

NEW THINKING ON DIPLOMACY P.14 | UPROAR OVER BEAR BILE P.22

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POPULAR ICON

A role model still relevant five decades later

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Do the Right Thing

Five decades ago, a 22-year-old soldier of the Chinese People's Liberation Army named Lei Feng died in an accident while at work. After excerpts from his diary, which recorded some of his volunteer work and charitable acts, were published, the top Chinese leadership initiated a large-scale campaign urging people to emulate his exemplary deeds.

Although Lei did not accomplish anything extraordinary during his lifetime, he was always ready to do everyday work for people and society. He donated his monthly allowances to disaster-hit areas, took part in various volunteer activities, and helped anyone in need he came across. Owing to his good deeds, he was admired and eulogized by millions of fellow citizens. And as an icon and role model, he has inspired and influenced both his contemporaries and later generations.

However, circumstances have changed with the passage of time. Today, Lei is no longer a household name, and his exceptional qualities have been somewhat ignored or even branded by some as irrelevant and out of tune with the prevailing social values.

Worse still, along with the rise of materialism and consumerism in China, the rules of human conduct in the country seem to have been downgraded. The sheer pursuit of personal or commercial benefits, sometimes at the cost of others, has become commonplace. Cold-heartedness, egotism and a basic rejection of altruism are increasingly prevalent attitudes.

Although Lei's exemplary model was set over half a century ago, compassion and altruism remain highly relevant today. In this fast-changing era China needs a positive role model more than ever—Lei's deeds fully embody the core values needed in a modern society.

Continuing to learn from his lofty example will help build up ethical and moral virtues in China and help combat selfish or demoralizing practices and tendencies.

While at times courtesy and social responsibilities seem to be on the wane in the country, learning from Lei has never ceased across China. In recent years, instances that represent Lei's ideals are frequently reported and involve individuals from all walks of life, from millionaire entrepreneurs to garbage collectors.

For every story of avarice and indifference, there is one about a person who was determined to do the right thing. The selfless efforts of those who are determined to assist the poor and needy and save the lives of those in danger correspond to the needs of our times and these people have carried on Lei's legacy.

Following Lei's model will never go out of date, and if all of us make a real effort to strive for what Lei upheld and practiced, it will not be difficult to build a truly harmonious society. ■

WRITE TO US

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Back Home

A Chinese paleontologist inspects a fossilized dinosaur egg nest in the Geological Museum of China in Beijing on February 28.

The rare dinosaur egg nest, 65-million-year-old, was unearthed in south China's Guangdong Province in 1984. It was later smuggled out of China and then bought by an American collector in 2003. At an auction in Los Angeles in 2006, the fossilized nest was sold for \$420,000. It was returned to China for free afterward.

The nest contained 22 unhatched eggs arranged in a circular pattern along the edge. Embryonic remains were uncovered in 19 eggs and one egg was removed for study. Some eggs are so well-preserved that the embryos curled inside are visible. This is the first time the Chinese Government has successfully used diplomatic channels to recover a paleontologic fossil that had been removed from the country.

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“China is accelerating its economic transformation, promoting innovation and opening up—to ensure long-term economic growth, stable, balanced and relatively rapid social and economic development.”

Chinese Vice Premier Li Keqiang, promising stable economic growth at a meeting with Robert Zoellick, President of the World Bank, in Beijing on February 27

“The core of the South China Sea issue is the differences in opinions regarding territorial sovereignty of islands and reefs in the sea, and the demarcation of part of the sea area. It is necessary to point out that there is no country, including China, claiming sovereignty over the whole South China Sea, as some people made irresponsible remarks in this regard on many occasions.”

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei, at a routine press briefing in Beijing on February 29 in response to a question concerning a U.S. commander's remarks on China's position on the South China Sea

“Taiwan authorities should take into consideration the calls from press institutions both on the Chinese mainland and in Taiwan, and eliminate obstacles for them to establish permanent press offices across the Straits as soon as possible.”

Fan Liqing, spokesperson of the State Council Taiwan Affairs Office, urging Taiwan to allow the establishment of permanent press offices across the Straits, at a routine press conference in Beijing on February 29

We know that some are preparing to use schemes to confirm election fraud. They will stuff ballots themselves, monitor this themselves and then present this accusation themselves. We see it and know already.”

Russian Prime Minister and presidential candidate Vladimir Putin, urging the opposition to behave themselves in elections on February 29

All-inclusive Services

The Chinese Government has pledged to provide equal access to public services for people living in urban areas without proper residential permits.

Future policies and measures on essential public services, including employment assistance, compulsory education and occupational training, will not be based on whether a resident has a permanent residential permit or not, according to a national guideline on reforming the country's household registration system.

The guideline, dated February 26, 2011, was posted on the official website of the Chinese Government on February 23.

Under China's household registration system, many urban public services are still only

available to registered urban residents within certain administrative regions. The system was introduced in the 1950s to reduce mobility and maintain social order under a planned economy.

Recent statistics show that the number of migrant workers reached 252.78 million in 2011, with 158.63 million of them leaving the towns they are registered to live in to seek employment elsewhere, usually in urban areas.

The guideline proposes creating a unified household registration system, as well as granting equal access to public services for both urban and rural residents.

Post-quake Reconstruction

The reconstruction of parts of southwest

China's Sichuan Province, which was hit by a devastating earthquake in May 2008, has been completed, said Vice Governor Wei Hong on February 24.

Wei said that 99.5 percent of the budget, or 865.8 billion yuan (\$137.5 billion), has been invested in post-quake reconstruction efforts, and 99 percent of 29,692 related projects have been completed.

Local governments have helped more than 12 million people in rural and urban areas repair their houses, and have relocated 200,000 farmers who lost their farmland.

According to official statistics, in 2011, the total output value of the six hardest-hit cities and prefectures was almost double that of the pre-quake period, with urban per-capita disposable income growing by 1.7 times and farmers' net income by 1.75 times.

The 2008 quake hit Sichuan and neighboring Gansu and Shaanxi provinces, leaving more than 80,000 people dead or missing and millions of homes destroyed.

Land Rehabilitation

China has announced a target of rehabilitating 250,000 square km of eroded land to make it habitable again by 2015.

Speaking at a national meeting on water loss and soil erosion in Nanning, south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, on February 25, Chen Lei, Minister of Water Resources, said that the country also aims to build 2.67 million hectares of agricultural terraces in the same period to ensure food supplies for 30 million people.

China has already rehabilitated 1.1 mil-



LIANG KECHUAN

SPRING HARVEST A tea plucker from the Dong ethnic group picks spring tea in Buyang Village, Sanjiang Dong Autonomous County in southwest China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, on February 27, the first day of this year's picking season in the region

Heroic Captain

Fan Shuren, the captain of a Panama-registered Chinese cargo ship from Nantong, east China's Jiangsu Province, was shot dead by pirates in waters near Nigeria on February 14. That day, the ship encountered pirates near the port of Lagos, Nigeria. In an effort to cover the retreat of other crew members, Fan remained on the navigation bridge and was shot dead along with the chief engineer who was from Taiwan.

Fan, 64, became a captain in 1990. The captain reached his retirement age four years ago, but he stayed with his job in order to support his family.



MECHANICAL OCCUPATION Transformers toys are placed on the Haizhu Bridge in Guangzhou, south China's Guangdong Province, on February 26, as their owners took pictures of the 79-year-old crossing over the Pearl River before it closed for an 18-month renovation





MEETING IN BEIJING A member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) talks to a reporter after arriving in Beijing on March 1 for this year's full session of China's top advisory body. Sessions of the CPPCC National Committee and the National People's Congress, the country's top legislature, opened in Beijing on March 3 and 5, respectively

lion square km of land, benefiting 150 million residents over the past 10 years.

Nearly one third of China's land is vulnerable to soil erosion, and the situation is particularly bad in the country's western regions.

Polar Research

China has launched a special project to research and evaluate environmental issues in polar regions.

The project, starting on February 24, will include five Antarctic expeditions and three Arctic missions over the next five years, according to a press release from the State Oceanic Administration.

Researchers will focus on polar environments, climate change and disputes between different countries regarding polar interests, the administration said in a press release.

In 2011, Chinese scientists completed 61 research projects at three Antarctic research stations and one Arctic station.

International Students

A record 292,611 students from 194 countries and regions studied in China in 2011, up 10.38 percent from the previous year, figures from the Ministry of Education show.

These students studied in 660 colleges, academic institutions and other educational organizations.

Of the total, 25,687 were supported by scholarships from the Chinese Government, up 14.73 percent year on year. Self-funded students, who accounted for the rest, a year-on-year increase of 9.98 percent.

The Republic of Korea is the largest source of international students for China, followed by the United States and Japan.

According to the ministry, China aims to attract 500,000 overseas students by 2020.

Food Safety Action

China's food and drug safety watchdog opened a national center on February 27 to receive complaints on pharmaceuticals, health

Pritzker Prize Winner

Wang Shu, an architect in Hangzhou, east China's Zhejiang Province, received this year's Pritzker Architecture Prize on February 27, becoming the first Chinese to win the prestigious prize. The prize, founded in Chicago in 1979 by the Pritzker family, owner of the Hyatt Hotel Group, is often likened to architecture's Nobel Prize.

"The fact that an architect from China has been selected by the jury represents a significant step in acknowledging the role that China will play in the development of architectural ideals," said Thomas J. Pritzker, head of the Hyatt Foundation, in announcing the prize.

"This is really a big surprise," said 48-year-old Wang. "I suddenly realized that I've done many things over the last decade. It proves that earnest hard work and persistence lead to positive outcomes."

Wang's work includes the Wenzheng College library at Suzhou University in east China's Jiangsu Province, which was completed in 2000 and won him the Architecture Arts Award of China in 2004. The work embodies his architectural philosophy—paying close attention to environment. It is also a reflection of the architectural idea of Chinese classical gardens.

Wang and his wife founded the Amateur Architecture Studio in Hangzhou in 1997. He now heads the Architecture Department of the China Academy of Art in Hangzhou and has taught or lectured at Harvard, UCLA, the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Texas.



food products, cosmetics and catering.

A subsidiary of the State Food and Drug Administration, the center handles reports of wrongdoing during research, development, production, distribution and utilization.

It is also responsible for coordinating efforts to inspect the relevant enterprises and individuals, compiling analysis reports and publicizing investigation reports, the administration said.

China has seen recurring drug and food safety scandals in recent years and the government over the months has introduced a series of measures to boost food and drug safety.



LIFT OFF A Long March-3C carrier rocket takes off at the Xichang Satellite Launch Center in southwest China's Sichuan Province on February 25, sending the 11th satellite of China's indigenous Beidou global navigation and positioning network into space

PMI Comes Back

China's purchasing managers index (PMI), a barometer of manufacturing activities, stood at 51 percent in February 2012, slightly rebounding from 50.5 percent in January, said the China Federation of Logistics and Purchasing (CFLP).

"The figure reflects the growing strength of the Chinese economy, with both industries and consumption picking up momentum," said Zhang Liqun, a researcher with the Development Research Center of the State Council. "But uncertainties remain due to slowing exports and investment demands."

The new orders sub-index, an effective gauge of domestic demand, stood at 51 percent in February, compared with 50.4 percent last month.

Capital Flees

In 2011, China recorded \$3.1 billion of volatile cross-border capital outflows, or so-called "hot money", compared with an inflow of \$35.5 billion in 2010, said the State Administration of Foreign Exchange (SAFE).

China experienced massive cross-border capital inflows in the first half of 2011, driven by expectations for a stronger yuan and interest rate differences between China and other developed economies. But the trend was reversed since September 2011 amid the liquidity crunch in overseas markets and weakened expectations for yuan appreciation.

The SAFE said fundamental factors will continue to support a surplus of China's international balance of payment, but the country may experience fewer cross-border capital inflows and greater volatility due to a complicated international financial environment.

Optimistic Outlook

American companies remain optimistic about their China prospects and plan to increase investments in the booming market.

The American Chamber of Commerce in South China surveyed 461 member com-



SAILING ON A cruise ship sets sail on February 29 from Nagasaki Port of Japan to Shanghai, China. It was the first regular marine passenger liner between the two countries

panies, and 57 percent of the respondents said they will bump up investments in China.

About 88 percent of the polled firms said they are already profitable or expect to make a profit in two years, and about 70 percent of the already profitable companies said they expect to meet or exceed their profit targets.

"Two major reasons for the expansion are the absence of a large number of investment opportunities in the rest of the world and the room for growth in the Chinese market," said Harley Seyedin, President of the American Chamber of Commerce in South China.

Green Credit

The China Banking Regulatory Commission (CBRC) on February 24 issued a circular,

requiring commercial banks to facilitate loans to "green" enterprises.

The CBRC urged lenders to reduce loans to industries with high energy consumption, high pollution or excessive capacity, and to strengthen support for environment-friendly industries and projects. The growth rate of new loans that China's 19 major commercial banks extended to those restricted industries was 3.3 percentage points lower than their overall credit growth.

Meanwhile, the CBRC required commercial banks to control the clients' threats to the ecological system, including local environment, healthcare and social security.

World Bank Advises

China should strengthen efforts to deepen a series of reforms to achieve its goal of a new structure for economic growth, said the World Bank in its latest report.

Numbers

1.83 million

China's auto market witnessed a total of 85 cases of vehicle recalls, covering 1.83 million defective units in 2011, up 55 percent from a year ago, said the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine.

16.45 billion yuan

Lottery ticket sales in China rose 2.8 percent year on year in January to 16.45 billion yuan (\$2.61 billion), according to data from the Ministry of Finance.

“The case for reform is compelling because China has now reached a turning point in its development path. Managing the transition from a middle-income to a high-income country will prove challenging,” said World Bank President Robert B. Zoellick.

The report lays out major strategic directions for China’s future: completing the transition to a market economy; accelerating the pace of open innovation; going “green” to transform environmental stresses into green growth; expanding services such as health, education and access to jobs for all people; and modernizing and strengthening its domestic fiscal system.

CSR’s New Plant

CSR Corp. Ltd., China’s largest train manufacturer, said it has signed an agreement with a local partner to build a new subway train assembly plant in Chengdu, capital of southwest China’s Sichuan Province.

Zhang Jun, Vice President of CSR, said the plant involves an investment of 980 million yuan (\$156 million).

Diving Champion

Qiu Bo, a Chinese diver, won the gold medal in the men’s 10m platform at the 18th FINA Diving World Cup at the Olympic Aquatics Center in London on February 25. Qiu won the gold medal with 574.90 points, helping China win back the title of world championship in the 10m event after six years.

Qiu, 19, won the championship at the 2011 FINA Diving World Series in Beijing. Then at the 2011 World Championships held in Shanghai, Qiu won two gold medals in the platforms.



The plant, which will initially have an annual production capacity of 200 subway trains, will roll out its first subway train early next year, said Zhang, adding that the subway trains will be supplied to Chengdu and its surrounding cities to cash in on the boom in constructing metro lines seen in many large cities.

4G Campaign

China’s telecom giant China Mobile recently unveiled a plan to deploy TD-LTE, a 4G mobile

telecommunication technology, in the country.

China Mobile President Li Yu said that over 20,000 TD-LTE base stations would be put in operation by the end of this year, and that the number would increase 10 times by the end of 2013.

“We are ready for large-scale 4G deployment with commercial services becoming available in 2013. The first TD-LTE installations will start in the second half of this year and some of the existing TD-SCDMA sites will also be upgraded to TD-LTE,” Li said.



GOONGLI

POWERING UP China’s largest electric vehicle charging station starts trial run in Beijing



WANG ZHEN

LIGHTS ON Visitors look at energy-efficient lighting products at the 2012 China (Beijing) International Lighting Exhibition on February 29-March 2. Over 200 domestic and overseas companies attended the show

576 billion yuan

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority said that yuan deposits in Hong Kong declined by 2.1 percent from a month ago to 576 billion yuan (\$91.43 billion) in January.

1.81 billion yuan

China’s dairy giant Yili Dairy Co. Ltd. reported a net profit of 1.81 billion yuan (\$287.3 million) in 2011, skyrocketing 132.8 percent from the previous year.



ARGENTINA

People parade with a super-sized Argentine national flag at a ceremony in Rosario on February 27 to mark the 200th anniversary of the first hoisting of the flag during the Argentine War of Independence in this central city



AP/WIDEWORLD

Students wearing flower costumes rehearse before the start of the annual Caracol Festival in Manila on February 26. Participants of the festival dress up as different forms of wildlife to express the need to preserve the city's environment and cultural heritage

THE PHILIPPINES



Protesters shout from a makeshift barricade at the "Occupy London" protest camp outside Saint Paul's Cathedral on February 28, as police dismantle the camp, which sprang up last October

BRITAIN

SYRIA

A woman shows a ballot card before casting her vote on a new constitution at a polling station in Damascus on February 26. Syrian authorities said referendum results showed 89 percent of eligible voters supported the new charter



U.S.A.

A resident searches for possessions after a tornado ripped through his neighborhood on February 29 in Harrisburg, Illinois. At least nine people were killed in tornadoes across the U.S. Midwest



Residents watch the demolition of the compound where former Al Qaeda chief Osama Bin Laden was slain last year in the northwestern town of Abbottabad on February 26

PAKISTAN





COVER STORY

FOREVER YOUNG LEI

Our times need the spirit of an altruist hero more than ever By Li Li

Wang Dajia, a 16-year-old middle school student from Changsha, capital of central China's Hunan Province, has supported charitable causes for nine years. After the catastrophic earthquake in Sichuan Province in May 2008, Wang decided to raise money for children in earthquake-affected areas. She published a book titled *Growth Starting With Gratitude*, a compilation of her compositions and paintings, and held charity book sales of

her book in parks, streets and schools around Changsha on weekends. She sold more than 4,000 copies within three months and raised a total of 120,000 yuan (\$19,000), which was donated to a primary school in Sichuan to build a classroom with audio-visual equipment and a library.

Wang attributed her Samaritan efforts to an enduring admiration of Lei Feng, a late soldier of the People's Liberation Army who has been a symbol of altruism in China since the

1960s. "To live is to serve the people. Live to make others happy," Lei wrote in his diary, which recorded his deeds and experiences and was published posthumously.

Lei was killed in an accident on August 15, 1962. On March 5, 1963, late Chinese leader Mao Zedong called for all Chinese people to "learn from Comrade Lei Feng." March 5 has since been marked in China as Lei Feng's Day and this year marks its 49th anniversary.



Quotes from *Lei Feng's Diary*:

People's lives will end but there is no end to serving the people. I want to devote my life to serving the people endlessly.

There is only one aim in my life: to be a useful person to the people.

It's a great glory to become a nameless hero.

To live is to serve the people—live to make others happy.



A SHINING MODEL: Lei Feng cleans his truck

FENG

FENYONG

Since then, a “living Lei Feng” has become the highest praise one can receive in China for going out of one’s way to help others. Devoted employees are called “Lei Feng-like workers,” and a team sharing a strong sense of team spirit is called a “Lei Feng team.”

“I grew up listening to songs about Lei Feng without understanding the true meaning of ‘Lei Feng spirit.’ As I grew older and read the book *Lei Feng's Diary*, I started to ponder what made Lei a great man. Lei is a grateful and loving person who cares for others,” Wang said.

In February, *Today Morning Express* in Hangzhou, east China’s Zhejiang Province, conducted a survey of 1,000 local primary and middle school students and tested their knowledge of Lei. The survey revealed that 72.7 percent of students know Lei’s deeds well and 93.8 percent said that people still need to follow his example. About 11.5 percent of the students regarded Lei as their favorite idol, after 20 percent who favor business leaders and 20 percent who admire entertainment stars, but ahead of the 10.7 percent who like writers and 10.3 percent who consider sports celebrities their idols.

An idol for all

*I often ask myself, my friends,
what can I give you?
Although I do not have the answer,
I know deep in my heart that I really can
give you my life,
my blood and a poem written with life and
warm blood.*

This poem was penned by Guo Mingyi, an amateur poet and a rank-and-file worker at the Anshan Iron and Steel Group in Anshan, northeast China’s Liaoning Province. The blood in his poem has a literal meaning as Guo has donated more than 60 liters of blood over the past two decades, equal to the blood volume of 10 adults. He is always trying to encourage the people around him to become

blood donors and founded a blood-donation club in July 2006. His club now has more than 900 members.

Guo has also persuaded more than 1,700 colleagues to register as volunteer donors of stem cells. In 2006, when Guo heard that a colleague’s daughter had been diagnosed with leukemia, he immediately set about trying to find people whose stem cells matched the girl’s. He convinced 400 of his colleagues to take a match test. He even sought help from local residents by speaking on a live radio program. Eventually, one volunteer turned out to be a match and the 13-year-old girl was saved.

In June 2010, Guo founded an organ donor club in Anshan and its founding members included his wife, sister-in-law and brother-in-law.

In 1994, after watching a public-service advertisement on TV about children in China’s poverty-stricken rural areas who could not afford to go to school, Guo became determined to do something to help.

Through Project Hope, a charity that helps children from rural poor families complete elementary school education, Guo made his first donation of 200 yuan (\$31.7), one third of his family’s monthly income at the time, to a boy from a mountainous village in a nearby county.

Guo still treasures a letter he received from the boy, who wrote, “Uncle Guo, I want to thank you for the money you sent. I am back at school. ▶▶



1. INSPIRATIONAL BUS: A bus decorated with Lei Feng's portrait and quotes in Zhengzhou, Henan Province
2. POWER OF A ROLE MODEL: Xu Shuanggong, 72, repairs outdoor fitness equipment in his community in Zaozhuang, east China's Shandong Province. Xu has been repairing household appliances for his neighbors for free since 1963
3. HELP AT HAND: Volunteers at a booth named after Lei Feng in the Olympic Green in Beijing gives directions to tourists on March 5, 2011
4. ALTRUIST HERO: Guo Mingyi (left), a worker at the Anshan Iron and Steel Group who is well-known in China for his charity efforts, talks with Wu Yifan, a student from a poor family whom he has supported for several years, on August 29, 2010



You have given hope to my family.”

Guo burst into tears when reading the letter. From then on he never looked back in his charity work. “I don’t need the children I helped to pay me back. All I want is for them to receive education, and the knowledge that I have changed their lives for the better,” he said.

Since 1994, Guo has also donated more than 120,000 yuan (\$19,000), half of his own income, to support 180 children from poor families. Although his monthly salary has increased ten-fold from 300 yuan (\$47.6) to 3,000 yuan (\$476) over the past 20 years, his family still lives in a sparsely furnished 1980s apartment.

Moved by Guo’s actions, many people call him a “modern-day Lei Feng.”

Besides the shared quality of selflessness and kindness, Guo and Lei also seem to share similar trajectories in life. Before joining the army, Lei worked at Guo’s current company as a bulldozer driver for more than a year. Lei and Guo were even recruited to the army by the same recruiter.

“I know a lot of Lei’s fellow workers and soldiers, who told me many stories about him. I feel that he has never really left, and this strengthened my belief to follow his example and make more contributions to the country, society and others,” Guo said during an online interview in February.

Although media coverage has made Guo a household name in China, he refuses to consider himself a celebrity. “I am nothing more than an ordinary worker, volunteer and person,” he said. Guo also said that by serving the community and helping others, every volunteer is carrying forward Lei’s legacy.

Unlike previous generations, Chinese young people today tend to view Lei as an equal. “Lei Feng wore a leather jacket and liked taking photos. He was full of passion for life and a fashionable young person just like us,” said Zhang Lei, a volunteer worker and student of Hunan University.

Yan Pei, a young advertisement writer in Changsha, worked as a volunteer English teacher in remote areas of southwestern Yunnan Province for one year after graduating from college. Before registering for this volunteering opportunity, she had landed a well-paid job in her home city where her parents wanted her to settle. “Learning from Lei Feng is not about repeating any slogan, but to offer as much help as one can to those in need,” Yan said.

Always inspiring

“After seeing a brand new bicycle in the square blown onto the ground by a gust of

wind, the three of us went forward and lifted the bicycle up.

“We should donate our pocket money to our fellow primary school students in Yushu County in Qinghai Province, which was struck by an earthquake in April 2010.”

These are excerpts from the “Living With Lei Feng Diary” kept by students at Lei Feng Primary School in Beijing over the course of 39 years. As an extracurricular activity, students have been asked to record their good deeds in a journal to motivate themselves and their peers.

Originally called Shuangsi Primary School, the school was renamed in honor of the national hero in 1990 after students exchanged letters with soldiers of the squad Lei served in for 17 years. According to China National Radio, there are at least 21 schools named after Lei across China.

Despite his enduring popularity in China, recently there has been an undercurrent of ridicule directed against Lei’s so-called “naivety.” As consumerism becomes the main driving force of people’s lives, self-fulfillment and self-gratification have become the top priorities for a great many people.

Some people even began to question the



Who Is Lei Feng?

Lei Feng was born on December 18, 1940, to a farmer's family in Wangcheng, central China's Hunan Province. At the age of 7, he lost all the members of his immediate family and was adopted by a distant relative. He graduated from middle school in 1956 and then worked as a tractor driver on a local farm. He went on to be a bulldozer driver at the Anshan Iron and Steel Co. and in 1960 he joined a transportation unit of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) based in northeast China.

Lei was killed on August 15, 1962, while directing a truck as it backed up. A pole struck him on the head.

Lei had a habit of keeping a diary to detail his deeds and experiences, which was published after his death and became one of the bestsellers of the time.

According to Lin Ke, a secretary of late Chairman Mao Zedong, *China Youth* magazine approached Mao in February 1963 to write an epigraph for their special coverage on Lei. Mao wrote "Learn from Comrade Lei Feng" in traditional calligraphy.

The magazine published Mao's writing on March 2, 1963. Three days later, it was republished by *People's Daily*, *PLA Daily*, *China Youth Daily* and *Guangming Daily*. The news media later published handwritten epigraphs by other Party and state leaders, finally immortalizing the soldier as an emblem of selflessness and devotion.

necessity of learning from Lei, suggesting that under a market economy, people should only get what they pay for. In recent years, a host of scandals involving bystanders who refuse to help people in trouble or good Samaritans who become the extortion victims of the people they have assisted have triggered concerns about a moral decline at many levels of Chinese society.

On August 23, 2011, for example, a female college student tried to leap to her death from the fourth floor of an apartment building in Shanghai. Her attempt attracted a large circle of bystanders. But instead of helping the suicidal woman, some bystanders laughed at her and even encouraged her to jump. When she finally landed on a cushion with only a minor bruise, one bystander even expressed disappointment saying, "She should have chosen a higher building to kill herself."

Commenting on the cruelty and indifference of these bystanders, Liang Xiaosheng, a famous writer, said that cynicism has poisoned Chinese people's souls.

"Nowadays the Chinese people tend to label every kind act as 'putting on a show,'" Liang said. "As a matter of fact, there are many things that you simply have to believe

in. When one helps others, you only need to believe that he or she is kind-hearted."

This lack of trust among people has already taken a toll on morality in China. The most notorious case is the death of Wang Yue, a two-year-old toddler who was killed in a hit-and-run accident in October 2011. After the girl was knocked down by a van, 18 bystanders walked past her as she lay face down on a narrow ally in a hardware market in Foshan, south China's Guangdong Province. When questioned, most of those passersby said they feared being framed for the accident by Wang's family.

In this context, many scholars emphasize the eternal relevance of "Lei Feng spirit," believing its revival will contribute to curing today's social illnesses.

"Although laws stipulate citizens' rights and responsibilities, people need to go beyond the law during emergencies. Even in a market economy, there must be people who are willing to make sacrifices. After people have their material desires met, they will long for higher happiness by showing compassion and conducting altruistic behaviors," wrote Gu Jun, a sociology professor at Shanghai University.

The kindness and selflessness Lei embod-

ies is also deeply rooted in Chinese culture. The ancient philosopher Mencius who lived 2,300 years ago said, "The benevolent man loves others and the courteous man respects others" and "I shall give up my life for righteousness."

At a press conference on February 27, Luo Shugang, Executive Vice Minister of the Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, called on the public to learn from Lei's selflessness for helping others, dedication to his career, self-motivated learning and thrifty lifestyle.

"In a world of global-scale problems, such as the financial crisis, climate change, environmental degradation, wars and famines, no single country or region can offer solutions alone. Now more than ever, people need to turn to Lei Feng's thoughts and deeds for inspiration. 'Lei Feng spirit,' which has become part of China's cultural and historical assets, offers a new perspective for constructing a better future for mankind and a harmonious world," says a recent editorial from the Beijing-based *Guangming Daily*. ■

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WEEKLY WATCH

WORLD PHOTO NEWS

Left: CHILE

Overseas Chinese and Chilean performers play traditional Chinese gongs and drums in downtown Santiago on August 8 (YE SHU BONG)

Right: COLOMBIA

Farmers carrying flower arrangements participate in a parade in Medellin on August 7. Colombia is one of the world's major flower producers and exporters (XIN HUA/AFP)



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11:00-13:00 Dining at City God Temple and
Sightseeing in Yu Garden

13:00-14:00 Jinzhi Yuye Cheongsam Store

14:00-15:00 Memories Hidden in the Streets

15:00-16:00 Tianzifang—Shanghai's Greenwich Village

16:00-17:00 New Height of the City

—Shanghai World Financial Center

17:00-19:00 Sunset on Riverside Avenue

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20:00-21:00 Nightlife in Xintiandi

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