



# Dance to Dough: Ningbo Baker Claims Global Champion

Recent news from São Paulo set off celebrations at the Zhejiang Commercial Technician Institute in Ningbo, east China's Zhejiang Province. Two of its students, Bao Jiaqian and her teammate, Chen Jiaxuan, claimed the top prize at the 53rd UIBC International Young Bakers Competition—a victory that went beyond personal honor. This win signals the ascent of a new generation of Chinese talent on the global stage and underscores the growing recognition abroad of their expertise and dedication.

Bao was born in 2004 and her path to the podium was far from straightforward. Her early years were devoted to a different art form: dance. But five years ago, a disappointing result in the High School Entrance Examination forced her to reconsider her future. Standing at a crossroads, she took a decisive turn—enrolling in the Baking and Desserts program at the Zhejiang Commercial Technician Institute.

From the moment she set foot on campus, Bao had made up her mind. The curtain had fallen—at least for now—on her dance dream, but a new stage beckoned, one lined not with spotlights but with ovens and trays. She resolved to give herself wholly to this new craft, convinced that discipline and effort could carve out a success of



The championship team with their award-winning pastries.

her own making. That resolve would become the quiet engine driving her through the years ahead.

It did not take long for Bao to fall for baking. She absorbed each lesson in the classroom, then stayed long in the training room after class. Thousands of hours had passed in this way until her persistence earned her a sought-after spot on the school's Baking Training Team, a distinction reserved for those who had excelled through a series of rigorous selections.

For five years, she submitted herself to a rigorous routine of repetition and refinement: kneading, proofing, shaping, baking. The motions were simple but relentless—she estimates she has kneaded dough more than ten thousand times. The thick calluses that now line her hands tell the story of those hours, equal parts hardship and perseverance. In addition to everyday practice, she would seize every opportunity to hone her skills, from provincial skill contests to national baking championships. Each event brought fresh lessons, whether in the form of a judge's critique or the steadying of nerves before a crowd, gradually sharpening her ability to perform under pressure.

That preparation was tested in São Paulo, where Bao and her

teammate faced seven teams from around the world, including baking powerhouses like France and Spain. The setting was exacting, the pressure immense. But the years of disciplined practice proved decisive. Working in near-perfect sync, they executed complex tasks with technical precision and creative flair that drew the judges' attention. When the results were announced, China's flag was raised above the podium—a championship earned through a blend of skill, imagination and a steadfast devotion to the craft.

In her moment of triumph, Bao gracefully shifted the focus from herself. "This honor doesn't belong to me alone," she said. "It wouldn't be possible without the platform our school provided, the careful guidance from my teachers, and the seamless work with my teammate."

She spoke candidly about the role her instructors played beyond coaching. During the toughest stretches—when progress seemed to plateau—they offered more than instruction: psychological support that helped her navigate doubt and frustration. Bao also credited the school's professional training equipment as critical to their preparation. Looking ahead, she vowed,

"I will carry this honor forward and keep working hard, not to let everyone down." Her remarks underscored the collective effort and nurturing environment behind her success.

News of Bao's victory was met with deep pride at her school, where the faculty viewed her success as a testament to their educational philosophy: "compete to learn, compete to excel." More than a motto, this approach is woven into the curriculum, designed to give students practical opportunities and resources to sharpen their skills in real-world settings.

Bao's journey—from a disappointed dancer to a world champion baker—has become a compelling example of that philosophy in action. It shows how the right guidance, a supportive community, and personal determination can turn setbacks into launching pads for extraordinary achievement. Her story resonates beyond the classroom, inspiring peers and future students alike, and affirming that dedication to one's craft can lead to global recognition and professional fulfillment.



Bao Jiaqian during a training session.

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