

Communication Serves as a Bridge for Cultural Exchange

By Gou Wen

On April 18th, the Ningbo International Students Festival reached its conclusion. During the week-long festival, international and local students from Ningbo's universities participated in a variety of activities, forming new friendships and a deeper understanding of each other's cultures and customs.

Ningbo Times's correspondent witnessed a series of spectacular talent shows performed by Chinese students with their international counterparts and attended fun activities organized by university student clubs.

A Feast of Cultures

One of the highlights of the Festival is the "Literati Gathering" event. Historically, men of letters in ancient China would organize "literati gatherings" to share their poetry and art. The famous calligraphy work *Lan Ting Ji Xu* ("Preface to the Orchid Pavilion Poem Collection") by Wang Xizhi recorded one such gathering that he attended with his friends at Lanting (located in present-day Shaoxing, Zhejiang) in the 4th century AD.

At the University of Nottingham Ningbo China (UNNC), a modern version of the "literati gathering" took place last week: at the D.H. Lawrence Auditorium, international and local students took part in traditional Chinese activities, including a *dongxiao* performance by a professional musician (The *dongxiao*, or the Chinese vertical bamboo flute, is an ancient Chinese musical instrument). International students immersed themselves in the diverse activities and were fascinated by the quintessence of Chinese culture.

Enhancing Understanding through Interaction

The atrium of the D. H. Lawrence Auditorium was transformed for the "Literati Gathering" event. Scrolls of Chinese calligraphy decorated the space; tea and traditional desserts were laid out. The curious international students inspected the Chinese items closely, happily taking selfies.

Students from UNNC's Chinese Cultural Society put on a Tai Chi performance. Tai Chi is a type of traditional Chinese shadow boxing and was included in UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2020.

"International students are interested in Tai Chi and this is a new thing for them," one of the performers said. But



International students enjoy the performance. [Photo provided to Ningbo Times]

teaching Tai Chi was not easy. "The names of some moves are difficult to translate, such as 'Bai He Liang Chi' (white crane spreading wings for flight)." Every move has many details. But the language barrier was an issue that could be overcome, as students could easily observe and imitate the moves. Tai Chi is a good way to connect China with the world, as it transcends the limitations of verbal communication.

Another demonstration that captivated audiences was *xiangdao* (the art of incense). Though no longer a common practice these days, *xiangdao* dates back to Pre-Qin times, over 2,300 years ago. Nobles, scholar-officials, and literati all practiced *xiangdao*, as did ordinary people, who would wear *xiangnang*, embroidered sachets filled with wormwood, in early summer to ward off evil spirits. *Xiangnang* is now a distinctive symbol of Chinese culture due to its association with both *xiangdao* and Chinese embroidery art.

A student dressed in *Hanfu* (traditional Chinese garments) from the UNNC Chinese Cultural Society demonstrated a *xiangdao* ceremony. The calming fragrance of the incense spread across the atrium as the participants gathered around her, watching the ceremony with deep interest.

After the event, Alice, an interna-

tional student from Ningbo University, shared her feelings. "It was really perfect. We learned a lot about China," she said. There were many things that she had never seen or heard of before the event. "It was the first time. I knew the Tai Chi before, but I have never seen this (the art of incense)," she said. Alice expressed her willingness to participate in more such events if they were to be held on the subsequent days of the Festival.

Embracing the World with an Open Heart

As Professor Nick Miles, Provost of UNNC said at the Festival's opening ceremony, this year's theme "Integration and Collaboration" demonstrated the importance of cross-border understanding and communication.

Through events that dismantle the boundaries between cultures such as the ones over the past week, expats in Ningbo could gain a more nuanced understanding of local culture, while local Ningbo citizens could try out new activities such as touch rugby.

According to UNNC's faculty, students are encouraged to organize activities that highlight their own cultures to broaden their vision and improve leadership skills. UNNC currently has nearly 100 student organizations and associations

in four major categories: academics, business & social work, arts, and sports.

Club activities supplement the students' academic learning; certain events have even extended their reach beyond China. Then, there is the annual UNNC "Global Village", where students from different cultural backgrounds set up stalls on UNNC's High Street to promote their cultures through food and music. These are also great opportunities for Chinese students to get to know foreign cultures.

In recent years, Ningbo's education sector has grown significantly, with a total of 1.42 million students plus 120,000 teachers and administrative personnel in 1,996 schools of all levels.

Local institutions have formed partnerships with more than 1,200 colleges and universities in 110 countries and regions. The University of Nottingham Ningbo China was the first Sino-foreign cooperative university in China, a testament to the Ningbo education sector's high level of globalization.

Over the past years, the annual Ningbo International University Students Festival has become a centerpiece of international exchange and cooperation in Ningbo's education sector. Music performances, fencing, rugby, and many other events allow students to demonstrate their energy and passion.



SPOTLIGHT

New Measures Expedite Clearance for Bonded Imports and Exports

By Dong Na

According to the latest statistics from Ningbo Customs, in the first quarter of 2021, the Ningbo Beilun Port Comprehensive Bonded Zone handled 139,000 tons of imported goods worth \$750 million, up by 74% and 68.8% year-on-year respectively; it also handled 91,000 tons of exported goods worth \$660 million, up by 100% and 83.3% year-on-year respectively. These impressive figures reflect a good first chapter for the Bonded Zone, which began operations this year after passing its acceptance inspection.

"Since the start of the epidemic, the demand for remote office and learning devices has increased rapidly. The global demand for laptops has soared," Zhu Chunyu, a manager of Ningbo Innolux Optoelectronics Co. Ltd., an electronic component manufacturer, said that the overall increase in laptop demand has greatly boosted the company's business volume. Innolux's import value in Q1 was approximately \$194 million, up by over 20% year-on-year.

Now that business is booming, it has become imperative for Innolux to import parts more efficiently. Thanks to Ningbo's new customs declaration procedure, the parts purchased by the company can undergo "two-step declaration": only a bill of landing needs to be submitted before the goods board the plane. Once the aircraft arrives at Shanghai Pudong International Airport, the cargo can be picked up immediately without inspection and transported directly to Innolux's factory in the Beilun Comprehensive Bonded Zone. The total transport time is less than 20 hours, short enough to meet the company's intense processing and production schedule.

According to Zhu, about 30% of their customs declarations are completed via the "two-step declaration" mode. Certain shipments undergo both the "two-step declaration" mode and the "advance declaration" mode simultaneously, which shortens shipping time even more. The time it takes for the cargo to arrive at the factory has been reduced by about 30%.

To bolster the high-quality development of the Beilun Port Comprehensive Bonded Zone, Ningbo Customs continues to implement customs clearance facilitation measures such as advance declaration and new taxation models such as consolidated tax collection, making clearance more efficient and reducing associated costs for importers and exporters. In the first quarter, 37.5% and 37.3% of companies in the Ningbo Beilun Port Comprehensive Bonded Zone imported goods through the "advance declaration" and "two-step declaration" modes; 62.71% of companies exported goods through the "two-step declaration" mode.

Chief Adviser: Zhao Qingchuan
Proofreader: Gou Wen

HISTORY&CULTURE

Ningbo Traditional Snacks Bite into Global Success

By Jin Lu, Zhang Chaoliang

Recently, 520 boxes of hand-made Ningbo traditional foods, including bean paste buns and rice balls with a total worth of 125,700 yuan, began their journey to Los Angeles, California.

These foods are produced and exported by Gangyagou (or "vat, duck, and dog", corresponding to the brand's logo: a duck and dog flanking a vat), a popular local restaurant chain and food brand specializing in traditional Ningbo snacks. Gangyagou's specialty foods were named a "Zhejiang Intangible Cultural Heritage" in 2012.

Though business is booming now, Gangyagou had once been struggling as it faced fierce competition from other brands that mass-produced frozen glutinous rice balls with industrialized assembly lines.

"Traditional food companies should continue to seek breakthroughs if we want to survive and thrive," said Wei Feng, the

company's sales manager. Wei told our correspondent that Gangyagou had made new discoveries in ingredient development in recent years while staying true to its heritage.

The brand has also developed unique solutions for preservation, sales channels expansion, and more. In 2014, Gangyagou's frozen glutinous rice balls made their debut on major supermarket chains' shelves.

To revitalize the brand's legacy, Gangyagou and its partners have also invested 50 million yuan in a traditional-process production project in Jiulonghu Town, Zhenhai District, with an annual output of 6,000 tons.

With the completion of Gangyagou's central kitchen and the standardization of its hand-made production processes, the brand's efforts have begun to bear fruit. In late 2016, Gangyagou received their first order for rice ball export to North America. Since then, Gangyagou has witnessed a new period of growth.

"A representative from an export



Gangyagou. [Photo provided to Ningbo Times]

corporation in Shanghai told us that there is a growing demand for authentic Chinese food in the US and Canada's Chinese community," said Wei Feng. Wei stated that Gangyagou wants to seize the op-

portunity to pursue its own "dual circulation" strategy—boosting its presence in the domestic market while expanding internationally to remain competitive and be prepared to embrace future challenges.

