

# Putting wheels on a green idea

## Mobile classroom teaches school children to treasure nature

By YU NAN  
China Daily staff

Except for the dashing antelopes painted on its sides, the Jinbei van looks like thousands of other minibuses cavorting through the streets of Beijing.

But inside the van it's a totally different world. Half the space is jammed with videotapes, books, pictures and other teaching apparatus.

Christened "Antelope," the van is actually a classroom on wheels, through which its drivers hope to spread environmental knowledge to Chinese children and arouse people's awareness of the importance of environmental protection.

The first environmental education van ("ee-van") in China, "Antelope" has travelled more than 20,000 kilometres, to give environmental protection lectures in about 200 schools in Beijing, Tianjin municipalities, as well as in Hebei and Shanxi provinces since it was born in May 2000.

"More than 20,000 school children have attended our classes so far," said Hao Bing, the first teacher in this mobile classroom and also the head of the programme.

Hao is an environmental volunteer working with Friends of Nature, a non-governmental environmental organization based in Beijing.

The "environment education van programme" is one of the most important programmes of the organization.

"With our 'green van,' we hope to teach children to listen to the Nature, to revere all living beings and to understand the laws of ecology. And we hope our activities can sow the seeds of awareness of the need for environmental protection in the hearts of children," said Hao.

### Urgent matter

Hao got the seed of the idea to create such a mobile classroom for environment education in China during her visit to Germany in 1996 with a delegation of Friends of Nature. There she found 25 environmental education vans shuttling between German nature reserves and primary schools.

"The mobile classrooms have been very effective, for they simplify complex environmental problems by letting students get directly in touch with Nature through playing games," Hao recalled.

Back home in Beijing, Hao started to take action to turn the idea into reality. Environmental education had just begun in China at that time, she recalled.

Even today, environmental education in most Chinese primary and middle schools is still spotty at best. Absence of teachers well-trained in environmental protection and management, as well as the lack of teaching facilities are the biggest barriers. Hao added that for schools in China, academic courses al-

ways seem to weigh much more important than immediate issues, such as the environment.

She pointed out that in rural China, environmental education is even more urgent, since most rural children still live in their hometowns after they grow up and they will be more closely connected with the natural world than the people living in cities.

Another reason that drove Hao to devote herself to this programme was the deterioration of the environment in China.

"The present environmental situation in China is alarming," Hao said. "For instance, 80 per cent of the rivers are polluted. Rising standards of living have resulted in more and more waste everywhere. In some places, parents carry their child all the time because carbon monoxide emissions settle to ground level becoming dangerously high."

When asked why their programme targets children, Hao said: "Children are tomorrow's leaders and activists as well as consumers and polluters. If they can become friends of Nature rather than destroyers, their future lives will be more beautiful and easier."

"To achieve this goal, they should first know both the beauty and the problems of their hometowns' environmental conditions."

### New education form

To devote herself to the programme wholeheartedly, Hao Bing, who completed a master's degree in environment education at Beijing Normal University in 1996, quit her research work in the university's Environmental Education Centre in early 2000.

"Environmental education in China is not a green salon where people sit around and chat about the green mountains and make up slogans like 'Give back our blue sky' or 'Return our clean water'," she said.

"It is easy to shout the slogans, but you have to do something. You have to contribute your own efforts, your energy, your money and even your health."

With the hard work of Hao Bing and several other volunteers and with a donation from Save Our Future — an environmental foundation in Germany, they started their first journey with the environmental education van on May 31, 2000.

"Our van is just like a Noah's Ark that brings Nature back to the city," Hao said. "We offer children the opportunity to engage in games about the environment and get into contact with Nature and learn to treasure it," Hao said.

But some people are doubtful about the effects of the classes since children will only have the experience once or twice in their entire lives and it only lasts for one morning or afternoon.

"The number of times and their duration are not so important," said Hao. "We just want to plant seeds of beauty and love in children's hearts. With the



Above: Volunteer teachers from Friends of Nature spread knowledge about and raise awareness of environmental protection among schoolchildren in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. Left: Hao Bing, former teacher with the Beijing Normal University, lectures on environmental issues in a primary school in Shanxi Province.

seeds, they will be able to wake up to their responsibilities."

Hao said she is happy that the classes are quite effective. During her second visit to a school in the suburbs of Beijing, a boy told Hao that he used a piece of adhesive plaster to bind up a locust whose leg was broken.

"I am so glad to see that they begin to help the tiny insects, birds and frogs to survive instead of killing them," Hao said. "Children learn from our classes about how to respect living beings and thus also learn to respect themselves and the people around them."

The lively outdoor games they organize have attracted a lot of children to join them, Hao said. In one class held at a primary school in a mountain area in Mentougou District in the rural suburbs of Beijing, Hao utilized a game to illustrate how the food chain was composed and operated.

Children in this game played different roles, some acted as plants, some as herbivorous animals, small carnivorous animals, and giant carnivorous beasts, so as to help them understand how life depends on life.

By doing so, the concepts of the pyramid of life and the food chain are no longer just black



Above: Volunteer teachers from Friends of Nature spread knowledge about and raise awareness of environmental protection among schoolchildren in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. Left: Hao Bing, former teacher with the Beijing Normal University, lectures on environmental issues in a primary school in Shanxi Province.

words on the board but vivid ideas.

And the fact that if one is missing, the whole chain must collapse.

Some parents also join curiosity. Intrigued by people began environment protection. Some of the obstacle for the poverty was that they realized that if there would be no water, grass for raising sheep, which they rely on for their income.

They also realized that if the environment was not protected, the proper way to get more grass would be late to do environment," Hao said.

More vans Hao Bing and her colleagues' hard work, their colleagues' education has clarity among the public and on the media. This concept has helped

make it possible for a second van, "Bronco," to join in the team through the joint sponsorship of Nong.net company and Unilever (China) Ltd. The second van began its journey in June last year.

So far, "Bronco" has travelled more than 8,000 kilometres in Shaanxi and Qinghai provinces and Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in northwestern China.

To encourage the two vans' excellent work, the Ford Conservation and Environment Grants — a top environmental foundation in China — presented an award to the programme run by Friends of Nature in October 2001.

But Hao Bing is not satisfied with their achievements. She said China is so large that two vans are not enough to offer classes in every corner of the country.

She hopes the success of the two vans will inspire more people to get involved and eventually set up a full-fledged travelling environmental education network.

Hao said she has a dream that some day hundreds of vans will roam across China accompanied by herds of antelopes and wild horses and crowds of rosy-cheeked children who love and treasure the beauty of Nature.

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D'eu, Chopin's "Marzurkas," and Chinese works such as Ma Sicong's "Longing for Home" and Sha Hankun's "The Shepherd's Song."

Both of the girls were born to families of musicians, and have won awards in various contests. Time: 7:30 pm, July 24

The last concert will be of chamber music presented by pianist Li Yun and a number of Chinese musicians. Although a famous musician in China, Li got a chance to study piano in Paris in 1985. Since then, she has been busy with some top European orchestras, and toured in France, Belgium, Spain, Sweden and Poland. Time: 7:30 pm, July 25

Place: Poly Theatre Tel: 6506-9208, 8451-3660

20th Western  
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### TODAY'S RADIO

FM 87.6 MHz (all stereo)	AM 828 kHz
10:30 Music Zone	06:30 News
13:30 Concert Hall	07:50 Sports World
16:30 Music Online	08:30 Times Magazine
21:00 Liyuan Theatre	14:30 Health Club
	22:05 Life Hotlines
FM 97.4 MHz (all stereo)	AM 603 kHz
12:30 Chinese Top 10	08:30 Reading Time
15:00 Around Russian	10:00 Community & Life
18:00 New Sound of Modern City	18:00 Travel Guide
19:00 World Chart Show	20:10 English pop songs
21:30 World Movie Soundtrack	

### TODAY'S TELEVISION

CCTV-1 Channel 2	21:48 Jiayi drama
17:00 World Express	22:43 Midnight Theatre
CCTV-9	
19:00 News; Weather	07:15 Chinese Civilization
20:05 Serial: The Island without Winter (10)	09:00 Culture Express
21:25 Man and Nature	10:30 Focus Today
23:01 Advertising Festival	19:00 World Wide Watch
CCTV-2 Channel 8	21:30 Centre Stage
19:35 China Financial Report	
20:00 Life	<b>BTV-1 Channel 6</b>
20:40 Net Age	11:30 Beijing Express
21:00 Earth Stories	12:30 Capital Economy Report
22:05 Stock Market Today	17:25 Stock Market
CCTV-3 Channel 15	19:53 Serial: Journey of Love (16)
08:38 Weekend Stage	21:45 Focus Today
11:20 Wonderful Time	22:36 Hello the World
17:40 Behind the Scenes	<b>BTV-2 Channel 21</b>
19:30 Theatre: the 10th National Singing Contest	07:10 20-part serial: Never Give up (10, 11)
22:05 Art Scope	15:08 Let's Talk About the Past
CCTV-4 Channel 32	18:07 MTV
07:55 Chinese Civilization	21:48 Dream's Come True
11:20 Chinese Medicine	22:46 Canadian movie
17:50 About Taiwan	<b>BTV-3 Channel 27</b>
18:30 English programme: Focus Today	07:42 Museums in China (92)
19:30 Chinese Arts	15:55 Beijing Hotline
20:30 Across the Straits	17:35 Serial: Life Is Beautiful (7)
CCTV-6 Channel 18	18:55 Discovery Channel
10:41 Memorable Moments	19:30 Science and Technology
23:04 European Theatre: French movie	20:05 Beijing Suburb
CCTV-8 Channel 29	21:40 Serial: Goodbye My Love (24, 25)
08:30 Jiayi movie	<b>BTV-4 Channel 17</b>
17:35 TV and Movie Club	12:00 Serial: Netizen's Diary (8)
19:00 World Culture Square	18:00 630 Theatre: Chinese Restaurant (21)
20:00 Serial: True Love (12)	18:35 Chinese Disc Wire
	19:10 Entertainment Live
	21:37 Serial: Chen Zhen (5, 6)

### BRIDGE (By Phillip Alder)

Gunther Grass, a German author, claimed in a 1990 interview, "We already have the statistics for the future: the growth percentages of pollution, overpopulation, desertification. The future is already in place." Is he right? By the time we wake up in the near-future, it will be too late?

At bridge, though, percentages are beneficial. You do not need to know them all, but it is good to keep a few common ones on your brain's hard-drive. Take this deal, for example. How would you try to land six spades after West leads the club jack?

North's four-club response was a splinter bid, promising game values with four-plus spades and a singleton (or void) in clubs. South control-bid (cue-bid) four diamonds to show that ace. When North revealed the heart ace, South bid what he hoped he could make.

Declarer was faced with a possible loser in each red suit. If the missing diamonds were dividing 3-3, South's heart loser would disappear on the 13th diamond. If West had at least one heart honour, declarer's diamond loser would evaporate on the heart ace.

Which was the better play? A 3-3 split has about a 35.5 per cent probability, whereas a double finesse is approximately a 76 per cent shot. The odds are clear.

South won with the club ace, chased the spade king, then played a heart to dummy's 10. East won with the queen and shifted to the diamond 10, but declarer won in hand with his ace, finessed dummy's heart jack, and claimed when it held.

North		East	
♠ A 8 7 4 3	♠ 2	♠ Q 9 6 5	♠ 10
♥ A J 10	♥ 7 2	♥ K 10 9 8	♥ 4
♦ K 6 5 2	♦ 3	♦ Q 8 5 4	♦ A
♣ 3	♣ 4	♣ 7	♣ K
Dealer: South		Vulnerable: Both	
South	West	North	East
♠ Pass	♠ Pass	♠ Pass	♠ Pass
♥ Pass	♥ Pass	♥ Pass	♥ Pass
♦ Pass	♦ Pass	♦ Pass	♦ Pass
♣ 6	♣ 4	♣ 7	♣ K
Opening lead: ♣ J			

### CROSSWORD (No 6648)

ACROSS

1 Flinch  
5 Tree fluid  
8 Slim down  
12 Via Appia  
13 Unseal, to Blake  
14 Lot unit  
15 Bete noire  
16 Coffee brewer  
17 Whodunit suspect  
18 Tizzies  
20 Senior  
21 Did blackboard duty  
24 Fame  
27 Luau strings  
28 Up till now  
31 Fleming and Smith  
32 Rush off  
33 Madonna ex  
34 Gunk  
35 Qty.  
36 Glazed food item  
37 Medicating  
39 Hurt at Pamplona

43 Mandrake's field  
46 Sooner city  
47 Tear  
49 Glimmering  
51 Capital of Peru  
52 Prospector's find  
53 Mo. expense

54 Restrain  
55 Singer — Shannon  
56 Balance

DOWN

1 Triangular sail  
2 Jazz's home  
3 Cafe handout  
4 Likes better  
5 The March King  
6 Loan abbr.  
7 Corral  
8 Actress  
9 Arlene —  
9 Decorated a cake  
10 Canal of song  
11 Atlas abbr.  
19 Potato snack  
20 Lyric poem  
22 Clubs and hearts  
23 Make do with  
24 Rock-band booking

25 Thai language  
26 Singer Yokoyama  
28 Craving  
29 Water, to Pierre  
30 Demolition need  
32 Insurance gp.  
33 Dampener  
35 Do a math problem  
36 Double helix  
38 Use force  
39 Hair-styling goops  
40 "You can count —!"  
41 Hoarfrost  
42 Red-waxed cheese  
44 Not in use  
45 So-so grades  
47 Lightning — Wrath  
50 Play a part

Solution to No 6647

M	E	L	D	S	A	L	K	S	H	Y
B	L	E	U	R	E	A	L	P	O	I
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S	K	A	T	E	D	R	I	D	E	
A	C	H	Y	E	A	J	A	G		
A	L	E	H	A	N	S	O	N	R	V
H	A	D	A	S	N	Y	T	O	E	
S	M	T	H	E	S	I	S	O	A	R
B	E	A	U	P	A	N	D	Y		
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K	A	Y	E	D	D	Y	Y	E	T	I

### WHAT'S ON

**Kung Fu Show**

The 90-minute performance displays dazzling skills of mysterious Chinese kung fu in a hero-plus-beauty story. Fifty kung fu masters amaze the audience with bare-handed practice, one-to-one competing and weapons practice.

Time/dates: 19:30, nightly  
Venue: Xin Rong Theatre (16 Baizhifang Road, Xuanwu District)  
Presented by Beijing Detian Shunyi Culture Development Co., Ltd.  
Tel: 8354-0774, 8354-0775

**Hidden Dragon, Crouching Tiger**

**STAGE**

**Keep it in the air:** The Chaoyang Theatre in central Beijing presents acrobatics year round.

Top acrobatic artists invited from all over the country perform for Chinese and foreign tourists. The programme features trick cycling, leaping through hoops and Chinese magic tricks. Some of the artists have won prizes in international competitions.

Time: 7:15 pm, daily  
Place: 36 Dongsanhuang Beilu, Chaoyang District  
Tel: 6507-2421, 6507-1818

**Joyful jugglers:** The China Acrobatic Troupe stages a nightly variety show at the Tiandi Theatre, where the seemingly impossible is made real.

Spinning plates, juggling umbrellas, contortionists and acrobats fill the air. Integrating superlative juggling, unicycling, balancing and jumping through hoops with the finest ancient Chinese dancing, the star-studded cast will amaze.

Time: 7:15 pm, daily  
Place: 10 Dongzhimeng Nandajie, Chaoyang District  
Tel: 6502-3984

**Mix and match Kunqu:** Based on the movie "The Gate of Rashomon" by Akira Kurosawa, young upcoming director Fang Tong has created an experimental Kunqu Opera.

And for the first time, it will be played in a small theatre.

The play is an interesting mix of traditional Kunqu Opera and new acting methods. A team of young Chinese and Japanese actors will perform two versions alternately: a modern drama named "Behind the Gate of Rashomon" and a Kunqu Opera called "The Gate of Rashomon."

Time: (Modern drama version) 7:15 pm, July 25, 27, 29, 31, August 2; (Kunqu Opera version) 7:15 pm, July 26, 28, 30, August 1, 3  
Place: Small playhouse of Beijing People's Art Theatre  
Tel: 6525-0123, 6603-7019

**Shaolin warriors:** Produced by

the China Performing Arts Agency, "Shaolin Warriors" is a unique kung fu extravaganza performed on stage by the world famous Shaolin kung fu monks, originally from the Songshan Shaolin Temple in Central China's Henan Province. The production was highly acclaimed when it appeared in the "Meet in Beijing" Arts Festival both in 2000 and 2001, and when it successfully toured North America in 2000 and 2002. It has entertained over 180,000 people both in China and abroad.

The amazingly adept warriors combine the agility and grace of gymnasts with the showmanship of Cirque du Soleil performers and a dazzling pageantry of flying fists, war whoops, and terrifying weaponry.

Time: 7:30 pm, August 21-25  
Place: Beijing Tianqiao Theatre, 30 Beiwailu, Xuanwu District (west of Temple of Heaven)  
Tel: 8403-6524, 8401-6294, 6404-8781

**CONCERTS**

**Chinese charmers:** A concert of guqin (a seven-stringed plucked ancient Chinese instrument) music will be given along with other traditional Chinese instruments such as the se (a 25-stringed plucked instrument) and xun (an egg-shaped, wind instrument).

Some pieces will be combined with the performance of calligraphy and painting to display these art forms. Others will be accompanied by martial arts performances or backed by projected films.

Time: 7:30 pm, Jul  
Place: Poly Theatre  
Tel: 6506-5343, 65

**Free concert** are staged free c during the second Week sponsored (China) Sound F Participating provide free mas children studying violin.

Time: 7:30 pm, Jul  
Place: Poly Theatre  
Tel: 6506-5343, 65

**Israeli pianist** praised by one with a unique an interpretation, "w "Partita in D maj "Douze Etudes l and Schumann's major" during he Time: 7:30 pm, Jul  
Place: Poly Theatre  
Tel: 6506-9208, 8451-3660

**Violinist Xie** with pianist Huar concert consisti pieces such as F