

SNAPSHOTS



Zou Guoliang, a teacher, spent his own savings on boats to ferry village students to school. Over 37 years, he has worn out six boats. PHOTOS BY HU CHENHUAN / XINHUA

A LIFETIME OF SERVICE FOR FERRYMAN

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Zou Guoliang celebrated his last Teacher's Day before his retirement on Sept 10. The 60-year-old is a teacher at a primary school in Shangyou county, East China's Jiangxi province. He is also a ferryman.

In 1980, a reservoir was built on the Nanhe River to drive the turbines of a hydroelectric power plant. The water rose and eventually engulfed the roads to Qinghu Primary School.

"The village children would have dropped out of

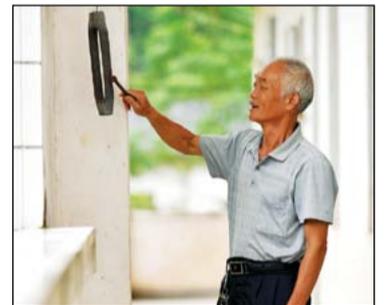
school, because it took too long for them to walk," Zou said. "The shortest route is across the reservoir."

He drew on his own savings to purchase a boat.

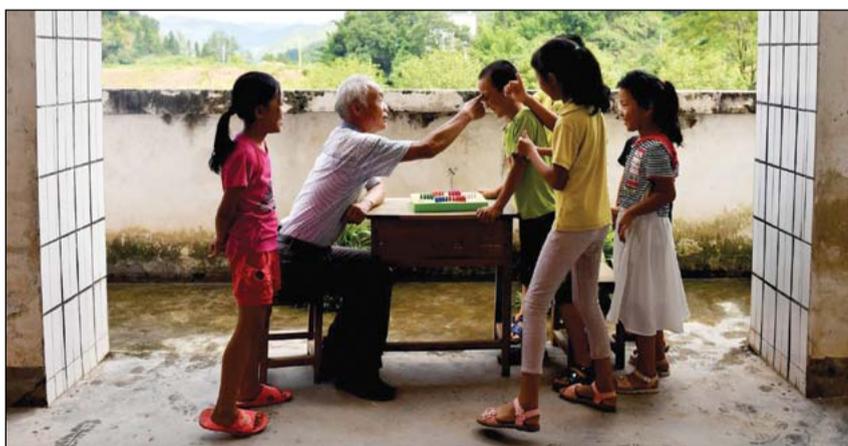
Over the next 37 years, Zou bought six boats and volunteered to ferry students every day between the primary school and their home village.

Now most villagers have moved out of the reservoir area, looking for improved living conditions. And the primary school has moved into a two-story house on what had been a pig farm. There are only six students at the school. But none of that dulls the shine of long service.

"I am happy to have worked here for a lifetime," Zou said.



Zou, as the teacher of the school, did almost everything, including ringing the bell, cooking, and helping with homework. On the recent Teacher's Day, he got a gift of a picture from his students.



As villagers gradually move out of the reservoir area, there are only six students at the school. Following in the footsteps of Zou, two new young teachers have come to work at the school.

