



# Rediscovering the joy of *lingkao*, a frugal but quality life in Shanghai



Above: Shanghai Yaozao's series products for children.

Left: Bee & Flower's sandalwood soap was first created in 1928 and this is an early poster for the product.

## Zhu Qing

Customers lined up in front of the Shanghai Soap Co Ltd's *lingkao* (零拷) shop on Yangshupu Road in Yangpu District recently, as news spread that the city's last shop selling laundry detergent by weight in bulk would soon close down.

Regular customers, who had been benefiting from the store's affordable, convenient and environmentally friendly service, were eager to purchase goods one last time before it shuttered.

"I came here before 9am, afraid that I wouldn't be able to buy such good-value soap in the future," a lady in the long queue told Xinmin Evening News.

Despite the run on the shop,

its owners say that the shut-down is not permanent, but rather a temporary suspension due to relocation.

The shop's general manager, Wang Zhenming, assured customers that the shop would return after an upgrade and would retain its mode of *lingkao* though he gave no schedule for the reopening.

For them, at least, the shop was closing and they were eager to get their hands on the last of such bulk and economical goods.

Many of the older generation remember the *lingkao* tradition, where almost all kinds of food stuff and household items could be sold in bulk.

It was a service that allowed customers to purchase only how much they needed, rather than forcing them to buy a pre-