



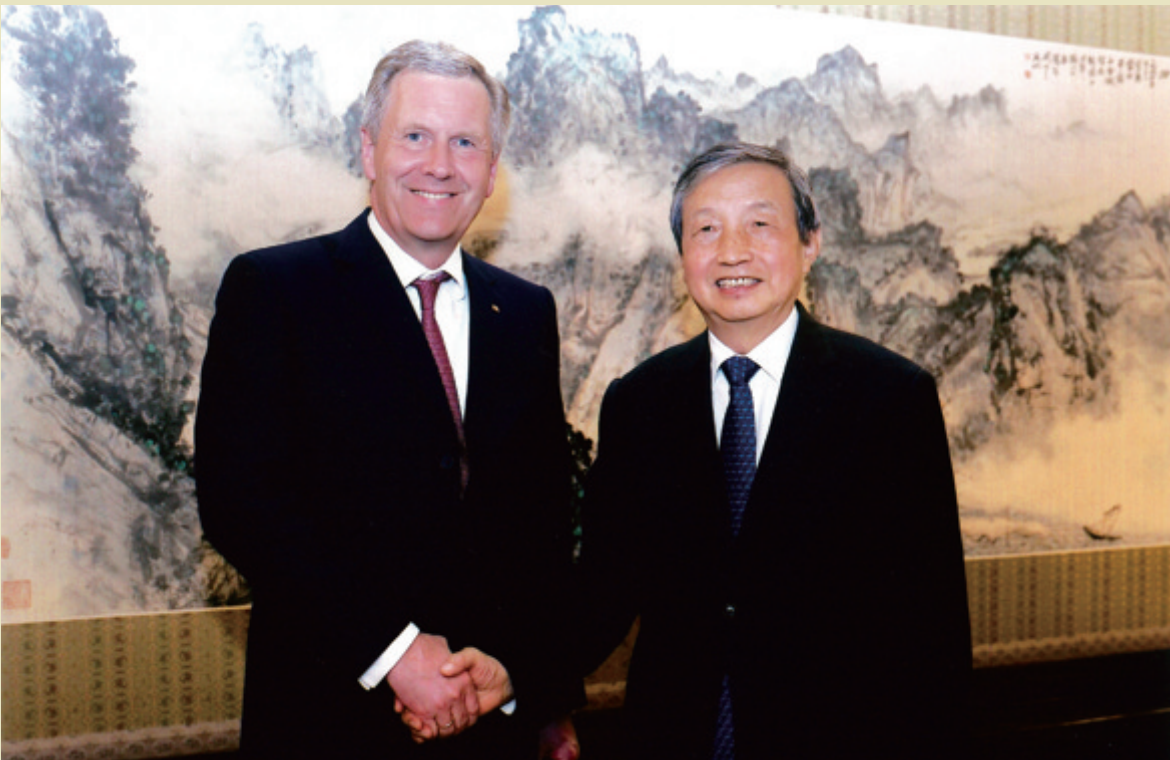
President Xi Jinping met with Jerry Brown, California governor, at the Great Hall of the People.



Premier Li Keqiang met with representatives of the 5th Roundtable Summit of the Global CEO Council.



Yu Zhengsheng, chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, met with the delegation of the Japan–China Friendship Parliamentarians' Union.



Vice–Premier Ma Kai met with Christian Wilhelm Walter Wulff, former German president.



» Contents

Express News

- 04** 2017 BRICS Friendship Cities and Local Governments Cooperation Forum Successfully Held / *Wang Qi*
- 04** CPAFFC Vice-President Xie Yuan Meets with New Costa Rican Ambassador / *Xiao Xiao*
- 05** Reception to Celebrate 45th Anniversary of Establishment of China-Guyana Diplomatic Relations Held in Beijing / *Chen Ke*
- 05** Vice-President Lin Yi Attends Concert Celebrating the 25th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations Between China and Georgia and Georgia's Independence Day / *Zheng Chen*
- 06** Vice-President Song Jingwu Meets with New Kyrgyzstan Ambassador to China / *Feng Miao*
- 06** Reception Marks 20th Anniversary of Diplomatic Ties Between China and Bahamas / *Department of American and Oceanian Affairs*
- 07** Chengdu-Montpellier Medical Cooperation Moves Up to New Level / *Chengdu Friendship Association*
- 07** First International Sister Cities Outstanding Innovation & Venture Project Promotion Launched in Chengdu / *Chengdu Friendship Association*
- 08** Shenyang Participates in China-CEEC Mayors' Forum / *Shenyang Friendship Association*
- 08** Delegation from Sasebo City Visited Shenyang / *Shenyang Friendship Association*

Cultural Exchanges

- 09** Vice-President Hu Sishe Attends Commemoration of the 45th Anniversary of Normalization of Relations between China and Japan / *Gao Hui*
- 11** China-Uganda Relationship Gets a Boost with First Dragon Boat Race / *Zhang Yujun*
- 13** Japan-China-ROK Flower Arrangements a New Platform for Cultural Exchange / *Yu Xiaodong*
- 16** A Sri Lanka Native & China Lover / *Jiao Tianjiao*
- 19** Chinese Photographers Visit Sri Lanka / *Sun Yajing*
- 22** People-to-People Friendship / *Jinith de Silva*

View

- 24 Impression of Poland / *Yao Sanming*
- 26 India-China relations on the background of China's Belt and Road and India's entry into SCO / *Avijit Banerjee*
- 28 China's Development Promotes Cooperation between China and Japan / *Jiang Feng*
- 30 BRICS Greet Its Second Decade / *Lu Rucai*
- 33 Literature Transcends National Boundaries: Chinese Writing in Translation / *Liu Yi*
- 36 Silent Witnesses to the Emergence of the Maritime Silk Road / *Dang Xiaofei*
- 38 The Everyday Struggle of Beijing's Rickshaw Drivers / *Justine Lopez*
- 39 Mobike rolls out bicycles in London / *Bo Leung in London*

Between Friendship Cities

- 41 Acting as a Bridge Connecting to the World / *Beijing Friendship Association*
- 43 Beijing-ASEAN Cultural Tour in Myanmar and Vietnam / *Beijing Friendship Association*
- 45 Building Bridges for Better Understanding between Peoples / *Beijing Friendship Association*
- 47 Confucius Institute Promotes Friendly Exchanges / *Haidian People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, Beijing*
- 49 Art Performance Marks 20-Year Friendship between Chinese and ROK Districts / *Changping People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries*

Interview

- 51 Interview with Sir Henry Keswick, Chairman of Jardine Matheson Group / *Staff Reporter*



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Front Cover: On July 12, 2017, the BRICS Friendship Cities and Local Governments Cooperation Forum was held in Chengdu, Sichuan province.

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2017 BRICS Friendship Cities and Local Governments Cooperation Forum Successfully Held

Wang Qi



On July 12, the 2017 BRICS Friendship Cities and Local Governments Cooperation Forum was successfully held in Chengdu by the CPAFFC, CIFCA and Chengdu Municipal People's Government. It was hosted by the Chengdu Foreign Affairs Office. Wang Jiarui, vice-chairman of the National Committee of the CPPCC; Li Xiaolin, president of the CPAFFC and CIFCA; Deng Chuan, vice-chairman of the Sichuan Committee of the CPPCC; Luo Qiang, mayor of Chengdu; Tang Chuanping, chairman of the CPPCC Chengdu Committee; Des Van Rooyen, minister of cooperative governance and traditional affairs of South Africa; Luciano Nunes Santos Filho, president of UNALE; Shipilov Aleksei, first deputy governor of Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug-Ugra of Russia; and I Kundan, additional municipal commissioner of the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai, India, attended the forum, among others, and delivered speeches.

CPAFFC Vice-President Xie Yuan Meets with New Costa Rican Ambassador

Xiao Xiao



Xie Yuan, vice-president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, met with Patricia Rodriguez, the new Costa Rican ambassador to China, on July 18.

Rodriguez said that she served as one of the leading members in the Costa Rica and China Friendship Association, and had been promoting friendship between the two peoples. Moreover, she had studied in China several times and had written some books about the country. The Costa Rican Embassy in China will actively assist the CPAFFC in organizing celebration activities, she said.

Reception to Celebrate 45th Anniversary of Establishment of China-Guyana Diplomatic Relations Held in Beijing

Chen Ke



On June 27, a reception to celebrate the 45th anniversary of the establishment of China-Guyana diplomatic relations was held in Beijing. Around 200 people, including Ma Peihua, vice-chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and president of the China-Latin America and Caribbean Friendship Association (CLACFA); Hu Sishe, vice-president of the CPAFFC; and Bayney Karran, Guyana's ambassador to China, attended the reception, along with some other foreign ambassadors. Before the reception, Vice-Chairman Ma had a brief meeting with Ambassador Karran.

Vice-President Lin Yi Attends Concert Celebrating the 25th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations Between China and Georgia and Georgia's Independence Day

Zheng Chen



A concert was held at the Beijing Concert Hall on June 14 to celebrate the 25th anniversary of China-Georgia diplomatic relations and Georgia's Independence Day. It was jointly organized by the CPAFFC, China's Ministry of Culture and the Georgia embassy. Li Huilai, assistant minister of Foreign Affairs; Lin Yi, vice-president of the CPAFFC; Xie Jinying, director-general of the Bureau for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries of the Ministry of Culture of China; Jalaghania, Georgia's vice-minister of foreign affairs; David Aptsiauri, Georgia's ambassador to China; and many countries' ambassadors and their wives attended the activity.

Vice-President Song Jingwu Meets with New Kyrgyzstan Ambassador to China

Feng Miao



On June 6, Song Jingwu, vice-president of the CPAFFC, met with Azamat Usenov, Kyrgyzstan's newly appointed ambassador to China.

Usenov spoke highly of the unique role the CPAFFC has played in the exchanges of sister cities, in local cooperation and in people-to-people exchanges between the countries. He thanked the CPAFFC for making positive contributions to promoting bilateral relations, and expressed hope that during his tenure the Kyrgyzstan Embassy in China would continue keeping close collaborative relations with the CPAFFC and playing the role of a bridge, so as to push bilateral relations to a higher level.

Reception Marks 20th Anniversary of Diplomatic Ties Between China and Bahamas

Department of American and Oceanian Affairs

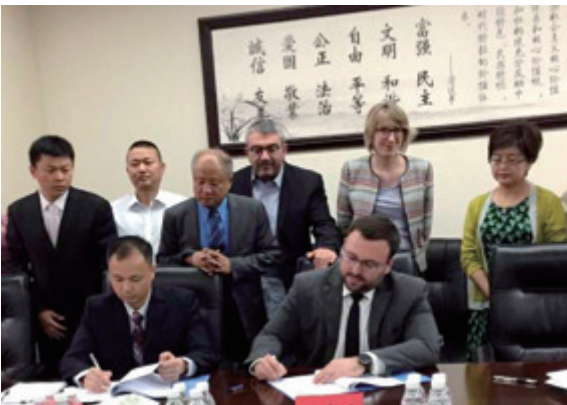


A reception for the 20th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the Bahamas was held in Beijing on May 25. Zhang Ping, vice-chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress; Li Xikui, secretary-general of the CPAFFC; and Paul Andrew Gomez, ambassador of the Bahamas to China, were present. Zhang met Ambassador Gomez before the reception. Zhang expressed hope that both countries would take the 20th anniversary as an opportunity to strengthen cooperation in more fields, and to promote relations. In his address at the reception, CPAFFC's Li remarked that since the establishment of diplomatic relations, the two countries have witnessed a smooth development of their relationship and the China-Bahamas friendship had taken deep root in the hearts of the two peoples. He said the CPAFFC was willing to do more to promote that friendship and provide service in developing relations.

Chengdu-Montpellier Medical Cooperation Moves Up to New Level

Chengdu Friendship Association

On the morning of May 22, Dr. Cong Huiquan, international project leader under the French Health Ministry's Medical Service, led a delegation from Montpellier University Hospital on a visit to Chengdu. During the visit, the cooperation MOU was renewed with the Chengdu Health and Family Planning Commission and ideas were exchanged for future cooperation.



In January 2014, Montpellier Medical Service and the Chengdu Medical Administration reached a consensus about establishing a Chengdu-Montpellier Endocrine and Metabolic Disease Research Institute and Senile Disease Research Institute, which was officially unveiled 10 months later. In the three years since, the institute has achieved fruition in its frequent medical team training and doctor training. The renewed MOU extends the existing cooperation into more areas, including medical research, smart medicine and remote medical treatment.

First International Sister Cities Outstanding Innovation & Venture Project Promotion Launched in Chengdu

Chengdu Friendship Association

On May 11, an outstanding innovation and venture project promotion was presented to the 2017 Chengdu Innovation Forum for Mayors of International Sister Cities. The event, conducted in the form of TED speeches, presented the innovation and venture resources of Chengdu's sister cities and served as a platform for participants to explore ways of developing professional and international in-depth cooperation. Tel Aviv; Vienna; Moscow; Gold Coast, Australia; Hamilton, New Zealand; Honolulu, Hawaii; and 10 other sister cities of Chengdu introduced their cities' development, industrial layout and innovation projects.



Shenyang Participates in China-CEEC Mayors' Forum

Shenyang Friendship Association



On June 8, the Shenyang People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (SYPAFFC) sent representatives to Ningbo, Zhejiang province, to attend the 2017 China-CEEC Mayors' Forum. During the meeting, the Shenyang officials learned from the experiences shared by other attendees on how to communicate with Central and Eastern European countries, while introducing Shenyang's geographical and industrial advantages to the European attendees. The SYPAFFC officials hoped to give Shenyang's enterprises a helping hand in their strategy of going global. The representatives of SYPAFFC followed Shenyang's central mission—"Work Jointly to Make Shenyang a Happy City"—to hold business negotiations with representatives from Central and Eastern European companies on possible cooperation in projects to build eldercare and rehabilitation facilities.

Delegation from Sasebo City Visited Shenyang

Shenyang Friendship Association



At the invitation of the Shenyang People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, a delegation led by Nakayama Kenji, chief of the International Strategy Section of Sasebo City, Nagasaki prefecture, Japan, visited Shenyang, Liaoning province, from June 13 to 17.

During the visit, the delegation met and negotiated with a number of entities—among them the Shenyang Economy and Information Technology Committee, Shenyang Civil Affairs Bureau, Shenyang Medium-Sized and Small Enterprises Association, Shenyang Old-Age Care Service Industry Association, the government of Yuhong district, Shenyang Normal University and Shenyang Medical College. They discussed the present situation and development of the eldercare industry and explored possibilities of cooperation in academic study, human resources and trade.

Vice-President Hu Sishe Attends Commemoration of the 45th Anniversary of Normalization of Relations between China and Japan

Gao Hui



CPAFFC Vice-President Hu Sishe (R4, back row) with the Japanese friendship personages.

Hu Sishe, vice-president of the CPAFFC, led a delegation to Japan to commemorate the 45th anniversary of the normalization of relations between China and Japan and to attend relevant cultural events from May 1 to

5 at the invitation of the Nanao Japan-China Friendship Society. He delivered a keynote speech—"Strive for Progress in Peace and Friendship with Joint-Efforts from Two Peoples"—during the anniversary celebrations, which

were co-organized by the Nanao society, together with friendship societies in other cities in the Hokuriku region and people in the political, economic and cultural fields.

Hu said that friendly exchanges

had been the major part of the two countries' relations over the past 2,000 years. He also noted that the CPAFFC had played a significant role in promoting people-to-people diplomacy after the founding of the People's Republic of China.

He extended his thanks to all present at the gathering for their continual efforts in promoting Sino-Japanese friendship, despite some twists and turns. These efforts, he said, provided the impetus for the development of bilateral relations. He made three suggestions with regard to community and youth exchanges between the two countries, and called for joint efforts from all friendship societies to help build a better future

for the two countries.

Among those Hu met during his visit to Japan were Tanimoto Masanori, governor of Ishikawa; Nakanishi Yoshiaki, vice-governor of Ishikawa; Katsumi Koga, honorary adviser to the Japan-China Friendship Society of Ishikawa; Kimoto Toshio, president of the Japan-China Friendship Society of Ishikawa; Toyokazu Fukushima, mayor of the city of Nanao; Takaso Hiroshi, president of the Nanao City Assembly; Masuhiro Izumiya, mayor of the city of Suzu; Akasaka Toshiaki, president of the Suzu City Assembly; Okada Jo, president of the Japan-China Friendship Society of Nanao; Michizo Sanbai, president of the Japan-China Friendship Society of Suzu; Skamoto Akira,

president of the Japan-China Friendship Society of Anamizu town.

Hu briefed his hosts about the current state of China's politics, economy and culture.

"Cooperation benefits us both, while confrontation can only hurt," he said, adding that China's development is an opportunity rather than a threat. Peaceful development, mutual benefits and win-win cooperation between China and Japan are in the fundamental interest of the two peoples, as well as the common aspiration of Asia and the international community, he said.

Hu also presented a flower bouquet at the Narrow Strip of Water Monument in Nanao, and paid tribute to the Chinese laborers who were forced to go to Japan and who died in ruthless oppression during World War II. He also visited the family members of the late Sakamoto Misoji, former Japanese chief Cabinet secretary and a long-time friend of the CPAFFC. He said the CPAFFC would build on its past achievements and explore new cooperative channels. The CPAFFC and the local governments and friendship societies in the Hokuriku region achieved common understanding on promoting exchanges between the youth of the two countries and local regions.

The delegation also took part in the Seihaku Sai Festival, a traditional cultural event in Japan that appears on UNESCO's intangible cultural heritage list. ■



The Seihaku Sai festival

China-Uganda Relationship Gets a Boost with First Dragon Boat Race

Zhang Yujun

“After finishing their dinner, women and children in the city will lock their doors and go to the riverside to watch the boat race... Every time the race reaches white heat, the drum will play loudly and the crowd will burst out shouting and applauding.”

Those are the words the famous writer Shen Congwen once wrote about the main event of the Dragon Boat Festival in western Hunan province. The writing presents a scroll of folk customs. Now, the same scene is unfolding in Africa’s largest lake. The traditional customs remain, while some energetic African faces add an enthusiastic and bold new look.

On May 28, 2017, the First Dragon Boat Race of Uganda was held on Lake Victoria. Thousands of participants from China and Uganda joined the gala celebrating Dragon Boat Festival. Ugandan Vice-President Edward Ssekandi, CPAFFC Vice-President Lin Yi and Chinese Ambassador to Uganda Zheng Zhuqiang attended the event.

The dragon boats lined up in Lake

Victoria and waited in the bluish waves. With banners and flags fluttering and crowds hurrying to watch, dragon boats set off swiftly to align in the starting order. Competing rowers from Uganda and China pulled oars in the waves and forged ahead toward the same destination. The beating gongs and drums, together with the waving of oars in unison, prevailed on the lake; one dragon boat followed another closely; not one was willing to lag behind. Excited spectators on the bank waved their arms and cheered loudly for all rowers. The sound of drums and cheers intermingled and resounded across the lake.

Exciting activities were not only found on the lake, but also nearby. On the grandstand, Chinese residents made *zongzi* and spring rolls for spectators. The fragrance of indocalamus leaves—a kind of bamboo—mingled with the aroma of snacks of both countries.

The long distance from China did not diminish the impact of the Dragon Boat Festival. On the stage before the grandstand, teachers from

the Confucius Institute in Uganda were introducing the origins and customs of the festival, followed by singing performances by several Ugandan popular entertainers. The activities reached a climax again and again.

After a day of racing, one rowing team representing a Ugandan logistics company, and the Jiangnan University rowing team from Wuhan, Hubei province, beat 20 other teams to win respective first prizes in the large- and small-boat divisions.

The First Dragon Boat Race of Uganda ended successfully, and the scene became a sea of joy. All the rowers, whether they won or not, clapped their hands and hugged each other to celebrate. Spectators sang and danced joyfully.

It was indeed a grand view by the waters of Lake Victoria. By the end of the celebration, differing languages no longer presented an obstacle to communication. Bright smiles were the perfect way to exchange thoughts. The hearts of Ugandan and Chinese people moved ever closer, and friendship was



Edward Ssekandi, vice-president of Uganda (in dark jacket); Zheng Zhuqiang, Chinese ambassador to Uganda (in hat); and CPAFFC Vice-President Lin Yi (white trousers) attended the First Dragon Boat Race in Uganda.

enhanced.

China-Uganda Cooperation Enters a New Stage

In recent years, the dragon boat race, as traditional folklore and a cultural icon, has become a carrier of cross-national communication and a symbol of common development through ups and downs. Being thousands of miles distant from China poses no obstacle to the Dragon Boat Festival in Uganda, nor for the dragon boat race, because of the profound bilateral friendship.

With its numerous pools and lakes, and with many residents living by water, Uganda has been called “Water City on East African Plateau”.

The environment provides a natural closeness to boat racing for local people. What’s more, 2017 marks the 55th year since Uganda and China established diplomatic relations. All these combined offer a perfect backdrop for the dragon boat race, and so it was initiated by Edward Ssekandi, the Ugandan vice-president and sponsor of the Africa-China People’s Friendship Association.

To make the dragon boat race a success, China and Uganda spared no effort to cooperate in every aspect of preparation. Ssekandi was concerned about every detail and coordinated government departments for full support. As to the event’s personnel, agenda and training, the Chinese Embassy in Uganda and the Africa-China Friendship

Association maintained close contact and went through several rounds of consultations. The CPAFFC actively promoted the participation of Chinese professional dragon boat rowers, and Chinese enterprises in Uganda, as well as associations in China and overseas, invested a lot and even teamed up with Ugandan rowers to participate in the race. The rowing team from Jiangnan University came to Uganda both to take part in the race and to help with the training of local rowers.

Ingenuous Ugandan residents, who were good at carving, made some of the dragon boats and painted them in bright colors. Chinese dragons with African characteristics sailed courageously on the largest lake in Africa.

To maximize the influence of the activity, the two countries launched a series of publicity campaigns. During the early stage of the race, Uganda held a news conference with its minister of tourism offering support. Ads, posters and special issues of publications introduced the race in every possible detail. The media also joined in the publicity effort to showcase the highlights. On the day of the gala, China Central Television, Xinhua News Agency and Uganda’s mainstream media covered the event from every aspect. “Sinomania” was the result.

The dragon boat race was a win-win scenario. For China, Chinese traditional folklore, cultural philosophy of patriotism, inclusiveness and the idea of coming together through thick and thin found their way into the lives of Ugandans. For Uganda—pearl of Africa—the ecological environment

and vast tourism resources were expected to attract more Chinese tourists and boost the tourism economy.

The inaugural dragon boat race in the largest lake in Africa coincided with the traditional Dragon Boat Festival in China. The gala aimed to promote Ugandan tourism. Meanwhile, taking the dragon boat race as a channel, Uganda had an opportunity to learn something about Chinese culture. This grand activity depicts a picture of friendship and family-like affection combining harmonious coexistence and mutual help.

“The First Dragon Boat Race of Uganda was both unprecedented and successful. We have every confidence to make the second race another success during the next Dragon Boat Festival,” Vincent, liaison director of the China-Africa Friendship Association, said during an interview.

“Next year, we are planning to invite more friends from China and delegates from surrounding countries to this game. We aim to make the Ugandan Dragon Boat Festival an international brand project, and we sincerely hope that the next dragon boat race will also get full support from China so as to add more Chinese characteristics to enrich the activity. Through the Dragon Boat Festival and race, the African people will get to know more about Chinese culture and hence boost the bilateral relationship. We are looking forward, from the bottom of our hearts, to meeting again next year at picturesque Lake Victoria.” ■

Japan-China-ROK Flower Arrangements a New Platform for Cultural Exchange

Yu Xiaodong



Flower arrangement artists from Japan, China and ROK.

The Third Japan-China-ROK Art Exchanges on Flower Arrangements was held at the China Cultural Center in Tokyo on June 15, 2017, attended by Chinese, Japanese

and ROK flower-arrangement artists, amateur practitioners of the art and people devoted to Sino-Japanese friendship.

The event was hosted by

Tokyo's China Cultural Center, the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, RBA International, Japanese NPO and the Korea-China Friendship Association of Culture & Economy. It was supported by Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the China-Japan-ROK Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat.

The art exchange invited famous flower arrangement artists from those three countries—Fumi-So Kume, famous artist of Tsukinowa-Misho-Ryu; Yasu-Ho Jinbara, chairperson of the Confederation of Kado (Tokushima prefecture); Wang Suizhi, former vice-secretary of the Association of Chinese Flower Arrangements Art; Liu Jianfeng, senior teacher of flower arrangement and manager of Chongwenmen flower

sales promotion shop; Sang Sook Han, deputy chairperson of the Academic Society of South Korea Flower Art Design; and Jung Hee-kim, a famous Korean flower designer. The artists' new works stirred up wide appreciation among visitors.

At the art exchanges in Tokyo, the junior school students from Saitama-ken and other guests took part in flower arrangements and exchanged ideas with the artists.

CPAFFC President Li Xiaolin has given close attention and support to communication between Chinese, Japanese and Korean flower arrangement artists. In her congratulatory message at the event, she said that in order to continue to develop the traditional arts of ethnic cultures, each country should

constantly seek originality and ingenuity by absorbing nourishment from the ethnic cultures of other countries. She expressed hope that the event would use the charm of flower arranging to deepen the mutual understanding of the three nations, particularly young people, and contribute to the continued development and prosperity of the art of flower arranging.

In 2015, to improve people-to-people communication and art exchanges among Japan, China and the Republic of Korea, the CPAFFC, RBA International and the Korea-China Friendship Association of Culture & Economy reached an agreement to hold art exchanges on flower arrangement in the three countries alternately. The First and Second Art Exchanges were held in Beijing and Seoul in 2015 and 2016 respectively, and won acclaim from all social circles.

The Third Japan-China-ROK Art Exchanges on Flower Arrangements held this year in Tokyo was also a complete success.

Hu Sishe, vice-president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries; Nobuhiro Kume, chairman of RBA international; Young Aeh Kim, chairperson of the Korea-China Friendship Association of Culture & Economy; Zhang Mei, press counselor of the Chinese Embassy in Japan; Ms. Shi Yongjing, director of China Cultural Center in Tokyo; Choe Byeongmi, director of the Arts and Exhibitions



Ribbon-cutting ceremony

Department, Embassy of South Korea in Japan; Ms Wang Suizhi, former vice-secretary of the Association of Chinese Flower Arrangements Arts; Mrs Kume, Fumi-So, famous artist of Tsukinowa-Misho-Ryu; and Ms Park Kumja, chairwoman of the department of flower arrangement of the Korea-China Friendship Association of Culture & Economy, all attended the opening ceremony.

RBA International Chairman Nobuhiro Kume delivered the opening speech at the assembly. He said his heart was full of joy and gratitude to be the host of the Third Art Exchanges on Flower Arrangements in Tokyo on the occasion marking the 45th anniversary of normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and China.

He noted the theme of the event—"Exchange of Smiles". Love of flowers renders one's heart warm and kind, he said, adding that heart-to-heart communication transcends nation and age to make everybody friendly and healthy.

"It is our wish that all people, families, society and the world are safe and peaceful," the Japanese host said.

Kume promised to make the event an opportunity for all participants and guests to enjoy the charm of flower arrangement and flowery smiles, as well as an occasion for the three countries to develop friendly ties and exchanges. He said everybody is closely linked with other people and no one can live alone.

"Neither can a country," he added. He said RBA International would continue its commitment to promoting nongovernmental communications among the three countries by conducting exchanges in the art of flower arrangement.

Hu Sishe, vice-president of the CPAFFC, pointed out that China, Japan and the ROK have enjoyed more than 2,000 years of friendly exchanges. As for cultural and arts exchanges, Hu said, the three countries have a common historical background. He noted that the art of flower arrangement has common characteristics in Eastern culture while having their own styles. Flower arrangement art exchange, he said, has become a new platform and new brand for cultural exchange. He expressed hope that such exchanges will help people of the three countries become more closely linked in their hearts and develop friendship through mutual help.

Zhang Mei, press counselor of the Chinese embassy in Japan noted in her congratulatory message that China, Japan and the ROK are important countries in Asia. She said the inseparable neighbors need to deepen mutual understanding and enhance cooperation while maintaining friendly coexistence. This, she said, is not only in their common interest but also beneficial to the peace, stability and prosperity of the Asia Pacific and the whole world. She hoped that taking advantage of the 45th anniversary of normalization of diplomatic relations

between Japan and China, as well as next year's 40th anniversary of the signing of the peace and friendship treaty between the two countries, will continuously increase the understanding and friendship between Japan and China, and push forward a friendly cooperative relationship. She pointed out that flower arranging is popular among Japanese, Chinese and Korean people, and it can contribute to deepening friendship and cultural exchanges.

Young Aeh Kim, chairwoman of Korea-China Friendship Association of Culture & Economy, said she was very pleased to join flower arrangement artists from the three countries at the Third Japan-China-ROK Art Exchanges on Flower Arrangements in Tokyo. Art exchange, she noted, provides a platform for wider cultural exchanges between the three countries and is an important stage for nongovernmental diplomacy. She said that exchanges of flower arranging skills have helped strengthen links between the three East Asian countries. She expressed her belief that the activity will further enhance communication.

Participants in the event all noted that flower arrangement is typically representative of the three East Asian countries' culture. The art of flower arranging embodies a lifestyle and feelings about nature, and it can help people achieve harmony with heaven while improving their aesthetic cultivation and attainment. ■

A Sri Lanka Native & China Lover

The Deeds of Sri Lankan Friend Indrananda Abeysekera

Jiao Tianjiao

“In my childhood, I read articles about Chinese master Monk Faxian’s travels in Sri Lanka and took interest in Chinese and its culture. Later, I knew Premier Zhou Enlai, who had been a friend of the Sri Lanka people and helped us when we were in dire need of outside support. In my view, China is like the big brother of Sri Lanka.”

—Indrananda Abeysekera

Indrananda Abeysekera, an ordinary Sri Lankan man, once served at the Sri Lankan Youth Service Council, the Sri Lankan National Gallery and the Sri Lanka Foreigners Employment Agency. In 1987, at the invitation of the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, Abeysekera visited China for the first time as a member of a delegation of friends. Since then, he has forged a close relationship with China.

He visited China again in the following year, a visit that made him realize that a man must reside in China for a long time before he can really understand the country, with its vast

territory and profound culture. And so the idea of living in China developed in his mind.

After returning home, Abeysekera took pains to seek another opportunity to come to China. Eventually, in 1990, he was invited by China Radio International to serve as an expert in Sinhalese, and he lived in Beijing for six years. Over the seven years

that followed his return to Sri Lanka, he visited China 10 times and settled in Beijing again from 2005 to 2011. He returned to his homeland in 2011, and since then has visited China every year, sometimes more than once. He has been to more than 28 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions in China, more than many Chinese people. When asked why he visited



Indrananda Abeysekera won the Chinese Government Friendship Award.

China so frequently, he answered affectionately: “Because China is my second home.”

Whether it was a brief visit or a long residence in China, Abeysekera always maintained close ties with the CPAFFC. In 1997, he initiated Sri Lanka-China Social and Cultural Cooperation in Sri Lanka, which specializes in friendly exchanges with China, and has carried out cooperative activities with the CPAFFC. Over the past 20 years, under Abeysekera’s leadership, the Sri Lanka-China Social and Cultural Cooperation and the CPAFFC have performed a variety of friendly exchanges in the humanities, education, economics, trade, charity and many other fields. The Sri Lankan organization has sent nearly 50 delegations to visit China and has received more than 50 Chinese delegations. It has held more than 10 large-scale activities. Abeysekera also launched the Friendship of Love program, which manages the donation of gifts to poor children in remote Chinese areas. He also established a cornea donation program, which encourages the Sri Lanka Eye Bank to regularly donate corneas to Chinese ophthalmology hospitals.

In 2010, led by Abeysekera, the South Asia China Regional Friendship and Cooperation Organization was formally established, encompassing major China-friendly organizations in South Asia and providing an effective platform for exchanges and cooperation. It was the first regional friendship organization to be set up in

South Asia. In addition, Abeysekera is a strong supporter of the Belt and Road Initiative and has added elements of it to many events he has hosted. For example, he created the theme of the Fourth China-South Asia Friendship Organizations Forum—“China-South Asia Regional Cooperation under the Belt and Road Framework”.

In 2016, to introduce the Belt and Road Initiative to the Sri Lankan people, the Sri Lanka-China Social and Cultural Cooperation held a countrywide essay competition, which received thousands of manuscripts and a good response from all sectors of society.

Abeysekera’s great contribution to promoting friendship between China and Sri Lanka has been commended by the people of China and Sri Lanka. In China, he has been given awards by the government many times. He has received the Chinese Government Friendship Award, issued by the Chinese Bureau of Foreign Experts; the 512 Natural Disasters Friendship Award, issued by Sichuan People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries; the Guangdong International Friendship Award, issued by the Guangdong People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries; among other honors. In 2004, Abeysekera was awarded the title of People’s Friendship Messenger by the CPAFFC.

Through the efforts of Abeysekera, the Sri Lanka-China Social and Cultural Cooperation, which started with only a few dozen

people, has developed to include six branches and nearly 1,000 members and has established partnerships with more than 10 Chinese provinces and cities.

As an old friend of Chinese people, Abeysekera can be called a “die-hard fan” of China.

“I greatly admire the achievements of the Communist Party of China and the country’s leaders in the construction and development of China. I also appreciate China’s development concept. I have been studying such ideas as socialism with Chinese characteristics, its Belt and Road strategy and the Chinese Dream.”

Abeysekera has been a firm supporter of China on all occasions. Whether it was an international issue, such as the South China Sea dispute, the Diaoyu Islands conflict or the suspension of Sri Lanka’s Colombo port project, he always backed China.

During the Olympic Games in Beijing in 2008, Abeysekera was interviewed by a German media outlet. When asked about his view of the Dalai Lama, he made it clear that Tibet was an inseparable part of China and the Dalai Lama’s separatist activities should be condemned. After the report was released in Germany, Abeysekera was criticized by officials at the Sri Lankan embassy in Germany, but he stood by his words.

“I did not say anything wrong, and what I said is the truth,” he said.

Another time, while browsing information on Facebook, Abeysekera happened to see a comment saying



State Councilor Yang Jiechi met with Indrananda Abeysekera.

that the Diaoyu Islands belong to Japan. That made him angry, and he immediately retorted to the poster of the comment with the argument that the Diaoyu Islands are an inseparable part of China.

Abeysekera has made painstaking efforts in the development of Sino-Sri Lanka friendship. As a friendly organization, the Sri Lanka-China Social and Cultural Cooperation has no fixed source of funding. At first, many of its activities relied on Abeysekera's meager personal salary and his relatives' and friends' sponsorships, and he had only his spare time to work for success. Owing to his long years

of engagement in the heavy work, Abeysekera developed diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease and other problems. But every time there was something related to Sino-Sri Lanka friendship, he would always insist on participating, even when he was ill

In 2016, desiring to visit China to discuss the Sri Lanka Eye Bank's plan to donate corneas to Chinese hospitals, Abeysekera—who was in poor health at the time—led a group despite his doctor's objections.

Unfortunately, he suffered a heart attack during the visit and was in serious condition. But under the care of Chinese medical professionals, his condition

improved. After being discharged from the hospital, he stayed in a hotel for two days and then resumed his efforts for Sino-Sri Lanka friendship.

The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle said 2,000 years ago that friendship is “the same soul in different bodies”. Though Abeysekera was born and grew in Sri Lanka, he has a sincere Chinese heart, which is extremely valuable.

I would like to dedicate this article to Mr. Abeysekera, who is still on the path to promoting friendship between China and Sri Lanka, and to others who are committed to the cause of international friendship. ■

Chinese Photographers Visit Sri Lanka

Sun Yajing

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Sri Lanka. A series of cultural exchange events themed “China and Sri Lanka in the Eyes of Photographers” was held to mark the occasion, which was jointly hosted by the CPAFFC, the Shanxi Provincial People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, the Hangzhou Municipal People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the Sri Lanka-China Society. The activities kicked off in May, and will last until November, to boost understanding and friendship between the two peoples and bring the vision of sharing in the Belt and Road Initiative to Sri Lanka.

I got the opportunity to participate in the first cultural tour from May 9 to 17. Following the photographers in our group, I viewed the whole process of tea growing, as well as the Bodhi Tree, the great history of the Galle Trilingual Inscription and the splendid scenery of Hambantota. All these gave me a deep impression of the unique culture, history and natural beauty of Sri Lanka—“the world’s most beautiful island”—and allowed me to witness

the country’s long history of cultural exchanges and deep-rooted friendship with China.

Buddhism in Sri Lanka

Buddhist cultural exchanges between China and Sri Lanka date to the Eastern Jin Dynasty (317-420). It is recorded that Monk Faxian, during his visit to India, also sailed to Sri Lanka, where he studied and transcribed the Buddhist sutra in the local Abhayagiri Vihara. In one of his travel records, Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms, he wrote about Sri Lanka.

We paid a special visit to Abhayagiri Vihara, the temple that Faxian visited, located on the northern Anuradhapura, the best-known ancient capital of Sri Lanka. The pagoda, the only temple structure that has escaped destruction brought by sectarian fighting, came into view, standing among the ruins of the conflict.

In front of an exquisite Buddha statue, Jinithe Desilva, vice-president of the Sri Lanka-China Society, recounted the legend of Monk Faxian, who once meditated here. He is said to have

begun weeping at the sight of a silk fan made in his hometown.

The Buddha statue had a unique face, with half its mouth in pain, the other half smiling, when seen from different angles. I couldn’t help thinking how mixed the master’s feelings must have been when he preached here under the Bodhi Tree.

My visit coincided with the Vesak Day, a major Sri Lankan holiday. It was traditionally celebrated on the full moon in May (Gregorian calendar) to commemorate the birth, enlightenment and death of Gautama Buddha. When the holiday arrived, five-color Buddha flags and various lanterns, with a white lantern as the main one, could be seen hanging on the doors of home and offices and in various public places.

Standing before the open-air Buddha in the holy city of Kataragama, we could see Buddhist believers praying continually with fresh lotus in their hands. The altar was imbued with flowers, pure and beautiful. Today Vesak Day has become United Nations Day of Vesak, attracting believers from all over the world. The 14th United Nations Day of Vesak this year was themed “Buddhism’s role in promoting

social justice and sustainable world peace”—a way of working for world peace and development in its own way.

Buddhist cultural exchanges have been uninterrupted since Monk Faxian visited the island. While filming in Polonnaruwa, the second-oldest capital city, we came across a group of monks from Jingci Temple in China’s southeastern city of Hangzhou. They said they were planning to transplant the Anuradhapura Bodhi Tree in China.

The Silk Road

The route of Faxian, beginning at Chang’an (today’s Xi’an), the ancient capital of China, and returning home

by sea, exactly coincides with the Silk Road and Maritime Silk Road. The trade route, growing in the Wei and Jin dynasties, has flourished for thousands of years. In fact, when it comes to the ancient maritime trade between China and Sri Lanka, Zheng He, the outstanding mariner of the Ming Dynasty, must be mentioned. History says Zheng He visited Sri Lanka three times—in 1409, 1410 and 1416.

In the Colombo National Museum of Sri Lanka, we saw the well-known Galle Trilingual Inscription. This stele features inscriptions in three languages—Chinese, Tamil and Persian. The Chinese inscription depicts mainly the origin of the trip and lists alms given; the inscriptions in

Tamil and Persian express admiration for Brahmanism and Islam. It also records the offerings made to two gods.

We also saw many examples of fine Chinese coins and celadon in the splendid art palace. These items are a record of the long history of trade between the two nations, and of the flourishing ancient trade routes. The spirit of national equality, religious tolerance, harmony and diversity that they manifest is what we must uphold in our pursuit of world peace and development.

Lasting fragrance of black tea

Ceylon tea, Keemun tea and Darjeeling tea are the world’s Top 3 black teas. Black tea is a must in modern cultural exchanges between China and Sri Lanka. During the visit to a tea garden in Sri Lanka called Blue Field, a girl told us all about tea in fluent Chinese. She said that she acquired her Chinese language skills from an exchange program to a tea garden in China’s southeastern Fujian province.

Nowadays, the mainstream opinion in Sri Lanka is that Ceylon tea originated in China in the early 19th century. Since Sri Lanka became independent in 1948, the tea garden, which once served British colonists, became the country’s major export and an economic mainstay. This year, the government of Sri Lanka is planning a celebration of the 150th anniversary of



Reclamation at Hambantota

commercial tea planting and the launch of Ceylon tea promotions in China. Under the framework of the Maritime Silk Road, Ceylon tea will be better appreciated by Chinese customers and more easily promoted in China.

China-financed infrastructure

In our brief visit, we had a full itinerary. On the way from mountains to seas to cities, we got a direct impression of the infrastructure in Sri Lanka. The road to Hambantota was broad and straight; elsewhere were ordinary two-way streets with few traffic lights. This newly built highway was financed by the Chinese government, we were told by Mr Jinith.

At the port of Hambantota, Mr Prasanna introduced the ongoing project of the port and its future plan. The project, a model of win-win cooperation between the two nations, has finished its second phase. Mr Prasanna pointed at a distant island, saying it was artificial—built up with earth—and soon there would be banks, supermarkets, luxury hotels and other facilities to serve ships docking there. Looking in that direction, I suddenly thought of the words of Sri Lankan Vice-President Mahinda Rajapaksa at the launch of the first-phase: “Our nation’s hope starts from this port.”

China’s aid could be seen everywhere in Colombo. Inspired by

the lotus pond shape of Polonnaruwa, aided by the Chinese government and designed by the two nations, Lotus National Art Theatre opened in December 2011 and became the largest China-aided single building in Asia. In addition, the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall in Pettah, was built in May 1973 with free aid from the Chinese government under the care of Premier Zhou Enlai. Over the past decades since it was put into use, the hall has been playing an important role as a symbol of China-Sri Lanka friendship. Opposite the hall is the embassy of the People’s Republic of China. The two buildings, echoing each other, have fully manifested the unity of the two peoples.

The design of the current Sri Lankan 1,000-rupee note includes the China-aided A5 highway tunnel. With the development of the Belt and Road Initiative, infrastructure in Sri Lanka will definitely make remarkable progress.

Conclusion

The nine-day visit flew by. At the end of the visit, I asked myself a question: What impressed me most? Was it the salute when the national anthem of Sri Lanka was played? Was it the magnificent ruins of two ancient cities? Or the citizens’ tolerant and calm attitude that values peace over violence?

Sri Lanka, whose name means

bright and prosperous paradise, covers 66,000 square kilometers and has six world cultural heritage sites and two world natural heritage sites. These ancient places serve as centers for citizens to recall the past—centers for living, study and education, as well as vacation, leisure and philanthropy. Despite interference from modern lifestyles, old traditions—the pagoda, the Bodhi Tree, the Buddhist sutra, traditional saris worn by women, the tea garden—have endured from generation to generation. This is, actually, the thing that impressed me most.

I remember on the day I arrived in Sri Lanka, a knowledgeable member of the visiting team pointed at a Vesak lantern and told me: “Tassels of the lantern are often made in the shape of waves because the road to nirvana must be tortuous.”

A commonly quoted saying goes: “The road is tortuous, but the future is bright.”

Over the past 60 years, China-Sri Lanka ties have overcome complex international obstacles and maintained sound development. Today with the new opportunity brought by the Belt and Road Initiative and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, the friendship between the two peoples will also surmount any new difficulties. The future is an extension of history. The future between Sri Lanka and China is win-win development. From now on, the Indian Ocean will shine with greater brilliance. ■

People-to-People Friendship

Jinith de Silva

China has maintained friendly relations with neighboring countries since days long past for two reasons. One was trade, the other was Buddhism. China's link with Sri Lanka spans 2,500 years.

China did not occupy or annex

any country, as some Europeans did. By the 15th century, China had become a big naval power, with famed navigator Zheng He crisscrossing the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea seven times from 1405 to 1433 for trade purposes. He visited Sri Lanka

six times. But these visits also helped China cultivate friendly relations with the other countries he visited. He took some of the representatives of these countries to China and introduced them to the emperor.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, China continued its policy of pursuing good foreign relations and took steps to establish diplomatic ties with many countries. Sri Lanka was one of the first countries to formally recognize it. The rubber-rice pact signed in 1953 brought the friendship of the two countries to a higher level. Sri Lanka established diplomatic relations with China in 1957.

The Chinese government also realized that in addition to inter-state connections, there should be people-to-people connections for relations to be meaningful. Former Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping once said if there was only cooperation between governments without people-to-people contacts, there would be no solid basis for bilateral relations.

The Sri Lanka China Society was established in 1981. We have



Mr Liu Dong, cultural secretary of the Chinese embassy in Sri Lanka, presenting a certificate to one of winners of Third Sri Lanka and China Photographic Competition and Exhibition.

taken many steps to promote and maintain Sri Lanka-China friendship at a very high level. Necessary support and encouragement for this has been provided by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the Chinese embassy in Sri Lanka.

One very successful project was executed by our society in Colombo, where in the last five years a great friendship has been built between China and the Devi Balika School—a leading school for girls in Sri Lanka. This project helped students gain knowledge of China and gave them an opportunity to study the Chinese language.

Some of the remarkable activities in this effort were the art and photographic exhibitions featuring Chinese students and students of the Devi Balika School.

An art exhibition was held in 2012, with much ceremony at the National Art Gallery in Colombo, to display the works of the children of China's Devi Balika students in Jiangsu province. A delegation of the Jiangsu People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries led by Hu Haiou, its secretary-general, visited Sri Lanka to take part in the exhibition.

We are pleased to say that in 2013, Devi Balika students took part in the Nanjing International Youth Drawing Competition, and five of those girls placed among the 10 best in the world. They were given an opportunity to visit China that year, thanks to the

Jiangsu friendship association.

In the last several years Chinese students from various provinces have been given the opportunity to take part in "Manjaree", the annual art exhibition held by Devi Balika. Our society played a major role in collecting the artwork from the provinces. A large number of works by Chinese students—mainly from Qinghai, Yunnan, Gansu, Shanghai and Guangdong provinces—were received for these exhibitions, and some won awards and certificates.

In addition to that, we gave students at Devi Balika opportunities to take part in exhibitions held in various provinces in China, and invited Chinese children to contribute to the annual photographic exhibition called "Roo Chaya" held by this school.

In April 2017 a two-day photographic exhibition was held at the school, organized jointly by the Jiangsu friendship organization, the Sri Lanka China Society and the Photographic Society of Devi Balika School. The exhibition was themed "A Dream Back to the Six Dynasties, Taking the Culture of Six Dynasties to Sri Lanka." With this, the children of Sri Lanka had a great opportunity to educate themselves on the ancient history of China. The opening ceremony of the exhibition was graced by Jiangsu People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries Vice-President Cai Xisheng and his delegation.

In 2013 a table tennis table—

much needed by the school—was donated by the Jiangsu organization.

We considered the teaching of the Chinese language to children at Devi Balika to be our biggest achievement. Of the school's 2,000 students, about 700 now study Chinese. In this school a student can use Chinese to enter a Sri Lankan university.

An opportunity was given to the prefects of this school to visit Jiangsu province in 2016 at the invitation of JPAFFC. As a result of this visit, Devi Balika School managed to foster a sister school relationship with two leading schools in Jiangsu—No 16 Middle School of Suzhou and No 1 Middle School in Nanjing. At the essay competition about China held by Sri Lanka China Society annually, the students of Devi Balika always get top results, showing that their knowledge of China is extremely high.

Within a short period, Devi Balika has been able to create and foster a good understanding among its students about China. I can categorically say that out of all schools in Sri Lanka this one single-handedly maintains very close relations with China.

Finally I would like to say that the children of Devi Balika will become a bridge that links the two countries' friendship for many years to come.

I would like to thank Mr Amaradasa Gunawardana, president of the Sri Lanka China Society, and Mrs Prdeepa Samarasinghe, principal of Devi Balika School, for their unfailing support. ■

Impression of Poland

Yao Sanming

This year marks the 207th anniversary of the birth of Polish composer Fryderyk Chopin. Recently, I had an opportunity to enjoy a concert featuring the works of the world-famous composer and pianist, and I couldn't help recalling the short but impressive visit I had in Poland a few years ago.

In April 2013, I had the honor of visiting the Republic of Poland with a delegation of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries. The name Poland means "plain" in Slavic. It was called Bolieer in ancient China. I found that Poland is true to its name as we traveled in the country. In just a few days, we were intoxicated by its poetic and refreshing green scenery. Poland boasts a diverse natural environment, including the coast of the Baltic Sea, the Carpathian Mountains and the Wieliczka Salt Mine. During our visit, we learned that the total forest area of Poland is more than 8.89 million hectares, accounting for about 32 percent of its territory. No wonder we saw a world of trees and an ocean of flowers.

What impressed me most was the education in Poland. An education-oriented country implementing a completely free nine-year compulsory education, Poland has rich educational resources, low tuition fees for higher

education and balanced development of private and public schools. More than 90 percent of Polish people have a high school or advanced education background with the rate of higher education at about 20 percent. There are 443 universities in Poland, of which 133 are public and 329 private. Generally, every 80,000 Poles can share a university. The crowds we saw in the streets, stations and parks in Poland were mostly reading while waiting for buses or enjoying their leisure time, demonstrating their cultured character. Poland follows the Bologna Process in higher education and is committed to harmonizing the architecture of the European higher education and technology system. It ranks in the top 10 of the world's higher-education powers.

Sixteen Poles have won the Nobel Prize in the fields of literature, chemistry, art and peace politics. Among them, Madame Curie won twice. Poland's continued commitment to education is one of the most important reasons for its renewed pride in the world.

Gdansk was the main city of our visit. The first Regional Forum Poland-China was held in this beautiful city. The forum was co-hosted by the CPAFFC and the Polish Foreign Ministry. The hotel we stayed in was

a cylindrical structure converted from an old barn, with a quaint exterior and a fresh and elegant interior featuring Polish national style. There were many yachts moored on the river in front of the hotel, making a beautiful scroll picture when viewed from a distance. The hotel owner proudly told us: "My hotel is the place where the Portuguese national team stayed during the European Cup in 2012." There were photos of the players with the staff on the wall. When the pictures of these world famous teams and stars were shared to my WeChat Moments, numerous friends "liked" them.

Gdansk is a famous city in the modern history of the world and plays an important role in the history of Poland. On Sept 1, 1939, Nazi Germany's bombardment of the Gdansk port marked the outbreak of World War II. The color revolution of the late 1980s was initiated by Solidarity, the Polish trade union, in Gdansk. After Solidarity won 99 percent of the seats of the Senate in the general election in 1989, Poland was renamed Republic of Poland. Since then, it has formally embarked on the political pursuit of Western parliamentary democracy and implemented an economic development path of a market economy based on private ownership. Over the years, despite twists and turns, Poland has

become the most successful country in the economic transition of the former European communist countries.

In the course of history, Poland has been torn by war, with 123 years of foreign invasion and occupation. But it is now the sixth-largest economy in the European Union and an economic leader of Central and Eastern Europe.

The first Regional Forum Poland-China was held at the Gdansk concert hall. A delegation of Chinese local governments selected by the CPAFFC carried out extensive and practical exchanges with Polish government and business sectors, and a number of intent agreements were reached for cooperation. As the deputy director of the Reception Office of the Xi'an Municipal People's Government, I exchanged ideas and experiences with our Polish hosts about the protection of cultural relics and other heritage. The forum was a complete success, with both sides achieving fruitful outcomes.

After the forum, we enjoyed excellent China-Poland arts exchange performances in the concert hall. It was a rare opportunity to enjoy Chopin's works in the motherland of the renowned composer and pianist. Our group leader told us we needed to be attired in formal dress. Before we set out, we examined our clothes. Hair, shoes and neckties were inspected carefully by our cautious leader. Upon arriving at the concert hall, we noticed that the Polish audiences were all dressed up.

The concert began with Chopin's

passionate *Military Polonaise*, one of his works that embodies a powerful national spirit and eulogizes the glorious performance of the Polish national struggle. It serves as a triumphant march.

Tan Yong, a professor at Southwest Minzu University in China, then performed an erhu solo—*Horse Racing*—which once again ignited the enthusiasm of the audience. At first, I was really worried about whether our Chinese folk music would be accepted by the local people in this musical city. Actually, it turned out that music is a universal language. Tan's performance drew big applause. Afterward, the artists of both countries took turns on the stage, bringing us wonderful performances. This was a gala both for music and for the China-Poland

cultural exchange. The concert ended with Chopin's *Nocturne* but we were so excited that the applause took a long time to quiet down.

Even though it has been a few years since that visit to Poland, I still have vivid memories in my mind. Poland, as a former socialist country of Eastern Europe, still has relatively underdeveloped infrastructure. Dilapidated factories, houses and social environments are waiting to be improved. Poland needs time to become strong and wealthy. The political forces of the country have been competing, and the road to a free, democratic and affluent new republic, which was proposed by Lech Walesa, still has a long way to go. May Poland have a bright future, with everlasting friendship with China! ■



A glimpse of Poland

India-China relations on the background of China's Belt and Road and India's entry into SCO

Avijit Banerjee

Recently, there has been a lot of discussion in the media and also among the policymakers on which direction India-China relations is moving, especially after India declined to participate in the Belt and Road summit that was held in Beijing in May and after India joined the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in June.

India and China, two great ancient civilizations, jointly fill a brilliant chapter in world civilization. As close neighbors, India and China enjoy the longest history of exchanges, with the most profound mutual influences. Ancestors of our two countries came to and fro to learn from each other and exchange Buddhist scriptures, jointly creating a splendid history. Since ancient times, there has been a continuous cultural, educational, economic and friendly

exchange between the people of the two countries. India's Buddhism, astronomy, medicine, literature, music, dance entered China; similarly, China's silk, porcelain, tea and printing also entered India.

The Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st century Maritime Silk Road, also known as The Belt and Road Initiative, is a development strategy and framework, proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping that focuses on connectivity and cooperation among countries—primarily between the People's Republic of China and the rest of Eurasia, which consists of two main components: the land-based Silk Road Economic Belt and the Maritime Silk Road. The strategy underlines China's push to play a bigger role in global affairs. The coverage area of the initiative is primarily Asia and Europe,

encompassing around 60 countries. Oceania and East Africa are also included.

The Belt and Road is a centerpiece of China's foreign policy and domestic economic strategies. It is aimed at rejuvenating two ancient trade routes and opening up markets within and beyond the region. In order to make it successful, China is keen to offer more economic and financial assistance to countries on the route and beyond through a connectivity program, technical exchanges and building infrastructure. The Belt and Road sounded interesting and timely, and many of the countries in the neighborhood of China had already extended their support. A great deal of deliberation and negotiation may be necessary among the countries along the Belt and the Road for generating

the necessary political interest in and support for these mega connectivity projects and viewing mutual benefits in. Though proposed by China, the Belt and Road should be a common aspiration of all countries along their routes.

China has already started taking several initiatives by investing in infrastructure projects and seeking a comprehensive engagement with member countries. However, better planning will be essential. From an Indian perspective, it is apparent that the Belt and Road Initiative will seriously hamper India's efforts in increasing its share in global trade and commerce if India chooses to stay out. Not only is India likely to lose existing and prospective markets, but it may also see its share in global capital inflows come down. The initiative will foster policy coordination, increase trade and investment and ensure people-to-people connectivity in this region. India, for various reasons, is reluctant to join. The main reason behind India's opposition to the policy is the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, which is a part of the Belt and Road. In such a situation, it becomes imperative for policymakers in India to plan out strategies that not only mitigate any adverse consequences of the initiative, but also enables India to reap benefits.

If we look at the cooperation mechanism between India and China, we find that in spite of its border disputes with China, India cooperates

with Beijing on matters of mutual interest. India's involvement in the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) or the BRICS Development Bank, now known as the New Development Bank (NDB), is an example of the fact that it accords strategic engagement with China a great deal of significance. Reconsidering the dynamics of India-China relations in a broader context, India should not go for an out-and-out strategic competition with China. It will be a great challenge to Indian diplomacy and business to make the complex game with China work in India's interest. India's not joining in the Belt and Road Forum until now should not be allowed to influence New Delhi's overall approach toward China. India must join hands with China to achieve strategic reconciliation. Perhaps India is aware of this reality; that is why Prime Minister Modi, speaking at a panel discussion recently at the St Petersburg International Economic Forum, said: "It is true that we have a border dispute with China. But in the last 40 years, not a single bullet has been fired because of it."

India's inclusion in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization as a full member in the June 2017 Astana summit in Kazakhstan is significant considering the present geopolitical game in the world. India's membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is also likely to make way for increased cooperation with China. SCO has

now become a proper multilateral bloc. There have been proposals for economic cooperation and even a free-trade zone among member countries. India's entry into SCO will help India to communicate more with the Central Asian countries in order to successfully carry out its "Connect Central Asia" policy'. This is another important forum where the two most populous countries, India and China, should play a more important role for future security and economic space that could ease tensions in the region. The SCO forum will provide India the opportunity to regularly interact with the member countries, and will enable a better understanding of the regional dynamics at work within the organization

In the present scenario where economic development is fundamental for the country, India's entry into the SCO will help it have greater access to the region's resources and markets and open the way for further cooperation with countries of the region. India has been suffering the menace of terrorism for a long time. Therefore, her entry will provide an opportunity to address the threat of terrorism which has affected the peace and stability of the region.

Another important summit meeting, the BRICS Summit, will take place Sept 3 to 5, 2017 in the Chinese city of Xiamen under the theme "BRICS: Stronger Partnership for a Brighter Future". BRICS has become a driving force in promoting global economic

growth, improving global governance and pushing forward democracy in international relations. It will be a challenge for the BRICS countries to work together to cope with challenges and seize the opportunities for common development and find common solutions to difficult problems. India should take the opportunity of the BRICS summit to strengthen and deepen its strategic partnership and mutual dialogue with China

In the present scenario, India and China should also enhance trade and investment cooperation for more early harvests in such major projects as production capacity, industrial parks and railway construction. Efforts should be made to promote regional connectivity and common development, accelerate communication and coordination among think tanks, educational and cultural institutes, and media houses of the two countries, which will help in managing and handling differences and sensitive issues.

India and China should not only competently overcome historical obstacles, but also establish cooperation in every aspect, including linking each other's separate strategies together. It is also imperative for the two countries not to sharpen rhetoric against each other and look for pragmatic solutions to existing problems. The onus lies on both India and China to maintain stability in South Asia, which is beneficial for the people of the whole world in general and the common people of India and China in particular. ■

China's Development Promotes Cooperation between China and Japan

Jiang Feng

How time flies. It has been 45 years since the normalization of Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations. This has great resonance for me, as I have witnessed the changes in the diplomatic ties between the two countries over the years.

I remember that it was in September 1972 that normal relations were established. I was in primary school—sixth grade. The next year, I entered Beihai Middle School in Beijing's Xicheng district and was told to learn Japanese instead of English or Russian. Because of the change in relations between China and Japan, people who knew how to speak Japanese were in great demand. Premier Zhou Enlai designated three middle schools to serve as pilot Japanese teaching centers—Beijing Yuetan Middle School, Beijing No 36 High School and Beihai Middle School. Because I started to learn Japanese so early in my youth, I learned quickly

and grew to become editor-in-chief of the Japan Monthly section of the People's Daily Overseas Edition.

In 1979, after graduating from senior high school, I was admitted to the History Department of Beijing Normal University. Since I already knew Japanese, I didn't have to learn English, which was an academic relief at that time, though now I find it a great pity. Fortunately, I had the opportunity to read the works of famous Japanese historians, from which I learned an attitude and method of learning that laid a solid foundation for my future studies.

In 1983, I worked in the China Youth Publishing Group. At that time, Japan was a place many people yearned to visit. For example, the cool advertisements for Toyota cars—"Where there's a way for a car, there's a Toyota"—drew people's attention at the entrance to Beijing Capital International Airport.

There was another example: One of my superiors got a chance to visit Japan as a member of the China Youth Delegation. During his visit, he met my aunt in Tokyo and she exchanged some yen for him so he could buy a color TV. Even a long time later he was still excited about the TV set he had brought home from Japan.

In 1988, influenced by the trend of many Chinese going to Japan for advanced studies, I decided to study there at my own expense. In those days, China's economy was underdeveloped. People who went abroad on their own were only allowed to exchange 8,000 yen one time (about 480 yuan today), while nowadays, self-financed students can exchange 5 million yen (about 300,000 yuan) annually.

I remember that the most common gift Chinese would receive from a Japanese friend was a ball-point pen or a disposable lighter. If it was a close relationship, the gift might be a pocket electronic calculator. At that time, if a Chinese received such a gift, the whole family would invite the Japanese friend to dinner.

When I was in Japan, I also worked hard to achieve the goal of "Four Larges" and "Four Small's". The "Four Larges" were a color TV, refrigerator, washing machine and camera; the "Four Small's" were a Walkman, microwave oven, recorder and calculator. With these things, the living standard status of a Chinese family would be greatly raised. However, those appliances nowadays are no longer the priority for Chinese

tourists.

When I was leaving for Japan, my whole family went to the airport to see me off, but they could not accompany me to Japan. I heard of one mother who chased her child's plane on the runway, sobbing. Now, most young people who go to Japan are accompanied by their parents all the way to their destination. Some parents even buy housing in Tokyo for their children.

During my stay in Japan, it was very difficult for my family to visit me because of the cumbersome customs formalities and strict financial requirements. All of that was daunting. In 2000, Japan introduced a new visa for China—a tourist visa—marking the start of mass visits by Chinese people to Japan. In 2016, the number of Chinese visitors reached 6.37 million, representing the commencement of a new era of people-to-people exchanges between the two countries.

China's GDP was only one-fiftieth that of Japan's when the two countries resumed diplomatic ties in 1972. In 2010, China's GDP surpassed Japan's for the first time after World War II. In 2016, China's GDP was nearly three times that of Japan's. Today, many Japanese entrepreneurs come to China to do business. They do not know what gifts they should send to their Chinese friends: Those ball-point pens, disposable lighters and pocket calculators are gone with the wind.

Reviewing the 45 years after normalization of Sino-Japanese

diplomatic relations, what impresses me most are the great changes in Chinese society, which have made some Japanese politicians, financial leaders and even ordinary people feel jealous, anxious, upset and confused. Recently, I have been on tour giving lectures at Chinese universities. Important topics are the changes in China and Japan, and the two countries' changing relationship. I have repeatedly stressed that the normalization of Sino-Japanese relations ended the war and has brought us an environment of peaceful development.

Today, China is growing stronger. On one hand, we still need to have the mentality of "Worst Enemy, Best Teacher"; on the other, we can help energize Japan's stagnant economic development with our Chinese wisdom and approach. In the face of UnionPay, Alipay and WeChat Pay, some Japanese exclaim that these new models of payment have not only impacted their country's antiquated financial system but also brought economic benefits—and they even contribute to solving Japan's social problems, such as labor shortages caused by an aging population and low birth rate.

China and Japan have experienced twists and turns in their relationship for 45 years, which reveals a truth: The rising China has seized the initiative. In the future, the coordination, cooperation and friendship between China and Japan must be further improved on the basis of a better-developed China. ■

BRICS Greet Its Second Decade

Lu Rucai

“Since the foreign ministers of Brazil, Russia, India and China first met in September 2006 (later joined by South Africa), cooperation among the BRICS nations has remained strong and has been very fruitful in a number of areas, such as politics, economics, and cultural exchange,” said Wang Xiaolong, special envoy of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs for BRICS Affairs, in a speech at the 2017 BRICS Think Tank Symposium on March 22 in Beijing.

“The creation and development of the BRICS mechanism conforms to the call for a fairer and more just system of global governance, and coincides with the common interests of the international community.”

Wang also announced that the 2017 BRICS Summit will be held in September in Xiamen, Fujian province. As the host country, China will call on all its partners to work together to create a “Stronger Partnership for a Brighter Future”—the slogan for this year’s summit—and to welcome a second decade of cooperation in the light of past experience and a vision of future development.

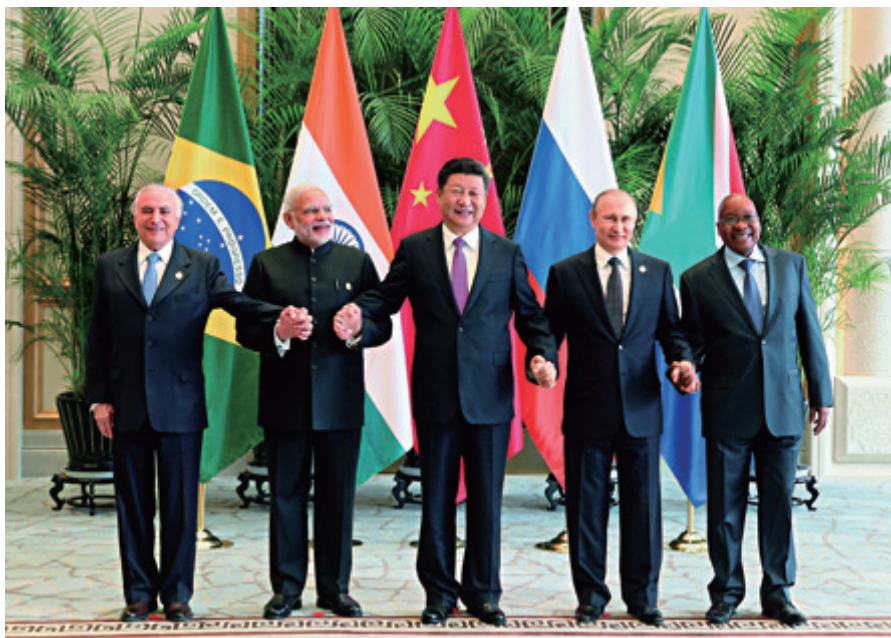
Reviewing BRICS Achievements

“Formed as an alliance between five emerging nations, all with strong momentum and potential, BRICS was originally seen as an investment initiative. Ten years on, the five countries have successfully responded to the expectations of the international community by producing real results,” said Wang.

The economic aggregate of the BRICS bloc as a percentage of the world’s total has increased from 12

percent to 23 percent. This means the five countries have contributed strong momentum to global development, Wand said.

The idea of the BRICS alliance was first put forward in 2001 by Jim O’Neill, then-chief economist of Goldman Sachs. O’Neil identified four major emerging markets—Russia, China, Brazil and India—and referred to them using the acronym “BRIC.” In 2010, South Africa joined the club,



Heads of state from BRICS nations meet in Goa, India on October 16, 2016.

adding an “S” to the term.

According to Wang, the BRICS nations have played a positive part in the advancement of the reform of global economic governance, guaranteeing a multilateral trade system and giving emerging markets and developing countries a greater say in these aspects. The New Development Bank and the Contingent Reserve Arrangement, created and launched by the BRICS bloc, have also contributed to global economic governance.

Zhao Jinping is director of the Department of Foreign Economic Relations at the Development Research Center of the State Council. He has visited Russia, Brazil, South Africa and India many times.

“I am so impressed with their rich and diverse cultures and the vitality of their social and economic development,” Zhao said.

He traveled to New Delhi last November and talked with experts from the National Institution for Transforming India, which reaffirmed his optimistic view of future cooperation between BRICS countries.

The BRICS nations have always held fast to globalization, as they have benefited from this trend of development, said Zhao. He believes these countries should act collectively rather than independently in order to drive the process forward.

“This highlights the importance of cooperation among BRICS countries,” Zhao said, adding that establishing free trade zones or high-level free

trade agreements will greatly facilitate economic cooperation between BRICS nations.

Financial Cooperation

“Cooperation between the BRICS countries now extends beyond the economic sphere,” said George Zinoviev, minister counselor of the Russian embassy in China. He noted that in recent years, at the United Nations and other international platforms, the BRICS nations have successfully coordinated their positions and taken action on a wide range of global issues like terrorism, drugs trafficking and corruption, and have worked to guarantee international information security.

“Moreover, their cooperation in the area of cultural and people-to-people exchanges has also grown rapidly,” said Zinoviev.

With this in mind, all parties have called for further cooperation, giving rise to “BRICS Plus”, a cooperative model named by Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

Zinoviev particularly stressed the progress that financial cooperation had made under the BRICS mechanism. The New Development Bank has so far confirmed seven investment projects in the five countries. Cooperation within the Contingent Reserve Arrangement has also begun. Zinoviev believes that “the two new mechanisms are able to play a key role in the international monetary system”.

The 2017 BRICS Think Tank

Symposium took the theme of “Strengthening financial cooperation and promoting BRICS development”. Luan Jianzhang, secretary general of the China Council for the BRICS Think Tank Cooperation, noted that for emerging markets and developing countries involved in the BRICS mechanism, their voices and level of representation within global economic governance largely correlate with those in the international financial system.

The establishment of the New Development Bank and the Contingent Reserve Arrangement marked the start of BRICS cooperation. Financial cooperation hence became a key aspect of the integral cooperation of the BRICS nations, having been very fruitful. Since 2011, there has been an annual meeting of BRICS financial ministers and central bank governors.

According to Wang Xiaolong, the New Development Bank has approved the first batch of projects and issued green bonds in China worth 3 billion yuan. The BRICS countries have also acted in concert under international frameworks such as the G20, and have coordinated on a range of issues including reforms of the international financial and monetary system.

Carlos Henrique Angrisani Santana, special representative of the Brazilian ambassador to China, believed that the New Development Bank and the Contingent Reserve Arrangement will, to some extent, stimulate reforms at the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank,

steering them in the direction of better representing developing countries.

Missions

Over the past few years, Western media have given a lackluster response to the BRICS initiative. What is the future of this mechanism?

Economic globalization is at a turning point. In 2016, world trade grew by 1.7 percent and GDP by 3.1 percent, the lowest since the financial crisis broke out in 2008. In contrast, BRICS economies displayed a growing trend—in 2016 India maintained a growth rate of 7 percent, and China 6.7 percent; in the other three countries, the falling range gradually diminished, and their economies showed signs of bouncing back, although the trend of zero or negative growth has not yet

disappeared. All this resulted from a better world economic environment, but also from cooperation among BRICS countries.

Zhao Jinping said increased import demands from China also injected momentum into the economic recovery of BRICS countries and the world as a whole. Taking a look at imports from January to February 2017, the growth rate of imports from India, Brazil, South Africa, and Russia maintained a level higher than that of other countries—India stood at 52 percent, South Africa and Russia were between 41 percent and 43 percent, and Brazil was 39.4 percent.

South African Ambassador to China Dolana Msimang thinks highly of the cooperation between BRICS countries. She said that South Africa

is an active participant in the BRICS agenda and that BRICS countries and emerging markets will play a more decisive role in the reconstruction of the global financial and economic supervision systems.

Regarding the BRICS economy, Luan Jianzhang stressed that the five countries must be confident in themselves, a top priority. In addition, they need to pursue further opening-up, innovation and cooperation under the BRICS mechanism, while fighting protectionism.

In February 2017, the First BRICS Sherpa Meeting was held in Nanjing, Jiangsu province. In a speech delivered at the opening ceremony, Chinese State Councilor Yang Jiechi defined the tasks and key points of the preparation work for the BRICS Xiamen Summit.

Communication and cooperation is ongoing in different areas between BRICS countries. From March 27 to 29, the Eighth Meeting of Heads of National Statistics of BRICS Countries was held in Shanghai. On March 31, the BRICS Business Council Midterm Meeting was held in New Delhi, during which China took over the presidency of the BRICS Business Council. On April 6, the Eighth Meeting of BRICS Heads of Intellectual Property Offices was held in New Delhi. These meetings will facilitate communication among BRICS countries and improve their cooperation in all areas. ■

From China Today



The new Development Bank opens in Shanghai on July 21, 2015.

Literature Transcends National Boundaries: Chinese Writing in Translation

Liu Yi

For writers, cultural differences are a constant source of inspiration. As the world becomes more like a global village, Chinese writers are eager to communicate with foreign readers through their works. This communication, however, is inhibited by the language barrier, as well as by huge cultural and societal differences between East and West. Literature in translation has become an important way of overcoming obstacles that no other means of communication has managed to deal with.

In 2012 the Nobel Committee for Literature awarded the prize to Chinese writer Mo Yan. Mo Yan's novels have been translated into many languages, making him better known among foreign readers than other Chinese novelists. This is widely believed to have been a key factor in his nomination for the Nobel Prize. At a news conference at the Chinese Embassy in Sweden before the prize ceremony, Mo Yan expressed his gratitude to his translators for their creative work.

Literature in translation has since become a topic of interest in the Chinese media and among the Chinese

public. There has been much discussion about professional issues such as translation standards and skills.

One of the most highly debated translations is the English version of Mo Yan's *Big Breasts and Wide Hips*. The translator, Howard Goldblatt, who is a well-known sinologist, made significant changes and even deleted certain plot points. Many people believed the changes went against the principles of translation and were designed to pander to a

market dominated by Western culture and values, others viewed it a useful approach to enable foreign readers to gain a better understanding of Chinese culture.

Literature as Communication

"Literature is the way writers communicate with their readers, so it's natural to make changes to adapt to their readers," said Professor Karen S. Kingsbury of Chatham University. She went on to say that such changes show respect to readers, taking into consideration their cultural background and historical position. "As far as I know, all changes Howard Goldblatt made were approved by the author."

Professor Kingsbury is an expert on contemporary Chinese literature and translator of *Love in a Fallen City*, a masterpiece by Eileen Chang (Zhang Ailing). "Many great works, and not-so-great works, are not the sole works of the author but a group of people," she said, "for example, the editors."

She then gave another example that is more familiar to Chinese people but is sometimes overlooked. *A Dream of Red Mansions*, she said, is the greatest novel in Chinese history,



but its author made many changes according to suggestions made by his close friends, who were also his first readers. When the author passed away the novel was completed by another writer who contributed about a third of the finished work.

Professor Kingsbury studied Comparative Literature at Columbia University in the mid-1990s. Her doctoral dissertation adviser, Professor Xia Zhiqing, was at the forefront of contemporary Chinese literature research and thought highly of Eileen Chang, a famous chronicler of 1940s Shanghai. It was during her time at Columbia that Kingsbury decided to translate *Love in a Fallen City*, as part of her dissertation.

The translation took nearly six years. When the first draft was finished, Kingsbury showed it to friends and asked for their feedback. In 1996 it was published in *Renditions*, a magazine of literature in translation published by the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

The reviews helped Kingsbury to go deeper in the novel. After several rounds of revisions, her translation was eventually published in 2007, and soon made part of the Penguin Classics range.

Kingsbury spoke frankly about the huge effect a translator's understanding of the original work can have on communication with readers. She said she often had questions about plot details when reading Chang's novels.

"But when I push it a little further, I will say 'Oh yes!' It's like a door,

and when you push the door, there is another room behind the door," she said, going on telling what she felt when reading *The First Brazier of Incense*, the novelette that established Chang's writing style and literary fame.

The story is set in 1940s Hong Kong. In the opening scene, the young female protagonist makes her first visit to the villa of her rich aunt, a widow and socialite. She looks carefully around the living room, which is decorated in the Western style. Several objects stand out starkly: a snuff bottle, a small statue of Avalokitesvara and a wooden screen, making the room a confusing jumble that doesn't quite make sense to the readers.

But go on reading. The protagonist walks into the sitting room where her aunt has just taken off her hat, and she is sitting there with her high-heel slippers swinging from the ends of her toes. The setting here is entirely Chinese—the author even mentions the old-fashioned curtains and a spray of flowers that natives of southern China love.

"Then I understood why Chang describes the settings so deliberately," said Kingsbury. "The living room is set to produce an Oriental impression that is made especially for British visitors, catering to their colonial mentality. Moving to the inner room, which is not for public display, the details of the setting show the owner's actual personality and convey key connotations to fellow Chinese."

Exploring the work is "like

an enjoyable and stimulating game or puzzle", said Kingsbury. As the most serious reader of a fiction work, the translator needs to solve many problems of understanding before she is able to present the work to other readers.

"Translators might solve some problems, but leave others vague," said Kingsbury, "as the vagueness is also the charm of a work that attracts readers."

Looking for the Next Eileen Chang

When asked why she translated Chang's novels, Kingsbury replied, "My goal was to find great Chinese writers." Kingsbury started to learn Chinese in her 20s. At that time, she had just graduated from university with a degree in English Literature. She then went to teach English in Sichuan, southwestern China.



Eileen Chang, a writer famous for her portrayals of life in 1940s Shanghai.

“There were only about 20 foreigners in the college, including foreign teachers and their families,” Kingsbury recalled, “so I started to learn Chinese.”

In the early 1990s she studied Comparative Literature at Columbia University with Professor Xia Zhiqing and Professor Wang Dewei, leading lights in contemporary Chinese literature research. Eileen Chang became well-known in the United States only after her novella *Lust, Caution* was adapted for the screen by Academy Award-winning director Ang Lee in 2007. Back in the 1990s, her name remained relatively unknown for several reasons.

“I deeply believe that Eileen Chang is a great writer, as good as Lu Xun, Leo Tolstoy and Virginia Woolf,” said Kingsbury. “So I want to do my best to bridge the gap of language and culture.”

Kingsbury believes Eileen Chang’s background in bilingual education is one factor contributing to her appeal in the West. “In her early years, Chang didn’t write fiction for English readers, but her multicultural background helped her think like English-speaking people.

“Writers who have a profound understanding of foreign cultures are able to ‘adjust’ their works for foreign readers.”

Kingsbury explained that this “adjustment” means that the writers can think of various cultures and social backgrounds while writing, whether they do so intentionally or unconsciously. She gave a more recent

example of Japanese writer Murakami Haruki. “He is very popular in the US, as he knows what English readers like to read,” Kingsbury said.

Kingsbury noted that love and life are topics that could arouse the widest interest amongst readers. Many Americans are curious about how Chinese society operates, how Chinese people live, and what they think of religion and life.

“But personal interest and social trends also influence readers’ decisions. For instance, my students pay special attention to women’s issues,” Kingsbury said.

Chatham University, where she teaches, was until recently a women’s college, one of the oldest and most eminent in the Midwest. “They want to know how Chinese see gender differ-

ences, and how different genders see life.”

Nowadays, there are multiple channels through which people can access Chinese literature, thanks to advances in telecommunications. Kingsbury gave a particular mention to Paper Republic, a platform for literature in translation founded in 2007. Since going into cooperation with Beijing-based People’s Literature in 2011, the website has gathered together a group of writers, works of literature and translators.

“Many American publishers visit the website for publishing ideas,” Kingsbury said, “as the US market is looking for more outstanding Chinese literature.”

■ *From China Today*



Karen S. Kingsbury

Silent Witnesses to the Emergence of the Maritime Silk Road

Dang Xiaofei

In Lianyungang, a city on the eastern coast of China, is a hill known as Kongwang, which translates as “Confucius Contemplates,” a name it received after the great philosopher Confucius (Kong Zi in Chinese) climbed it to contemplate the sea. However, the most amazing thing about this small hill only 129 meters high is not that it was visited by one of the great Chinese thinkers, but that it hides a group of Buddhist carvings from the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220). This is testimony to the arrival of Buddhism in the country through the Maritime Silk Road.

200 Years Older than the Mogao Grottoes

The figures can be seen from the paved road 500 or 600 meters west of the entrance at the foot of the hill. Carved into a yellow ocher rock, 105 figures of different sizes and positions tell Taoist and Buddhist stories. In fact, these images incorporate the secrets of the Maritime Silk Road.

Although the “picture” is dominated by Taoist figures, some Buddhist images can be found around them. This syncretism was a cultural particularity of the Eastern Han

Dynasty, especially after Buddhism first entered China and took advantage of the local religion—Daoism—to spread. “The positions of the images and the carving techniques clearly reflect the Han style: full use of high relief and engraving with convex lines,” explained Gao Feng, deputy director of Haizhou District Tourism Department in Lianyungang.

Opposite the Buddhist images, upon four lotus flowers—one under each foot—is an elephant carved in stone, from a single gigantic rock. “Both the elephant and the lotus flower are closely related to Buddhism,” said Gao

Feng. “They say that Sakyamuni Buddha rode an elephant before he was reincarnated. After his rebirth, Sakyamuni stepped on lotus flowers.” Along with the images that decorate the rock, the stone elephant relates to a time when Buddhism spread through China and coexisted harmoniously with Taoism. Inside the left front leg of the elephant is written in characters: “Fourth month of the fourth year of the reign of Yongping.” This date indicates the creation of the elephant, which took place during the rule of Liu Zhuang, second emperor of the Eastern Han Dynasty.

In 1980, experts revealed that



A carving of Buddha on Kongwang Hill.

Kongwang Buddhist images were carved in the late Eastern Han Dynasty, 200 years before the Mogao Grottoes – known as the “China Grottoes” – were created.

How is it possible that such syncretism occurred first on the Kongwang Hill and not in the center and west of the country where Buddhist culture was most developed? The explanation has to do with the fact that in that area, in addition to living in a strong religious atmosphere, the Eastern Han Dynasty had fully developed the stone carving technique. However, another explanation points to the fact that, in parallel with the overland Silk Road, Indian Buddhism was introduced to China through the Maritime Silk Road.

Xu Fu’s Trip to the East

How did the Maritime Silk Road open? More than 2,200 years ago, the First Emperor of the Qin Dynasty sent his alchemist, Xu Fu, overseas, in search of the elixir of immortality. As the head of a caravan of thousands of children and technicians from different fields and carrying tons of cereals of different varieties, Xu Fu left Haizhou (as Lianyungang was known at the time), his hometown, for the East. The alchemist obviously did not find the elixir, but he did open up a navigation route in the eastern part of the country, thus becoming the pioneer of the Maritime Silk Road.

On his journey, in addition to arriving in Wakayama, a prefecture

located on Honshu, the main island of the Japanese archipelago, Xu Fu also went to Kitakyushu, on the northern tip of Kyushu Island, the Setonaikai Sea and the Kii Peninsula. In fact, nowadays in Japan it is possible to visit historical sites related to Xu Fu, like his temple, his tomb, his well, his point of disembarkation, and so on. Some Japanese scholars have even come to suggest that Xu Fu was Jimmu Tenno, the first Japanese emperor.

Why did Xu Fu chose Lianyungang as the starting point of his journey? According to Luo Lin, deputy director of the Lianyungang Historical Relics Protection Research Institute, the ancient inhabitants of the region mastered navigation techniques and traded with the outside world by sea, laying the basis for the opening of the Maritime Silk Road. “All that can be seen in the paintings on the Jiangjun Cliff,” Luo explained. Known as the “Heavenly Scriptures of the East,” the paintings on the Jiangjun Cliff are not only the first of their type to be discovered on the Chinese coast but also, with about 7,000 years of history, the oldest of their kind in the country.

In order to find the elixir of immortality for the emperor, Xu Fu’s expeditionary fleet traveled on several sea routes, which would then provide precious experiences for the merchant ships to come. Thanks to the gradual consolidation of the Maritime Silk Road, silk products and Chinese porcelain articles were exported from Lianyungang to Japan, the Korean Peninsula, India and Sri Lanka, among

other South Asian countries. In turn, the ships brought back Buddhism.

If calculating since the date Xu Fu left Lianyungang, the Maritime Silk Road has existed for over 2,000 years. For its part, being the small hometown of Xu Fu, Lianyungang has been transformed and nowadays is a coastal commercial city.

Communication with Northeast Asia

Xu Fu not only took the techniques of agriculture, sericulture and medicine to Japan and Korea, but also inaugurated new shipping routes, unlocking the channels for cultural exchanges with countries along the way, and even with the Arab world.

During the Sui (581-618) and Tang (618-907) dynasties, the flames of war hampered the overland Silk Road. However, the adverse circumstances in the west helped the Maritime Silk Road to thrive in the southeast. Lianyungang so became an important center for exchanges with Silla (a country in the southeast of the Korean Peninsula) and Japan.

Japan sent numerous diplomats and scholars to Tang Dynasty China to learn about its experiences. One of the most prominent was the monk Ennin. Having fulfilled his mission, Ennin decided that Haizhou (Lianyungang) would be the starting point to return to his homeland. Abe no Nakamaro was another well-known character. As a member of the ninth Japanese delegation sent to China, he arrived in the Tang realm during the fifth year of

Emperor Xuanzong's Kaiyuan Reign. Known in Chinese as Chao Heng, Abe no Nakamaro forged a friendship with the great poet Li Bai. When he decided it was time to return to Japan, Li Bai traveled to Lianyungang to bid farewell to his friend. Because the departure of Abe no Nakamaro coincided with a great storm, Li Bai thought his friend had died in the disaster. He then wrote a poem in his memory: "Sad clouds settle over Cangwu ..." (Cangwu referring to Lianyungang).

In addition to officials and scholars, Lianyungang also attracted ordinary people from Japan and Korea, living in harmony with the local population. Because many people from Silla wanted to settle in Lianyungang, a "consulate" was opened in Sucheng Town of Lianyun District. In addition to registering as citizens of Haizhou, many migrants took their relatives with them, who performed official work, carried out business, converted to Buddhism or married, and lived by farming. With such a notable population of people coming from Silla, a Silla Village was formed.

In July 1990, a small team of four Korean professors traveled to Lianyungang to conduct an inquiry into the old site of the Silla Village. At the end of their research they erected a tombstone in the north of the Baojia Mountain, which reads: "Ruins of Ancient Silla Houses in Sucheng." It is another monument commemorating cultural exchanges between China and Korea. ■

From China Today

The Everyday Struggle of Beijing's Rickshaw Drivers

Justine Lopez

As the capital pushes toward modernity at breakneck speed, Beijing's most charming characteristics are becoming increasingly threatened. From the destruction of historic hutongs to the closure of decades-old restaurants, making a living in the capital is becoming more and more difficult for people in some traditional trades. And the city's rickshaw drivers are not immune.

With the rise of shared bikes and the increased enforcement of traffic laws, many rickshaw drivers are struggling to get by.

Although traffic laws pertaining specifically to rickshaws have long existed in the capital, they are now being enforced in ways they haven't before. Police are cracking down on drivers for all sorts of infractions, from operating without licenses to driving in restricted areas.

By law rickshaws can only conduct business in places designated by the government, mainly around touristy lakes. However, it's not uncommon for unlicensed rickshaw drivers to break the rules and risk hefty fines in order to make a better living.

According to a rickshaw driver surnamed Li, the police crackdown on illegal businesses, rickshaws included, is making life in the capital more and more challenging for many people like him.

"It's devastating and inconsiderate. The government says they're now cracking down on illegitimate businesses, but China has always been full of them. China has always had people selling on the streets and China has always had rickshaw drivers. Always," Li, 40, said. "It's the livelihood of so many people, and it's part of our culture. They're taking it away without compensation or arrangements for what we can do without rickshaw driving. There's nothing we can do, though."

However, the hyper-enforcement of traffic laws and the clamping down on illegal businesses aren't the only things posing a threat to Beijing's rickshaw culture. The rise of easy-to-use transportation options like Didi, electric scooters and shared bikes means that drivers are now seeing even fewer customers.

Despite the challenges, it's still common to see rickshaw drivers pedaling lazily down Beijing's streets, carting tourists around or rummaging up customers. It's a sight not all that different than when rickshaws first appeared in the city nearly 150 years ago.

Rickshaws have a long history in Beijing and in China as a whole. They first appeared in China in 1873. Back then they were simple, two-

wheeled carts that were literally pulled by “drivers.” As simple as they were, they became such a popular mode of public transportation that the number of rickshaws in China ballooned to 10,000 in less than a year.

It wasn’t until the onset of cars and motorbikes in the 20th century that rickshaws began to be edged out of the market. Yet even still, Beijing’s rickshaw culture has somehow managed to endure.

The same can be said today. Despite the newest set of challenges facing rickshaws, drivers like Li are still finding ways to drum up business.

“I have to be more cautious now, but work hasn’t been harder or easier,” he said. “Beijing’s very big, and if I can’t go to one area, I can go to another. People are not more or less willing to take a rickshaw if there are places they need to go to.”

On a good day, some drivers manage to make up to 500 yuan, according to Shanghai Daily. But rickshaw drivers who are operating outside the law still risk being slapped with fines or having their vehicles—worth roughly RMB2,000 (USD295)—confiscated by authorities.

But drivers like Li still believe the risk is worth the reward. “It makes money. I’ve been doing it a long time, so I’ve got used to it and I’m good at it. I’ll just have to be more careful,” he said.

And for the many drivers who have spent their lives pedaling rickshaws around China’s capital, there’s no other choice but to persevere. ■

From That's Beijing

Mobike rolls out bicycles in London

Bo Leung in London

A bike-sharing scheme that could rival London’s so-called Boris bikes has been granted permission to operate in the British capital.

Ealing Borough Council in West London approved plans during a council cabinet meeting on July 11 evening for Chinese company Mobike



Mobike rolls out bikes in London.

to launch a pilot project in Acton. The scheme would bring 750 bikes to the area and was scheduled to start at the end of July.

Bassam Mahfouz, cabinet member for transport, environment and leisure, said: “We welcome Mobike’s decision to start operating in Ealing. Hiring a Mobike is an easy way to give cycling a try over short distances, without committing to the expense of buying a bike, and we hope that residents will be encouraged to get out of their cars and cycle instead.”

Mobike has already made its UK debut in Manchester, where a fleet of 1,000 bikes was launched in June.

Unlike former London mayor Boris Johnson’s bike-share program in the capital, users do not need to return a Mobike to a specific docking station.

And while the so-called Boris-bikes are partially funded by Transport for London, Mobike will be available at no cost to the taxpayer as the scheme in Acton will be run as a private enterprise by the Chinese company.

Mahfouz added: “Mobike is initially starting on a small scale in Acton before expanding to the rest of the borough. We will be watching the rollout with close interest and encouraging local people to do their bit for local air quality and congestion by giving them a go.”

The specially designed bikes are equipped with GPS and proprietary smart-lock technology, which allows users to find a nearby bike and scan its QR code to unlock it. The rider can then park the bike in any location and lock it.

According to an Ealing council report, cyclists will have to pay 50 pounds (\$64) deposit to join the scheme and will be charged 50 pence for 30 minutes.

Bike-sharing schemes have taken off in recent months and Mobike isn’t the only company wanting a slice of the London market.

Singaporean startup Obike has preempted its rival by rolling out 400 Obikes in East London’s Tower Hamlets borough.

The Mayor of London’s office said, although it cannot confirm which other London boroughs are in talks with bike-sharing companies, Transport for London will work with the boroughs to ensure that any such schemes work for Londoners.

Mobike, which handles 25 million rides a day in China, also looks to be preparing to put riders on its bikes in Washington, based on its hiring plans in the area.

One of the jobs Mobike has posted on professional networking site LinkedIn is for an operations manager, based in Washington, who would need to get to know “the local environment” and “be the main point of contact for the regional government officials and transport authorities”, according to The Wall Street Journal.

In Washington, Mobike would face competition from Capital Bike-share, a local company that operates more than 3,700 bikes at 440 stations across five jurisdictions around metropolitan Washington. ■

From China Daily

Established in July 1981, the Beijing People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (BPAFFC) is a civilian organization engaged in promoting people-to-people friendship between Beijing and foreign countries. Under the leadership of the Beijing Committee of the Communist Party of China and the People’s Government of Beijing Municipality, the BPAFFC has played an important role as a bridge in enhancing friendship between the people of Beijing and the rest of the world in the past 36 years. It has been opening new channels for multidimensional people-to-people exchanges with foreign countries in different fields at various levels. The BPAFFC has achieved positive results in promoting China’s international exchanges, implementing the Belt and Road Initiative, contributing to the Chinese capital’s social and economic development and introducing the city to the outside world. It has also pushed forward the capital’s nongovernmental diplomacy. The BPAFFC has established friendly contacts with more than 230 nongovernmental organizations from at least 60 foreign countries.

I. Conduct People-to-People Diplomacy in Line with China’s Foreign Policy

To commemorate victory in the Chinese People’s War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the defeat of fascism in World War II, the BPAFFC held a commemoration of Michael Lindsay, an outstanding

Acting as a Bridge Connecting to the World

Beijing Friendship Association

friend of the Chinese people; an exhibition of posters depicting Russia's Great Patriotic War; an exhibition of paintings by friends of the Chinese people in the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression; and the Peace Festival: Promoting Peace with International Friends, a painting and calligraphy exhibition. To mark the 80th anniversary of the victory of the Red Army's Long March and the 80th anniversary of Edgar Snow's interview with Chairman Mao Zedong, the BPAFFC hosted the 17th Edgar Snow Memorial Symposium with the Edgar Snow Memorial Fund. To celebrate the Year of Cultural Exchange, the BPAFFC held the Exhibition on the Culture of Caribbean Countries, the Cultural Photography Exhibition of the Pacific Alliance and the Cultural and Tourism Exhibition on South Pacific Countries. It invited inheritors of intangible cultural heritage to events held by the Chinese embassy in Japan. To boost preparation for the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics, the BPAFFC held the Beijing in

Snow photo exhibition in the United Kingdom, invited winter sports experts from the United States to Beijing to share experiences, organized foreign experts and students in Beijing to go to Yanqing district for information on the preparation of the Winter Olympics and hosted the 2017 Beijing International

Kite Festival.

II. Push Forward "Contact Building" Program with Focus on "Making Friends"

With "making friends" as its priority, the BPAFFC continues to consolidate its social foundation and



Beijing International Forum on People-to-People Friendship.

expand the circle of friends for China.

Strengthening Existing Friendship: The BPAFFC invited civilian organizations from ASEAN, South Asia, Japan and the Republic of Korea for friendly visits; enhanced exchanges with people's organizations from the United States, Germany, Norway, Italy, Australia and the Czech Republic; held various events including the 35 Years of People-to-People Exchanges Between China and Japan Photo Exhibition and the China-Japan Tai Chi Exchange; and organized prizewinners of the One Belt, One Road and Sri Lanka Essay Competition to make speeches.

Establishing New Friendship: The BPAFFC invited the Arniko Society of Nepal to the Beijing International Health-Building Exchange; invited prizewinners of the Zheng Lvcheng Nursery Rhyme Competition to China and hosted the Zheng Lvcheng Nursery Rhyme Concert; established friendly contacts with more than 10 foreign people's organizations including the China-South Asia Friendship Organization and the Richard Nixon Foundation; and initiated friendly exchanges with 14 Latin American and Caribbean countries, co-hosting events with them.

Promoting Youth Exchanges: The BPAFFC hosted the China-US Middle School Student Exchange, as well as China-Japan and China-ROK youth exchanges in the fields of culture, sports and art; the China-Malaysia, China-Brunei youth exchanges in science and technology; and the China-Japan-ROK Youth Forum. It held the

China-Thai Young Executive Exchange Program and China-Nepal Young Entrepreneur Exchange; co-hosted such events as the "Joy Dancing Beijing" Cultural and Art Exchange Week of International Youth, the International Youth Piano Competition, the "Wushu and Winter Olympics in Beijing" and the Foreign Students Camping and Beijing Sister City Youth Camp with the Foreign Affairs Office of the People's Government of Beijing Municipality and the Communist Youth League Beijing Municipal Committee. All these have widened platforms for international youth exchanges and helped foster future envoys of people-to-people exchanges.

III. Implement Beijing's Development Plans and Establish Platforms for People-to-People Exchanges

The BPAFFC tries to turn its foreign affairs resources into an impetus for the capital's social and economic development. It organized private enterprise owners to attend the China (Czech) Investment Forum and Hellenic-Chinese Cities Forum, and it held the China-Thai and China-Nepal Entrepreneur Exchanges, encouraging and helping Beijing's enterprises to go global. The BPAFFC organized community eldercare workers to visit Japan to acquire experience in line with the city's implementation of the Regulations on Home-based Elder Care. It sent agriculture experts to Myanmar and Cambodia to spread advanced

agriculture technology. The BPAFFC hosted the Beijing International Forum on People-to-People Friendship, which focused on themes related to urban construction and management—preservation of historical and cultural constructions, education, culture, and development of the silver hair industry, building a platform for international nongovernmental organizations to establish friendly ties with one another and enhancing pragmatic cooperation between Beijing and cities of other countries. The BPAFFC held a variety of events to spread Chinese culture and introduce Beijing to the outside world, such as the Taiji Beijing International Health-Building Exchange, the Beijing International Kite Festival, Walking Around Kunming Lake for International Friends, Trees Planting at Beijing International Friendship Forest, Foreign Diplomats Reunion, the "Beijing and Me" International Students Essay Competition and "Beijing's New Image in the Eyes of Foreign Friends" Photo Contest. These events were warmly welcomed by foreign friends and attended by more than 5,000 foreigners each year.

IV. Enhance Cultural Exchanges and Present an Impressive Image of Beijing to the Outside World

The BPAFFC strengthens people-to-people ties between China and different countries through cultural exchanges as part of an effort to implement the Belt and Road Initiative. It hosted the Beijing-ASEAN Cultural

Tour in such countries as Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Indonesia; held Chinese Culture Week, Beijing Culture Week and the Chinese Painting and Calligraphy Exhibition in Lebanon, Sri Lanka, Lithuania and Malta. It displayed intangible cultural heritage objects at the Traditional Russian Festival; held Chinese Culture Week at the Colombo-Beijing Friendship Forum; and hosted a series of activities in Lebanon under the theme “One Belt & One Road in Lebanon: Beijing & Beirut”. These events provided a way for local people to experience traditional Chinese culture by taking Beijing culture to campuses, communities and Chinese culture centers.

The BPAFFC enhanced people-to-people exchanges with countries along the Belt and Road by organizing prize-winners of the One Belt and One Road and Sri Lanka Essay Competition to make speeches and hosting the Gala for International Organizations in Beijing, the Future Leader and Young Ambassador-Revisiting the Maritime Silk Road International Youth Summer Camp, a symposium under the theme “Friendship Along the Silk Road—enhancing Exchanges among People’s Organizations & Promoting the Implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative for Common Development”, as well as the “Charm of National Essence” Peking Opera Gala. ■

Beijing-ASEAN Cultural Tour in Myanmar and Vietnam

Beijing Friendship Association

On February 10, the “Beijing-ASEAN Cultural Tour” exchange in Myanmar—co-hosted by the BPAFFC, the ASEAN-China Center, the Xicheng District People’s Government of Beijing and the China-Myanmar Friendship Association—kicked off with the staging of *Havoc*

in Heaven, a famous Peking Opera, at Yangon University of Foreign Studies (YUFS). A performance featuring magic tricks called *Golden Opulence*, oral stunts and other performances drew rounds of applause from the YUFS students.

Several hundred students



Participants in the “Beijing-ASEAN Cultural Tour” exchange in Vietnam.

learned to make handicrafts from a few inheritors of Chinese intangible cultural heritage at the scene in a close-range appreciation of the charm of traditional Chinese art. Brochures about intangible cultural heritage and the customs of Chinese New Year in Beijing were handed out to visitors. Mimi Turner Kay, a deputy director of Myanmar's Ministry of Culture, said: "It's a great pleasure for us to appreciate fantastic performances of Chinese intangible cultural heritage. This will increase our students' interest in learning the Chinese language and culture."

The Beijing-ASEAN Cultural Tour, as part of the Happy Spring Festival series held by China's Ministry of Culture, had three segments involving intangible cultural heritage: performances, displays and making, and the Charming Beijing, Colorful Xicheng photo exhibition. The first section covered oral stunts, ancient color-magic tricks, Chinese Guqin (a traditional plucked string instrument) and Bianlian (face-changing) and other examples of Chinese national intangible heritage. The second section covered snuff-bottle inside painting, Chinese medicine fragrance-making, clay sculpture painting, Beijing painted sculpture, Beijing paper-cutting, Yu style straw weaving and burn-carving on gourds. The photo exhibition showcased a fast-developing Beijing and the lives of Beijing people.

The event gave a Beijing flavor to Yangon, a modern city known as

the "oriental garden". The students and their parents learned Beijing handicrafts such as paper-cutting, straw weaving and burn-carving on gourds. Peking Opera artists inspired children's interest by painting monkey masks for boys and teaching girls to walk on stage. Fishing, a Chinese magic trick performance, received repeated applause.

Mohammed, the university president, praised the performances, hoping for more events like this in the future. Tian Shanting, cultural counselor at the Chinese embassy in Myanmar, spoke highly of the event. He said: "With support from the new administration, Myanmar has held a series of large-scale activities to celebrate Chinese Spring Festival for the first time. The Beijing-ASEAN Cultural Tour stood out as a highlight of the activities. By spreading traditional Chinese culture to local young people, such events will contribute to an enhanced Sino-Myanmar Friendship."

On a day when the temperature exceeded 30 C, the tour in Myanmar came to its last stop—the Shwezigon Pagoda, the largest pagoda in Bagan, an ancient city known as the "City of Pagodas". Despite the heat and crude hardware, inheritors of Chinese intangible cultural heritage introduced traditional Chinese culture to Bagan, resulting in active communication between the traditional cultures of China and Myanmar.

The director of the Bagan Cultural

Affairs Bureau and members of the Shwezigon Pagoda Management Committee attended the event. More than 200 local people watched the performances and participated in the activities.

State-to-state relationships are underpinned by people-to-people amity. Organized by the BPAFFC, a delegation of the Shwezigon Pagoda Management Committee came to Beijing in July 2016 to communicate with the staff of the White Pagoda Temple Management Office under the Beijing Municipal Administration of Cultural Heritage. Actually, the exchange in Bagan was a return visit. Wu Maoming, vice-president of the pagoda committee, said: "Rural residents in Myanmar, who have little access to cultural entertainment, desire to know the outside world. The exchange in Bagan enabled them to watch wonderful performances that are not available on TV and learn to make traditional Chinese handicrafts. I hope more exchanges like this can be held. The Shwezigon Pagoda Management Committee is ready to support them."

On Feb14, the Beijing-ASEAN Cultural Tour visited Hanoi Capital University. Bianlian, a famous Sichuan Opera, and Fishing, a Chinese magic performance, caught the attention of teachers and students. The inheritors of oral stunts integrated electronic elements into traditional plays, drawing rounds of applause from the audience. The event, which enabled the audience

to participate and interact with the performers, attracted crowds of people.

The exchange in Vietnam implemented the consensus reached by Chinese and Vietnamese leaders on enhancing cultural exchanges and increasing mutual understanding between the two peoples. Vietnam also traditionally celebrates Spring Festival. The event, as part of the Beijing-Hanoi Sister City Program, presented examples of Beijing's intangible cultural heritage to the people of Hanoi, sending them best wishes for the festival. It also enhanced the exchanges and cooperation between Beijing and Hanoi in such fields as culture and tourism, strengthened their sister-city ties and increased understanding and respect for the cultures of each other's country.

On Feb 15, the Beijing-ASEAN Cultural Tour exchange in Vietnam came to its final stop—Hanoi University of Culture—marking the end of the 2017 Happy Spring Festival series. The performance there ended with elegant *Kunqu* plays and graceful but powerful martial arts.

Hong Xiaoyong, the Chinese ambassador to Vietnam, spoke highly of the event.

“The leaders of the two countries reached consensus on enhancing cultural exchanges during their recent meeting,” he said. “As an effort to implement the consensus, the exchange in Vietnam was held during Spring Festival. The timing could not have been better.” ■

Building Bridges for Better Understanding between Peoples

BPAFFC's Efforts to Enhance People-to-People Exchanges with Sri Lanka

Beijing Friendship Association

People's hearts are the biggest political power. People-to-people ties underpin strong and sustained connectivity, as well as international cooperation on the Belt and Road Initiative.

To build bridges for greater understanding between people, the Beijing People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, together with Beijing Women's Federation and Beijing Federation of Literary and Art Circles, sent a delegation to Sri Lanka for a friendly visit and cultural and women's exchanges from March 19 to 26, 2017.

Reviewing the History of Relations to Deepen Traditional Friendship

The Beijing People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the Association for Sri Lanka-China Social and Cultural Cooperation (ASLCSCC) have maintained friendly

contacts and held various activities in multiple fields since 2010, when they established relations. At the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of Sino-Sri Lanka diplomatic relations held in Colombo, Sri Lanka's capital, on March 20, 2017, guests from both countries reviewed the 2,000 years of Sino-Sri Lanka friendship and the progress the two countries have made in friendly exchanges. The Sri Lanka International Eye Bank donated 60 pairs of corneas to China. The ASLCSCC proposed building 60 schools to mark the 60th anniversary. Karu Jayasuriya, the speaker of Sri Lanka's Parliament, wrote with a brush pen: “May Sino-Sri Lanka friendship last forever!” in Chinese characters, and presented awards to the ASLCSCC, Sri Lanka-China Friendship Association and China South Asia Friendship Organization to acknowledge their contributions to bilateral friendly

exchanges.

Enhancing Women's Exchanges to Convey China's Ideas

Enhancing exchanges and cooperation to jointly promote the development of women's causes was high on the agenda of the visit. On March 21, Zhao Lijun, vice-president of the Beijing Women's Federation and head of the delegation, delivered an impassioned address at the First China-Sri Lanka Women Friendship Forum held in Colombo. She said she expected the forum to be a unique platform for China and Sri Lanka to learn from each other's experiences in the support of women's causes, to share resources, move cooperation forward and deepen friendship. She also expressed hope that the forum would enhance the exchanges between the Beijing federation and people's organizations

and women's federations in Sri Lanka.

She also made a keynote speech at a panel meeting—“Development of Chinese Women and Experience for Sri Lanka”—elaborating on the Beijing federation's efforts and progress in promoting women's and children's development from seven perspectives. Her speech was highly praised by the attendees. Sri Lanka delegates proposed to communicate and cooperate with their Chinese counterparts on women's protection, flexible employment and leadership development.

Tell Chinese Stories Based on Cultural Exchanges

Cultural exchange, the most important channel of communication, holds the key to connecting different countries and strengthening people-to-people ties. On March 21, the delegation held the “Colors of Beijing”

photo exhibition in Sri Lanka. The photos displayed places of historical interest, such as the Great Wall and the Palace Museum, as well as modern spots such as the central business district and night views of Financial Street. They also showcased the development of modern industry, science and technology, presenting an all-around and multidimensional image of Beijing as an international metropolis.

Ye Yongcai, president of the China Photographers Association, introduced 50 selected photos that showcased Beijing's history, culture and scenery in his address at the opening ceremony. He hoped the exhibition would enhance cultural exchanges between the two countries and increase mutual understanding. At the Women's Leadership Forum, the photographers from Beijing told the story behind each photo. Those who had been to Beijing marveled at the city's profound changes and expressed their intention to revisit the places shown in the pictures.

A Chinese adage says “Victory is assured when people pool their strength; success is secured when people put their heads together.” The Beijing People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, as a people's organization engaged in the work of nongovernmental diplomacy, will play a more important role in building bridges for greater understanding between Chinese people and the people of other countries, especially countries along the Belt and Road, and help turn the vision of connectivity into concrete action. ■



Zhao Lijun, vice-president of the Beijing Women's Federation, addressed the First China-Sri Lanka Women Friendship Forum.

Confucius Institute Promotes Friendly Exchanges

Haidian People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, Beijing

The Republic of San Marino is among the first European countries to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China, and the bilateral friendship has enjoyed stable, sound and sustained development. On March 29, 2015, the first Confucius Institute in San Marino was co-founded by the Confucius Institute Headquarters, China National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (or Hanban) and the University of San Marino in Montegiardino, with Beijing City University as the Chinese cooperative school.

The Confucius Institute under the University of San Marino is the outcome of efforts by both countries' associations for friendship in enhancing people-to-people communication. Gianfranco Terenzi, councilor of the institute and president of the San Marino-China Friendship Association, who has served as the captain regent of San Marino for four terms, has a great affection for China. The Haidian People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (HPAFFC) received him several times. In 2013, Terenzi visited Haidian district as an old friend. In his talks with Zhou

Laisheng, president of the HPAFFC, Terenzi proposed to build a Confucius Institute in San Marino to better spread traditional Chinese culture. Liu Lin, president of Beijing City University and HPAFFC vice-president, was pleased with the suggestion and expressed full support. The HPAFFC and the San Marino-China Friendship Association put great effort into preparations for the institute's establishment and development. Terenzi and his old friend Xu Cunsong, vice-president of the HPAFFC, played an important role in

the preparation.

The Confucius Institute under the University of San Marino is committed to spreading the Chinese language and culture, especially traditional Chinese medicine, in San Marino, southeast Italy and the European mainland. It helps people in these areas increase their understanding, and built a bridge for exchanges with the Chinese people.

Unlike other Confucius Institutes in Europe, the University of San Marino institute combines Chinese language and culture with healthcare to



Gianfranco Terenzi visited Baijia Dayuan in Beijing's Haidian district.

better spread knowledge of TCM to benefit the people of San Marino and the region.

To help local people understand and experience TCM culture, which is extensive and profound, the institute held various teaching and promotion events. In April 2016, Beijing City University sent outstanding TCM experts to the institute to teach traditional Chinese medical massage. San Marino's Ministry for Education and Culture held a news conference to promote the course before it began. Apart from teaching, TCM experts also gave lectures at universities and communities to spread TCM culture to more local residents.

At the commemoration of its first anniversary on July 22, 2016, the institute unveiled the Tong Ren Tang Traditional Chinese Medicine Museum, the first museum in Europe devoted to TCM. The two captains regent

(heads of state) of San Marino spoke highly of the museum during their visit on Sept 23. San Marino TV and newspapers covered their visit.

Language is the vehicle of culture. Taking Chinese language and culture courses as its focus, the institute tries to increase local people's understanding of China. Over the past four years, it has set up 15 types of classes, including long-term ones for spring and autumn terms, and short-term ones for summer and winter breaks. In addition, it has created special classes, including short-term intensive Chinese language, elementary Chinese for adults, traditional Chinese calligraphy and hand weaving.

The institute has created a website and mailbox, and publishes information about cultural activities and China's big events on such social platforms as Facebook and Twitter. In February 2016, the institute held the HSK (Chi-

nese proficiency test) for the first time in San Marino, an effort highly commended by the San Marino government.

Spreading culture requires continuous effort. Apart from teaching the Chinese language, the institute hosts various events to spread the country's culture. In September 2015, the Shanghai Photo Exhibition—sponsored by the Shanghai People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the San Marino-China Friendship Association, and co-organized by the Confucius Institute under the University of San Marino and Shanghai Library—opened at the institute.

Also that month, the institute held the first Confucius Institute Open Day to increase the influence of the Chinese language and culture in San Marino and the nearby Italian cities. In November 2015, the institute hosted a performance by China Ethnic Song and Dance Ensemble, the first of its kind by a Chinese national-level performing group in San Marino.

Institute councilor Terenzi, Morganti, minister of culture, and other San Marino officials watched the performance in the packed theater. During Spring Festival in 2016 and 2017, the institute held Chinese style celebrations. All these events, which were widely acclaimed, opened a window into Chinese culture for the people of San Marino, thus enhancing friendly exchanges between people of the two countries. ■



The Confucius Institute under the University of San Marino was unveiled.

Art Performance Marks 20-Year Friendship between Chinese and ROK Districts

Changping People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries

Dobong-gu district in Seoul, South Korea, a “sister city” partner of Beijing’s Changping district, is located northeast of Seoul, with 340,000 people living in its 20.84-square-kilometer area. Its name is derived from Dobong Mountain. One of Seoul’s major residential districts, Dobong-gu boasts full-fledged infrastructure and convenient transportation. It is home to the city’s largest agricultural product transaction market and Yuying Electronics, a major high-tech company.

In 1996, a sister-city relationship was established between Changping and Dobong-gu, making Dobong-gu district one of the earliest metropolitan area to become Changping’s “sister city”. Thanks to unremitting efforts on both sides, the past 20 years have witnessed increasingly closer governmental exchanges, lasting friendship between the people and fruitful cooperation in administration, economy, culture and hygiene. We are the witness of each others’ changes and development. Over the years, we have arranged several governmental and people-to-people exchanges, and visited some key projects and noted each other’s pride worthy achievements. Since we initiated a civil

servants exchange program in 2004, 12 delegations of civil servants have paid mutual visits, which greatly benefited both sides’ training of comprehensively capable civil servants who have an international vision. In addition, they learned of each other’s experience of scientific administration. In 2007, the two districts launched a biannual program for middle school students to visit their counterparts for cultural exchanges. The activity provided opportunities for the youths to broaden their international vision and foster friendship.

In 2016, the year that saw the 20th anniversary of sister-city relations between Changping and Dobong-gu districts, it was our common wish to commemorate this special and significant year in special ways to make people of both countries fully aware of our precious and hard-earned friendship. After several communications and consultations, the two districts decided to co-host grand and ceremonious art performances, presented by residents and hosted in Changping in June and Dobong in September.

In early June last year, Lee Dong-jin, the mayor of Dobong-gu district led a delegation on a visit China. On the

evening of June 2, an art performance celebrating the 20th anniversary of bilateral relations was held by Changping district. An audience of 500 watched the performance, including district leaders Hou Junshu, secretary of the CPC Changping District Committee; Zhu Guangtong, director of the standing committee of the Changping people’s congress; Chen Qiusheng, chairman of the Changping committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference; the delegation led by Lee Dong-jin; and people from all walks of life in Changping district.

Starting with *Dance of the Golden Snake*, a Chinese folk music ensemble, the art performance welcomed all the Dobong-gu guests with happy and festive traditional music. *The Drunken Beauty*, a Peking Opera classic, and *I Only Care About You*, a female solo, demonstrated the different charm of Chinese traditional art and modern music. *Niuniu Playing in Snow*, a handkerchief dance performed by students from Ermao Primary School, unfolded a scene under the dreamlike lights where kids enjoyed themselves in a winter snowfield. *Fire Phoenix*, a magic show performed by Ding Shuai, a young magician from Changping

district, opened a mysterious magic world for the audience.

Yulia Shen, a Korean opera pop singer from Dobong-gu district, and He Manze, a male tenor, each sang a Korean song, respectively *Beautiful World* and *Nessun Dorma*, a *Turandot* classic. Lee Dong-jin, mayor of Dobong, sang *O Sole Mio*, an Italian song, for the audience. The dynamic K-pop dance by the juvenile dance club of Dobong's high school won rounds of applause for their youthful style.

The art performance was full of excitement and came to a climax when Korean taekwondo and Chinese martial arts were demonstrated. Difficult stunts were displayed in the taekwondo show, including cross-kicks, side kicks, and aerial triple-kicks. Students from Beijing Shaolin Martial School also showed their various martial skills. The

event ended with all the performers singing *Arirang*, a Korean folk song.

In late September 2016, Sun Wei, a member of the Changping Committee of the Communist Party of China, and the district's executive vice-chief, led a culture and art delegation to visit Dobong-gu district for celebration activities marking the 20th anniversary. On Sept 22, the Dobong auditorium, packed with jubilant audiences, was well-decorated and full of a festive mood. Even the aisles were crowded with spectators. Performers from the two districts presented Dobong residents with a wonderful show conveying love and friendship.

Coolest Ethnic Style, a dance show presented by Changping district, displayed the beautiful dance and rich culture of many ethnic groups, including Han, Mongol and Zang (Tibetan), along

with *Balancing a Jar on the Head*, an acrobatic show and *Fisherman's Song* and *Horse Racing*, a Chinese folk music duet played on the zheng (Chinese zither) and erhu (a Chinese stringed instrument). All demonstrated the charm of traditional Chinese performing arts. The Korean audience sang *Time Is All We Need*, a popular Chinese song in Korea, happily together with the singer on the stage. Artists from Dobong also performed the long-drum dance, a fan dance and Korean folk music. Taekwondo stunts and martial arts performances were the most acclaimed. The audience was deeply impressed by the forceful rhythms, the masculine movements, the imposing manner and the delicate balance of strength and beauty. At the end of the show, Chinese and Korean performers sang *Jasmine Flower*, a Chinese folk song, to bid farewell to the audience.

The past 20 years have seen the friendship between Changping district and Dobong-gu district increase steadily. By integrating the distinctive art forms of the two districts, the art performances gave residents of both areas an opportunity to share the fruits of friendly relations and enjoy Chinese and Korean cultures. The celebration activities for the 20th anniversary held in Changping district and Dobong-gu district have deepened the friendship between the peoples and enhanced the comprehensive and pragmatic cooperation between governments and peoples. People of the two districts cooperated for mutual benefit and win-win results. ■



Beijing's Changping district held an art performance to commemorate its 20-year friendship with Dobong-gu district in Seoul, South Korea.

Interview with Sir Henry Keswick, chairman of Jardine Matheson Group

Staff Reporter

VOF: *We know that you were born in Shanghai, China, in 1938. Can you tell us your first impression of China as an ancient Asian civilization, and with regard to its recent changes and development?*

Henry Keswick: While I was born in Shanghai, my family returned to the United Kingdom while I was still an infant. Nevertheless, China and the Chinese people have always been a significant part of my life.

I became more deeply acquainted with China when I began my career with Jardine Matheson in Hong Kong in 1961, at age 23. Since then I have had the good fortune to participate in Asia's commercial ascent over the past half-century, and in particular the resurgence of China.

While inevitably there have been bumps in the road, it has been gratifying to watch China's steady rise since Deng Xiaoping's reform and opening-up policy in the late 1970's. We reestablished Jardine Matheson's presence in China in 1979, and in 1980 established the first commercial joint ventures in China's modern era. These were the first of many developments in the country, where today we have investments of over \$8 billion.

Since then, I have visited China many times as the firm's business interests grew and flourished. I have met many of the country's leaders and have made many friends. I was always gladdened by the positive feelings for Jardines that I found in China. Many people recognize our long association with China and the continuous support we gave to the country and its people—such as in Chongqing during World War II, where we maintained our presence during times of hardship for all, and where today we still have substantial interests in various activities.

I am impressed by the resilience, determination and entrepreneurship of the Chinese people, both within China and among those who have made their homes across the region, many of whom are our friends and business partners. It is these characteristics that have underpinned China's significant economic growth over the past 30 years or so, which is still going strong today. I am sure that China will continue to go from strength to strength, and I very much hope that we in Jardine Matheson will have a continuing role to play in supporting that economic development.

VOF: *What's your take on Chinese*

President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative? And what kind of opportunities or challenges will be brought by this initiative in terms of company development?

Keswick: President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative envisions the development of logistics and communication linkages that will support trade, investment, monetary flows, tourism and people-to-people exchanges. Taken together with the planned China-Pakistan Economic



Sir Henry Keswick, chairman of Jardine Matheson Group

Corridor and linkages through Southwest China to mainland Southeast Asia and the eastern parts of South Asia, these initiatives look forward to a much higher degree of connectivity with the more than 60 economies covered under these new Silk Road visions. Domestically, the Chinese government has been developing ways of increasing connectivity and integration within China's borders as part of a strategy of coordinated economic development, such as with the Yangtze River Economic Belt strategy.

These initiatives are of great interest to international businesses, such as Jardine Matheson, in considering opportunities in inland China. On a broader front they represent real opportunities to stimulate regional economic development that will enhance the attractiveness of China's markets, as well as those international markets' increasing links with China.

For Jardine Matheson we give examples of two specific areas where we can participate. First is the role of Hong Kong, which will have a pivotal position as a financial center where our group has a significant number of interests. Second is Chongqing, where the group has major investments and which we see as having much to gain as an important hub in the Belt and Road.

It is initiatives such as the Belt and Road that will help maintain China's economic growth and to provide opportunities for the country's

inland cities.

***VOF:** The Jardine Matheson Group was set up in China in 1832. As chairman of this diversified enterprise, which has such a long history, would you please share with us its successful operation philosophy?*

Keswick: I represent the fourth generation of the Keswick family to lead the firm, and am already being followed by a younger generation. I am frequently asked by Chinese business owners how we create businesses that last generations.

It is a critical question. The question of succession means that simply being local or owning a brand won't always be enough for leading Asian firms. The ability to train up a new generation of family business owners, or introduce professional managers without diluting the advantages of being a family-owned firm, will be crucial in the years ahead. Many firms will struggle to make that transition, but some will make the transition and thrive.

The most successful firms will have a strong sense of purpose that helps guide them through uncertainty. At Jardine Matheson, our business model has undergone many changes, market upheavals and new ways of working. Yet our values have remained constant: Our integrity, strong work ethic, financial prudence, long-term view, independent spirit and, most important, our determination to succeed

have been key to the firm's success over the years.

***VOF:** The Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries is one of the earliest organizations in China engaged in people-to-people diplomacy. Have you heard of the association and had exchanges and cooperation with it? What ideas or suggestions do you want to share with us on effectively enhancing mutual understanding among peoples of different countries and promoting international cooperation in the new circumstances?*

Keswick: CPAFFC is a well known organization in the world, with a long history. It is one of the most famous national people's organizations in nongovernmental diplomacy. It has made great contributions in enhancing people's friendship, promoting international cooperation and safeguarding world peace. The CPAFFC has helped Chinese localities establish friendship relationship with more than 2,400 provinces, states and cities in the world. In the UK there are 58 friendship cities with China, for example London-Beijing and Edinburgh-Xi'an, among others.

Thanks to President Li Xiaolin's hospitality I was invited by the CPAFFC to visit Beijing. I hope Jardine Matheson Group will have further cooperation with the CPAFFC in the future. ■