1-14-2008

On the China Beat

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China has been looming ever larger in the global economy and the global imagination in recent years, and the international chatter about the country hit a crescendo last year with reports about things like lead paint, moon shots, an architectural face-lift in the capital in preparation for the 2008 Olympic Games, high growth rates, a rising middle class, and ever sharper divides between haves and have-nots. As China draws more attention from the Western media and its readership, the need for storytellers and interpreters of China has also grown. As China scholars and writers who are concerned about the way Chinese stories are spun, both within and outside the Middle Kingdom, we formed this blog in order to draw attention to the tales and twists of China past and present.

Beginning in mid-January 2008, The China Beat will regularly publish commentaries, interviews, and other short pieces that deal with the PRC, the coverage of Chinese experiences in the Western media, and the place of China in Western popular culture. Between us, we bring to the task experience on the ground in China and following it from afar, researching varied topics relating to the country’s past and present, and writing on Chinese themes in different genres. We differ in opinions and background, but share a commitment to convincing readers that China deserves to be seen as a complex country undergoing multifaceted transformations, not as an inscrutable place that defies understanding.