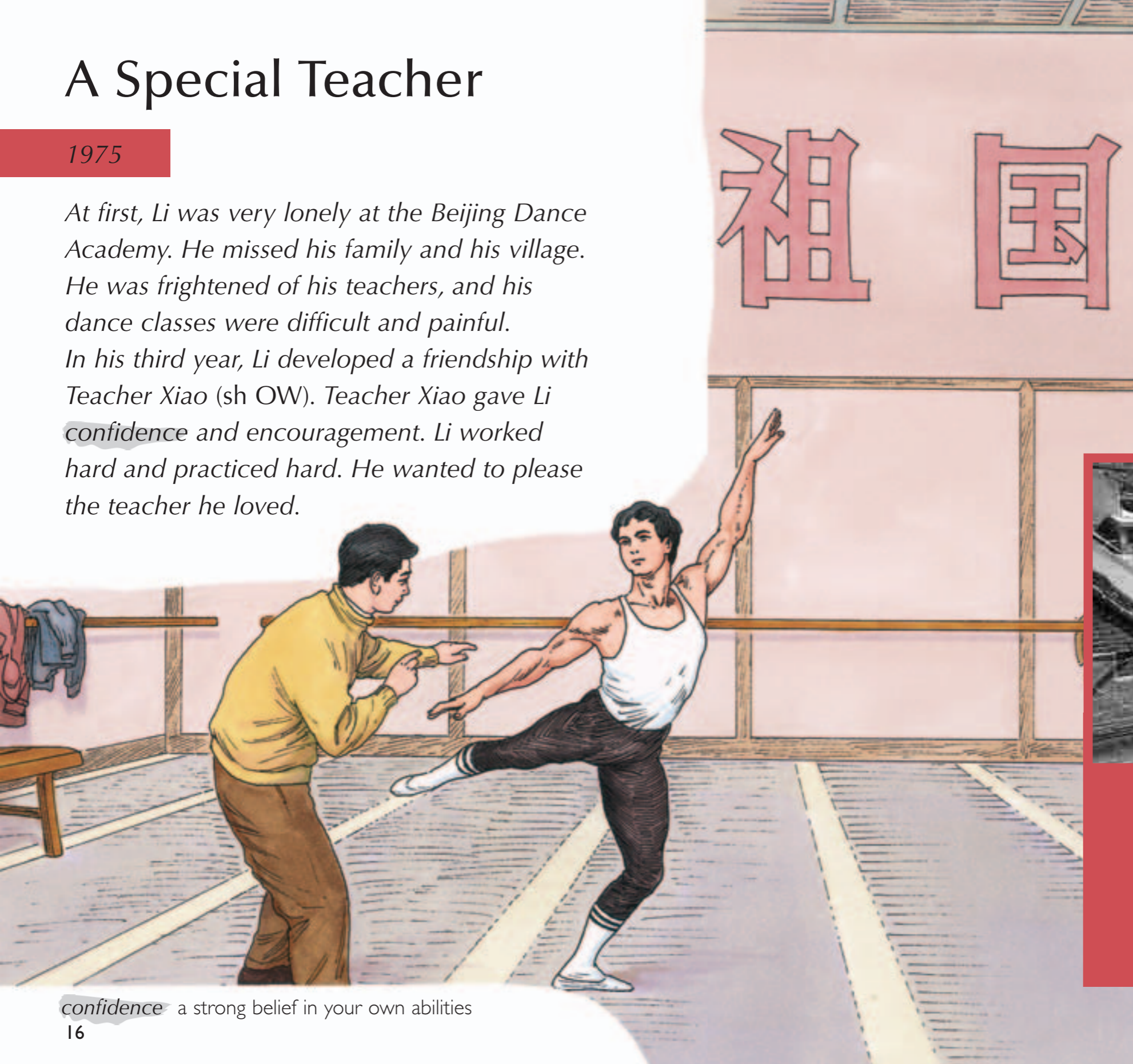


A Special Teacher

1975

At first, Li was very lonely at the Beijing Dance Academy. He missed his family and his village. He was frightened of his teachers, and his dance classes were difficult and painful. In his third year, Li developed a friendship with Teacher Xiao (sh OW). Teacher Xiao gave Li confidence and encouragement. Li worked hard and practiced hard. He wanted to please the teacher he loved.



In 1975, Li's favorite teacher, Teacher Xiao, visited Li's home during the school vacation. Teacher Xiao was shocked at the living conditions in Li's village. Li agreed with him but said he didn't know how to help. Teacher Xiao told Li that he could help "by working hard and becoming the best dancer you can."



This photo of Li's village was taken in 2002. Li says that it has hardly changed since he lived there.

confidence a strong belief in your own abilities