

About “Chinese Bridge”: A Chinese Proficiency Competition for Foreign University Students

The Competition, organized by Hanban (The Office of Chinese Language Council International), has become an annual event worldwide since it started in 2002.

The purpose of the event is:

- 1) to create a stage for foreign learners of Chinese to show their Chinese language skills
- 2) to create a platform for foreign learners of Chinese to exchange learning experiences
- 3) to create an opportunity for foreign language learners of Chinese to have a better understanding of Chinese language and culture
- 4) to motivate their enthusiasm and interest in carrying on with Chinese learning and studies

The Procedure:

Preliminary rounds are done in different countries in April or May, and the winners (about 100 world-wide, about one or two from each country) proceed to the semi-finals and finals held in China in July or August.

Preliminaries have been held in South Africa since 2004. Many were hosted in Stellenbosch. Stellenbosch University students have been the winners (either first place or second place or both) in all the past preliminary competitions. Expenses for the finalists of the competition, including the airfare, are fully covered by the Chinese government. A partial scholarship for a four-week study at a Chinese university is also offered to excellent performers in the competition, namely the second or third place winner, whose accommodation and tuition fees in China are covered.

Stellenbosch Students won:

This year (2008) two third-year Mandarin students from Stellenbosch University won the first and second place. Both of them will take part in the semi-finals and finals in China. The final round of the competition will be hosted by Hu'nan TV Station, which is one of the most popular TV stations in China. The Station sent a team to Stellenbosch University to make a special programme of the preliminary round.