

## **The Holy Palace of the Soundless World On Tianjin Technical College for the Deaf at Tianjin University of Technology**

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Postsecondary Education Network International (PEN-International) Multimedia Computer Laboratory was officially opened at Tianjin Technical College for the Deaf (TTCD) at Tianjin University of Technology (TUT) in September 2001. PEN-International is funded by the Nippon Foundation in support of international level distance learning. It has established collaborative partnership with technical colleges for the deaf in the U.S., China, Japan and, Russia. Being a partner with PEN-International will greatly enhance China's postsecondary education for the deaf. It also means that China's postsecondary education for the deaf is getting a step closer to the most advanced deaf education system in the world.

TTCD, a special education institute, was approved and founded by the Ministry of Education in November 1997. It became one of the colleges at TUT admitting deaf students from throughout the country. TTCD offers computer science and technology, mechanical manufacturing and equipment, and fashion design majors. Students can receive associate degree in three years and a bachelor's degree in 4 years. Over the past four years, TTCD has continued to utilize TUT resources and to explore deaf education pedagogy and methodology. TTCD has made a great contribution in the field of deaf education.

TTCD Director, Bao Guodong, freed himself from the multimedia computer laboratory opening ceremony to be interviewed. Speaking of the development of TTCD since it was founded, Director Bao had many comments to offer.

"China is a country with big population. Deaf population is over 20000,000. There are many outstanding deaf people with great ambitions in their soundless world. However, China did not have a single institution that would offer deaf people college level education opportunities. The founding of TTCD not only gave hundreds and thousands of deaf students chances to receive higher education, it filled a void in China's postsecondary education for deaf people. The development of TTCD is not without the support of TUT administrators. They select faculty with higher moral standard and strong academic skills to teach deaf students. Currently, TTCD has 18 faculty members. Seven of them are associate professors and

professors. These professors devote themselves to deaf education and deaf students. They keep close contact with deaf students and help deaf students beyond their academic learning. Deaf students, in return, take the institute as their home and regard their professors as parents and friends. For deaf students, TUT establishes as rigorous academic standard and requirements as it does for hearing students. Deaf students take courses that are similar to the courses offered to hearing students, participate together with hearing students to develop English skill, Computer skill and a thesis defense. TTCD also offers extra courses in Chinese language, computer application, and English, since these are areas where deaf students are weak. Instead of using the traditional style of teaching deaf students where deaf students are separated from hearing students, TTCD encourages the interaction of deaf and hearing students. Deaf students and hearing students share dormitories, dine at the same cafeteria, and participate together in students' sport games, recreational activities and performances. These help students' social skills and boost their self-esteem and self-confidence. Further, deaf students' outstanding talents are acknowledged in various areas: 24 deaf students won the 1st and 2nd prizes of learning award awarded by the China Federation for Disabled People. TTCD students' performances won the 1st and 2nd prizes at the Tianjin Postsecondary Cultural Festival that was broadcasted by CCTV. At the Tianjin special sport games, TTCD deaf students brought back 5 gold medals and 4 silver and bronze medals. In addition, two deaf students won the Wang Kechang scholarship special award and first award. TTCD not only focuses on deaf students' academic learning, great attention is also paid to teaching deaf students to be a well-rounded person. Of the more than 100 TTCD graduates, many have become key figures at their places of employment in government organizations, joint investment companies or as self-employed people.

TUT administrators draw upon international deaf education development experiences and emphasize educational exchange and collaboration at that level. Since 1998 when TTCD at TUT signed a memorandum of understanding to establish a partnership with PEN-International, there have been bilateral visits between the two colleges. This year, eight faculty members were sent to the USA and Japan to receive training regarding deaf education and education technology. TTCD at TUT will become a teacher training center for Russia and South-East Asia as well as China. TTCD will work to increase the number of collaborative partnership throughout the world and will work to improve the quality of deaf education."

TTCD at TUT is one of four technical colleges for the deaf in the

world and is the first and the only technical college for the deaf in China. Walking into TTCD at TUT, deaf students can not help but feeling like they are walking into a holy palace. A beautiful campus and a desirable learning environment help the students to cherish the opportunity they receive and to motivate them to study hard. Deaf students are tremendously proud to be able to receive formal higher education. At TTCD campus stories about how faculty members devote themselves to deaf students and how deaf students love their teachers touched our hearts. For the past four year, TTCD has made an enormous contribution in the field of deaf education in our country. It brings a good reputation to TUT. Acknowledgement goes to the administrators and faculty at TTCD for their continued effort in deaf education. Heart-felt appreciation extends to all the foreign friends and Mr. Deng Pufang for their help and support. Director Bao told us with confidence that, "Today's TTCD comes from a long journey of hard work. We will continue to work and bring China's deaf education standard to a new level."