

The Voice of Ningbo Takes the Spotlight on the World Stage

By Dong Na

Recently, the inauguration ceremony of the China Daily Readers' Club (Ningbo) & Fans Festival was held at the Ningbo Talent Family. The event attracted nearly 100 participants from 16 countries and regions.

Ningbo's rich international exchange opportunities, strong links with overseas Chinese communities, coupled with its unique geographical location, long history, and profound culture make the city an important gateway for the world to see and understand China.

As a bridge of communication, the Readers' Club will organize frequent international cultural exchange activities, striving to become an important platform where people around the world could understand traditional Chinese culture and witness the pace of Ningbo's development.

A New Platform for Cross-Cultural Communication

In recent years, Ningbo has stepped up its pace of going global and expanded its partnership with countries along the Belt and Road; it is committed to opening up even more to the outside world as a modern coastal metropolis.

The theme of the inauguration ceremony was focused on celebrating Ningbo's unique identity and promoting citizenry pride. Nine individuals, hailing from Italy, Canada, the United Kingdom and many other parts of the world, received the title "overseas communication officer" at the ceremony. They have all worked and lived in Ningbo for many years and have a deep understanding and affection for the city. They are expected to become the link between Ningbo and the rest of the world, and are encouraged to play a unique role in spreading the narrative of Ningbo far and wide.

"Ningbo is a great place to work and meet new friends, and it is a great place to call home. Let's make sure that our global economic reach is matched by global awareness of who we are. It is a city that we need to shout about and talk about to others," said Peter Morgan, Associate Dean of the Business School of the University of Nottingham Ningbo China and one of the overseas communication officers.

A student choir from Georgia School Ningbo performed the popular Chinese song *My Motherland*, with some of the lyrics translated into Hebrew, Korean, and Portuguese, concluding the event on a heartwarming, positive note.

A Chinese cultural extravaganza presented by foreigners living in Ningbo. [Photo provided to *Ningbo Times*]

The Diverse Lives of the Communication Officers

"Ningbo is the right place to set up business," said Erdem Ozturk from Turkey, who had been working in Ningbo for 8 years before starting his own business here. "I've always admired Ningbo for its deep port; it facilitates the way for trading," he noted. Then, he gave high praise for the city's enhanced cooperation with Central and East European countries, "The China-CEEC Expo under the Belt and Road Initiative brings overwhelming opportunities of exchanges. I registered my new company this year."

Nyameko from South Africa referred to Ningbo as "a city of inspiration". "Ningbo evokes my desire of writing," As an amateur writer, Nyameko explained, "Try to sit an afternoon through by the Moon Lake, feeling the calm breeze blowing across the crystalline waters. Then all of a sudden, inspiration would come to you." The open hearts and arms of the local people provide another source of ideas for his writings, "Folks here are welcoming, and are willing to share their personal stories with a foreign friend like me."

Seyedeh Sara Ahmadi Nishaboori, a young woman from Iran, was raised in Ningbo and speaks fluent Chinese. Sara has written a novel in Persian about growing up in Ningbo, drawing on her experiences from

the past ten years. "I have recognized myself as a bridge of intercultural communication since senior high," she said, "And I find writing tales to be the best vehicle linking Ningbo to other parts of the world."

Communication Officers Spreading the Word About Ningbo

"It has been great to go and deliver amazing views/pictures of Ningbo to my contacts on social media and to give talks sharing my experience. I love to see people's curiosity about Ningbo," As Peter Morgan sees it, Ningbo has many great tourist attractions, but they need better promotion. In fact, tourism could well be a central strategy in Ningbo's development. Morgan also emphasized the importance of continued protection for the city's many beautiful lakes. "Online, Ningbo needs to push itself higher—maybe that could be part of my role as an overseas communications officer. Then, Ningbo needs to consider the ways and channels (online and offline) for communicating its strengths and for promoting its city image."

Active in marketing, Italian Mattia Marchetti Aloisio's main job is to help Ningbo companies promote awareness for their brands on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other international platforms. His clients come from a wide range of industries, including sporting goods and consumer goods manufacturing. Many

international users have liked, reposted, or commented on the content he helped his client create. His success has spawned many ongoing collaborations.

Erdem has a deep fondness for local delicacies such as *niangao* and *tangyuan*. But his favorite is *yangmei jiu*, sorghum liquor sweetened and flavored with fresh Chinese bayberries. He used to bring it back to Turkey. "My father is also a big fan of *yangmei jiu* and we make it at home every year. It has become a family tradition," Erdem believes food and beverages could be a key driving force behind Ningbo's effort to go global, "I would definitely recommend more of it to friends and family back home in Turkey."

Jason never thought he would get a chance to lead a company, but he made it in Ningbo. As a junior at the University of Nottingham Ningbo China, he is good at producing videos and founded a production studio with several friends. His startup has benefited greatly from supportive government policies and incubators. At present, it collaborates with many well-known Chinese-language platforms such as Zhihu and Bilibili. The number of their followers across all platforms now is over 30 million worldwide. "We have cooperated with government departments inviting overseas students to share their feelings and thoughts on living in Ningbo. These vlogs are expected to go live in May."



SPOTLIGHT

Behind Fast Growth is the Courage to Embrace Change

By Gou Wen

During 2020's Chinese New Year, when everyone was enjoying time with their family, Li Mingdong and his colleagues set off for Bac Ninh, Vietnam, 150 kilometers from Friendship Pass, Guangxi. Li is a manager of Guangbo Vietnam Co., Ltd, an overseas branch of the Chinese office supplies and plastic goods manufacturer Guangbo.

Rising costs is the main reason behind Guangbo's decision to set up a factory in Vietnam. "The tariffs imposed by the United States have a big impact on our production costs. With a 25% to 35% tariff, even a 1-yuan item will become more expensive," said Li.

In mid-October 2018, Guangbo started their search for an ideal site to establish an overseas factory. One month later, Li Mingdong went to Bac Ninh to assess it as potential location. In March 2019, the Vietnam factory was officially put into use.

Today, the Bac Ninh factory covers an area of 15,000 square meters; it has

more than 360 workers and an annual output value of over 100 million yuan. This marks a firm step forward in Guangbo's international expansion.

In fact, Guangbo had considered many other Southeast Asian countries for their overseas facility, including Laos and Cambodia. While those countries all have their competitive advantages, Vietnam occupies an especially important place in the Belt and Road Initiative; its existing trade links with China are solid and ever-strengthening.

"The Vietnam factory maintains close ties with the headquarters back in China," said Li. Guangbo's products were already being exported to Southeast Asia before the Vietnam facility was built. The decision to build the new factory is Guangbo's way of tackling the complex challenges of today's international landscape and consolidating its global foothold. Only five months passed from site selection to the opening of the new factory—such speed reveals this Ningbo company's determination and motivation.

The same spirit can be seen in Li. As

Guangbo in Vietnam. [Photo provided to *Ningbo Times*]

a manager, he has to oversee everything at the Vietnam facility, large and small, both before and after the opening of the new factory. Due to the limitations of Vietnam's domestic supply chain, many materials and equipment had to be exported from China. Compounded with the difficulties of navigating a foreign business environment, these challenges meant that the Vietnam facility often found itself urgently lacking key resources.

Fortunately, the situation has since improved. Speaking of the future, Li said, "We are considering switching to Vietnamese suppliers, which will be more convenient. Moreover, most of our employees in Vietnam have learned to speak Chinese."

As Guangbo continues to go global, its determination to explore new opportunities and new frontiers will only grow stronger.

INFO&TIPS

Ningbo Hydrogen Buses Debut at Boao Forum

By Jin Lu, Weng Danchen

Recently, 10 hydrogen buses developed by the Ningbo Green Power Hydrogen Technology Research Institute debuted at the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference 2021. The buses covered a combined mileage of 20,000 kilometers shuttling Forum participants, attracting much attention.

These hydrogen buses were independently developed by the State Power Investment Corporation Hydrogen Energy Company. State Power Investment's subsidiaries, Ningbo Green Power Hydrogen Technology Research Institute and Ningbo Green Power Fuel Cell Co., Ltd., participated in the development and production.

The main duties of the hydrogen buses at Boao include airport transfer, shuttling for exclusive events, and emergency standby. Each vehicle, 11 meters long and seating 45 passengers, is equipped with a fuel cell system independently developed by State Power Investment. It takes about 20 minutes to fill up with hydrogen and has a range of up to 650 kilometers.

The bus emits 70 kg less carbon dioxide every 100 km than a regular bus, which is equivalent to the amount of carbon dioxide absorbed by roughly 14 ordinary trees during one day, or the amount exhaled by an adult in about 50 days.

Engineers from Ningbo Green Power Hydrogen Technology Research Institute were stationed at Boao to provide regular maintenance for the buses. They have been working continuously for more than a month.

"In Boao, Hainan, the outdoor temperature is normally above 30°C and the air humidity is high. Sometimes, we have to discharge cooling water and replace meters under the scorching sun. Once, one of my colleagues had a heat stroke during the task," said an engineer from Ningbo Green Power Hydrogen Technology Research Institute. "But when the hydrogen bus drivers told us that the hydrogen car was efficient, quiet, and comfortable to drive, we felt that it has all been worthwhile."

Hydrogen buses will be officially put into operation in Ningbo before September this year; the prototype is in the final testing and commissioning stage. The first 20 hydrogen energy buses will be manufactured in the first half of this year. Compared with lithium battery vehicles, hydrogen energy battery vehicles are more environmentally-friendly, achieving zero emissions and zero pollution.

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