

PEOPLE

# Gui Haichao: From small-town dreamer to daring astronaut



Gui Haichao, a member of China's Shenzhou XVI crew and an astronaut, recently visited his alma mater, No. 1 High School of Shidian County in Baoshan City, Yunnan Province. He took the opportunity to share his personal learning experience and inspire the current students at the school by discussing how he achieved his dream of becoming an astronaut.

Gui, born in Yaoguan Town,

Shidian County, had a significant moment during his second year of senior high school. It was on October 15, 2003, when China achieved the successful launch of its first manned spacecraft, Shenzhou V. The news, heard through the school radio, ignited a deep aspiration within him to venture into the vast expanse of space.

Motivated by his aspiration, Gui became increasingly determined to excel in his studies. Following the college entrance examination, he achieved outstanding results and was admitted to Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics (BUAA). Within just nine years, he completed his doctoral degree and pursued postdoctoral research abroad. At the age of 31, Gui attained the esteemed position of a doctoral supervisor at BUAA.

In 2018, upon learning that China was recruiting the first

group of payload experts for its space station, Gui volunteered without hesitation. He had always nurtured a dream of conducting scientific research in the space, and the opportunity to fulfill that dream propelled him to immediately sign up.

The astronaut selection process is known for its demanding nature, thoroughly assessing the candidates' physical and mental qualities. Amidst approximately 2,500 candidates, Gui emerged as one of the four outstanding payload experts after enduring a rigorous selection process. Finally, on May 30, 2023, Gui soared into space aboard the Shenzhou XVI manned spacecraft, fulfilling his lifelong dream of venturing beyond Earth's atmosphere.

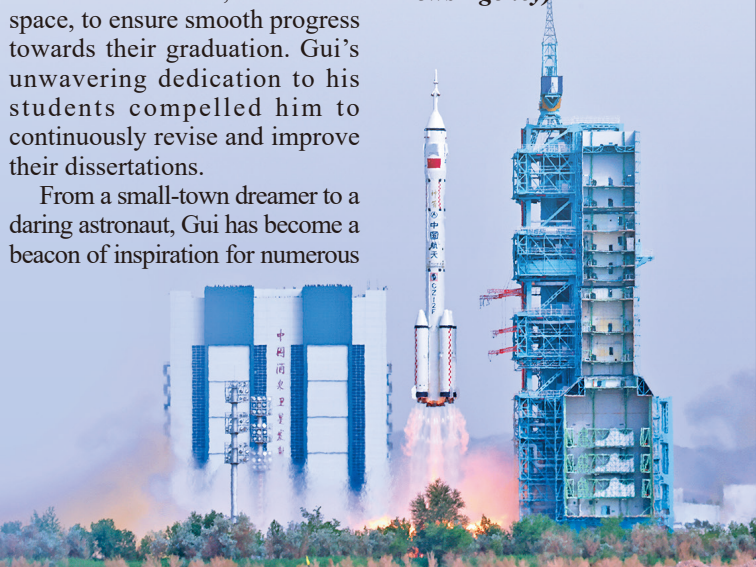
During his space mission, amidst a busy schedule conducting experiments, Gui took moments to share awe-

inspiring views of the Earth from space. He also tended to the growth of vegetables in the "space garden," taught lessons in the space classroom, and provided guidance on his students' dissertation writing. He convened meetings with the seven of them, even from space, to ensure smooth progress towards their graduation. Gui's unwavering dedication to his students compelled him to continuously revise and improve their dissertations.

From a small-town dreamer to a daring astronaut, Gui has become a beacon of inspiration for numerous

children. Through his remarkable journey, he has demonstrated that education has the power to transform one's destiny.

(Text by People.com, Xinhua News Agency, China Daily, China Youth Daily, and Yunnan.cn)(Pictures by Xinhua News Agency)



TRAVEL

## Isaac: Xishuangbanna showed me a different side of China



Stepping off the plane from Beijing to Jinghong, south Yunnan's Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture was like stepping out of one world and into another. Instantly I noticed the tropical weather and how much hotter it was than the cool spring I had left behind only a few hours before.

Not really knowing what to expect, I was eager to get out of the airport and see what the city had to offer. Traveling from the airport to the hotel, I noticed that Jinghong was a much smaller, and seemed like a much more relaxed city than what I was used to in Beijing. The tropical flowers bloomed all around us as we made our way though some light traffic to the hotel.

After getting settled, the real adventure could begin, and it did not disappoint. The entire weekend showed me how people can come together and have fun while celebrating the New Year of Dai people. The sights, sounds, and tastes of the city were simply

wonderful. I was able to learn so much about a part of China that I knew next to nothing about and am now eager to learn more about in the future.

In Jinghong, the Mengle Buddhist Temple sits on the former site of the Jingpiao Temple, an imperial temple built by a Dai King to honor his queen, who believed in Buddhism. The original temple was destroyed in a war in 1848. It was not until 2005 that a new temple was built on the sight. Much like the lakes of the north, you will find beautifully decorated pavilions in the imperial gardens of the Dai kings. The pavilions feature an architectural style similar to that of the Theravada Buddhist temples, while the pavilions in Beijing follow the traditional Han style. The architecture of these incredible pavilions blends seamlessly into the natural landscape surrounding them and makes them an excellent place for us today to sit and relax.

The food I was able to try on

the trip was amazing. While a few dishes might make you second guess yourself about trying them, I was up for the adventure and got to sample some delicious dishes like ant eggs and a traditional salad made with chicken feet. Chicken feet were already one of my favorite dishes, so getting to try them in a different preparation was a real treat. There was also a lot of fish and beef dishes served with each meal.

There were two parts of the trip that really stood out as highlights for me during this trip. The first was when we went to the river to release lanterns. Seeing the lanterns rise up into the night sky with the city lights as a background was awe inspiring. It was also quite moving to walk around and watch as people prepared their lanterns for launch. They were symbolically releasing the issues of the old year in preparation for the coming new year.

The second highlight for me was the water splashing. I had watched several videos online to get an idea of what to expect, but they did nothing to prepare me for this amazing experience. People of all ages, from young children to elderly men and women, were part of one giant party and were enjoying the festivities.

Overall, this trip has shown me a completely different side to China that as a foreigner I would never have expected to see, and I encourage you all to pay Xishuangbanna a visit if you get the chance. It is a once in a lifetime experience that you will never forget.

(Text by Isaac, picture by Guo Yao)

NEWS IN BRIEF

## Yunnan-Angkor world heritage event set for June

The year 2024 has been designated as the Year of China-Cambodia People-to-People Exchange. As part of ongoing efforts to strengthen these exchanges, the Yunnan-Angkor Voices of World Heritage Sites event will take place on June 7 in Yunnan Province, China.

The upcoming event will encompass several noteworthy activities, including a grand launching ceremony, the promotion of world heritage tours, a dialogue session featuring Chinese and Cambodian presidents and editors-in-chief

of media organizations, the inauguration of the Angkor Airport Cultural Corridor, and a direct engagement session among world heritage sites.

Since the official opening of Siem Reap Angkor International Airport in Cambodia in October 2023, Angkor Wat has witnessed a greater influx of international tourists. The inauguration, in turn, has resulted in increased people-to-people exchanges and expanded opportunities for tourism and trade between Yunnan and Cambodia.

(Reported by Liu Ziyu)

FRIENDSHIP

## A friendship that endures

Recently, a range of goodwill activities were held in Dayton, showcasing the timeless bond between the US and China, according to Xinhua News Agency. These included a photo exhibition featuring the Flying Tigers and Doolittle Squadron, the Fifth China-US World War II Friendship Forum, and a commemorative ceremony marking the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the donated grinding wheel from Yunnan Province in the US.

During the opening ceremony of the photo exhibition, representatives from two high schools in China's Yunnan Province and the International Leadership of Texas Private High School Garland exchanged a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that was recently signed online. The MOU solidifies the partnership for the Flying Tigers Friendship Schools and Youth Leadership Program. Amidst the representatives stood a warplane and a grinding wheel, which not only embody the deep-rooted US-China friendship during World War II, but also bear witness

to the unwavering spirit of the Flying Tigers and the enduring legacy of US-China friendship.

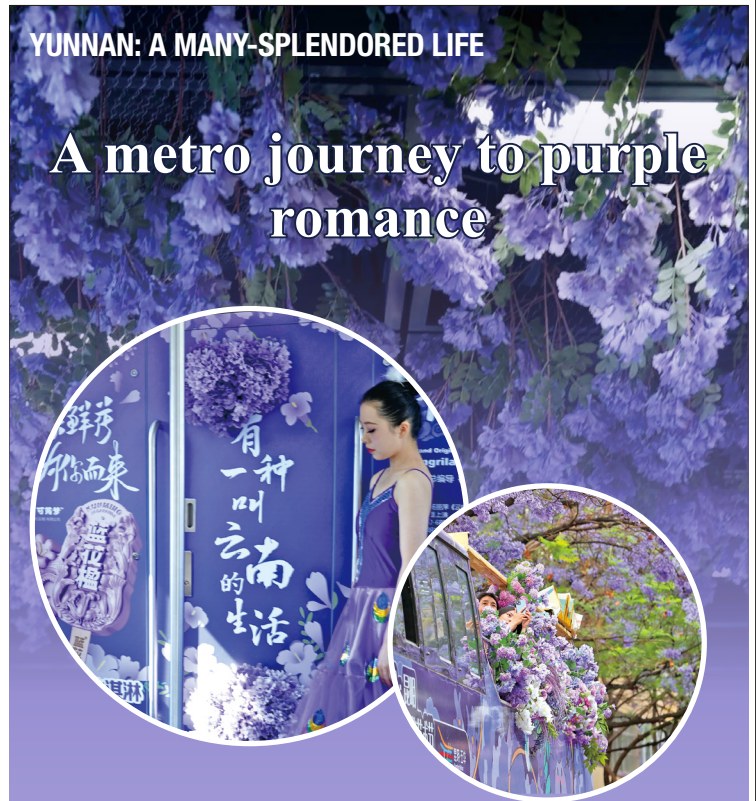
Over 80 years ago, the Flying Tigers' Curtiss C-46 Commando transport aircraft performed a remarkable feat on the renowned "Hump" route. During the construction of the airfield for the Flying Tigers, thousands of Chinese soldiers and civilians used the massive grinding wheel weighing 3.7 tons to compact the runway.

Twenty years ago, the grinding wheel, donated by the Yunnan Provincial People's Government, made its journey to the National Museum of the United States Air Force, where it became an integral part of the exhibit alongside the C-46 transport aircraft. Throughout the past two decades, the museum has welcomed tens of millions of visitors who have not only been in awe of the remarkable accomplishments of the Flying Tigers and the Chinese military and civilians symbolized by these artifacts, but have also been deeply moved by the profound friendship

between the people of the United States and China in their united stand against the Japanese invaders.

At the commemorative ceremony, a representative from Yunnan Province recounted the captivating tale of the grinding wheel and the Flying Tigers, rekindling the history of their combat side by side. The narrative unveiled the remarkable partnership between the brave Yunnan soldiers, civilians, and the Flying Tigers.

The Flying Tigers Friendship Schools and Youth Leadership Program is a dedicated initiative to impart the values and legacy of the Flying Tigers. On April 12, a memorandum of understanding, outlining the collaboration for this program, was signed online among two high schools in Yunnan Province, namely Kunming Foreign Language School and Xiangyun No. 2 High School, the International Leadership of Texas Private High School Garland, and the Sino-American Aviation Heritage Foundation. (Xinhua News Agency and Yunnan Daily)



As early summer descends upon Kunming, the capital city of Yunnan Province, the blooming jacaranda trees transform the landscape into a mesmerizing canvas of romantic purple, enchanting visitors from both within the country and across the globe.

Kunming Rail Transit Co Ltd has gone the extra mile to provide a special experience for both locals and tourists wishing to immerse themselves in the beauty of jacaranda flowers. On the Metro Line 4, a jacaranda-themed train instantly captivates passengers with its stunning purple ambiance. Clusters of

jacaranda flowers inside the train transport passengers to a floral wonderland, allowing them to enjoy the fragrance of blossoms during their metro journey. Adding to the delight, performers from the "Dynamic Yunnan" troupe engage with passengers, creating a truly interactive experience. Moreover, certain metro stations are impressively embellished with jacaranda decorations, creating breathtaking spectacles for all to enjoy. (Text by Yunnan Daily and the "Kunming Wuhua Fabu" WeChat public account)(Pictures by Xinhua News Agency and Yunnan Daily)

