

Pride in the Profession: A visit to China

By Larry N. Montague, TAPPI President

Editor's note: This article is an expanded version, with additional pictures, of the On The Road column from the upcoming August edition of *Paper360*. The new column will feature reports about our industry's people and events around the world, written by TAPPI staff members.

At TAPPI, we have a new slogan and membership campaign called "Pride in the Profession." This means many things to many people. We could debate its meaning from the forest to the production floor to the kitchen table, and we would all be correct.



Hou-Min Chang

Rather than debating, I recently witnessed what it means during a visit to China. It was my privilege and honor to visit several places in China, and to see first-hand what Pride in the Profession means to our industry peers there. I was very fortunate to have TAPPI Fellow Hou-Min Chang and his wife Anne as my hosts and interpreters during my trip.

First stop: Suzhou

I first visited Stora Enso Suzhou Paper Co., Ltd in Jiangsu, China. I was greeted by Sean Wallace, managing director and Zhu Wei Yan, technical/TQM director. What a small world—I had worked with Sean's brother, Mark, back at The Newark Group. Sean moved to China from the U.S. in September 2006.

This mill serves the coated free sheet markets. Their products go into many publications in China and the rest of the world. Back in 1996, when it was built, this mill was the first of its kind. The machine is 3.8 meters wide and runs 1000 meters per minute, and with 600 employees it is one of the largest employers in Suzhou.

The mill depends on coal for energy; there is no natural gas available. Stora Enso Suzhou focuses on high quality heavyweight coated art paper grades primarily marketed in mainland China. Currently, about a quarter of the 3,680,000 tons of these grades, manufactured in China from all mills, are exported outside of mainland China; about 25 percent of total exports go to the U.S.

Suzhou's brand name for their paper is SPCO, and the mill services about five

percent of the market. Their product is sheeted into small bundles that go to the smaller printers in China. After being around for ten years, they have developed a niche market of very loyal customers.

In November 2005, the mill rebuilt the machine; management and crews began to pay more attention to best practices. Demand for their grades is increasing in China, a trend they expect to continue through the 2008 Olympics in Beijing.

Suzhou's TQM program is regarded as one of the top five units of Stora Enso. The mill's safety performance is number one of fine paper mills in Stora Enso, and fourth best in the entire company.

Both Sean and Zhu Wei Yan agreed that there is a need in China for the type of professional support and technical information that TAPPI provides. They offered some interesting suggestions for growing membership in China:

1. Make it easier for their employees to join.
2. Organize conferences and training sessions far in advance.
3. Publicize TAPPI and market it locally—on their paper.



Worker at Stora Enso's Suzhou mill. (Photo courtesy Stora Enso)

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Top: Poster shows exterior of Gold East Paper.

Center: The grounds of the Gold East mill are lovely and well-manicured.

Bottom: Larry Montague (second from left), along with TAPPI Fellow Hou-Min Chang and his wife, Anne, with one of their hosts at Gold East Paper.

In April 2008, NFU will host TAPPI's PLACE Course. NFU and TAPPI will also co-sponsor the International Conference on Pulping, Papermaking and Biotechnology 2008 (ICPPB'08) at NFU on Nov. 4-6, 2008.

Next stop: Gold East

My second visit took me to APP's Gold East Paper Co. Ltd. mill in Jiangsu, China. Once again, I could see the influence that Hou-min Chang, a professor in the paper science department at North Carolina State University, has had on the world of paper. We met students who Hou-min had instructed back at NCSU who are now gainfully employed at this mill.

Our hosts included Fan Shan Lei, director; Mao Lin Yang, vice president, and Weyrehm Wang, environment protection and engineering division vice director. I could not help but notice the beauty of the mill grounds the moment we drove through the entrance gate. The plush gardens and landscaping gave me the feeling that I was entering a pristine botanical garden.

From the boardroom to the mill floor, Gold East Paper has created a showplace mill. They have 5000 employees and produce two million metric tons of supercalendared paper per year, on three identical paper machines running at 1.5 metric tons per minute. Plans are already in place to add the #4 machine by 2010. All of these machines are the most advanced that their supplier, Voith Paper, has to offer. I was also privileged to see the future plans and space for four more machines.

Identical machines let the mill keep inventory of parts to a minimum. At the present, the mill gets its pulp from Gold East's pulp mill, which is 1000 miles away. The pulp mill uses long fiber from North America, Brazil and Russia. They have plans for their own tree plantations in the future; but my hosts mentioned that there is stiff competition for the land for agricultural use.

The mill campus includes a power station, fresh water plant, effluent plant, a chemical research center, R&D center, and employee housing. I was told that the mill is very "people-oriented" and provides a platform for sustainable employment. Other achievements include:

- Six Sigma processes
- Most advanced SAP system offered
- ISO 14001 certification
- This mill was the first to receive the China Environmental Department's top award in 2004
- Gold East Paper has 22 branch offices around the world, and 35 in China.

At the foot of Purple Mountain

Last but not least, my China adventure included three days at Nanjing Forestry University (NFU). TAPPI co-sponsored a Wet-End Chemistry short course in conjunction with NFU, which was taught by Michael Sun, Ph.D., senior principle scientist, papermaking chemistry and process for MeadWestvaco. Junhua

Pride in the Profession: A visit to China *(continued)*



Top: Larry Montague visiting Nanjing Forestry University.

Center: TAPPI co-sponsored a Wet-End Chemistry short course in conjunction with NFU.

Bottom: Larry Montague (third from left), with his hosts and some of the new friends he met on his visit to China.

"Jenny" Chen Ph.D., an application specialist for Kemira, assisted Sun with the program.

NFU is located in the east of Nanjing, at the foot of Purple Mountain and east of Xuanwu Lake. Founded in 1952, NFU has 39 departments in 154 colleges, offering 54 undergraduate degrees, 48 master degree programs, and 28 doctorate programs, plus three current centers for Postdoctoral research.

NFU is home to more than 23,000 students, including 3000 master and doctoral students as well as foreign students. In the past 50 years, NFU has launched more than 62,000 graduates and post-graduates. NFU has 1000 teachers, 416 professors and associate professors, 84 supervisors for doctoral students and 85 concurrent professors.

During my time at NFU I had the privilege of meeting and getting to know the following people:

- Shiyuan Yu, Ph. D. and President Professor of Nanjing Forestry University
- Lee Zhongzheng, Ph. D. Fellow of International Academy of wood Science, Director of Jiangsu Province TAPPI
- Hong Jianguo, Dean Doctor Professor College of Chemical Engineering
- Hongqi Dai, Ph. D. Professor Department of Paper Science
- Zhang Hui, Professor Senior Engineer Ph. D. Chemical Engineering College
- Kangua Cheng, Professor and Director of Wood Protection Research Institute
- Dr. Huamin Zhai, Vice Dean of College of Chemical Engineering
- Zeng Tao, Professor Associate Dean College of Chemical Engineering
- Julina Zhu, International Department of Nanjing SIXIN Scientific-Technological Application Research Institute Company, Ltd.

It was truly my honor and privilege to have met these fine people. They, too, exhibit "pride in the profession."

**For more information about the places
Larry visited in China:**

Stora Enso Suzhou: www.storaenso.com

APP and Gold East Paper: www.goldeastpaper.com

Nanjing Forestry University: www.njfu.edu.cn