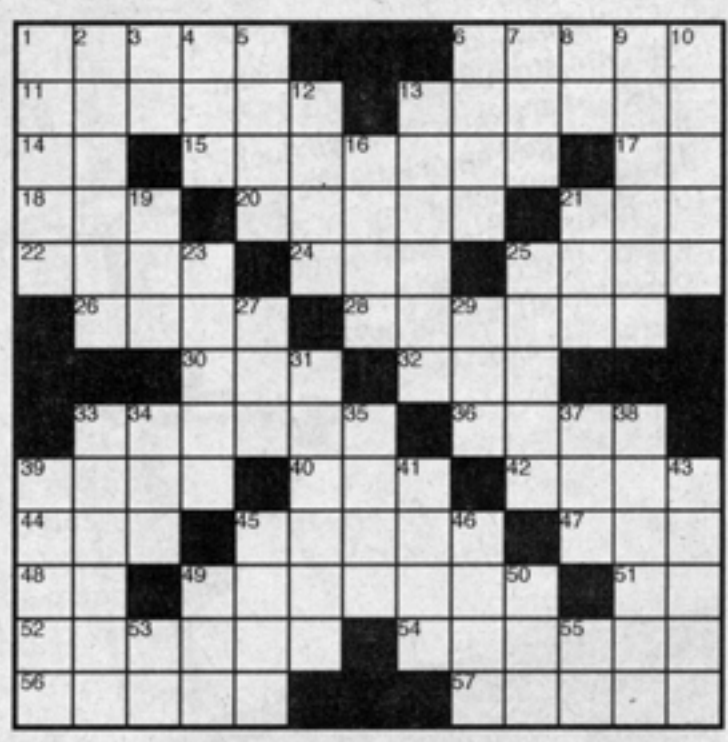
CONCERTS
Harping on: French harpist Isabelle Perrin will give a recital in Beijing.
At her Beijing concert, she will play Bach's "Sonata in G Major" Grandjany's "Rhapsodie" and Bizet's "Fantaisie sur Carmen" amongst other pieces.
Time: 7:30 pm, November 16
Place: concert hall at the National Library of China, 39 Baishiqiao Lu, Haidian District
Tel: 6848-5462, 6506-9206

Just Wagner! The China Philharmonic Orchestra will give a performance dedicated solely to the music of Richard Wagner.
The concert will be under the baton of guest conductor Klaus Weise.
It will include "Prelude and Liebestod from Tristan and Isolde," and Act I from "Die Walkure."
American soprano Cheryl Studer, who has just performed at the Beijing Music Festival, will sing the solo in the concert.
Time: 7:30 pm, November 17
Place: Forbidden City Concert Hall, inside Zhongshan Park on the west side of Tian'anmen Rostrum
Tel: 6559-8315

FIVE MAN SHOW: The Wanfung Art Gallery will hold an exhibition of oil paintings by five artists including Yin Kun, Xiao Se, Lao Dao, Xin Yi and Li Chunyao. Yin tends to concentrate on reality through his brush. Xiao's works display an eccentric and mysterious style. Li Chunyao focuses on the theme of violence and sex. The paintings of Lao Dao illustrate a combination of symbols. Xin Yi is trying to reconstruct a new world with music notes in his works.
Time: 9:00-5 pm, November 17-December 5
Place: 136, Nanchizi Dajie, Dongcheng District
Tel: 6523-3320

CROSSWORD (No 6441)

- ACROSS**
1 Went nuts over
6 West Indies dance
11 Luxuries
13 Expelled
14 Roman 2
15 Road surface
17 Depart
18 Obtained
20 Japanese poem
21 Exec
22 Santa Fe's St.
- 24 Sportscaster Allen
25 Goose formations
26 Rani's garment
28 Rely
30 Wanted-poster abbr.
32 Over there
33 Most timid
36 Footnote
39 Execs
40 Drain
42 Polluted air
- 44 Communications corp.
45 Fluffy quilt
47 Air-pump abbr.
48 We
49 Busy
51 Pierre's St.
52 Portuguese
54 Felt
56 Handles
57 Common wildflower



Solution to No 6440

PAD	VOIDS	PEA
IRA	INDIA	URL
GENES	AERATES	
TWIG	TAD	
SWEETENS	DATA	
CR	SERE	SHAH
RIB	DEALS	ABE
UTAH	RAND	LA
BETA	ASSAILED	
LBS	TRAY	
RECOUNT	ILIAD	
AGA	LEARN	NAE
TON	BRING	GAB

BRIDGE (By Phillip Alder)

In discussing the realist and journalist Ryszard Kapuscinski wrote: "Our job is like a long as they're 'stale'; after two days covered with a week, they're thrown out."

Gently squeeze deal — does it South did very well in the right a sequence to rough, I guessed and would be in seven diamonds, who could get the bid by any pair were doing.

Note that seven trumps must go down, diamonds need seven. However, seven diamonds need seven. However, seven diamonds need seven. However, seven diamonds need seven.

loser? Instead, after pulling the missing trumps, you must discard two hearts from hand on the ace and king of spades. Then you play a heart to your king, a heart to dummy's ace, and ruff a heart in your hand. After that suit splits 3-2, you are home. You return to dummy with a trump and discard the club eight on the established heart seven.

North
A K 4
A 7 6 3
K 10 7 4
7 2

West
J 8 6 5 2
10 4
9
K Q 9 4 3

East
Q 10 9 7 3
Q J 9
8
J 10 6 5

South
—
K 8 5 2
A Q J 6 5 3 2
A 8

Dealer: South
Vulnerable: East-West

South	West	North	East
1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♦	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♥	Pass
7♦	Pass	Pass	Pass

Opening lead: ♠ K

唐人百戏 Marvellous Acrobatics
"Chinese Soul," a grand variety show performed by the famous China Acrobatic Troupe and specially packaged for foreign visitors in China, features marvellous programs which won gold medals at well-known domestic and international acrobatic contests. Integrating superlative acrobatics with the finest ancient Chinese dancing, juggling, opera, national music and ethnic costumes, the star-studded cast will amaze you at every turn.
Poly Plaza International Theatre, No 14 Dongzhimen Nandajie, Dongcheng District
Time/Dates: 7:30 pm, Nov. 15-22, 2001
Price: RMB500, 380, 200, 100, 60 yuan
Tel: 65023984, 65022649, 65065343, 65065345