

JIANGSU

Glimpses

THE GRAND CANAL ISSUE



The Grand Canal



Letter from the editor-in-chief

The Grand Canal of China, with a total length of nearly 3,200 kilometers, was dug over 2,500 years ago. As the longest and largest canal in the world, it starts from Hangzhou, where the 19th Asian Games will be held, and extends all the way to the capital city, Beijing.

The Grand Canal consists of three parts: the Grand Canal of the Sui and Tang Dynasties, the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal, and the Eastern-Zhejiang Canal. The canal runs through six provinces (Hebei, Shandong, Henan, Anhui, Jiangsu and Zhejiang) and two municipalities (Beijing and Tianjin). It also connects five major river basins, including the Haihe River, Yellow River, Huaihe River, Yangtze River and Qiantang River. In ancient times, it served as a major transportation artery that linked every corner of China.

The Grand Canal has created abundant material and spiritual wealth, forming a unique canal culture. It has become one of the important symbols of Chinese civilization. On June 22, 2014, China's Grand Canal Project was successfully listed as a World Cultural Heritage Site.

Jiangsu is the birthplace of the Grand Canal and home to Yangzhou, the city leading the application for inscribing the Grand Canal into the list of world heritage. The current Jiangsu section of the Grand Canal includes three important waterways: the Jiangnan Canal, the Huaiyang Canal, and the Central Canal. Since the completion of the Grand Canal's north-south connection during the Sui Dynasty, Jiangsu has always been an extremely important transportation hub and economic and cultural area in China.

The Jiangsu section of the Grand Canal runs from north to south for more than 790 kilometers. The Grand Canal passes through eight national historic and cultural cities in Jiangsu, namely Xuzhou, Suqian, Huai'an, Yangzhou, Zhenjiang, Changzhou, Wuxi, and Suzhou. Along Jiangsu section of the Grand Canal, there are also seven World Heritage sites, 28 heritage elements, and over 5,000 cultural heritage resource sites of various levels and types. It involves 103 key intangible cultural heritage projects, with more than one third of the world cultural heritage resources, making it a true core area of the Grand Canal heritage.

In Jiangsu, the Grand Canal has become a part of the beautiful life. Along the 790-kilometer section of the canal in Jiangsu, the urban and rural appearance, and the canal scenery add charm to each other. The inherent cultural deposits have become a striking part of people's spirit. A "beautiful central axis" is on the rise with clear water, green banks, beautiful landscapes, and flourishing culture.

The ancient waterway system enjoys not only the echoes of its history spanning over several thousand years but also the call of the future.

The 2023 World Canal Cities Forum was held this summer, and the 5th Grand Canal Culture and Tourism Expo is on the way. In the expanding international "circle of friends" of the Grand Canal, Jiangsu is using a world language to tell the story of the ancient waterway system with cultural confidence.

Charm of Jiangsu, more beautiful with you.



Charm of Jiangsu

JIANGSU

Glimpses

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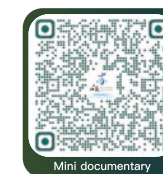
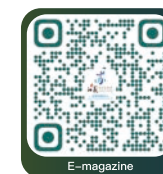
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THE GRAND CANAL: CULTURAL ROOT, ECOLOGICAL LIFELINE AND ECONOMIC ARTERY



Xuzhou section of the Grand Canal 

This summer, the 2023 World Canal City Forum kicked off in Yangzhou, Jiangsu. Yangzhou is a famous historic and cultural city and the leading city in the application for inscribing the Grand Canal into the World Heritage List. It has made remarkable achievements in the construction of the Grand Canal Cultural Belt and the Grand Canal National Cultural Park. Elevated to a national-level forum in 2022, the 16th World Canal City Forum was jointly organized by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China and Jiangsu Provincial People's Government. Xin Changxing, Secretary of CPC Jiangsu Provincial Committee and Director of the Standing Committee of the Provincial People's Congress, delivered a speech at the opening ceremony of the 2023 World Canal City Forum.

Artificial canals are the masterpiece of human civilization. Throughout history, people from various countries around the world have excavated canals of different scales. These canals have promoted economic development, cultural dissemination, and

social transformation. They have given birth to numerous world-renowned cities, fully showcasing the wisdom, courage, and creativity of human beings. Today, canals and canal culture have become an important platform and "universal language" for international communication

and exchanges.

The Grand Canal of China is the oldest and longest canal in human history with largest scale and longest period of use. Although I have not been working in Jiangsu for a long time, I was attracted by the Grand Canal. Taking



Yangzhou section of the Grand Canal

stretched for thousands of years, connecting the Yangtze River and the Yellow River. It has nurtured the splendid Chinese culture and given birth to the glorious civilization of the Chinese nation. Today, the canal culture, along with the Yangtze River culture and the Yellow River culture, is radiating new brilliance through creative transformation and innovative development. Looking forward the future of China, the Grand Canal, the Yangtze River and the Yellow River, as ever-flowing rivers of civilization, the "linear" heritage and "living" culture, will be destined to become the source of vitality in building the modern civilization of the Chinese nation.

In the cultural context of the Grand Canal, Yangtze River and Yellow River, Jiangsu is a convergence area. It is not only the origin of the Grand Canal, but also an important node of the Yangtze River. It also has the former course of the Yellow River, which once flowed into the sea for more than 700 years. The intersection of the Grand Canal, Yangtze River, and former Yellow River has nurtured a rich and diverse regional culture. Jiangsu, therefore, becomes an important birthplace of Chinese civilization. On the new journey,

the opportunity of research, I visited many cultural heritage sites along the canal, including Sanwan Ecological Cultural Park, Jiangdu Key Water Conservancy Project, Pingjiang Road's Historic Cultural Block, Dangkou Ancient Town, the Grand Canal Interchange Project and Hongze Lake Wetland. They immersed me in the cultural charm of the Grand Canal. In order to have a more comprehensive understanding of the culture of

the Grand Canal, I invited several professionals in Jiangsu to have a dedicated discussion for half a day, which was very enlightening. From a temporal and spatial perspective, I believe that the Grand Canal can be described as spanning ancient and modern times, connecting the north and south, and linking China with the world.

The Grand Canal spans ancient and modern times. Even today,

we can still appreciate the impressive heritage and relics of thousands of years. Through them, we can catch a glimpse into the pioneering spirit of the initial excavation of the Hangou Canal 2,500 years ago, as well as the prime of the Sui and Tang dynasties, and the elegance of the Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties.

The Grand Canal connects the south and north parts of China.

The geographical connection has promoted communication and integration of regional cultures. It has also facilitated the heritage and development of Chinese civilization. That's how it brings together the diverse and integrated Chinese nation from a psychological perspective.

The Grand Canal links China with the world. It has witnessed the six eastward journeys of the esteemed monk Jianzhen

to Japan. It has welcomed innumerable travelers, envoys and merchants to China, facilitating multidimensional exchanges of goods, ideas, knowledge and values. The Grand Canal serves as a vital link for the mutual exchange and learning between Chinese civilization and others.

The saying goes that "The Grand Canal witnesses half of Chinese history." Looking back at ancient China, the Grand Canal has

General Secretary Xi Jinping has clearly assigned Jiangsu the significant role of "leading and demonstrating in speeding up Chinese modernization" and has also required Jiangsu to "explore new experience in fostering the modern Chinese civilization." We will earnestly implement the important instruction of General Secretary Xi Jinping, and solidly carry out the protection and development work of the Jiangsu section of the Grand Canal. Here are a few thoughts:

Firstly, the Grand Canal is a continuous cultural root. We will explore new experience based on guarding this heritage. In Jiangsu, we will nourish Chinese civilization, enabling it to move towards a better future. We will well unleash, organize and refine the value of cultural heritage, the Grand Canal. We will systematically study and interpret its prominent Chinese civilization characteristics and contemporary significance, emphasize dynamic inheritance, and construct the "Grand Canal National Cultural Park Key Construction Zone" with high quality. We will strive to turn the Jiangsu section of the Grand Canal into a fine project that protects world cultural heritage and a distinctive symbol that showcases the modern Chinese civilization.

Secondly, the Grand Canal is a vibrant ecological lifeline. We will explore new experience in constructing this lifeline and promote the transformation of ecological civilization from theory to practice in Jiangsu. With water as the core, we will cultivate the ecological culture of the Grand Canal, promote the high-quality advancement of the Eastern Route of the South-to-North Water Diversion Project, and the construction of the Jianghuai Ecological Corridor. We will coordinate the integrated protection and systematic management of mountains, rivers, forests, farmlands, lakes and grasslands. Ultimately, we will strive to build the Jiangsu section of the Grand Canal into a beautiful home where the city, the canal and people coexist harmoniously, creating a "beautiful central axis" on the geographical map of Jiangsu.

Thirdly, the Grand Canal is a bustling economic artery. We will explore new experience in strengthening this artery, providing continuous empowerment for the high-quality development of Jiangsu. On the premise of sound protection, we will better utilize the cultural, ecological and economic values of the canal. We will develop characteristic industries to enrich

the people, and build a world-class tourism corridor of canal cultural heritage. We are endeavoring to transform the Jiangsu section of the Grand Canal into a vibrant tourist belt, renowned worldwide, and a splendid showcase of Chinese modernization and new practices of Jiangsu.

The excavation of canals means

not only breaking up the land, but also bridging the gap between different civilizations. The flowing water of the canals not only carries ships, but also represents the shared aspiration for a better life. The development history of world canals shows us that it is imperative to let cultural exchanges transcend estrangement, mutual learning

transcend clashes, and coexistence transcend feelings of superiority. Only in this way can human civilization embrace a better future. We will make full use of the wisdom gained from this forum. Through the medium of canals and canal culture, we will strengthen cooperation with international organizations, research institutions, non-

governmental organizations and key enterprises. Together with global canal cities, we will better implement the Global Civilization Initiative. Jiangsu will work jointly with other cities to contribute more to promoting people-to-people bond among nations and the exchange and mutual learning of world civilizations.



Sanwan Canal Scenic Area, Yangzhou





Bruges, Belgium



Dangkou Ancient Town, Wuxi



The Grand Canal belongs to China as well as the world Highlights of the Grand Canal needs both spread and Sharing

By Geng Chunxiao

The 5th Grand Canal Culture and Tourism Expo is held in Suzhou from September 21 to 24, 2023. Since 2019, the Grand Canal Culture and Tourism Expo launched by Jiangsu Province, based on the whole area of the Grand Canal, with the theme of "Integration, Innovation and Sharing," has been successfully held for four sessions in Yangzhou, Wuxi and Suzhou, with a total of 476,000 people visiting the site and over 820 million online audiences. The Expo is gradually becoming a landmark project in the construction of the Grand Canal National Cultural Park and a brand of cultural and tourism integration of the Grand Canal with important international and domestic influence.



EXPO
2019 • 1st

In May 2019, the first Grand Canal Culture and Tourism Expo was held in Yangzhou, the city of origin of the Grand Canal and the leading city in the application for UNESCO World Cultural Heritage for the Grand Canal in China.

As an important part of the Expo,

activities such as "Exploring the Grand Canal with International Friends," "Grand Canal Talent Show" attracted international visitors from over 50 countries and regions including the United States, Russia, France, Germany, South Korea, Vietnam, India, Egypt and Colombia.



Lotus Bridge in the Slender West Lake, Yangzhou



During the "Grand Canal Talent Show" event, Alena, from Belarus sang the well-known Yangzhou folk song "Pulling Reed Flowers" and, with the help of actors from the Jiangsu Puppetry Troupe, performed a lively puppetry dance. Adan from America struck the Su-style drum and sang "Heaven on Earth, Suqian" with an authentic Suqian accent.

Justin Scholar's rendition of the Wuxi Opera "Bean-Curd House" had a unique flavor, with Ukrainian friend Oksana's performance of Wuxi Opera "The Wandering Songstress" originated from Changzhou showcased the charm of the water towns. From Ukraine, Anastsaiia, and renowned actor Xu Jianjun from the Huaihai Opera Theatre of Jiangsu Province jointly performed

a selection from the Huaihai Opera "Returning to My Parent's Home," acting as a harmonious and loving cross-national couple. British lad Situ Jianguo not only bravely took on performing Kunqu Opera, but also humorously described his learning process through the art of crosstalk.

Anna Zykova, the Manager of Product Development at Rus-Express for the Asian market, expressed her admiration for the elegance of Suzhou and Yangzhou. She also mentioned that Nanjing, with its rich history and international style, is a city worth spending several days in.

Dr. Alexander Pleshakov, who studied at Nanjing University of Chinese Medicine, is the General Manager of the

Russian Longevity World Traditional Chinese Medicine Therapy Center. He expressed that the gathering of 300 cycling enthusiasts at the Yangzhou Marathon Park along the canal was truly awe-inspiring. And he went back to plan a recreational trip to Jiangsu Province. He believes that there is a promising future for leisure and health tours combining hot springs and Traditional Chinese Medicine. Aziz Rashidov, the China Market Manager of Planeta Travel from Russia, expressed that during this trip, they enjoyed Kunqu Opera, Suzhou Pingtan and Yangzhou Ditty. He even had the opportunity to listen to a piece of local opera in a restaurant in Nanjing. There are no boundaries in the fusion of tourism and art, and everyone loved it.



↑ The China Grand Canal Museum in Yangzhou, whose groundbreaking ceremony was held at the first expo, was open in 2021. Today, it has become a mecca for tourists.

During the event, the nation's first live-action performance of the Jiangnan garden, "Spring River in the Flower Moon Night, Beauty of Yangzhou," was staged at the Slender West Lake in Yangzhou.

"The first shovel of the Grand Canal of China was originally in Yangzhou, truly deserving its title as the eldest son in the

canal." Mr. Higashida, the head of Japan's Takatsuki Travel Agency, was amazed by the grand opening performance. He said that after visiting the heritage sites of the Grand Canal in Yangzhou during the day, watching the performance in the evening felt like traveling to the past.

Sergey Dzhan-Sha, the General Manager of China Merchant

Travel Co., Ltd. and Vice President of Russian Travel Association "World Without Borders," is a China enthusiast who is well-versed in the poetry of the Tang Dynasty. He said that the Yangzhou he aspires to is exactly this beauty of ecology, culture and technology. They planned to design more Jiangsu-themed travel products. They also planned to collaborate with

Jiangsu travel agencies to promote vacation study programs, especially family exchange projects, in response to the current trend of learning Chinese in Russia, allowing children to become good friends and build a bridge of friendship between the two countries.

"A performance that perfectly combines local features, historical stories, and modern artistic techniques. We deepened our understanding and love of Yangzhou in the stunning audio-visual performance." Mr. Kyun Minemura from the Japan Travellers' Association said.



International friends travelled along the canal and were enchanted by the scenery of Yangzhou. Diane Chung, a travel consultant from Luck Charm Company in the United States, lingered in front of display of the Yangzhou embroidery for a long time. She said these embroidered artworks are masterpieces, as if they were painted. The craftsmanship is truly remarkable.

Duong An Hoang, a travel consultant from Asia Tour Company, said that the technique of stacked stone in Geyuan Garden is truly exceptional, and the bamboo creates an elegant and artistic atmosphere. Walking around and enjoying the scenery feels like wandering in a landscape painting.

Cathay Tour company's leader, Chan Virginia Choy Lin, said that living in a city with such a profound cultural heritage is undoubtedly a blessing. Yangzhou exudes a unique charm that reflects both the past and the present. Yangzhou's dedication to protecting and promoting the culture of the Grand Canal is commendable.

Han Dennis, Marketing Director of Charming Holidays North America, said the Grand Canal Museum of China in Yangzhou is worthy expecting. He would recommend Yangzhou to his customers, so that more international travellers would know about Yangzhou and aspire to visit Yangzhou.

EXPO
2020 • 2nd

Wuxi

The 2nd Grand Canal Culture and Tourism Expo was held in Wuxi. A particularly conspicuous "sightseeing group" composed of international friends from different countries, including East Timor, Namibia, Bulgaria, Germany, Indonesia, Malaysia, Portugal, Spain, Thailand, Vietnam, Panama and Venezuela. They participated in the "Charm of Jiangsu Canal Tour" and experienced the "Fascination of Millennium Canal, Charm of Jiangsu."

The Consul-General of Portugal, Mr. Isílio Salavador said, "I used to work for UNESCO and was one of the organizers of the Creative Cities Network. I am delighted to learn that Nanjing and Yangzhou in Jiangsu Province have been named City of Literature and City of Gastronomy, respectively. The Grand Canal of China is one of the greatest water conservancy projects in human history. It represents a cultural change and embodies the philosophical thinking of great unity in ancient China. I am willing to promote more exchanges and cooperation between the Jiangsu Canal cities and Portuguese cities, as well as member cities of the Creative Cities Network."

Mr. Kayamo, the Ambassador of Namibia to China, said, "The friendship between China and Africa has a long history just like the Grand Canal. China and Namibia both have splendid cultures and abundant tourism resources, and we hope that both countries can strengthen exchanges and cooperation in the field of humanities."



Mr. Pamplov, the Consul-General of Bulgaria, said, "The Grand Canal Culture and Tourism Expo far exceeded my expectations. The opening ceremony was stunning. The new Chinese-style cold buffet was truly eye-opening and the chefs turned food into masterpieces."

Marion, French Consul-General in Shanghai and Political News Consul, said, "Jiangsu has a rich cultural heritage, and its intangible cultural heritage crafts and museum cultural products appeal greatly to French people. Next year, it will be the China-France Year of Culture and Tourism, and we hope that both sides can jointly organize relevant activities."

Vietnamese Consul-General Ning Chenggong said, "Jiangsu is an important source of tourism for Vietnam, and Jiangsu's culture is also very attractive to the Vietnamese people. We hope that the tourism departments of both sides can strengthen mutual visits and communicate closely."

Venezuelan Consul-General Reisbes Beris said, "We hope to promote culture and tourism exchanges between Venezuela and Jiangsu, bringing the unique folk customs and hospitality of the Venezuelan people to China and Jiangsu, and we also hope that the canal culture will shine brightly in Venezuela."



Huishan Ancient Town, Wuxi



EXPO 2021 • 3rd

In Wuxi, international friends strolled in Huishan Ancient Town and enjoyed the "The Grand Canal in Four Seasons" series performance. In Nanjing Museum, they visited "the Epic Representation of the Grand Canal," and experienced intangible cultural heritage handicrafts like Qinhuai Festive Lantern making and paper cutting. In Yangzhou, they tasted Huaiyang cuisine. These activities allowed international friends to satisfy a craving.

Following the melody of the Grand Canal, the 3rd Expo flowed to the "Venice of the East" in Marco Polo's eyes - Suzhou, Jiangsu Province. This time, international friends continued to visit.

International friends went from Wuxi's ancient towns to Suzhou's. They enjoyed the life aesthetics of "refined scholars" and "residents by the river," experienced water tours and felt the charm of water through scene changes in every single step and in every single boat. The cultural elegance of Suzhou, together with people's good life and the city's high-quality development, has opened foreign friends' heart, immersing them in "Traveling along the



Tongli Ancient Town, Suzhou



Canal" and triggering common canal memories in the international circle of friends.

During their visit, international friends found that Suzhou craftsmanship is still alive on both banks of the canal and that the integration of the profound canal culture and modern technology has inspired great wisdom.

In the intangible cultural heritage experiencing area of Suzhou Museum, the Consul General of Consulate General of the Kingdom of Spain in Shanghai Carmen Fontes, with her skillful embroidery techniques, impressed arts and crafts

master Qian Xiaoli. Ms Fontes told Qian that she had been offered embroidery courses early in her primary school.

"My grandma and mom are really adept at embroidery work and we still keep the clothes embroidered by my grandma at home." While visiting Suzhou Industrial Park, she saw a small loom for Song brocade. The beauty of Suzhou is just like the two-sided embroidery in the Suzhou Museum: traditional culture enjoys a wonderful encounter with modern civilization here and connects to the rest of the world with rich cultural heritage, said Ms Fontes with delight.



"The canal in the daytime is very beautiful. So is it at night. In the bright moonlight and fresh breeze, it is pleasant to listen to the melodious Kunqu Opera and watch actors performing



on the stage," said Ikel Parker, Deputy Consul General of the Turkish Consulate General in Shanghai, the selection of "The Peony Pavilion" in Suzhou Kunqu Theater still lingering in his mind.

Atalizada Ikhtiyar from Azerbaijan, was fascinated by the windows with ice-cracked patterns in the Humble Administrator's Garden and the regular hexagonal windows in Suzhou Museum. He said that the master designer Ieoh Ming Pei was also a mathematician obsessed with structural design. Geometric constructions can be found in many of Mr. Pei's masterpieces, which are an international

language requiring no translation.

Atalizada Ikhtiyar said that, at Suzhou Industrial Park, Suzhou Gold Mantis Culture Development Company displayed the "Prosperous Suzhou" by painter Xu Yang in Qing dynasty. Water and mountains in the painting wind for dozens of miles and such views as Xieqiao bridge in Mudu, Shihu Lake, Panmen Gate and Tiger Hill are recognizable even today, giving people the feeling of living in the ancient city. "Today, there are many canals in different countries and regions and the cities along them share similar memories of canals. I'm very glad to participate in this Expo, and while appreciating the new model of culture and tourism integration, I have seen how to polish cultural symbols behind the Grand Canal and explore the cultural accumulation along it. All this has also inspired my thinking about canal protection."

As a new highlight of the 3rd Grand Canal Culture and Tourism Expo, "the Encounter of Silk Road and Canal," an international theme exhibition where one can experience 31 different national customs, gained great popularity.

"These instruments are sufficient for an international symphony," said the Russian tourist Cammie, after visiting Chinese Guqin, Russian Balalaika, Kazakh Dombra, Uzbek Tambur, Pakistani Tabla and Cambodian Snakeskin Drum, in the "Charming SCO exhibition area."

In the Italy Pavilion, a non-automated stand-up coffee machine of retro style was incredibly eye-catching. According to Peter Robben, an Italian catering equipment exhibitor, of the only seventy of its style around the world, this coffee machine had been specially shipped here for the international exhibition of this Expo.

Saffron from Iran, black tea from Sri Lanka and chocolate from Uzbekistan... Dazzlingly various traditional flavors and specialties from countries along the Silk Road gathered here for exhibition.

In the Pakistan Pavilion, tea sets carved from jade attracted many visitors. The Pakistani exhibitor Mohammed said that Pakistanis love jade as much as the Chinese people do. Compared with Chinese who like jade accessories more, Pakistanis prefer to make jade into decorations and tableware.





EXPO 2022 • 4th

In the autumn of 2022, the 4th Grand Canal Culture and Tourism Expo opened in Suzhou. The "Encounter of the Silk Road and the Canal" and the other five major exhibitions opened at the same time. More than 60 international guests from Asia, Europe, and Oceania attended the "Charm of Jiangsu" International Friends Canal Tour. In their view, the Expo

was not only a "small world" of culture and tourism, but also a "Grand View Garden" of the canal.

The 4th Grand Canal Culture and Tourism Expo set up a special area for the "China-Eu Oil Painting Art Exchange." Through painting, the common language of human, this exhibition realized a cross-regional, cross-time intersection of the Silk Road and the Canal in culture and art. Just like the integration of the Chinese moon gate and the European Roman

column at the entrance of the exhibition area, nearly 100 oil paintings from Europe and Jiangsu encountered here.

"It is great that the Expo builds a small world of culture and tourism." Tiago Brito, head of China tourism of Portugal Tourism Board, said after visiting the exhibition, "The Art Exchange exhibits Picasso's and Ieoh Ming Pei's script. I suppose that the Suzhou Museum is Pei's gift for his hometown Suzhou. There was also a centuries-old print from Europe of the

Porcelain Tower of Nanjing on display. The famous tower, built in China's Ming Dynasty, has a long history with Portugal. In 1613, Alvare de Samedo, a Portuguese, went to Nanjing and stayed for two years. He wrote a book called "Imperio de la China" which was spread widely around the world. It describes the Porcelain Tower of Nanjing as a magnificent building that can be compared to the most famous ancient Roman buildings. I hope I can go to Nanjing in the future and visit this Oriental symbol of centuries old. In

the exhibition, we experienced different views when we moved forward. In front of these 20 countries' exhibitions, we can also 'swim' to Turkey or Italy just a few steps away. Through the Expo, we can experience different products, meet different people, feel different cultures in the world, understand each other and get better communication."

Sherry, a visitor from Greece, bought Luoyang peony porcelain and Gaochun porcelain as souvenirs at the Expo. "In my motherland, there is also beautiful porcelain and a canal that gave birth to the splendid culture, the Corinth Canal. My family and I also lived by the canal. In the international exhibition of Central and Eastern European Culture and Tourism, I saw the exhibition area of my hometown Greece.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Greece, making it more important for people in the global village to share happiness, increase exchanges and build confidence together." Sherry said, "Apart from the eye-pleasing exhibits, you can't miss the unique dishes served by the cities along the canal. Nanjing boiled salted duck, Kunshan Aozao noodles, Lianyungang Huaguoshan hawthorn wine, Yangzhou Yechun steamed bun... What impressed me most was the food exhibition of Taizhou, where the crab soup dumplings made on the spot were appetizing, and the soup sloshing in the skin was especially attractive. In autumn, you can taste different Jiangsu crab cuisines at the Grand Canal Culture and Tourism Expo."





Cambodia cashew nuts, Turkey Mosaic lights, Malaysia white coffee, Azerbaijan pomegranate juice, Sri Lanka black tea, Iran figs, Pakistan jade, Dubai date palm, Czech crystal, Poland amber, Japan wagashi... In the international exhibition, the rich, splendid and lively exhibits gave visitors an amazing experience. Enthusiastic African swing and Flamenco dance filled the area with a cheerful

atmosphere. Visitors could enjoy an exotic trip without going abroad.

The Italian exhibition area was also striking. The door of the exhibition area extracted the colors of the Italian flag. It absorbed the architectural elements of the Rome Colosseum, reflecting the fashion culture of Italy through the gradual change

of color design and displaying the five major parts of Italy: manufacturing, tourism, culture, food and wine. Visitors dressed in Hanfu (a traditional Chinese costume) were photographed with people in Carnevale Venetian costumes at the entrance of the building, showing the fusion of Chinese and Italian styles from Marco Polo and Matteo Ricci's description.

Gelato, aperitif, Focaccia pizza... The Italy exhibition area was a destination for visitors to enjoy the delicacy. Exhibitor Dominich demonstrated Polenta, Parma ham, Montepulciano sausage, Pecorino cheese, mozzarella, Ariccia pork and other Italian representative dishes.

Dominich introduced that 2022 is the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the relationship between Jiangsu and Tuscany, a region in central Italy. Tuscany's disposition is very similar to Jiangsu's. It has a strong cultural and artistic atmosphere which is regarded as the birthplace

of the Italian Renaissance. Many influential artists and scientists, such as Da Vinci, Dante and Michelangelo, were born in Tuscany. Tuscans love food and have a unique culinary tradition. Same as Jiangsu, Tuscany is also particular about eating the right food in their corresponding time. Jiangsu has two "Cities of Gastronomy," Yangzhou and Huai'an, which have water charm and profound culture. "The Grand Canal was mentioned in the "Travels of Marco Polo" and Matteo Ricci's "Reading Notes about China," which made Italians fascinated about it. Tuscany's famous dish potato meatballs are very similar to Jiangsu's famous Huaiyang dish Lion Head Meatballs. I believe there will be endless topics in the conversation between these two places."

Tansy, director of Shanghai Great Wine Tree International Trade Co., LTD., showed visitors a variety of Italian wines. She said Italy produces a quarter of the world's wine and has been making wine for more than 3,000 years. Tuscany is a famous wine-producing region in Italy, where Brunello and Chianti Classico are worth trying. "The canal has a big influence on food and wine. Italy has a famous canal called the Po. It can be seen as the largest river on the map of Italian wine. It flows through the Piedmont, Veneto and other wine regions, bringing a micro-climate suitable for grapes along the canal to grow. The unique fermentation of water vapor in the Zibello along the Po canal also give the ham 'Culatello di Zibello' a unique flavor."

In addition to meals, board, lodging, shopping, visiting and entertaining, the Italian exhibition area also brought lessons on Italian culture. Louis, the director of Hantang Institute, introduced that the institute is committed to cultivating Italian art, design and fashion history, enriching the communication horizon of Chinese enterprises



and tourists. "In our courses, we would introduce an ancient canal called Arno in Florence, Tuscany, which gave birth to the Renaissance. There is a thousand-year bridge over the canal, and the arcade formed by the bridge's verandas is still a traditionally busy place for the jewelry trade. You can boat and visit the famous Uffizi Museum along the bridge. Such quiet life

along the canal is very similar to the charm of ancient water towns in Jiangsu Province, with the same romantic life aesthetics."

Compared with previous exhibitions, the 4th international exhibition added an RCEP culture and tourism exhibition area. Enterprises from Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and

other RCEP member countries were invited to participate in this exhibition, presenting the unique customs and practices of RCEP member countries.

Inside Thailand's national exhibition area, docents in Thai costumes and frangipanis welcomed waves of visitors to buy aromatherapy, essential oils, and "Bangkok bags." Luo Chundong, Deputy Director of the Tourism Authority of Thailand in Shanghai, said, "China is the largest source of tourists for Thailand. In 2019, Thailand received 11 million Chinese tourists. The live broadcast of the Expo also enabled more Thai tourists to learn about the Grand Canal's tourism products and its profound cultural heritage."

Laotian beer and Xieng Khouang Ancient Tree Tea were also sold hotly at the Laos national exhibition area. Bella, the general representative of the Laos Culture and Tourism Center, said that many visitors asked her about the guide to China-Laos Railway tourism. Bella introduced that the China-Laos Railway, which opened in December 2021 from Kunming, in Yunnan Province, to Vientiane, the capital of Laos, was a landmark

project of the Belt and Road Initiative. With the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership taking effect in January, 2022, the demand for international logistics needs between China and Laos was booming. She believed that more and more enterprises and tourists would enjoy the opportunities and convenience brought by the China-Laos Railway. Like Jiangsu, the places along the canal in Laos are also rich in world cultural heritage. For example, Luang Prabang, a UNESCO "natural and cultural" heritage city, lies in a valley surrounded by mountains along the Mekong River.

Chen Wenxi, Development and Promotion Consultant of the Ministry of National Tourism of Cambodia (China Region), introduced that there is a river among the world's canal "friends circle" originating from the northeast slope of China's Tanggula Mountain, Mekong River. The Mekong River is called the Lancang River in China, and the section of the river that flows into the Indo-China Peninsula is called the Mekong River. The Mekong River is an important transnational river system in Asia. It flows through China, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand,

Cambodia and Vietnam. People living along the ancient river also hold culture and tourism activities as rich as the Expo. Cambodia holds a water festival called "Bon Om Touk" every autumn, where dragon boat racing, moon worship, lantern boat cruising and other activities are held. These activities are similar to Suzhou's Dragon Boat Festival custom which is listed as a world intangible cultural heritage. It can be seen that people living by the canal can achieve integration, innovation and sharing through the canal culture. The annual Expo also enables diplomatic envoys and representatives of institutions from different parts of the world to play a better role as a bridge and link to boost exchanges and cooperation in the areas of humanities between Jiangsu and countries along the Belt and Road.

"Many people know the Rhine River as a name card of Germany. In fact, Germany also has a man-made canal as beautiful as the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal, the Kiel Canal. It runs across the state of Schleswig-Holstein and connects the North Sea to the Baltic Sea which is still a busy waterway for ships." In the German exhibition

area, Ma Ke, manager of the China Office of Economic and Technology Promotion Center of Schleswig-Holstein, said that he had visited Taicang in Suzhou many times. "When I visited Suzhou in the past, I did not know the most authentic travel line. However, this exhibition gives me the chance to experience the beautiful scenery of 36 cities in China at once in a day."

The Consul General of the Consulate General of the Republic of Bulgaria in Shanghai, Sergei Spasov used "marvelous" to describe this trip. "The opening ceremony at Tiger Hill was fantastic," Spasov said, "The night cruise gave me a completely different experience."

Richard from the Netherlands Council for the Promotion of International Trade also described the Expo as "marvelous." He said that at the 3rd Expo, Dutch beer and fresh-cut tulips from the Dutch exhibition sold well on site. The year 2022 marked the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Netherlands. The Expo set up a platform for the exchange of Chinese and foreign culture and tourism.

EXPO 2023 • 5th

The 5th Expo was still held in Suzhou. At the "Encounter of the Silk Road and the Canal" theme exhibition of the Expo, culture and tourism organizations from more than 20 countries such as Spain, France, Italy, Japan, South Korea, the United States, Brazil, Hungary, Poland, Ghana, and more than 120 companies participated in the exhibition.

The year 2023 marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and Spain, and is also the year of China-Spain Year of Culture and Tourism. The exhibition area of the Spanish National Pavilion

has planned and held a series of activities integrating artistic creation, exchange and display and interactive experience, such as featured art exchange exhibition and Spanish ham tasting. Many of you have been looking forward to seeing the beauty of Spain's Castilla Canal.

During the 2023 Expo, in addition to Suzhou, other cities in Jiangsu Province also plan and organize related supporting activities around the theme of the Grand Canal. For example, Nanjing holds the Forest Music Festival, Wuxi holds the 13th Cultural Expo, Xuzhou holds the Chinese Han Culture Tourism Festival, Changzhou holds the Culture and Tourism Festival and New Energy Life Festival, Nantong holds the Culture and Tourism Shopping Carnival,



↑ Shantang Street, Suzhou



Lianyungang holds the 19th Journey to the West Cultural Festival, Huai'an holds the 6th China Grand Canal Urban Intangible Cultural Heritage Exhibition, Yancheng holds the "Beautiful Autumn Scenery in Yancheng" Culture and Tourism Season, Yangzhou holds the cultural tourism consumption promotion season with night tour and night market, Zhenjiang holds the 17th China Zhenjiang Jinshan Culture, Art and International Tourism Festival, Taizhou holds the "Taste of Taizhou" City of Water and Crab Food Tourism Season, and Suqian holds the Canal Culture

Carnival "Millennium Zaohe River, Longyun Hilarity" ...

It should be noted that the micro documentary produced by Jiangsu Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism and manufactured by "Charm of Jiangsu" Global Communication Centre, "The Flowing Civilization," also has its premiere during the Expo. Welcome to enjoy this micro documentary by scanning the QR code on the catalog page or the accompanying postcard.

The Expo meets every year's autumn. One of the important

purposes of the Expo is to build a platform for international and domestic canal cities to carry out people-to-people exchanges, spread canal culture and share canal stories. Jiangsu is a crucial province that carries out the policies of opening-up. Through the exchanges of culture and tourism with other countries, Jiangsu has developed a closer relationship with them and achieved fruitful results. "Charm of Jiangsu" focuses on building an important tourist destination in the world, promoting the concept of "two corridors, two belts and two districts" from high-level plans

to intensive and meticulous implementation, and further promoting the construction of world-class canal cultural heritage tourism corridor, to make the beautiful scenery, wonderful culture, delicious taste and ample life more concrete and tangible, discovering beauty in Jiangsu. This Expo, as a platform for spreading civilization, exchanging culture and enhancing friendship, is constantly integrating, innovating and sharing, introducing the spectacular of the world to Jiangsu and spreading the highlights of Jiangsu to the world.



the Central Canal

By Chen Lili

The Central Canal, located between the Lu Canal and the Huaiyang Canal, begins at the border of Shandong and Jiangsu in the north and extends to the Huaiyin Water Conservancy Hub in the south. It is the latest section of the Grand Canal to be formed. Prior to the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), there was no artificial canal between Xuzhou and Huai'an, and transportation relied on the Yellow River. In the year 1688, under the leadership of River Inspector Jin Fu, the Central Canal was excavated, putting an end to the historical reliance on the Yellow River and marking the completion of the formation of the Grand Canal.

The Central Canal connects the Yellow and the Huaihe rivers, passing through Xuzhou and Suqian and leaving timeless legends at each dock. Xuzhou is the hometown of Liu Bang, founder of the Western Han Dynasty (206 BC - 24 AD), and Suqian is the birthplace of Xiang Yu, the self-styled "Hegemon-King of Western Chu." The region is the birthplace of the Han Dynasty culture. It boasts rich cultures, and is making strides on the path of modernization. The region was of great commercial importance. Here you can find the imperial lodge or travel palace where Emperor Qianlong of the Qing Dynasty visited five times during his six southern tours. You can also experience both the Chu and Han cultures and enjoy the charm of water towns. The legends of heroes, beautiful landscapes, fine wine, and delicacies are waiting for you to come and enjoy a journey along the canal.

Xuzhou:

Athens of the East

By Geng Chunxiao



Xuzhou section of the Grand Canal

The Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal flows into Xuzhou from Shandong Province. The Xuzhou section is 181 kilometers long, the longest in the cities along the river. Xuzhou is the city where the Grand Canal, the Bian, the Si, and the Yellow rivers meet. It is the hometown of Liu Bang, the founder of the Han Dynasty. Xuzhou is the birthplace of the culture of the Western Han and Eastern Han dynasties. With its rich cultural heritage, scenic spots and historical sites, Xuzhou is also known as the "Athens of the East."



↑ Yaowan Ancient Town

Yaowan Ancient Town

Xuzhou, sitting in the middle reach of the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal, serves as a hub for transportation, commerce, and military affairs. Yaowan is the most famous wharf and commercial center along the Xuzhou section of the Grand Canal. It faces the Grand Canal on the west and the Luoma Lake on the east. Surrounded by water on three sides, Yaowan enjoys natural geographic advantages. The prosperity of water transportation has driven the rapid development of industrial commerce in Yaowan.

Today, Yaowan ancient town still preserves a large number of buildings of the late Qing Dynasty. The Jiangxi Guildhall, Shanxi Guildhall, and Suzhou-Zhenjiang-Yangzhou Guildhall have been renovated and are available for visits. Other





↑ Xuzhou section of the Grand Canal

attractions include the Wu Family Courtyard, Zhao Xinlong Soy Sauce Shop, China Pawn Museum, Yaowan Folk Custom Museum, Yaowan Post Office of Qing Dynasty.

When visiting Yaowan, be sure to taste the local specialty dish called "Yaowan Ship Cuisine." The fishermen in Yaowan are skilled in cooking fresh lake produce. They use the freshest aquatic plants and animals from the area and cook them on the boat. Later, the cooking was moved to land. After incorporating culinary skills from all over the country, it resulted in a unique and renowned cuisine in northern Jiangsu.

As night falls, the hustle and

bustle of Yaowan just begins. At the "Night Owl Market," which runs from dusk till dawn, we can enjoy fun games and a wide variety of delicious food such as steamed stuffed buns.

Xuzhou is not only a renowned cultural city in China but also known as the "Capital of China's Engineering Machinery." The sci-fi blockbuster "The Wandering Earth II," which was released during this year's Spring Festival, has created an extraordinary buzz. Some audiences said they were impressed by those elements featuring science and technology, including space elevators and the engineering machinery operating in harsh environments. The Xuzhou

Construction Machinery Group Co., Ltd. (XCMG), a leading Chinese heavy machinery manufacturer, is among the providers of the movie's props. With the global popularity of "The Wandering Earth II," it is believed that more people will get to know about the XCMG and the famous canal city of Xuzhou.

In the spring of 2022, photographer Jia Chuanjun, from Xuzhou, selected 200 photographs and old photos of the Grand Canal and compiled them into a photography collection "My Canal." Since the initial casual shooting, Jia Chuanjun has been shooting the Grand Canal for more than 30 years without interruption.

Jia Chuanjun was born and raised by the canal, and he also works on the canal. In his words, the Grand Canal is his home, his roots, and even his soul. He said, "The environment along the canal is getting better day by day. The everyday appearance of the canal is precious historical record. I want to freeze the canal in unforgettable moments authentically and dedicate them to those who love the canal."

Jia Chuanjun once worked at the Liushan Ship Lock Management Office of the Northern Jiangsu Shipping Management Office, dealing with the Grand Canal every day. Hearing and seeing the tremendous changes in the development of the canal, Jia Chuanjun unconsciously

generated a sense of responsibility, so he picked up his camera and began to record the canal every day. The bits and pieces by the canal were all the objects he had carefully shot.

Since the 1980s, he has been taking a camera and riding along the canal. Over the years, he has fully understood the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal and its tributaries, including the number of the ship locks, the width and depth of the waterway. He has completed the entire journey of the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal and the Canal in East Zhejiang three times. The long journey has broadened Jia Chuanjun's horizons, increased his understanding of the canal, and also made him accumulate over ten thousand photos about the canal.

There are many contents and

angles which can be used to photograph the canal. He focuses his lens on common people in the sunlight, vendors in the dark, tugboats with burden looming in the mist, boatman's arching back in sweat, and intertwined with the harvest of wheat waves and curling smoke from chimneys on both sides of the canal. These include some small scenes filled with the hustle and bustle and magnificent scenes captured by wide-angle lens or from the aerial view. The content involves ancient towns, docks, waterway work, mariners, the South-to-North Water Diversion Project, urban life, etc.

Jia Chuanjun said, "By photographing 'My Canal,' I want to tell everyone that the canal belongs to you and me, China and the world. I hope the kind title can inspire everyone to protect and love the canal."



↑ Xuzhou section of the Grand Canal



Suqian section of the Grand Canal

Suqian: Three Canals Flowing Here

By Geng Chunxiao & Zhu Xiaojuan

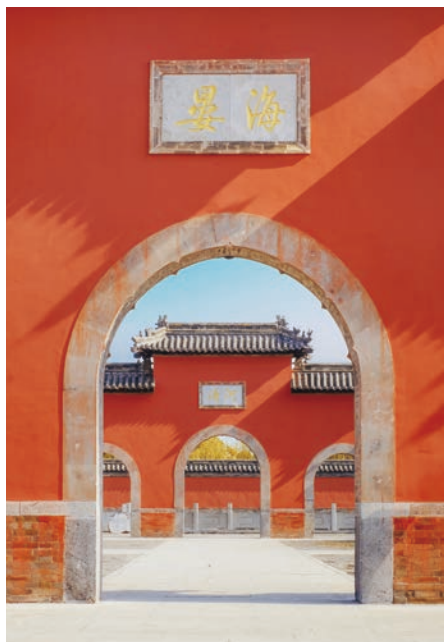
The Grand Canal runs through Suqian City from the northwest to the south. Suqian is not only the hometown of Xiang Yu, the self-styled "Hegemon-King of Western Chu," but also one of the birthplaces of liquor culture, with two famous liquor brands, Yanghe and Shuanggou. During Emperor Qianlong's six inspection tours of the southern regions, he stayed here five times and praised Suqian as the "most beautiful place in spring."

The Suqian Section of the Central Canal

As the main channel of the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal, the Suqian section of the canal has undergone multiple changes, forming three rivers at different historical periods. Therefore, Suqian has become the only city in China with three main channels in different historical periods: the Tongji Channel of Sui-Tang Grand Canal, the Yuan Dynasty's

Yellow River ancient course, and the Qing Dynasty's Central Canal. The Suqian section of the Grand Canal is also called the Central Canal. It is the throat and pivot of river management and canal transportation along the entire Grand Canal. The excavation of the Grand Canal played a decisive role in ensuring smooth transportation during the Qing Dynasty and marked the final major project that shaped the course of today's Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal. It revitalized the world's first artificial canal, which was on the verge of abandonment, and completely transformed the history of the Grand Canal.

Taking a boat from Yaowan ancient town and sailing south along the Grand Canal for dozens of kilometers, you can reach Zaohe ancient town in Suqian.



The Dragon King Temple Palace



The Dragon King Temple Palace

The Dragon King Temple Palace

During his six southern tours, Emperor Qianlong had lived in the Dragon King Temple for five times. Therefore, the temple is also known as the "travel palace of Emperor Qianlong."

The Dragon King Temple covers an area of 36 mu (2.4 hectares), with over 20 buildings. It is one of the largest and well-preserved palaces among all the travel palaces of Emperor Qianlong.

The first courtyard holds the Imperial Stele Pavilion built by Emperor Qianlong, which records the reason and process of the temple's construction during the reigns of emperors Kangxi and Yongzheng of the Qing Dynasty. The second courtyard is the center of the temple, where the main building, the Dragon King Hall, sits. In the center of the hall is a gold-plated statue of the Dragon King of the East Sea. It's the place where monks hold daily activities. When Emperor Qianlong lived in the temple, he discussed the political affairs and worshipped here. The third and last courtyard served as Emperor Qianlong's residence.

The Zaohe Dragon King Temple Fair Cultural Week is held every year on the fifth day to the tenth day of the first month on the Chinese lunar calendar. When visiting the fair, you can enjoy folklore performances such as worshipping the God of Wealth, Liulin Opera performance, lantern shows and parades, and try some famous snacks such as Qianlong pastry.

the Huaiyang Canal

By Chen Lili

The Huaiyang Canal runs from the Huaiyin Water Conservancy Hub in Huai'an City to Guazhou of Yangzhou City, where it meets the Yangtze River. It connects the Yangtze and Huaihe rivers. It's the oldest section of the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal, dating back to 486 BC when Fuchai, king of the State of Wu, excavated the Hangou Channel. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, it was called the Huaiyang Canal, while in modern times it is called the Inner Canal.

The excavation of the Hangou Channel gave birth to the two historical and cultural cities of Huai'an and Yangzhou. The rise of water transport during the Sui and Tang dynasties brought prosperity to the two cities once again, reaching their peak during the Ming and Qing

dynasties. The Water Transport Governor's Office and the Canal Governor's Office were both located in Huai'an. The salt merchants in Yangzhou were the wealthiest in the country. The two cities, along with Suzhou and Hangzhou, were known as the "Four Great Cities" along the Grand Canal.

The Grand Canal has nurtured the Huaiyang culture that integrates the northern and southern cultures, featuring the characteristics of magnificence and elegance. There are water sluices and embankments that reflect the ancient people's water control wisdom, a "living fossil" of China's postal industry, governors' offices, private gardens of salt merchants, and famous Huaiyang cuisine such as crab and pork meat ball, stewed eel, and Wensi tofu. Can't wait to start our journey!



Sailing downstream along the Grand Canal from Suqian, you will arrive in Huai'an, the "Capital of China's Grand Canal." It is the hometown of Han Xin, one of the "Three Heroes of the early Han Dynasty," Zhou Enlai, first premier of the People's Republic of China, and Wu Cheng'en, author of "Journey to the West," one of the four classic Chinese novels. The other two classic Chinese novels "Water Margin" and "Romance of the Three Kingdoms" were both written in Huai'an.

Huaiyang Canal section in Huai'an

In "Travels of Marco Polo," the Italian explorer mentioned Huai'an twice. "KOI-GAN-ZU [Huai'an Fu] is a very handsome and wealthy city, lying in a direction between south-east and east, at the entrance of the province of Manji, where a prodigious number of vessels are

continually passing, its situation being near the bank of the river Kara-moran [Yellow River]. Large consignments of merchandise are forwarded to this city, in order that the goods may be transported, by means of this river, to various other places. Salt is manufactured here in great quantities, not only for the consumption of the city itself, but for exportation to other parts; and from this salt the Great Khan derives an ample revenue."

Huai'an has historically occupied a central position along the Grand Canal. During the Tang and Song dynasties, Huai'an had already become a famous commercial city along the Grand Canal. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, it became the command center for transportation and management of the Grand Canal, as well as a ship manufacturing center, a grain transfer center, and a salt distribution center in China. Huai'an, Yangzhou, Suzhou, and Hangzhou are known as the "Four Great Cities" along the Grand Canal.

Let's first visit the site of the Water Transport Governor's Office.

Site of the Water Transport Governor's Office

From the Sui Dynasty, the imperial court set up a special office of water transport in Huai'an, and to the Song Dynasty, set up a Jianghuai transport agent here. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, the Water



↑ Site of the Water Transport Governor's Office

Transport Governor's Office was established here, managing the transportation of grain from the south to the north, and the transport of salt from the north to the south, among other tasks.

At that time, tens of thousands of grain ships loaded with grains, salt, groceries and handicrafts arrived at Huai'an and transported them to various south areas. The amount of grain transported northward through Huai'an and the amount of salt transported southward through Huai'an were astonishing. In addition to the transport of grain and salt, the number of goods such as groceries and handicrafts entering and transiting the country was also astonishing.

The Water Transport Governor's Office was the highest administrative organization at that time, responsible for managing all national transportation affairs. The power of the Canal Governor was enormous. In the Ming and Qing dynasties, a total of 237 water transport governors were appointed here.

Today, the site of the Water Transport Governor's Office has been transformed into a park, which is open to the public. The Chinese Water Transport Museum was built on the north side of the site to demonstrate the history of water transport to people.

Qingyan Garden

During the reign of Emperor Kangxi of the Qing Dynasty, the Canal Governor's Office was relocated from Jining of Shandong to Qingjiangpu of Huai'an. Jin Fu, the then Canal Governor, built a house here. He excavated ponds and planted trees to build a back garden of the house, and named it "Huai Garden." Later, it was named "Qingyan Garden," literally meaning "clear river and peaceful sea."

Qingyan Garden is the only well-preserved back garden of a governor's house in China's history of water control and canal transportation. It is also the most representative classical garden in northern Jiangsu, integrating the characteristics of both southern and northern China.

Every time Emperor Qianlong visited Huai'an, he lived here. His favorite place was the "Hefang Academy," which literally means lotus scent, also sounds the same as flood preventing in Chinese. It was said to be built by the then Canal Governor Gao Bin to welcome the emperor. Gao Bin, due to his outstanding achievements in river management, was awarded five imperial steles, which are still preserved in the garden.



↑ Qingyan Garden

Qingjiang Sluice

Starting from the backyard of Canal Governor, let's visit the water conservancy projects in Huai'an together. Less than two kilometers from Qingyan Garden is the Qingjiang Sluice, which was built to control

the flow and regulate water levels of the Inner Canal, so that boats could pass smoothly.

During the Ming and Qing dynasties, Qingjiang Sluice not only served as a passageway for boats, but also a sluice gate to prevent the Yellow River from flowing into the canal. Therefore, the opening and closing the gates was strictly regulated. According to the Qing Dynasty's regulations, only grain transport boats, tribute boats, or boats carrying senior officials were allowed to pass through the Qingjiang Sluice in certain months. Other boats would have to disembark at the Stone Wharf and transfer their goods and passengers to land transportation.

Qingjiang Sluice is the only well-preserved ancient sluice of the Ming and Qing dynasties on the Grand Canal, as it's built with specially selected black stones. The gaps of the stones were filled with cooked glutinous rice and lime, making the architecture solid. Sailing eastward from Qingjiang Sluice along the Inner Canal, you will reach an important section of the Hundred-Mile Gallery project of the Grand Canal. On the river banks, there are ancient buildings and modern skyscrapers. You can enjoy the scenery by walking along the canal, or taking a boat.

On the eastern side of Qingjiang Sluice is Zhongzhou Island. Here, you can visit the Huai'an Traditional Opera Museum, the Huai'an Hall of Fame, and the Qingjiangpu Memory Museum. The Qingjiangpu Building on the island has become a landmark of Huai'an.

On the opposite side of Zhongzhou Island is the Imperial Dock, now a bustling food street. The prosperity of transportation and commerce has allowed the fusion of northern and southern cuisine, making Huai'an one of the birthplaces of Huaiyang cuisine and earning the title of a UNESCO Creativity City of Gastronomy.

As the biggest hydraulic project in Asia, Huai'an Water Interchange provides a stunning view. Huaihe River and the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal together forms a breath-taking landscape that a natural river and a manufactured canal run across each other if viewed from high above.

With a history of 2,500 years, Hexia ancient town was once very prosperous. It has many titles, one of which is "Hometown of Scholars." During the Ming and Qing dynasties, a number of candidates from this town passed different levels of imperial examinations.

The food in Hexia ancient town is superb, including Wenlou Soup Dumplings, Huai'an Tea Cakes, and stewed eel and so on. All of the dishes are appetizing. As night falls, the night life of the Inner Canal begins. The canal glows with lights, and the tour boats move slowly, presenting the beauty of Huai'an.



↑ Huai'an Sluice



↑ Qingjiang Sluice

YANGZHOU:

The City where the Grand Canal of China Began

By Zhang Jiajie

One day in 730 AD, the great poet Li Bai bid farewell to his good friend Meng Haoran at the Yellow Crane Tower. He wrote, "Go to Yangzhou in March, in the mist of the flowers of spring."

Yangzhou is a city where the Yangtze River and the Grand Canal meet. In the Tang Dynasty, Yangzhou has become a hub of domestic water and land transportation, as well as an important port for foreign economic and cultural exchanges.

Yangzhou Section of Huaiyang Canal

The prosperity of Yangzhou started with a river. In 486 BC, Fuchai, king of the State of Wu excavated the Hangou Canal, which is known as the beginning of the Grand Canal in China. Yangzhou is also considered the city where the Grand Canal starts. It also takes the lead in the application for the Grand Canal to be included in the list of world cultural heritage sites, and is the city with the most heritage items along the canal.

If you want to have a comprehensive understanding of the Grand Canal, the Grand Canal Museum of China is the best choice. Located beside the Sanwan canal scenic area of Yangzhou, the museum provides a professional exhibition of the Grand Canal from various aspects.

The museum looks like a huge ship about to set sail. Yangzhou Section of the Grand Canal which runs from Guazhou Town to Wantou Town is about 30 kilometers in length, creating the famous "Yangzhou Sanwan," which in



Chinese means three river bends in Yangzhou. After China Grand Canal Museum is built and opened up, Dayun Tower, Tianzhong Tower and Wenfeng Tower compose the scene of "three river bends reflect three towers." Wenfeng Temple was the starting point for Tang Dynasty monk Jianzhen's journey to Japan.

Gaoyou Yucheng Postal Stop

Gaoyou is the only county in China named after "you" (mail). Yucheng Postal Stop was the large ancient post station along the Grand Canal during

the Ming and Qing dynasties. It's also the best-preserved ancient post building in China. With the completion of the Grand Canal, mail and materials could be transported by both land and waterways, greatly promoting the development of ancient communication industry. Yucheng Postal Stop is an important post station along the Grand Canal, with over 100 rooms. It is called the "living fossil" of China's postal service and is of great scientific and cultural value to study the history of ancient Chinese post, transportation and water conservancy.

Shaobo Ancient Embankment

South of Yucheng Postal Stop is the famous canal

town of Shaobo. Shaobo ancient embankment, located on the east bank of the canal's ancient course, was built during the Song Dynasty to prevent the flooding of Shaobo Lake and maintain the water level of the canal. It is also an important barrier to resist the floods of the Huai River and ensure the safety of Shaobo Town.

More than ten docks were built on the ancient embankment, four of which are well-preserved, and the most famous one is "Da Ma Tou." Equally famous, there is Shaobo lock, its change and development is not only the historical epitome of China's lock development, but also an indispensable "Eastern model" in the world's ship and water transport development.



Slender West Lake

The ancient canal connects the water and moats of different periods in Yangzhou, forming the Slender West Lake. During the Qing Dynasty, Yangzhou salt merchants and local officials arranged beautiful scenery on both sides of the lake to welcome emperors Kangxi and Qianlong.

Wuting Bridge, Twenty-four Bridges, Fishing Platform, Xiaojin Mountain and White Tower are popular with tourists. Slender West Lake represents the culture of salt merchants and gardens, and also part of canal culture in Yangzhou.

If you come early, you can have morning tea at the Quyuan

Teahouse beside Slender West Lake. Yangzhou's morning tea has become a symbolic cultural icon of the city.

Geyuan Garden

Geyuan Garden is a famous private garden located in the north of the East Gate Street in Yangzhou. The garden is a unique example of Chinese garden with its novel design and dense structure.

During the reign of Emperor Jiaqing of the Qing Dynasty, Huang Zhiyun, salt satrap of Lianghuai Area (today's Anhui and Jiangsu provinces) bought an old house in Yangzhou and renovated it. For Huang was fond of bamboos, and for the shape of bamboo leaf looks like the

Chinese character "个"(ge) so the garden got its name.

The most famous scene in the garden is the "rockery of four seasons." Covering an area of less than 50 mu (about 3.3 hectares), the garden is divided into four rockery areas named after the four seasons—spring, summer, autumn, and winter. Different rockeries are formed from different kinds of rocks to represent different scenes in



↑ Geyuan Garden

the four seasons. When walking clockwise from Yiyu Xuan, the center of the whole garden, people feel as if they have experienced the essence of the four seasons of the year.

The windows in Geyuan Garden are also exquisite, with stained glass imported from France. Over 200 years ago, the price of glass was comparable to that of gold. The Grand Canal brought huge wealth to salt merchants. It also made Yangzhou an international trade center at that time.

Not far from the garden, there is a Marco Polo memorial, which is now crowded with visitors. The traveler from Europe, Marco Polo, once commented that Yangzhou was very large and

powerful. Jianzhen, Cui Zhiyuan, Puhardin and other sages of cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries have also left footprints in Yangzhou. Historically, Chinese culture has expanded its influence in the world through the Grand Canal. Today, Yangzhou still uses the canal as an emotional bond to conduct cultural and economic exchanges with the world.

Sanwan Canal Scenic Area

The altitude of northern Yangzhou is higher than that of southern Yangzhou. When the Huaihe River flowed into the Yangtze River through the ancient canal of Yangzhou, the water velocity was quite fast, which was not conducive to sailing. In 1597, under the leadership of Guo Guangfu, magistrate of Yangzhou in the Ming Dynasty, the canal was turned from straight to form three water bays. Guo also increased the length of the canal from 200 meters to 1,800 meters, so as to slow down the flow rate, achieving the effect of a dam.

Tianning Temple and Chongning Temple

Tianning Temple is where Emperor Qianlong of the Qing Dynasty lived during his southern tour. It was first built in the Eastern Jin Dynasty (317-420) and is one of the earliest Buddhist temples in Yangzhou.

Guazhou Ancient Town

Guazhou is at the intersection of two golden waterways of China, namely the Yangtze River and the Grand Canal. It was a sandbank in the middle of the Yangtze River, named after its shape resembling a "melon," or "Gua" in Chinese. With the siltation of sediment, Guazhou is connected to the north bank of the Yangtze River, and become the main point of water and salt transportation.

Poets have left nearly 10,000 poems here, including "Spring River in the Flower Moon Night" (Chun Jiang Hua Yue Ye) by Zhang Ruoxu of the Tang Dynasty and "The River All Red" (Man Jiang Hong) by Yue Fei, the most famous general in Southern Song Dynasty. The ancient ferry site, Yubei Pavilion, and Chenxiang Pavilion have become famous attractions.

Yangzhou city is built by the river and gets prosperous and beautiful by water. It is now shouldering the historical mission of reviving the ancient canal. In 2009, the World Historic and Cultural Canal Cities Cooperation Organization was established in Yangzhou. The city is also the permanent venue of the World Canal Cities Forum (WCCF). It hosted the first Grand Canal Culture and Tourism Expo.



Qingming Bridge, Wuxi 

the Jiangnan Canal

By Chen Lili

The Jiangnan Canal is the section of the Grand Canal south of the Yangtze River, which runs through Zhenjiang, Changzhou, Wuxi, and Suzhou. It was first excavated in the third century BC. In 610 during the reign of Emperor Yang of the Sui Dynasty (581-618), this section of the canal was expanded, forming the Jiangnan Canal.

In the past, the Jiangnan Canal served as the lifeline of transporting grains from

the south to the north, and goods from the north to the south. Today, it is still the most navigable and busiest waterway in the Grand Canal. It cuts across all the distributaries connecting the Taihu Lake basin with the Yangtze and Qiantang rivers, and connects to Shanghai through the Wusong River and Taipu River, nourishing the millennium prosperity of economy and culture in Jiangnan (the area south of the lower reaches of the Yangtze River).

From the bustling ferry to the misty water towns, Jiangnan is a painting, a poem, a song, a dream, a lingering memory, and a lifelong imagination. In one's lifetime, one must pay a visit to Jiangnan.



THREE MOUNTAINS, ONE LAKE, ONE FERRY

By Chen Lili & Zhou Xuanting

"Between Jingkou and Guazhou, one stretch of water; Mount Zhong right there beyond a few folded hills." wrote Wang Anshi, a great thinker of the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127), in his poem "To Berth the Boat at Guazhou." Jingkou, today's Zhenjiang, lies on the opposite bank of Guazhou. The Jingkou-Guazhou section formed a golden waterway where the Yangtze River and the Grand Canal meet.

The Zhenjiang section of the Grand Canal is the starting point of the Jiangnan Canal. Jiangnan is the most important grain-producing area, and Zhenjiang is the throat of grain transport. During the Song Dynasty, Zhenjiang was responsible for transporting 70 percent of the grain in the country. In 2009, several grain warehouse sites dating back to the Song and Yuan dynasties were discovered on Shuangjing Road.

In 1861, Zhenjiang port opened trade with foreign countries, which boosted the blending of the Western and Eastern cultures. Pearl S. Buck, a Nobel Prize winner in literature, spent her childhood in Zhenjiang. Having lived in Zhenjiang for 18 years, Buck regarded it as her "Chinese hometown," and Chinese as her "mother tongue." In Chongshi Girls' Middle School, where Buck studied, there is a former residence of her.

Zhenjiang is surrounded by mountains on its eastern, western, and southern sides, while the northern side is bordered by the Yangtze River. It is a renowned ancient city that boasts remarkable natural beauty.



Three Mountains

Three famous mountains are located along the Yangtze River: Jinshan Mountain, Jiaoshan Mountain, and Beigu Mountain.

Of these three mountains, Jinshan Mountain is the best-known. It was originally an islet in the middle of the Yangtze River, and did not connect with the mainland until the Qing Dynasty.

Jinshan Temple, built during the Eastern Jin Dynasty, is one of China's four most famous temples, along with Putuo Temple, Wenshu Temple, and Daming Temple. The temple is built into the mountain, creating a unique layout called "mountain surrounded by temple."

The Chinese folk story "The Legend of the White Snake" includes the story of "Floods in Jinshan Temple," with attractions such as Monk Fahai Cave and White Dragon Cave related to the story.



↑ Jinshan Lake

Jiaoshan Mountain is known for "temple surrounded by mountain."

Jiaoshan Mountain is the only islet in the Yangtze River that is surrounded by water on all sides. Jiaoshan Mountain is covered with lush vegetation, like a jasper floating river. The mountain is full of ancient trees and stone carvings. The distinctive temples, pavilions and other scenic spots are hidden among them, so there is a saying of "temple surrounded by mountain."

Jiaoshan Mountain is famous for an ancient temple, ancient trees, ancient stone tablets and ancient fort barrette. With a history of over 1,000 years, the Dinghui Temple is a famous ancient temple in China. The main buildings of the temple were built in the Ming Dynasty. In

its peak time, there were 98 halls, with several thousands of monks. The number of ancient trees in Jiaoshan Mountain accounts for about half of all ancient trees in Zhenjiang. There are more than 400 stone tablets of different dynasties. The most famous one is "Eulogy for Burying a Crane," which was written by a hermit for a dead crane.

Beigu Mountain sits between Jinshan Mountain and Jiaoshan Mountain. It overlooks the Yangtze River with precipitous and steep cliffs. Beigu Mountain is famous for many descriptions during the Three Kingdoms period. The ancient Ganlu Temple is well-known for the story known as "The Marriage of Emperor Liu Bei." There are many cultural relics on the mountain, such as the Sword

Testing Stone, and the tombs of General Taishi Ci and Lu Su of the East Wu Dynasty.

There are many poems about Beigu Mountain, such as "Passing by Beigu Mountain" by Wang Wan, a poet of the Tang Dynasty, and "Send-off to Xin Jian at Hibiscus Tower" by Wang Changling of the Tang Dynasty. The most famous poems are "Thoughts Gazing from Beigu Pavilion" and "Reminiscing the Past at Beigu Pavilion" by Xin Qiji of the Southern Song Dynasty.

One Lake

Jinshan Lake is located at the foot of Jinshan Mountain. The lake, Jinshan Temple and the rippling waves make for a refreshing sight.

The most popular attraction in the scenic area is the White Snake Love Culture Park, which features many bridges such as Lover's Bridge, Water Painting Bridge, Spinning Bridge, Thousand-Leafed Corridor Bridge, Landscape Suspension Bridge, and Xu Xian Embankment, connecting Cherry Blossom Garden, Baihui Pavilion, Qingxiu Garden, Lotus Pond, and Aquatic Plant Garden. Flowers bloom here throughout the year, creating a beautiful scenery of lakes and mountains.

One Ferry

Xijin Ferry is the cultural heritage of Zhenjiang. As the only ferry crossing to the Jiangbei (north of Yangtze) area, Xijin Ferry has an extremely important strategic position. In the past, Xijin Ferry was a prosperous place.

This ancient ferry crossing, like a living fossil, is the oldest, largest, and best-preserved historical cultural district of a ferry crossing in China, known as the "China Ancient Ferry Museum." As you stroll along the approximately 1,000-meter-long ancient street, you can see historical traces of the Six Dynasties period to the Qing Dynasty, spanning thousands of years. There is the Zhaoguan Stone Pagoda from the Yuan Dynasty, Fifty-three Slope, and Daidu Pavilion. Li Bai, Wang Anshi, Su Shi, Lu You, and Marco Polo have all waited for boats here.

Today, the ancient ferry no longer exists, but the hustle and bustle of the town remains. You can enjoy morning tea and admire the night scene. Various types of family inns, coffee shops, bars, and creative shops are also thriving in the area.



↑ Xijin Ferry

CHANGZHOU: MEETING SU DONGPO HERE

By Wang Chao & Fang Fei

In spring, the 2023 Industrial Tourism and Grand Canal Industrial Heritage Summit opened in Changzhou. At the opening ceremony, the sixth chairman of the International Inland Navigation Commission, David Edwards-May, delivered a special video message filmed at a water conservancy site near the Isère River in southeastern France.

THE CHANGZHOU CITY SECTION OF THE JIANGNAN CANAL

The Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal runs through Changzhou's city area for 23 kilometers, and the waterway from Biji Alley to Dongpo Park is becoming a scenic tourist corridor that combines scenery, historical and cultural attractions.

"Chengxiang," a specific concept of geographical region in Chinese history, usually refers to prosperous areas within and outside the city. With a history of more than 2,500 years of the Grand Canal, Changzhou has developed the feature of "the Ancient Chengxiang" where water, city,

residents and culture interact together perfectly. As the location of the Ancient Changzhou City, the Ancient Chengxiang is the destination which tourists just cannot miss. It appears the first site to explore the beauty of the Changzhou city. In the core area of the Ancient Chengxiang locates Changzhou Qingguo Lane Historical and Cultural District, which is the best-preserved and the most prestigious ancient lane in Changzhou city. Just next to the Qingguo Lane rides Changzhou Nanshi River, which is the oldest part of the World Cultural Heritage Site, the Grand Canal.

THE OLD CITY OF CHANGZHOU

Changzhou is also a city that thrives on the canal. After Fuchai became the king of the State of Wu, he hosted the excavation of a canal from Wangting in Suzhou to Benniu in Changzhou, which flowed into the Meng River and finally met the Yangtze River. It's the beginning of the Jiangnan section of the Grand Canal, nine years earlier than the Hangou Canal in Yangzhou. This section of the canal was known as the Spring and Autumn Canal.

In addition to the Spring and Autumn Canal,

there is also Spring and Autumn Yancheng Tourism Area here. It has a history of more than 2,700 years, with a large number of potteries, bronze ware, and even a canoe excavated from its relics.

In his "Changzhou Benniu Sluice," the Southern Song poet Lu You mentioned the proverb "If the harvest in Suzhou and Changzhou is good, no one fears famine." It proved that Changzhou became a main grain production base as early as in the Song Dynasty, instead of merely a grain transporting center.

Qingguo Lane 

BIJI ALLEY

Biji Alley is located in the west of Changzhou city, adjacent to the canal, and is where the ancient Pilin Post was located. It was formerly called Flower Market Street. Changzhou has been famous for making wooden combs since ancient times. Because of the excellent quality and beautiful design of the combs, they were offered to the imperial court, earning the reputation of "Changzhou combs lead the world." The entire street is devoted to the production of combs. At night, there is a constant flow of people and a continuous stream of buying and selling, with each household hanging palace lanterns. The lights reflect off the canal water, creating a dazzling scene that lasts all night.

Nowadays, one can still see ancient landmarks such as large docks, dock archways, Huanghua Pavilion, and Pilin Post Stone Tablets along the canal. During Emperor Qianlong's southern tour, he landed at the large dock in Biji Alley twice and entered the city. Pilin Post is also the place where Jia Baoyu appeared finally in the novel "A Dream of Red Mansion," where he said goodbye to his father Jia Zheng.

DONGPO PARK

On the other end of the ancient Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal in Changzhou lies Dongpo Park, named after the famous scholar and writer Su Dongpo in Northern Song Dynasty. In 2000, the French newspaper Le Monde selected the 12 millennium heroes between 1001 to 2000, and Su Dongpo was the only Chinese person selected.

Among all the cities along the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal, Changzhou holds particular significance for Su Dongpo. Although he was born in Meishan County, Sichuan Province, he visited Changzhou 14 times before spending his final 46 days in the city at the Tenghua Old Residence.

Inside Dongpo Park, there is a small and elegant pavilion called



"Yizhou Pavilion," which is surrounded by water on three sides. In 1073, Su Dongpo passed by Changzhou on his way from Hangzhou to Zhenjiang to relieve disaster and help those in need. It was Chinese New Year's Eve, and to avoid disturbing the local officials and people, Su Dongpo had his boat moored by the riverbank and spent the night here. To commemorate Su Dongpo, the people of Changzhou built the pavilion.

QINGGUO LANE

Located near the old Nanshi River in the central area of Changzhou is Qingguo Lane, which still retains the traditional Jiangnan-style residential architecture. The area was once a hub for shipping and trade of fruits from both the north and south. The local fruit shops along the riverfront were abundant, earning it the old name of

"Qian (thousand) Guo (fruits) Xiang (lane)." As the local dialect has difficulty distinguishing "qian" and "qing," it is known as "Qingguo Lane" today.

Remarkably, this 900-meter-long street is home to nearly 100 historical and modern celebrities, including Sheng Xuanhuai, the "father of Chinese industry," Zhao Yuanren and Zhou Youguang, linguists and composers, Qu Qiubai, a revolutionary hero, and Liu Haisu, a famous painter, among others.

WUXI:

A SECTION OF THE GRAND CANAL, THE WATER LANES OF JIANGNAN

By *Chen Lili & Zhou Min*

In Jiangsu, the Grand Canal connects the Wu culture, Jinling culture, Huaiyang culture, Chu-Han culture and other regional cultures, becoming the beautiful axis of Jiangsu..

THE WUXI SECTION OF THE JIANGNAN GRAND CANAL

The Grand Canal not only passes through Wuxi, but also hugs the city, shaping the turtle-back space of Wuxi Old Town, creating Beitang Street outside the north gate and Qingming Bridge Historic District outside the south gate.

The 1.5 km-long ancient canal section, across Tangqiao to Qingming Bridge, is about 20 meters wide. People live on both sides of the river. The temple, tower, river, street, bridge, kiln and residence coexist harmoniously.

THE QINGMING BRIDGE HISTORICAL COMMUNITY IN WUXI

Qingming Bridge is the oldest, largest, and most complete of its kind on the Wuxi section of the Grand Canal. The bridge was built during the Ming Dynasty. The reflection of the bridge in the water together with

the arched bridge deck forms a circle which looks like an eye, witnessing how Wuxi City becomes more and more prosperous through time.

In 1986, the renowned Japanese composer, Daisuke Inoue, visited Qingming Bridge and was inspired to compose the popular song "Qingming Bridge," which brought fame to the bridge in Japan and around the world.

Qingming Bridge is the gateway to experiencing the culture of the ancient canal in Wuxi. Looking east from the bridge, you'll see the Bodu Port and the former residence of Zhu Dachun, a prominent modern Chinese industrialist. Turning south, you'll see Dayao Road, which used to house hundreds of kilns producing durable and firm blue bricks that were transported throughout the country via the Grand Canal. Today, the site of these kilns is home to the Wuxi Pottery Museum. Looking west, you can catch a glimpse of

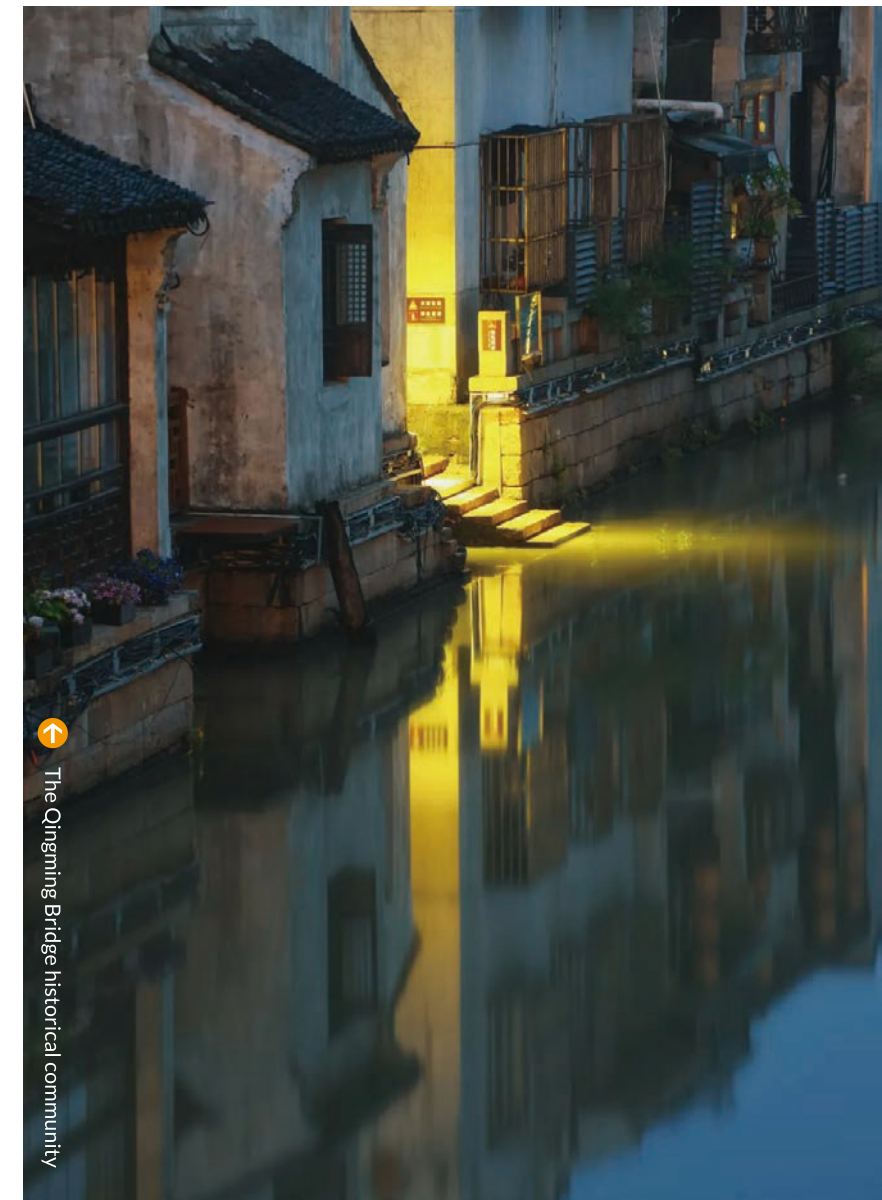


↑ Qingming Bridge

Nanchang Street, dotted with Jiangnan-style shops and bustling with a distinctive Jiangnan market atmosphere. At the end of the street, you'll find the Nanchan Temple. To the north, there is the Dagong Bridge built in 1929, and on its west side, stands the former site of Yongtai Silk Factory, which is now home to the China Silk Museum.

The Qingming Bridge historical community is centered around Qingming Bridge, which serves as the anchor of the ancient canal. The community stretches from Kuatang Bridge in the north to Nanshuixian Temple in the south, and from Wang Yuanji Cookware Factory in the east to the coastline of Dingsheng River in the west. The 1.5-kilometer-long Wuxi section of the ancient Grand Canal stretching from Kuatang Bridge to Qingming Bridge is the most important section of Wuxi's ancient canal. The Jiangnan-style residential buildings constructed on both riverbanks resemble narrow lanes with vendors' stands and workshops in the front and rear, earning them the reputation of the "rare section of the Grand Canal and Jiangnan water lanes."

The best way to see the ancient



↑ The Qingming Bridge historical community

canal and the city is by taking a boat tour. Boarding at the Nanchan Temple Dock, you can travel along the canal and journey back in time. You will see the modern high-rise buildings of today's cityscape gradually disappear from sight, replaced by ancient kilns, residences, bridges, alleys, temples, pagodas, and docks of the Ming and Qing dynasties.



SUZHOU:

THE MOST AUTHENTIC JIANGNAN- STYLE CITY

By *Chen Lili*

As the "most wonderful section" of the Jiangsu section of the Grand Canal, Suzhou is not only the world famous "City of Gardens", with "ten canal scenes," such as the Panmen Gate and the night mooring under Maple Bridge, but also the birthplace of Kunqu Opera, the oldest Chinese opera, the representative work of human oral and intangible heritage. Just like the famous local handicraft "double-sided embroidery," traditional culture and modern civilization meet and shine together here.

↑ Shantang Street, Suzhou

THE SUZHOU SECTION OF THE JIANGNAN CANAL

Open the map of Suzhou today, and compare with the map of Suzhou City in the Southern Song Dynasty "Pingjiang Map," along 1,000 years, Suzhou's pattern, "water and land parallel, river and street adjacent," continues to this day. With over 20,000 waterways and over 40 percent of its territory covered by water, Suzhou has remained a water and land city until now, with waterways adjacent to streets. The Grand Canal surrounds the ancient city of Suzhou like a jade belt.

Speaking of water cities, we cannot help but think of the Italian city of Venice. In fact, the two cities share a lot. In the 13th century, Marco Polo, the Venetian merchant, came to Suzhou and praised it as a noble city. In 1980, Suzhou and Venice became sister cities.

Suzhou was built over 1,000 years before Venice, and the phrase "Heaven above, Suzhou and Hangzhou below" dates back to the Tang Dynasty. The great Tang poet Bai Juyi, who was once the governor of Hangzhou, hosted the excavation of the Shantang Canal in Suzhou and built a causeway about 3.5 kilometers long using the silt from the canal.

PANMEN GATE

Panmen Gate is located in the southwest corner of the ancient Suzhou city wall. It is the only remaining water and land parallel gate in China, with a history of over 2,500 years.

It consists of two gates, the outer and inner, with a distance of 4.6 meters between them, acting like a water gate. The land gate is divided into two layers too, the inner and the outer, forming a unique square-shaped barbican, which was built to resist external enemies.



Baodai Bridge ↑

BAODAI BRIDGE

Baodai Bridge lies north and south across the mouth of the Daidai River, parallel to the ancient Grand Canal. It was first built in the Tang Dynasty and is also the longest and most complete large-scale ancient continuous arch stone bridge that still exists in China.

Baodai Bridge is situated in the tranquil Tantai Lake, and with its 53 arches, it looks like a jade belt adorned with 53 pearls. The bridge not only improves the

transportation between the Grand Canal and Dantai Lake but also stands as a magnificent scenic spot in the Jiangnan region, renowned for its exquisite craftsmanship and picturesque beauty.

SHANTANG HISTORIC AND CULTURAL BLOCK

Shantang Street runs from Changmen Gate to Huqiu (also known as Tiger Hill). The painting "Prosperous Suzhou" by Xu Yang, a Suzhou court painter in the Qing Dynasty, depicts the area from Xumen Gate to Shantang Street and portrays the most prosperous Suzhou of the Qianlong period over 200 years ago.

No. 603 Shantang Street sits the ancestral temple of the world-renowned architect I.M. Pei, who spent part of his childhood in the Lion Grove Garden owned by his family. The Suzhou Museum, which designed by Pei in his later years, is called the most beautiful museum in China.

At the end of Shantang Street is the gate of Huqiu. Su Shi, a literary giant of Song Dynasty once said that it would be a pity not to visit Huqiu in Suzhou. More than 2,400 years ago, King Helyu of Wu was killed in a war with the state of Yue and buried here. According to legend, a white tiger sat on the hill three days after the burial, so it was named Huqiu (Tiger Hill).

Huqiu has two famous attractions. The Sword Pond is said to be the entrance of King Helyu's

tomb, and the Huqiu Pagoda, known as "the leaning tower of China," appeared in Western enlightenment literature "A Pictorial Description of the Chinese Empire."

PINGJIANG HISTORIC AND CULTURAL BLOCK

Pingjiang Road, more than 1,600 meters long, is located between the Humble Administrator's Garden and the Luohan Yuan twin towers. Pingjiang Historical and Cultural District is called "Jiangnan cultural museum without walls."

Suzhou Pingtan (storytelling and ballad singing in Suzhou dialect), Kunqu Opera, Suzhou embroidery and Hanfu (traditional Chinese costume) are ubiquitous on Pingjiang Road. The essence of ancient Suzhou city is integrated in over 100 cultural relics and historic sites including the Ouyuan Garden, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the China Kunqu Opera Museum, city walls, waterways, bridges, alleys, residential houses, gardens, guild halls, temples, ancient wells, trees, and archways.

Suzhou is a city that thrives on the Grand Canal. Traversing the Yangtze River and Taihu Lake, the Grand Canal brings vitality to Suzhou. It has given birth to the Jiangnan culture, such as Kunqu Opera, dubbed as "mother of Chinese operas,"

and Suzhou Pingtan, attracting many people. The Jiangnan culture, represented by Kunqu Opera, has spread northward along the Grand Canal. Many made-in-Suzhou products have been transported to other parts of China and even the world.

For my friend of Nepal Mahim Singh, a student from the School of International Education at Nanjing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics, quiet canals, traditional ships, antique gardens, and ancient streets make Suzhou a perfect place. "As I walked along the stone-paved walkway by the canal, I felt like I was touching history. I can observe that the local people keep their traditions. They cooked delicious wontons over a wood fire and served them in quaint Chinese porcelain bowls. Sitting by the river, I saw locals fishing in the river



and heard a local old woman singing a melodious ballad. I could feel her attachment to and pride in the place."

If you want to know the Jiangnan area better, you can't miss Suzhou. Take a boat tour southward on the Grand Canal, just like what Tang Dynasty poet Zhang Ji did. The Maple Bridge which Zhang docked at has become one of the top ten Grand Canal attractions in Suzhou. Visiting Maple Bridge and listening to the clock chimes has become a must-see for many tourists.

Years upon years, Suzhou has always been bearing people's aspiration for a better life. At present, the city is drawing a new painting of "Prosperous Suzhou." Now it is forging ahead modernization with Chinese characteristics. The city and the Grand Canal are thriving with vitality.



↑ Pingjiang Historic and Cultural Block

GROWING CIRCLE OF CANAL FRIENDS

By *Geng Chunxiao*

More than 500 canals around the world have endowed over 3,000 cities with a common culture. Along the winding canals, each city is like a musical note, crooning the praise song "Living by the Canal."

From the ancient Chinese legend "Emperor Yu Controls the Waters" to the biblical story of "Noah's Ark," "water" has always been one of the integral part of the world's civilization. Driven by such different purposes as irrigation, navigation and flood control, human beings have made the same choice in water-control—the excavation of canals. Canals are witnessing the determination, persistence and wisdom of human beings in transforming and utilizing nature.

Many countries in the world have canals. Of the canals in the world, Canal du Midi in France, the Canal du Centre in Belgium, the Rideau Canal in Canada, Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal in the United Kingdom, and Seventeenth-Century Canal Ring Area of Amsterdam in Netherlands were listed as World Cultural Heritage sites. The Suez Canal and the Panama Canal are still playing the role as international shipping hubs. Whether in history or now, the canals have promoted the coordinated development and cultural exchanges between regions through shipping, and have also recorded the lifestyle and struggle of people in different countries.

The Grand Canal was not built in a day, but connected by canals constructed at different periods. The Grand Canal has been "alive" as it has been in use. Historically, the people on both sides of the Grand Canal were closely related to the Grand Canal, and they depended on the Grand Canal to survive and lived on the transportation of the Grand Canal. The Grand Canal has brought prosperity for the cities on both sides as well. Today, there are still many people living on the boats, and their work and life are closely integrated with the Grand Canal. The continued splendor of the Grand Canal culture stems from the uninterrupted flow of the canal, the cultural

traditions, survival wisdom and artistic creations of the people along the canal. For generations, they have lived by the canal which intermingles the characteristics of both the north and the south.

So many world-renowned cities owe their charm to a developed water system. Scenic spots along the Grand Canal in charming Jiangsu are mesmerizing. They encompass tangible cultural heritage such as bridges, embankments, locks, temples, river sections, docks, shipyards, granaries, warehouses, alleys, old residences, ancient towns, inscriptions, historical sites of famous figures, water conservancy relics, and theme

museums. Additionally, there is intangible cultural heritage, like literature and art (ancient poetry and paintings) related to the canal, traditional crafts, local opera, and folk customs. Moreover, the vibrant life on ships and on both sides of the canal is truly enchanting.

The Grand Canal is the name card through which Jiangsu communicates with the world, showcasing Jiangsu's enthusiasm for taking the tide and facing the future. The millennium canal connects cities of charming Jiangsu. The Grand Canal bridges the ancient and modern times. The splendid events related to the canal links China and the rest of the world.



Xuzhou section of the Grand Canal



蘇州山塘街
Shantang Street, Suzhou