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Even though I may have walked on a street many times in the past there are things I never knew or noticed. Those small details are the dots connecting us with the past, the present and the future.

**Albert Yang**

Founder of Shanghai Saruku

Yang said he doesn't gloss over details of the bloody era of Japanese occupation in the 1930s and 40s because lessons can be learned from history.

"There is no doubt that Shanghai's prosperity and modernization in the 1930's was interrupted by Japan's invasion," he said. "What we learned is to always defend peace and oppose war. Both sides suffered. It is good for the Japanese to understand the history so we can work together to build a better tomorrow."

The tours are organized once or twice a week, mostly on weekends. During weekdays, Yang often visits libraries to look for historical facts and stories of the sites visited on tours.

Each tour attracts about 10 participants — about one-third are expats from Japan, while the rest are Japanese-speaking Chinese.

Mitsunori Kuroda from Japan was a supporter of Shanghai Saruku from the very beginning. Having lived in Shanghai for seven years, he said he has always been interested in the history of the city and China, and the tour was an eye-opener for him.

"I love to walk in the city during my leisure time, especially in Hongkou District because it's where many Japanese people lived about a century ago," Kuroda told Shanghai Daily. "And one day while roaming on Yuanmingyuan Road, I came across the office of Shanghai Archaeology, where I saw a promotion for Shanghai Saruku. I always love viewing old buildings, and the stories told during the tour made them more interesting."



Albert Yang (left) poses with Shanghai Saruku participants at a museum displaying the history of the Hengshan-Fuxing area in Xuhui District. — Ti Gong



Yang (center) explains the history of Sihang Warehouse, a battleground between Chinese and Japanese military forces in 1937. — Lu Feiran

Kuroda said that in the future he hopes tours will expand to Yangpu District, an area that highlights the history of industrial development in Shanghai.

The concept of "citywalk" has become extremely popular this year in Shanghai, especially among expats who regard the city as a second home.

Foreign-language walking tours are few, and most of them are in English. Some expats are making efforts to fill in the blanks.

Historic Shanghai is one such walking tour. Launched by American Patrick Cranley, it has been running in Shanghai for 25 years, long before the concept of "citywalk" spread into

China from overseas.

It remains a major English-language city tour activity that focuses on exploring the rich social and architectural heritage of Shanghai. Historic Shanghai walks reach far beyond the Bund and downtown Shanghai to cover almost every corner of the city, from water towns in the west to Chuansha Town along the eastern seaboard.

"We organize site visits, lectures and walks that highlight the stories of some of Shanghai's most interesting buildings, including public structures, neighborhoods, places of worship and places of business," Cranley told Shanghai Daily. "Through these activities, people can learn about the city's history, people, development and culture — all the things that together define 'Shanghai Style.'"

Yang hopes that Shanghai Saruku will build on that legacy.

"I'm exploring more routes and new transport methods for the tour," he said. "Although it is called citywalk, I believe shared bikes and taxis can also be used to save time and reach areas further away."