

Through rain, sleet and snow Mailman who risks life in deliveries says, 'I bring people happiness'

By LIU YUAN and YU NAN

Hands down, Jin Heli has one of the hardest jobs in Beijing.

Walking miles to deliver the mail to the mountain villages in the Fangshan District in suburban Beijing has been his daily routine for 22 years.

A green bicycle and a green mailbag are the only companions he has on rounds. But he doesn't actually ride the bicycle. He uses it to carry letters, parcels and newspapers. "The villages I serve are all on the top of steep mountains," explained Jin. "It's so steep I have to push the bicycle."

Jin works out of the Puwa Post Office, in the village of Puwa where Jin was born and reared.

Located in the Taihang Mountain Range, the village is 1,800 metres above sea level, and one of the poorest in the municipality.

Jin joined the army and was stationed in Nanjing, capital of Jiangsu Province, when he was 22. After retiring from the army in 1971, Jin was assigned to work in a military factory located in Qinghe, in northwestern Beijing.

"It took nearly a whole day for me to get home from the factory, with four changes of buses," said Jin. "So I could only go home during festivals or vacations to be with my wife and children."

To be able to live with his family was Jin's main impetus for choosing to be a mountain mailman.

When asked why he has stuck to the job for such a long time, Jin's answer is simple: "I just wanted to take care of my family."

A rewarding job

Jin walks an average of about 75 kilometres every day. Six villages, dozens of factories and companies, and hundreds of people rely on Jin and his feet to bring them letters, remittances, parcels and newspapers.

Jin gets up at 5 o'clock every morning and doesn't get home until sunset.

Although in his 50s, Jin is still full of energy and climbs mountains like a young man. It takes him only two and a half hours to cover 10 kilometres in the moun-

tains. "I'm used to it," Jin said.

"I think this is a rewarding job and I like it," said Jin. "I bring people happiness and I gain their respect." When asked how they felt about Jin, the villagers' all gave high praise:

"He deserves a medal for being a model worker." "He delivers our letters even in heavy rain or snow." "He never stops for lunch with us even if he comes at lunch time." "He is so dedicated. He should have a mail cart and a big bonus." "When he retires it will be hard to find a replacement."

The national 108 Highway is the road that Jin must travel every day. It connects all the villages Jin serves. The regular transport drivers on the highway all recognize him, as they have watched him for years trudging alone along the highway. Now they automatically stop to give Jin a lift when they can, which can save him several hours and let him get home a bit earlier. "But when winter comes, the steep and twisty road is closed, so I have to rely on my feet," said Jin.

Jin said there are two basic qualities required to be a competent mailman in the mountains. One is "toughness" because you have to handle fatigue, loneliness, darkness and even danger on the job. The other is "dependability" because you have to stick to your job even if you have to walk 20 kilometres to deliver one letter.

A dangerous job

"I have worried about his safety every time I watch him leave home for over 20 years," Jin's wife Wei Shuting said. "His job is too dangerous."

"One time, a tractor he hitched a ride on plunged into a gully. When I got to the hospital to see him, he had a bloody wound on his head, his leg was broken and he almost died!"

"Another time during a heavy snow, he insisted on delivering remittances to people in several different places. He was out for a whole day and night! When I opened the door, I didn't recognize him at first. His face was purple with the cold!" she said.

Jin said he did it because he knew people needed the money



Devoted couple: Countryside postman Jin Heli and his wife Wei Shuting stand in front of their home in the Puwa Village in the Fangshan District of Beijing.



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for Spring Festival. "But the roads were too slippery to walk fast. I had dozens of slips and falls before I got home that time," he said with a smile.

When he is out delivering the mail, his wife looks after all the business in the post office such as handling remittances and parcels.

Working in the mountains of Beijing for about 20 years, Jin seldom goes to downtown Beijing, although the transportation is much more convenient than it used to be.

But his two children, a son and a daughter, have both left Puwa Village and are trying to fulfill their dream of finding a better life in the city.

"They don't come back home even for the Spring and Mid-autumn festivals when the whole family should be together," the wife said gloomily. "I know they don't like the life in village," Jin said.

Dad with outdated ideas

Jin Yanming, 31, his son, has followed his father's career as a mailman. But he delivers the mail with a cart. He bought a

house in Liangxiang, the central District which is more prosperous than the Puwa Village.

"I moved out partly because of my son," Jin said. "I wanted him to get a better education."

"In Puwa Village, two grades of students shared the same classroom. But my son goes to school and takes extra classes after school."

In the son's house, his father is a teacher. "He asked me to mend socks I threw away and then he said, 'He penny when we were kids. Pick-nack I ever got'."

"But once in the village, he brought then me, cooked a meal for me and gave me 2 yuan (US\$5 at the rate then) when they were young. I was extremely grateful," he said.

"My daughter has followed his job as a mailman because she likes the mountains and the stable life. He never thought of any other kind of life," he said.

made by lama monks in Beijing. Time: 9 am-5 pm until March 31. Place: 12 Yonghegong Dajie, Dongcheng District. Tel: 6404-4499

Royal relics: This exhibition at the China Millennium Altar displays precious historical relics used in pageant ceremonies in the past. Most exhibits were used in royal ceremonies by emperors. Time: 9 am-5 pm until March 31. Place: 9A Fuxing Lu. Tel: 6853-0257

Huang Zhou revered: The Yanhuang Art Museum is holding a commemorative exhibition in tribute to Huang Zhou (1925-97), a famous modern artist in China who was also the founder of the museum. In commemoration of Huang, the exhibition will run at the front hall to the entrance of the museum, where scores of Huang's original paintings are displayed in rotation. Huang is known for his vivid portrayal of donkeys. The exhibition includes his water paintings, sketches and flower and bird paintings. Time: 9 am-5 pm daily. Place: 9 Huizhong Lu, Chaoyang District. Tel: 6491-2902

Ancient coins: A perennial exhibition of ancient coins is on show at the Ancient Coin Museum in the North Second Ring Road. About 10,000 ancient coins are displayed, including early shellfish coins and silver coins of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). China was one of the first countries to make and use coins, some of which date back more than 3,000 years. Time: 9 am-4 pm, daily. Place: Deshengmen Jiantou, Xicheng District. Tel: 6201-8073

Big Bell Temple: An exhibition of 500 ancient bells from different dynasties is on show at the Big Bell Temple. A bronze-cauldron with six ear-like handles is the latest discovery. A painting on a corridor, depicting the Buddha was also discovered during the construction. Time: 8:30 am-4:30 pm, daily. Place: 31 Beisanhuan Xilu, Haidian District. Tel: 6255-7566

TODAY'S RADIO

FM 87.6 MHz (all stereo)

- 10:30 Music Zone
- 13:30 Concert Hall
- 16:30 Classic Music Story
- 23:30 BBC Pop Music

FM 97.4 MHz (all stereo)

- 12:30 Chinese Top 10
- 15:00 Russian Scope
- 18:00 New Sound of Modern City
- 19:00 World Chart Show
- 21:30 World Movie Soundtrack

AM 828 kHz

- 06:30 News
- 07:50 Sports World
- 08:30 Times Magazine
- 14:30 Health Club
- 22:05 Life Hotlines

AM 603 kHz

- 08:30 Reading Time
- 10:00 Community & Life
- 18:00 Travel Guide
- 20:10 English pop songs

TODAY'S TELEVISION

CCTV-1 Channel 2

- 17:00 World Express
- 19:00 News; Weather
- 21:40 Man and Nature
- 22:15 World Reports

CCTV-2 Channel 8

- 19:35 China Financial Report
- 20:00 Life
- 21:00 Earth Stories
- 21:25 Economy 30 Minutes

CCTV-3 Channel 15

- 19:30 Theatre
- 21:35 Art Scope
- 22:40 Late News

CCTV-4 Channel 32

- 08:00 News 60 Minutes
- 10:35 Glimpse of China
- 17:50 Taiwan Scope
- 18:30 China Today
- 20:00 Chinese Medicine
- 20:30 Across the Strait

CCTV-6 Channel 18

- 08:40 Chinese movie
- 11:56 Documentary
- 14:37 British movie
- 19:45 Chinese movie
- 21:41 German movie

CCTV-8 Channel 29

- 08:30 Jiayi movie; US movie
- 17:35 TV and Movie Club
- 19:00 World Culture Square
- 21:48 Jiayi drama
- 22:43 Midnight Theatre: Healing Hearts (20)

CCTV-9

- 07:15 Kungfu
- 08:15 Chinese cooking
- 11:15 Learning Chinese

17:30 Around China

20:30 Centre Stage

BTV-1 Channel 6

- 11:30 Beijing Express
- 12:30 News
- 14:45 Documentary serial: Discovery in the West (10)

- 17:25 Stock Market
- 18:30 News; Weather
- 19:42 Focus Today
- 20:59 Sports report

BTV-2 Channel 21

- 14:28 Culture-Beijing
- 15:08 Talk About the Past
- 18:00 Beijing Time
- 19:38 Serial: Betray (17, 18)
- 21:48 Dream's Come True
- 22:46 US movie

BTV-3 Channel 27

- 07:42 Documentary serial: Museums in China (54)
- 12:55 Modern English
- 15:55 Beijing Hotline
- 18:55 Discovery Channel
- 19:30 Science and Technology

BTV-4 Channel 17

- 09:19 Movie
- 12:00 Serial: The New Happiness Street (264)
- 18:00 630 Theatre: Sister Ma
- 18:35 Chinese Disc Wire
- 19:10 Entertainment Live

BTV-5 Channel 24

- 07:00 Facing Life
- 12:35 Specialist Clinic
- 19:35 Modern Times
- 20:30 Luxury & Elegance
- 21:05 Fashion Gallery
- 21:40 Estate in 21st Century

BRIDGE (By Phillip Alder)

It is your turn to act. You have two four-card suits and will bid one of them. Which do you choose?

Obviously, the answer depends on the situation. If you are the responder, you normally bid the first suit you reach as you mount the bidding ladder. So, if partner opens one heart and you have 4-4 in the black suits, respond one spade. But with 4-4 in the minors, you call two clubs (if strong enough for a two-over-one).

Now, though, suppose you are answering partner's takeout double. Look at the South hand in the diagram. After partner doubles one heart and the responder passes, would you bid diamonds or clubs? And what would you do if East raised to two hearts?

If weak, bid the first four-card suit you come to as you mount the bidding ladder. However, if you are happy to act twice, bid the higher-ranking first. Here, with almost enough to jump, you should start with two diamonds, planning to continue with three clubs.

With such a strong hand, West will double two diamonds for takeout. Partner, despite having only 13 high-card points, will raise to three diamonds; and then probably you should head for game. Note that five diamonds makes

easily when the trumps split 2-2.

If East raises to two hearts over North's double, make a responsive double. You don't wish to guess a minor; ask partner to propose a trump suit. And he will tend to show a minor because he knows that if you had four spades, you would have been happy to bid that suit. What happens after that is anyone's guess!

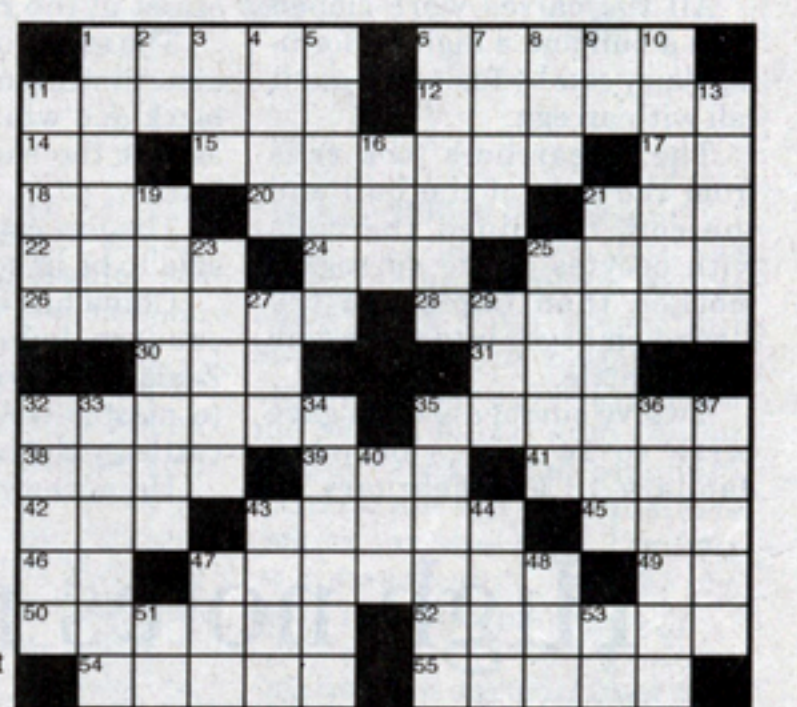
Finally, note that in hearts West is held to six tricks if South gets a spade ruff.

North			
♠	K 10 7 4		
♥	3		
♦	A K 6 5 4		
♣	K 8 4		
West			
♠	Q J 9		
♥	A K Q 7 5		
♦	Q 10		
♣	A 10 9		
East			
♠	6 5 3 2		
♥	10 6 4 2		
♦	3 2		
♣	5 3 2		
South			
♠	A 8		
♥	J 9 8		
♦	J 9 8 7		
♣	Q J 7 6		
Dealer: West			
Vulnerable: Neither			
South	West	North	East
??	♥	♠	♣
Opening lead: ♥ A			

CROSSWORD (No 6536)

ACROSS

- 1 Cure a ham
- 6 Heart part
- 11 Malicious elf
- 12 Reddish -brown
- 14 Magazine exec
- 15 Gadgets
- 17 12 step programme group
- 18 Oklahoma town
- 20 Outspoken
- 21 Concorde
- 22 Yankee adversaries
- 24 Longing
- 25 Bird-feeder treat
- 26 — at (maligns)
- 28 Sleazy
- 30 Lease
- 31 Pit stop item
- 32 Made hotter
- 35 Funnies
- 38 Sculpture and music
- 39 Dorm
- 41 Leather-to-be



- 42 "— Jude" (Beatles)
- 43 Makes level
- 45 "Road movie" locale
- 46 Whether
- 47 Glues
- 49 WI neighbour
- 50 Outlaw
- 52 In a bad temper
- 54 Coalitions
- 55 18-wheelers

Solution to No 6535

BBS	ALPO	CRAB			
OOH	PAUL	YORE			
NEO	SCRIMPING				
GROVE	POUR				
IT	ELS	EPEE			
RUN	LIE	PSALM			
YR	ZEN	LOS	AU		
AGGIE	CAT	ENS			
NEAP	POD	EM			
CROC	SABER				
VAPOR	LOCK	ARE			
EKED	LOPE	RIB			
TAPE	SNOW	KEA			

WHAT'S ON

STAGE

Keep it in the air: The Chaoyang Theatre is one of the best Beijing theatres to present acrobatics all 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, Dongsanhuan Beilu, Chaoyang District. Tel: 6507-2421, 6507-1818

Acrobatic show: The Tianqiao area of Beijing was the city's major outdoor performance area for acrobatic shows before the founding of New China in 1949.

Acrobatic shows are still staged every evening in a theatre located in the Tianqiao area.

The shows, put on by the Beijing Acrobatics Troupe, include many national and world award-winning programmes.

Time: 7 pm, daily. Place: Wansheng Theatre, 95 Tianqiao Market. Tel: 6303-7449

Local opera: A Chuju Opera play is coming to Beijing.

China has many operas besides Peking, Yueju and Kunqu, that are popular in different areas of the country. Chuju Opera originated about 100 years ago in Hubei Province.

The opera "You Are a River" is based on a novel of the contemporary writer Chi Li.

Time: 7:30 pm, March 11, 12. Place: Chang'an Grand Theatre. Tel: 8653-1043

'Green Hat': A drama taken from American writer Nathaniel Hawthorne's famous novel "The Scarlet Letter" will be performed by a group of young dramatic artists.

Although the play's plot is similar to Hawthorne's novel, it was renamed "Green Hat," Chinese slang for a cuckold.

Time: 7:15 pm until March 25 except Mondays. Place: China Children's Theatre. Tel: 6603-7255, 6603-7265

Folly: A group of modern drama

stars will perform the folly "Soccer Club." The play focuses on the seamy side of football circles. Illicit affairs, indecent proposals and internal squirmishes bring out rarely seen sides of a soccer star's life.

Many plots in the play correspond to actual incidents.

Time: 7:15 pm, March 25-April 16 except Mondays. Place: small playhouse of the Beijing People's Art Theatre. Tel: 6525-0123

CONCERTS

Perfect pipa: Students from the China Central Conservatory of Music will perform two concerts featuring traditional pipa music.

Students will play "Ambush on All Sides" and "Dragon Boat" among other famous pieces.

Time: 6:30 pm, March 15. Place: Jinfan Concert Hall. Tel: 6525-0615

Out of this world! The Beijing Symphony Orchestra will play world-famous pieces like Gustav Theodore Holst's "The Planets," Maurice Ravel's "Bolero" and "Daphnis et Chloe."

The concert will launch the orchestra's new season. It will be performed under the baton of Tan Lihua, the orchestra's artistic director.

Time: 7:30 pm, March 15. Place: Forbidden City Concert Hall. Tel: 6559-8308, 6559-8285

Symphonic concert: Austrian conductor Johannes Wildner will conduct the China Philharmonic Orchestra in concert.

The concert will include Beethoven's "Coriolan Overture," Poulenc's "Concerto for Two Pianos in D minor," and Mahler's "Symphony No 5 in C-sharp minor."

Young Chinese pianists Liu Hsiao-Lian and Zhou Yi will play the piano duo.

Time: 7:30 pm, March 16. Place: Forbidden City Concert Hall. Tel: 6559-8308, 6559-8285

Piano recital: The youngest winner of the Leventritt Award, Cecile Licad, will perform for the first time in China.

Licad, heralded by the Washington Post as "a perpetual wonder," will play piano classics by Schubert, Liszt and Chopin.

The concert is part of the Imperial Garden series which aims to introduce outstanding foreign musicians to the Chinese audience.

Time: 7:30 pm, March 17. Place: Forbidden City Concert Hall. Tel: 6559-8308, 6559-8285

Flute music: Students majoring in folk music from the Central Conservatory of Music will bring the sounds of the Chinese flute to the Jinfan Concert Hall.

Students will play flute pieces such as "Joyful Meet" and "Shepherd's Flute."

Time: 6:30 pm, March 22. Place: Jinfan Concert Hall

Ethnic Songs: Songs from ethnic groups in West China, such as the Tibetans and the Uygurs, will be performed during a concert in Beijing.

Songs such as "Spring on the Pamirs," "The Qinghai-Tibet Plateau," and "Saddle" will be performed at the event.

They will be sung by professional performers of the Central Nationalities Song and Dance Ensemble, made up of members of these minority groups.

Time: 7:30 pm, March 22. Place: Concert hall at the National Library of China. Tel: 6488-5462, 6841-9220

Billboard awarding: China's pop superstars will be out in full force, the Awarding Ceremony of the 9th Chinese Songs Billboard.

Sun Nan, Na Ying, Tian Zhen, Zheng Jun, Zero Point Band, and many other stars have been nominated for awards. Winners will perform at the awarding ceremony.

Time: 7:30 pm, March 29. Place: Capital Gym, 54 Baishiqiao Lu. Tel: 6833-5552

Your cup of tea?: The tea house on the second floor of the Sanwei Bookstore is a good place to sample a little Chinese culture on Saturday evenings.

In addition to offering various kinds of Chinese tea, the venue also showcases live pipa and guzheng music every Saturday evening. If noisy pubs are not your thing and you just want to relax in a quiet atmosphere, this is worth a try. The music is played by professional performers from the Central

Folk Orchestra teachers from the Central Conservatory of Music. Time: 8:30 pm, every Saturday. Place: Sanweikstore, 60 Fuxingmennei Dajie. Tel: 6601-321

EXHIBITIONS

Tasting old: Two exhibitions are held at the Wangfujing Art Gallery. On Tuesdays works by Huang You and Kuang Han. As a famed water painter, Huang presents characteristics of Beijing culture people can get away from modern and enjoy nostalgic memories of ancient China. The other exhibit is a show of oil paintings by Kun, Xiao Se and Xiao Peng. On display are a number of tures. Time: 9 am-5 pm until March 31. Place: 136 N Dajie, Dongcheng District. Tel: 6523-33

Young An oil painting exhibition featuring the works of young artists at Qin Gallery. The young participant, Wang Yangchun, was born in 1995, and won a prize in 1997 at the age of two. Time: 9:30 am until March 15. Place: 38A Fodi Beijing. Tel: 6507-4

Contemporary prints: A print exhibition featuring temporary Chinese artists at Red Gate Gallery. The exhibition showcases the works of eight artists, whose art is a window for the current trends and the development of Chinese art. Time: 9:30 am until March 31. Place: F Chongwenmen Watchtower, ngdajie. Tel: 6525-1