

THE LURE OF 'FAIRYLAND'

Huaguo Mountain, home to the legendary Monkey King, and nearby Lianyungang are major tourist draws

By CANG WEI
cangwei@chinadaily.com.cn

Every Chinese child knows about the Monkey King and his hometown — Huaguo Mountain, whose name means “flowers and fruits”. Every year the area attracts millions of tourists thanks to its mythical status and beautiful scenery.

The mountain, seen as the birthplace of the Monkey King, or Sun Wukong, the hero of one of the most famous Chinese novels, *Journey to the West*, covers an area of 84.3 square kilometers.

The novel written by Wu Cheng'en (1501-82) has been adapted into cartoons, TV dramas and films in China and is immensely popular, especially among Chinese children.

Huaguo Mountain, also called “the No 1 fairyland in the East China Sea”, features grotesque rocks, monkeys in the trees, and endless white clouds shrouding its valleys.

The mountain also has many scenic spots for fans of the Monkey King, including Water Curtain Cave, the Sanqing Palace and the 72 Caves site.

Meanwhile, the nearby seaside city of Lianyungang is home to many scenic attractions, such as Liandao Island and Yuwan Bay.

The international port city, located near the Yellow Sea, is the eastern terminus of the New Eurasian Land Bridge and the proposed Northern East-West Freight Corridor.

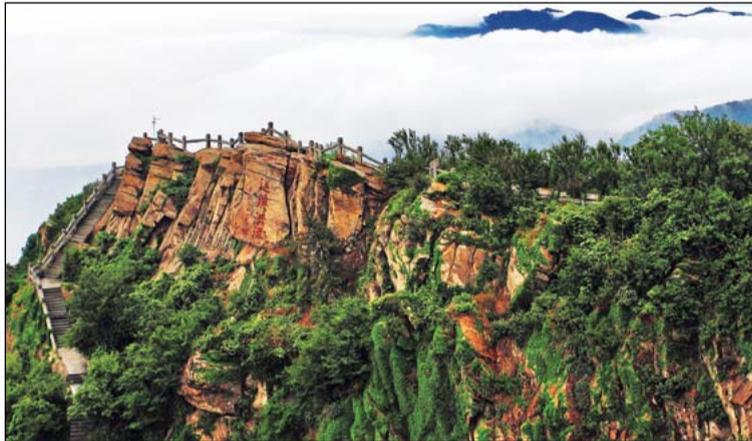
Lianyungang was also one of the first 14 Chinese coastal cities to open up to the world, making it a center for industry, foreign trade and tourism in East China.

Lianyungang is also known as “the city of crystal” due to Donghai County in Lianyungang containing 70 percent of China's reserves of natural crystal and manufacturing 80 percent of the country's crystal products.

With the development of tourism in Lianyungang, Li Daoyong, who was a tour guide 20 years ago, now runs a travel agency.

“I felt it was the right time to start my business in 2003 when the city was listed as one of China's top tourism cities,” said Li.

“When my agency started operations, we had just two workers. But my agency handled 50,000 visitors in 2017 after Huaguo Mountain was



Huaguo Mountain attracts millions of tourists every year, owing to the popularity of the novel *Journey to the West*, in which it is the birthplace of the legendary Monkey King. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

listed as a National 5A scenic spot in 2016,” he said, referring to the highest ranking for a Chinese tourist attraction.

Speaking about his early days, Li said that in 1998, the agency he worked for received only 700 visitors. Back in the 1970s, the city had only one hotel that received foreign visitors. But now it has 23 starred hotels with 2,529 rooms, including two five-star hotels.

In 2017, Lianyungang and the surrounding areas attracted more than 33 million tourists, up 12.5 percent from the previous year.

In recent years, the city has invested heavily to restore its ancient scenic spots and develop new places of interest. In 2017 alone, it invested more than 37 billion yuan (\$5.4 billion) to develop 59 scenic spots, including many countryside tourist attractions. Local farmers working at the

attractions, in jobs like seafood picking and silk making, have benefited from tourism and now live a better life.

In Lizhuang village in the city's Ganyu district, more than 400,000 tourists visited its 400-hectare cherry-planting site.

Separately, the city has also built villas, landing sites and bridges on Liandao Island.

The island, covering an area of 7.6 square kilometers, is the largest in East China's Jiangsu province.

Another attraction is Yuwan Bay, about 20 km from downtown. It attracts not only tourists but also locals who go there to see its waterfalls and cliffs.

For those who love nature, Yuntai Mountain in the northeastern part of the city is rich in wild plants and boasts various kinds of giant ancient trees. To get to Lianyungang, take a flight to the city's Baitabu Airport located 25 km from downtown, or take the high-speed bullet train to Xuzhou station and then a bus to neighboring Lianyungang city.

Liu Maomao contributed to this story.

UBS fetes 21st Beijing Music Festival

ART SPECIAL

By PAMELA LIN in Hong Kong
pamelalin@chindailyhk.com

Entering the 15th year of its partnership with the annual Beijing Music Festival (BMF), Swiss global financial services giant UBS is continuing its commitment to support the cultural and financial development of communities by sponsoring special, high quality concerts.

The festival kicked off its 21st anniversary with 21 performances, under the theme “Entering the 21st Dawn of a New Era”, from Oct 12 to 26. The repertoires include operas, symphonies and chamber musical recitals.

“We feel there are parallels between the Beijing Music Festival and our business, making our sponsorship a perfect fit highlighting the pursuit of collaboration, innovation and, ultimately, excellence,” said Dr Eugene Qian, president of UBS Securities & member of the Asia Pacific Executive Committee, UBS Group.

UBS, a long-term partner of BMF, has helped fostered musicians from across the region. This year, it presented a joint special chamber music performance by Shanghai Quartet, HKPHIL Quartet and Andreas Ottensamer chief clarinetist of the Berlin Philharmonic at BMF.

The festival has arranged live-streaming and broadcast of the performance on the music platform.

Continuing to incorporate new ideas and elements in the “Chinese concept” is also what BMF has inherited. This year, the festival had a grand opening with “Farewell My Concubine”



Dr. Eugene Qian, president of UBS Securities & Member of the Asia Pacific Executive Committee, UBS Group. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY ASIA WEEKLY

a Chinese opera classic combining multimedia effects, modern dance and traditional Chinese music.

“The Orphan of Zhao” presented at the festival is a drama from China's Yuan Dynasty and is the earliest Chinese play known by the Europeans. This time, the directors brought rock and roll elements integrated with oriental choreography in the play, taking the “Chinese concept” to a new level.

Committed to promoting the region's cultural and financial development, UBS invited 35 students from 13th Middle School in Beijing's Shunyi District to the rehearsal by the artists this year and attended a music program to be taught by teachers at the Central Conservatory of Music, China's leading music school.

“We also had UBS volunteers to assist the students on site, providing opportunities for



our UBS employees to join in the BMF concerts,” said Qian.

Besides BMF, UBS has a special focus on contemporary art, comprising more than 30,000 artworks that are displayed at UBS buildings worldwide, including the company's outlets in Beijing and Shanghai.

“A growing number of clients turn to UBS for our expertise in interpreting dynamic markets and exploring opportunities in the financial sector. They also look to us to provide them with an unmatched level of insight, experience and access to the best in contemporary art,” said Qian.

UBS is also the Global Lead Partner of Art Basel, the world's premier art shows for modern and contemporary art.

“UBS is proud to be a longstanding global patron of the arts across the Asia Pacific, as

well as globally,” Qian said.

Moreover, China has been a key market for UBS, providing great opportunities for its China's business. This May, UBS became the first global bank to apply for increasing its stake in its securities joint venture to 51 percent.

With an increase of 37 percent of profit before tax to CHF1.7 billion (\$1.71 billion) in UBS Group's third quarter results of 2018, UBS's Asia Pacific's contribution has continued to climb, with Greater China as a key contributor. “We expect China to become the world's leading economy by 2022. We continue to invest in the country, and we're on track to double our headcount to 1,200 employees by 2020,” UBS said.

Currently, UBS has more than 1,100 employees in China.