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## Olympic Opening Ceremony Order of Events

- 2,008 Fou drummers; lit their drums to form giant digits (in both Arabic and Chinese numerals) to countdown the final seconds to opening time 8:08 p.m., 8/08/08 opening date.
- 29 fireworks, another of the great Chinese inventions, in the shape of footprints marching along Beijing city's central axis into the national stadium, represented the 29 Olympiads.
- 20 Buddhist apsaras of the Mogao Caves hover near giant Olympic rings, each holding 45,000 beads.
- 56 children representing 56 ethnic groups (each was Han Chinese in ethnic costume), carrying the flag of the PRC; 9-year-old Lin Miaoke sang Ode to the Motherland (listeners heard the voice of Yang Peiyi); flag handed over to eight People's Liberation Army soldiers who carried the flag in goose-stepping march to the podium and the Chinese national anthem March of the Volunteers sung.

### Artistic section

- Prelude: Film: "The Making of Paper" Four Great Inventions; performance of black-costumed dancers whose hands hid brushes dipped in ink, leaving trails on the block of white paper; accompanied by *guqin* (7-string zither). The LED scroll showed painting by Wang Ximeng.
- Fluid array of 897 movable type blocks that formed three variations of the character *He* (harmony), representing the third great Chinese invention: the movable type press. Shown in Bronze inscription, Seal script and Modern Chinese Script. 810 Zhou-era performers representing the 3000 Disciples of Confucius, carrying bamboo slips, recited excerpts from the Analects: "Isn't it great to have friends coming from afar?" and "All men are brothers within the four seas." The blocks changed into a small version of the Great Wall, then sprouted plum blossoms, Chinese symbol for openness. The tops of the blocks come off to reveal 897 performers, who waved vigorously, indicating that the blocks were not computer controlled.
- Terracotta soldiers; Chinese opera; Beijing opera puppetry performance.
- Dancers in Tang dynasty clothing carried by hundreds of performers; LED screen depicts Silk Road.
- Procession of men with oars; junks show expeditions of Zheng He; another Chinese invention, the compass, in its ancient form a metal spoon floating in a fluid.
- *Kunqu*, one of the oldest extant Chinese operas, accompanied on a *guzheng*.
- Modern segment:: pianist Lang Lang and five-year-old Li Muzi; melody from the Yellow River Cantata.
- A *Tàijíquán* performance by 2,008 masters showed harmony with nature.
- Schoolchildren drawing and coloring on the paper scroll and chanting poetry; the same children representing the 56 ethnic groups of China. They symbolized a Green Olympics (to protect the world).
- Celestial show, arrival of astronauts symbolizing Chinese space exploration; 60-foot, 16-ton ball structure representing the earth.
- The Chinese singer Liu Huan and British singer Sarah Brightman sang 2008 Olympic theme song: You and Me.
- 2,008 performers raise parasols with smiling faces of young children; red and orange fireworks in the form of smiley faces; 56 ethnic groups danced a vigorous folk dance.

## CHINESE CULTURE SHINES AT DAZZLING OLYMPICS OPENING CEREMONY

BEIJING, Aug. 8 (Xinhua) -- Five thousand years of Chinese civilization rolled out on a painting scroll on Friday as the Beijing Olympics opened with resounding fireworks, dazzling lights and merry-making crowds.

The National Stadium, or Bird's Nest, in northern Beijing basked in glory and excitement as icons of traditional Chinese culture paraded onto the central stage.

The Great Wall, Confucius, Kunqu and Taiji. Revered Chinese film director Zhang Yimou has kept icons of traditional Chinese culture on his scroll, which opened to become a 147-meter long stage for a dreamlike world of light, shadow and pictures.

An audience of 91,000 gasped as fairies gracefully fell from the sky to scoop the falling stars that had formed the Olympic rings on the stage after a session of welcoming fireworks.

"How happy we are, to meet friends from afar", a crowd of 2,008 performers began chanting lines of Confucius -- a great Chinese scholar and teacher of all teachers -- accompanied by the percussion rhythms of 2,008 fous, a primitive instrument made of clay or bronze.

Chinese culture shone at Beijing's Olympic opening epic, in which primitive musical instruments found harmony with modern piano, ancient culture was brought to life through high technologies and Chinese athletes joined worldwide players.

The performances began with a black and white Chinese ink and wash painting, drawn by the unique body language of the performers.

At the end of the opening gala, the work became a colorful painting with green trees and blue water, by worldwide athletes parading into the stadium as well as children and artists.

"That's a pretty aesthetic way of doing it," said Debbie Bowen from Chicago, the United States, of the scroll performance. "It's not easy for me to understand Chinese culture, but the information conveyed through body language and behavioral arts is pretty clear."

Valerie Mangnall, Associated Press reporter from Australia, said the performances were "beautiful".

"Even without the explanation on the screen, I think they are easy to understand. The part of the writing is a little abstract, but the opera, the music, the nature part are pretty obvious with the theme of the harmony."

### FOUR INVENTIONS<sup>1</sup>

Zhang Yimou said his team had planned to use the four inventions as a main thread throughout the opening ceremony. "We chose the painting scroll instead because the four inventions are still not enough to represent the entire Chinese civilization."

He wove the four inventions into the scroll instead.

The unrolling scroll that started Friday's performances and the wash and ink painting that in the center represented the Chinese invention of papermaking, one of China's special contributions to the spread and development of world cultures.

Elements of papermaking, movable-type printing, compass and gunpowder were carefully woven into the opening performances as highlights of Chinese civilization.

Movable-type printing appeared in the "Writing" part of the performances and took an image of both ancient character case and modern computer keyboard. A performer trod the "Silk Road" holding an ancient compass and gunpowder was represented in the dazzling displays of fireworks.

### HARMONY

Harmony was a key word in Friday's performances, with three versions of the same Chinese character "He" -- meaning harmony -- in different historical periods to express man's common pursuit of harmony and peace.

Harmony was found also in Taiji, meaning the supreme ultimate, which was believed to be the origin of the universe. Ancient Chinese philosophers believed that people and all things were constituted by the interaction of the two poles (yin and yang) and the five elements (metal, wood, water, fire and earth).

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<sup>1</sup>[Wikipedia [Four Great Inventions of Ancient China](#)]

Friday's performances demonstrated the Eight Diagrams of Taiji, symbolizing eight natural phenomena, including heaven, earth, thunder, wind, water, fire, mountain and swamp and bringing out the changes of all things on the earth.

During the performances, children read in unison and colored the ancient Chinese paintings of nature green, expressing the idea of environmental protection which is also the key concept of Taiji -- unity of man and nature.

Ancient Chinese music, represented by percussion instrument *fou* and stringed instrument *Guqin*, struke a chord with modern piano played by renowned Chinese pianist Lang Lang and a five-year-old girl.

## **WITH CONFIDENCE, BEIJING EMBRACES WORLD**

When Zhang Yimou's scroll opened on Friday night, Beijing opened arms to the world.

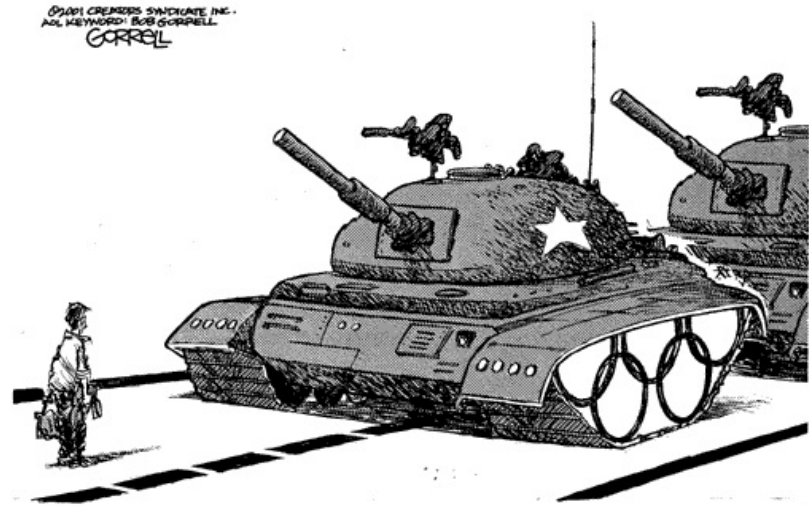
The scroll has kept showing up at the Beijing Games: in the Olympic torch and in the placards indicating names of countries during the athletes parade.

Beijing embraced the world when British singer Sarah Brightman and Chinese singer Liu Huan sang from the top of an elevated globe, "You and me, from one world; heart to heart, we are one family". Smiling faces of children from across the world beamed from the rim of the round, tank-like stadium and from 2,008 umbrellas fanning out on the central stage.

The entire audience roared when Chinese President Hu Jintao announced the opening of the Beijing Games.

"A prime mission of the Beijing Olympic Games is to enhance cultural exchanges between peoples in the world," said International Olympic Committee President Jacques Rogge at the opening ceremony. "We sincerely hope that the time-honored Chinese civilization, the vibrant palette of urban and rural lives in China and the hospitality of the Chinese people, will leave you all with warm and indelible memories of the country."

The whole world marveled at the glories of the opening ceremony, watched live by 91,000 audience and an estimated 4 billion TV viewers across the globe.



CHINESE PRIDE AND ANTICIPATION BEGIN TO BUILD AS THEY AWAIT THEIR COUNTRY'S TURN TO HOST THE 2008 OLYMPICS...

