



January 2011 Edition: Issue 50

ProjectsAbroad

中国



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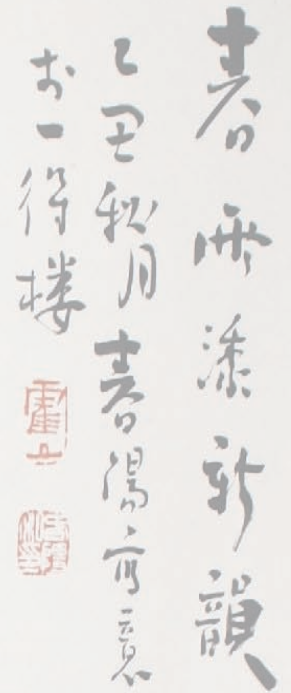
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春の所添新韻  
乙丑秋月 喜得の可意  
おー得樓



So, we reach the end of another month. January is a period caught between the lethargy of the wake of Christmas and the hype and anticipation that precede the beginning of a Chinese new year. It is the bridging month between two giant civilisations' biggest celebratory periods. The festivities will start on the most celebrated day of the period which is Wednesday the 2nd Feb and continue all the way through to February the 17<sup>th</sup> which is called the Red Lantern festival. That's right folks, just when you thought the excesses of Christmas were beginning to wear off, in comes a whole new celebratory period looking to get the party started again and for even longer!

The Chinese New Year is the biggest celebratory period of the year in China and could be compared to a Western Christmas. These similarities include the eerily empty streets (10x more eerie in a city of 20 million); the closure of what feels like everything, the smiling faces and good-will-to-all feeling on the streets; it's all here. An added dimension that is not prevalent in many foreign cities to the extent that it is seen here, are the masses of migrant workers who return to their homes. You will therefore be privy to one of the largest annual human migrations the world sees.

In terms of festivities, the Chinese are of course famous for their fireworks; as well they might be, being the inventors' an'all. The streets get crazy. It's not uncommon for them to be thrown around in ways that would be considered very dangerous by our home country standards, for example, out of windows. (I normally suffer from firecracker shell shock for a good couple of days afterwards, jumping at the slightest popping sound.) The banging and cracking reaches its peak at the midnight hour of the first day on the lunar calendar and fireworks can be seen everywhere as individuals and communities take to the streets to let off their private stash.

With regard to Projects Abroad festive February events in China there is no shortage! We have the always popular Tai Chi, we have a big leaving dinner for our medical volunteer Hassan, who has been here for a whopping 15 months, and the massive Projects Abroad charity quiz set to blow the roof off.

Have a great February and HAPPY CHINESE NEW YEAR!

Kevin

*A Dreamy World*  
A man's dreams are an index to his greatness

## Projects Abroad Quiz

Kevin Dennis

The month of February will see the return of the much-loved Projects Abroad quiz. For this event, which will take place the day after the Chinese New Year's day, we will group the volunteers together as per their accommodation arrangements to go head-to-head in a high-octane (well I get excited at least) competition for status as the brainiest volunteer flat in Shanghai.

There are 7 rounds and a total of 35 questions that have will groups whispering excitedly as they bounce answers around the table. For the final round the quiz will culminate in a set of rapid fire questions whereby volunteers will go head-to-head, with one representative team member standing up to compete with the others. This is when the atmosphere reaches fever-pitch as teams are aware of what's needed from them to take the first place.

This event will take place on the second floor of a charming 19<sup>th</sup> century French Concession public house which we reserve exclusively for the bash. At the beginning of the quiz we pass a pot around for donations. This pot is then given as a prize to the winning team to donate to a local charity of their choice. In the last quiz that took place we donated 1000RMB. When converted into Western currency this may seem a relatively small sum, but when you consider the usage of this money in rural China or for those on the lower tier of income it becomes very different. Add to this fact that Projects Abroad looks to hold one of these quizzes once a month in the busier periods and this amount become grows even more in significance.

Charity contributions aside, it's a lot of fun. New volunteers find new friends, people mix and mingle around the room, and flats pull together to tap into their collective pools of knowledge. Definitely one to look forward to for February!

### Donation Receipt



Date 日期	Donation 捐赠	For 用于	Others 备注
Aug 04 <sup>th</sup> 2010	1000RMB	Aids prevention	

## Shanghai 2010 Experience

by Keelan Naidoo

(South Africa, Business, 1 Month)



From my first moment in Shanghai, I was truly captivated. Coming from South Africa, Shanghai presented a completely different culture to the one I was used to. That is why I loved every moment. Shanghai is a place where old meets new and east meets west. You will see soaring skyscrapers and ancient temples next to each other and old style motor bikes and bicycles riding on the same road as flashy cars. Shanghai is a city that is constantly moving, it has a certain rhythm and beat to it. And I felt this rhythm and beat when I was on the metro, walking on the streets or strolling through the beautiful parks.

I visited a few places in Shanghai such as Century Park, Jingan Temple, Jade Buddha Temple and Yuyuan Garden. They were all interesting and had their own unique features.

One of the highlights of my trip was that I got to meet other volunteers from the rest of the world. They were all really interested in South Africa and loved getting to know more about the culture. I also got to know more about some foreign cultures such as French, Swedish and German culture which was absolutely fantastic. I made many good friends and we had loads of fun together.

I also visited a few Toastmasters Clubs in Shanghai which gave me another great opportunity to meet new people and learn more about the Chinese culture.

And just when I thought my experience was complete, two days before I left it snowed unexpectedly and I got to see snow for the first time. Most people did not think much of it and some were just trying to get out of the snow. But for me it was truly incredible.

I am eternally grateful for the opportunity to go and live in Shanghai for one month. It took my breath away on countless occasions. It was beautiful.



## Words from Laura Wheatley

(Australia, Teaching, 3 Months)

I'm Laura Wheatley, from Australia, and I am doing the teaching project at school, which is about 40 minutes away from the Pudong side of Shanghai. In Australia, I am training to be a Primary School teacher and have had some experience in Australian schools so it is very interesting to see the difference to how I teach back home and how I teach in China. The first thing that struck me was the class sizes. In Australia, the classes hold 20-26 students in one class; here the average class is 48! These classes are taught very differently, where there is a set structure and a set standard that you have to teach at, whereas I'm use to having students at all different levels and giving them a different task to some of the other students.

Another great difference between the schools is how much the students want to learn! In Australia, you don't receive as much enthusiasm as you get in China, which is great to see. They're also very excited to have foreign teachers who have only one known Chinese phrase that they really know - "ting bu dong"! As you can imagine, this phrase is used quite often! Apart from these big classes, I also teach a small group of students from Grade 4. They are a mixture of boys and girls, but in total we only get around fifteen students, where one day we can have three of these students to the next day having twelve! In these classes, we can teach whatever we want to! We have worked on the days of the week, months, numbers, and recently we've started trying to teach the students to read! This has been a great experience to try and explain to them how one letter can have up to five sounds of it! Being and teaching in China has been a great experience and it is a joy to teach the vast majority of the students – as with all classes, you have some that just don't listen!

## Mount Emei



Mount Emei (Emeishan) is situated in southwest Sichuan, seven km from Emeishan City and 37 km from Leshan City. Emeishan is one of China's four sacred Buddhist Mountains and has been a popular place of pilgrimage for the past 1800 years. Legend has it that Bodhisattva Samantabhadra preached here and pictures of the elephant that supposedly carried him up the mountain are found in many of the shrines dotted about the hillside. There were once 150 temples and monasteries on the mountain. Today, only 30 remain and only 20 of these are active although none are impressive sights in themselves.

Although Emeishan is still hugely popular with pilgrims, (the smoke from incense and burning paper in the temples en route stings your eyes!) the mountain is equally famous for its spectacular scenery. The word "Emei" in Chinese means "Eyebrows of beauty" and locals believe that the peaks of Emei resemble the eyebrows of a woman! Towering 3099 meters high, Emei is the highest of China's mountains and as such, the temperature here is ideal for lush vegetation and some stunning and rare plants and wildlife. The forested slopes, hot springs and wonderful views here could keep you for days. It is best to allow at least a couple of days to explore the low slopes of the mountain and perhaps an additional day to make it to the peak at Wanfoding.

Although the mountain is a big pilgrimage site, and becoming increasingly popular with tourists, it is possible to escape the crowds and head off on some of the smaller trails, exploring at your own pace. This is a wonderfully atmospheric area, and the impressive views, scenery mixed with the sight of monks and the sound of bells, make for one of China's more interesting areas to explore and discover.

*(Extracted from <http://www.china-travel-guide.info/destinations/emeishan.asp>)*

## Spring Festival 2011



**S**pring Festival, widely known as Chinese New Year in the west, is the most important traditional festival and a public holiday in China. The 2011 Chinese New Year starts in February 3.



In 2011, the public holiday for Spring festival is from February 2 to February 8. It is the year of rabbit. The festival falls on the first day of the first lunar month (usually in late January and early February), and ends with Lantern Festival which is on the 15th day.

The festival is celebrated grandly and extensively across the country. Various cultural activities such as Fireworks Dragon Dancing, Lion Dancing and other traditional performances, are arranged in parks and streets in cities and towns. Every family thoroughly cleans the house, sweeps the floors and washes daily things. House cleaning is believed to drive away ill-fortune and bring good luck in the coming year. Windows and doors are decorated with red paper-cuts and couplets.

Chinese New Year is a time for families to be together. A reunion dinner is held on New Year's Eve, when New Year food including Chinese dumplings and spring rolls is eaten.

From the first day of the New Year to the 15th day, Chinese people go to visit friends and relatives. New year greetings are given to each other, and lucky money is given to children to bring them good luck.

The new year period is the busiest travel time. If you choose to travel during this period, you need to make full preparations and have your trip arranged as early as possible.

Continued on next page ...

## Spring Festival 2011(Continued)

### Chinese New Year Food

Chinese New Year Foods are very important to Chinese people. All family members come together to eat at this time. Chinese New Year foods are not only delicious but it is traditional to eat certain foods over this festival. Chinese Dumplings, Fish, Spring Rolls, Nian Gao are usually seen as delicious and eaten at this time.



**Nian Gao** (Glutinous Rice Cake)

In Chinese, Nian Gao sounds like "getting higher year by year". In Chinese people's mind, the higher you are, the more prosperous your business is. Main ingredients of Nian Gao are sticky rice, sugar, Chestnuts, Chinese date and lotus leaves.



**Chinese Dumplings**

Chinese Dumplings look like silver ingots. Legend has it that the more dumplings you eat during New Year celebration, more money you can make in the New Year.



**Spring Roll**

People like Spring Roll because they are nutritious and delicious. Spring Rolls contain pork and vegetable. They can be easily taken on picnics. They get their name because they are traditionally eaten during Chinese New Year Celebration.



(Extracted from [www.chinahighlights.com/travelguide/festivals/spring-festival/](http://www.chinahighlights.com/travelguide/festivals/spring-festival/))

# Upcoming Social Events For February

**Feb  
3**

**Spring Festival**

**Daily Until Mar 6**



## Museum of Oblivion

Museum of Oblivion is a group exhibition with new work from Finnish artists, Tatu Tuominen and Tuomas Laitinen. The show presents a discussion on the position of humans in their present environment. The artworks cover various medias and installations that escape from the realm of art to approach life, and our environment.

Address: Art + Shanghai, No 22 Fumin Lu, near Yan'an Lu

## Reminiscence

Front line contemporary hosts works by three young Wuhan artists: Li Jikai, Gong Jian and Chen Bo. Having participated in scores of exhibitions over the last decade, these three artists are now considered to be some of the leading artists of the so called "Ego Generation".

Address: Front Line Contemporary, No 588 Yongjia Lu, near Yueyang Lu



**Daily Until Mar 6**

**Feb  
14**

**Happy Valentine's Day**



**Feb  
17**

**Lantern Festival**



## Chinese Knot

### History of Knotting



As a means of artistic decoration, the art of knotting is an ancient Chinese handicraft that dates as far back as the Tang (CE 618-907) Dynasty (in contrast, the strictly practical use of knotting, both in China and elsewhere, dates farther back than the beginning of recorded time, as indicated by archeological finds in China of special needle-like implements fashioned of bone and believed to be used for the purpose of untying knots – thus implying the existence of knots – discoveries which have been carbon dated to be over 100,000 years old).

### Usage of Chinese Knotting

The most commonly used knotting material in China is silk, which comes in a variety of bright colors, red being one of the most popular colors in China, as it symbolizes good luck, a long and prosperous life, etc.

Besides being used as a hanging decoration in the home and as an adornment to articles of clothing, examples of Chinese Decorative Knotting range from articles of jewelry (rings, earrings, bracelets and necklaces, as well as small pendants that hang on bracelets and necklaces) to actual articles of clothing – albeit, "finishing", or ornamental, articles of clothing (however practical they may also be) – such as buttons and belts.

This seemingly simple art produces handicraft items that are intricately and exquisitely worked – it is no wonder therefore that the Chinese decorative knot has for centuries been worn by people of all walks of life as a talisman, or good-luck charm.

*(Extracted from <http://www.chinahighlights.com/travelguide/culture/knot.htm> )*



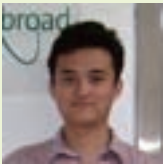
## **Kay Xu - Country Director**

Kay studied at the University of London before joining our Projects Abroad team in Shanghai. She is originally from North West China. In her spare time she enjoys badminton and going to the gym.



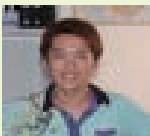
## **Kevin Dennis - Assistant Manager**

Graduated in Marketing & Media Communications and came to China with the British Council as an English teacher in 2006. In his spare time, Kevin enjoys music, travel, films, books, shooting the breeze and trying his hand at new things.



## **Michael Meng - Project Manager**

Michael has been working for Projects Abroad since June 2009. Michael's role is to help arrange each volunteer's project before they arrive in Shanghai; he then ensures that they are happy with their work and is available to offer any advice. Michael graduated with a degree in English and has worked for several years for local businesses in Shanghai; in particular he has experience in the field of marketing.



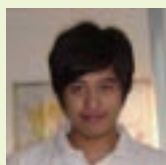
## **Teddy Lee - Desk Officer**

Teddy began working for Projects Abroad in March 2008, having just graduated with a degree in English. Teddy will be the main contact for volunteers before they arrive, happily answering all pre-departure questions.



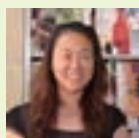
## **Leon Liu - Volunteer Coordinator**

Leon helps out with everything! His main role is to collect the volunteers from the airport and help with visa extensions, but he also regularly visits the volunteers at work or at their accommodation.



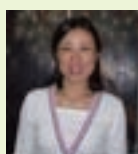
## **Danny Wang - Volunteer Coordinator**

Danny began working for Projects Abroad in June 2009, having recently graduated from the University of Shanghai for Science and Technology. In addition to being fluent in English, Danny also speaks some Japanese. Danny will be on hand to assist volunteers throughout the duration of their time in China.



## **Wendy Wei - Administrator**

Wendy has been working in the Shanghai office for several years. She is in charge of all the accounts, arranging the food and transport allowance and is also involved in allocating volunteers to their accommodation.



## **Lily Zhang - Accommodation Supervisor**

Born and raised in Shanghai Lily is in charge of finding our volunteers comfortable flats to live in during their time in Shanghai. She is also a jack-of-all-trades and can fix anything from a blocked toilet to a broken light bulb!