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#### Shen Danji

Manager of the research and education division at Shanghai Auto Museum

#### Yu Chao and Jiang Mengyu

**A**n exhibition on bicycles, one of the oldest modes of transportation, is ongoing at the Shanghai Auto Museum in the suburban Jiading District.

Titled “Ride Point: The Extraordinary Bicycle,” the exhibition, which took three years of meticulous planning and preparation, takes visitors on a nostalgic voyage by evoking collective memories associated with bicycles.

The exhibition is divided into three sections that explore the origins and

evolution of bicycles. In the 1860s, French blacksmith Pierre Michaux and his son Ernest presented the world with their pedal-powered velocipede.

Inspired by the concept of a hand crank, they attached pedals to the front wheel, transforming the initial “foot-dragging” method of propulsion into the continuous pedaling motion we are familiar with today.

Bicycles were made available in Shanghai during the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911) and early Republic of China (1912–49) periods, making it the first city in the nation to adopt the new mode of transportation.

By the middle of the 20th century, the city’s bicycle population had grown from a few hundred to about 200,000.

At that time, both indigenous and imported bicycle brands were widely used on the streets, including the well-known Chinese brands Phoenix and Forever.

They served not just as the primary source of transportation back then, but over time, they also became an inseparable part of childhood memories.

“I have been nostalgic while visiting this exhibition,” said a visitor surnamed Liu. “As a child, I had the opportunity to try out various branded bicycles.”

Shan, another visitor at the exhibition, remarked, “It was quite difficult to own a bicycle in the past, as one required coupons before purchasing.”

“Getting those coupons was quite a challenge, so once I finally obtained

my own bicycle, I valued it very highly,” Shan added.

The exhibition has also recreated scenes from daily life in the 1970s and 1980s when bicycles were quite commonplace.

Although bicycles continue to serve as a popular mode of transportation across the globe, they have evolved to encompass a variety of purposes, such as symbolizing fitness, promoting environmental awareness and reflecting an urban lifestyle.

“Bicycles provide opportunities for engagement in environmental causes, competitions, leisure and even artistic expression,” said Shen Danji, manager of the research and education division at the Shanghai Auto Museum.

“The exhibition offers a multidimensional experience featuring various models.”

The exhibition also delves into the cultures of bicycles and automobiles.

Yang Xi, marketing manager of the Shanghai Auto Museum, said “some of the key technologies used in the automobile industry actually originated from bicycles, which share some technical similarities with cars in structures and operating principles.”

Visitors to the exhibition can rediscover the profound influence that bicycles have had on both the history of transportation and human civilization.

The museum hopes that the exhibits will inspire visitors to explore new, innovative modes of transportation.

