

zhongshanspecial

# Zhongshan has long-term relationship with World Expos

By ZHAN LISHENG

Zhongshan will open its door to visitors from May 22 to 27 at the Urban Best Practices Area (UBPA) during the Shanghai World Expo.

The Pearl River Delta city has three exhibition halls for displaying its recent development, its culture and history, as well as its unique multimedia charity parade.

The exhibition halls cover a total area of 1,500 sq m.

The city is the birthplace of Dr Sun Yat-sen or Sun Zhongshan (1886-1925), forerunner of China's democratic revolution, which overthrew the feudal Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) in 1911. Zhongshan was named after this historical

figure after he died in 1925.

"Dr Sun advocated 'fraternity' during his lifetime. As his hometown, Zhongshan has done a lot to carry forward that spirit," said Yin Zhaoju, vice-mayor of the city.

The theme for Zhongshan's Expo show will be "fraternity and harmony".

## Charity parade

The charity parade, held on the day of the Chinese Lantern Festival, the 15th day after the Spring Festival, takes place every year in the city to raise funds for the elderly and needy.

At the Expo exhibition, the development of this annual parade over the past 23 years will be highlighted and displayed via multimedia.

"There will also be folk art performances outside, which are expected to help reproduce the jollity of the city's annual gala," said Jian Haiyan, deputy president of China Red Cross Society's Zhongshan branch and deputy director of the city's delegation to the Shanghai Expo.

The performances, which will take place from 15:30 to 16:10 everyday during the six days, include drunken dragon dance performed by an art troupe from the city's Changzhou West district, as well as a crane dance and lion dance by the troupe from its Shaxi township.

According to Jian, Zhongshan's exhibition halls will integrate cultural elements

with economic ones, tradition with modernity and show off the city's great historical figures, celebrities, towns, businesses and brand names.

## City's Expo history

"Believe it or not, we have reasonable evidence that the first Chinese who attended the World Expo was from Zhongshan and that the first Chinese who proposed that the World Expo should be held in Shanghai was also from our city," said Jian.

Historical records indicate that Xu Rongcun, a businessman from the city, was the first Chinese to attend the World Expo in London in 1851, while Zheng Guanying, a successful industrialist and eminent philosopher, became the first Chinese to propose in 1893 that Shanghai should host the World Expo.

The First World Expo in London in 1851 failed to attract any attention of the Chinese except Xu Rongcun, who was a successful businessman in Shanghai then. Xu handpicked 12 packs of "Yung Kee" silk for the Expo in London and the product won a golden prize.

In 1893, Zheng Guanying advised that Shanghai should host the World Expo to make the people rich and revitalize the businesses in his masterpiece "Words of Warning in Times of Prosperity", in which he elaborated upon the concept of commercial war.

Zheng wrote that the World Expo would bring numerous benefits to the people and the nation, and help improve techniques, products and businesses in China.



Local folk artists perform dragon dance during the charity parade.

# Charity parade helps build a better world

By LAO ZHAN

The annual charity parade has become an integral part of Zhongshan people's endeavor to develop the spirit of fraternity advocated by Dr Sun Yat-sen, a native of the city and China's democratic forerunner.

The local government's idea to highlight the theme of fraternity and harmony at the Shanghai Expo is what made them stand out, according to Yin Zhaoju, vice-mayor of the city.

"Our theme in application for a presence at the Expo immediately impressed the selectors among the 106 cases submitted by over 80 cities globally," he said.

Yin said the charity parade is a good demonstration of this theme. The city initiated the annual charity parade in 1988, initially in an attempt to raise funds for the elderly. It is now an annual charitable gala in which tens of thousands of people participate

on every Lantern Festival.

Over 3 million people including representatives of the red-cross societies nationwide, overseas Chinese and Hong Kong and Macao residents of Zhongshan origin, and migrant workers from across the nation have joined in the parades in the 23 years.

And more than 1.2 million people have donated over 700 million yuan during the past 23 parades.

The vice-mayor said that the event is well organized with 55 teams consisting of rural volunteers and another 68 teams of community volunteers playing active roles in a series of charitable activities ranging from performances, sales, contests, medical services, maintenance services and donations.

The event is a showcase for folk activities including the crane dance, phoenix dance, lion dance, and piu-sik parade, turning the gala into a carnival.

He said that it is of great

importance to the local government that use of funds is rational and management of the money raised is transparent. They have established an oversight system to ensure that this is the case.

Any individual who donates over 200 yuan and any organization, which donates over 1,000 yuan are made public, and how the funds are used is subject to professional auditing and made known to the public every year.

Of the funds, 218 million yuan has been used to help the needy and more than 5 million yuan has been used to set up a special school for the disabled.

Another 180 million of the funds was used for 63 public projects including a hospital and a first-aid center, with another 146 million yuan being used for disaster-relief on occasions including the Sichuan earthquake in 2008 and the disaster caused by typhoon Morakot in Taiwan in 2009.



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The former residence of Dr Sun Yat-sen, China's democratic forerunner.