

# Shanghai

## 1.Foreign marriages more equal

When the cosmetics company that employs Carefree Zhang started working with a marketing research firm, it boosted sales, the 25-year-old met her future husband and the happy couple did their bit to kill a few outdated myths about cross-cultural relationships in China.

Zhang began dating the consulting firm's 27-year-old American manager - whose name she doesn't want mentioned because they are keeping the relationship secret from co-workers.

"We found we have common interests in various fields and we can communicate well with each other using a combination of English and Chinese," said Zhang. They plan to develop their careers in Shanghai and may marry in the near future. Zhang's case is typical for the majority of local youths involved in cross-nation marriage nowadays, said Zhou Jixiang, director of the Marriage Administrative Section of Shanghai Civil Affairs Bureau. Of the 1,300 locals that registered for marriage with foreign citizens during the first half of this year, some 80 percent of the couples share similar educational background and can communicate with each other in the other's language, according to the department. The majority of couples have an age difference of less than five years.

"The majority of marriages still involve a Shanghai woman with an overseas citizen, but it seems that local women do not marry solely for the purpose of going abroad as before," said Zhou.

In the past, local women that dated foreign men were often accused of being more interested in getting an overseas passport than finding true love.

While that criticism hasn't totally disappeared, Shanghai's growing affluence has changed the way many people look at cross-cultural relationships. "Now, most locals do not think it is worth sacrificing marriage to go abroad as they can enjoy a modern life right here at [home.](#)"said Zhou. This new attitude has been met by a growing number of overseas marriages, according to Zhou. The number of overseas marriage increased from 1,384 in 1998 to 3,400 last year. "That's because more and more foreigners came to work in the city," added Zhang. Scott Smiley, 28, from United States, who met and married 32-year-old Lu Xiangjun,said: "We met at a party when I first came to Shanghai and now I work in my wife's travel agency."

## **2.Shanghai plans Asia's biggest shopping center**

The Shanghai Ganghong Industrial Co plans to build Asia's biggest shopping center in Shanghai, China's leading business and industrial center. A spokesman for the company said the cost of the first phase of the shopping center project is estimated at 1.5 billion yuan (nearly 200 million US dollars). With a planned floor space of 330,000 square meters, the shopping center will be located in the Jinhongqiao Resident District in the Hongqiao Development Zone.

There will be about 130 lifts inside the center, including some for sight-seeing. The planned parking lot will be spacious enough for up to 3,500 cars.

The shopping center will feature general merchandise, cultural and art products, food and drink, furniture, products for home decoration, and exercise equipment. A hotel and an office building will be built during the second phase of the development.

## **Nation**

New visa rules for foreigners

China has adopted flexible new visa rules to make it convenient for foreign professionals and investors to work and invest in the country. According to the rules, qualified foreigners may apply for a special multiple-entry visitor's visa, which is valid for 2-5 years, allowing a maximum of 12 months' stay per visit. For foreigners who need to work in China, they may also apply for a special work visa, which allows one to stay in the country for 2-5 years with multiple-entry rights.

The new rules, jointly formulated by nine central government departments, including the Public Security Ministry, the Science and Technology Ministry and the Foreign Economic Relations and Trade Ministry, are aimed at attracting high-level professionals and investors from abroad. Foreigners who fit the qualifications described below can apply for such visas:

Senior advisers invited by government institutions at the provincial and ministerial level and high-tech professionals and senior managerial personnel who come to carry out science and technology cooperation projects, key project agreements or professional personnel exchange programs in the country. Those who have made outstanding contributions to China or who come to carry out inter-governmental agreement on aid given gratis. Professors and researchers invited by research institutions and key universities or colleges at the provincial and ministerial level. Those invited by Chinese enterprises or institutions to hold a position of deputy general manager or higher or other senior managerial personnel and essential technical personnel who enjoy the same treatment.

Those who invest a minimum of US\$1 million in the western areas of the country or in poor counties in the central part of the country, or invest a minimum of US\$3 million in other parts of the country. Ethnic Chinese who have won important international awards for science and technology achievements.

Spouses of the aforesaid foreigners and their children under the age of 18. A circular issued by the General Office of the State Council calls on all relevant government departments to effectively carry out the rules by cutting red tape, streamlining procedures, and improving efficiency.

## **Worldwide**

### Chinese language teaching easier for foreigners

More than 60 experts from home and abroad shared their views and experiences on Chinese language teaching at a three-day international forum which closed in Shanghai at the end of last month. The experts jointly called for the design of Chinese language teaching materials to take full account of the difficulties encountered by foreigners. The teaching method for Chinese grammar is especially in need of improvement, according to experts. Newly-released statistics show that 25 million foreigners are learning Chinese.

To date, about 60,000 foreign students have come to China to learn the language. The forum, sponsored by Shanghai International Studies University, received more than 50 dissertations from the United States, Germany, Japan as well as China.