

Dashan 大山

Dashan (aka Mark Rowswell) has been called “the most famous foreigner in China”, where he has worked as media personality and cultural ambassador for over 30 years.

Born and raised in Canada, Rowswell began studying Chinese in the mid 1980s, first at the University of Toronto and later at Peking University. While in Beijing, he became interested in *xiangsheng* [*she-ang shung*], a revered form of traditional comedic dialogue in China, and was soon appearing on national television under the stage name “Dashan”.

Repeated performances to hundreds of millions of television viewers turned “Dashan” into a household name across China, and his media career expanded from comedy to dramatic acting to hosting cultural, diplomatic, educational and commercial programs & live events. Over time, Dashan came to be seen as an all-round cultural ambassador between China and the West and as a symbol of finding common ground between cultures, “*a foreigner but not an outsider*” according to the People’s Daily.



Dashan is the only non-Chinese performer to have appeared four times on the CCTV Spring Festival Gala, the largest annual television extravaganza in China with an estimated audience of over 800 million viewers.

Dashan served as Canada’s Team Attaché during the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, and as Canada’s Commissioner General for Expo 2010 in Shanghai. In 2006 he was inducted into the Order of Canada, the country’s highest civilian honour. In 2012 Dashan was named “Goodwill Ambassador to China” by Canada’s Prime Minister. In 2018, the University of Alberta conferred an honorary Doctor of Letters on Mark Rowswell in recognition of his contribution to cross-cultural communication.

In recent years Dashan has returned to his comedic roots, combining traditional Chinese comedy with Western stand-up in a ground-breaking solo show “Dashan Live”. Chinese audiences all know the character “Dashan” from TV; over this 60-minute performance Dashan shares hilarious behind-the-scene stories of his 30 years between East & West.