

**Document 18.10: Excerpt from “Quick, Pass Me a Burger!” by Tang Yuankai, *Beijing Review*, April 14, 2005**

*A huge market and a keen ear to the ground keep fast food business tills ringing*

Ying Hua, a lecturer with Peking University, is coaxed out of his Sunday morning sleep as his cell phone rings. It is Li Xiao, one of his middle school classmates, who tells him she is dropping in at noon: “Don’t bother about lunch. Just treat me at McDonald’s, it’s fast.”

Ying Hua isn’t too keen on the fast food joint but neither is he any good in the kitchen. His only other option is the supermarket. Heading to one, Ying decides on the quick-frozen *jiaozi*, and semi-finished fried rice that comes peppered with beef, pork, chicken, mushroom or vegetables. *Jiaozi*, or dumpling made with meat and vegetable stuffings, is a classic Chinese favorite whose preparation takes up considerable time. So it’s hardly surprising that its frozen variant is selling like hot cakes. Even the nutritious *congee*, made from sundry grains, is now available ready to serve. All it needs is some boiling water.

As lifestyles change, Chinese are taking to fast foods in a big way. Unlike earlier times, they too are hankering after speed, efficiency, convenience and taste. “More people, working under tight schedules, have no time for trivialities like cooking and dining,” affirms Ying. Indeed, many a business is thriving on China’s “fast food survival.” The fact that it is lucrative has only ushered in more competition, leaving the fast food “connoisseur” spoilt for choice....

Coming back to Ying and his classmate. They have a pleasant lunch [of frozen *jiaozi*] that took just 20 minutes to put together....

Source: Tang Yuankai, “Quick, Pass Me a Burger!” *Beijing Review*, April 14, 2005.