

Highlights from TUG 2005

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TUG 2005: International Typesetting Conference and the 26th annual meeting of the T_EX Users Group, was held in Wuhan, China, from August 23–25, 2005. CTUG (the Chinese T_EX User Group), committed to handling the conference affairs. Congratulations to Hong Feng, chairman of CTUG, and all of his local help, including Chen HaiBin, Hong Chan, Gu XiongZhi, Hu WeiMing, Liu Hao, Peng ZiQiang, Wan Lin, Wu ZhenHua, Xu JiZhe, Yao WeiZhen, and Zhang YuanLin, for making the conference a unique experience and resounding success.

T_EX users traveled from near and far to attend this year’s conference and tutorials. China, Australia, South Korea, Europe, India and North America were all represented. Hong and/or Chen HaiBin, Wu ZhenHua, Peng ZiQiang met conference attendees at the airport outside of Wuhan arranging bus and taxi transportation to our final destination, the East Lake Hotel in Wuchang, Wuhan. We were invited to enjoy a welcome dinner near the hotel upon our arrival—a restaurant setting that would become familiar over the next several days as the conference room was just down the hall, and where breakfast, lunch and dinner were served, included in the registration.

A variety of brief tutorials was offered on Monday, August 22, the day before the conference opened. The instructors were a top notch fit with regard to their respective topics. The line-up included: Hong Feng, *T_EX as a Compiler*; Ross Moore, *L^AT_EX to HTML Conversion*; Hartmut Henkel, *MetaPost for Beginners*; Hans Hagen, *ConT_EXt for Beginners*, and Chris Rowley, who ended up choosing to forgo his *L^AT_EX for Beginners* course as we were running behind schedule (and because there were scant few beginners in the room).

Wai Wong, with the Chinese University of Hong Kong, delivered a charming and informative keynote address entitled “Typesetting Chinese: A personal perspective”. Wai’s presentation was followed by about 20 talks over the three days, ranging from a look back at the design of T_EX and METAFONT by Nelson Beebe, to a look ahead at improving pdfT_EX via the LuaT_EX team as presented by Hans Hagen. A wide range of topics was covered in-between, such

as accessing fonts in the operating system, among other features of X_YT_EX, presented by its author Jonathan Kew, and using T_EX in conjunction with other tools such as Perl and Excel, to sort, analyze, and finally typeset the Byzantine *Cappelli*, presented by Phil Taylor. Each and every one of the presentations was well attended and enthusiastically received.

Wednesday afternoon, Jerzy Ludwiczowski of GUST and the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Poland summarized a bit about T_EX user group activities worldwide. He passed along some ideas generated at BachoT_EX such as producing a font CD, perhaps including Chinese fonts, and setting up a Wiki about the history of T_EX. Jerzy’s talk preceded the TUG annual meeting where, after the group was updated about TUG business, upcoming conferences, and a proposed T_EX Hall of Fame, discussion focused on ways to increase both interest in T_EX and membership in TUG. Suggestions ranged from advice about how to advertise T_EX and TUG nationally and internationally using a PR firm on the web, to introducing a simple L^AT_EX system to grade schoolers.

The conference officially concluded Thursday with a round-table panel. In the afternoon, many attendees boarded a bus to tour a nearby archeological museum and one of Chairman Mao’s former residences. Late afternoon that same day about half the group journeyed overnight by bus from Wuhan to the town of Wudang. After a rest and a traditional Chinese breakfast, the group boarded the bus again, arriving at Wudang Mountain, the birthplace of Taoism, about an hour later. Onward and upward, though this time boarding gondolas two by two, we continued our long vertical climb via pathways and stairs that eventually led to Taoist temples, nunneries, temples on cliffs, bridges, pavilions and ancestral temples. Needless to say, the views were spectacular from most locations on Wudang Mountain. And even though the journey from Wuhan to Wudang was a long one (thus some people departed Wudang Friday afternoon by train), the visit to this magnificent and special place was appreciated by all.

Some comments from attendees:

—For the most part, I think it went pretty well. It would have been helpful in planning travel to know in advance what the Wudang Mountain expedition would involve; at the time I was booking my flights, there was no hint that this was more than a one-day excursion. (But despite the difficulties, I very much enjoyed going.)

—I think the local Wuhan tours were outstanding, and I loved them.

—I really enjoyed this conference. The bus ride to Wudang added to the richness of the trip, and I'm happy to have had the experience. We saw a side of China we wouldn't have seen otherwise.

—Once again, thank you very much for inviting me to TUG 2005. I did enjoy the talks and the discussion during the conference very much. I learnt a lot through them.

—I think the informal discussions we had during the panels were especially valuable. Some very good ideas were exposed there, and would be less likely to come up in more formal settings such as regular lectures, were we often lack time to answer questions comprehensively. Thus, I believe it would be quite profitable to everyone to have more of these. However, I must admit I don't know how these scale up when there are more participants; we really weren't that many, probably because some people couldn't make it to China.

—Hope to see you next year!

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Sitting in chairs left to right: Chris Rowley, Sam Zoghaib, Ross Moore, Volker Schaa, Hong Feng, Hans Hagen, Jerzy Ludwiczowski, Richard Kinch

Back, left to right: Yao Weizhen, Guo Liang, anonymous photographer, Liu Hao, Jonathan Kew, Eitan Gurari, Jin-Hwan Cho, Kevin Warnock, Joseph Rajendra, Hartmut Henkel, Candy Yiu, Maik Kündig, Le Khanh Au Duong, Karel Skoupý, Robin Laakso, Phil Taylor, Karel Piška, Nelson Beebe, S.K. Venkatesan, Steve Grathwohl, Klaus Höppner, Arthur Reutenauer, Lu Ming, Wu Zhenhua, Wai Wong.

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