



President Li Xiaolin attends the reception of International Nakuruzi Festival.



President Li Xiaolin takes photo with the representatives of Singapore.



The 4th China-US Governors Forum was held in Chengdu, Sichuan province, on May 22, 2018.



The curtain of the 8th Chinese, Japanese and South Korean Youth Painting and Calligraphy Exchange and exhibition rises at the Gimcheon Museum of Fine Arts in South Korea, on May 22, 2018.



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Published in Chinese and English

Front cover: President Li Xiaolin, Wu Zhongqiong, Vice-Governor of Jiangxi province and Minister Konrad Wolf jointly initiate Chinese culture exhibition marking 200th anniversary of Karl Marx's birth.

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

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ISSN 1000-9582 CN11-1234/D

President Li Xiaolin and her Japanese counterpart co-chair forum for Chinese and Japanese governors

Wang Lei

On May 11, the 3rd Forum of Governors from China and Japan — co-hosted by the CPAFFC, the China-Japan Friendship Association and the Japanese National Governors Association — was successfully held in Sapporo, Hokkaido, Japan. Premier Li Keqiang and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe attended the opening ceremony and delivered speeches. CPAFFC President Li Xiaolin and National Governors Association President Ueda Kiyoshi, who is also governor of Saitama Prefecture, addressed the forum on behalf of the organizers and jointly presided over the exchange events between the Chinese and Japanese governors. CPAFFC Vice-President Song Jingwu was among the attendees. Previous forums were successfully held in Tokyo and Beijing in 2012 and 2014. It is the highest-level platform for the National Governors Association in Japan based on regular exchanges of visits between Chinese and Japanese governors over the past four decades.



Vice-President Xie Yuan attends Michigan China Week

Zhang Yang

Vice-President Xie Yuan led a CPAFFC delegation to Michigan-China Week in the United States from May 6 to 9. The event was hosted by the state government of Michigan and the Michigan-China Innovation Center. Around 150 government and business representatives from Guangdong, Sichuan, Hebei, Liaoning, Jilin and Heilongjiang provinces participated. They visited the American Center for Mobility and the University of Michigan and had extensive exchanges with representatives from public and private sectors of the state. Governor Rick Snyder of Michigan met with Xie. Snyder warmly welcomed the Chinese delegation to the first-ever China Week held in Michigan. He attributed the rapid growth of Michigan's economy in recent years largely to its fruitful cooperation with China, noting that Michigan is now the No 3 US state for Chinese investment. He expressed hope that China Week would create more opportunities for the two sides to increase potential cooperation.



Vice-President Hu Sishe marks 200th anniversary of Karl Marx's birth

Liu Jiayun

On April 20, a news conference about a large-scale cultural exhibition — *Chinese Cultural Series: Meet China in Celebration of the 200th Anniversary of Karl Marx's Birth* — was held in Trier, Germany. The series was jointly sponsored by the CPAFFC, General Directorate for Cultural Heritage Rhineland-Palatinate (Generaldirektion Kulturelles Erbe, or GDKE) and the Federation of German-Chinese Friendship Associations (Arbeitsgemeinschaft Deutscher China-gesellschaften, or ADCG). CPAFFC Vice-President Hu Sishe; Salvatore Barbaro, state secretary of the Ministry of Science, Lifelong Learning and Culture of Rhineland-Palatinate; Thomas Metz, director-general of GDKE; Wolfram Leibe, mayor of Trier; Dr Stefanie Hahn of the Ministry of Science, Lifelong Learning and Culture of Rhineland-Palatinate; Kurt Karst, president of ADCG; representatives from the IHK Chamber of Industry and Commerce Rheinland-Pfalz; and members of the Chamber of Trade attended the news conference.



2018 Cairo Duanwu Dragon Boat Carnival held in Egypt

Gong Xu

On May 12, the 2018 Cairo Duanwu Dragon Boat Carnival was held on the Nile by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the Egyptian-Chinese Friendship Association, with the aim to spread traditional Chinese culture, enhance friendship between the Chinese and Egyptian peoples and commemorate the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Egyptian-Chinese association. The carnival included six dragon boat teams (including one from Shanghai's Putuo district), consisting of paddlers from China, Egypt and the United States. Hundreds of spectators from both China and Egypt watched the competition. This big event was reported by several Egyptian mainstream media outlets. CPAFFC Vice-President Lin Yi, Chinese Ambassador to Egypt Song Aiguo and Vice-President of the Egyptian-Chinese Friendship Association Ahmed Wali attended the opening ceremony. The carnival saw for the first time a mixed team of contestants from the three countries.



Seminar on the practice of Marxism in China held in Brussels

Zuo Fengqiang

A seminar on how Marxism has been practiced in China was held in Brussels on May 5 to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the birth of Karl Marx. The event was jointly hosted by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign countries and the Belgium-China Friendship Association. More than 100 people, including experts and scholars from Belgium, France, Switzerland and China, discussed their understanding of the issue during the seminar. CPAFFC Vice-President Song Jingwu, BCFA Chairman Hans van Duysen and Zhang Chi, minister counsellor of the Chinese embassy in Belgium, attended the seminar and delivered speeches.

Journalists from around 10 media outlets, including Xinhua News Agency, CCTV, People's Daily, Jiefang Daily and China News Service covered the event.



Secretary-General Li Xikui attends signing ceremony for donation of gamma knife to Morocco

Shao Shuai

An agreement was signed in Beijing on Feb 7 for the donation of a gamma knife by the China Friendship Foundation for Peace and Development to the Lalla Salma Foundation of Morocco.

Li Xikui, secretary-general of the CPAFFC and director of the CFFPD, attended the signing ceremony, along with Cao Shudong, deputy general manager of China National Nuclear Corp; Jia Ling, secretary-general of the CFFPD; Meng Yanbin, chairman of the Board of China Isotope & Radiation Corp; Latifa Elabida, secretary-general of Lalla Salma Foundation of the Kingdom of Morocco; Mourad Layachi, charge d'affaires of the embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco in China; Khalil Mohammed, president of Morocco-China Friendship Association; and other leading officials.



Chinese education workers visit Japan

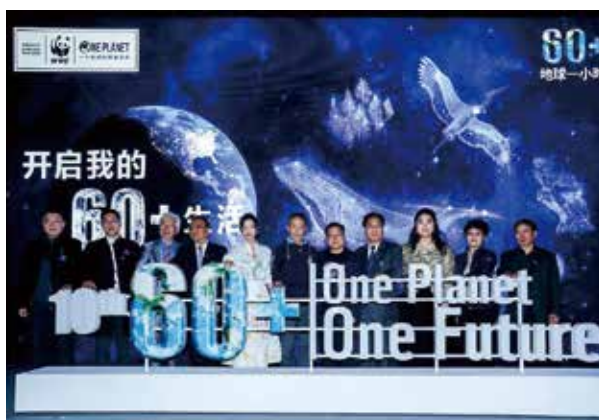
Beijing Friendship Association



At the invitation of Japan-China Friendship Center, the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries organized the 22nd Chinese education workers' delegation for a five-day visit to Japan from Jan 29 to Feb 2 upon the 40th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship between China and Japan. The 59 members of the delegation were all grassroots teachers from Beijing and Heilongjiang, Gansu and Anhui provinces. Among them 29 were backbone teachers from the Dongcheng, Xicheng, Haidian, Chaoyang and Shunyi districts of Beijing, sent by the Beijing People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries. During the visit, the delegation branched out to visit Tokyo, Kyoto and Osaka. The Chinese teachers visited high schools in Tokyo and Osaka to exchange ideas with local teachers and students and learn about Japan's schools.

2018 Earth Hour lights-out at National Stadium

Beijing Friendship Association



On March 24, the Beijing NGO Association for International Exchanges, and the World Wide Fund for Nature held the Earth Hour 2018 lights-out campaign at National Stadium (Birds Nest) in Beijing. More than 260 people attended the countdown ceremony, including Gao Shuangjin, vice-president of the association; leaders from supporting governmental units, such as the foreign affairs office of Beijing municipality, the Beijing city management commission and the Beijing environmental protection bureau; Li Bingbing, the global ambassador of Earth Hour 2018; entrepreneurs Wang Shi and Zhang Zetian; well-known hosts Chen Duo, Wen Yan; artist Yu Quan; young pianist Tian Jiaxin; and other guests from home and abroad. Themed "Open My 60-Plus Life", this year's campaign is expected to bring the 60-plus lifestyle and 20 low-carbon lifestyle behaviors to the public.

Chengdu artist wins top prize at 2017 International Competition of Artists with Disabilities

Chengdu Friendship Association



On the 30th anniversary of the Chengdu-Phoenix sister-city relationship, Laura Pastor, vice-mayor of Phoenix, Arizona, in the United States, led a delegation to Chengdu. Pastor announced during the March 19 meeting with Chengdu Vice-Mayor Liu Xiaoliu that a photograph taken by a Chengdu disabled artist had won the first prize in the 2017 International Competition of Artists with Disabilities. Pastor handed the certificate to the director of the Chengdu Disabled Persons Federation. Since 2006, Chengdu and Phoenix have had frequent exchanges in art. In December 2017, seven artistic works created by disabled people in Phoenix were exhibited at the first Exhibition of Chengdu Disabled Artists' Paintings and Calligraphy.

Setting sail on a long voyage for win-win cooperation

Chengdu Friendship Association



On March 14, 2018, the Queensland Cup Chengdu to the Gold Coast Youth Video Competition officially kicked off in Chengdu, Sichuan province. The competition was co-organized by the Chengdu foreign and overseas Chinese affairs office, the Chengdu education bureau and Study Gold Coast. Thirteen final winners will be selected from among Chengdu middle school students participating in the competition. The winners will go on a two-week free study tour in Gold Coast as goodwill ambassadors. Chengdu and Gold Coast established friendly cooperative relations in 2016. Through the joint efforts of both sides, several exchange events were held, including the 2015 Chengdu-Gold Coast Panda and Koala Sculpture Design Competition, China to Gold Coast—An Education Experience and the 2016-17 Queensland Cup Best of Chengdu teen video contest. More than 20 young students from Chengdu visited Australia for the study tour. At the launching ceremony of the video competition, Chengdu and Gold Coast renewed their framework agreement on education cooperation.

President Li Xiaolin attends opening ceremony of Chinese culture exhibition marking 200th anniversary of Marx's birth

Liu Jiayun

To commemorate the 200th anniversary of Karl Marx's birth, an exhibition of Chinese culture — *Meet China* — is underway in Germany.

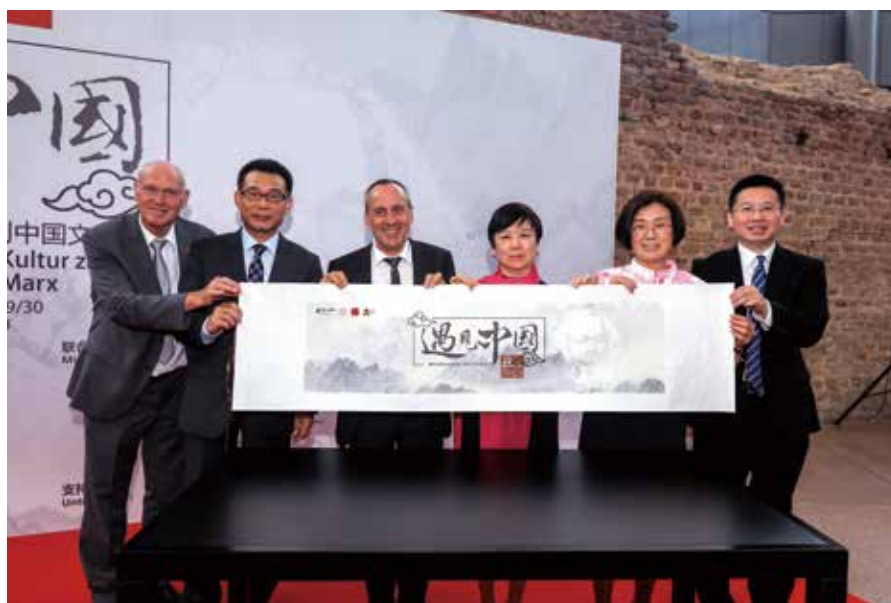
The exhibition series is jointly hosted by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, the General Directorate for Cultural Heritage Rhineland-Palatinate (Generaldirektion Kulturelles Erbe, or GDKE) and the Federation of German-Chinese Friendship Associations (Arbeitsgemeinschaft Deutscher China-Gesellschaften, or ADCG). The opening ceremony was held on June 1 in Thermen am Viehmarkt, a Roman ruins museum in Trier, Germany.

Present at the opening ceremony were nearly 200 honored guests from government, friendship associations and commercial, academic and artistic fields of the Rhineland-Palatinate, as well as Chinese guests, including CPAFFC President Li Xiaolin; Jiangxi province's Vice-Governor Wu Zhongqiong; Consul-General of the Chinese Consulate General in Frankfurt Wang Shunqing; Minister of Science, Lifelong Learning and Culture of Rhineland-Palatinate Konrad Wolf;

President of ADCG Kurt Karst; and Curator of the Rheinisches Landesmuseum Marcus Reuter.

In her speech at the opening ceremony, President Li said that viewers of the exhibition will have a sense of the fascinating Chinese culture from the photos, paintings, handicrafts, historical books and artistic performances characteristic of different areas and different ethnic groups. They could, Li said, find out about the tremendous

changes in China's society and feel the pulse of China's development in the new era. In this way, Li said, they may fall in love with China and begin a journey there. She expressed hope that the exhibition would serve as a window for Germans to learn more about China, a bond to join the two peoples' feelings and friendship and a bridge to facilitate communication and mutual learning between German and Chinese cultures, with exchanges between the



President Li Xiaolin (third from right) with guests at the start of the exhibition.

two countries' provinces and cities.

Wolf said that mutual recognition and communication between different cultures would not only cross political and economic boundaries but also facilitate mutual understanding among different peoples, thereby promoting political and economic development. The seven provinces and cities engaged in the cultural exhibition series, he said, represent almost one-fourth of China's entire territory, enabling people in Trier to learn about various facets of China — a “charming country” — through different activities related to the exhibition.

Jointly launched by the CPAFFC; Jiangxi province; Beijing; Shandong and Qinghai provinces; Chengdu, Sichuan province; Baoshan, Yunnan province; and Shaoxing, Zhejiang province, the Chinese culture exhibition series will be open for four months (June 1 to Sept 30), starting with a segment called Spirit of Jiangxi, Taste of China. President Li Xiaolin, together with Jiangxi Vice-Governor Wu Zhongqiong and Minister Konrad Wolf, announced the opening of the exhibition.

Journalists from German media and their Chinese counterparts from People's Daily and Xinhua News Agency covered the exhibition. People's Daily and German media interviewed President Li.

During her visit in Germany, President Li also had talks with Minister Wolf and Trier Mayor Wolfram Leibe. ■

Taiwan county hosts 8th Cross-Straits Spring Festival Temple Fair

Liu Jiacheng

From Feb 17 to 21, the *8th Cross-Straits Spring Festival Temple Fair of Folk Customs* — jointly organized by the China Friendship Foundation for Peace and Development (CFFPD), the Chinese Culture Friendship Association and the Sichuan People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries — was held with success at the Convention and Exhibition Center in Nantou county, Taiwan. Vice-President Xie Yuan of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, CFFPD Secretary-General Jia Ling, Nantou county Mayor Lin Mingzhen and Deputy Mayor Chen Zhengsheng attended the opening ceremony.

Bashu culture crosses the Straits

Recently, because of the strained and complex situation across the Taiwan Straits, the Temple Fair — which had been held at the Taichung Cultural and Creative Industries Park for seven years — had to be temporarily relocated to the Convention and Exhibition Center of Nantou county, Taiwan. Some other unexpected negative fac-

tors also added to the difficulty of running the fair. Following instructions from CPAFFC President Lin Xiaolin, the CFFPD and the Sichuan friendship association made painstaking efforts in their preparatory work. They patiently coordinated with relevant parties to ensure the successful opening of the fair as scheduled.

The Temple Fair included a tourism-themed photography exhibition, a Sichuan delicacies buffet, a promotional sale of special Sichuan products, a Sichuan tea exhibition, a display of lanterns made in Zigong city, an intangible cultural heritage exhibition, an ethnic song and dance performance, the *Charming Sichuan* exhibition and a promotional exhibition about Sichuan aviation and logistics. The exhibitions and performances were highly acclaimed by the Taiwan public. Every day, throngs of visitors came to experience a Bashu-flavored Spring Festival.

More than 300,000 people visited the Temple Fair during the five days, an unprecedented event in the county. CCTV4 Chinese International Channel, Sichuan Satellite TV, People's Daily

Online, Sina.com, Sohu.com, China Vision News, CTS News, TVBS News, Central News Agency, Taichung Daily and 10 other mainstream media outlets from both sides of the Taiwan Straits covered the event.

Disaster relief effort

On the eve of the event, a magnitude-6.5 earthquake jolted Hualien county, Taiwan, causing casualties and property losses. In an expression of sympathy for affected Taiwan compatriots, the CFFPD donated NT\$500,000 to the affected areas. CPAFFC Vice-President Xie announced the donation at the Temple Fair's opening ceremony, wishing the disaster-hit areas success in weathering the difficulties.

During the fair, local attendees tasted snacks, watched performances, enjoyed folk customs and talked with members of the delegation. Touching stories happened every day.

"I heard that your Temple Fair had moved to Nantou this year, bringing Sichuan food and intangible cultural heritage. So I went out of my way from Taichung," a man surnamed Hong, who has been a follower of the fair for seven years, told us. "Wherever your Temple Fair goes, I'll be on its heels."

Leraning from media reports that the Sichuan Temple Fair would be held in Nantou, a woman surnamed Yan, a Sichuan native who lives in Taiwan, took several of her friends — also Sichuan natives — to the fair on the first day of its opening. She said that it had been more than a decade since she last went home to Sichuan and that the

Temple Fair quenched their thirst for native food and assuaged their homesickness.

On the stage, the Sichuan performers shook hands with members of the audience and asked if they liked the performance. The local viewers responded with exhilaration, "We like you all very much! It was the Tsai authorities that created trouble to prevent you from coming! We hope you will come to Taiwan every year!"

A woman surnamed Xiao from Changhua, Taiwan, had never been to Sichuan, yet she was very interested in Sichuan Opera and imagined many times sitting in a theater watching live performances. She took her husband and daughter to enjoy up-close the magical face-changing skills of Sichuan Opera. She was especially grati-

fied, saying that this year's Spring Festival made her dream come true.

Upon arriving in Taiwan, Jiang Weiming, a master of dark tea making, an intangible cultural heritage from Sichuan, bought a teapot made of mud taken from Sun Moon Lake. He remarked that using teapots made in Taiwan to make dark tea from Sichuan would better unleash the tea fragrance and make the tea more aromatic. Every day his stall was surrounded by visitors who came especially to ask for a sip of tea.

The Temple Fair captured the quintessence of Chinese culture shared across the Taiwan Straits as it has existed in the customs of people on both sides. The event greatly promoted cultural exchanges between the two sides and brought the people from the island and mainland closer. ■



Face-changing in Sichuan Opera

Building consensus for the future

Henan friendship association makes fruitful visit to Japan

Zhang Zhongxun

Invited by Japanese Shorinji Kempo Unity, Liu Jinfeng, vice-president of the Henan People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, led a delegation of four people to Japan from Feb 23 to 25. SKU is a martial arts association.

During the visit, the delegation attended closing ceremonies marking the 70th anniversary of the founding of SKU, as well as other events that were part of friendly exchanges. The delegation met with leaders of SKU, representatives from Japanese political and business sectors, officials from the Chinese embassy in Japan and officials from Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries. They reviewed the history of friendly cooperation between SKU and Henan and conducted in-depth discussions

on starting new areas of cooperation and exchanges in the future. They also discussed the best ways to conduct exchanges.

The delegation met Yuki So, president of SKU, on Feb 23. Vice-President Liu delivered congratulations to SKU on the 70th anniversary of its founding on behalf of Henan province and expressed his admiration and gratitude for the plentiful work SKU had done over the years to promote friendly cooperation and exchanges between China and Japan, as well as between Henan and various sectors in Japan. Liu briefed his hosts about the 19th Congress of the Communist Party of China and the current economic and social situation in Henan province. He proposed to expand exchanges and cooperation

in new fields in the future while strengthening the current friendly cooperation in culture, education and grooming of talent.

President So said she is always concerned about the development of China and Henan and will continue to pay attention to the implementation of Henan's development strategy in the future. In particular, she will pay close attention to the building of the Zhengzhou Airport Economic Zone, National Innovation Demonstration Zone and the formidable task of poverty alleviation, and will offer support in all possible aspects, she said.

On Feb 24, the delegation attended the closing ceremony marking the 70th Anniversary of the founding of SKU. About 430 people attended the

closing ceremony. Attendees included government officials; representatives of the business sector; middle and senior leaders of SKU; Cheng Yonghua, China's ambassador to Japan; Zhu Dan, deputy director-general of the CPAFFC's Japan department; and Shi Yongxin, abbot of Henan's Shaolin Temple.

Ambassador Cheng, speaking for the Chinese embassy in Japan, noted that China and Japan are neighbors and have a history of more than 2,000 years of friendly exchanges. As a typical example of Sino-Japanese cultural exchanges, Shaolin Temple boxing in Japan has deep roots in China, Cheng said.

"In the past 70 years, SKU has played an important role in promoting mutual understanding and friendship between the two peoples," Cheng said. "We sincerely hope that it will continue to increase its role as a bridge, and take the opportunity of this year's 40th anniversary of the Sino-Japanese Treaty of Peace and Friendship to further carry out exchanges with China."

In her speech, So expressed her gratitude for the support received from all walks of life. She spoke of the philosophy of Shaolin Temple boxing in Japan and said she will continue to push forward the development of the SKU.

The delegation also exchanged ideas with Ambassador Cheng and Deputy Director-General Zhu about China's relations with Japan. Cheng and Zhu spoke highly of the

fruitful results Henan had achieved in exchanges with Japan, and said that people-to-people exchanges have broad prospects for further development. They promised that they will continue to support and help Henan in exchanges with Japan.

The three-day visit was fruitful and meaningful. The delegation enhanced mutual understanding and trust through in-depth exchanges with senior officials of the SKU and various political and business sectors. The visit also effectively enhanced Henan's influence and popularity in Japan.

Next, the delegation will follow up and implement the many consensuses reached during the visit. For example, efforts will be made to encourage Zhengzhou University to establish links with Japan's top universities, to accelerate the development of higher education in Henan province. Second, more visits and exchanges will be arranged to help the young people of the two countries enhance mutual understanding and broaden horizons. Third, SKU will rely on its special strengths to encourage Japanese businesses to invest in Henan. This will boost the implementation of development strategies such as Zhengzhou Airport Economic Zone, the National Innovation Demonstration Zone and poverty alleviation work.

After the visit, delegates said they believed that the civilian foundation of Sino-Japanese friendship is solid,

and there are broad prospects for cooperation between China and Japan in various fields.

They made two suggestions: First, Henan must vigorously develop people-to-people exchanges that will promote more official exchanges between the two governments. Since ancient times, nongovernmental exchanges have been an important part of the diplomatic relationship between nations. As far as Sino-Japanese relations are concerned, nongovernmental exchanges have remained stable in history, and have played an indispensable role in promoting mutual understanding and trust. To deepen exchanges and cooperation between Henan and SKU, the two sides need to continuously develop new and better methods of carrying out nongovernmental exchanges to promote intergovernmental exchanges.

Second, Henan should continuously broaden the scope of cooperation with Japan. Doshin So, the founder of SKU, believed that "realization of world peace starts from Japan-China friendship. Without friendship between the two neighboring nations, there will be no peace in Asia. Without peace in Asia, there will be no peace in the world".

SKU has long adhered to this principle and has promoted exchanges with China. Thus it has contributed significantly to Henan's economic and social development, the SKU president said. ■

2018 Beijing Belt & Road Culture Tour in Pakistan

Beijing Friendship Association

A ceremony was held at the Chinese Culture Center in Islamabad, Pakistan, on Feb 5 to launch the Beijing Belt & Road Culture Tour, a program hosted by the Chinese capital for cultural exchanges with countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative.

The ceremony was organized by the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan, the All Pakistan-China Friendship Association, the Beijing People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the government of Beijing's Xicheng district.

The event was part of a program initiated by the Beijing association and the Xicheng government to promote cultural exchanges with foreign countries. Their efforts also included an earlier Beijing-ASEAN Culture Tour. The exchange program aims to tell the world about Beijing's efforts to build itself into a center of political, cultural and technological innovation, while carrying on traditional Chinese culture.

Yao Jing, China's ambassador to Pakistan, attended the opening ceremony. Speeches were given by You Yi, director of the Pakistan China Culture Center; Syed Junaid Akhlaq, joint secretary of the Pakistan national history and literary heritage division; Li Yi, head of the tour delegation and deputy mayor of Xicheng district; and Attia A.

Qutub, president of All Pakistan-China Friendship Association.

The ceremony had more than 150 guests, including some from China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education, Higher Education Commission and Confucius Institutes, as well as Chinese exchange students in Pakistan, delegates from the All Pakistan-China Friendship Association, the Pakistan National Council of Arts and partners of the Chinese Culture Center.

The event featured Beijing's intangible cultural heritage handicrafts and a photography exhibition, *China Story: 2017 Photo Show*. Seven handicrafts maestros showed their skills in creating the heritage items — inner-painted

snuff bottles, traditional drug incense, clay masks, painted sculptures, paper cutting, bristle figures and color drawings on classic gourds — all of which attracted long lines of visitors waiting for a closer look or a brief dialogue with the artisans. The photo exhibition presented major events taking place in China in 2017, as well as various achievements in Beijing urban development and the lives of residents. The show included 10 prize-winning works by Pakistani participants in the Beijing in the Eyes of Foreign Friends photography contest.

The exchange program was designed to promote mutual understanding between the people of Beijing and those of other countries. ■



2018 China-Vietnam Traditional New Year Woodblock Prints exhibition opens in Beijing

Beijing Friendship Association

While the rising sun shines over each and every household / People would put up new peach wood charm for the old.

These two poetic lines describe how people replace old woodblock prints for the coming New Year.

To welcome the coming spring, a ceremony was held in the compound of the Beijing People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (BPAFFC) on Jan 8 for the China-Vietnam Joint Exhibition of Traditional Woodblock Prints, jointly hosted by the BPAFFC; ASEAN-China Center; International Cooperation Bureau of Vietnam's Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism; and the government of Beijing's Xicheng district.

China and Vietnam have long been neighbors with shared borders and destinies. People in both countries have had frequent exchanges and learned from each other, producing many shared customs.

To celebrate Spring Festival, the two countries planned last year to hold the Joint Exhibition of New Year Woodblock Prints, an iconic symbol of the New Year. The event coincided with the visit by a Vietnamese cultural delegation led by Nguyen Ngoc Thien, the country's minister of culture, sports

and tourism.

The exhibition included 50 choice woodblock prints from the two countries, showing unique artistic characteristics and local flavor, together with a sense of common origin. The prints were first displayed in Beijing during Spring Festival and scheduled to move to Hanoi to entertain Vietnamese viewers.

At the opening ceremony, Mr Bai Dacheng, an expert on Beijing folklore, introduced the origins and different genres of Chinese woodblock prints. His Vietnamese counterpart presented five fruit plates characteristic of Vietnamese

springtime customs. Guests from both countries could also make their own woodblock prints, and practiced writing spring couplets.

The ceremony was attended by members of the Vietnamese culture delegation; Vietnam's Ambassador to China Dang Minh Khoi; Xie Jinying, director of the international liaison bureau of China's Ministry of Culture; Sun Jianhua, deputy director of education, culture and tourism at the ASEAN-China Center; Tian Yan, executive vice-president of the BPAFFC; and Li Meng, vice-president of BPAFFC. Media outlets from Vietnam and China covered the event. ■



Second China-Morocco Friendship Forum held in Agadir

Ai Lin

China and Morocco have enjoyed a long history of friendly exchanges. Ibn Batuteh, a famous Moroccan traveler, created an often retold story about the maritime Silk Road between the two countries. This year marks the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Morocco.

In order to consolidate the traditional friendship and strengthen people-to-people cooperation between China and Arab and African countries, the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, the Morocco-China Friendship and Exchange Association and the Sous Massa Region jointly held the Second China-Morocco Friendship Forum in Agadir on March 26 and 27.

Nongovernmental organizations work together to promote local government exchanges

The China-Morocco Friendship Forum was jointly created by the CPAFFC and the MCFEA with the aim of enhancing mutual understanding between provinces and cities of China and Morocco and pushing to build an institutional platform of practical cooperation in the fields of business, trade, culture and tourism. The MCFEA has been a partner of the CPAFFC for many

years. Mohamed Khalil, its president, has done much to promote people-to-people exchanges between the two countries. In January 2016, during President Xi Jinping's visit to Egypt, Khalil was presented with the China-Arab Friendship Outstanding Contribution Award with nine other Arab figures and had a group photo taken with President Xi.

The First China-Morocco Friendship Forum was held in Rabat in April 2016 — themed “Spring of the Silk Road is Blooming in Morocco” and attended by 150 local officials of 10 provinces and cities in China and

Morocco, as well as representatives of entrepreneurs from both countries. Saadeddine Othmani, Morocco's current prime minister, who was minister of foreign affairs at the time, attended the forum, and more than 10 Moroccan and international media outlets covered the event with reports that generated favorable social responses.

The Second China-Morocco Friendship Forum had two themes — “Morocco: Portal of China's Belt and Road Initiative in Africa” and “60 Years of Relations between China and Morocco”. More than 400 people from 17 provinces and cities in China and



A speaker at the Second China-Morocco Friendship Forum.

more than 10 Moroccan provinces and cities, including leaders of local governments and representatives from cultural, trade and economic circles, attended the forum. Both sides had in-depth discussions on establishing friendship-city relations and enhancing cooperation in agriculture, industry, fishery, tourism, culture, new energy and the digital economy. The discussions bore fruit. The forum received the attention and support of King Mohammed VI of Morocco. Vice-President Lin Yi of the CPAFFC delivered a speech at the opening ceremony. Artists from both countries performed at the closing banquet to add warmth to the friendly atmosphere.

Local government exchanges lead to practical cooperation in various fields

Seven pairs of Chinese and Moroccan provinces and cities reached a preliminary agreement on cooperation during the second forum. Letters of intent to establish friendship-city relations were signed in the following groupings: Shanxi province and Ningxia Hui autonomous region with the Souss-Massa region; Ganxi province with the Marrakech-Safi region; Datong city with Taroudannt province of the Souss-Massa region; Changzhi and Nanjing with Agadir; and Wuxi with Ait Melloul.

Shanghai Jiaotong University signed a memorandum of understanding on academic exchanges and cooperation with Ibn Zuhr University. Tea

companies from Guizhou province displayed their products and performed the traditional tea ceremony at the forum, which drew the attention of more than 10 enterprises, including the Morocco Aveiro Co, HTM Consulting Firm and Haliotis Consulting Firm. They had talks on specific cooperative matters, such as product sampling and pricing, and reached preliminary agreements for export of about 3,000 tons of tea. After field investigations, Guizhou New Energy Automobile planned to have specific discussions with the MCFEA and the Souss-Massa region on setting up a distribution center or branch in the country. Companies from Dalian reached intent agreements with the Souss-Massa region on cooperation in aquaculture.

Practical cooperation consolidates traditional friendship

The China-Morocco Friendship

Forum takes practical cooperation at local government level as a starting point, consolidates the China-Morocco strategic partnership and strengthens friendship between the peoples of both countries. As a member of the African Union and member of the Arab League, and with its unique geographical position, Morocco will play a greater role in enhancing the China-Africa comprehensive strategic partnership of cooperation and the China-Arab partnership for comprehensive cooperation and common development. It will reinforce China's cooperation with Arab and African countries in the construction of the Belt and Road. The forum has also laid a solid foundation for holding the Summit of the China-Africa Cooperation Forum and the Eighth Ministerial Meeting of the China-Arab Countries Cooperation Forum scheduled for later this year in Beijing. ■



Chinese lanterns overflowing with lights, colors in Europe

Wu Yuna

In the winter of 2017, southern France was hit by the most severe freeze in a decade, and yet the southern city of Gaiaque, with a population of just 10,000, had 250,000 visitors in town. What attracted them to brave the cold and rain to visit the small city? A Chinese lantern festival, the first kind of it in France.

The lantern festival, jointly hosted by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the government of Gaiaque, and operated by the Zigong Lantern Culture & Industry Group, lasted for two months from Nov 30, 2017 to Jan 31, 2018. A total of 35 sets of lanterns were displayed, featuring Chinese traditional culture and Gaiaque's folk customs. The colorful lanterns, with delicate paintings showing typical Chinese images and scenes representing Gaiaque's traditional customs — the Temple of Heaven in Beijing, Chinese porcelain dragons, adorable giant pandas and peacocks, as well as fountain sculptures and wine breweries commonly seen in the French town. The novel lanterns were crafted with ingenuity and made a resounding impact in France.

People came to the festival from the 20-odd towns around Gaiaque in Tarn province, as well as from Paris, Lyon, Marseille, Toulouse, and even

from Spain and Switzerland. The French national television stations M6 and D3 aired the Gaiaque Chinese Lantern Festival during prime time, creating a sensation in France. The number of visitors on weekends hit more than 10,000, and they waited 20 minutes on average before entry. Yet the long wait did not dampen the gusto. The board of directors of the Toulouse Airport organized a group to visit Gaiaque. The directors enjoyed themselves so much that they lingered in the exhibition area for a long time. Some large French businesses even chose the site as the venue for their annual New Year's meeting, to the joy of their employees, who said that they had never attended a New Year's meeting with so much fun and significance. Many visitors bought multiple-entry tickets so they could see the lanterns more than once. A couple who came from the city of Albi visited three times and afterward was still reluctant to leave for home. At the conclusion of the festival, the mayor had to decline requests from more than 20 French travel agencies for additional visits.

The Gaiaque Chinese Lantern Festival also captured the attention of France's central government and many local governments. The French minister of culture wrote a letter of congratu-

lations on the success of the lantern show. The Oxitani area, where Gaiaque is located, also made a commitment to improving the parking conditions near the festival venue. Local tourism businesses were the happiest of all. A fast-food shop owner told reporters with excitement: "The lantern festival is fantastic. At peak time, I have to prepare meals for 400 people. I've made a lot of money this winter. We used to feel hopeless about our city, thinking that it was too small to be promising, but now we think our city is back to life."

Exuding confidence, the mayor of Gaiaque told us that his city would continue to host the festival in the future and make it a China-themed cultural festival rivaling Disneyland in France.

Lantern festival finds its way into 2018 China-EU Tourism Year

The success of the Gaiaque Chinese Lantern Festival showed us a shortcut for introducing Chinese culture to European people. The year 2018 has been designated China-EU Tourism Year. When we learned that the Chinese mission to the EU was preparing supporting activities for the Year of Tourism, we did not hesitate to recommend the use of lanterns from Zigong Lantern Culture & Industry Group. The proposal was immediately

accepted by the Chinese mission to the EU, the European Commission and the Brussels City Council.

On Feb 22, a large-scale lantern festival exhibition themed “2018 China-EU Tourism Year: Lighting Up the Heart of Europe”, sponsored by the mission, China’s Embassy to Belgium, the Sichuan provincial People’s Government, the CAFFC, the European Commission and the Brussels City Council was unveiled in Brussels, Belgium, where the EU headquarters is located. Nine groups of large lanterns, such as the Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests at the Temple of Heaven, the Belgian Atomium, red lantern colonnades, blue and white porcelain and panda images made their dazzling debut at the Grand Place in Brussels and its periphery. That night, more than 300 guests from all walks of life attended the reception and lighting ceremony, joined by a number of celebrities, including Zhang Ming, head of the Chinese mission to the EU; Qu Xing, Chinese ambassador to Belgium; Yang Xingping, vice-governor of Sichuan province; Shen Xin, director of the European and Asian department of the CPAFFC; Lowri Evans, director-general and Irmfried Schwimann, deputy director-general of the Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs; Philippe Close, mayor of Brussels; Karine Lalieux, deputy mayor of Brussels; and former Belgian prime minister Elio Di Rupo.

When night fell, amid the synchronized countdown chanted by nearly a thousand visitors at the scene,

the Chinese and foreign VIP guests pressed buttons to start the movement of a glass ball with the scrolling words “China-EU Tourism Year”. Instantly, the nine sets of lanterns at the Grand Place and its periphery lit up simultaneously amid the melodies of classical Chinese ritual music. The time-honored city hall was clad in Chinese red. Exclamations and cheers arose from the crowds. People excitedly took pictures of the lanterns and immersed themselves in the joyful, festive atmosphere.

The national television station of Belgium, European News and Capital News of Belgium reported on the lantern show. Other traditional media and new media also reposted their reports.

Chinese traditional culture shines in Europe

The reason the lantern festival proved popular in Europe is that lantern fairs are an outstanding part of Chinese

culture, combining art, customs, history, culture and music in one. Also, the touring lanterns narrated Chinese stories to bring the hearts of Chinese and European people closer to each other. In addition, the organizers of the event did a good job in preparing and promoting the festival. They elaborately designed and arranged the displays, which incorporated elements of local life and customs to generate affinity among the local visitors.

The CPAFFC has accumulated rich experience during its longtime foreign publicity work, and hence has a keen sense and ability to find opportunities and partners. Our sincere and earnest attitude is also playing a pivotal role in moving our partners.

It is hoped that the dazzling lights of Chinese lanterns will serve as a window for people across the globe to learn more about Chinese culture and the warm and kindhearted Chinese people, working together to build a peaceful and beautiful world in the future. ■



Brussels seminar commemorates 200th anniversary of the birth of Karl Marx

Zuo Fengqiang

The Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the Belgium-China Association held a seminar in Brussels on May 5, 2018 to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the birth of Karl Marx. More than 100 experts and scholars from Belgium, France, Switzerland and China attended the seminar — called The Practice of Marxism in China — along with other guests. They delivered speeches on this important topic and exchanged ideas.

In his speech at the opening ceremony, CPAFFC Vice-President Song Jingwu said: “Comrade Xi Jinping has put forward a series of groundbreaking concepts, thoughts and strategies about the governance of the country in line with contemporary national conditions and practical needs. The new ideas and thoughts mark the birth of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era — which is leading the Party’s and nation’s cause — to make revolutionary accomplishments and bring about revolutionary change. This is another great leap forward in the localization of Marxism in China, which will guide the Chinese people to accomplish the great mission of national rejuvenation.”

Minister Counselor Zhang Chi

of the Chinese Embassy in Belgium said in his speech: “Never forget why you started, and you can accomplish your mission. One hundred and seventy years ago, Marx and Engels wrote the manifesto of proletarian revolution. After so many years, the Communist Party of China has never wavered, despite adversity, and has always taken the people’s aspiration for a better life as its goal. Under the leadership of the Party Central Committee, with Comrade Xi Jinping as the core, the Chinese people are not only striving to realize the Chinese Dream but also willing to build a beautiful World Dream with the people of the world.”

President Hans Van Duysen of the Belgium-China Friendship Association said in his speech: “Despite the changes of the times, Marxism is not outdated, and the West should reflect on its own problems. China has created a different development pattern from that of the Western world, found a suitable development path and made remarkable achievements. I believe that the China model will help the world overcome the crisis that may occur in the future.”

In the keynote speeches section, experts and scholars from both

China and abroad — such as M. Frank Willems, former president of the Belgium-China Friendship Association; Professor M. Harro Von Senger of the Swiss Comparative Law School; Professor Luo Kequan of the Marxism College of the Jilin University; and Associate Professor Jiao Yushi of the Party School of the Guizhou provincial Party Committee, elaborated on such topics as Marx and Marxism in Belgium, two major functions of Marxism in China and its influence in Chinese politics, the origin and practical significance of the Marxist Theory of “a community of shared future for mankind”, the logic of the Communist Manifesto and the theory of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

During the dialogue and exchange session, about 100 experts, scholars and other attendees enthusiastically discussed the relations between Marxist theory and the new thoughts, new ideas and new theories such as the Chinese Dream, the Belt and Road Initiative and “a community of shared future for mankind”.

More than 10 media outlets, including Xinhua News Agency, People’s Daily, China News Agency, and Jiefang Daily, covered the event. ■

For the everlasting friendship between China and Japan

Interview with Utsunomiya Tokuichiro

He Yan

Utsunomiya Tokuichiro was born into a family traditionally friendly toward China. He is vice-chairman of the Japan-China Friendship Association and chairman of the Tokyo Japan-China Friendship Association. As the eldest grandson, he was idolized by his grandfather Utsunomiya Tokuma and has been deeply influenced by the atmosphere of Sino-Japanese friendship in the family.

After completing his college studies in Japan, Utsunomiya Tokuichiro went to the United States for seven years of postgraduate study at the University of Texas and attained a Doctor of Medicine degree. During the period, he reviewed Sino-Japanese relations from an international perspective and concluded that Japan must strengthen cooperation with China and other Asian countries. Despite the US-Japan alliance, Japan was just one of America's allies. Japan,

he argued, needed to approach its nearest neighbor, China, which has a time-honored history and culture. The two nations should establish — and continue to deepen — a mutually beneficial strategic relationship, he said.

In November 2017, Utsunomiya Tokuichiro led a delegation of Japanese citizens to Beijing. I had a chat with him at the hotel. Looking back over the past, he said: “In August 1989, my grandfather was bestowed an honorary doctorate of law by Peking University for his contribution to friendship and peace between Japan and China. I accompanied my father and grandfather to Beijing. It was my first time to be in China. It was a significant event in my life.”

My grandfather helped Japan and China normalize relations.

Q: In November 1987, the Japanese government awarded your

grandfather the First Class Order of the Rising Sun. In 1991 he was awarded the title of Friendship Ambassador by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries. May I ask how your grandfather contributed to the normalization of diplomatic relations between China and Japan?

A: My grandfather was a statesman. After World War II, he joined the Liberal Democratic Party of Japan. In 1952, he was elected a House representative and continued to be elected for 10 consecutive terms. In his opinion, Japan should apologize to the Chinese people for the crimes it committed during the war of aggression against China. He called for the normalization of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

In 1959, my grandfather accompanied Ishibashi Tanzan, former Japanese prime minister, to visit

China and was received by Premier Zhou Enlai. That meeting left a deep impression on him and reinforced his determination to push for Japan-China friendship.

After that, he visited China many times. In order to push the two countries' relations towards normalization, he established an Asian-African studies society inside the LDP. However, there were many opponents in the party, such as Kishi Nobusuke, grandfather of the current Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. Debates within the party on the issue lasted until the normalization of the diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1972.

My grandfather loved peace. He hoped that Japan would not make the same mistake as in the past. Though I knew little about that period of the history, I heard many stories from my grandfather. Now, I often hear stories about my grandfather from the elders of my family.

Q: Would you please share with us the contacts between your grandfather and Chinese leaders such as Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping?

A: After 1959, my grandfather maintained a good relationship with Premier Zhou Enlai. When Deng Xiaoping visited Japan in 1978, my grandfather met him for the first time. It was during a factory tour. There is a photo of him shaking hands with Deng. They looked like brothers.

That was a happy moment. My

grandfather was happy that he had played an important role in promoting economic and trade relations between China and Japan. The Japanese businesses hoped that bilateral relations could develop further so that they could enter the huge Chinese market. My grandfather helped many of them start business in China.

In the 1960s, my grandfather might have met Chairman Mao. I'm not sure, for I knew nothing about their contact, if any. Every time he came to China, he mainly met with Zhou Enlai. Certainly, he looked up to Mao.

Q: Why did your grandfather launch the Disarmament Review?

A: It was his promise to the voters. In the 1976 election, disappointed with the LDP, my grandfather decided to withdraw from politics. He opposed the political views of Kurisu Hiroomi, a far-right-wing retired officer of the Self-Defense Force, who advocated strengthening of armaments.

Many voters yearned for peace and urged my grandfather to participate in the election again. To their delight, he won the election in 1980 and became a member of the House of Councilors. In order to keep his promise to the voters, he organized the nonpartisan Dietmen League for International Disarmament, set up the Utsunomiya Disarmament Laboratory and published the monthly magazine Disarmament Review at his own expenses to promote peace and friendship.

From 1980 to 2000, my grandfather remained committed

to publishing the magazine. After his death in 2000, the relay baton was passed on to his friends. The publication ran until 2004. This is one of my grandfather's great contributions to the Japanese people, the Asian people and particularly the Chinese people.

Q: What is your grandfather's influence on you?

A: I am his eldest grandson. He lived with us. In my eyes, he was a kind old man, but he appeared powerful in office or on public occasions. Occasionally he would lose his temper. However, he was tender to women and often offered help to stateswomen, such as Doi Takako, former leader of the Social Democratic Party of Japan.

Although Doi Takako and my grandfather were not from the same party, he still gave her a lot of help, such as introducing her to American statesmen, helping her understand Japan-China relations and even offering her financial support. At my grandfather's funeral, Doi Takako said that she was lucky to have met my grandfather.

Before World War II, my grandfather was a student at Kyoto University. His article criticizing the system of the Emperor led to his imprisonment for a year and a half. After he was released, he began to study economics and made a fortune in business. He then founded his own company, Minophagen Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd, to support his political activities and win Diet election.

My grandfather hoped that I would also go into politics. Regretfully, I did not live up to his expectations. Now, I am in charge of the Minophagen Pharmaceutical Co.

In my memory, my grandfather threw a big party every spring when cherry trees were in bloom, inviting his friends and Chinese officials, including the Chinese ambassador. He hoped that future generations of Japan and China would follow the path of everlasting friendship.

I am included in the future generations, in my grandfather's words. I love his idea — Japan and China following the path of everlasting friendship. As president of the Japan-China Friendship Association in Tokyo, I, just like my grandfather, will continue to be committed to the cause of Japan-China friendship for the sake of the well-being of our children and grandchildren.

Encourage more Japanese people to visit China

Q: It is a consensus reached by China and Japan to put aside disputes over the Diaoyu Islands. However, since the Noda Yoshihiko government announced the implementation of the so-called nationalization of the Diaoyu Islands in 2012, the Sino-Japanese relationship has experienced difficulties. What is your comment on this matter?

A: It is too difficult to answer this question about the “islands”. In my view, it is a regrettable thing. We

should not let such regrettable things happen again. The disputes have caused suspension of some friendly exchanges between the two countries.

Q: 2017 marks the 45th anniversary of the normalization of the diplomatic relations between China and Japan. 2018 marks the 40th anniversary of the signing of the China-Japan Treaty of Peace and Friendship. In your view, will the anniversary become a turning point in bilateral relations?

A: I think it is an important occasion. The current situation is different from five years ago. Although the LDP did not start the islands dispute, it has carried on the policies of the party that did create the dispute. So the issue remains unresolved.

In my opinion, things are improving gradually. The Japan-China Friendship Association is working closely with the Chinese embassy to encourage Japanese youths to visit China. Not long ago, 1,000 Japanese college students from Tokyo interacted with their Chinese counterparts in a gathering at Peking University as part of an exchange program. I myself took part in the activity.

Back in my country, many Japanese students study Chinese as their second or third language. Some can speak very good Chinese but have no chance to visit China. The exchange program will continue three or four years. The initial project has helped about 2,000 Japanese students visit China.

Visiting China is a good way for Japanese young people to learn about the real China, and to understand and deepen their friendship with the Chinese people. However, given that China is scantily reported by the Japanese media, the Japanese people cannot get the right information. Eighty percent of the Japanese public do not have a positive feeling toward China.

The number of Japanese people visiting China is decreasing, while more Chinese people come to Japan. Many have expressed their affinity for Japan. I think more programs should be in place to promote people-to-people exchanges between the two countries, and particularly encouraging the Japanese people to visit China. I believe that a better bilateral relationship can be achieved through these programs.

Further exchanges between the young people

Q: As vice-chairman of the Japan-China Friendship Association and chairman of the Tokyo Japan-China Friendship Association, could you please share with us your stories in enhancing the Sino-Japanese friendship?

A: I have been working for the Japan-China Friendship Association since 2009. Here I would like to mention Saionji Kazuteru. He was my mentor in my study of China. During my first visit to China with my grandfather and father in 1989, Mr Kazuteru was also in the company. One day in 2009, he came to my office and

said, “You are Utsunomiya Tokuma’s grandson and you live in Tokyo. Why don’t you work for the Japan-China Friendship Association?” Persuaded by him, I served as an adviser soon after. In 2010, I became the leader of the Association’s Youth Council.

The year 2010 was of great significance to me. I had just taken over the company from my father, which meant that I had to deal with both my corporate business and my job at the association. But I gradually learned how to unfold my engagement in the association. At that time, there were many elderly members of the association. Thinking that it was not good for the development of the association, I did a lot of work to invite young people to join us. Today, the association consists of many college students, mostly younger than 30. The Japan-China Friendship Association has become a sustainable organization with strong momentum for development and a good partner of the China-Japan Friendship Association.

Q: How will the Japan-China Friendship Association continue to advance Sino-Japanese relations?

A: As I mentioned just now, the association has launched a project to help the Japanese college students visit China. But it’s a pity that most of them have not become members yet, due to their scanty knowledge of our association or simply lack of time. Students are often too busy with their studies to take part in extracurricular activities.

However, there are still a considerable number of young people

who wanted to join the association. When I first joined, there were few young members. By contrast, we now have 20 young members just in the Tokyo branch. There are over 40 branches in different cities of Japan. Young people are scattered throughout these branches.

I subsidize the Tokyo branch with money from my company’s profits. My company makes big bucks from its business with Chinese companies. So why not donate part of the earnings? Besides, donations can also bring us tax cuts. Honestly, the current state of our association is indeed a hard-earned result. We will continue to make progress.

Q: What will the Japan-China Friendship Association do to increase people-to-people exchanges?

A: For Japan, it is very important to learn more about history, especially that of the last 100 years. For example, we organized a visit by Japanese students to the Marco Polo Bridge to help them get some knowledge about that period of history. The Japanese government and educational authorities are vague in their attitude toward the modern history of Japan-China relations. They never told the Japanese students what the Japanese army had done in China.

In order to help the Japanese students learn about history, the association has also organized trips to Beijing and Nanjing. We will do more to reveal Japan’s past in waging the aggressive war against China. Only in this way can friendly relations be built between the Japanese and Chinese

peoples. If historical truth is kept in dark, there can be no friendly relations.

Only when the Japanese people know more about China, can they have respect for this country and mutual respect can be built between the two peoples. Unfortunately, we have not achieved this result yet. We will work even harder in this regard.

In China, many young people are fond of the Japanese culture, including Japanese anime. In recent years, a lot of Chinese youths have visited Japan. Perhaps it is easier for the young people of the two nations to communicate with each other, as they have common interests and more communication channels, such as chatting online.

I hope that the younger generation of the two countries strengthens exchanges. I also hope that more Chinese work in Japanese companies and more Japanese get employed by Chinese businesses. The once-bankrupt Sharp company was saved by Chinese investors. In my view, it is an effective way to enhance mutual understanding between the two peoples through enhanced economic and trade links.

Today, China is the second-largest economy in the world. However, some Japanese are still immersed in conceited memories of past achievements. Times have changed. I believe these people’s attitude will also change. Under the leadership of President Xi Jinping, the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation will eventually be realized and greater benefits will be brought to the world. This is my honest feeling. ■

The echo of civilization

Ancient treasures from Afghanistan tour China

Yu Xiaodong

On May 25, an exhibition of precious cultural relics from Afghanistan opened at the Zhengzhou Museum in China's Henan province. The touring exhibition is putting 231 of Afghanistan's most precious artifacts on display. They have been "lost treasures" for decades.

Though mentioned frequently in the global media, Afghanistan has remained little-known to many. With the exhibition, it is presenting treasures thousands of years old, works that have witnessed countless rises and falls in the long stretch of history. A crown covered with hundreds of hand-hammered gold foil pieces; necklaces made of kallaite, rubies and gold; applique 'Kushana Aphrodite'; round-eyed glass dolphin; ivory plaque with the figures of a graceful Indian goddess are just a few of the many other precious items that radiate brilliance in the exhibition hall, telling the stories of Afghan history and its mysterious and splendid culture.

The exhibition in Zhengzhou was a sensation, with major media outlets scrambling to cover the event.

Afghanistan, a crossroads of world civilizations, is a communication hub in Eurasia. With a history of more than 4,000 years, the country has experienced heydays of different dynasties. Mesopotamian civilization, the

Alexandrian Empire, Indians, Turks and Chinese all had some relationships with Afghanistan. Zhang Qian, a Chinese envoy during the Western Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 25), once arrived in the country on a diplomatic mission to what was then called the "western regions". The ancient Silk Road across Eurasia brought the two countries closer. It was the complexity of the country's history that shaped the diversity and uniqueness of Afghan culture. Through its collisions with Steppe, Greco-Roman, Chinese and Indian civilizations, the Afghan culture developed a special charm.

Since the beginning of the 20th century, Afghanistan has given the world the impression of being in a constant state of war. During the most recent decades of war and domestic chaos, the National Museum of Afghanistan was looted, and its most exquisite relics have been sold on the black market. Its paper records were even used to set fires. In February 2001, the Taliban, which was then in power, ordered the destruction of Buddhist statues throughout the country, including the world's tallest standing stone Buddha statue — the 2,000-year-old Bamiyan Buddha Statue. Many archeological sites, cultural relics and artifacts were smashed. Afghan relics protectors hid large quantities of na-

tional treasures to save them.

After the war, Afghanistan began reconstruction. The National Museum selected more than 200 precious artifacts to exhibit in France in 2006. Because the outlook in Afghanistan is still not optimistic, the collection was entrusted to UNESCO, which organized the world tour. The collection has been to Italy, the United States, Germany and other 11 nations and regions. For the past decade, the objects have not returned to Afghanistan. In March 2017, the exhibition *Afghanistan: Treasures from the National Museum, Kabul* was presented in the east wing of the Meridian Gate building at the Palace Museum in Beijing. The Afghan treasures, brought forth across millennia, unveiled its mysteries for Chinese audiences.

After the collection came to China, the exhibition once encountered difficulty because of some uncertainties. At the critical moment, with the mediation and leadership of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, and with coordinated efforts by various other parties, the problems were overcome. In September 2017, *Legendary Treasures of the Silk Road: Precious Collections from the National Museum of Afghanistan* opened at the Dunhuang Academy

Preserve and Research Center, along with the opening of Second Silk Road (Dunhuang) International Cultural Expo. In two months, the exhibition attracted more than 130,000 visitors, as well as widely known experts and scholars in the relics and museology fields from abroad. The treasures then went to Chengdu to be exhibited at the Chengdu Museum under the title *The Echo of Civilization: Ancient Treasures from Afghanistan*. That exhibition coincided with the Chinese Spring Festival, and enthusiastic Chengdu citizens stood in line for hours to have a glimpse of the treasures. The exhibition received more than 500,000 visitors in three months.

Now, the exhibition has arrived in Zhengzhou, Henan province, showing Afghanistan's long history and splendid civilization.

Collections are from Tepe Fullol, Ai Khanum, Tillya Tepe and Begram, four major archeological sites that exemplify the 2,000-year Afghan civilization spanning the Bronze age, Bactria Kingdom, Roushi period and the Kushan Kingdom. They represent some of the world's greatest archeological treasures. Some of the objects are a transfixing pattern of light and color, some excel for their remarkable workmanship, some are dazzling and some have profound connotations. They are objects of admiration not only for their exquisite craftsmanship and designs, but also for their amazingly rich, exotic charm.

The most attractive relics are the gold objects from Tillya Tepe — so much so that when they were shown in

Japan they were immediately dubbed the golden exhibition. The Tillya Tepe culture involves traces of many other cultures. For instance, the dragon patterns on the relics are obviously influenced by China. This is also evidence that around the first century, during China's Western Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 25), Chinese culture was transmitted to Central Asia through the Silk Road, from whence it influenced the Western world. This exhibition stands as a testament to that glorious era.

It seems that some mysterious force remains today — even after 2,000 years — that inspired China's Belt and Road Initiative, which perfectly connects contemporary China with ancient times. This connection is no less significant than was the original opening of the ancient Silk Road millennia ago. Though culture was a byproduct of commodities trading on the ancient road, the interweaving of world civilizations is unmistakable. Under today's Belt and Road Initiative, culture has become as important as

trade. The initiative encourages mutual respect and the harmonious coexistence of different civilizations, based on the idea that cultural exchange should be the bridge connecting different civilizations and enhancing friendship between peoples to promote human progress and world peace. We can draw wisdom from different civilizations as we seek to solve humanity's common problems.

This collection of relics mirrors the vicissitudes of the world's history as well as the honors and humiliations that have befallen the Afghan people. It also reflects the collision and fusion of various civilizations. Today, science and technology are making steady headway; however, the historical force inherited from ancient times can cause contemporary people to pause and reflect. In hosting this exhibition, the CPAFFC is acting on its sense of duty to respond to the call of history and bring the mysteries of Afghan civilization to the Chinese people. ■



Telling the world about the Red Flag Canal

Zhang Heqiang

On April 10, Qin Jianhua, deputy secretary-general and director of the Foreign Affairs and Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of Anyang, Henan province, and Zhou Xiang, executive vice-president of the Party School of Linzhou, led a delegation to visit the Department of American and Oceanian Affairs of the CPAFFC and discussed how to spread the spirit of the Red Flag Canal to the world.

The Red Flag Canal, located in Linzhou, Henan province, was built in the Taihang Mountains by the people of Linzhou (then called Linxian) in the 1960s under extremely difficult conditions. Dug entirely by hand, it diverted water from the Zhang River through the mountains.

The digging of the Red Flag Canal started in February 1960, and the supporting works of its tributaries were completed nearly a decade later, in July 1969. The project shaved 1,250 mountaintops, erected 151 aqueducts, dug 211 tunnels, built 12,408 pieces of infrastructure and excavated 22.25 million cubic meters of earth and rock. The main channel of the Red Flag Canal is 70.6 kilometers long, and water is distributed throughout Linzhou's villages and towns. A calculation

suggests that if the excavated material was used to build a wall 2 meters high and 3 meters wide, it could connect Guangzhou with Harbin — the Chinese mainland's northernmost and southernmost metropolises. The Red Flag Canal has solved the water shortage that had plagued the local people for thousands of years and greatly improved the living and farming conditions. It continues to serve the people of Linzhou to this day.

The Red Flag Canal embodies the

Chinese nation's indomitable, self-reliant and hardworking spirit. Telling the canal's inspiring story to the world will be of benefit to the cause of poverty alleviation everywhere.

Both the guests from Henan and their hosts at the CPAFFC expressed their determination to organize activities to spread the Red Flag Canal spirit to other developing countries through exhibitions and lectures. In this way, they hope to provide support to these countries' cause of poverty alleviation. ■



Joint creation of a demonstration zone for China-UK cooperation

3rd China-UK Regional Leaders Summit held in Northern Ireland

Liu Chang

The Third China-UK Regional Leaders Summit — themed “China-UK Industrial Area Cooperation” — was co-hosted by the CPAFFC and the Northern Ireland government in the capital city of Belfast from Dec 1 to 3, 2017, as a supplementary activity of the fifth meeting of China-UK High Level People-to-People Dialogue.

Attending the event were CPAFFC Vice-President Song Jingwu; Vice-Governor Wang Dawei of Liaoning province; Vice-Mayor Weng Tiehui of Shanghai; Vice-Governor Guo Shenglian of Hubei province; Deputy Chairman Zhi Jianhua of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference of Jilin province; Vice-Mayor Lu

Lin of Dalian; Secretary-general Xiao Feng of the Shenyang municipal government; Director Zhou Jianping of the National Development and Reform Commission of China; Consul General Wang Shuying in Belfast; Robin Newton, speaker of Parliament in Northern Ireland; Arlene Foster, leader of Democratic Unionist Party; Michelle O’Neil, leader of Sinn Fein Northern Ireland; David Sterling, acting head of Civil Service; Martyn Roper, minister and deputy chief of Mission at the British Embassy in Beijing; Richard Burn, director general of China’s Department of International Trade; and Tim Losty, minister counselor for Northern Ireland Bureau in China.

In recent years, Northern Ireland

has made steady efforts to promote cooperation with various provinces and cities in China, starting with education. In 2011, Hubei Normal University cooperated with Ulster University to build eight Confucius Classroom centers in Northern Ireland, covering 123 primary and secondary schools with 18,000 registered students. In April 2012, then-State Councilor Liu Yandong visited Northern Ireland to inaugurate the Confucius Institute of Ulster University. She received a warm welcome from the local people. The visit also became an important milestone in the friendly and cooperative relationship between China and Northern Ireland. In May 2013, then-First Minister Robinson and Deputy First Minister McGuinness of

Northern Ireland were invited by the CPAFFC to visit China.

Liu, who was vice-premier at the time, met with the delegation and together they outlined the blueprint for cooperation between the two sides. The government of Northern Ireland earnestly implemented the results of the meeting and sent then-Director General Tim Losty of International Department to China to set up the region's Beijing office in September 2014. Losty made dozens of visits to Liaoning and Hubei provinces to ensure implementation of the cooperation projects. In 2014, Queen's University and China Medical University jointly set up a college in Shenyang, Liaoning province. In June 2015, the Chinese consulate general was opened in Belfast. In 2016, the Northern Ireland government enacted the 2016-18 Strategy on Northern Ireland-China Relations. In December 2016, First Minister Arlene Foster was invited as the only representative of the devolved regions of the UK to attend the fourth meeting of the China-UK High Level People-to-People Dialogue in China. Vice-Premier Liu met her and acknowledged the fruits of cooperation between Northern Ireland and China in the previous few years, pointing out that "Northern Ireland has been in the forefront of China-UK cooperation".

The December summit in Belfast was the first time for the China-UK Regional Leaders Summit to be held outside England. As a gesture of warm welcome to the Chinese delegation,

the Northern Ireland government broke with convention and let the Chinese guests directly enter the parliament house without going through security. Speaker Newton greeted them at the entrance and shook hands with them one by one. At the welcoming dinner, a student choir from the local Confucius Classroom sang Chinese songs for the guests. Arlene Foster, leader of Democratic Unionist Party, and Michelle O'Neil, leader of Sinn Fein Northern Ireland, recalled their pleasant visits to China at the invitation of the CPAFFC, saying that the summit was not only a review of previous cooperation but also would open a new chapter of future cooperation between Northern Ireland and China.

In his speech at the opening ceremony, David Sterling, the acting head of Civil Service, recalled achievements in cooperation between the two sides and indicated that expanding cooperation with China is an important part of Northern Ireland's 2030 Vision plan. Northern Ireland will deepen cooperation with China in the fields of infrastructure, knowledge economy, biological medicine and food processing in line with the Belt and Road Initiative, he said. Northern Ireland's ministries of Agriculture, Health and Economic Affairs; Queen's University; Ulster University; and the owners of major enterprises such as Huawei UK, shared with the Chinese guests their understanding of the fruitful cooperation in the fields of agricultural food safety,

medical service, innovation, the knowledge economy and entrepreneurship between Northern Ireland and China in recent years, along with their thoughts about future cooperation.

During the summit, Vice-Governor Wang Dawei and Vice-Governor Guo Shenglian signed agreements with Sterling of Civil Service on behalf of Liaoning province and Hubei province for friendship-city relations with Northern Ireland. Wang said the economic structures of Northern Ireland and Liaoning are similar and complementary. The summit, he said, has provided an opportunity for both sides to strengthen mutually beneficial cooperation in high-end manufacturing, food processing, technical training and life sciences.

Vice-Mayor Weng Tiehui, Vice-Governor Guo Shenglian, Vice Chairman Zhi Jianhua, Vice-Mayor Lu Lin and Secretary-General Xiao Feng briefed the summit about cooperation projects carried out between Northern Ireland and their provinces and cities in medical service, agricultural food safety, innovation and knowledge economy and creative industries. Minister Counselor Losty said that the summit was a new milestone of cooperation between Northern Ireland and Chinese provinces and cities. The Beijing Office of Northern Ireland will continue to cooperate with the Chinese Consulate General in Belfast and the CPAFFC in implementing practical cooperation results.

Northern Ireland is one of the

UK's traditional centers of agriculture and manufacturing. In recent years, it has relied on its educational resources to vigorously develop the knowledge economy and upgrade its traditional industries, shifting its economy toward aviation manufacturing, biomedicine, food processing, financial services and creative industries.

The China-UK Regional Leaders Summit set its theme as "China-UK Industrial Area Cooperation", aiming to promote the sharing of experiences in economic transformation and practice mutually beneficial cooperation. Sterling said that as a traditional industrial region of the UK, Northern Ireland has learned from its own development experience to locate five key fields for industrial transformation — accelerating R&D, strengthening education and technical training, promoting inclusive and sustainable growth, exploring global markets and improving economic infrastructure. These five fields are the major pillars of the Northern Ireland 2030 Vision plan.

Sterling expressed hope for more sharing of experience and mutually beneficial cooperation with Chinese industries in the above-mentioned fields, and for the joint promotion, upgrading and transformation of industrial regions in both China and the UK.

CPAFFC Vice-President Song Jingwu said that both China and the UK take the transformation of industrial regions as an important part of their national strategies but noted they are in

different stages of development. In recent years, Northern Ireland has made remarkable achievements in industrial transformation and has been at the forefront of China-UK regional cooperation. The CPAFFC hopes that Northern Ireland and related provinces and cities of China continue to strengthen cooperation in the future and jointly face challenges in the process of promoting industrial transformation.

Director Zhou Jianping briefed the summit about China's policies for revitalizing old industrial bases — such as Northeast China — and proposed to make use of the China-UK Advanced Manufacturing Industrial Demonstration Park to strengthen cooperation between the industrial regions of the two countries and promote the transformation and upgrading of their industrial areas through cooperation.

Major political parties and different sectors of society of Northern Ireland are unanimous about developing relations with China. For a long time, the CPAFFC has maintained a friendly and cooperative relationship with Northern Ireland and invited many high-level officials such as chief ministers and deputy chief ministers of Northern Ireland to visit China. Given the Brexit, Northern Ireland appears vital in terms of geostrategic position and economic importance.

To prepare the summit, Northern Ireland mobilized resources from various sectors, including Parliament, government, parties, enterprises, colleges

and universities and invested a lot of manpower and material resources. The efforts show how much importance it has attached to cooperation with Chinese provinces and cities. Meanwhile, as the cradle of the Industrial Revolution, the UK has a number of old industrial bases such as Northern Ireland rich with valuable experience in industrial transformation and development from which Chinese provinces and cities can learn. Heads of a number of national departments of China, such as the Central Finance and Economy Leading Team Office and the National Development and Reform Commission, undertook investigations on industrial transformation and upgrading in the economic center — northern England — and the "economic engine" of central England, which had been focal points of the previous two China-UK Regional Leaders Summits. The National Development and Reform Commission has sent representatives to participate in this year's summit.

In the future, the CPAFFC will continue to cooperate closely with the Chinese Consulate General in Belfast and the Beijing Office of Northern Ireland. It will track and implement results of the summit, and continue to deepen cooperation between Chinese provinces and cities with Northern Ireland in infrastructure, trade, education and health. The cooperation will bring benefits to the common people of both sides and create demonstration zone of China-UK cooperation. ■

Speech at a tea gathering

Liu Deyou

Spring is in the air in Beijing in April.

Today, I feel delighted and honored to be invited to attend the tea gathering here in the compound of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries. I would like to extend my thanks to the China-Japan Friendship Association for hosting this great event in such a beautiful season. Thank you for giving me a chance to meet the distinguished Japanese tea master Sen Genshitsu and many other friends of Urasenke as well as officials from the Japanese Embassy and those who work and live in Beijing. Today both our Chinese and Japanese friends can not only enjoy the flowers in full blossom but also taste the Japanese matcha at the gathering.

The year 2018 is of particular significance. It marks the 40th anniversary of China's reform and opening-up drive and the 40th anniversary of the conclusion of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship between China and Japan, following the 45th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations between the two countries last year.

After World War II, the Sino-Jap-

anese relationship has followed a tortuous and rough course. It started with people-to-people exchanges, proceeded to the stage where unofficial organizations pushed for official contacts and then went on to realize semiofficial, semicivilian communication until the establishment of diplomatic ties, after which exchanges have been conducted through both official and nonofficial channels.

During the first 40 years (1972-2012) after the normalization of diplomatic relations between China and Japan, the bilateral relationship maintained the momentum of advancement on the whole and yielded great results despite some ups and downs. This period was no doubt the most remarkable of all stages of the 2,000-years of Sino-Japanese relations in terms of development speed and positive results. However, the widely known event that took place in the latter half of 2012 brought the bilateral relationship to its nadir, to the disappointment of the two peoples. Worrying about the future of the relationship, the two peoples yearned for it to return to a track of stable and healthy development as soon as possible.

I want to stress that people-to-people exchanges have been playing a vital role in Sino-Japanese relations since the founding of the People's Republic of China. It was at the grassroots level that the Japan-China friendship movement started off. The development of bilateral relations is the fruit of the painstaking efforts of numerous pioneers, both known and unknown, including all of you present here. It took years of nongovernmental exchanges to push Sino-Japanese relations toward normalization and bring about a situation where exchanges are conducted on both an official and unofficial basis. There are a thousand reasons to cherish the hard-won fruit, and not a single reason to harm it.

Today, both China and Japan should stay true to their original aspirations when they realized the normalization of diplomatic ties. They should not forget where they started, and return to the "origin".

What is the origin? It refers to the China-Japan Joint Statement on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations, the China-Japan Treaty of Peace and Friendship signed in 1978 and two

other political documents, as well as the Four Principal Consensuses on the bilateral relationship. These four political documents are of profound historic significance, for they have laid an important foundation for political relations between the two countries. The core of these documents is nothing but peace and friendship.

History tells us that China and Japan must follow a path of peace, friendship and cooperation. It is the only right choice and serves the fundamental interests of the two countries and peoples. The peaceful coexistence, enduring friendship, mutually beneficial cooperation and common development of China and Japan are vital to the peace, stability and prosperity of Asia and the world at large. We must ensure that bilateral relations develop in a healthy manner. It is the common aspiration of the Chinese and Japanese peoples that peace, friendship and win-win cooperation make up the bilateral relationship rather than hatred, confrontation or war.

We should take a long-term perspective when assessing Sino-Japanese relations. In my view, a friendly relationship meets the expectations of the people and is a general trend not to be disrupted or reversed by any person or force. Though certain sensitive and complicated problems remain in the tense relationship, signs of thawing have appeared lately. We hope that the two sides will make consistent efforts to maintain their positive momentum and push bilateral relations forward in

the direction of peace and friendship. Given that the Sino-Japanese relationship is moving in a positive direction currently, we are looking forward to some new changes in the near future.

Sen Genshitsu, the great tea master of Urasenke, is an old friend of the Chinese people. He is also an internationally renowned social activist. He has been committed to promoting *sado* in different parts of the world and called for peace and friendship. The great tea master has always harbored a friendly feeling toward China. He hoped to boost friendship and cultural exchanges between China and Japan by means of *sado* and has made great contributions in this regard.

Cultural exchanges are conducive to enhancing friendship, mutual understanding and trust between the two peoples. Cultural exchanges can help build a bridge linking people's hearts. It is a bridge of friendship and mutual understanding. I hope more and more people will interact through the bridge.

I think *sado* is an important part and platform of cultural exchanges between China and Japan.

Back in 2003, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the signing of the China-Japan Treaty of Peace and Friendship, the Chinese version of *The Heart of Tea to the World* by Sen Genshitsu was published by the Culture and Art Publishing House in Beijing. The book not only marked another milestone in the development of friendship and cultural exchanges between China and Japan but was also his greatest gift

to Chinese readers.

Reading through the illustrated book, I think it highlights the concept of "heart". In Japanese, the word has an extensive and profound meaning. It denotes, I think, a person's spirit, as well as culture. Seeing what his country was like after World War II, Sen Genshitsu said, "One must have an upward spirit and must not forget his culture." He also said, "A man must have his own spirit, foothold and culture. Without these, he would not win respect wherever he went." His remarks made me believe that man needs to have a certain spirit when in poverty; and even when he becomes rich, he still, and even to a greater extent, needs some spiritual and cultural attainment.

Sen Genshitsu elaborates on the "heart" in his book *Wabi-Sabi: The Traditional Japanese Aesthetics*. It is generally believed that this term can only be perceived by intuition rather than expressed in words. In Chinese, wabi-sabi is sometimes translated as "闲寂" (*xianji*, or loneliness in leisure) and "枯淡" (*kudan*, or indifference in boredom). However, the Chinese translation seems to have failed to render the full meaning of the words. Sen Genshitsu gives a dialectical explanation of *wabi-sabi* in his book. He said, "People tend to interpret wabi as loneliness and quietness. They are wrong." As proof, here is a Japanese poem (*waka*) by Fujiwara no Ietaka.

Why expect blossoms only?

Look at the green shoots,
Coming out of snow-covered
fields.
Aren't they heralding the spring?

It is said that Sen Rikyu loves the poem very much. He gave a new interpretation of it. According to him, the poem demonstrates *wabi*. Sen Rikyu noticed the dynamic feature of *wabi* when watching the grass sprouting from snow-covered soil. While *wabi* generally represents quietness and emptiness and carries a negative connotation, it also has a dynamic and positive side. Sen Genshitsu believes that *wabi* is the most essential spirit of *sado*.

Sen Genshitsu appears to be the first to give such a comprehensive and dialectical explanation of the Japanese aesthetic concept of *wabi*.

Sen Genshitsu also pointed out that Ietaka's poem compares the bright flowers with green grass in the snow-covered fields and prefers grass to flowers. Genshitsu used the poem to illustrate the *wabi-sabi sado* proposed by Sen Rikyu.

As the *wabi-sabi* aesthetic philosophy featuring rustic simplicity is found to share some thoughts with traditional Chinese philosophy, Japan's unique *sado* can be easily understood and accepted by Chinese. As I understand it, the *wabi-sabi* idea of simplicity can be attributed to the influence of China's *Book of Changes*, Confucianism, Laozi and Zhuangzi philosophy and particularly Zen thought. During the Tang (618-907) and Song (960-

1279) dynasties, ink-wash painting of landscapes, birds and flowers and pastoral poetry became popular. Since then, the simple, unadorned and tranquil style has become a trend in Chinese culture. I would suggest that the *Book of Changes* provided the source for the Japanese aesthetics of simplicity and tranquility; Confucianism and Laozi-Zhuangzi philosophy helped it spread; and Zen lent weight to its popularity. All these Chinese cultural elements contributed immensely to *wabi-sabi*'s birth and growth.

Speaking of what the Chinese culture has contributed to the world, I would like to point out that it was during thousands of years of civilization that the Chinese nation created and nurtured its profound and splendid culture. The Chinese culture, like a river originating from a remote source, running long and unbroken and constantly generating ripples of wisdom and thought, has had deep influence on the development of the world. Its language, literature, arts, science, technology, philosophy and ethics are powerful in vitality, cohesion and creativity. The splendid Chinese culture, imbued with the diligence and wisdom of the Chinese people of all ethnic groups, has become a pearl in the treasure house of world cultures and an integral part of human civilization. By opening its arms to other cultures and constantly enriching itself, the Chinese culture is injecting new vigor into human culture.

In this regard, China and Japan have cultural affinity. I think the inter-

personal relationship valued in *sado* is a good example. When it comes to destiny, great importance is attached to "once in a lifetime".

"Once in a lifetime" in Japanese means that every meeting is the only one in a person's life. Even if people may meet one another many times in the future, the meeting itself cannot be repeated. So we need to treasure each meeting instead of overlooking it. This reminds me of a teaspoon used in Urasenke's Beijing office. The spoon was sculptured by Sun Pinghua and named "Tea Popularity", which, I think, has a deep implication. I believe today's tea gathering will remain in our memory forever.

Peace is the pursuit and aspiration of all human beings.

"Peace rises from a bowl of tea." This slogan, coined by Sen Genshitsu, carries great weight. In the past few decades, he has made assiduous efforts to promote *sado* in the world so that more people will share its values. In my view, the idea of "peace in a bowl of tea" perfectly coincides with the "harmony" in *sado*'s four concepts of harmony, respect, purity and tranquility.

In my understanding, this harmony or peace exists between people, within families, among countries and throughout the world. Today, the world is far from tranquil. People of all countries yearn for peace. Let's work hand-in-hand for the sound development of Sino-Japanese relations, for world peace and for a better future for humankind. ■

Celebrating 40 Years of China's reform and India-China relations

Hemant Adlakha

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The popular Chinese saying “time flies like arrow” best reflects my four-decade association with China and my China studies. More interestingly, this is also the period of socialist China's successful trajectory of economic growth and social transformation. This remarkable Chinese success under the ongoing reform and opening-up policy started 40 years ago. I often tell my Indian students and friends from China the wonderful coincidence of the launching of China's reform policies at the Third Plenum of the 11th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in December 1978 and my entry into China studies around the same time.

I remember it was in July-August 1979 that I enrolled for an undergraduate Chinese language three-year degree program at New Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru University. Within days of joining the university, I learned from my teachers and senior students about how China had only a few months ago started turning over a new leaf in its history and had begun embarking upon

an unprecedented development trajectory. Moreover, there was yet another significant development taking place at the same time — that is, India and China about to revive and restore normal diplomatic and ambassadorial relations following the disruption of highest-level diplomatic ties as an unhappy consequence of the territorial military conflict a little over 16 years before.

As China celebrates four decades of miraculous and outstanding successes achieved since the implementation of the reform and opening-up policies (the reform era), it is of huge importance to note that China's socialist market economic (SME) policy has now exceeded three decades of the socialist planned economy by almost 10 years. Full credit must be accorded to the CPC and its leadership for the smooth and successful transformation of Chinese society from the tumultuous 10 years from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s into the steady and stable reform era. As our opportunities to interact with visitors from the Peoples' Republic of China gradually increased

(remember, we in India did not have official exchanges of visitors between the two countries during the period 1962-77), we were shocked to learn from our visiting friends from China that there remained a huge gap between China and the developed countries, and in some areas the development levels in China were lagging behind India, too.

Of course, the ensuing 40 years have been a totally different story. Not only has China maintained a very impressive average annual growth rate of 9 percent over the last four decades — something unprecedented and unparalleled both in Chinese and world history — but China has now emerged as the world's second-biggest economy, behind only the United States. Furthermore, China's last 40 years of growth in various aspects has been unbelievably fast when compared with what the Western industrialized countries achieved over a couple of hundred years. For example, China's share in the world economy has risen from 2.7 percent in the late 1970s to 16 percent today; China's per-capita income has

grown exponentially from \$100 to \$8,000; and, last but not least, the CPC-led China has lifted over 700 million Chinese people out of poverty during the four decades of the reform era.

Internally, from the rural household contract responsibility system to the urban economic system reform; from opening the coastal and border areas to developing the western inland region; and externally, from the establishment of the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone to its accession to the World Trade Organization, China has been gradually and consistently pursuing overhauling of the old economic structures and creating newer market institutions. As pointed out recently by the Chinese Ambassador to United Kingdom Liu Xiaoming, since adopting the reform and opening-up policy, China has opened up a market of over \$1.7 trillion to foreign investment, and invested more than \$1.2 trillion overseas. In the past decade, with its strength in capital, market, technology and labor force, China on average contributed 30 percent of the world economic growth annually, sharing the benefits of China's development with more countries.

Since 1978, as the focus of China's national strategy started shifting toward economic growth and development, the country realized the urgent need to readjust its diplomatic strategy and the foreign policy goals and priorities. As Deng Xiaoping had proclaimed at the CPC's 12th Party Congress in October 1979, the major task of Chi-

na's diplomacy was to ensure a favorable peaceful environment for realizing the four modernizations. As a result, China immediately embarked on the mammoth task of putting an end to the past policy of living in isolation and began to establish normal diplomatic relations with more and more countries, and vigorously started putting in efforts to improve existing relations with other countries, especially with its neighbors. For example, the normalization of relations with the US was followed by China developing relations with many other nations. The normalization of relations with other nations was naturally aimed at ensuring an external security environment which will in turn allow China to implement reforms internally and at the same time open up its markets and economy to investments coming in from abroad.

The first decade of the reform era — the 1980s — was extremely crucial for China in improving its relations with the US, the Soviet Union and all the neighboring countries. Moreover, Chinese diplomacy, in a new move, took the initiative in expanding relations with the ASEAN group of nations. China also showed astute diplomatic initiative by paying attention to improving relations with Japan. In August 1978, China signed a peace and friendship treaty with Japan, thus marking a new development in bilateral relations in its neighborhood.

Many international policy experts, and especially China's foreign policy analysts, have observed that 1949 to

the late 1980s and mid-1990s was a period during which China's relations with almost all its neighbors had been described as "abnormal" and "troubled". In sharp contrast, a major turnaround took place in the early to mid-1990s. China not only successfully resolved its border conflicts with almost all its neighbors (except India) but went on to normalize bilateral relations (with the Soviet Union, Mongolia, Myanmar and Vietnam, for example) and even established diplomatic relations with the previously perceived "hostile" or "unfavorable" states such as the Republic of Korea, Japan and Indonesia. What is most remarkable is that eventually China emerged as the largest trading partner of almost all its neighboring states, including India. As Zhang Yunling and Zhou Fangyin have opined in their recent book *Transformation of Foreign Affairs and International Relations in China, 1978-2008*, relations between China and its neighbors have greatly improved since the early 1980s. The first two decades since the beginning of the reform era "was the best period since the founding of New China in terms of relations with neighbors. This has been confirmed by documents of the Chinese government."

The importance of improving cooperation with South Asia, especially restoring and maintaining normal, friendly relations with the largest nation in South Asia, too, was a key strategic component of China's new-look neighborhood diplomacy. Long before the conception of the crucial connectiv-

ity role the South Asian region possesses for the success of the Belt and Road Initiative, China has all along known the importance of its vital strategic interests in the region. China shares several thousand kilometers of border with many countries in South Asia — for example India, Nepal, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bhutan. Moreover, these countries make South Asia the only neighboring region consisting of five of the total of China's 14 near neighbors.

I consider myself doubly lucky, as my entry into China studies happened at a time when both China and India realized the need for improving their bilateral relationship in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Interestingly, internal political changes taking place in both countries during the mid- to late-1970s period could not have come at a more opportune time. With the CPC new leadership regime's main focus on securing a favorable international environment on one hand, and on the other hand the coming to power of a new political dispensation following the downfall of the Indira Gandhi government in 1977, the ground was already laid for the two countries to improve bilateral relations that had been frozen since the unfortunate territorial conflict in 1962. The first initiative the two nations took toward normalizing was a trade agreement the two signed in 1977. Though the volume of the trade pact signed was too small to be of any major significance, the far-reaching impact of the beginning that was made resulted into almost a nonstop flow of the exchange

of sports, culture and education related visits between the two neighbors.

The sudden rise of goodwill and friendly expectations as a result of the acceleration of trade, cultural and diplomatic exchanges between China and India led to the official invitation from the foreign minister at the time, Huang Hua, to the Indian foreign minister to visit Beijing. Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the Indian counterpart wasted no time and immediately agreed to pay a visit to China. Vajpayee's official visit in February 1979 was the first such high-level visit by an Indian dignitary to China in three decades. The visit opened on an optimistic note and set in motion the process of consolidation of bilateral relations. The success of Vajpayee's visit was acknowledged and duly rewarded by Beijing. It announced that Huang would pay a reciprocal visit to India. Subsequently, Huang visited New Delhi in June 1981. He was viewed in India as not only a friend but also as modern China's most important diplomat.

In a 2010 tribute to Huang, who had just died, one of India's national newspapers wrote: "He played a key role in pushing forward the normalization process. Huang was the face of China's diplomacy during the difficult 70s and 80s, serving as Zhou Enlai's right-hand man. In 1981, Huang was sent to New Delhi by China's paramount leader, Deng Xiaoping. Huang's visit was a landmark and an important milestone as India and China worked to normalize ties which had been frozen after the 1962 war."

Following the two foreign ministers' visits to each other's countries, the bilateral ties have been progressively moving in a forward direction. Realistically speaking, it is true that the unsettled boundary continues to cast a shadow over bilateral ties. Yet what is also unrealistic is to deny that the past four decades are best defined as a maturing of ties between the two giant Asian neighbors. Booming bilateral trade, increasing people-to-people contact and continuous exchanges of high- and top-level visits between the two nations have remained a permanent feature of their bilateral relationship. Following the Indian prime minister's visit to China in 1988, the first top-level Indian leader visiting China in 35 years, the next three decades (1988-2018) have witnessed a continuous flow of such top-level bilateral visits. Every top PRC/CPC leader has visited India during the past 30 years. Likewise, all successive Indian presidents and prime ministers have visited Beijing. As for the current leaders of the two countries, both President Xi Jinping (2014, 2016) and Premier Li Keqiang (2013) have been to India on official visits. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi (2015, 2017) and India's previous president, Pranab Mukherjee (2016) have also paid official visits to Beijing. In the coming weeks, the prime minister, foreign minister and defense minister are scheduled to visit China. This is a clear manifestation of the fact that in spite of certain

unavoidable irritants— such as India refusing to endorse and participate in the Belt and Road Initiative and China consistently objecting to India’s entry into the NSG — both countries are committed to building bilateral ties on common ground and working toward resolving existing differences to base their relationship on mutual respect and sensitivity to each other’s concerns, interests and aspirations.

Finally, based on my personal experiences, I have numerous stories to tell about how, during my visits to China in the last four decades, I have been deeply touched by the friendly attitude and warm hospitality the Chinese people have showered upon me. I believe I have been extremely lucky to enjoy instant rapport and bonding with my friends in China. I strongly hold the view that the depth and the strength of the centuries-old cultural affinity between our two peoples will always keep us bound together. I recall and quote the following beautiful lines which Tagore wrote, almost as if paying rich tribute to the people of China from his deathbed:

“Once I went to the land of China,
Those whom I had not met
Put the mark of friendship on my
forehead
Calling me their own”.

(Rabindranath Tagore wrote this poem, called *On My Birthday* on Feb 21, 1941, a few months before his death.)■

2018 China (Shenyang)- Hungary culture exchange week a success

Shenyang Friendship Association

From May 8 to 12, the Shenyang People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries held the 2018 China (Shenyang) Hungary Culture Exchange Week in the northeastern Chinese city. The event was organized under the framework of Belt and Road Initiative. With the popularization of the Belt and Road concept, exchanges and cooperation between China and Hungary have unfolded at an accelerated pace. Both sides are attaching greater importance to cultural communication, which is believed to be vital for enhancing mutual understanding.

The culture exchange week included four themed activities — Hungarian Artists Visiting Shenyang, Chinese-Hungarian Artistic Exchange, Hungarian Culture Photo Exhibition and Hungarian Culture & Food Week. Hungarian Ambassador to China Mate Pesti; SYPAFFC President Zhao Changyi; Feng Shouquan, a member of the Standing Committee of Shenyang Committee of the Communist Party of China; and Feng Shouquan, head of

the Shenyang CPC Committee Publicity Department, joined more than 100 Shenyang citizens in attending the opening ceremony. At the ceremony, Shenyang 1905 Re-Creative Space was granted the title of Shenyang People’s Platform for Friendship and Exchange with Foreign Countries.

After the opening ceremony, SYPAFFC spoke with Ambassador Pesti. Both sides reached a preliminary understanding about carrying out cooperation and exchanges in medical science (especially the influenza vaccine), tourism charter flights, modern logistics and sister-city relationships. Pesti said that thanks to the long-standing friendship between China and Hungary, the Hungarian people are very much interested in having their children study in Chinese-Hungarian bilingual schools in Hungary. He told his hosts that his country had set up a work team for implementing the Belt and Road Initiative. He said that before he left for China, his country’s prime minister and economic minister had

asked him to convey their hope for a further widening of cooperation and exchanges between the two countries at the regional level. They also hoped that Hungary would exceed other Central and Eastern European countries in local-level cooperation and exchanges with China, Pesti said.

During the culture exchange week, officials from the Hungarian embassy, as well as Hungarian artists, chefs, folk art craftsmen and performance troupes, carried out various forms of cultural exchange with the artists and residents of Shenyang. The locals had close-range contact with Hungarian culture, attending a cultural salon, tasting the country's food and experiencing other cultural activities at the 1905 Re-Creative Space and Shenyang Le Meridien Hotel.

The craftsmen from Hungary and their local counterparts exchanged ideas, while demonstrating their respective handicraft skills. Hungarian chefs offered food cooked in Hungarian style to give locals a taste of Eastern European cuisine. When visiting the Imperial Palace Museum, Laolongkou Liquor Factory and Shengjing Grand Theatre and strolling along the beautiful bank of the Hun River, the Hungarian guests marveled at Shenyang's beautiful scenery and urban development. They expressed admiration for the city's cultural richness and the local people's hospitality. They said they would tell their families and friends about what they had seen and felt in Shenyang so that more Hungarian people will become acquainted with the city. ■

Chengdu-Azerbaijan melody rang out on Belt and Road

Chengdu Friendship Association

On the evening of March 16, the CCEC building on Tianfu Avenue was illuminated as brightly as in daytime: a Central Asian-style mugham music concert was going on, with string instrument melodies echoing to exciting drumbeats. The nearly two-hour musical performance took the 700 members of the audience to the foot of Caucasus Mountains beside the Caspian Sea, where they enthusiastically embraced the “country of fire” — Azerbaijan.

Deeply engrossed in the music along with the audience were Azerbaijani Ambassador to China Akram Zeynalli and his wife. Following his initial trip to Chengdu in September 2017 to attend meetings of the United Nations World Tourism Organization, Akram now visited Chengdu for the second time to showcase traditional Azerbaijani mugham music. The music broke down cultural barriers, promoted people-to-people exchanges and enhanced mutual benefits and collaboration.

100th anniversary of the founding of the Republic of Azerbaijan

Actually, residents of this

“capital of music” are no strangers to international music. Since its opening in 2017, the Cloud Music Hall has welcomed music masters from Russia, France and Poland. But this was the first time Azerbaijani traditional music had been heard in Chengdu.

Mugham is Azerbaijan's traditional music genre, and has a rigorous structure. Having absorbed the tunes, rhythms and performing skills of troubadour ballads lauding heroes, the genre has rich historical and cultural connotations. The eight Azerbaijani musicians who performed at this event are famous in Azerbaijan. The two-hour performance included works fusing traditional mugham with jazz and traditional opera selections. There was even an Azerbaijani version of *Colorful Clouds Chasing the Moon*, a Chinese piece tailor-made for Chengdu locals. Excited by the rhythmic music, audience members snapped their fingers and swung their bodies as if they were part of an Azerbaijani carnival.

“Seeing that so many people are fond of Azerbaijani music, I am extremely happy and I do hope to make music a channel to enable more people in Sichuan to gain insight into

Azerbaijan,” Akram said.

After the concert, Akram met journalists for a merry interview. Azerbaijan, situated at the crossroads of Eastern Europe and West Asia, is an important country along the Belt and Road routes, he said, noting that 2018 marks the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic. Akram told the reporters his country will host a series of celebration activities in China. *Magical Azerbaijani Music in Sichuan* is the program’s first stop.

Why was Chengdu chosen as the first stop? Chengdu, as enchanting as paradise, should be accompanied by music, Akram said. “I think Sichuan is one of the most beautiful provinces in China, with such an agreeable climate and environment. I feel very comfortable in Sichuan.”

During the visit to Sichuan, Akram witnessed the tremendous development of the province and saw how happy the citizens of Chengdu were.

“I would like to send warm congratulations to the people of Sichuan, as you are blessed with such a good living environment. Wherever I went, I found beautiful scenery. I felt that I was living in a paradise on Earth.”

Baku to be a stop on the southern line of Chengdu-Europe Express Rail

Actually, Azerbaijan’s high opinion of Chengdu partly stems from Chengdu-Europe Express Rail operations. The sound of Azerbaijani

music in Chengdu is like the resounding steam whistle of the Trans-Eurasia Chengdu-Europe train passing from east to west on the new Silk Road.

Azerbaijan is situated on the route, and the Trans-Caspian East-West Transit Corridor is closely linked to the Belt and Road Initiative. The Chengdu-Europe Express Rail plans to add a southern line this year, and Baku will be one of the stops. This transport connectivity will boost economic and trade exchanges.

Azerbaijani enterprises participated in the 98th China Food & Drinks Fair for the first time this year in Chengdu, adding new international elements.

“It is a positive sign, and I believe bilateral economic and

trade collaboration will be further strengthened with the opening of the southern line of the Chengdu-Europe Express Rail,” Akram said.

He pointed out that Azerbaijan was one of the first to respond positively to the Belt and Road Initiative. He said he was very optimistic about cooperation with Sichuan in agriculture, industry, science, education and tourism. He invited enterprises of Chengdu and Sichuan to invest in Azerbaijan and launch startups.

To facilitate personnel exchanges and transportation logistics, Akram hopes a Chengdu-Baku direct air route will be opened and that it will help more Azerbaijani cities find Sister Cities in Chengdu. ■



Azerbaijani music performers

Israel's consul-general reluctant to leave

Mo Yi

“Chengdu has sufficient strength to attract an increasing number of international trend-setters. I have already become a genuine Chengdu trend-setter.”

—Amir Lati, Israel consul-general in Chengdu

Amir Lati, Israel's consul-general in Chengdu, has worked and lived in the city for three and a half years. From his perspective, Chengdu, which is situated at the golden junction of China's Belt and Road trade routes and the Yangtze River economic zone, presents unlimited opportunities and offers international talent golden opportunities to realize self-fulfillment.

Supporting Chengdu's booming economy are its agreeable living conditions, including world-class medical care and education. At present, a fairly large number of foreigners are studying and living in Chengdu. They are reluctant to leave once they have settled.

“I was supposed to have a three-year stay in Chengdu,” Lati said. “However, I voluntarily applied to extend the tenure for another year, as there are still many important cooperative projects to implement and my family members and I have become fond of life in Chengdu.”

Over the three and half years, Lati and his family have traveled to

nearly every corner of Chengdu and are able to speak idiomatic Sichuan dialect.

“My daughter attends kindergarten in Chengdu, where she studies with Chengdu kids and can chat with them in Sichuan dialect. She actually speaks better Sichuan dialect than me,” he said.

Besides the comfortable life Chengdu offers, the opening of a Chengdu-Israel direct air route is Lati's other primary concern.

“It is my sincere hope that a Chengdu-Israel direct air route will go live during my tenure,” he said. “At present, Hainan Airlines and Sichuan Airlines have proposed to open a Chengdu-Tel Aviv air route. We are looking forward to an early launch.”

Lati is confident that the direct flight will greatly boost exchanges and collaboration between Southwest China and Israel.

It is worth mentioning that WeChat became one of the important ways for Lati to gain deeper insight into Chengdu. If you connect to his WeChat timeline, you quickly get to know his current work even if you don't look up media reports. When Lati came to Chengdu, there were only a few locals in his circle of WeChat friends. However, there are currently nearly 3,000.

“Having worked in Chengdu for several years, I find it to be an open and

inclusive city,” he said.

Lati often attended forums and lectures and held promotion events at universities. Now, he updates his WeChat Moments every day to watch the rich and varied lives of Chengdu residents. People of different professions and ages are participating in the city's transformation.

Chengdu, which is racing against time to build itself into a major international communication center, has good reason to want international trendsetters such as Amir Lati.

Seventeen countries have been given official approval to set up consulates in Chengdu, making it a top choice for any foreign country to establish a presence in western China. Chengdu is third in China for number of consulates, behind only Shanghai and Guangzhou.

Chengdu, which is known for being both traditional and modern, has forged international sister city relationships with 34 cities and has 51 friendly and cooperative partners around the globe. Extensive, in-depth and multifaceted collaboration have been carried out in the economy, science, technology, culture and education.

“I am a Chengdu trend-setter reluctant to leave,” Lati says.

His Chengdu roots have grown deep. He is a classic example of the settlement of international migrants.■

Normalized education cooperation

7th “Picture Yourself in Perth” concluded

Chengdu Friendship Association

Ten middle school students from Chengdu, China, went on an eight-day study tour in Perth, Australia, in February as part of a sister city program.

From Feb 6 to 13, the Chinese students, winners of the 7th Picture Yourself in Perth photography contest, visited local universities and had fun at tourist attractions in Perth, Chengdu's international sister city in Australia.

Perth Mayor Lisa Scaffidi and Phil Payne, executive director of Study Perth, cordially received the Chinese students at City Hall. They expressed hope that the study tour would further strengthen youth exchanges, consolidate the regular Chengdu-Perth education collaboration and enhance people-to-people friendship between the two cities.

During their stay in Perth, the students visited the University of Western Australia and Murdoch University. They attended classes and exchanged ideas with the local students and teachers at Taylors

College, Phoenix Academy and Canning College. The visits deepened their understanding. They also went sightseeing to some scenic spots, including the Aquarium of Western Australia, Caversham Wildlife Park and Elizabeth Quay, and were deeply impressed by what they saw.

The study tour was a rich experience and full of surprises. Let's listen to the students in their own heartfelt words.

Lin Xianhang

Touching down on the alien land at the very beginning, all I felt was its lonely, mysterious serenity. The night sky was dark with only dimmed yellow light from the crescent moon in the distance. I was tired but in high spirits, and when I went into the University of West Australia, I saw the other side of Perth — wit and humor. At this university, man and nature co-exist in harmony, and the atmosphere of rigorous scholarship is infused with some mischievous joy. In the following

days, I gradually discovered the profoundness and passion of Perth in my contacts with different teachers in the colleges.

Our exchanges in Perth are cultural interaction and integration. We showcased the charm of our traditional culture and got a feel of the life and customs of Oceania. Gradually, a cultural link was established. I also harvested precious experiences and mental maturity.

The Perth journey was full of love and surprises. Although the road of life is long and the beautiful memories may become intangible, the genuine experience of growing up will take root and flourish.

Jin Yongqi

The people in Perth lead an agreeable and comfortable life. Most of them are passionate, kindhearted and always ready to help those in need, even a stranger. Once we got lost in a downtown area and a Perth citizen went out of his way to help us find

the pharmacy we looked for. He even accompanied us to various streets and alleys to look for satisfactory souvenirs.

The school atmosphere and the friendly attitude of the teachers of Perth exemplified their teaching methodology. Here, you are on an equal footing with the teachers: You can call them by their first names; they can talk and laugh with you and will respond to any question you pose. However, they would not give you the answer. Only by exploring by yourself can you acquire the knowledge.

Wang Zirui

Perhaps the most rewarding experience was the meeting with the mayor. In the afternoon of our second day in Perth, we went to the Council House, where we met with the mayor. We presented her with gifts brought from Chengdu and chatted with her. We went to the wildlife park on Sunday and discovered cute kangaroos and koalas. We also had contact with the other unique animals of western Australia, such as the wombat and some birds. I was reluctant to say goodbye to Perth. The agreeable climate and little animals unafraid of people are the most unforgettable experiences. I attended so many classes here and gained an insight into the lively classroom atmosphere and friendly teachers.

Here I would like to offer my sincere thanks to all the teachers who organized and facilitated the study tour and gave us such a precious opportunity to visit Australia. I will be back some day. ■

Chengdu accelerated its development as an important center for exchanges in China

Chengdu Friendship Association

Chengdu's Foreign and Overseas Chinese Affairs Office offered its full support to strengthen Chengdu's profile on the international stage.

At the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in October 2017, it was agreed that the country should strive for new achievements in opening-up on all fronts. Openness means progress, while isolation leaves one behind. China will not close its door to the outside world; instead, the door will be opened wider. We should take the Belt and Road Initiative as a priority, give equal emphasis to “bringing in” and “going global”, follow the principle of achieving shared growth through discussion and collaboration and increase openness and cooperation in building innovative capacity. With these efforts, we hope to break new ground in opening China further through links running eastward and westward, across land and over the sea.

Chengdu has determined that opening-up should be conducted on a deeper, more comprehensive and more pragmatic basis. While following the

trend of world economic development, the city has begun a drive to integrate itself into the Belt and Road Initiative at great depth, banking on the country's growing strength. It is taking advantage of its position as a major geographical hub in western China and using domestic and international market resources to accelerate its effort to turn itself into an economic highland in China's opening-oriented development. The second plenary session of the 13th CPC Chengdu Committee decided that Chengdu should give special attention to improving international exchanges and intensifying external exchanges and cooperation, so as to build itself into an important center of international exchange in China.

Facing the new mission in the new era, the Chengdu Foreign and Overseas Chinese Affairs Office is embarking on a new journey. It is considering:

- How it can integrate into the Belt and Road by pushing more local enterprises of the new economic frontiers to go global and showing to the outside world the advantages of Chengdu in opening-up and cooperation.
- How it can make use of multilayered international cooperation

mechanisms to “bring in” more major international projects and thus help the city develop new economic frontiers.

- How it can promote the building of an international hub for exchanges and intensify its exchanges and cooperation with international Sister Cities by choosing most suitable industries for the cooperation.

In the course of building an important center for international exchanges in China, the Chengdu Foreign and Overseas Chinese Affairs Office has drawn a comprehensive road map for more in-depth and pragmatic operations.

Blaze new trails for Chengdu’s frontier enterprises to go global

Chengdu, situated at the junction of Belt and Road trade routes and the Yangtze River economic zone, has been presented with historic golden opportunities. The Chengdu Foreign and Overseas Chinese Affairs Office is a trailblazer in the city’s integration into Belt and Road construction. At present, it is implementing the strategies it has mapped out to help Chengdu’s enterprises on new economic frontiers to go global.

Actively responding to the Belt and Road Initiative, a series of activities themed “Panda Chengdu” are underway in the United Arab Emirates, the Philippines, Australia, Italy, Hungary, Mozambique and South Africa to propagate Chengdu’s local culture and introduce enterprises that are pushing the economic frontier.

The city has set up “Overseas

Chengdu” workstations in 16 countries — Australia, France, Cambodia, Malaysia, the United States, Japan, Thailand, Singapore, Mexico, Pakistan, UAE, Poland, Russia, Portugal, Canada and Indonesia. These workstations have effectively served Chengdu’s enterprises in their business of going global, greatly promoting Chengdu’s international influence and profile.

Chengdu’s Qiaomengyuan project fully uses the advantages created by Chengdu-rooted overseas Chinese to serve China’s major development strategies. The project has held six talent policy promotion meetings — in Houston, New York, Seattle, Toronto, Sydney and Lyon — with the focus placed on encouraging innovation and business startups. These moves helped forge a close connection between overseas professional talent and Chengdu municipality.

The Chengdu global promotion conference, targeting places with vibrant economies such as the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region,

the Czech Republic, Poland, Mexico and Colombia, built international exchange platforms for Chengdu and undertook matchmaking for more high-quality cooperative programs on new economic frontiers.

Bringing in more international high-quality resources

At present, fostering new capability to develop new economic frontiers is being enthusiastically pursued by the whole world. Every country is working hard to gain ground. Chengdu is also following the trend, trying to build on the momentum. To attain this goal, Chengdu needs to derive force from international programs on new economic frontiers. The Chengdu Foreign and Overseas Chinese Affairs Office attaches great importance to bringing in international exchange activities, important international conferences and international VIPs, which in turn become incentives for international economic frontiers



2018 World Police and Fire Games Federation Chengdu Meeting

programs to settle in the city.

With its global vision, the office has made every effort to help the city bring in more international new economic frontiers programs, including the first Houston Technology Center China Center; the newly established City University of Hong Kong Chengdu Research Institute; an important program of Sino-France medical cooperation; the Chengdu Brain Research Institute program in cooperation with Canada; and the Malaysia National Pavilion in the Shuangliu Free Trade Zone. In addition, the China-US 2 Plus 2 Clean Energy Forum was held in Chengdu in 2017, and the China-Swiss low-carbon city program has formally entered the implementation stage.

The Chengdu office also made efforts to promote international exchanges and important international conferences. The efforts have reaped fruitful outcomes. The Eighth East Asia Local and Regional Governments Conference; the Forum on Qiaomengyuan Innovative Development and International Incubator Industry; the 2017 BRICS Friendship Cities and Local Governments Cooperation Forum; the China-South Africa Local Governments Dialogue; and the China-Arab Civilization and De-Extreming Roundtable were held in Chengdu in a continuous stream.

The Chengdu Foreign and Overseas Chinese Affairs Office has made unremitting efforts to attract more international VIPs' attention to the development of Chengdu's economic frontiers. These VIPs included Irish Ambassador to China John Paul

Kavanagh; South African Ambassador to China Dolana F. Msimang; Israeli Ambassador Zvi Heifetz; Dr. James Watson, Nobel Prize laureate and DNA double helix structure discoverer; Lukas Kaucky, first deputy foreign minister of the Czech Republic; former chancellor of Germany Gerhard Schroder, who is also vice-president of the board of supervisors of Herrenknecht AG; and Nobel Prize laureate Aaron Ciechanover. They all spoke highly of Chengdu's development.

International Sister Cities' industrial map

Today's Chengdu is working hard to make international exchanges more convenient and frequent and build itself as an example of Chinese inland economic openness and a gateway for international exchanges with a global vision and international standard.

The year 2017 saw rapid expansion of Chengdu's circle of friends. The number of Chengdu's international Sister Cities and friendly and cooperative cities rose to 85. Among those were three newly added international Sister Cities and 11 friendly and cooperative ones, including La Plata, Argentina; Maputo, Mozambique; Valencia, Spain; Patras, Greece; and Bangkok, Thailand. In the meantime, the Chengdu Foreign and Overseas Chinese Affairs Office added more points on the international Sister Cities industrial map.

The heightened level of Chengdu's international exchanges

and cooperation reflects its opening concept and mindset. In 2017, the office successively hosted multifaceted international exchange activities, including the 12th Thai Festival Week, the 2017 Chengdu International Civil Servant Summer Program for Sister Cities, the 2017 Innovation Forum for Mayors of International Sister Cities of Chengdu, the 2017 Chengdu International Sister Cities Youth Music Festival, the Third India-China (Chengdu) International Yoga Festival, the 2017 Chengdu-Europe Culture Season, the 2017 Consultative Conference of the International Advisory Board of the Chengdu Municipal Government and the 2017 Swiss Week in China.

Thanks to the diligent work of the office, Chengdu's profile has been greatly raised on the international stage. The city has won a number of international honors, including the 2017 Award for Best International Stand at the New Zealand National Agricultural Exhibition and the WeGO Prize for Special Contribution. It received the flag of the World Police & Fire Games in the United States, which confirms officially that Chengdu will be the host of the 18th WPF in 2019.

The Chengdu Foreign and Overseas Chinese Affairs Office tapped international resources to the full and contributed to the opening of new international air routes, bringing Chengdu closer to the rest of the world. New direct routes include Chengdu-Los Angeles, Chengdu-Addis Ababa, Chengdu-Auckland and Chengdu-New York.■