

TALKING POINTS

“Is it really necessary to raise the individual income tax threshold? Is it even possible to increase it to 10,000 yuan in the end as planned? In order to raise people’s income levels and help them have a comfortable standard of life, we will push ahead with social development gradually.”

ZONG QINGHOU, chairman of Hangzhou Wahaha Group, speaks at the Yabuli China Entrepreneur Forum Summer Summit on Aug 22, as quoted by thepaper.cn

“The way in which the Ice Bucket Challenge has quickly gone viral among celebrities highlights a new model of charity work in the era of online social networking. It aims to catch the attention of famous people and get them to participate in charity work in a fun way. However, to get more members of the public to take part in this and learn more about diseases like ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis) would represent a better solution to the problem of caring for vulnerable groups over the longer term.”

WANG ZHENYAO, dean of the China Philanthropy Research Institute, as reported by caixin.com

“As people appreciate living on the planet in a sustainable and healthy way, I treasure every drop of water. I will try my best to help the ALS Foundation, but I won’t accept any Ice Bucket Challenge.”

ZHOU XUN, a Chinese actress, posts her thoughts of the latest charity fad on her Weibo account

“Over 21 percent of working people in China are troubled by insomnia, but only 8 percent of them seek medical assistance. Some 72 percent of the interviewees only gets a maximum of six hours’ sleep a day, while 8 percent sleep for the recommended eight hours.”

A SURVEY BY TIANJI.COM, a Beijing-based networking site, on how little sleep Chinese professionals get, as reported by CNR.cn

“We are having problems retaining staff with experi-

ence overseas. We tried to recruit more overseas returnees to expand our faculty, but some were unable to adjust and left very quickly.”

WANG JIAQIONG, dean of Capital University of Economics and Business, as reported by Oriental Morning Post

“Everyone has different thoughts on how to be a good parent. In my opinion, the most important thing is to educate the child to be a healthy, optimistic and independent thinker. He has to deal with the rest by himself. Also, don’t push your dreams onto your child. Try to understand his or her feelings before educating them. A parent has to remember that if their child cannot learn the way they teach, then they must teach in a way their child can understand.”

WANG WENYONG, a business investor posted on his blog

“The salary gap among people with different academic degrees is not as obvious as it used to be and having an advanced degree doesn’t necessarily equate to a highly paid job anymore. Most new graduates these days are struggling to find a job that can meet their high salary expectations. My advice is that it is better to work hard on a step-by-step basis and catch every opportunity to improve rather than just chasing the big money right off the bat.”

FENG LIJUAN, a human resource expert, as quoted by eastday.com



A JOURNEY TO THE WEST: Two Dutchmen are taking Chinese products on the road home. PHOTO PROVIDED TO SHANGHAI STAR

I figured it was time for somebody to stand up and say, “China is cool!”

Editor’s Note: After spending over five years in China, two Dutch guys quit their jobs for a remarkable reason – to discover China around the world.

Impressed by the fascinating stories of motivated Chinese people, Maren Striker and Rogier Bikker left Shanghai on July 26 to spend three months driving to Holland along the old Silk Road, a 15,000-kilometer journey that will span 12 countries.

To show what Chinese people are capable of, they decided to use only local products – a Chinese car, laptops, phones and even sunglasses.

Here is the first story that Rogier Bikker wrote about how they prepared for their journey and got started. We will keep updating stories from Bikker and Striker as they continue their journey.



ROGIER BIKKER

I’m standing among boxes piled up in my living room in central Shanghai. It’s 11 pm and I’m stressed. But it’s not the kind of stress that I’ve experienced working as

a foreign entrepreneur in China for the past five years. There are no clients knocking on the door. Instead, it’s my buddy Maren in the doorway. “Just 2 days to go!” he says with excitement.

We’re about to drive from Shanghai to Rotterdam by car. What started as a crazy idea over a beer, turned into a year of planning our journey from China to Holland.

More than just a road-trip, it’s a journey with a message. Because we’ll be traveling using only Chinese brands: a BYD car, Huawei smartphones, AEE cameras, Ozark gear, Lenovo laptops, Xiyouji (A Journey to the West) clothing, Braos sunglasses, and so on. All these Chinese brands, unknown to many foreigners, support our project, which we are calling ‘Brand New China.’

By travelling with only Chinese brands, I aim to share the fact that China is no longer just a copycat country or the factory of the world. I have seen the country change dramatically since my first visit 12 years ago. I was lucky to work with some incredibly ambitious Chinese people, and along the way came to know the highly driven and innovative side of China. Frustrated by the negative perception of China around the world, I figured it was time for somebody to stand up and say, “China is cool!”

That I proclaim this as a non-

Chinese might be a bit ironic. But I believe it touches on the identity struggle that China is going through at the moment. The young generation is extremely proud of China, but also very aware of its flaws, and not confident in the country because of that. When I talk about Brand New China with my Chinese friends, they feel patriotic and proud. But they still advise me to just drive with a Volkswagen. It’s this endless identity struggle that is so exemplary for the young generation in China.

I also experienced this when trying to get Chinese brands on board for the journey. I simply wrote emails to every car manufacturer in China asking to provide me a car. All of those who responded were extremely enthusiastic. But they just weren’t confident their car could make it to the other side of the world, except BYD, which fittingly stands for ‘Build Your Dreams.’ When I met the Shenzhen-based battery manufacturer-turned-car brand, they told me “Let’s build this dream!”

That was six months ago. A week ago they delivered a ‘brand new’ car to Shanghai for Maren and me to pick-up. All that’s left is to pack up our stuff, leave our daily life behind, and drive back home. Luckily, we’ll be taking a bit of China along with us.

WE’D LIKE TO HEAR OF YOUR EXPERIENCES

We’re delighted to welcome readers who live or have spent time in Shanghai, or anywhere else in China, to share their stories with Shanghai Star readers. **Rules:** Stories must be set in Shanghai or China and be 500 words or less. Please attach a 50-word description of yourself and a personal photo. Send it to shanghaiatar@chinadaily.com.cn. **The opinions expressed on this page do not necessarily reflect those of the Shanghai Star.**