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A Day in the Life of Shui Jianhua

—REPORT FROM SPLENDID VILLAGE—

GUIZHOU, China

May 1998

Mr. Peter Bird Martin
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Dear Peter:

My internal alarm clock sounded at 4:57 a.m. I drew back the mosquito netting, switched on the light bulb that hung from a wire above the bed and pulled on my clothes. In a matter of minutes Shui Jianhua, my 26-year-old farmer friend, and I were off to begin his day.

We walked up an uneven stony path, passing quiet wooden village homes in the faint pre-dawn light, and headed toward a series of terraced rice paddies that cut into the mountainside like a staircase.

"I can already feel that it is going to be another hot sunny day," Jianhua said. "If we have many more days like this, those who haven't yet planted their rice seedlings will be in trouble. Look at the village party secretary's paddies over there; he hasn't even plowed yet. It's a good thing I've already gotten all of my seedlings in."¹

As we continued along the path a solitary, bent-over figure became visible in the morning darkness, standing knee-deep in a paddy. "That's villager Meng," Jianhua told me after he greeted her. "She's had a difficult life. Her husband was killed by a car in Duyun [the prefecture capital] while making a delivery with a pushcart. He was just trying to earn some money for the family. Both of her daughters were deceived and sold as wives while working as migrant labor in Guangdong Province. And her two sons are not good for very much. The woman carries tremendous burdens."

We continued along the path. "Here are some of my paddies," Jianhua said proudly as we stepped onto a narrow mud retainer-wall that separated two levels of paddies, each the size of small putting greens. Carefully placed rows of tender-green rice seedlings, each row separated by about four inches, poked above the surface through the water-filled plots.

Surprised by a sudden movement in the dimly lit water, I asked,

¹ Rice seedlings are grown to a height of six inches in a nursery paddy (they look like grass because they are planted so close together) then are bundled and transferred to open paddies where each seedling is placed six inches apart in rows. Before the seedlings are transplanted the open paddies are plowed.

“What’s that in the water over there?”

“Oh, those are just little fish we put in the paddies. By the time harvest comes and we drain the paddies, they’ll grow as large as my hand. You should come back then. We have a fish feast. It’s a lot of fun.”

Jianhua’s first task of the day was to divert the flow of a spring-fed rivulet that emerged from a rock-faced cliff above his paddies. During the night the stream had been used to water a neighbor’s network of paddies; now it was his turn. Before he introduced the flow of fresh water, Jianhua first inspected each paddy’s outlet, a six-inch-wide opening that functions to retain water or to release it into a spillway that leads to the paddy below. At some of the outlets he constructed a small mud wall in order to dam the flow of water. In other paddies that were more full, he patted the mud wall down a bit, or adjusted several stones to release a trickle of water. The understanding and skill that enabled Jianhua to maintain appropriate water levels — with the use of gravity only — in this labyrinth of irrigation channels half-way up the side of a mountain, was quite impressive.

“Every other day from 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. and from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. it’s my turn to use the stream’s water to irrigate my paddies.”

“How long has this system been in place?”

“Four years. Before that there were too many arguments among villagers over who would get to use how much water, and when. So the village leaders put this arrangement into place; things are much better now. A 24-hour system that gives people several hours access at a time ensures that most get the water they need.” (Some paddies and fields are totally dependent on rainwater.)

“This section of the trail is very steep. You continue at your own pace,” Jianhua continued. “I’ll go up to the top, up where the trees begin, to switch the flow of water into my paddies. I’ll meet you up there.” As he finished his sentence Jianhua skipped up the steep path into the darkness.

Thus a day in the life of villager Shui Jianhua began, with the switching of life-sustaining water into his network of rice paddies.

Shui Jianhua lives in a mountain community called Splendid in southern Guizhou Province. To get to Splendid from Duyun, one has to travel by bus for several hours, hike for 60 minutes along a crystalline mountain stream and then climb straight up for 30 minutes. The village sits perched among rock ledges, waterfalls and pine forests. The view from his home is breathtaking — I have never seen a cathedral so stunning.

Typical of the area, Splendid Village’s 1,000 members work hard just to maintain a subsistence-level of living. The village homes are divided into eight sub-communities (*zu*) that dot the mountainside. Primary crops grown are rice, maize, potatoes, wheat and cabbage. All work is done manually. A “man’s best friend” is the beast that pulls the plow: water buffalo, oxen or horse.

Agricultural goods for the most part are consumed by the villagers themselves. Other sources of income include raising pigs and capturing wild animals such as snakes. The biggest income-producers for Splendid Village, however, are family members who have left to work as migrant laborers in either nearby urban areas like Duyun or in far away coastal cities like Guangzhou and Shenzhen.

Almost everything in Splendid Village is hand-made.



Networks of rice paddies, like these at the head of the gorge that leads to Shui Jianhua’s village, are irrigated by spring-fed rivulets or are totally dependent on rain water. Knowledge of how to maintain appropriate water levels, with the aid of gravity alone, helps to ensure a good harvest.



The view from Jianhua's home: a cathedral built of steep mountains, deep valleys, terraced rice fields and groves of timber.

Houses and most furniture are built from local pine; roof-tiles are baked in local kilns; every part of the plow except the iron blade is made from tree limbs; and baskets are made from local bamboo.

Items that are not made by the villagers (such as pots and pans, rope, plastic items, rat poison and fertilizer) are purchased or traded for at the nearest market town, which is a three-hour hike away. Markets are open on calendar days that end with the numbers 3 and 8. On market days over 10,000 residents from the surrounding mountains pour into the town to buy and sell.

Though Splendid Village belongs to one of the poorer townships in the area [average annual per-capita income

hovers around U.S.\$80], there have been improvements in recent years. The most exciting was the introduction of electricity in December, 1997 — just six months before my visit. The villagers say the most important way electricity has changed their lives is convenience. Instead of having to build a separate fire to cook rice, for example, many of the village homes can now accomplish the same task by flipping the switch on an electric rice-cooker. Jianhua even has a used black-and-white television that receives one channel. The reception is horrible, but it's television — and for the first time in Splendid history.

While electricity has kindled enthusiasm in Splendid Village, poverty remains a chronic reality. The village's remote location, transport (everything must be carried



Clusters of dark wooden houses with black tile roofs characterize the village communities around Splendid. Patchworks of rice paddies surround each village.

by men, women or animals from the nearest road) and other infrastructure limitations are key determinants of the village's poor living standard.

Education levels reflect the hardship. Of the 300-plus Splendid elementary school-age children, less than half attend school. Many families cannot afford the U.S.\$12 tuition or choose not to send daughters to school. Splendid Village's elementary-school students are about 70 percent male. Village illiteracy surpasses 65 percent.

Similar to much of the southern half of Guizhou Province, Splendid Village is populated by ethnic-minority people and, like villages, is composed of a mix of ethnic groups that intermarry. Splendid Village is 60 percent Shui, 30 percent Miao and 10 percent Buyi ethnic minority. Because the majority are Shui, and the village is located near a county primarily populated by Shui people, most of the villagers have adopted Shui customs and language. Actually, the men dress like Han Chinese (Mao jackets, etc.). The women, however, wear traditional Shui dress. In addition to speaking Shui dialect, most villagers speak a local variety of Mandarin Chinese.

Shui Jianhua's family is typical. His father is Buyi and his mother is Shui. Though Jianhua's wife is also Buyi, neither of them can speak Buyi. And because his wife is from another county, she cannot speak Shui either. As a result, Jianhua and his wife speak a local variety of Mandarin with each other. Jianhua's family and Splendid Village are a fascinating medley of language and culture.

Though Jianhua's family farms six *mu* of land [a bit more than a half an acre] spread over 21 paddies, and has plenty of grain to eat, the family members realize that they must find income outside Splendid Village to maintain a stable life.² In Splendid Village, at least one member of nearly every family has left to find work in urban areas. Three of Jianhua's five immediate family members are part of China's migrant labor force. His parents both work as janitors in Duyun and his brother has been working in a Guangdong Province factory for three years. Jianhua's sister was married several years ago; she lives in a nearby village. Even Jianhua, who is just 26, has done construction work on the coast of Guangxi Province for five years and pedaled a pedicab in Duyun for three years. As long as one family member remains in the village to tend the paddies and animals, Jianhua's family believes that it is best that everyone else work in urban areas.

Life, then, for Shui Jianhua and the rest of his fellow

villagers, is lived on the margins. And though Splendid Village appears to be a well-integrated and basically self-sufficient community, I realized after joining Jianhua for a typical day of work that life in Guizhou's mountains is a tremendously challenging way to live.

* * *

After Jianhua diverted the water's flow into his paddies we headed back toward the village. Pre-dawn darkness had given way to morning light.

It was a few minutes after 6 a.m. and the village had come to life: women stood in rows across paddies, bent over as they planted rice seedlings; a man with a plow over his shoulder walked by leading a water buffalo by a rope connected to the animal's nose; small groups of children gathered to make the 30-minute descent to the elementary school that sits alongside the stream at the foot of the mountain.

When we reached his home, Jianhua's wife, Meili had already left to help others plant their paddies. Several days before Jianhua and Meili had finished their planting with others' help; now it was time to return the favor. Their 20-month-old baby, Xiao Xia, was still fast asleep. That is, until she heard Daddy's voice.

Jianhua went to the back room and the family bed where Xiao Xia sat crying. He brought her out to the opening in front of the house, crouched and held her over the edge of the wall. As was the morning ritual, Jianhua whistled to help her urinate. He said proudly that little Xiao Xia almost never wets their bed.

Jianhua began to prepare breakfast: potatoes we had dug out of the ground the previous evening, pork fat I had brought from Duyun, and a flavorful chili-pepper sauce. He prepared the soupy mixture in a wok that slowly cooked over a charcoal fire.

As I sat outside waiting for breakfast a news broadcast began to blare over a loudspeaker installed on a villager's roof. After the 30-minute news broadcast came announcements from the township government. "String must be used when planting your rice seedlings," said a stern voice. "If you are caught planting without string, all of your rice will be pulled up." Using string helps to align the rows of rice and increases productivity, Jianhua said. At the same time, however, it slows the planting process that everyone is so eager to complete.

The loudspeaker is part of a one-way communication

² On its six *mu* of land the Shui family has a 50-year lease, which began in 1980 when the land was divided among the villagers. I asked Jianhua's uncles what it was like when the land was distributed. They said it was a very tense time — no one wanted to get the short end of the deal. In an effort to satisfy everyone, the land was divided by general categories of soil quality and then parceled out to families in shares of approximately one *mu* per person (six members of Jianhua's immediate family lived together at the time). As a result, Jianhua's 21 plots of land are not in one place; they are scattered throughout areas of varying soil quality.

Jianhua with his wife and child — they depend on each other and often work together. Little Xiao Xia plays by herself in the fields while her parents work.



system between the township and its villages. The township government can broadcast news and make announcements from it, and it can even pass messages to individual villagers over the system. But there is no way for the village to communicate back to the township.

After breakfast — Jianhua ate five large bowls of rice, compared to my one — we fed the animals. Jianhua owns a strong mare that had borne a foal just a month earlier. The mare was given raw grain (leftover wheat from last year's harvest); the foal still drank its mother's milk. Two large sows and three younger pigs were fed slop — an assortment of wild greens cut in the mountains, the tops of the potato plants we had pulled out of the ground the day before, and leftovers. Jianhua's two chickens were left to forage for food on their own. Nothing is wasted in Splendid Village.

The major event of Jianhua's day was to hike to the township to purchase fertilizer, transport it home and spread it over the paddies.

Meili, Jianhua's wife, returned for breakfast; the two of them discussed the day's agenda. They depend on each other, and seem like a good team. Today, little Xiao Xia would ride on her mother's back as she worked in the paddies with the other women. The baby was secured to her mother's back with a wrap-around cloth backpack.

By the time Jianhua's mare had finished eating we were ready to set out. Jianhua attached a saddlepack to the mare's back that would be used to carry the fertilizer. He was quick to say, however, that because the mare had worked so hard for the past two weeks plowing, and was still nursing the foal, he would lighten her load by carrying a bag of fertilizer himself. Lead the mare, and with an empty, X-shaped wooden rack on

his shoulder, Jianhua set off for the 90-minute hike.

This was the foal's first trip beyond the village paddies; she skipped along beside her mother, not wanting to be left behind.

Jianhua was quite proud of his animals, especially the mare. He commented on what a great worker it was, how responsive it was to his verbal commands. He could release the mare from miles away with a load and it would return directly home. Jianhua said his secret was that he does not strike the animal unless it is disobedient, and he is careful not to overwork it. As we navigated the incline that led down to the village elementary school, the mare slipped occasionally because the decline was so sharp.

When we arrived at a stall that sells cigarettes, drinks and odds and ends next to the school, Jianhua's cousin, who runs the shop, motioned us over. A few others had already gathered and were peering into a burlap sack that had something alive in it. I looked in — and jumped back. The bag was thick with snakes. "The poisonous ones bring the best money," the cousin explained. He asked Jianhua if he wanted to buy them. Jianhua told his cousin it was not worth the money to make the selling trip to Duyun unless there were more of them.

As we continued on our way Jianhua explained that he knew four snake traders from wealthy Guangdong Province who live in Duyun. "My friends and relatives know I have these contacts, so they like to sell to me. Then I sell to the traders. But I would not dare let them know how to contact the traders directly," he added. "They'd undercut me."

Though not yet noon, the sun shone brightly. An unusual string of about eight sunny days had concerned

farmers, especially those with paddies that were not fed by spring water. Our path traced a beautiful stream that wound through towering mountains.

In the distance, heading in our direction, I could see four colorful umbrellas. The four people beneath them looked like city folk on a field trip. "Who are those people?" I asked.

"They are township officials who have come out to inspect whether or not we have used string to align our rice seedlings."

We exchanged greetings as we passed each other. They looked surprised to see a foreigner walking with a villager, a horse and its foal.

"All four of them are wicked," Jianhua said with spite after they passed. "Especially the guy that's walking in front. When we had our baby I got fined 100 yuan (U.S.\$12) because we did not register first. When he came to collect the money and I didn't have the cash, he threatened to take my horse 'til I paid up. I'd like to box his ears!"

"Have you ever considered running for village head?" I asked. "You seem to have a strong interest in the way things are run and I can tell a lot of the people in the village respect you. You have village elections coming up the end of this year, don't you?"

"You're right, we have elections in December. But in Splendid Village all politics are determined by the township government. So while there are village elections in Splendid Village, they are nothing more than a farce. I'm not interested in village politics."³

We hopped across the stream. The mare and her foal stopped to drink.

"You spend a lot of time by yourself working in the paddies and transporting goods back and forth from the township," I said. "What do you think about when you're alone?"

Jianhua thought for awhile and replied, "I mainly think about the tasks that have to be done around my home and fields. I also recall the years I worked as a migrant laborer. I've been back in the village for only two years; we returned home after we were married." He paused, then added, "I also think of how I might be able to make a little extra money, ways to support my family, especially as our daughter grows."

"Why did you head to the coast to work in the first place?"

"Just after I graduated from junior high school I got into an argument with my father. I simply left a note the following morning saying that I was on my way to the coast to work. It probably wasn't the best way to plan, but that's the way it happened. Though living far from home was difficult and working conditions as a construction worker were bitter, I'm glad I did it. I stayed on the coast for five years. Then after that I rode a pedicab for several years in Duyun. That's when I met my wife. My years working outside were tough, but they were good. I wasn't married at the time and I was able to save some money."

We walked for awhile in silence, then asked each other more questions. Jianhua asked me about life in the United States: Do you have farms? Do you grow rice? Do you plow with water buffalo, oxen or horses? How much is your salary? How do you figure ways to make money in your country? Most of the questions he asked me were about work and money — I suppose they reflect much of his own life's preoccupations.

"Do you have any dreams for the future?" I asked.

"How can you have dreams when you live in a place like Splendid Village?" We walked a bit farther, then he added, "If my brother returns from the coast to take up the family responsibilities in the village, I'd like to head back out for more work in an urban area. I think it's the best hope I have. I'd have to be away from my wife and daughter, and I don't like that, but there's no other way."

By this point we were almost to the township. Jianhua began to see people he knew and greetings were exchanged. "Come to our home and sit for awhile," said people who weren't working in the paddies. Those in the paddies said, "Come down here and give us a hand."

Not wanting to offend anyone, I asked Jianhua, "Are they serious? Do all these people want us to come to their home, and do the others expect us to roll up our pants and get in the paddy with them?"

"Just say to everyone that we'll come another day. They're just being polite."

Shortly thereafter, we arrived at the township store, which was like a scene from a western movie. We left our horses out in an open area while we looked for the woman who ran the store, which took awhile. We then purchased our

³ In 1987, the China's National People's Congress passed a law establishing the structure and functions of village committees. According to the law, these committees are to be directly elected bodies, comprising three to seven members that oversee village administrative and economic affairs. International organizations like the International Republican Institute have observed that since village elections were instituted the process has, generally speaking, become increasingly democratic. Since 1987, the Ministry of Civil Affairs has provided guidelines and training in open nomination procedures, multi-candidate election, secret-ballot voting, transparent vote tabulation and immediate transfer of power. The case of Splendid Village, however, demonstrates that some areas of China's countryside are yet to join this hopeful process.

goods: two 110-pound bags of soil nutrient (they were out of fertilizer) and a few pieces of candy for Jianhua's little daughter. Jianhua said she always inspected his pockets for goodies when he returned home.

The township is not impressive. It is a modest collection of a few buildings — some concrete, some dilapidated wood — that house a few dozen township government officials and a junior high school.⁴ The township is more an administrative center than a community. Splendid Village is just one of 12 villages (more than 10,000 people) under the township's administrative umbrella.

We split one of the bags into two 55-pound sacks and strapped them onto the saddlepack that rested on the mare's back. Jianhua fit the other bag onto the X-shaped wooden rack and groaned as he hoisted it on to his shoulder. We were off.

For the return to Splendid Village Jianhua decided to take a route that was a bit shorter, but much steeper. It was past noon by this time and the unusually bright day made the sun feel especially hot.



We didn't talk as much on the way back.

At one point, though, about 20 minutes into the trek, as the four of us [mare, foal, Jianhua and I] hiked single-file across the face of a steep mountainside, Jianhua said to me, "if you get tired let me know." I shook my head and grinned to myself — Jianhua was shouldering over 55 pounds; I was carrying six pieces of candy for his daughter in a plastic bag.

As we zigzagged through rice paddies and rock ledges we passed hikers and paddy workers who knew Jianhua. The closer we got to home, the more everyone seemed to be related. "That's my sister-in-law's father," or "that's

The township country store. With the exception of market days in nearby towns every five days, farmers from 12 surrounding mountain villages come here to buy odds and ends.



⁴ Township government officials are the lowest strata of administration in China to receive government salaries. Village-level officials (e.g., village party secretary, village head and village accountant) are not on the government payroll. This reality has interesting implications for local politics, especially the widespread problem of corruption.

Jianhua, with his mare and foal, returning to Splendid Village from the township store. Shouldering a 55-pound bag of soil nutrient as we climbed the mountain trail, Juanhua told me he often makes the trip three times in a day.



my second-cousin's wife," he would endlessly explain.

"When you're not working hard to keep up your farm, and are not with your wife and daughter, I said, "what do you do when you have spare time?"

"I love catching and raising mountain thrush. I'm raising three right now. They sing beautifully, but best of all they like to fight. I take one of my caged thrushes high up into the mountains and let it sing. Its singing often attracts other wild thrush. The wild thrush comes near the cage and begins to sing along, but soon they begin to try to fight. At that point I throw a big net and try to capture the wild bird. Besides enjoying raising them myself, I can sell a good fighter for over 100 yuan (U.S.\$12) in Duyun."

We passed a paddy that looked dangerously dry. Jianhua said, "Whoever plants that paddy will be in big trouble if it doesn't rain within the next day or two."

"Has there ever been a famine or natural disaster in Splendid Village?" I asked.

"In the early 1970s there was a famine and many died, but nothing on that scale has happened since then."

The mare, which Jianhua felt sorry for because it had not been fitted with horseshoes, struggled up sections of the mountain, especially where there were smooth rocks and footing was unsure. The little foal appeared exhausted, but seemed even more scared of being separated from its mother.

We arrived home at about 2 p.m., more than four hours after leaving.

As anticipated, little Xiao Xia searched her Daddy's

pockets and was given her candy. As with infants the world over, sugar was the ticket.

We ate a stew of cabbage for lunch, with rice and chili-pepper sauce.

We had originally planned to spread fertilizer in the paddies during the afternoon, but because the township store was sold out, the job would have to wait for another day. As a result, the late afternoon was more relaxed. Jianhua's wife and little Xiao Xia returned to their friend's rice paddies to help plant.

Because of the dryness, Jianhua decided to check his fields again — proper water levels are important for a good crop, he said.

While crossing from one field to another, Jianhua spotted a mongoose family in the brush — a mother and three offspring. Quite by accident, he found himself standing between them and their den. As the mongooses scurried in desperation, Jianhua ripped off his shirt and lunged at them, capturing one of the little ones in his shirt.

Though the mongoose bit him, Jianhua could not have been happier: "This little guy will solve our rat problem. One sniff of the mongoose and the rats will flee our home."

The rest of the afternoon was spent admiring the caged mongoose as it snapped at live frogs that Jianhua dangled from strings. Village kids, arriving home from school, peered admiringly at Jianhua — their hero who had captured the vicious little critter.

By about 8 p.m. it was too dark to work outside. Village fires and rice cookers began to do their work. We began dinner at about 9 p.m.,

which Jianhua said was normal. Before dinner began, however, all animals were fed and watered.

As we ate I asked Jianhua and Meili if they remembered the first time they spoke to each other. He had told me earlier that they met while working in Duyun, the prefecture capital, but I did not know the story. I've always found it interesting (and fun) to ask a couple if they remember when they first spoke. Meili blushed, but Jianhua started right in.

"At the time, I rode a pedicab in Duyun and Meili sold shish kabobs with her cousin. We rented rooms on the same street and I would notice her as we often passed each other on the street. I began to try to find a way to say something to her. One day it was raining very hard and as I was walking down the road she quite unexpectedly walked past me very quickly. I yelled out as she passed, 'Hey, you splashed mud on me' (even though she hadn't). She said she was sorry. I teased, 'Well, just be careful next time.' She hurried on. And the rest is history."

Meili, who was quite shy, blushed and squirmed as her husband talked — but you could tell she was enjoying it. Jianhua then asked me to answer the same question about when I first spoke to my wife. We laughed a lot.

As I got to the part in *my* story where I was going to say, "and the rest is history," Splendid Village's party secretary and the village head (the #1 and #2 of the village) knocked on the door. They were both Jianhua's relatives.

We spent the next hour talking about Splendid his-

tory, its struggle with poverty, its successes (such as the recently supplied electricity) and its future. It was an enlightening conversation, but by about 11p.m. I could barely keep my eyes open. Jianhua was still going strong, but I decided to turn in.

My bed was on the second floor of his two-story home. I pulled off my clothes and lay down. It was 11:01 p.m. During the night it began to rain. And it poured. Spring-fed rivulets gushed white-water mud, and streams turned into flooding torrents. Next morning, word reached the village that three elementary-age children had been swept off a single-log bridge they had tried to cross on their way to school. They were not hurt, but it was a close call.

"For most of the farmers," Jianhua told me over breakfast, "the heavy rain has saved them. But not everyone is happy about it."

Across the valley from Jianhua's front door a rice paddy's earthen wall had collapsed during the night. Three men feverishly shoveled the mini-mudslide with hoes, trying to divert the cascading water.

"I'll have to get out to check my paddies," Jianhua said. "I'll adjust the outlets a bit and I should be fine."

Though there was initially some question — and much debate among the villagers — about whether I would be able to hike out of Splendid Village because of flooded streams, I was able to make it without any problems.

As I hiked along the muddy trail that just 24 hours earlier Jianhua and I had walked with his mare and foal, I considered the extent to which



As we finished dinner the village party secretary and village head showed up to discuss Splendid Village.



Jianhua's 20-month-old daughter, Xiao Xia, peering out their window. I wonder how different life will be for her in 20 years as an adult in Guizhou's mountainous countryside?

a day in the life of this 26-year-old farmer speaks of a greater reality of village life in China.

Like his father, Jianhua has to work extremely hard just to subsist and the lack of cash is a constant problem. Yet whereas his father knew only communes, campaigns and revolutions as he was growing up, Jianhua has known only reform. In addition, Jianhua has seen and experienced much more as a migrant laborer, something his father could never have done as a young man. As a

result, Jianhua has higher expectations and hopes for his life. According to Jianhua, for example, he and other young villagers now complain more about what is just; they recently protested against a corrupt township education official. Jianhua also has better access to material goods. Hey, he can even watch his new used-television!

Sincerely,

Index to ICWA Letters by Daniel Wright

Entries refer to ICWA Letter (DBW-1, etc.) and page, with Letter number given before each page entry

A

adopt-a-student 4.7
 agricultural cooperative foundation
 (*nongye hezuo jijinhui*) 4.3
 agriculture 5.6

B

Baisuo Town 4.2
 Bank of China 1.6
baozi (Chinese breakfast dumpling) 1.5
 Barnett, Doak 1.9, 7.3
 Beijing 2.5, 2.7
 "Blood Field" 3.3
 Boyao Township 4.1, 4.6
 Buck, Pearl 7.3
 Bund 1.1, 1.2
 Burghardt, U.S. Consul General Raymond
 7.1
 Buyi 1.6, 8.4

C

Calamity and Reform in China 2.6
 Carter, Jimmy 7.4
 Chen Junsheng 3.6
 Chiang Kai-shek 2.3, 7.3

China Southwest Airlines 1.4
 Chinese Academy of Sciences 6.3
 Chinese Academy of Social Sciences 6.2
 Chinese New Year 5.1
 Chinese Spring Festival 5.2
 Chongqing 2.4
 Clinton, President Bill 7.1
 Communist 2.2
 communist revolution 7.3
 county-towns (*xian cheng*) 4.1
 CPPCC (Chinese People's Political
 Consultative Conference) 1.7
 Crow, Carl 7.3
 Cultural Revolution 2.5, 2.6, 2.7
 culture 5.1

D

Daguan Village 3.2, 3.5, 4.1
 Dalian 6.5
 Dazhai production brigade 3.2
 Deng Xiaoping 1.1, 1.2, 1.9, 2.7, 6.1, 6.2,
 6.8, 7.5
 Dongguan 5.4
 Dunkin Doughnuts 7.6
 Duyun 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.9, 2.1,
 8.4

E

economic conditions and trends
 1.6, 2.7, 3.6, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7
 Education and Economic Development
 for Ethnic Minorities (3E) 1.7
 ethnic groups. *See* Buyi; Han; Miao; Shui

F

Fifteenth Party Congress 1.1
 filling station 4.6
 fishing 4.10
 floating population 5.2
 Focal Point (*Jiaodian Fangtan*) 6.3
 Fourteenth Party Congress 6.2, 6.3
 Fuquan City 2.4

G

Gao Gang Harbor 1.2
 geography 1.5
 Grand Canal 1.2
 Great Leap Forward 2.2, 2.6
 Great Wall 7.7
 Guangdong Province 5.1, 5.6, 6.2, 8.4
 Guangxi Province 1.5, 8.4
 Guangzhou 1.4, 1.5, 1.6

guerrilla warfare 2.4
Guiyang 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 2.1, 7.2
Guizhou *Economic Daily* 5.7
Guizhou Province 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 2.1,
2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.7, 2.10, 3.2, 5.1, 6.2,
6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 7.1

H

Han 1.6, 8.4
Hard Rock Cafe 6.8
He Yuanliang 3.2
history 2.2
Hong Kong 1.1, 1.5, 1.6, 1.9
Hu Angang 3.1, 6.2, 6.3
Hunan province 5.5

I

'impoverished township' 4.7
investment per capita 6.2
iron rice bowl 5.5

J

Japanese occupation 2.2
Jiading Township 4.9
Jiang Zemin 1.1, 2.4, 4.1, 6.3
Jiangsu Province 1.2, 1.3, 1.6, 2.7, 4.3,
7.2
Jiangxi Province 2.2
Jiaotong University 2.4
Jiuqian tujiu (home-grown rice wine) 2.5
Judd, Walter 7.3
jump into the sea 1.6

K

Karnow, Stanley 7.4
Kou'an 1.2
Kuomintang party 2.2, 2.4

L

'Lady Democracy' (*ziyou nushen*) 7.5
Laos 1.5
Lei Feng 3.2
Li Cheng 1.4
Li Peng 6.3
Libo County 4.8
life styles 1.6, 5.3, 8.4
Liu ji 1.1
Liu Shaoqi 2.5, 2.6
Luce, Henry R. 7.3
Luodian County 3.2

M

Madsen, Richard 7.5
Mandarin Chinese 8.4
Manifest Destiny 7.2
Mao jackets 1.6
Mao Zedong 2.3, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 3.2, 7.5
McDonalds 7.6
Mekong River 1.5
Meng Shihua 2.4, 2.5, 2.6
"mess hall eating" 2.6
Miao 1.6, 2.1, 8.4
micro-credit 1.7
micro-enterprises 1.7
migrant labor 1.7, 5.1, 5.2, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8,
6.1, 6.6, 6.8
mortality rate 2.6
Myanmar 1.5

N

Nanjing 1.2, 2.4
National Day celebration 1.1
New Pudong Area 1.2
Ningbo 6.5
Ninth Five-Year Plan, 1996-2000 1.4, 6.4
Nixon, Richard 7.4
North Vietnam 2.7

O

off-post 5.4
opium 2.2
Oriental Pearl TV Tower 1.2
Overseas Chinese 5.7

P

paddies 8.1, 8.2
parties 2.2
Party Congress 6.4
People's Daily 3.2, 3.6
People's Liberation Army 2.6, 7.5
per-capita GDP 1.5, 6.1
per-capita GNP 6.2, 6.8
per-capita income 4.4, 4.7, 5.1, 6.8, 8.3
Ping-pong diplomacy 7.4
Pizza Hut 7.6
Politburo 3.2
population 1.3, 1.4, 1.6, 3.5, 4.7, 5.4
Portman Ritz-Carlton Hotel 7.1
poverty 3.1, 4.4, 8.3
provinces (China). See Guangdong;
Guangxi; Guizhou; Hunan; Jiangsu;
Jiangxi; Sha'anxi; Shanxi; Sichuan;
Tibet; Yunnan

Q

Qiannan Education College 1.6, 1.8
Qiannan Miao and Buyi Autonomous
Prefecture 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 2.4, 6.4, 6.5,
6.6, 6.8
Qiannan Prefecture's Office of Poverty
Alleviation 3.1
Qiao Shi 6.4
Qing dynasty 2.2
Qingdao 6.5

R

railroads 5.1
Red Army 2.3
Red Guards 2.5
Red Star Over China 2.3
Reston, James 7.4
rice 8.1
rivers. See Mekong; Yangtze
Ross, Edward A. 7.3
Rural Chinese Government Administration 4.3
rural development 8.3

S

Salisbury, Harrison E. 2.2
Sandu County 4.8, 6.6, 6.8
Sandu Shui Ethnic Minority Autonomous
County 2.4, 6.4, 6.5
Sasser, Ambassador James R. 7.1, 7.6
Seventh Five-Year Plan 6.4
Sha'anxi Province 2.3
Shanghai 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.6, 2.7, 7.2
Shanxi Province 3.2
Shenzhen 1.5, 1.6, 6.5, 6.8

Shenzhen Airlines Co. 4.7
Shenzhen Hope School 6.4, 6.5, 6.6, 6.8
Shenzhen Representative Office 6.6
Shenzhen Special Economic Zone
6.2, 6.5, 6.8
Shui 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 8.4
Shui Jianhua 8.1
Sichuan Province 1.5, 2.4, 2.7
sister-city relationship
6.2, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6, 6.8
skills transfers 5.8
Snow, Edgar 2.3, 7.3
social conditions and trends 8.1, 8.2, 8.4, 8.10
Song Meilin 7.3
South China Sea 1.5
Southeast Asia financial crisis 5.8
southern tour 6.2
Southwest Airlines 1.4
Soviet Union 2.7
'spirit of a screw' 3.2
Splendid Village 8.1, 8.2
Steele, A.T. 7.3

T

Taiwan 2.7
Taizhou City 1.3
The Long March 2.3
The Long March: The Untold Story 2.2
Third Front industrial structure 2.7
Tiananmen Square 7.1, 7.5
Tianjin 1.5
Tibet 1.5
Time magazine 7.5
town (*zhen*) 4.2
township (*xiang*) 4.2
township and village enterprises (TVEs) 4.7
travel permit 4.4

U

U.S. Air Force 4.2

V

Vietnam 1.5, 2.7
Vinzani, Debbie and Tim 1.5, 1.7, 1.8

W

Wang Mingguang 3.3
warlords 2.2
White Swan hotel 1.5
"Who Lost China?" 7.3
Wu Jiapu 3.1

Y

Yan'an 2.3, 2.4
Yang, Dali 2.6
Yangtze river 1.2, 2.4
Yingpan village 2.1
Yonggui, Chen 3.2
Yunnan Province 1.5, 2.7

Z

Zhangjiagang 1.3
Zhongnanhai 2.5
Zhou Enlai 2.5
Zhou Guangshao 6.3
Zhouqing Town 4.8
Zhu De 2.6
Zunyi 2.3
Zunyi Conference 2.3

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Paige Evans. A playwright and former Literary Manager of the Manhattan Theatre Club in New York City, Paige is looking at Cuba through the lens of its per-

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Marc Michaelson. A program manager for Save the Children in The Gambia, Marc has moved across Africa to the Horn, there to assess nation-building in Eritrea and Ethiopia, and (conditions permitting) availing and unavailing humanitarian efforts in northern Somalia and southern Sudan. With a B.A. in political science from Tufts, a year of non-degree study at the London School of Economics and a Master's in International Peace Studies from Notre Dame, he describes his postgraduate years as "seven years' experience in international development programming and peace research." [sub-SAHARA]

Randi Movich. The current John Miller Musser Memorial Forest & Society Fellow, Randi is spending two years in Guinea, West Africa, studying and writing about the ways in which indigenous women use forest resources for reproductive health. With a B.A. in biology from the University of California at Santa Cruz and a Master of Science degree in Forest Resources from the University of Idaho, Randi is building on two years' experience as a Peace Corps agroforestry extension agent in the same region of Guinea where she will be living as a Fellow with her husband, Jeff Fields — also the holder of an Idaho Master's in Forest Resources. [sub-SAHARA]

Daniel B. Wright. A sinologist with a Master's Degree in International Relations from the Nitze School of Advanced International Studies of the Johns Hopkins University, Dan's fellowship immerses him in southwest China's Guizhou Province, where he, his journalist-wife Shou Guowei, and their two children (Margaret and Jon) will base themselves for two years in the city of Duyun. Previously a specialist on Asian and Chinese affairs for the Washington consulting firm of Andreae, Vick & Associates, Dan also studied Chinese literature at Beijing University and holds a Master of Divinity degree from Fuller Theological Seminary of Pasadena, California. [EAST ASIA]

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