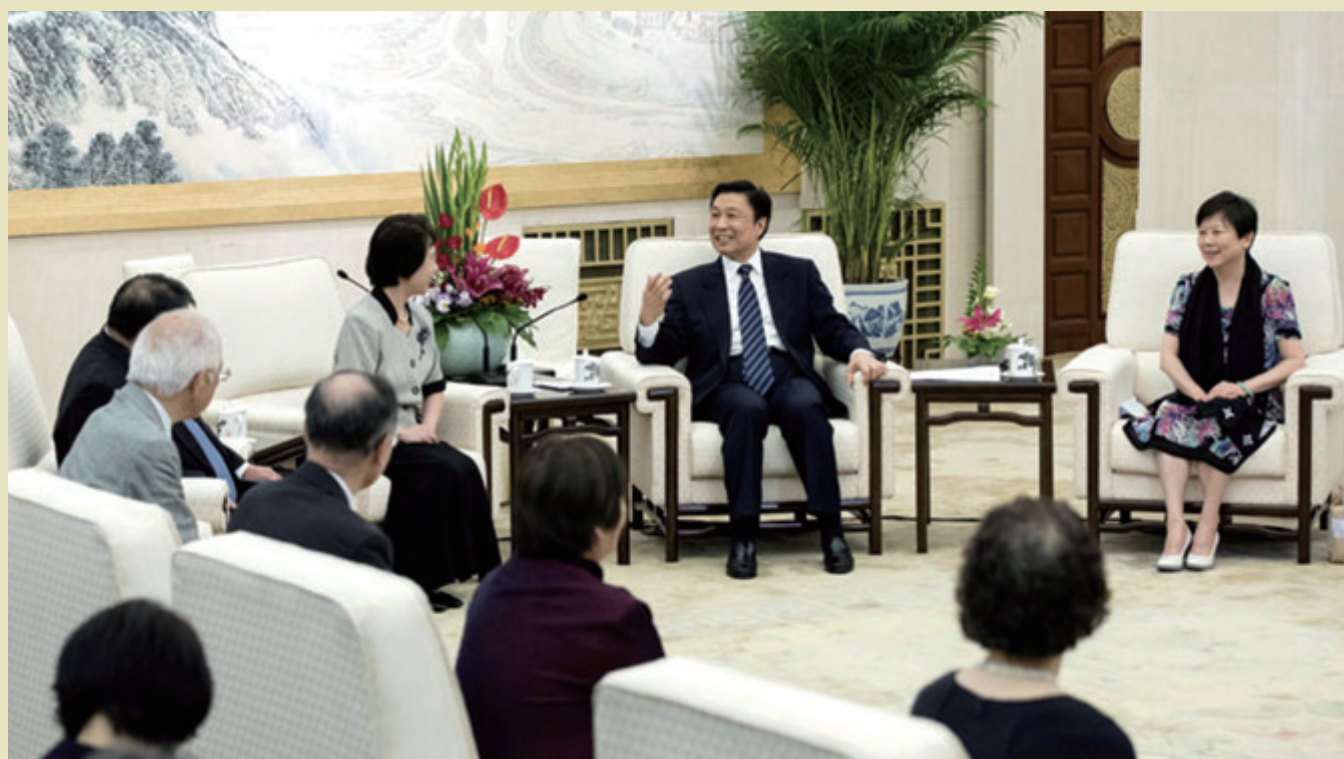




State Councilor Yang Jiechi (center) speaks at the BCIM Local Government Cooperation Forum in 2015.



Vice-President Li Yuanchao with the delegation of Japanese orphans

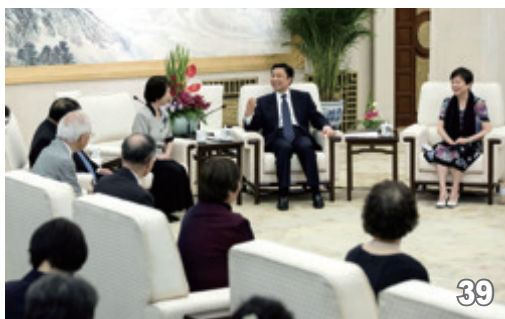


CPAFFC Vice-President Song Jingwu (L.7) joins descendants of foreign doctors who aided China for a photo session.



CPAFFC Vice-President Hu Sishe (R.5, back row) with members of the Min-on Concert Association

FOCUS



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Published in Chinese and English

Front Cover: President Xi Jinping meets with China-Arab Friendship Outstanding Contribution Award winners in Cairo.

Sponsored and published by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries

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ISSN 1000-9582 CN11-1234/D

President Xi's Debut State Visit to the Middle East

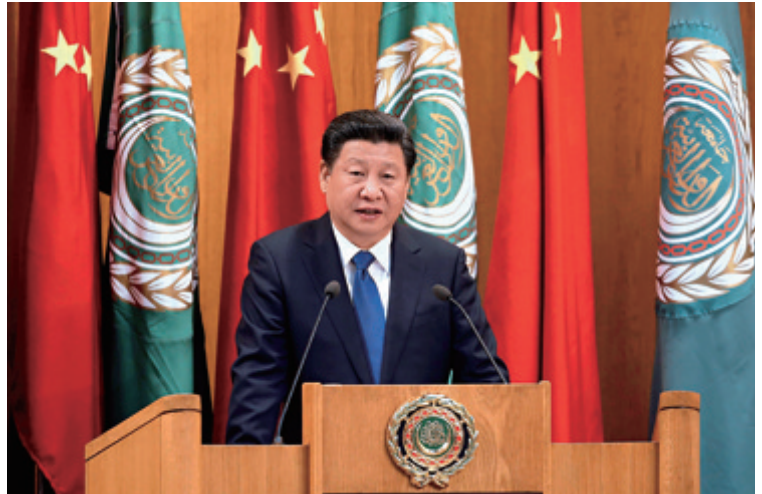
Chinese President Xi Jinping's arrival in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia on January 19, 2016 marked the start of his three-nation tour of the Middle East. The visit is China's first major diplomatic event in 2016.

President Xi and King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia announced during the Chinese president's two-day stop in Riyadh the upgrading of bilateral ties to a comprehensive strategic partnership. President Xi said that as Saudi Arabia stands at a key junction along the "Belt and Road" the two countries should discuss aligning their development strategies and promoting interconnectivity and intercommunication in the Middle East and the Gulf region. The two sides signed an MOU on industrial capacity cooperation, agreeing to pursue cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative, as well as a slew of cooperation deals covering sectors such as energy, communications, environment, culture, aerospace, and science and technology.

Egypt was the second leg of Xi's three-nation tour. The first Arab and African country to establish diplomatic relations with China, Egypt has maintained for decades a healthy and stable relationship with China. During Xi's visit the two countries signed 21 cooperative documents that included endors-

ing a five-year plan to boost two-way ties and pledging to co-build the trans-Eurasia Belt and Road Initiative. In the meeting with his Egyptian counterpart, President Xi said both countries should carry forward their friendship and forge ahead to the future, letting the two peoples benefit even more from the development of bilateral relations. The two heads of state also attended the opening ceremony of the Sino-Egyptian Culture Year in 2016.

When speaking at the Arab League headquarters in Cairo, President Xi urged countries in the Middle East to resolve their differences through dialogue rather than use of force. The Chinese president also proposed in his speech a host of fresh moves, including loans, financial aid, and a common investment fund to help improve people's livelihood, fight terrorism, and promote



President Xi delivers his speech at the Arab League headquarters in Cairo on Jan. 21, 2016.

development in the Arab world.

President Xi Jinping arrived in Teheran, capital of Iran, the last leg of his three-nation tour of the Middle East, on January 22. Xi met with his Iranian counterpart, Hassan Rouhani, and discussed aligning their national strategies and boosting cooperation on both political and economic fronts. "China-Iran relations hold great opportunities for new development," Xi said. "China is ready to work with Iran and elevate our relationship and practical cooperation to new heights, so ushering in a new chapter of ties that feature comprehensive, long-term and stable development." ■

From China Today

CPAFFC Confers Honor Medals on Arab Friends

Ai Lin



President Xi Jinping with China-Arab Friendship Outstanding Contribution Award winners

On Jan 20, with President Xi Jinping in attendance, the CPAFFC presented awards to 10 Arab figures for their contribution to the development of the Sino-Arab relationship. Each received the China-Arab Friendship Outstanding Contribution Award. Xi was on a state visit to Egypt, the second stop of his three-nation tour of the Middle East.

After the awarding of the medals,

Xi approached Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the 93-year-old former secretary-general of the United Nations, who could not stand because of a leg injury. Xi bent to shake hands, saying, “You’ve not only contributed significantly to the safeguarding of international peace and the promotion of world development, but also to the fostering of a friendly relationship between China and the rest of the world. We hold you in great

respect.”

Boutros-Ghali expressed his thanks for “this great honor” and admiration for what he said was “China’s contribution to the world peace”.

The other nine recipients of the award were Adnan Kassar, a well-known Lebanese businessman and financier; Abdulrahman A. Al-Jeraisy, president of the Saudi-China

Friendship Association; Talal Abu-Ghazaleh, president of the Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Organization; Taib Abdelrahim, secretary-general of the Office of the President, Palestine; Awad Ahmed Mohamed Elgaz, former minister of energy and mining of Sudan; Mohammed Khalil, president of the Morocco-China Friendship and Exchanges Association; Samil Dbeche, president of the Algeria-China Friendship Association; Mohsen Farr Ghani, an Egyptian translator; and Mohsin Haider Darwish, chairman of the Oman-China Friendship Association.

Before the ceremony, CPAFFC President Li Xiaolin met with the recipients and spoke highly of their long-term contribution to the mutual understanding and friendship between the Chinese and Arab peoples.

Last year marked the 60th anniversary of China-Arab diplomatic relations. Over the past six decades, Li said, China and Arab countries have been friends sharing both triumphs and trials. The profound friendship could not have been achieved without the painstaking efforts by people from China and Arab countries who were engaged in promoting the bilateral relations, Li said.

She remarked that both China and the Arab world are currently faced with the same historical mission—striving for national rejuvenation.

“The CPAFFC,” she said, “would like to join hands with our friends, old and new, to make more efforts to enhance mutual understanding and trust, benefit our peoples and further China-Arab friendly relations.” ■

CPAFFC Delegation Visits New Zealand

Xu Fenghua



Group photo at a Maori meeting hall

In early December 2015, a CPAFFC delegation, with representatives from six departments, visited New Zealand at the host’s invitation. Members conducted work exchanges with the New Zealand -China Maori Friendship Trust and held talks with the mayor of Taupo. The delegation gained knowledge of the history, culture and current state of the Maoris in New Zealand by staying in Maori homes and visiting Maori schools, cultural centers and history museums.

The CPAFFC’s Department of

American & Oceanian Affairs established a long-term cooperation mechanism with the New Zealand-China Maori Friendship Trust in 1995. Since then, the department has sent delegations consisting of representatives from related CPAFFC departments to visit New Zealand from time to time to deepen their understanding of the Maori culture.

The New Zealand-China Maori Friendship Trust was established in 1996. Its chairman, Hiwi Tauroa, was the first Maori to be a school head-

master. Tauroa first visited China in 1981 as a member of the New Zealand-China Friendship Society delegation. Since 1984, he has played host to the CPAFFC delegation in New Zealand several times. In order to further promote friendly exchanges and cooperation between the Maoris and the Chinese people, he started the friendship organization and has served as its chairman since then. On Sept 13, 2002, the CPAFFC honored him as a People's Goodwill Ambassador for his contribution to the friendship between China and New Zealand.

This was the seventh CPAFFC goodwill mission to New Zealand. For five of the six members, it was the first. In order to make the guests' tour smooth and pleasant, Tauroa's wife Pat Tauroa worked to facilitate and arrange the activities. She and her son Terry drove to the Auckland airport to greet and see off the delegation. They accompanied the members during the whole visit, which deeply moved every member of the group.

In December, when Beijing is in its cold wintertime, New Zealand, in the southern hemisphere, is enjoying summer with bright sunshine. The sharp contrast in weather, the exotic customs and the beautiful scenery thrilled members of the delegation. Moreover, the enthusiasm of their Maori hosts filled their hearts with warmth.

After driving for more than one hour from the airport, the delegation arrived at the Kaiaua seashore farmland southeast of Auckland. Pat Tauroa's nephew and other relatives and friends gathered at their marae to welcome the delegation with the traditional Maori *powhiri* ceremony: Maori songs and

hongi. The *marae* is where family members and friends have get-togethers. The concept of *whanau* is at the center of the Maoris' social structure. Today, Maoris in many places maintain the habit of having all family members and relatives living in one household. The delegation had also prepared some Chinese songs in response to the hosts' warm welcome. After dinner, they sat around the table to listen to the host telling them about the history, culture and current state of the Maoris.

Maoris are the aboriginals of New Zealand. They've lived on the land since the middle of the 14th century. In 1840, the United Kingdom signed the Treaty of Waitangi with the Maoris, which gave ruling power to the British Crown but let the Maoris retain ownership of natural resources. In 1947, New Zealand became a sovereign country

and a member of the British Commonwealth. In 1987, the Maori language became one of the official languages of New Zealand. At present, the Maoris account for 14 percent of New Zealand's population, making it the largest minority group in the country. Its tribes mainly live on the northern island of New Zealand. The Maori culture has become an important part of the country's national culture. The Maori-style welcome and sending-off ceremonies can often be seen in various activities. The Maoris respect and worship the land, rivers, mountains, plants and everything else in nature and see themselves as protector.

When the delegation arrived at Kaiaua, members stayed in local Maoris' *marae*. All the guests slept on the floor like their hosts. The next day, they drove along the picturesque east

CPAFFC delegates with their host family



coast of North Island to Rotorua for a visit to the local Maori Tribe Cultural Center. In the Maori language, Rotorua means “two lakes”. Early Maoris made the place their home because of its rich geothermal resources. In the cultural center, the delegation watched a well-known haka performance.

In Murupara, the delegation visited Tawhiuau Maori Middle School and conducted exchanges with local teachers and students. At present, in more than 50 Maori tribes in New Zealand, around 15 tribal schools use the Maori language as their main teaching language. The school opened Chinese courses and is regarded as the local Confucius Classroom, and courses are expected to be promoted in other Maori tribal schools. This school established a relationship with an ethnic minority middle school in Guiyang, China. The delegation also saw the school’s farm and chatted with some Maori students weeding the field. The guests and hosts took group photos and sang Chinese songs together.

In Taupo, Mayor David Trewavas met the delegation at the town hall. Taupo became a sister city with Suzhou, Jiangsu province, in 2008 and has enjoyed frequent exchanges with the beautiful Chinese city since then. It also keeps close contact with the CPAFFC. In November, Trewavas led a municipal government delegation to the launch ceremony of the China New Zealand Mayors’ Forum held by CPAFFC in Auckland. This year, he led another delegation to the first China New Zealand Mayors’ Forum held by the CPAFFC in Xiamen. He expressed appreciation for the CPAFFC’s efforts in promoting cooperation between lo-

cal governments in China and New Zealand. CPAFFC representatives expressed thanks to Trewavas for supporting the forum, adding that the Chinese group expects further support from him for the second forum to be held in Wellington in 2017.

Taupo is located in the central area of New Zealand’s North Island, near the 616-square-kilometer Taupo Lake, the largest lake in the country. The top leader of the Tuwharetoa, Sir Tumu Te Heuheu, also attended the mayor’s meeting with the Chinese delegation. Heuheu had been to China before attending a friendship forum of the CPAFFC in Jiangxi province. He accompanied the delegation on a visit to the Lake Taupo Museum and introduced in detail the history, culture and customs of the Maoris.

When the delegation passed the city of Hamilton, members saw from distance the Maori King’s palace and the Maori Hall, the largest in New Zealand, on the riverside in the Waikato region. Pat Tauroa made a special arrangement for the delegation to visit the Waitomo Glowworm Caves in south Auckland, considered by some to be a wonder of the world. The word “Waitomo” in the Maori language is

composed of “Wai” and “tomo”, which represent “water” and “cave”. The caves are owned and managed by local Maoris. Entering the caves by boat, members of the delegation could see thousands of glowworms on the ceiling, forming a shining sort of Milky Way. It is Nature that created this wonder, which was splendid and breathtaking.

In Auckland, the City of Sails, the delegation also got some idea of Auckland’s prosperity. Many Maoris have become accustomed to modern city life.

After days of communication and interaction, the visitors built deep friendships with the family of Pat Tauroa and other Maoris. They parted with reluctance and the whole trip became an unforgettable memory for all.

Though the delegation only spent four days in New Zealand, all the members deeply felt the warm hospitality of the Maoris and were impressed by their singing and dancing. More importantly, they felt the friendship of the Maoris toward the Chinese people. We expect to invite the New Zealand China Maori Friendship Trust to China to attend the 7th Friendship Forum of the American and Oceanian Regions next year and renew the friendship. ■

Delegation members sing songs for students in Maori.



CPAFFC Representatives Attend 70th Anniversary of Secours Populaire Français

Zuo Fengqiang

At the invitation of Secours Populaire Français (friendship society for people aid), the CPAFFC sent representatives to the French organization's 35th National Congress in Marseilles from Nov 20 to 22. The gathering was themed "Contributing to the Relief Cause in the 21st Century".

This year marks the 70th anniversary of Secours Populaire Français, a French nonprofit organization founded in 1945 that is dedicated to fighting poverty and discrimination in public life. More than 1,000 representatives from across France and its overseas provinces participated in the meeting. The SPF National Congress also invited more than 200 representatives from over 60 countries and over 100 cooperative organizations to attend the forum.

At the opening ceremony on Nov 20, Julien Lauprêtre, chairman of SPF, delivered a work report, reviewing the 70 years of the organization's history and setting goals for future development. He called for everybody to contribute to the global relief cause in the 21st century, saying that "we should concern ourselves with everything related to human well being."

In the afternoon of Nov 20, four seminars were held to discuss the future development directions of SPF. Themes centered on the SPF relief mis-



Julien Lauprêtre delivers a work report.

sion, as well as initiatives in education and activism to encourage government action.

Around 1,200 representatives were divided into 120 interactive groups during the morning session on Nov 21 to share their experiences in carrying out relief activities. In the afternoon, four subforums were held focusing on how to enhance communication during relief work, how to respond to climate change quickly, why food is the top need of the poverty-stricken population and how to understand the

influence of poverty on people's health.

On Nov 22, the congress elected a new national SPF leadership committee, council and secretariat. Lauprêtre was re-elected as chairman, with a leadership team consisting of more young people. Twenty-five members under age 30 entered the new leadership committee. In his closing speech, Lauprêtre announced that the 36th congress of SPF would be held in Bordeaux, France, in November 2017.

During the meeting, CPAFFC representatives attended all the forums and activities, interacted extensively with the representatives from France and other parts of the world for an exchange of ideas and information. They use different occasions to present briefings about the results of cooperation between the CPAFFC and SPF as well as the goals set by the fifth session of the CPC's 18th National Congress for building a moderately prosperous society by 2020 and lifting more than 70 million out of poverty in China. They also told their foreign friends how China endeavored to help the poor lift themselves out of poverty and build a civilized society.

All participants at the meeting expressed their appreciation for China's participation. In his concluding speech on Nov 22, Lauprêtre mentioned par-

ticularly that “China has also sent representatives to this ceremony.”

During the meeting’s interval on Nov 21, Chinese representatives spoke with Makowski, a member of the secretariat of SPF in charge of foreign cooperation, Hassounh in charge of assistance to global network construction, and Callens, chairman of North United Association. The discussions were on cooperation between CPAFFC and SPF in 2016.

In 2016, CPAFFC plans to cooperate with SPF to implement a poverty relief project in a poor county in Lyuliang, Shanxi province, and the CPAFFC officially invited SPF to send a delegation to China. The China-France High-Level Cultural Dialogue and People-to-People Exchange will be held in Beijing this year. The CPAFFC will cooperate with SPF to hold a China-France Women’s Football Friendly Match during the dialogue. According to a bilateral agreement, the CPAFFC will invite a delegation of students from the northern branch of SPF to China for communication and interaction with Chinese students.

SPF grew out of the French branch of the Secours Rouge International, which was founded in 1923 by the Communist Party of France. It was the third-largest charity organization after the French Red Cross and French Christian Aid. By 2015, the activities and members of SPF covered all of France. There are 98 local associations, 663 aid committees, 1 million donors, 73,000 solicitors and 1,256 fixed-aid stations and medical stations. Last year, SPF performed 2.8 billion charity acts, benefiting more than 600,000 families in France. It also implemented 151 re-

lief projects with its 164 cooperative partners in 65 countries, which benefited more than 500,000 people.

Lauprêtre joined the anti-fascist movement known as Free France when he was young. He was arrested in 1943 but started secret anti-fascist activities in Lyon after being released in 1944. On the day of the Normandy invasion, he returned to Paris and joined the battle to liberate Paris. In 1985, Lauprêtre was elected chairman of SPF. He has devoted his life to building a society with justice, freedom and happiness. As an active figure in French politics, he contributed greatly to the humanitarian cause. Many humanitarian activities carried out in France were proposed by him, including the “Day of No Vacation”, “Green Santa Claus” and “World Little Partners”. In 1986, he was awarded French Legion of Honor.

SPF began to cooperate with the CPAFFC in 2007. Since then, it has carried out many cooperative relief projects in China. In 2008, SPF donated rain-collecting facilities to 100 farmers’ families in Zhaona village, Gansu province, benefiting more than 1,000 people. After the Wenchuan earthquake in Sichuan province, SPF

immediately provided 360 tents to the disaster-stricken area and sent relief materials to 316 households, benefiting more than 2,000 people affected by the earthquake. In 2011, together with the French AREVA Fund, SPF donated a multimedia library to Mengjia School in Deyang, Sichuan province, benefiting over 1,000 students. In 2013, SPF and Air France donated money to put up a building for the Naqin Primary School in Taishan, Guangdong province. The new facility brought benefits to 9,773 local residents. In addition, SPF donated 2 school buses to the Basa Middle School in Yunnan province, benefiting 1,000 students. The CPAFFC and the northern branch of SPF also cooperated to facilitate exchanges of youth delegations in culture, sports and music.

The CPAFFC’s recent move to send delegates to the meeting of SPF in celebration of the 70th anniversary of the organization’s founding has further consolidated the long-term partnership. With this partnership, we will surely make greater contributions to the construction of a moderately prosperous society in China by 2020 and to the full emancipation of the country’s 70 million poor from poverty. ■

The author (R.1) with representatives of Morocco



CPAFFC Delegation Visits Democratic Republic of the Congo and Republic of Congo

Xu Liya



CPAFFC Vice-President Lin Yi visits Edouard Mokolo Wa Mpombo, First Deputy Speaker of the Senate of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

At the invitation of Andre Kimbuta, mayor of Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Jean Marie Ewengue, mayor of Oyo city, Republic of Congo, a CPAFFC delegation led by Lin Yi, the group's vice-president, visited the two countries from Sept 22 to 30.

During the visit to the DRC, the delegation met with Edouard Mokolo

Wa Mpombo, first deputy-speaker of the Senate; Jolie Kenda, president of the China-Friendly Group of the National Assembly; and Kiwakana, first vice-chairman of the Association of Enterprises. The delegation also held a work meeting with Kimbuta and signed an agreement with the city of Kinshasa supporting the establishment of sister-city relations with Chinese cities.

During the visit to Congo, the delegation met with Cyprien Sylvestre Mamina, secretary-general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ida Yoka, director of the General Office of the Ministry of Internal Affairs; and Arsène Rigobert, Guelele Kouene Kintono, coordinator of the Youth Association for Protecting Forests in Central Africa. The delegation also held a work

meeting with Oyo Mayor Ewengue; Pointe Noire Mayor Roland Bouiti-Viaudo; Brazzaville city Cabinet Director Charles Makaya Dit Mackaill; and Chairman of the Association Congolaise d'Amitié entre les Peuples Vital Balla. Wang Tongqing, China's Ambassador to the DRC, and Liu Cunxiao, the Chinese interim charge d'affaires in Congo, attended major activities during the visit.

Reviewing the past discussing the future

During the trip, Lin Yi visited political figures of the two countries and attributed the China-Africa friendship, which spans decades, to the contribution of the older generation of revolutionaries and the care of many friends in various fields.

"CPAFFC is willing to do solid work to carry forward the friendship between China and Africa in the new era," she said, adding that the Chinese people will never forget the old friends who have contributed greatly to that friendship. She said China hopes to enjoy more visits from its African friends.

In his speech, Mokolo, the Senate vice-speaker, recalled his experiences promoting the recovery of diplomatic relations between China and Zaire when he served as consultant for then-President Mobutu Sese Seko. He also recalled merrily his meetings with Chairman Mao Zedong, Premier Zhou Enlai and Vice-premier Deng Xiaoping. Remarking that the two countries had maintained mutually beneficial cooperation since the normalization of diplomatic relations in 1972, he said the relationship is totally different

from that between African and Western countries. According to Mokolo, the African-Western relationship is like a horse and its rider or a slave and his master — an unequal one. African countries are proud of their relations with China, he said.

In September, DRC President Josef Kabila visited China to attend the ceremony marking the 70th anniversary of China's victory in the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression (1937-45) and the world's victory over fascism. He met with President Xi Jinping during the visit — a moment that he said attested again to the special friendly ties between the two countries.

Mokolo said he was willing to contribute more to the friendship between China and the DRC in the capacity of first vice speaker in charge of foreign affairs.

Cyprien Sylvestre Mamina of Congo's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation recalled his pleasant experience accompanying President Denis Sassou-Nguesso at a reception held by CPAFFC celebrating the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations. He said that broad consensus was achieved during the mutual visits of President Xi Jinping and Sassou-Nguesso in 2013 and 2014, when they exchanged views on developing relations. He added that Congo's Ministry of Foreign Affairs supports more exchanges not only between local governments but between ordinary people in the two countries.

Cooperation between Chinese and African local governments

China and African countries have 122 pairs of sister cities, including two

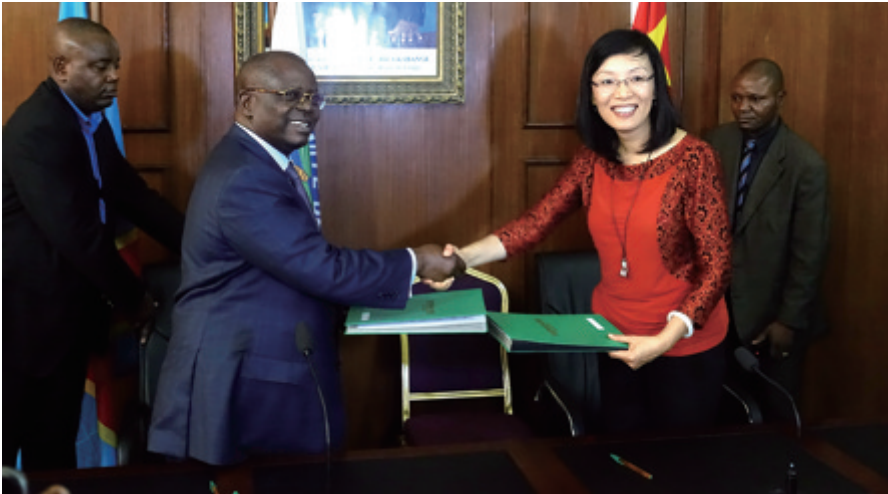
cities in the Republic of Congo. But no cities from the DRC have established sisters relations with any Chinese city yet. After the mayors of Kinshasa and Oyo visited China not long ago, the matter was put on the agenda. During her DRC visit, CPAFFC's Lin briefed her hosts about Chinese cities' cooperation with their sister cities in Africa. She said the two mayors' visits to China and the signing of two friendly cooperation memorandums—between Kinshasa and Guangzhou, and between Oyo and Yangzhou—demonstrated the two sides' willingness to establish sister-city relations.

"CPAFFC supports the establishment of sister-city relations based on equality and mutual benefits and is willing to promote bilateral cooperation," Lin said.

Kinshasa's Mayor Kimbuta expressed thanks for China's warm reception during his visit to China and said the friendship between China and the DRC needs to be supported by tangible cooperation.

"When I met with the mayor of Guangzhou, we reached consensus on many issues for cooperation," Kimbuta said. "Kinshasa hopes to build friendship with Guangzhou and carry out practical cooperation. We hope that the CPAFFC will urge Guangzhou to send a delegation of experts to the Democratic Republic of the Congo for an on-site investigation into building large-scale shopping malls, developing public transportation systems and designing urban plans."

Oyo Mayor Ewengue said that Oyo and Yangzhou are both the hometowns of state leaders, and Congo President Denis Sassou-



Lin Yi and Edouard Mokolo Wa Mpombo conclude agreements in the DRC.

Nguesso attaches great importance to the establishment of a friendly relationship between the two cities, which he said embodies the friendly relations between the two governments and the brotherhood of the two peoples. Ewengue will officially invite Yangzhou officials via diplomatic channels to visit Congo.

Brazzaville, Congo, and Changsha, in China's Hunan province, represent the first pair of active sister cities for China and Africa. Pointe Noire and Dalian established a sister-city relationship in 2000. However, in recent years there have been no active exchanges.

The CPAFFC delegation visited both Brazzaville and Pointe Noire for working talks with officials, and both said they expected to resume communication and restart cooperation with their sister cities.

The Brazzaville mayor said he hoped to learn from Changsha's experience in city management, especially environmental sanitation technologies and staff training. He hoped to enhance bilateral trade and

economic cooperation, and carry out exchanges between the two cities' youths. Roland Bouiti-Viaudo, the mayor of Pointe Noire, said he expected Dalian to send a delegation to visit his city, and he hoped to talk with Dalian's government and enterprises on cooperation in building modern markets, cultural villages for handicrafts, comprehensive sports centers and road lighting and cleaning projects.

The CPAFFC's Lin told her hosts about China's domestic situation and encouraged the two African cities to bank on the opportunity presented by the 2nd Forum on China-Africa Local Government Cooperation to be held in Beijing in November and the China-Africa Mayors' Dialogue to be held in South Africa in December to activate cooperation with Changsha and Dalian.

Expand exchanges with NGOs in Africa

Because of frequent conflicts and changes of governments in Africa, the CPAFFC has enjoyed no fixed relations with NGOs in the DRC. The

Association Congolaise d'Amitié entre les Peuples, which once had close ties with the CPAFFC, has also become inactive as a result of aging staff and lack of funding. Therefore, the delegation took the opportunity of the visits to strengthen ties with friendly groups in the two countries.

During the visit in the DRC, the delegation met with Mokolo and urged him to establish a Congo-China friendly association by absorbing members of the China-Friendly Group of the National Assembly.

Mokolo expressed willingness to contact people who are friendly to China in different fields to set up the association, and he said he would like to be the new organization's chairman. Kenda, the current president of the group, said the 19 members of the new China-Friendly Group were all committed to contributing to the friendship and cooperation between China and the DRC, even though they were from different political parties and different regions.

At the beginning of the visit, the delegation met with Association Congolaise d'Amitié entre les Peuples Chairman Vital Balla and thanked him for his long-term contribution to the friendship between the two countries.

"CPAFFC attaches great importance to the cooperation with the association and is willing to make new contributions to the friendship between the two countries," Lin said.

The delegation also held talks with the Association of Enterprises of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Youth Association for Protecting Forests in Central Africa to discuss future cooperation opportunities. ■

CPAFFC Delegation Attends 3rd China-Africa Mayors' Dialogue

Zhang Yujun

It was November, but Johannesburg in the southern hemisphere was all sunshine, with flowers blooming everywhere under a blue sky.

At the Sandton International Convention Center, black, yellow, brown and white faces were radiant with confidence and friendship. They were officials from China and African countries communicating with one another, discussing plans for cooperation between local governments.

At the invitation of United Cities and Local Governments-Africa, CPAFFC Vice-President Lin Yi led a delegation to Johannesburg on Dec 2, 2015 to attend the 3rd China-Africa Mayors' Dialogue and Special Lunch with Chinese elected representatives for the 7th Africities Summit.

“Since the establishment of the FOCAC in 2000, the China-Africa relations have entered a new era of all-round development,” Lin said in her address. “The Johannesburg Summit of the FOCAC will inject new vitality into our relations and become a new milestone in the history of Sino-African relations. The China-Africa cooperation cannot fare well without cooperation at local levels. The CPAFFC is willing



CPAFFC Vice-President Lin Yi with dialogue participants

to further promote pragmatic cooperation between Chinese and African local governments so that more and more people can directly benefit from the achievements of the China-Africa cooperation.”

Jacqueline Moustache Belle, mayor of Victoria City, spoke on behalf of African countries, saying that Africa is the future of the world, while China leads the world in its pace of economic development and building people-friendly cities. The China-Africa partnership represents the future

of the world, Belle said, and the two sides must unite. Cooperation based on mutual respect will not only benefit the two sides, but also contribute to global economic development.

Representatives at the conference all agreed that China-Africa friendship has stood the test of the time and become stronger despite the geographic distance between the two. Both sides expressed willingness to take advantage of the comprehensive and strategic partnership to further carry out local exchanges, deepen practical coopera-

tion, enhance mutual understanding and friendship and promote sustainable development of relations between Chinese and African cities.

Common Development

Representatives from five Chinese cities introduced their resources, cultural features and development concepts, as well as investment opportunities such as trade and tourism. They met with African mayors in different groups and talked with them about the cooperation opportunities and prospects. As the Mayors' Dialogue was held during the 7th Africities Summit and before the Johannesburg Summit of FOCAC, the introduction of the Chinese representatives received an especially positive response from their African counterparts.

Tian Shujun, vice-chairman of the Dalian CPPCC, and Roland Bouiti-Viaudo, mayor of Pointe Noire, Republic of the Congo, decided to carry out closer exchanges to expand their cities' cooperation to wider areas. Jingdezhen Vice-Mayor Lu Zhengda invited African representatives to visit the Jingdezhen International Ceramic Fair Exhibition and exchanged ideas with representatives from Mozambique and other African countries on establishing sister city relationships and enhancing mutual visits and exchanges. Liang Xianting, deputy secretary of the Zhaozhuang municipal committee of the Communist Party of China, told his African counterparts that Zaozhuang is an experimental zone in China's rural reform and a model for modern agricultural development. It presents ample opportunities for cooperation with African countries in food processing, Liang said. Liang also talked with representa-



CPAFFC Vice-President Lin Yi gave remarks.

tives from Morocco about developing agricultural projects, producing and exporting farming machines and setting up joint factories.

Chairman of the Association of Local Governments in South Africa and Mayor of Bloemfontein Thabo Manyoni said in his concluding remarks that China-Africa cooperation has bright prospects and that there is huge cooperation potential in infrastructure construction, investment, trade and tourism development. The development of cities has expedited the process of industrialization in China, he said, and China's experience can help African countries revamp their cities. Manyoni said he hopes that cities in China and Africa will work together to reduce poverty in Africa.

About 40 Chinese representatives including Lu Zuoquan, vice-president of the Nanchang People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, along with Chen Hongning, deputy mayor of the Liuzhou Municipal Government, and other local officials and entrepreneurs attended the dialogue. About 40 African representatives including Khalifa Sall, the UCLGA pres-

ident and mayor of Dakar, the capital of Senegal; Parks Tau, the mayor of Johannesburg, host city of the 7th Africities Summit; Mohamed Saddiki, mayor of Rabat, capital of Morocco; Moubarcar Bah, mayor of Bamako, capital of Mali; as well as local government representatives from the Republic of the Congo, Republic of Guinea, Cameroon, Mozambique, Uganda and Benin participated in the dialogue.

The Africities Summit was launched in 1998. It is sponsored by UCLGA and the local government of the host city. As the most important platform for dialogue about local development in Africa, the summit has a significant influence in Africa. Every summit attracts several thousand mayors, ministers, entrepreneurs and scholars from African countries. The summit has been held every three years since 2000. When the 6th Africities Summit was held in Senegal in 2012, the CPAFFC and UCLGA co-organized the first China-Africa Mayors' Dialogue. In 2013, the CPAFFC and the Shandong provincial government hosted the 2nd China-Africa Mayors' Dialogue in Jinan. ■

Speech of Pakistani Consul General at 5th China-South Asia Cultural Forum in Chengdu

It is a matter of great pleasure for me to be invited to the International Conference on “Exploring Cooperation across Himalayas: the 5th China-South Asia Cultural Forum” and to be able to share my thoughts with this August audience.

At the very outset, I would also like to take this opportunity to compliment the organizers for arranging this impressive event.

I am confident that valuable outcomes will ensue from the discussions that take place here.

“May you live in interesting times.” is a proverb that is as South Asian as Chinese for us; and this century has become an embodiment of the same.

The world has moved on from the evolution phase to transformation phase—everyone can peek into each other’s life be it at an individual, national or International level.

This has brought a new dimension to the term “cultural cooperation” which is beyond generic group exchanges and has actually translated into real-time transmission and cooperation of knowledge, skills and arts across national boundaries.

The Asian region has been globally recognized as the seat of learning and culture, besides being host to the oldest civilization. The exchange of students, scholars, trade, belief systems and social development is not new to us, as the Asian region has contributed to the global perspective and learning, be it cultural or technical, at all times.

The advent of developed media has replaced the trade routes as the mode of transfer of information and the two are inseparable in these times.

However, it is my firm belief that the term “Exploring Cooperation” will yet again be redefined by our region.

Ladies and gentlemen, China holds a special place in the context of South Asia that starts with sharing geographic borders with Afghanistan, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Pakistan; and having historic thread of events that connects the past of South Asian region with territories across Himalayas.

Be it people to people or at the State level, China has held strong economic and trade relations with all of them.

Buddhism and Islam spread to the lands of China and beyond through the western Silk Road. Over the years, the

silk route has borne testament to the message of peace, harmony and friendship that Chinese monks and envoys carried back and forth across the Himalayas; they introduced the Buddhist art symbolizing the purest values of civilization and became a conduit to spreading them to as far as Korea, Japan and other parts of East Asia.

The travelogues of Fa Xian, Song Yun and Xuan Zang helped establish linkages and awareness about the civilizations and the links between China and the region of South Asia. These paths and passes traversed in ancient times later came to be known as the Silk Road.

Come today, the centuries-old relations are set to embrace the new realities and yet again be an engine of transformation to the region and the world under the “One Belt, One Road” vision of President Xi Jinping.

This new model of Cooperation incorporates in itself the benefits of the Maritime Silk Road and aims to revive fabled Silk Road of yesteryears under new Economic Belt of the Silk Road.

We have high expectations for it to not only augment relationships but bridge social, economic and cultural

gaps within the region—with equity, equality, transparency and inclusiveness.

This road will be the passage-way of a deeper vision of connecting civilizations; bringing diverse national cultures closer; augmenting landscape of regions, nations, cultures, people and civilizations in an unprecedented manner than mere brick and mortar.

The development of the ancient Silk Road was dictated by trade exploration to find new frontiers and primarily hinged upon economic supply and demand of traders and communities on the route.

The present-day vision is an outcome of precise deliberations and policy options as it lays down a foundation for closer regional cooperation, improved economic growth, diverse trade options, better connectivity and resource mobilization.

In modern times, it will be custodian of the largest regional connectivity, bringing common prosperity for the people and countries of South Asia, which by no means is an ordinary feat and would rather redefine the global perspective of the terms connectivity and prosperity.

Therefore, the policymakers look toward the support from the academicians and intellectuals of this august forum to identify, explore, deliberate and recommend the doable options to bridge the technical, social and cultural gaps among the people and cultures of the region in such a way that leads to peace, prosperity, inclusive growth and cultural harmony for all.

Xie Xie. Thank you! ■

Speech of Ambassador of Nepal Mahesh K. Maskey at Sichuan University



At the 5th China-South Asia Cultural Forum

It is my great honor to share a few thoughts with you in this August gathering of distinguished scholars from China and South Asian Countries. The 21st century is widely regarded as the “Century of Asia”. China and South Asia are already the 1st and 3rd largest economies by purchasing power parity, the second being the United States of America. The convergence in cooperation of China and South Asia is a matter of great importance not only for the peaceful rise of Asia, but also for ensuring world peace and achieving common prosperity. Therefore the

theme “Exploring Cooperation Across Himalayas” of Fifth China-South Asia cultural forum is well-timed and I believe the contributions from learned speakers and participants will not only enlighten us about this topic of seminal importance, they may also help stimulate our imagination to break new grounds in international relations.

The two land masses of China and South Asia together boast of tremendous cultural, ethnic, religious and bio-diversity that is unparalleled in the world. Rich in land, mineral and oceanic resources, they also have

immense potential for renewable energy needed to safeguard the fragile ecosystem of Mother Earth. The majestic Himalayas which connect these two land masses itself being the repositories of freshwater rivers needed for survival of life on earth and productivity of earth herself. If we dare to imagine, the scope of cooperation between the two giants is breathtaking at the least. It was Albert Einstein, the great scientist, who had said “imagination is more important than knowledge”. He might have said so because we often need imagination to drive our knowledge towards a desired goal. We also need imagination to create new knowledge in place of outdated, outmoded concepts.

We are growing out of the era of colonial past with its outmoded value system—the era of dominance and dependence, mistrust and conspiracy, conflict and wars. In that era the Himalayas was seen as a reliable security barrier discouraging movements and communications across its rugged terrain. We are now entering into an era of win-win cooperation, friendship and mutual trust, of bold imagination to make breakthroughs from mental impasses. In this era Himalayas is being rightfully viewed as a shared bond of sustenance and friendship between China and South Asia.

I believe the “One Belt One Road” initiative envisioned by President Xi Jinping is one such bold stroke of imagination. China and South Asian countries are partners in this initiative which involves around 4 billion people connecting Asia with Middle East, Europe and Africa. “One



Ambassador of Nepal Mahesh K. Maskey addresses the Forum

Belt One Road” heralds a new era of shared culture, prosperity and eco-friendly sustainable development where China and South Asia can play a major role.

In this changed context it is natural that we begin to explore cooperation across Himalayas earnestly. Incidentally, Himalayas also symbolizes my country Nepal since whole of her northern border is made by Himalayan range and 8 of 10 highest peaks lie in Nepal. Across the passes of these mountains, along the south-western Silk Road that started from here and crossed through Lhasa to Nepal and India, trade and culture flourished in the middle ages. In the ancient times Buddhist cultures already flowed back and forth through ancient Silk Road as many Buddhist scholar monks from China traveled great distances to reach Lumbini in Nepal - the birth place of Sakyamuni Lord Buddha. Great Nepali Architect Araniko has travelled to China and built White Pagoda of Beijing and

Wutaishan which stand as a symbol of friendship between China even today.

As South Asia and China converge in search of their comparative advantage to reinvigorate their friendship and to redefine the concept of cooperation, as they engage in their determined effort to nurture the cultural threads that had sustained social life of their people over thousands of years, I am fully confident that Nepal will serve as a key link and the indispensable land bridge for this grand venture. Chinese people often quote Lao Ze who had said that “a journey of thousand miles begins with a single step”. I want to tell our Chinese friends that Nepal is willing to take that first step, and I believe other South Asian countries also are equally willing to do so, in this “thousand mile venture” of grand cooperation across the Himalayas.

I thank the organizers for inviting me and wish Fifth China-South Asia Forum an immense success.

Thank you all. Xie xie dajia. ■

Dec. 15, 2015

Buddhist Culture and Sino-South Asian Cultural Exchange

Dipak Sarkar

Cultural relation between South Asia and China is more than hundreds of years old. Chinese and Sindus-valley civilization has laid its foundation for the expansion of this relationship. South Asia is the origin of the most widespread Hinduism and Buddhism. Millions of Chinese are the followers of Buddhist philosophy and culture. This bridge has played a significant role in establishing a cordial relation between Chinese and South Asians. The famous Chinese monk Faxian (Fa-hien) and Xuan Zang, monk Bhikkhu Buddha Bhadra of Nepal, contemporary Nagarjun of India and others are the religious leaders of Buddhist philosophy who spread its culture in China and South Asia. Moreover, they are the catalyst of cultural relations among people of both regions.

Likewise, Chinese feel oneself lucky enough to be at Buddha's birth place Lumbini, while others feel calm to be at Kushinagar, where Buddha passed away. Some Chinese feel excited when they have a glance over Buddha's Relic in Sri-Lanka and when some of them reach to Bhutan they get stimulation from Buddha's teachings and practice.

The influence of the Buddhist

philosophy and culture propagated by Sakyamuni Buddha, who was born in Nepal, is universal. Mercy and friendship, non-violence and the equitable wisdom for waiving the sorrows are the fundamentals of Buddhist philosophy and culture. More and more people in the world are coming to the term that the equitable methodology of Buddhist philosophy is useful for world peace. As one of the main branches of Buddhist philosophy, The Mahayana, has flourished and being practiced and has been established institutionally in China, specially the Tibet Autonomous Region—which shows the live cultural relations between South Asia and China. This relation can be termed as most valuable people to people relation. If we will be able to take this cultural exchange to a new height by making it a subject of the concern of the new generation, it may pave new ways for cultural exchange between South Asia and China. It will contribute positively to the social life of both regions. It may contribute a lot on the development of Nepalese tourism sector, if we are allowed to take an example.

Meanwhile, Nepalese remember Princess Bhrikuti whenever they reach Jokhang Monastery of the Tibet

Autonomous Region. They even feel the existence in hundreds of years old history of Buddha's philosophy and its culture. The philosophy was brought in Tibet after King Songsten Gampo married Princess Bhrikuti of Nepal. These are only a few examples, we still have lots of historical facts among us.

It is true that Social development grows simultaneously in the cultural background. Despite of extensive Himalayan range and geographical hurdles, our forefathers have succeeded to build up a strong relationship. Establishment of New China and political changes in South Asia along with the development in science and technology has united us more closer than ever before.

For a moment if we overlook our historical cultural foundation, present scenario on cultural relation is not satisfactory. South Asians have not been able to focus on the cultural relation as “soft power”. Making cultural relation as a secondary means and political dissatisfaction might have affected the concentration. I would like to connect this scenario with Nepal's situation. Nepal has prioritized education, health, and construction of essential infrastructure in its budget. However, many local organizations

work with emotions even they are financially weak.

Despite of their weak finance and limited resources they are able to establish people to people relations with China. For instance, the organization “World Cultural Net” which I am linked with, has been exchanging cultural programs with China for 25 consecutive years. But we are not yet satisfied with its prevalence and impact. Nevertheless, being hopeful we are intensely devoted for the better results in coming days.

Modern technology has played a noteworthy role in building the relations stronger. In coming days, cultural public relations can be upgraded through communication technology. In addition to the matter World Cultural Net is planning to publish a “wave magazine” for the China and South Asia cultural dialogue. Several programs like video conferences on cultural topics and making documentaries are prioritized in our organization’s plan. To make new generation acquainted with our cultural relation and importance, World Cultural Net has forwarded a campaign “New Generation-New Dimension”. In this campaign, students from China and Nepal are culturally exchanged.

We have expected a great support from CPAFFC, different Universities of China, Confucius centers along with other professional organizations to make mentioned activities a great success. Meanwhile, we also seek support from South Asian active cultural organizations, friendly Associations and other organizations working for the development of cultural exchange activities. ■

Wife of the Republic of Ghana’s Vice-President Visits China

Tang Ruimin



CPAFFC President Li Xiaolin (R.3) with the Ghanaian delegation

In mid-October 2015, Matilda Amissah-Arthur, wife of Ghana’s Vice-President Kwesi Bekoe Amissah-Arthur, visited Beijing, Hangzhou and Shanghai.

During the reception in honor of Amissah-Arthur, Li Xiaolin, president of the CPAFFC, said that with the joint efforts of the two sides, the traditional friendship and cooperation between China and Ghana, built and forged by the older generation of state leaders, have seen rapid development. Fruitful cooperation was carried out in various

fields, including politics, economics, trade and mining. She went on to say that in early November 2015, the CPAFFC invited governors of the Greater Accra region, the Ashanti region and the Northern region to the 2nd Forum on China-Africa Local Government Cooperation. The forum, Li said, has promoted two-way exchanges cultivating local level people-to-people friendship. She also expressed her hope for further pragmatic cooperation that will serve the two peoples.

Amissah-Arthur said that Francis Nwia Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's founding father in 1957, was very friendly to China and developed a strong personal friendship with then-Premier Zhou Enlai. She likened the friendship between the two countries to a river that has run a long course from a remote source. On the occasion of the 55th anniversary of the establishment of Ghana-China diplomatic ties, she said, "We are ready to further deepen our friendship and bring the bilateral relationship to a new high."

Ghana, in western Africa, is sometimes referred to as the Gold Coast of the Atlantic. Gold, cocoa and timber exports underpin the country's economy.

Amissah-Arthur earned a master's degree in library management from the University of Ghana, where she met and later married Kwesi Bekoe Amissah-Arthur. Once an economics professor at the university, her husband was appointed as vice-minister of finance in 1993 and later became governor of the Bank of Ghana. He now serves as the country's vice-president. He and his wife are friendly to China and closely watch its changes. But they never had a chance to visit China in person before her visit this time. She extended her thanks to the CPAFFC for inviting her to China and said she will work toward a vice-presidential visit to China in the future.

Amissah-Arthur also actively works for the benefit of women and children and cares for the vulnerable. She visited Meng Xiaosi, vice-president of the All-China Women's Federation, with whom she exchanged ideas for enhancing women's awareness of



Madam Amissah-Arthur with Chinese children

political participation, protecting women's health and improving their economic status. She said she appreciated what China had done in offering poor women soft loans, increasing women's employment and helping poor women and their families. She thought highly of China's free screening test for breast and ovarian cancers. She hopes to keep contact with the federation and learn from China's experience.

During her stay in Shanghai, Amissah-Arthur visited the Shanghai International Peace Maternity & Child Health Hospital, the Shanghai Children's Welfare Institute and a few primary schools to learn more about the state of Chinese women and children.

During her visit to Hangzhou, she visited beverage company Wahaha Group Co, Ltd, which has over 80 production bases in China and well-established distribution channels overseas. As the Chinese market is becoming saturated, the company

has decided to shift its business focus to international markets and setting up plants overseas. Amissah-Arthur encouraged Wahaha to invest in her country and to sell its products in Africa. She also told her host that cocoa is one of Ghana's major export products, with huge potential to cooperate in making cocoa drinks. She was deeply impressed by the group's self-developed bottle molds, its production lines, attractive salary packages and welfare benefits. She expressed hope that Wahaha drinks will be produced in Ghana soon and said Ghanaian film and TV stars could endorse these drinks in her country.

Amissah-Arthur said her short visit in China had left a deep impression on her, and she would bring what she saw and heard back to her country so that the younger generation will have a better understanding of China, ensuring that the friendship between the two countries will last for generations. ■

A Friendly Dialogue between Two Great Civilizations

Li Wuzhou

The China-India Friendship and Inter-Civilization Exchanges Roundtable Conference, jointly sponsored by the China Soong Ching Ling Foundation (CSCLF) and the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA), was held in Beijing on November 26, 2015, at the former residence of late honorary president of the People's Republic of China Soong Ching Ling (1893-1981) who was a proactive promoter of China-India friendship.

The conference brought together a group of renowned experts and scholars from both countries. They reviewed the long history of friendship between China and India, analyzed the current situation of political, commercial, and people-to-people exchanges, and brainstormed the sound development of the future bilateral relations. The roundtable meeting not only deepened the two nations' mutual understanding and friendship, but also injected vitality and impetus towards promoting a jointly open new future. Here we take a look at some of the contributions and suggestions discussed by experts in their fields at the meeting.

Soong Ching Ling and the China-India Friendship

The year 2015 marked the 65th anniversary of the establishment of dip-



A group photo of hosts and guests

lomatic relations between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of India, and the 60th anniversary of Mme. Soong's visit to India.

Executive Vice-Chairman of the CSCLF Qi Mingqiu regarded Soong Ching Ling as "the envoy and golden bridge of friendship between China and India." The intimate, high-level roundtable conference held at the former residence of Soong Ching Ling therefore had great significance. The aim of the meeting was to inherit resources from the cherished historical China-India friendship to promote communication and dialogues between the two peoples

and to explore building non-governmental people-to-people exchanges and cooperative mechanisms, thus to elevate bilateral relations to new heights.

Throughout her life, Soong attached great importance to friendly relations between China and India. In 1927, she met Jawaharlal Nehru during a visit to the Soviet Union. This established the fundamentals of a life-long friendship. Ai Duo, director of the Administration Center of the Former Residence of Soong Ching Ling and Research Center of the CSCLF, explained that following Japan's full-scale invasion of China in 1937, Nehru

declared support for China and raised funds for the Chinese people's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression. Soong expressed her sincere thanks to Nehru. The friendship eventually led to an Indian medical detachment serving in China. The world then witnessed Indian independence in 1947 and the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. In October 1954, Nehru visited China, and his old friend Soong in particular, who accompanied him to 10 major events. At the end of 1955, Soong received a warm welcome from the ICWA, launched by Nehru, and the Indian people during a successful visit to India.

China Today, a periodical established by Soong Ching Ling in 1952, has passed down its tradition of spreading the truth and presenting China objectively to foreign readers, as laid down by its founder. President of China Today Hu Baomin expressed the hope that in the foreseeable future, the media of the two countries would strengthen cooperation and communication and bridge the gap between China and India.

Director-general of the ICWA and former Indian ambassador Nalin Surie praised Mme. Soong Ching Ling as the envoy of China-India friendship, and expressed the great wish to consistently strengthen cooperation with the CSCLF to promote mutual friendship and cultural exchanges.

Exchanges between two great Civilizations

China and India are two of the four most famous ancient civilizations of the world, each with their own cultural circles that learn from and influ-

ence one another, and nourish mutual cultural development. Chinese paleographer and Indologist Ji Xianlin once commented that if there were an award for the most compatible relations benefiting from cultural communication, the exchanges between China and India would win it. Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore also regarded China and India as old and beloved brothers.

China and India have had both spiritual and material cultural exchanges. As regards the former, Chinese ancients learned much from India, including philosophy, literature, and the arts through which to nourish Chinese culture. That Buddhism spread from India to China and gradually adapted to the local culture may be identified as the greatest achievement of cultural exchanges between the two countries. Buddhism has permeated Chinese social mores and philosophies. This is manifest in a universal outlook that encompasses causality, equality of living creatures, salvation, logical reasoning, and integration of all creatures. The Buddhist doctrine and Confucian ethics combined to accelerate the localization of Indian Buddhism in China, and make Buddhism an important belief among Chinese folk.

Huang Xianian, a research fellow at the Institute of World Religions at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, regards Buddhism as "the largest exchange program" between China and India. He commented on the great significance of the Chinese people's journey to the West and their learning in the old days from Buddhist scriptures, saying it was like a large-scale "study abroad" for Chinese ancients. Ravindra Panth, president of the Institute of

Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, commented that Chinese monk Xuan Zang not only brought back authentic Buddhist sutras, but also improved the dissemination of Buddhism in Eastern Asia, a great contribution to India and the world.

Indian languages have become an indispensable factor of Chinese culture. Dean Zhang Liwen of the Confucian Studies Academy of Renmin University of China said that Chinese words such as world, consciousness, politics, nirvana, and disengagement all came from India. Some Indian phrases also evolved into Chinese idioms, like prostrating oneself and touching the ground with five parts of the body (hands, knees and head) in obeisance.

Bilateral cultural exchanges have broadened the impact of China's thoughts on India. Vice President of the Confucian Studies Academy of Renmin University of China Peng Yongjie remarked that, due to the missionary activities of Buddhist monks between China and India, in particular Chinese monks' visits to India, Indians gained a deeper understanding of Chinese culture and Confucianism. In fact, India's studies on Confucianism constitute a well-organized and systematic work of research in the 20th century, and are a vital part of Sinology in India.

Business and trade also enriched the material and cultural exchanges between the two nations. An abundance of goods was transported from China to India, such as silk products, steel, tea, sugar, peanuts, porcelain, and certain fruits, while China imported jewelry, Bodhi trees, jasmine, pepper, and eaglewood.

New progress in China-India relations

Participants widely believed that China and India had become even closer at the turn of the 20th century. Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore played an important role in China's New Culture Movement early last century; Indian people also provided strong support to the Chinese people's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression. The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, advocated by both countries, has become the guiding principle of normalizing international relations. China and India, despite their different economic development modes, have both made remarkable achievements that attract worldwide attention.

In September 2014 and May 2015, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi made reciprocal state visits, opening a new chapter in bilateral relations. They are now in full swing and on the right track. Qi Mingqiu said that the two great nations shared much in common: both are countries with large populations, developing nations, and emerging market economies. They are the two main actors in the process of developing global multi-polarization, and the forces that boost Asian and world economic growth. As such their bilateral relations have surpassed the bilateral scope to strategic global effect.

In the modern era, both China and India have experienced pivotal moments. China is stepping into the "new normal" of economic development, which highlights innovative, coordinative, green, open-minded, and shared development. The Indian economy has switched to a new fast track, accelerating development and establishing development and economic zones,

which are the key points of new national policies. Made in India, Digital India, and Wisdom City have become the orientation for the nation's development. Guo Yezhou, vice minister of the International Department of the CPC Central Committee and chairman of the Council of the China Center for Contemporary World Studies, commented that both countries are at a critical juncture in their development, thus their pragmatic cooperation is imbued with unprecedented opportunities.

At the dawn of the new century, China-India economic relations developed rapidly. In 2014, the volume of trade between the two nations surpassed US \$70 billion, along with multiple agreements, largely thanks to the strong wishes of both nations' governments and enterprises to push forward bilateral economy and trade exchange. Furthermore, improved political relations provide a sound foundation for rapid growth, bringing about huge market potential, and bringing into play the preferential advantage of industry structures. Dean of the Institute of World Economics and Politics of CASS Zhang Yuyan suggested the two emerging economies fully play their roles in the global market and redress the imbalance in global governance to better represent the interests of developing countries. Another suggestion was to start by launching an economic strategic dialogue and then to expand to other fields between the two neighboring countries.

Economic relations between China and India have indeed overtaken the bilateral context to reach regional and global levels. Professor Swaran Singh of the School of International Studies

of India Nehru University attributed the strong momentum of bilateral political contact to the determination of the two leaders, both of whom wish to build a sibling-like relationship between China and India.

Although the two governments want to push forward political relations, more understanding and trust are still needed. The moment Professor Wang Bangwei, dean of the Institute of Oriental Studies at Peking University, stated this opinion, he received unanimous agreement from participating experts and scholars.

Lan Jianxue, an associate research fellow at the China Institute of International Studies, held that we should switch to another perspective that transcends traditional geopolitics to focus on culture and civilization, and abandon the old Chinese belief that "a mountain is not big enough for two tigers." The two nations could work in concert to give full play to Eastern civilization and wisdom. "We should use our practice to testify that the Himalayas is big enough to accommodate two large tigers," he said.

Li Li, deputy director of the Research Institute of South Asia, South-east Asia and Oceania from the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations, expressed in her speech that the breakthrough in China-India relations of 1988 lay in the consensus achieved on the border issue, namely that the issue should be settled through negotiation and shouldn't affect the settlement of other problems. In fact, the border issue has made some substantive progress, she said, especially in bilateral military exchanges and cooperation. These achievements have to

some extent strengthened mutual trust.

In response to the Indian government's concerns about security in connection with China's Maritime Silk Road initiative, Professor Han Hua of the School of International Studies of Peking University suggested more dialogues to dispel doubts. Both countries are highly dependent on the Indian Ocean for bilateral trade as well as their respective foreign trade. Therefore, China attaches great importance to India's strategic location along the route of the new Maritime Silk Road. Professor Han suggested docking the Maritime Silk Road initiative with India's Monsoon Plan and to highlight the existing mutual interests.

Professor Madhu Bhalla of the East Asia Research Department of Delhi University emphasized that the two countries should have serious dialogues on each other's core values with an open-minded attitude, so neutralizing suspicion.

Cultural exchanges for mutual trust

Representatives at the meeting emphasized strengthening people-to-people exchanges. They recommended broadening bilateral relations in the realms of cooperative programs among young people, tourism, cultural exchanges, religious activities, and educational communication. ICWA Director-general Nalin Surie said that China and India are two great ancient civilizations, and that there was no reason for their historical relationship to end. Dean of the Confucian Studies Institute of Renmin University Zhang Liwen agreed that improving cultural exchanges was the most significant aspect of building mutual trust. He hence advised that

more meetings should be held to invite relevant experts and scholars from both sides as well as representatives of non-governmental organizations and enterprises to hold in-depth discussions.

Cultural exchanges – which comprise theories and content from academia to arts, from culture to literature, from official practices to folk activities, from mass participation to ethical engagement, and from high art to folklore art – should be developed in an all-round way. Scholars emphasized the importance of knowledge about the current main cultures to deepen mutual understanding. Professor Ravindra Panth, director of the Institute of Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, noticed the absence of a people-to-people dialogue mechanism. Professor Peng Yongjie stated that contemporary cultural research, in China and India, paid close attention to the Western world, ignoring neighboring major countries. Both should take measures in the fields of cultural investment, resource allocation, and cultural and religious systems.

Most scholars called on public media to play a more proactive and positive role, for instance, reporting the history of cultural exchanges and useful information in various fields, thus to promote mutual understanding between the two nations. India and China have a combined population of over two billion; however, the permanent correspondents sent from either side to the other number around 20. This is obviously not enough to strengthen cooperation. "We should not solely depend on Western countries as information resources through which to know our neighbors," Sanjeev Kumar, research fellow at ICWA, said.

The development of friendly communication has not matched the momentum of bilateral economic relations.

Last year, 810,000 Indians visited China, while 180,000 Chinese tourists went to India, compared to the 110 million Chinese tourists traveling around the world. Both nations should vigorously promote tourism to offer new experiences to travelers and direct cultural contact, and to consolidate the political foundation between China and India.

Some scholars also pointed out that from their observations, recent years have witnessed the bilateral relations gradually enter blissful exchanges. Qiu Yonghui, professor at the Institute of World Religions of CASS and vice president of the Chinese Association of South Asian Studies, shared an example whereby the Chinese government has opened the holy mountains and lakes in Tibet to Indian pilgrims, welcomed by Indians. At the same time, Yoga is booming as a lifestyle choice in China, combined with Tai Chi and traditional Chinese music. Nalin Surie said he was delighted to see regular exchanges between the two nation's youth, as well as high-level forums among Chinese provinces and Indian states. The high-level media forum has provided a framework. Last year witnessed the launch of the encyclopedia project on China-India cultural exchanges, and think tank forums are also on the horizon. "All these efforts will reduce the negative impact of unmatched information and promote mutual trust and exchanges," said Surie. ■

From China Today

CPAFFC President Li Xiaolin Meets with Vietnamese Delegation

Xu Yiyi



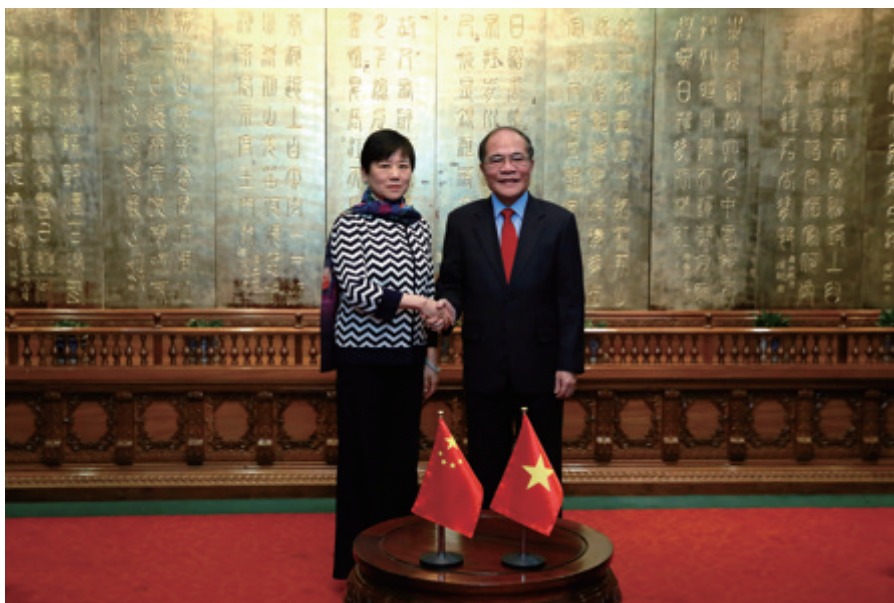
Hosts and guests are all smiles.

It was bitterly cold in Beijing in December 2015, but the Grand Hotel Beijing was filled with warmth when Li Xiaolin, president of the CPAFFC, met with Nguyen Sinh Hung, president of the Vietnamese National Assembly. The meeting proceeded in a

congenial atmosphere and the hosts and guests recalled the friendship between the two countries and discussed plans for future cooperation.

Hung arrived in Beijing the previous day and met Chinese President Xi Jinping on the same day and said

he was happy that they could see each other again just one month after their previous meeting. He told his Chinese hosts that the bond between China and Vietnam was forged with comradeship and brotherhood, nurtured by the previous generation of leaders represented



CPAFFC President Li Xiaolin with Nguyen Sinh Hung, president of Vietnam's National Assembly

by Chairman Mao and Vietnamese leader Hồ Chí Minh. Such a connection is a precious one and will be long-lasting, he said.

Despite the ups and downs it has experienced, the China-Vietnam relationship over recent decades has shown good momentum. Xi visited Vietnam not long ago, and the two sides reviewed their nations' 65-year-old relationship from a strategic perspective. Both parties agreed that China and Vietnam would keep a friendly relationship as they always did in the past, and would work together for the mutual benefit of both peoples. The leaders also had a candid exchange of views on issues involving disputes, and reached an agreement on deepening the comprehensive partnership between Vietnam and China. Xi's visit left a deep impression on the leadership and people of Vietnam.

Hung spoke highly of the contributions of the CPAFFC and Vietnam-

China Friendship Association to the long-lasting bond of comradeship and brotherhood. He also thanked Li for her three visits to Vietnam in 2015, saying they had produced good results. He hoped that the associations would work together to further improve China-Vietnam relations. The purpose of the latest visit to China was to strengthen ties between the Chinese National People's Congress and the Vietnamese National Assembly, to enhance the Vietnam-China comprehensive strategic partnership and to expand cooperation to the benefits of the two peoples. Hung also said that differences between the two countries should be resolved in a candid and peaceful manner, which would help boost bilateral relations.

On behalf of the CPAFFC, Li thanked Hung for his visit, noting that China and Vietnam are close neighbors, and maintaining good bilateral relations is in line with the interests of both. The relations between the two governments

are developing smoothly, and people-to-people exchanges are increasingly frequent. The year 2015 marked the 65th anniversary of the establishment of China-Vietnam diplomatic ties and the 125th anniversary of the birth of Hồ Chí Minh.

"I have led three delegations to Vietnam and established cooperative relations with Vo Xuan Hong, chairman of the VCFA, and other friends from all walks of life in Vietnam," she said.

The friendship associations of the two countries also jointly held a forum during Xi's visit, which was characterized as highly productive. Vice-Premier Zhang Gaoli also visited Vietnam, during which an exhibition was held to illustrate with photographs the life of Hồ Chí Minh and the development of the China-Vietnam relationship.

Li said that just as relatives need to visit each other to strengthen family ties, the CPAFFC welcomes Vietnamese friends to China for homestyle visits.

"I distinctly felt the responsibility of carrying forward the friendship forged by our last generation of leaders," she said. "The CPAFFC and China-Vietnam Friendship Association will try their best to make new progress in our people-to-people exchanges."

Hung was moved by Li's heartfelt words, adding: "This year marks the 123rd anniversary of the birth of Chairman Mao, and my long-planned trip to Shaoshan will finally come true. I will also visit Guangzhou, where the Vietnamese Revolution began. Back then, the revolutionary activities initiated by Chairman Hồ and his comrades were assisted by the Communist Party of China. A solid foundation for Vietnam's national independence was laid

during that period. We will always remember Chairman Mao, Premier Zhou, Chairman Li Xiannian and their peers for their help. We will remember all Chinese ambassadors to Vietnam and our Chinese friends like Madam Li for your efforts in developing the Vietnam-China relationship.”

Hung continued: “I will meet with Chairman Zhang Dejiang and Chairman Yu Zhengsheng this time. Both China and Vietnam are led by Communist parties and are promoting socialist construction. We are determined to build a relationship that will last forever. I visited the Yucai School when I was in Guangxi province, where our predecessors received education. The old photos displayed in the exhibition hall touched me, and I wrote: ‘The exhibition showed the comradeship and friendship between the mentors and students, and our friendly relations will

last forever.’ After the meeting with President Xi, again I wrote: ‘The bonds between China and Vietnam have been forged by the minds and hearts of comrades and brothers and will continue into the future.’ The upcoming 12th Conference of the Communist Party of Vietnam will reaffirm the importance of our relationship with China, which will keep developing in the future.’

The 85-year-old ambassador Zhang Dewei was also present. He witnessed many important moments in the Vietnam-China relationship. In his speech, he said that he had worked for nearly 70 years promoting friendship between the countries.

“The friendship associations in both countries have worked together for 60 years. All these efforts have contributed greatly to the strengthening of the ties between our two peoples,” he said. “We had long had the saying that

the Vietnam-China friendship is one between comrades and brothers.”

Zhang told the story of how this had come about:

“The idea of brotherhood and comradeship was first put forward by President Hồ Chí Minh at the Ha Noi airport, where he was welcoming the then-Chinese president Liu Shaoqi to Vietnam. Initially it was expressed in Vietnam’s poetic tradition, which is a combination of a six-word line with an eight-word line, a pattern that reads unnaturally in Chinese. I adjusted it to a quatrain pattern when we were back in the hotel, and I am glad that it is still quoted today,” Zhang said.

The ambassador’s story enlivened the atmosphere, and Hung stood and hugged him. Everyone was touched by the story, and the applause was sustained—one more element of warmth in the cold winter of Beijing. ■

Zhang Dewei (left), former Chinese Ambassador to Vietnam, shakes hands with Nguyen Sinh Hung, president of the Vietnam’s National Assembly.



First China-Japan Youth Chinese Calligraphy Exchange and Friendly Oath-Taking Ceremony Held in Beijing

Wang Geping

On Nov 1, 2015, the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries hosted a gathering of young Chinese and Japanese calligraphers at its headquarters in Beijing.

CPAFFC Secretary-General Li Xikui, along with Minister Yasushi Yamamoto of the Japanese Embassy in China and Director-General Zhang Juxiang of the China Service Center for Friendship and Cooperation with Foreign Countries attended the First Chinese and Japanese Youths Conference for Calligraphy Exchange and Friendship Oath-Taking and delivered speeches.

One-hundred young amateur

calligraphers selected from Beijing Hepingli Ninth Primary School, Beijing Yuetan Middle School, the University of International Business and Economics, the Embassy Affiliated Japanese School of Beijing and the Beijing Japanese Student Association each presented four Chinese characters—He Ping You Hao (Peace and Friendship)—in a calligraphy competition expressing their desire for good China-Japan relations.

At the gathering, the youths jointly wrote a 100-character "Oath to Friendship", with each person writing one Chinese character, as a token of their common wish for an everlasting friendship between China and Japan.

They also exchanged calligraphy works as gifts to one another. Outstanding works selected by a judge panel of the Chinese Calligraphers Association were awarded gold, silver and bronze medals.

Students of both countries also played a game popular in Japan called "Standing Newspaper," in which they get close—literally and figuratively—through body and language.

Although the gathering lasted for just one day, the youths developed a close friendship through the exchange of calligraphy works. They shared a lunch and pledged friendship at the Peace Bell in the CPAFFC compound.

■

Group photo in front of the "Long Live Peace" statue



Performance Tour at Universities by Japanese Artists

Zhang Yaqin



CPAFFC Vice-President Hu Sishe (R.5, back row) with members of the Min-on Concert Association

At the invitation of the CPAFFC, Murata Hideo, Director of the Min-on Concert Association, brought an art troupe of 27 artists to China on a cultural exchange tour from Nov 8 to 13, 2015. They performed at Beijing Language University, Beijing City University and the University of International Relations.

Hu Sishe, vice-president of the CPAFFC, watched their first show at BLU and spoke highly of the significance of the event, in which Japanese artists came to Chinese

universities and had a wonderful time with teachers and students there. He also thanked Min-on for its four decades of contributions to cultural exchanges between China and Japan. About 1,500 students and faculty members from the three universities watched the performances.

To improve understanding between Chinese and Japanese youths, Min-on selected and sent to China outstanding young artists who staged excellent performances under the theme “Japanese charm in four seasons”.

There were songs, dances and music instrument performances that embodied Japanese cultural traditions, as well as Chinese folk music like Friends and Jasmine. All the performances won warm praise from the young audience.

Workshops on the formal Japanese tea ceremony and the rural wedding ceremony gave the teachers and students first-hand experience with Japanese culture. And the interactions between the performers and the audience were successful amid a warm and congenial atmosphere.

The students said the show provided a good opportunity for them to learn more about Japan. They were impressed by the vigor and skills of the artists and were fascinated by their bright smiles. They said they could feel the genuine goodwill of the Japanese artists in building friendships. All three universities expressed the hope for more of such activities to be held on their campuses.

The Min-on Concert Association has been sending art troupes to China since 2013, and this was their third visit. Their performance blended tradition with modernity and conveyed goodwill from Japan to China. Their efforts have helped promote communication and trust between Chinese and Japanese young people. ■

Lantern Festival Conventions

Zhang Li

The Chinese Lantern Festival is celebrated on the first full moon of the new lunar year, which always falls on the 15th day of the first lunar month. Family members gather on this happy evening to adorn their homes with lanterns and streamers and make merry. The festival is the last of the two weeks or so of Spring Festival celebrations that begin on Lunar New Year's Eve. Customary activities on that evening include lantern counting and eating glutinous rice balls. The event is now recognised as a national intangible cultural heritage.

Origins

Until the end of the 9th century this occasion was known as the Shangyuan Festival. It is believed to have originated in the Western Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 8). It was on the 15th day of first lunar month that Emperor Wendi quelled a palace coup. He celebrated the anniversary each year by leaving the palace dressed in everyday garb to celebrate the anniversary of that victory with his subjects. Shangyuan thus became a major festival on the taichu calendar, China's first complete calendar created in 104 BC. During the Han Dynasty the lantern display was confined to the night of the 15th day of the first lunar month. In the Tang Dynasty (618-907), however, it lasted for three days from the 14th to the 16th day

of that month. At that time, Chang'an, the capital, was a lively metropolis with a population of more than 1 million. On the royal initiative, the lantern display became a large-scale festival activity featuring thousands of lanterns of various shapes and sizes. In the Song Dynasty (960-1279), the festival took on more folk-like features that included lantern counting and eating *yuanxiao*, or sticky rice balls. It is hence also known as the Yuanxiao Festival. *Yuanxiao* are small, spherical glutinous rice flour dumplings with fillings made from rose petals, sesame, red bean paste, jujube paste, walnuts, dried fruit, and sugar that can be boiled, fried or steamed. Enjoyment of these sweet, delectable dumplings extends to an appreciation of family harmony, happiness and unity. Lunar New Year celebrations in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), featured a lantern festival from the eighth to the 17th day of the first lunar month. It was an occasion celebrated with dramas and other performances. The festival is also a romantic holiday. When China was still a conservative feudal society, young unmarried women were strictly confined to their households and chores, but permitted to go out on holidays. The lantern display was consequently a good opportunity for single men and women to meet marriage partners. Social changes over time have

brought with them modifications to the customs and mores of the Lantern Festival. It nevertheless remains one of the most significant traditional Chinese festivals.

Local customs

In addition to eating *yuanxiao*, enjoying the spectacle of decorative lanterns and trying to count them, different localities also maintain their own Lantern Festival customs and traditions.

Lianqiao rice

This three-day annual activity that takes place in Dayangshu Dixia Village of Beijing's Huairou District began more than 180 years ago. It originates in the legend of how the Jin and Huo clans—the family name of most of the village's 150 households—fled Shandong province and came to settle in the area, but did not bring with them any seeds to sow. A group of men from the newcomers journeyed far to borrow a bag of millet, but accidentally dropped it down a narrow stone crevice. Just as they were about to despair, a flock of fairy sparrows suddenly arrived and picked the seeds out for them. The men made a vow of gratitude to share their harvests with these birds every spring. It has been the custom in the village ever since for young girls to go doorto-door on the day after the Lantern Festi-

val to collect Spring Festival leftovers, usually rice and vegetables. In the local dialect, *lian* means collecting, and *qiao* refers to sparrows, titmouses and other small birds. When the girls come home with the food they have collected, their mothers help cook it over wood fires, and share these concoctions with their fellow townsfolk. But before sitting down to dinner the villagers first feed the sparrows and other small birds in gratitude for bringing the seeds to their ancestors, and also in hopes of a fruitful harvest in the coming year.

It is also customary to include needle, thread, and thimbles into the woks. Girls that find them in their bowls are deemed to have seamstresses' "nimble fingers." After the meal, villagers take a ritual walk on the frozen surface of ponds or streams, because walking on ice is believed to ward off illnesses.

Winding Yellow River Lantern Maze

A number of characteristic folk activities take place during the Lantern Festival in regions along the Yellow River such as northern Shaanxi, Inner Mongolia, and Shanxi. Of them, the Winding Yellow River Lantern Maze, which combines ancient tactical formations with the folk lantern gala, is the most fun. The lantern maze consists of four rotating matrixes representing the four seasons and the accompanying 24 solar terms. It signifies a smooth, uneventful coming year. Those who walk through the maze hope to avoid ill fortune and enjoy a long life. There is just one way out of the 1,400-square-meter maze, so anyone taking a wrong turn gets lost. During the course of the evening, various performance troupes gather in the village, and local residents

join and interact with them as they walk through the maze. Immigrants from Shanxi brought this convention to Beijing's Miyun county in 1371 as a way of remembering their hometown. In 2008, the county applied to have this convention classified as nation-level intangible cultural heritage.

Altar Fair in Liulin

This grand folk cultural activity, held in Liulin County, Shanxi province, starts on the 13th and ends on the 26th day of the first month of the lunar calendar. As the Lantern Festival is its climax, locals accordingly decorate the streets with lanterns and streamers, but they also build altars at which to pray for favorable weather in the coming year. In the Ming Dynasty, local craftsmen began scaling down temples to create a more folk-like ethos. They fashioned wooden altars that could be easily dismantled on which to place holy figurines. Such simplified altars are usually four meters tall, and enshrine mythological figures such as the God of Fortune and the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara (known in China as Guanyin or Goddess of Mercy). There are more than 200 wooden altars in Liulin where local residents offer sacrifices to gods or to their ancestors. The oldest was made in 1900. The building of altars starts two days prior to the Lantern Festival. Some take only a couple of hours while more ornate ones need two or three days. People make various offerings of food, especially cooked wheaten figures in the shapes of pigs, goats, and fishes, to place on the altars. In the evenings local residents gather around an open fire to enjoy performances by folk artisans. There are many explanations for the function

of this festival, the major one that it is to pray for offspring. Young couples take home with them some of the dough models, and if the wife becomes pregnant they bring with them more offerings the next year to redeem a vow to the god. Around the altar hang many red lanterns on which are brushed the characters meaning "Whatever requested is granted". The altar fair celebrates folk art and skills and is also an activity to enhance unity and mutual help. Each altar is a symbol of a community organization, including its funding, building and daily maintenance. Democratic autonomy is one of the important foundations of rural social stability.

Lantern counting in Dongshi

Lantern counting has a history of about 300 years in Dongshi, a township on the Jinjiang River estuary of the Taiwan Straits in Fujian province. During the Lantern Festival, it was customary for locals to hang lanterns in the Jiaying Temple as a worship ritual, especially newlywed couples. On the other side of the strait, there is another town that shares both the name Dongshi and this convention. During the Ming and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties, many people in Dongshi sailed to Taiwan to make a living, and later gave the new settlement the same name as their hometown. Emigrants built a branch temple in the new Dongshi in Chiayi County and carried on the lantern custom. On the 13th day of the first lunar calendar month, men who have been married for a year first hang up lanterns and then count all those on display around the largest one at the center, to try to guess how many men married the previous year. At night, recentlywed couples gather here to ad-

mire the festive lanterns and enjoy the accompanying activities. They later take lanterns home with them to pray for a child. Every Lantern Festival, the residents of both Dongshis make guesses at the number of lanterns that illuminate the festival in hopes of fertility and prosperity. This tradition is witness to the kindred relationship between peoples on both sides of the Straits. It was listed as a national intangible cultural heritage in 2008.

Baidengshan ritual in Yuxian county

The Baidengshan ritual, in which lanterns are arranged in a worshipful array, has a history of more than 450 years. Originally a folk ceremony, it is one of many festival entertainments. It starts on the 12th day of the first lunar calendar month, and comprises four parts. The first is lighting the lanterns, the second making obeisance to them, third are festival activities, and fourth drama performances. First, ritual offerings and hundreds of lanterns are variously arranged on a huge wooden support. That evening the lanterns are lit, one by one, to illuminate these displays. A boy is chosen to lead local people and visitors in prayers for peace and prosperity in the coming year. Parents heave up their children to help them touch a high spot on the lamp pole in hopes this will make them grow tall and have a prosperous future. Young couples also take six lanterns home from the display to pray for a baby. The festival activities then begin—happy events for both performers and audience. The highlight of the evening is a drama performance by local amateur actors in which they tell old stories and legends. ■

From China Today

From the Great Barrier Reef to the Great Wall:

The Tale of Ross Gwyther over the Past 40 Years

**Beijing People's Association for
Friendship with Foreign Countries**



Dr. Ross Gwyther

For Sino-Australian friendship

“Friendship between the peoples of two countries means more than just friendly relations. It also means a good understanding of each other’s society and culture, and an understanding of how that society functions. It is with this background that to me the

ACFS can still play an important part in building links between our two peoples.”

— Dr. Ross Gwyther

Born in Queensland in 1949, Dr. Ross Gwyther initially joined the Queensland Branch of Australia China

Friendship Society (ACFS) in 1976 and is now National President of Australia China Friendship Society Ltd., the national organization which covers six state branches of the ACFS, as well as the current president of ACFS Queensland.

Gwyther has a particular interest in labor movement history, peace movement and environmental protection. The belief in socialism aroused his interest in China and encouraged him to spend his spare time over the past 40 years to work for the ACFS. During the latter years of his working life, Dr Gwyther was Queensland Organizer for the National Tertiary Education Union which represents all employees at universities in Australia. Besides, he has also been actively involved in the peace and environment movements ever since 1970s. His dedication and expertise in environmental protection also contributed to the exchanges between China and Australia.

Strong belief in socialism

The Vietnam War was a period of intense political struggle in Australia, and virtually every family was touched in some way by that struggle. The Federal Labor Government of Gough Whitlam formalized Australian disengagement with the war in 1972, and the years following were a time in which young people explored many different approaches to political activity.

The experience of Gwyther in the 1970s was like many young people who were deeply influenced by the tremendous advances they heard of in China under the Communist

Party and Chairman Mao Zedong. In particular they saw the exhortations to “learn from the people” and to “serve the people” as being of fundamental importance in their own situation in Australia. Many university students in that period took this to heart and left their studies to work amongst working class people. As for Gwyther, he worked for 10 years in factories and on the railway tracks. It was an experience which left a lifelong influence—both in seeing the real nature of class differences in Australian society, and also in seeing the importance of working class experience and struggle.

That experience led Gwyther to a commitment to helping build a socialist society. It has been a commitment which has only strengthened over his working life.

In his eyes, human beings, given favorable conditions, have a great capacity for empathy with each other, for creativity, and for the ability to live together in harmony and cooperation. By building a socialist society, we enable not just the lucky few but the majority of everyday people to develop to the fullest their creative capacities to live a full and meaningful life. That interest and passion for helping build a socialist society is also the impetus for his ongoing interest in promoting friendship and understanding between the Australian and Chinese peoples.

Enthusiasm in environmental protection

Gwyther has been interested in environmental issues since his early university days. There were three strands that came together to cement his interest. He had always been

passionate about understanding how the world works which led him into science as a field of study. He had also had a lifelong interest in art, and in particular the tranquility and beauty of the natural world. Thirdly the 1960s were a time of great hopes amongst his generation of young people for a more just and equitable world. These three strands weaved a fabric of concern that all the people need to treat the environment with care and humility – that we are simply a part of the natural environment and the social world we construct should be based on that principle.

The environment movement in Australia is made up of many small and large campaigns. And the concern for harmonizing social developments with environmental protection is at the heart of these campaigns. Many of the campaigns have involved long and sometimes bitter struggles, as the rich and powerful in the society often ignore environmental issues in their quest for profit at any price.

Gwyther took part in some of the big environmental campaigns such as the struggles around oil drilling on the Great Barrier Reef in the 1960s, the moves to build a large dam on the Franklin River in Tasmania in the 1980s and around developing renewable energy during the 2000s. These campaigns have shown the power of ordinary people when they are facing the vested interests of big capital.

He also was actively involved in the struggle to help the Aboriginal people to regain the sovereignty over their land, which expresses a fundamental recognition of the need



Dr. Ross Gwyther

for people to live in harmony with the natural world as well as managing it sustainably.

Many young Australian people today express their belief in the importance of environmental protection. They may well be unaware that their ideas have come directly out of the struggles of thousands of common people before them.

Gwyther's belief in harmonizing the natural and the social worlds has also led him to be active for many years in the Australian peace movement, campaigning for peaceful resolution of conflicts and for a more independent Australian policy.

Dedication to Australia - China friendship

Gwyther learned about the importance of campaigning for Australia-China friendship from Senator Bill Morrow who had been a Labor Party Senator and a Railways Union leader in earlier years. In the 1950s, despite a vicious campaign to attack him as unpatriotic, Morrow steadfastly struggled to show

Australian people the advances in the New China since 1949. He was one of those brave people who established the Australia China Society (ACS, later to be renamed the Australia China Friendship Society) in 1952. During the 1960s he led the ACS in a campaign for Australian recognition of the People's Republic of China.

Morrow's example encouraged many Australians to take up the cause of friendship with China. In 1972, Gwyther had his first involvement with ACS when ACS celebrated the diplomatic ties between Australia and China. Thereafter he has always seen one of the important outcomes of building friendship between Australian and Chinese people as the wider section of his community that has come to understand a little of the ongoing development of socialism in a society where socialism is in practice – both the difficulties that are inevitable and the successes that come along.

There have been many ways of developing friendship ties through ACFS activities. One of the traditional ways has been organizing tours for

Australians interested in some aspects of China. In the early years of 1970s and 1980s, ACFS organized many workers' study tours to show Australian workers something of people's working lives in the New China. In more recent time the huge growth in commercial tours to China has meant that ACFS has shifted to develop specialist tours.

Another important and ongoing part of ACFS activities has been to organize information talks, presentations and seminars for people with expertise about aspects of Chinese life so that they may share their work with a broader Australian community.

A third aspect of ACFS activities has always been to facilitate personal connections between Australian people and Chinese visitors or Chinese people resident in Australia. There is no substitute to personal interactions in building more understanding and friendly relations between people.

The recent Environmental Study Tour which ACFS conducted with the assistance of Friendship Associations in Shanghai, Beijing and Hebei, is an example of how we can contribute to friendship in new fields, as well as adding in a very small way to Australian understanding of the efforts China is making to increase environmental awareness and protection. It has led to some concrete exchanges between experts in China and Australia, and also it has inspired ACFS to develop student exchanges amongst university students studying environmental science in our two countries. ■

“Our fathers were comrades-in-arms, and now we are friends.”

—Descendants of Foreign Doctors Who Aided China Gather in Guiyang

Luo Dongquan



CPAFFC Vice-President Song Jingwu (L.7) joins descendants of foreign doctors who aided China for a photo session.

From Aug 29 to Sept 1, 2015, a series of activities were held in Guiyang to mark the 70th anniversary of victory in the Chinese people’s War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and commemorate foreign physicians who came to help China in the war. The event was hosted

by the Guizhou Provincial People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the Guiyang Municipal People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, and supported by the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and China Radio International.

Descendants of 10 foreign physicians and 15 Chinese medical personnel who fought in the war participated in the commemorative activities. They were strangers before they met in Guiyang but their ancestors were comrades bound by the battlefield.

In hotels and restaurants and in

Tuyunguan—the wartime base for military medical operations—and other venue, they talked like old friends, asking each other such questions as Who was the daughter of Romanian doctor Samuel Flato? and Who was the son of Bulgarian doctor Yanto Keneti? When doctor David Jancu’s two daughters met with Keneti’s son and daughter-in-law, they all grasped hands tightly. Jancu’s second daughter, Tania, had long heard that Keneti had married a Chinese medical worker named Zhang Sunfen while in Tuyunguan and that they had two sons, Baozhong and Baohua—both meaning “Safeguard China”. Now, when they met, Tania found Baozhong in his 70s with silver hair.

Christina, who was visiting from Sweden, is the daughter of Flato. She said her father suffered unfair treatment after returning to Poland for suspected disloyalty and was jailed for a period of time. In 1954, Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai visited Poland and asked about Flato, telling the Polish Government how the doctor had helped China during the war. Zhou’s intervention secured Flato’s release. Three years later, Flato joined the Polish Embassy in China as a Minister Counselor. Christina accompanied her parents and went to school in the Chinese capital.

Also participating in the commemorative activities were the daughter of Polish doctor Wolf Jungermann; the daughter of doctor Victor Taubenflige; the son and grandson of German doctor Rolf Becker; and the descendants of doctor Lin Kesheng, the wartime chief of the China Red Cross Ambulance Corps who was responsible for receiving

foreign doctors at the Tuyunguan clinical base.

Jancu’s third daughter, Ms. Nadia from Canada said of the visit: “We are particularly excited to get together with the descendants of other doctors who assisted China. We commemorated our fathers for their legendary experiences, and relived the harsh conditions under which they worked. Their tenacious spirit is worthy of everlasting memory.”

Seventy years ago, doctors from different countries became comrades-in-arms in China. Now their descendants are continuing their friendship. As the two-day event in Guiyang came to an end, the visitors said they hadn’t talked enough. They left to each other their home addresses, emails and WeChat numbers, hoping to stay in touch.

The Chinese people have not forgotten them

“I found it, I found it!” exclaimed Mr. Brookman from Israel in front of a monument in the Tuyunguan Guiyang Forest Park. He is the nephew of Romanian doctor Jasulz Kransdorf, who helped China during World War II and was given the Chinese name Ke Lieran upon returning to his homeland.

Finding the names of his uncle and aunt on the monument to the foreign doctors of the Chinese battlefield, Brookman jumped with joy like a child. He walked around the monument several times, taking photos and carefully studying the inscriptions. He then became lost in thought, visualizing his uncle and aunt rescuing wounded Chinese soldiers.

His uncle had fought in the anti-fascist forefront in Spain in the 1930s

and later traveled to China to help with Chinese people’s war to repel Japanese invaders. His aunt Kijena (later known as Ke Zhilan in China) had followed in her husband’s footsteps to join the foreign medical team in China. She died at the age of 39 after being infected by typhus after tending a patient who had the disease.

Brookman found three photographs of his uncle in the exhibition. Interviewed by a media reporter, he said reverently: “The Tuyunguan commemoration shows that the Chinese people cherish the memory of these medical volunteers and still hold them in high esteem after so many years. I’m deeply moved.”

The photos of Romanian doctor David Jancu at the Tuyunguan photo exhibition evoked fond memories in his two daughters. Tania told the reporters: “In the past, my father seldom told us about the cruelty of the war or of the difficulties and dangers he suffered working in China. When we asked him, he only recounted a few humorous anecdotes.”

She went on to say that it was only after his father died that family members learned more about his past from the diaries he had left behind. Her father had fought on the western and northern fronts in Spain together with the Republican Army, braving aircraft and artillery barrages from Franco’s army, which was supported by German and Italian fascists. He bravely engaged in the battlefield treatment and transport of wounded soldiers.

After arriving at Tuyunguan, Guiyang, Jancu and about a dozen other European doctors went on to Changsha, Hunan province, by truck.



The veteran doctors' descendants gather at Tuyunguan.

From there, they went to their assigned working places, though reluctant to part with one another. Jancu walked for nearly two weeks to reach his work post at the 30th Division Hospital of the Sichuan Provincial Army in the town of Xiu Shui.

In early winter 1940, Dr. Walter Freudmann came down with a case of pulmonary congestion in a hospital north of Jancu's. Ordered by his troop commander, Jancu went alone to help Freudmann. He walked for three days, trudging across mountains and crossing the Yangtze River to reach the hospital where Freudmann worked. Jancu's timely treatment saved the man's life.

In the spring of 1942, in a hospital in Yunnan's Mengzi Mountains, Jancu was infected with typhus when treating patients. He developed a high fever, and his condition deteriorated for two weeks until becoming critical. German doctor Baer came from far away to treat him, and a Chinese nurse gave him meticulous care. With their help, Jancu's condition gradually improved, and he eventually recovered. Learning

about this, Tania said emotionally: "Without the other doctors' help, my father would not have survived, in which case neither I nor my brothers or sisters would have been born."

After visiting the Guiyang Archives, Tania told reporters: "The archives are a rich trove of well-preserved historical documents, enabling future generations to understand this unique history. Here I learned about many aspects of this history that were previously unknown to me, and even saw pay notes, work reports and other documentation of the medical volunteers. I will bring the books and photos given by the Archives back to Romania. Though they are all in Chinese, they are records of history, a very precious history."

Her sister Nadia added: "Some high school students from Guiyang also attended the commemorative activities at Tuyunguan, indicating that they treasure the study of history and appreciate the assistance China received from other countries. I am convinced that the Chinese people

will never forget their friends. As the daughter of one of China's old friends, I am also a friend of China and the Chinese people."

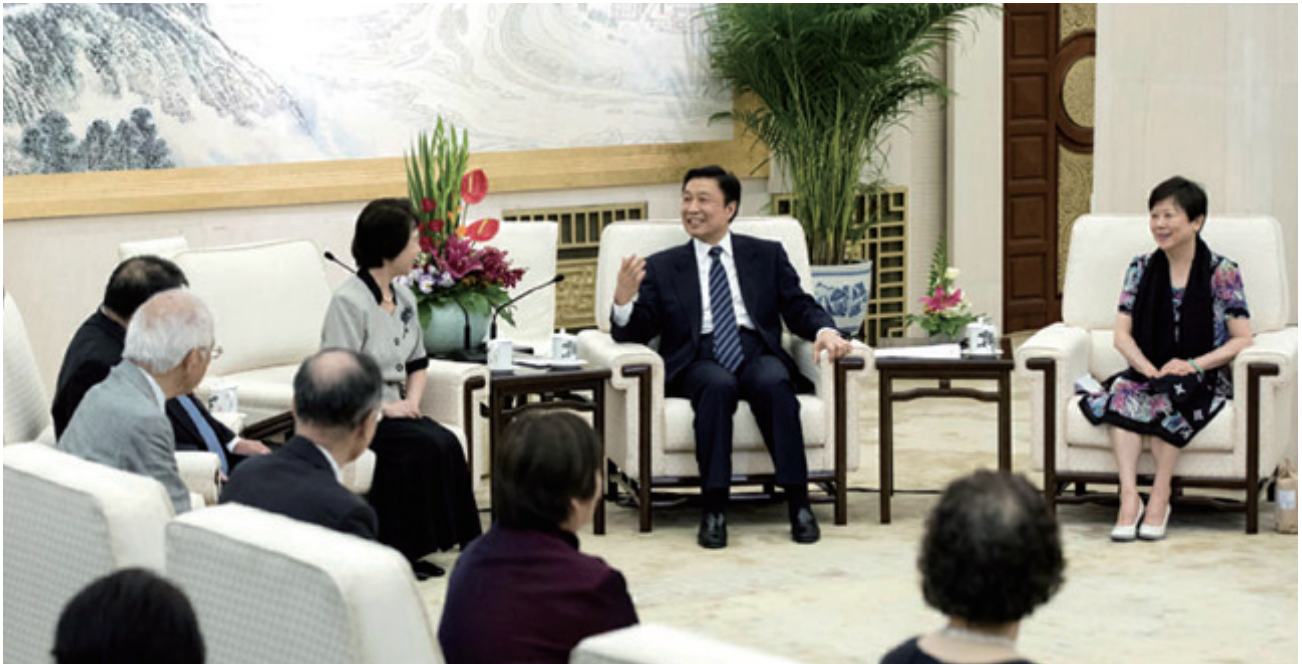
Impressed by Beautiful Guiyang

The event commemorating international medical workers' aid to China during the war was praised as a complete success, thanks to the hosting parties' meticulous arrangements and warm reception. The foreign guests visited Dade College, which had groomed a large number of progressive youths for China's revolution. They strolled along the Nanming River and took photos in front of ancient Jiaxiulou building and visited the Guiyang museum and the city planning exhibition, where the city's past, present and future were presented. Guiyang deeply impressed the visitors with its picturesque scenery, artistically laid-out new buildings, refreshing environment and mild climate. More than 40 ethnic groups live in harmony, creating a human tapestry with their enchanting and colorful ethnic customs.

Tania and Nadia, along with Brookman, the nephew of "Ke Lieran", all sent e-mails immediately after returning home to their Chinese hosts, expressing thanks and conveying their enjoyment during the event. According to Nadia: "The days we spent in Guiyang are unforgettable. We saw a modern environmentally friendly city in line with international standards. During the modernization process, ethnic traditions and historical buildings have been well preserved. What we saw in Guiyang is a microcosm of modern China's development." ■

Special Feelings in a Memorable Year: Japanese Wartime Orphans Revisit China

Li Kun



Vice-President Li Yuanchao with the delegation of Japanese orphans

“I’d like to say that you’ve returned home now!”

“To tell you my innermost feeling, I have two homes. One is in Japan, the other is in China.”

On a winter day in November 2009, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao invited a group of Japanese wartime orphans to Zhongnanhai, the headquarters of the Chinese government in Beijing. During their meeting, the orphans responded to Wen’s welcoming greeting with a Chinese song, “My Innermost

Feelings”, in rewritten words. Numerous audiences were deeply moved when the meeting was shown live on television, making that cold winter day particularly warm and beautiful.

Six years later, July 11-17, 2015, a delegation of 54 Japanese orphans returned to China, led by Ikeda Sumie, director general of the Japan-China Friendship Association for Japanese Returning from China. They visited Harbin, Beijing and other places where they grew up. They visited their living

adoptive parents and other relatives, paid tribute to their deceased adoptive parents at cemeteries and thanked the Chinese government and the Chinese people for caring for them after the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression.

The orphans had been abandoned by Japanese soldiers in 1945 in Northeast China as the Imperial Japanese Army was about to retreat. Chinese people, though having suffered immensely from aggression, adopted the children as their own.

Altogether, at least 2,380 abandoned Japanese children were adopted by Chinese families, 90 percent of them in the three northeastern provinces and the Inner Mongolia region. After China and Japan established formal diplomatic ties in 1972, the Chinese government offered humanitarian assistance as many orphans wanted to visit Japan to find their parents or other relatives, or to return to that country for resettlement. The government did much to help them. According to official data, more than 2,500 Japanese orphans returned to Japan and settled down there.

Last summer, on July 15, vice-president Li Yuanchao met the 54-member delegation in the Great Hall of the People.

“China and Japan have gone through the historical tragedy of the war launched by Japanese militarists,” Li said. “After the war, kind and broad-minded Chinese people raised thousands of Japanese orphans. At the same time, the Japanese orphans also made efforts to promote friendship between the two countries. This year marks the 70th anniversary of the Chinese people winning the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression. On this occasion, China is willing to improve the relationship with Japan based on the four political documents between the two governments and in the spirit of taking history as a mirror and looking forward into the future.”

Ikeda Sumie, one of the delegates, said with visible emotion: “We, the orphans of wartime, would not have survived and had today’s life without the care of our Chinese parents and the



A group photo

education of the Chinese government. We owe gratitude to China and we will always remember the love and care of the Chinese people. The friendship between China and Japan is of special significance for us. Thus, we are willing to make lifelong efforts to promote friendship between the two peoples.”

“For us,” Sumie continued, “Japan is our home country, but China is our hometown. Our hearts are always with China, and we are grateful every day. As the survivors and witnesses of that war, we will pass down our memories and tell the younger generations the truth, so as to avoid repeating the historic tragedy.”

At the reception, the members of the delegation again sang the moving lyrics of “My Innermost Feelings” to express their gratitude:

“To tell you my innermost thought, I have two homes. One is in Japan, the other in China. To tell you my innermost feeling, I miss my hometown. Though far apart, I miss my mom in China ...”

Time has passed quickly, but

the melody has remained the same, conveying feelings of love and homesickness experienced by the Japanese orphans. The song deeply moved the people present, and many tears were shed.

During the visit, two of the delegates celebrated their birthdays. At the reception, everyone present sang the birthday song for them.

At the end of the reception, amid warm applause, Sumie presented a letter of appreciation to CPAFFC on behalf of the delegation for the reception and the organization’s longtime support for Japanese orphans in China.

Several Chinese and Japanese media outlets, including People’s Daily, Xinhua News Agency, CRI and Yomiuri Shimbun, carried reports about the Japanese orphans’ visit. The accounts all noted that recalling the episode of history in which the Chinese and Japanese people fostered a friendship that transcended hate and death, is of positive significance in improving the China-Japan relations. ■

Kazakh WWII Veterans Revisit China Theater

Wen Guangmei

When war spread across the globe more than 70 years ago, both China and Kazakhstan were plunged into the unprecedented disaster. For eight years on the Pacific theater battlefields of World War II, Chinese soldiers and civilians fought arduously against the Japanese aggressors. Kazakhstan, too, made great contributions and sacrifices, mobilizing more than 25 percent of its population to turn back the fascist tide in the 20th century's most brutal conflict.

More than 600,000 people never returned home, and some of those were buried in Chinese soil. In the crucible of blood and fire, many outstanding sons and daughters of Kazakhstan and China fought side-by-side, strengthened by a shared vision of a peaceful destiny. Their hard-won victory serves as an everlasting monument for future generations.

Symbol of peace and friendship

Ahead of the grand celebration in Beijing on Sept 3 marking the 70th anniversary of the Chinese people's victory over Japan, as well as the world's victory over fascism, Song Jingwu, vice-president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, told Kazakhstan's mainstream media



CPAFFC Vice-President Song Jingwu gives a medal to Jurdebayev.

that veterans who had assisted China in the war, as well as family members of many veterans who could not attend, would be found among the many foreign state leaders and other dignitaries at the ceremonies.

In the early morning of Aug 31, 2015, Ozganbaev, chairman of the Kazakhstan Veterans Committee, together with two veterans of the war, arrived at Beijing Capital International Airport. The veterans were among a select few: Only about 100 soldiers who fought numerous bloody battles in China during World War II are still living. Many of them, Ozganbaev

said, remain nostalgic about China and were eager to return but were too frail to undertake such a journey. They asked Ozganbaev to convey their warm regards to the Chinese people.

Two veterans, accompanied by the relatives of others, traveled with Ozganbaev to the Sept 3 commemoration events—a parade, reception and evening party—and were interviewed by Chinese and Kazakh media. Song of the CPAFFC presented them with commemorative medals on behalf of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, the State Council and the Central Military

Commission, along with scarves whose rainbow and dove patterns symbolized peace.

“The Chinese people fought at great cost and sacrifice to protect justice and peace, achieving a great victory in the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and contributing significantly to the global defeat of fascism,” Song said. “In addition, a large number of Soviet Red Army troops, including many from Kazakhstan, fought side-by-side with the Chinese Army and people on the battlefields of Northeast China, making an enormous contribution to the ultimate victory.”

Song said the war made the two peoples brothers through thick and thin.

“As such, it was our common victory, and today is our shared day of celebration,” Song said. “We salute you. And you can be sure that the Chinese people will never forget you.”

Their stories

On Sept 3, 2015, under the scorching sun, 91-year-old Jurdebayev and 88-year-old Linnik sat on the reviewing stand near the Tian’anmen Rostrum in blue uniforms with glimmering military decorations. They had sat there for several hours. We who accompanied them sat behind, attired in light summer dress and wearing caps. We fanned ourselves in the heat, but the two neatly dressed old men wouldn’t even loosen their collars. Perspiration trickled down their cheeks and soaked their heavy uniforms.

The veterans happily showed us photos of themselves with Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev and told the touching story behind

each medal, including every detail, undimmed by time, from the battlefields of China. Recalling the fights, as well as the warmth of friendship, they were visibly moved and tears flowed as they recalled the most emotional moments.

Jurdebayev's story

“I was born in 1924 in Astana, currently the capital of Kazakhstan,” Jurdebayev said. “At the end of 1942 I enlisted in the Soviet Red Army’s Baikal Front Army 298th Infantry Battalion. During the Great Patriotic War, the Baikal Front Army was ordered to dispatch 16 divisions and two brigades to the front lines of the Soviet-German battlefield. The Baikal Front Army had a total force of about 300,000 soldiers, more than 2,000 artillery and mortar units and over 1,400 tanks.

“From 1943 to 1945, I was sent out to the battlefield where the Baikal region and Manchuria shared a border to fight Japanese troops. In August 1945, I participated in battles against

the Japanese Kwantung Army. We marched across the parched grasslands of Inner Mongolia to capture fortified enemy positions in Hailar, Soren, Dolon-nuur and Zhangjiakou, defeating the enemy in our front. On Sept 3, when we heard the news that Japan had admitted defeat and the war had ended, we cheered in high excitement. But today, among all the soldiers who fought in those battles, I am the only survivor to come to this grand commemoration event.

“After retiring from military service in 1950, I joined the police force as a crime investigator in the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic’s Akmolin Oblast Internal Affairs Bureau. In 1973, I retired with the rank of colonel in recognition of my long-term outstanding performance.”

Probably because of the nature of his job, Jurdebayev is not talkative but prefers to retreat into reading and thinking. Having a mild nature, he is always modest. His daughter showed us more than 20 medals he

Jurdebayev talks to the journalists.





CPAFFC Vice-President Song Jingwu gives a medal to Linnik.

had been awarded for his outstanding performance during the war, as well as during his peacetime service. The most precious is the Patriotic War Medal.

Linnik's story

In contrast, veteran Linnik was more outgoing. Every day he would tell many stories, and as he talked he would hold our hands. Smart and humorous, he could talk for hours. Though he did not personally participate in the war against Japan, he was truly a hero, having been awarded a second-class Great Patriotic War medal and a Victory over Germany medal, along with eight other military commendations. He said he was most pleased to have finally been awarded a medal from China, as it symbolizes the Chinese people's victory over the Japanese aggressors and the end of World War II. As Linnik pointed to the medal on his chest, his pride was evident.

Linnik was born in Krasnodar, Russia in 1928. In 1942, he and his

fellow students were evacuated to what is now the city of Samarkand in Uzbekistan along with the whole 4th Technical School of Krasnodar. He joined the mechanics class in the local factory's technical school and in 1943 was sent to the Ural region in Russia to work. He enlisted in the armed forces the same year and in July 1943 was wounded in a battle near Oryol. Later, from October 1949 to April 1950, he was responsible for delivering fuel to Urumqi, China.

He told us in detail what he experienced at that time:

"I was sent to a military hospital in the city of Sverdlovsk (now Yekaterinburg) when I was wounded. After leaving the hospital, I went to Krasnodar where my mom had been living. Unfortunately, she died while I was in the hospital, though I did not know it at the time. Later I was taken to Perm, in Russia, but was arrested and taken to a police station because they found me with no identification

documents. I was afraid to show them my documents because they included accounts of my being wounded and hospitalized.

"I escaped from the police station and went to the Military Service Committee and pleaded with a colonel there to be re-enlisted in the military. While in the hospital, I had seen some of my comrades. Some were so heavily wounded that they died or had limbs amputated. I hoped that I could continue to fight on their behalf until victory was achieved.

"Having recovered from my injuries, I was sent to the Hawthorn Navy School in Ukraine. In October 1944, I was assigned as a sailor on the tanker MT-2003, a vessel responsible for fuel, arms and ammunition deliveries to Chinese forces engaged with the Japanese. In 1946, I went to Akmolinsk (now Astana, capital of Kazakhstan) from Odessa, Ukraine, and was recruited into the 7th Reserve Infantry Battalion of the 374th Reserve Infantry Regiment, and learned to use mortars after three months of training. In 1948, when I was 20 years old, 250 middle school boys from Almaty were recruited into the 182nd artillery regiment in Samarkand, including me. We were sent to study at the Communist Youth League school, and I was given the rank of sergeant.

"On Oct 1, 1949, the People's Republic of China was founded. One-hundred young soldiers from my unit who were capable of driving motor vehicles were put on a three-month training program in preparation for transporting fuel to China. I was chosen to be one of them. We drove 40 tank trucks heading for the Panfilov



Linnik is interviewed by a journalist.

Regiment and stayed for a night at the Sino-Soviet border. At Manas or somewhere else—I can’t remember exactly where—I met the commander of the PLA’s Eighth Route Army and saw Zhou Enlai.”

Reaction to the Parade

The commemorative events in September were part of Linnik’s first visit to Beijing. He was full of praise after watching the military parade. “The parade left me in awe,” he said. “When I was in the service, military technology was completely different from that of today, but Chinese soldiers also marched in perfect formations, demonstrating the Army’s outstanding discipline. I was also excited to see a combined Air-Land-Sea honor guard composed of 80 officers and soldiers from Kazakhstan participating in the parade. They were all very young, but they had been selected through strict screening. Some of them were participating in an international military parade for the first time, while some others were descendants of soldiers

who fought in the Great Patriotic War.

The chairman of the Kazakhstan veterans committee, Ozganbaev spoke highly of China’s contribution to the defeat of Japan and victory in the worldwide anti-fascist war, praising China’s efforts to safeguard world peace and stability. Still, he had a strong reaction, when President Xi Jinping announced the decision to cut the military by 300,000 personnel: “I was shocked, Ozganbaev said.

“His promise fully demonstrates that China is sincerely willing to safeguard peace, seek common development and enjoy shared prosperity with all other nations in the world,” Ozganbaev said. “It also indicates that China is active and responsible in promoting international arms control and disarmament.”

“The parade left a strong visual impression and struck a chord with us emotionally,” he added. “China has become the world’s second-largest economy and is playing an increasingly important role in international affairs. The parade has not only showed

China’s national strength but also put across its courage and determination to oppose war and pursue peace.”

Ozganbaev went on to express his gratitude to the China Friendship Association for its friendly reception and meticulous care throughout his visit.

Veteran Jurdebayev was left in awe after watching the parade.

“I was very pleased to see the great achievements China has made,” he said. “May God bless the Chinese leaders with good health and the Chinese people with a happy life. I hope China and Kazakhstan will enjoy an everlasting friendship between our two peoples.

Epilogue

The two veterans represented here are a microcosm of the 1.8 million soldiers of Kazakhstan, and the 8.7 million fighters in the Soviet Red Army. Though they may not be famous, their ordinary names and commonplace stories have made inspiring music in human history. We do not know what the future will hold for these veterans; perhaps this will be the last chance for us to meet. But the war we fought together long ago has long fostered an indestructible friendship between our two nations. In this time of peace, the Sino-Kazakh relationship has entered a golden age. History is not only a mirror in which we see our past but also a link between our two peoples, prompting us to cherish peace and strive together for a better future. ■