

UNNC Student Shines light on Rural China

by Elena Yang

Saul Stollery, a UNNC(The University of Nottingham Ningbo China) graduate from the UK, recently participated in a TV show entitled The Day I Ran China. He gained a lot of fans from the show with his good looks and his outstanding performance in the live broadcast.

The show invites ten participants from all over the world to gain insights into China's targeted poverty alleviation programmes. What impressed Saul the most was the "live-stream selling" in Yizhang, Hunan Province, where participants were required to introduce and sell local agriculture products.

While the other two groups tried to improve traffic flows with various performances, Saul's team returned to the product and poverty alleviation itself, using humorous language to highlight the characteristics of agricultural products. Finally winning the competition with nearly five times the votes of the second-placed team, his team impressed the audience.

Saul said that it was the first time he had visited rural areas during his eight years in China. He hoped to show the true

charm of China to foreigners, reminding them that "China does not only have Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou."

Enrolled at UNNC with a full scholarship and graduated with a first-class degree, Saul considers studying at UNNC is "the best choice of his life". His host family became a second home and motivated him to take an active part in the University's volunteer activities to help others.

Each week, he tutored English to children from poor families. "I think the biggest gain for these children is not the improvement in their English, but self-confidence and the ability of teamwork," he said.

Outside the show, Saul has been trying different things. When he was a student, he tried hosting, singing, and speaking. After graduation, he learned about webcasting and gained a lot of fans with his charm. Then he founded his own skin management company, which now has 7 branch stores in Beijing.

Nowadays, Saul says that he is very busy, but "always ready" for fresh challenges. "I want to try more and have diverse life experiences while I am still young," he said.



Local Ningbo Snacks and Dishes (I)

Food

Xikou Qianceng Cookies

Xikou Qianceng Cookie is a traditional snack of Xikou, Fenghua, the hometown of Chiang Kai-shek. It is square, with 27 layers, of golden color tinted with green. It is crisp, sweet, a bit salty and has been popular among consumers.

The history of Qianceng cookies is about 100 years. Legend has it that a local named Wang Maolong started to make the cookie in Xikou in 1882. Later on, his brother added some sea sedge powder to the recipe, which made it more delicious. Ever since, the recipe of sea sedge became widespread soon.

The cookies are made of choice materials: quality flour, refined and un-boiled oil, sesame, sugar and sea sedge powder. In making it, 12 steps are needed, like mixing, steaming, filling, layer-making, baking and packing, etc. Each cookie, of 1.5 cm in thickness, has 27 layers, making the cookie crisp, sweet and delicious. The cookies have won some national and provincial awards for famous special local products.



As a famous local snack, the Qianceng cookie is most favored by tourists and the natives residing overseas. It is not only popular in east Zhejiang, but also in Japan, Southeast Asian countries, Hong Kong and other lands.

Cicheng New Year Cake

The New Year Cake is a special food that the locals will prepare when the Spring Festival is coming each year. It uses selected raw materials and employs meticulous production process. It is made with high quality japonica rice, washed clean first, soaked for 3-4 days or one week, ground into pulp, pressed it and get it half dried and crushed, put it into steamer box and get it fully steamed. Then pound it, and finally cut it into different bar-shaped cakes.

Every year when the spring festival comes, the locals of Ningbo will be busy preparing for the holiday. One of the most important item of food to be prepared is the cake. This is partly because niangao, the Chinese pronunciation for the rice cake, is similar to that of "Happy New Year". As Cicheng is the most famous production place of Niangao, therefore it is called Cicheng Nian-

gao. People use different plates to press various auspicious words on the cake, such as Happiness, Fortunes, Best Wishes, and also lovely animals are pressed on the cake, such as rabbits, goose, etc.

The cake-production history of Cicheng also lasted for more than 1000 years. Legend goes that General Wu Zixu of the Wu state at the end of the Spring-Autumn Period once fought at Cicheng of Ningbo. Before he died here, he said to his subordinates: "If mishap befalls us and people starve, dig at the foot of the city wall for three Chis(one meter). you can get grain." Then soon after his death, the city was surrounded by the Yue troops, and many people starved to death. Then people remembered the words of General Wu, Then they dug at the foot of the city wall, and got plenty of food shaped like city wall bricks. The troops got enough to eat and defeated the enemy. It turned out that General Wu, when he monitored the construction of the city walls. After that, every year before spring festival comes, the locals of Cicheng made niangao to remember General Wu.

--, "The Culture of Ningbo: A Reader", (Zhejiang University Press, 2016).

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