

GIFs give China's solar terms a modern twist

Moving art helps people understand ancient calendar in more direct way

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The 24 solar terms, a complementary calendar system invented in ancient China, has been brought to life by a creative designer in Guizhou province.

On the eve of Qingming Festival this month, Shi Changhong released his version of reproduced and packaged characters for each solar term in the form of "moving art", or Graphics Interchange Format, known as GIFs.

Since their initial release on March 29 on Zcool, a professional website for designers, the GIFs have won acclaim from the general public and rapidly engulfed social media, with millions of hits during the festival period.

"In my mind, the 24 solar terms represent a complicated social practice system that is formed through observations of the sun's annual motion, and understanding of the year's changes in seasons, climate and phenology. But this is a textbook definition. After looking at the GIFs, I can understand them in a clear and more direct way," Wang Xiaoqian said on Sina Weibo.

To maximize publicity, Shi released his work in three forms — video, animation and graphics — while background sounds add to the brilliance.

"When I watch the short video, I can feel the Chinese-style elements hidden in them. It is really cool to rejuvenate traditional Chinese culture in

such a unique way," Xiao Feifei said on WeChat.

Shi told China Daily: "It is comforting for me to see that so many people like my latest work."

"The 24 solar items is a deeply rooted concept that encapsulates the essence of Chinese wisdom. However, only a small number of people know all the names or the correct order of those terms. My intention is to increase Chinese people's desire to learn more about our traditional culture."

Last year, the 24 solar terms were added to UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage List, and many people have asked Shi if it was the UNESCO listing that inspired him to design the GIFs.

"Actually, the 24 solar terms work is only a part of my whole design program *Charm China*, which I started over a year ago," Shi said.

"I grew up in a small village. When I was a child, I noticed that my family would do farm work in accordance with the solar terms, which really means a lot to Chinese in rural areas. Therefore, designing the GIFs allowed me to recall happy childhood memories."

Born in Liping county's Qiandong village, Shi is a member of the Dong ethnic group. When he was a child, everything around him, from hats and shoes to embroidery and daily necessities, was embedded with a strong ethnic influence. Shi developed an interest in designing pic-



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Shi Changhong, graphic designer in Guizhou province

tures and was responsible for updating the school notice board during high school.

In 2004, he was admitted to Guizhou Normal University and majored in graphic design, laying the foundations for his future career. After graduation, Shi joined Guizhou Sunshine Brand Design and became a professional designer.

In 2011, he won a competition by creating two artistic Chinese characters for "Guilin", the name of a popular city for tourists in the Guangxi

Zhuang autonomous region. His initial success prompted him to produce many more Chinese regional logos.

He first gained public attention in September, when he released his full set of Chinese regions to celebrate the National Day holiday. Shi's internet fame has helped him to gain business opportunities. He said that with investment from other business partners, he would have more control over his work, adding that the 12 zodiac signs and China's 56 ethnic groups are potential projects. "But I will not be a sellout and forget my principles," he said.

Online celebrities have become increasingly common in China, with many people seeking fame in this manner, but Shi has his own priorities. "I would like to be known as a consistent designer rather than an online celebrity. My work does the talking and this is how I intend things to remain," he added.



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Around China

ZHEJIANG Hired-muscle plan goes awry

Three men have been detained in Hangzhou on suspicion of robbing a woman who had hired them to beat up her parents-in-law. According to reports, the woman wanted a divorce from her husband and was angry at his parents for mistreating her. She had agreed to pay the men 60,000 yuan (\$8,700), which they allegedly took without holding up their part of the deal. The suspects told police that it was easier to rob the woman than beat up her parents-in-law. The woman has since divorced.

RADIO STATION FM93

GUANGXI Man accused of taking leave to rob



A 27-year-old man in Nanning has been detained on suspicion of taking personal leave from work to commit robberies. The unnamed man allegedly assaulted three drivers in a car park and stole about 10,000 yuan (\$1,450) in cash, as well as 20 bank cards. Police said the suspect confessed and begged officers not to tell his employer because he did not want to lose his job.

NANNING EVENING NEWS

Scheme uses sex to keep employees

A man, surnamed Yang, had sex with eight women in a month after being brainwashed into joining an illegal pyramid scheme in Guilin. When Yang, 25, realized the

illegal nature of the group's business and attempted to leave, but he was persuaded to stay through the offer of sex. Yang said some of the sales representatives had contracted sexually transmitted diseases after frequently being lured to participate in group sex parties to remain with the scheme.

MODERN LIFE DAILY

JIANGSU Officer comes to woman's rescue



An auxiliary police officer touched the hearts of locals after crouching down to act as a backrest for a 60-year-old woman who suffered a bone fracture after being knocked down by a motorist in a traffic accident in Zhenjiang on April 9. When Qian Jin arrived at the scene at 7:40 am and found the woman lying on the wet road, he immediately crouched down to allow the victim to lean on his body after stopping a pedestrian who wanted to help the woman up, to prevent further injury. The woman was sent to hospital for treatment 30 minutes later after Qian used his mobile phone to seek medical help.

MODERN EXPRESS

Mortar shell creates chaos

A resident caused panic after taking a mortar shell her husband came across while collecting scrap iron into their housing estate in Nanjing on April 9. Police were called to the scene to help evacuate



residents after being alerted by the woman, surnamed Zhu. Police said it was an 82-millimeter mortar shell, but contained no gunpowder, and that the source of the mortar shell is still being investigated.

CHINA NEWS.COM

SHANDONG Man confused over spending savings

A 70-year-old man, surnamed Li, called a police hotline for help in Yantai on April 7, saying that his savings of 10,000 yuan (\$9,415) had disappeared from his account, and that he had no memory of withdrawing the money. However, when police visited Li, he said he remembered that he had used the money to purchase a financial product last year.

QILU EVENING NEWS

Passengers exit bus via windows

Passengers on a bus in Qingdao on April 7 were seen jumping out of the windows after the driver, surnamed Cheng, stopped the vehicle and sought police help because a woman complained her bag had been stolen. Almost all of the passengers had exited the bus by the time police arrived at the scene six to seven minutes later. Cheng said he had explained to the passengers what he was doing and asked them to cooperate when he stopped the bus during rush hour. However, many of the passengers said they were in a hurry to get to work. Police failed to locate the victim's bag.

QILU EVENING NEWS

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