



On June 27, 2018, China (Xing County) International Symposium on Poverty Relief was held in Xingxian county, Lyuliang city, Shanxi province.



On June 12, 2018, Rainbow Bridge — Shaanxi Zhidan Junior Football Team attended the opening ceremony of 2018 FIFA World Cup.



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Front Cover: On June 21, 2018, CPAFFC President Li Xiaolin addressed the Special Session of Round-Table Summit of Global CEO Council.

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President Li Xiaolin attends 2018 Legislative Summit of National Conference of State Legislatures in US

Yang Xuehe

President Li Xiaolin attended the 2018 Legislative Summit of National Conference of State Legislatures in Los Angeles, California, from July 28 to 31.

President Li delivered a speech at the NCSL Executive Committee meeting. She pointed out that China has been a peace-loving and responsible country since ancient times. While making great efforts to develop itself, China has taken it as its responsibility to safeguard world peace and strive for the happiness of the human race. China never places its interests over others, nor does it seek its development at the sacrifice of other nations' interests.

As former president of the United States George H.W. Bush repeatedly emphasized, the US-China relationship is the most important relationship in the world. Trade is the foundation on which a sound US-China relationship is maintained. Mutual respect and win-win cooperation are the fundamentals for advancement of US-China bilateral ties.



Vice-President Xie Yuan meets with Dr. Robby Schlund

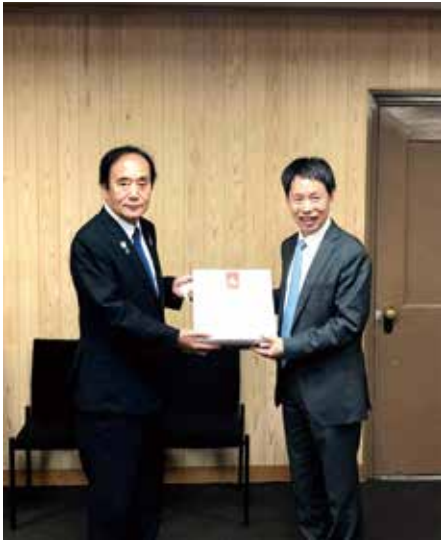
Zhang Min

On July 23, CPAFFC Vice-President Xie Yuan met with Dr. Robby Schlund, a member of the German Bundestag. Schlund thanked Xie for sparing the time to meet him and spoke highly of the CPAFFC's contribution to promoting people-to-people friendly contacts and friendship-city cooperation between China and Germany. As the deputy head of the Chinese Affairs Group in the Bundestag, Schlund expressed willingness to cooperate with the CPAFFC to deepen exchanges and cooperation with legislative bodies, local governments and friendship cities.



Vice-President Hu Sishe meets with Saitama Prefecture Governor Kiyoshi Ueda

Liu Wenwen



On June 8, 2018, CPAFFC Vice-President Hu Sishe led a delegation of the Art of China Tour to Japan to meet with Kiyoshi Ueda, president of the National Governors' Association of Japan and governor of Saitama prefecture.

During the meeting, Hu noted that this year marks the 40th anniversary of the signing of the Sino-Japanese Peace and Friendship Treaty. China-Japan relations are at a significant moment linking past and future, and a rare opportunity exists for improvement and development.

Vice-President Lin Yi meets with delegation of US legislators and mayors

Zhang Yang



Vice-President Lin Yi met with a delegation of US legislators and mayors headed by Congressman Jimmy Gomez on July 30. Lin briefed the guests about what the CPAFFC has done in recent years to promote cooperation between Chinese and the US sub-national regions. She expressed hope that the delegation could learn more about China through this visit, and thus lay a foundation for future cooperation between the two sides. Gomez thanked the CPAFFC for its hospitality in receiving the delegation. He said he believed that prosperous California-China trade relations have brought concrete benefit to the people of both countries, and hoped all US states, including California, would deepen cooperation with China.

Vice-President Song Jingwu meets with president of Hanns Seidel Foundation

Xiu Yujia

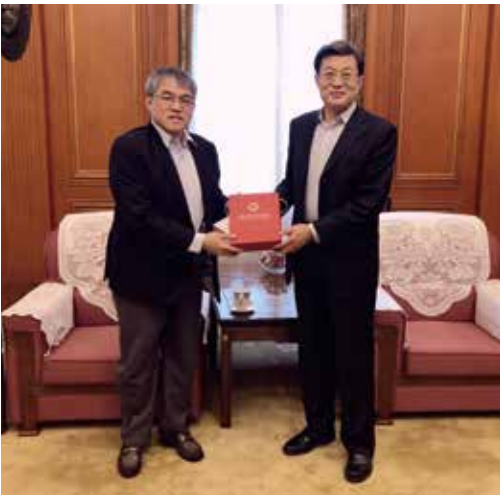


On July 16, Song Jingwu, vice-president of the CPAFFC, met with Prof. Ursula Mannel, president of Hanns Seidel Foundation of Germany.

Song said the HSF, as one of the most important political foundations in Germany, was among the earliest to begin cooperation with China, noting that the CPAFFC was its first Chinese partner. Since 1979, the two parties have cooperated in areas such as parliament member exchanges, rural development and educational training, witnessing China's achievements during 40 years of reform and opening-up. Currently, with China-Europe relations facing new challenges and opportunities, the CPAFFC is committed to closer cooperation with HSF, Song said. Prof. Mannel spoke highly of his organization's cooperation with the CPAFFC over the past 40 years. She said she believed that Germany and China should strengthen cooperation and make further contributions to protecting Europe-China relations, liberalization of world trade and multilateral world governance.

Secretary General Li Xikui meets with Benjamin C.Y. Fok

Zhang Chuyan



Li Xikui, secretary-general of the CPAFFC and director of the China Friendship Foundation for Peace and Development, met in Beijing with Benjamin C.Y. Fok, chairman of the board of Henry Fok Ying Tung Group Company Limited, and his delegation on July 3.

Li extended a welcome to the delegation and gave a briefing about the main functions and the tasks of the CPAFFC and CFFPD. Li also invited Fok to attend the Third World Philanthropy Forum to be held in Shanghai in September this year. He said the two sides should maintain close contact and work together to carry out cooperation and exchanges in the field of philanthropy.

Fok expressed hope that the two sides would strengthen cooperation in the fields of philanthropy, ecology and environmental protection.

Sino-Sri Lanka Think Tank Forum held in Beijing

Beijing Friendship Association



A think tank forum — Belt and Road, Opportunities and Challenges of Cooperation between China and Sri Lanka — jointly organized by the Beijing People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, Beijing International Studies University and the Association for Sri Lanka-China Social and Cultural Cooperation was held on May 31 at the university.

Karunasena Kodituvakku, ambassador of Sri Lanka; Madam Tian Yan, executive vice-president of BPAFFC; Ji Jinbiao, president of BISU; and Indrananda Abeysekera, president of ASLCSCC, delivered speeches at the opening ceremony, expressing thanks to the scholars of the two countries engaged in bilateral exchanges for their contribution of valuable experience and unique insights to cooperation between the two countries and for their efforts in promoting the Belt and Road Initiative in nongovernmental exchanges.

Latin American and Caribbean diplomats have get-together in Shunyi National Stadium

Beijing Friendship Association



To help diplomats from Latin American and Caribbean countries deepen their understanding of Beijing and to enhance communication, the Beijing People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries organized a get-together — Spring Blossom and Autumn Harvest — on June 29. Fifty people, including diplomats from Latin American and Caribbean countries, as well as BPAFFC council members, went to Shunyi District to visit the Luo Hong Art Museum and Shunyi Olympic Ice World, participate in the 27th Beijing International Yanjing Beer Culture Festival and exchange views with officials of Beijing’s Tianzhu Free Trade Zone Management Committee and 11 local enterprises.

Spring Blossom and Autumn Harvest is organized by BPAFFC to help diplomats and council members learn more about the economic and cultural situation of Beijing’s 16 districts.

Remarks by President Li Xiaolin at NCSL Executive Committee meeting

Li Xiaolin



CPAFFC President Li Xiaolin met with officials of the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Dear President Deb Peters, Distinguished members of NCSL Executive Committee, Ladies and gentlemen, Good afternoon!

It is my great pleasure to attend the NCSL Summit again. I am always happy to be in LA, since I studied at UCLA for my master's degree in the

early 1980s.

The CPAFFC has been cooperating with NCSL for 21 years. Last year at the NCSL Boston Summit, President

Blue and I signed a memorandum to further promote the collaboration between NCSL and CPAFFC. The MOU reflects the importance we have attached to our exchanges over the past 20 years, as well as our consensus on cooperation.

Devoted to promoting China-US exchanges for over 40 years, I have personally experienced the ups and downs of our bilateral relations. I have deeply realized that mutual respect and win-win cooperation are fundamentals for advancement of our ties.

This year, however, there's a worrying trend in China-US relations. It seems that our two countries are veering off the normal track of win-win cooperation. The interpretation of the US government toward China is filled with challenges and difficulties.

What is China? In my perspective, China is a peace-loving and responsible country with a long history.

More than 2,000 years ago, back in the Han Dynasty, China accounted for 26 percent of global GDP, which could only be matched by the Roman Empire at that time. Later in the Tang, Song and Ming dynasties, China became even stronger, accounting for more than 50 percent of the world's GDP. As the world's most powerful country for more than 1,000 years, China had never pursued global dominance.

In Chinese history, the most famous outbound expeditions were Zhang Qian's diplomatic missions to the western regions during the Han Dynasty (the first century BC), and Zheng He's seven voyages to the western seas during the Ming dynasty (the first half

of the 15th century).

Zhang Qian, known as the pioneer of the Silk Road, traveled westward by land to where Afghanistan and Kazakhstan now stand. His journey opened the route for China to connect with Central Asia and West Asia, which enhanced the understanding of different cultures and increased commercial exchanges between the East and the West.

Zheng He, known as the initiator of the Maritime Silk Road, led seven maritime expeditions to the West under the authorization of the Ming emperor, reaching as far as Kenya in Africa, with the purpose on spreading Chinese culture, promoting trade exchanges and pursuing peace.

What I would like to emphasize is that both of them came back home after they finished their missions. History proves that the Chinese people are peace-loving people, never seeking outbound expansion.

I would also like to give some examples in recent years, to prove that China is a responsible country.

In 1997, when the financial crisis swept Asia, China made positive contributions under great pressure to alleviating the impact and maintaining the regional economy by not devaluing Chinese currency.

In 2007, financial crisis hit the US. It escalated into a financial tsunami in 2008. China contributed \$600 billion in total to help the world economy out of turmoil, making a great contribution to the recovery of world economy.

In 2014, at the outset of the Ebola epidemic in Africa, China sent medical teams to Africa without any hesitation, making a unique contribution to the

battle against the disease.

In 2016, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change was signed by 178 countries including the US and China, becoming one of the milestone documents in human history. It represents the resolve of all parties to fight climate change and joint action to reduce ecological risks and the subsistence crisis that might be caused by climate change. Unfortunately, US President Donald Trump denounced it and withdrew his country from its due duties.

Undoubtedly, facts have shown that China is a country always sharing responsibility with other countries in the world.

I originally planned to visit President Bush Sr after this trip. However, due to his declining health condition, I had to cancel the trip. I remember clearly he made very wise remarks on the US-China relationship. He said that this relationship is the most important bilateral relationship in the world. Trade is the key foundation for a sound US-China relationship.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of China's reform and opening-up policy. Next year will be the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between our two countries. Over the past 40 years, our bilateral relations have attained remarkable achievements. In the next 40 years, I hope that, with our joint efforts, we will find mutual interests again and bring in new highlights in the win-win cooperation between our two countries. Thank you all! ■

My first experience of a tea ceremony

Mu Yu

Since it would be my first time there, I was wondering...

Learning that there was going to be a tea party in the CPAFFC compound, I immediately signed up for the gathering. Though I know sado, or tea art, only by its reputation, I believed I could still be immersed in any authentic tea ceremony without difficulty. After all, the event was related to Japanese culture, and it was sponsored by China-Japan Friendship Association, none of whose productions had ever let me down.

In my previous understanding, sado was an artistic process for making a cup of tea. And making tea always appears in the form of a convenient and instant Lipton brand bag whenever I have visitors, or as a glass of chrysanthemum-flavored tea served with rock candy in a restaurant. I have seen people make Chinese gongfu tea, which is more complicated. Even the easiest serving of a single cup requires three or four kinds of tools and equipment. Nevertheless, I found out later that gongfu tea was a far cry from a traditional sado ceremony.

I used to think that sado, literally “the way (do) of tea (sa)”, was just a gimmicky term coined by Japanese, who are good at packaging things. The most impressive memory I have about sado was from a Japanese TV series titled Meteor Garden, in which the

heir of a sado family, wearing *haori*— a man’s traditional Japanese attire for formal occasions — makes tea in serious observation of sado routines. He acted totally different from his usual manner as the spoiled son of a privileged family.

I wondered if it was because of the charm of sado.

When I actually was there, the tea ceremony was like...

The tea party began with a ceremony during which Daisosho (grand master) Sen Genshitsu of Urasenke dedicated the tea in prayer for Japan-China friendship.

First I saw an old man with white hair and calm face, dressed in a dark *haori*, slowly but vigorously stepping onto the stage. He gently nodded to the audience. Then, after a brief pause, he picked up one of the white handkerchiefs on the table and began hand movement, slowly as in an old slow-motion movie.

Strangely enough, I was immediately attracted and my eyes followed the movement of his hands. The handkerchief was unfolded, overturned, folded again, and then used to wipe the tea cup. Then the grand master took up another handkerchief and did it all over again. Everybody present watched silently and the air seemed frozen, except for a few camera

flashes.

But what does it mean to stare at a handkerchief for such a while? It was a handkerchief, of course, and a white one. It was used to wipe the tea cups — that’s it. That was all. But then what?

A silk bag was unfastened, revealing a can of tea inside. Genshitsu took out the can — a lovely one — and put it down on the table. The silk bag was lovely, too. He smoothed the wrinkles in the fabric and put it aside. He then lifted the lid of the can gently and put that aside as well.

A brief break again.

The tea cups were finally taken out, wiped, filled with boiled water...

For someone like me who was attending a tea ceremony for the first time, this was the best I could do to record and interpret the master’s performance, though my account is far from complete and accurate.

I had to admit that I knew nothing about tea sado or the master. I had harbored no prior expectations for the ceremony. Surprisingly, however, I was totally captivated by the master’s every gesture and motion, by his dignified appearance and the atmosphere he created. I surrendered to just sit there in silence and watch in awe. If the ceremony had been performed by a young man with hastier movements, it might have lost its qualities of peace, esteem, elegance and tranquility such

as I perceived as I watched the master's performance. I didn't expect sado would have such an appeal to me.

After preparing the tea, the sado master raised cups in dedication to the Chinese and Japanese national flags. It was not until he gently bowed to the audience that I realized that all who were present, including me, had been in the master's eyes throughout his performance.

Later, during the party, the master shared a story about his meeting with Deng Xiaoping, the former paramount Chinese leader. He recalled how their scheduled 30-minute sado appointment was prolonged for an hour and a half because of the congeniality of the dialogue. He also said that a person who understands tea would never get involved in a war. Here was a respectable old man, amiable and with a ready smile.

To be honest, it confused me even more: Is this the same person who looked so straight-faced just now with a cup of tea in his hands?

"I noticed that the master kept fiddling with his handkerchief. ..."

I wondered if a colleague from the Japan-China Friendship Association could shed some light on it.

"You call that fiddling? Don't you know that every move of his has a meaning?"

"Well, then, why the staring at the handkerchief?"

"What you call staring is actually appreciation — what a lovely handkerchief!"

"Um, then why the sour look?"

"That's not sour but solemn."

"All right."

After being there, I thought about...

A guest from Malaysia once told me of a common saying in his country, which goes like this: One will never fall in love with a place unless they first know it. However, when it comes to Japan, knowledge seems to have become a barrier to bar the development of affinity between the two neighboring nations.

In fact, we Chinese appear to be only too knowledgeable about Japan. Stories about it are available everywhere — textbooks, movies, narrations by the elders, etc. Geographically, there is only a narrow strip of water that separates us. Despite their complicated and even tortuous relations in modern times, China and Japan have shared cultural similarities and exchanges for thousands of years. Currently, Japanese anime culture is spreading across China. All these facts evoke a mixed feeling among Chinese whenever Japan is mentioned.

However, does "too knowledgeable" mean the knowledge is sufficient? Or is this "too knowledgeable" just a hodgepodge of secondhand information gleaned from different fields? Real knowledge is not hearsay. Without real contacts, one is nowhere near the truth.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the China-Japan Treaty of Peace and Friendship. Over the past four decades, under the theme of friendship and peace, an increasing number of Japanese elements — including cuisine, anime, traditional instruments, such as the shakuhachi, and more have come into the daily lives of the Chinese people.

Then, can these be called

"sufficient contacts"?

This year also marks the 40th anniversary of China's reform and opening-up. The four decades of ups and downs show the surges in the river of time. With great courage and wisdom, the Chinese people have blazed a path toward modernization through numerous successful and unsuccessful attempts. The living standards of the current Chinese generation are much better than their parents' and grandparents' generations. Meanwhile, the Chinese people are much more confident than ever before. With such confidence, the young generation sees Japan with a vision much different from their elders.

As little as I knew about sado, I have known Japan and the Japanese language. Layman that I was, I was touched after witnessing the sado ceremony. Once I experienced the real thing, the previous knowledge gained by hearsay immediately lost its flavor.

Amity between people holds the key to sound relations between states. Harmony is built on the basis of mutual understanding. To achieve that amity and understanding, people should come together, join each other, see with their own eyes, hear through their own ears and feel by their own hearts. Compared with what is done on the internet, cultural exchange in conventional ways is slower and less influential. It takes longer to be effective. But it influences like quiet drizzles. Every bit of mutual understanding gained between people, and every heart being touched, constitutes the true sense and charm of people-to-people diplomacy.

To know the real Japan, start by enjoying a sado ceremony. ■

Along the Silk Road forward

Mu Yu

Oh, Casablanca! — it was the first thing that came to my mind when I learned that I was to go to Morocco and Tunisia for a business trip. But where was this Tunisia? Was it a country? Later I heard many of my friends asking the same question. At that time, I had no idea that in that faraway, unknown country there were many people who loved China with devotion and sincerity.

Thanks to briefings from my colleagues, I got some preliminary knowledge of the two countries beside the side the Atlantic and Mediterranean, with desert views and seaside scenery. I also learned with surprise that they were both Arabian countries, which immediately prompted me to think of women in the Middle East completely covered in black veils and long robes, with only their eyes exposed. I also alerted myself that even visitors were required to follow the local customs.

I cautiously asked my colleagues in charge of Arabian affairs if I could wear dresses. Their positive answer encouraged me to ask a bolder question: Would a short-sleeved dress be appropriate? The question triggered a burst of loud laughter.

It was when I later walked around in Morocco and Tunisia freely that I realized why they laughed. A thought welled up in my mind: Stereotyped images can cheat a person and cause one to lose common sense.

Moroccan instruments can be vocal

On March 26, the 2nd China-Morocco Friendship Forum opened in Agadir, Morocco. The CPAFFC delegation and three folk music performers from the Ningxia Song and Dance Troupe were ready to offer an art feast to the local audience at the opening ceremony.

These three performers were good at Chinese traditional music instruments — the pipa (Chinese lute), the erhu (a two-stringed instrument commonly known as the Chinese violin) and the bamboo flute. Before coming to Morocco we had learned that the pipa shared so many similarities with Moroccan oud that it was believed they were of the same origin. But it was beyond our expectation that the erhu and bamboo flute would find their cousins in Morocco. An intimate dialogue thus began between Chinese instruments that came from thousands

of miles away at the other end of the Silk Road and their distant relatives.

The afternoon before the performance, we went to the studio of local band Inourza for rehearsal. The band — four players and a singer was locally famous. Soon after entering the studio, the Chinese musicians were attracted by the oud, ribab and Moroccan flute. The shape of the oud was almost the same as that of the pipa, despite its 12 strings in six groups instead of four strings. The ribab and erhu not only look alike, but also share a horsetail bow, although the ribab does not use rosin. The flutes shared so many similarities that a layman would not be able to distinguish one from the other.

The musicians from both sides all eagerly took up the other side's instruments and tried to use the alien tools. Within just two and a half hours, the Chinese and Moroccan musicians composed and practiced two songs that combined elements from the two countries.

On the evening of March 27, in a village in the desert area of Agadir, the artists staged their performance. The first episode they played together

was adapted from traditional Moroccan folk music with pairs — the pipa and oud, the erhu and ribab, the Chinese flute and Moroccan flute — conducting a harmonious conversation. Amid the rise and fall of the melodious notes, the musicians exchanged heartfelt glances. When music rises, languages are no longer a barrier. The second episode was based on the classic Chinese music of Happiness, while a piece of Moroccan music was added to fire up the crowd.

Who would have imagined that across the thousand-mile distance there were these artists of different races, using different languages and playing different but similar instruments that sounded so harmonious together?

Art knows no borders and music transcends boundaries. Art and music let the hearts of different peoples come together across any distance. Thousands of years ago, there were the pioneers enduring great hardship in opening up the Silk Road. Thousands of years later, in an evening in Agadir, music carried forward the spirit of the Silk Road that had extended through time and space.

Nihao is also a Tunisian greeting

Before of the trip to Tunisia, I was curious about the Menzah 6 Middle School where we were scheduled to perform Chinese music. I wouldn't find it strange for any country to open Confucius Institutes, but I cannot help wondering why a country so far away from China has its middle schools offering a course in the Chinese language. Do the students there really know anything about China?

I got the answer when we met

President Jebali of the Tunisia-China Friendship Association, who greeted us. President Re — we preferred to call him that after making his name sound Chinese— had lived in China for 11 years and studied Chinese Medicine. His Mandarin was so fluent that we natives could not help but admire him. He told us that his two sons were learning Chinese right now “because China means the future of the world”.

It seemed that the Tunisian people knew about China more than we had imagined, a fact that was repeatedly demonstrated during the following days.

Have you ever had the strange feeling of being frequently greeted with *nihao* in Mandarin while walking in an alien nation? Once two local girls driving a car pulled ahead of us just to say *nihao*. Our Asian faces helped identify us as Chinese.

Nelson Mandela once said: “If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart.”

True, those friendly and cordial faces went with warmth straight into our hearts.

On the afternoon of March 31, we finally got to Menzah 6 Middle School. Meeting our eyes first were groups of lovely students in national costume and Chinese qipao on the playground under the blue, sunny sky. Some wore T-shirts with Chinese characters, “I learn Chinese”.

They had prepared performances in Chinese. A girl wearing a white Chinese gown and a silver hairpin sang *The Myth* with sweet voice and tender feeling. A Chinese drama titled *The*

Story of Mama and Xixi brought peals of laughter from the audience.

The continuous applause and laughter tantalized our musicians in the waiting room, who could not wait to give their performance. A girl who had just finished her part in the show went into the dressing room and told us in broken Mandarin that she loved China and Chinese people. The radiant smile on her face warmed my heart. I looked around and saw the youngsters' eyes glistening with tears of joy. I knew that nothing would make an actor feel happier than seeing a welcoming and appreciative audience.

Seeing the looks of ecstasy on the children's faces, we knew the performance was a complete success. The girl who sang *The Myth* was right beside me. She told me she was learning to play the violoncello, which to her was similar to erhu in both tone and the way they are played. She also said that she and her classmates had been discussing the way to further their music studies in China.

I have many reasons to believe that the show was the most significant one I have ever attended. It was not the most modern or the biggest, nor the highest in terms of artistic standards. But for those youngsters it will most likely develop their interest in China in the future.

I once asked President Re: “Why are people so enthusiastic about China?”

“Because the Chinese who came to Tunisia did good deeds,” he replied. “For instance, the first medical corps that came to help with our medical services.”

“Then how about the present?”

How do young people in Tunisia learn about China?”

“Mostly by TV and through the internet,” he said.

In Menzah 6 Middle School, the students found a better way to learn about China: Come close to Chinese people and Chinese art. I believe that’s the essence of cultural exchanges in people-to-people diplomacy — an understanding based on close contact nurtures real love toward each other.

The last day before leaving, we were having lunch in a roadside restaurant when a group of children in primary school uniforms happened to pass by. Two girls with lovely smiles came in and talked to President Re in Arabic with noticeable shyness. President Re turned to us and told us that they wanted to talk with us. After introducing themselves in English the girls asked: “I like China. Do you like Tunisia?” “Of course we do!” we answered.

I still remember what President Re’s wife told us after watching the Chinese musicians’ perform. She said: “Listening to the beautiful melodies, I felt as if I was in the dream, trekking along the Silk Road from China to Tunisia.”

In fact, the seeds of friendship sowed on the Silk Road have yielded positive results.

Thanks to modern technology, the thousands of miles of distance that set people apart in the past have become just a few hours’ flight. The flowers of the friendship between China and countries along the Silk Road will continuously bloom in full and splendor. ■

Interview with Kitamuro Nanen, chairwoman of the Hokushi Seal Engraver Association

Staff Reporter

The Exhibition of Calligraphy and Seal Cutting Works in Chinese and Japanese Eaves Tile Culture was presented successfully in August at the art gallery of Ishikawa prefecture, Japan. The exhibition was jointly sponsored by the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the Hokushi Seal Engravers Association.

We met our old friend Kitamuro Nanen on the occasion. The association, founded in 1980, is a civilian society whose members study and practice calligraphy and seal cutting. Nanen, its chairwoman, is well-known in the region for her high level of work, taught by Bai Yoteki, a master calligrapher. Nanen is currently managing director of the Japan Seal Engravers Association, director of Japan-China Friendship Association in Ishikawa and vice-president of the Japan-China Friendship Association in Kanazawa.

Infatuated with Chinese culture, she has been dedicated to promoting nongovernmental cultural exchanges

between China and Japan. Since 1994, she has worked with the CPAFFC to hold exhibitions related to Chinese culture, especially Chinese characters.

Q: You have been committed to advancing cultural exchanges between China and Japan. Would you please share with us your close links with China and the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries?

A: After my first visit to China in 1976, I kept dreaming about hosting my own exhibition in the home of Chinese characters. I was fascinated by Chinese calligraphy even when I was a child.

I studied and practiced very hard to grasp the art of seal cutting and different styles of Chinese calligraphy, including seal characters, official script, regular script and cursive script. In 1994, I had my first contact with your association through a news agency in Ishikawa prefecture. With the help of the CPAFFC, my exhibition was finally held at the Beijing Working

People's Cultural Palace. At that time, I led a delegation to China especially for the exhibition. At the opening ceremony, CPAFFC's vice-president, Wang Xiaoxian, made remarks and our delegation members in kimono demonstrated sado. That special day is still vivid in my mind.

Q: We know that you and the CPAFFC organized many exhibitions and lectures on Chinese culture, especially Chinese characters, in both China and Japan. You often published articles about Chinese culture in Japanese newspapers and magazines. Why have you been so obsessed with China and its culture over the years? Or, what is the charm of this country and its culture?

A: China is one of the four ancient civilizations in the world. It is known that Japanese culture originated with this neighbor. Almost everything in Japanese people's daily lives, if traced to its origin, is connected with China.

Hieroglyphics born in other cradles of human civilizations all evolved into phonographies. However, the Chinese characters born in the Yellow River civilization have remained unchanged for more than 3,300 years. That's really amazing. Writing these characters in a delicate structure of strokes on rice paper with an ink brush is a high art, definitely unique in the world. The peripheral cultures stemming from Chinese characters are also fascinating.

Q: Facing each other across the sea, China and Japan have enjoyed a history of contacts for over 2,000 years. This year marks the 40th anniversary of the signing



Kitamuro Nanen, chairwoman of the Hokushi Seal Engraver Association

of the China-Japan Treaty of Peace and Friendship. In May, Premier Li Keqiang visited Japan, strongly pushing Sino-Japanese relations back onto the right track. As a cultural celebrity devoted to people-to-people friendship, what is your expectation about the cultural exchanges between the two countries?

A: Chinese culture is a central, radiant culture while Japanese culture is a peripheral one. They complement each other. When studying the source of a radiant culture, one will find many enlightening elements in the peripheral cultures that deserve a thoroughgoing study, such as those derived from Chinese characters. There is so much to explore. As a nongovernmental person, I hope that I can, while keeping the Hokushi Seal Engraver Association active, continue unearthing the cultural elements hidden in the complementary cultures of Japan and China.

Q: In the 1970s, you came to China for the first time. This year marks the 40th anniversary of China's reform and opening-up. As a witness of the past 40 years, what changes in China have impressed you most?

A: In 1976 when I first came to China, I saw people's communes everywhere, and the country was not affluent. However, the Chinese people were nice, easy-going and hospitable. People in rural areas were so warmhearted that I was often moved to tears. Today, with the rapid economic development and population growth, many problems have surfaced that cannot be fixed quickly. China is a time-honored civilization with a large population. It should have accumulated an amazing amount of talent. I believe the world will see how the Chinese nation will use their clever minds to solve all the problems. ■

Journey to birthplace of Marxism enhances mutual learning across cultures

Li Zhe



The opening ceremony

It was the height of summer. The swelling River Moselle and verdant vineyards added to the beauty of the old city of Trier. A delegation from the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries headed by its president, Li Xiaolin, was visiting the German city from May 31 to June 2.

Learning about Marx in Old Treves

Trier, formerly known as Treves, is one of the oldest German cities. Its history can be traced to the first century BC — the Roman Empire. The churches, the Roman palaces, gates,

long bridges and baths that have stood the test of time are still telling the stories of city's varied past.

It is widely known not only for its rich historical and cultural heritage, but also for its identity as the hometown of Karl Marx. Marx was born in 1818 and lived here until he was 17. As this year marks the 200th anniversary of the great philosopher's birth, Trier and the state of Rheinland-Pfalz are holding a series of commemorative activities. On May 4, a commemoration ceremony was held at the Constantine Cathedral in Trier. About 1,000 people from all circles in Germany attended the event.

On May 5, the date of Marx's birth, a themed exhibition co-hosted by the state and city administrations opened at the State Museum of the Rhine Area and simultaneously at the municipal museum. Meanwhile, the renovated former residence of Karl Marx was opened to the public. A 5.5-meter-high bronze statue of Karl Marx created by Chinese sculptor Wu Weishan was unveiled at the site, and it has become a new landmark for Trier.

Besides launching large-scale commemorative events, the local administration also designed many souvenirs using Marx's image. From

shopping malls to street corner stores, customers saw various kinds of souvenirs emblazoned with the portrait of Karl Marx. Many local restaurants introduced new items to their menus like the “proletarian breakfast”, “Marx bread” and “Marx steak”, among others. After being named for Marx’s book *The Capital*, sales of local wine enjoyed rapid growth in a short time. The most sought-after souvenir was the so-called zero-euro coins, which sold for 3 euros each. On the front side was the familiar head portrait of Marx; on the back were the Porta Nigra and other landmarks. The first and second editions of 25,000 coins were sold out within a few days.

Meeting with China in Marx’s homeland

On the afternoon of June 1, a drizzle had just stopped and the exhibition hall located at the site of the Ancient Roman bath became livelier than usual. Witnessed by over 200 guests from China and Germany, CPAFFC President Li Xiaolin, Vice-Governor Wu Zhongqiong of Jiangxi province and Rheinland-Pfalz State Minister of Culture Konrad Wolf jointly put a seal on a scroll of landscape paintings in traditional Chinese style. The red-ink seal was engraved with characters that said “Meeting with China”. The painting was specially created with a portrait of Karl Marx. The sealing ceremony initiated a series of exhibitions — called *Meeting with China* — about Chinese culture in commemoration of the 200th anniversary of Marx’s birth.

For China, the year 2018 is of special significance, for it was not

only the 200th anniversary of Karl Marx’s birth but also marked the 40th anniversary of China’s reform and opening-up drive. The *Meeting with China* exhibition held in Marx’s hometown thus came at just the right moment.

The event was co-hosted by the CPAFFC and seven provincial and municipal administrations, including Jiangxi, Shandong and Qinghai provinces; Baoshan Yunnan province; Shaoxing, Zhejiang province; Chengdu, Sichuan province; and Beijing. It has also received support from the state administration of Rheinland-Pfalz, the municipal administration of Trier and several German organizations dedicated to friendship with China. Since the opening ceremony, a “Chinese wind” has swept across Trier, which had seen a Marx craze since the beginning of the year.

“The event has brought to Trier one-fourth of China,” Mayor Wolfram Leib said with admiration.

The four-month exhibition series comprised seven themed exhibitions, which have all been launched. “The Charm of Jiangxi, the Chinese Flavor”, the opening of the series, brought to German audiences folk paintings from Wan’an; pottery from the Jingdezhen and Jizhou kilns; egg-decorating crafts from Le’an; embroidery from Xinyuan Chinese opera plays written by Tang Xianzu, a Jiangxi native and playwright from the Yuan Dynasty (1206-1368).

Another exhibition opened on July 6, displaying “Confucius culture and Chinese characters”; and a “Beijing-themed Collection of Chinese seal works”, which introduced the

local audience to the traditional values of the Chinese people and the image of contemporary China. It helped them understand both inheritance and innovation in Chinese culture.

Exhibitions themed “Ba-shu Culture from Sichuan” and “Jade Culture from Yunnan” opened on Aug 3. The grand finale staged on Sept 1 included two exhibitions themed “Luxun’s Literature” and “Sanjiangyuan, Source of the Three Rivers”, which showed what China has achieved in reform and ecosystem protection.

The seven exhibitions adopted various forms of presentation, including pictures, videos, articles, traditional handicrafts and stage performances, demonstrating the harmony between traditional culture and modern civilization, environmentally friendly cities and beautiful countryside, and between human society and the nature.

The series of activities told German people stories of how the Chinese people had endeavored to realize their dream of building a beautiful homeland and living a happy life.

CPAFFC President Li said in her opening speech: “I hope that the exhibitions can help our German friends feel the charm of Chinese culture and the pulse of China’s development, witness the great changes of social construction, deepen understanding about China, so as to breathe new life into the exchanges between the two countries and enhance mutual learning between the two civilizations.”

Tracing the origins of Marxism

On June 1, President Li visited

Karl Marx's former residence and the municipal museum where the exhibition of *The Life Course of Karl Marx* was held. The detailed exhibition reproduced Marx's life in Trier, Paris and London. Many of the exhibits — including his birth certificate, original doctoral degree certificate, manuscript and Braille edition of *The Communist Manifesto* — were presented to the public for the first time. Among them was a sketch of young Marx by his college friend Heinrich Rosbach, the earliest existing portrait of him.

After the visit, President Li enthused: "The visit impressed us very much. It is really a roots-seeking journey. Karl Marx devoted his whole life to the liberation of all mankind in hope of helping the poor out of poverty and suffering. This is exactly the root and soul of Chinese Communists. President Xi Jinping once said: 'The people's yearning for a happy life is the goal we strive to attain, and this has been derived from Marx's ideal and original intention.' The Communist Party of China has been making efforts to localize Marxism on the basis of China's concrete conditions, and has used it as the guiding principles in China's practices. China's 40 years of reform and opening-up is the best tribute to the 200th anniversary of Marx's birth."

During the visit to Germany, one of Marx's famous remarks was frequently mentioned — "The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways. The point, however, is to change it." During the past 200 years, the world has been profoundly changed by the theories of the No 1 thinker in a thousand years. ■

Exhibition in Trier receives warm reaction

Jiangxi Friendship Association

On June 1, an exhibition—The Charm of Jiangxi, the Flavor of China—celebrating the 200th anniversary of Karl Marx's birth opened in Trier, Germany. The exhibition was a hit with local audiences and won praise from Chinese and German people in all circles.

The exhibition of selected folk paintings from Wan'an, a county of Jiangxi province, showed the changes and new look of rural areas, agriculture and farmers in China. The paintings recorded the growth of agricultural production, the improvement of farmers' livelihoods and the protection of the ecosystem in China's rural areas as represented by Jiangxi under the leadership of the Communist Party of China. The exhibition embodied a sense of attainment and happiness the people had developed in the nation's endeavor for the building of a moderately prosperous society in all aspects.

Guests present at the scene gave their thumbs-up.

"The year 2018 marks the 200th

anniversary of Karl Marx's birth and the 40th anniversary of China's reform and opening-up. The series of exhibitions themed '*Meeting with China*' has come at the right time. The audience can learn about the life and theories of Marx as well as the features of various Chinese localities and their economic and social development. It is undoubtedly a good opportunity for the public of Trier and even the whole of Germany to enhance their understanding about China."

Marcus Reuter, director of the General Administration of Cultural Heritage Protection and Research of Rheinland-Pfalz

"Holding this exhibition in Marx's hometown is not only a commemoration of the great thinker who has profoundly influenced China and the world at large, but also a chance for people from Germany and worldwide to see the real China in all aspects and learn what China has achieved in the 40 years of reform and opening-up. It is a

window for the German people to get to know China and understand China.”

Li Xiaolin, president of the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries

“Currently, China and Germany are important partners, with their relations undergoing rapid and sustained development at a high level. The increasingly widening and deepening exchanges between the two peoples have contributed — and will continue to contribute — to the furthering of bilateral relations. The rich content of the Jiangxi culture exhibition will, I believe, arouse great interest from the German audience.”

Wang Shunqing, China’s consul-general in Frankfurt

“Jiangxi is a beautiful place and well known for its pottery crafts. We have been expecting artists from Jiangxi to demonstrate their artistry for a long time. The year 2018 marks the 200th anniversary of Karl Marx’s birth, and Trier has witnessed rapid growth in the number of visitors. They can not only visit Marx’s former residence and trace his footprints, but can also feel the charm of Chinese culture, especially the local culture of Jiangxi province.”

Dr Konrad Wolf, Rheinland-Pfalz state minister of culture

“It is the first time to see such a large-scale display in Germany of Chinese culture with such great diversity packed into one exhibition. Culture, like music, has no national boundaries. Its charm can be enjoyed by audiences from different backgrounds around the world. I would

like to express our sincere thanks to the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and to the provincial government of Jiangxi for their great efforts in making it happen.”

Kurt Karst, President of Germany-China Friendship Association

Media from home and abroad covered the event with enthusiasm. The hosts held news conferences in Beijing and Trier on April 13 and April 20, which attracted public attention at home and abroad. The launch of *Meeting with China* on June 1 was widely reported by domestic and overseas media. People’s Daily and its website, Xinhua Daily Telegraph and Xinhua.net, Economic Daily, Chinanews.cn, the Global Network, Sina.com, and PhoenixNet all reported the activities. Domestic media outlets in Jiangxi province, including Jiangxi Radio and Television Station and other newspapers, TV channels and news websites followed the event all the way, with reports also published via Weibo, WeChat and mobile apps. By 6 pm on June 8, new-media reports on the event had been viewed more than 6 million times.

People from all walks of life gave abundant praise. As of June 8, the exhibition had attracted more than 4,000 German visitors. At the booth exhibiting embroidery, Benedette Andres of the Rheinland-Pfalz General Administration of Cultural Heritage Protection and Research tried needlework on a piece of linen under the tutelage of Zhang Xiaohong, an officially acknowledged “inheritor” of

national intangible cultural heritage.

She said with emotion: “The story of Zhang Xiaohong sharing her decades of experience with her daughter reminds me of my mother teaching me to do needlework when I was a child. Though Germany and China are thousands of miles apart, the similarity in culture and art is amazing.”

Barbara Zwiebelberg, 78, was attracted by the brightly colored folk paintings of Wan’an farmers. She said: “I never expected Chinese paintings to be so bold and bright and full of life and energy, much more than black-and-white ink paintings as I had long thought they were. Despite their rich artistic heritage, Chinese artists have maintained modesty in communication with the rest of the world. The exhibition’s theme is appropriate. It has given us who have never been to China a chance to get to know it and conduct face-to-face exchanges with Chinese artists.”

Liang Pengcheng, an artist from Wan’an skilled in a style known as “farmer painting”, gave his explanation. He attributed the genre’s origin to folk painters in late ancient times. The new genre, he said, follows the pulse of the times and uses the plain language of color to express the artist’s inner feelings and reflect the lives of the common people in modern China.

“Such an approach to artistic creation,” Liang said, “allows it to represent China’s folk culture and let the outside know about China and listen to our voice. The exhibition gave us farmer painters a chance to exchange with foreign artists. It will inspire us to produce more and better works.” ■

Special event: 'Tracing Marx's Thoughts'

Xu Yanqing and Liu Lang

The year 2018 marks the 200th anniversary of Karl Marx's birth, the 170th anniversary of the publishing of the Communist Manifesto and the 40th anniversary of China's reform and opening-up drive. It also marks the beginning of a new era after the 19th National Congress of Communist Party of China.

Human society has changed profoundly during the last two centuries. Nevertheless, Marx still enjoys respect from all over the world, and his theories still shine with the brilliance of truth. In a bid to figure out the underlying reason why the Chinese people chose to follow Marxism and have upheld it ever since, we set out on a journey of investigation and of thinking.

From April 23 to 29, the Research Center for People-to-People Diplomacy of the CPAFFC joined hands with the Yan'an Municipal Committee of the CPC and the People's Government of Yan'an to hold a special event entitled Tracing Marx's Thoughts — Commemorating Marx's 200th Birthday. During the series of activities, a delegation of Chinese scholars followed the footprints of Marx to his hometown in Trier, Germany; helped finalize the signing of a memorandum between Yan'an and Trier to establish a friendship-city relationship; reviewed the CPC's original mission statement at the



CPAFFC Vice-President Xie Yuan addressed the forum.

birthplace of *The Communist Manifesto*; exchanged ideas with British scholars and entrepreneurs on Marxism's significance to the current world at the British Museum, where Marx wrote his masterpiece, *The Capital*; and held profound discussions with local officials, scholars, young students and entrepreneurs from Germany, Belgium and Britain along the journey. Through the activities, they gained intuitive recognition of Marx's lofty spirit and brilliant ideas.

First stop: Trier, Germany — hometown of Karl Marx

The black majestic Roman gate stands. River Moselle meanders by. Trier, one of the oldest cities in Germany, was the center of rule in the northern Alps during the Roman

Empire era. Two-hundred years ago, a great thinker, Karl Marx, was born here.

In the conference room of the city hall, at noon on April 24, 2018, Dr Li Xinyu, director general of the Research Center for People-to-People Diplomacy of the CPAFFC and other members of the Yan'an delegation met with Mayor Wolfram Leib. The head of the delegation briefed the German hosts on the historical relations between Yan'an and Trier, the current cooperation in the cultural and tourism industries and his understanding of the two cities' geographic characteristics and the possibilities of carrying out future people-to-people exchanges. The two sides fully expressed their opinions and had a sincere conversation, until they reached an agreement for

enhancing future exchanges by efforts from both sides. Mayor Wolfram Leib then took a pen from a pocket and, together with Li, signed the Yan'an-Trier memorandum establishing the friendship-city relationship.

Yan'an has been the spiritual home of all Chinese Communists, for the northwestern city witnessed a historic leap forward in the CPC's development from its founding with insufficient theoretical preparation to its maturity when the Party became fully experienced in integrating Marxism with China's reality. Yan'an was thus acknowledged as a holy land for Marxism, where it finally completed its localization in the mammoth Asian nation. The similar historical roles of Yan'an and Trier inspired the Research Center for People-to-People Diplomacy to promote a friendship-city relationship between the two places. Mayor Wolfram Leib told the Chinese guests that an exhibition on Karl Marx's biography and masterpieces was planned to relive his academic and political career. Visitors would come to better understand how the 19th century, which featured industrialization, urbanization and turbulent social changes, influenced the great philosopher and economist, and how his creative thoughts influenced later generations.

Second stop: Brussels, Belgium
— birthplace of *The Communist Manifesto*

Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, praises *The Communist Manifesto* as “a classic work of scientific insight into the law of the development of human society

brimming with struggle spirit, critical spirit and revolutionary spirit, which upholds the position of the people and seeks the interests of the people and the liberation of all mankind”. On April 25, the delegation arrived at the birthplace of *The Communist Manifesto* — Brussels, Belgium, where Marx and Friedrich Engels conceived and completed the great masterpiece, which affected the whole world. Since its elaboration 170 years ago, Marxism has spread worldwide. No other thoughts or theories have ever produced such a broad and profound impact on mankind as Marxism has done in history. From 1845 to 1848, Marx lived a life of displacement as a political refugee in Brussels. Volunteers from the Young Marxists, an organization active in Europe, told the delegation that despite having to move nine times in three years, Marx worked with all his passion to complete three of his masterpieces, undaunted by the tough living circumstances. The three were *The Poverty of Philosophy*, *Wage Labour and Capital* and *The Communist Manifesto*, which was jointly written with Engels in the Swan Restaurant in 1848 and which has changed the course of human history.

Third stop: Manchester, Britain —
pioneer of the Industrial Revolution

Manchester is the birthplace of the cotton textile industry as well as the first industrialized city in the world. Two centuries ago, the cotton textile industry first appeared in Manchester to raise the curtain for the Industrial Revolution. In 1842, Friedrich Engels went to the Victoria Mill — owned by his father, Friedrich Engels Sr, and

Peter Ermen — as an intern, where he got to know the life of workers. On his way to Britain, young Engels stopped at the editorial office of *Rheinische Zeitung* and met Marx for the first time. A long friendship began.

Fourth stop: London — where *The Capital* was written and published

From August 1849 onward, Karl Marx lived in London until he died 34 years later on March 14, 1883. Leading a hand-to-mouth existence, Marx devoted all his time to academic studies. After he obtained a reader's card to enter the reading room of the British Museum in June 1850, he went there almost every day, from dawn to dusk, reading and studying — and finally coming up with the first volume of the masterpiece *The Capital*.

His diligence and profound knowledge made him a prolific theorist. The first Chinese edition of *The Complete Works of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels* has 50 volumes, the second more than 60 volumes (whose publication is expected to be completed by 2020) and the international edition of more than 160 volumes. What an admirable wealth of intellect!

Fifth stop: Highgate Cemetery,
London — where Marx sleeps
eternally underground

The quiet and solemn Highgate Cemetery took us back to the Britain of the 19th century. The gravestone with Marx's bust on top was not hard to find. His body was initially buried at a corner of Hyde Park but was moved to the present location in 1954 when a group of British communists raised funds to build the new tomb.

After decades of displaced life, Karl Marx finally got to lie alongside his relatives and sleep his long sleep in peace. Standing before his grave, what we felt was not sadness but strength — a strength that encouraged us to press ahead on our way toward our goal. We drew strength from the epitaph on the great man's gravestone: "The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways. The point, however, is to change it." Ah, this is the power of practical philosophy. Two-hundred years have passed but China, and the world at large, has never forgotten him.

Sixth stop: Yan'an, China — Venue of the forum marking the 200th anniversary of Karl Marx's birth

On May 14, Vice-President Xie Yuan of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, attended the forum *Tracing Marx's Thoughts — Commemorating Marx's 200th Birthday in Yan'an*. The forum is of great significance in summarizing the journey of tracing Marx's thoughts in Europe and to promote the localization, modernization and popularization of Marxism in China.

The forum comprised three sub-forums — Marxism and Human Development, Reform and Opening-Up and the Localization of Marxism and Marxism and Youth's Mission. Addressing the forum, Xie spoke highly of the memorandum between Yan'an and Trier for establishing a friendship-city relation. He urged Yan'an to invite the mayor of Trier for a visit "as soon as possible" and promote practical cooperation between the two cities,

especially strengthening exchanges and interactions among the youth.

Meanwhile, doctoral postgraduates from China, Germany, Kazakhstan, Vietnam, Laos and Nepal participated in the youth forum to share their understanding of Marxism and the youth's mission.

Kumar, a Nepalese student from Beijing Normal University majoring in philosophy and China, said at the forum:

"It is believed that the Chinese civilization has a history of over 5,000 years, with profound culture. As an international student, I sometimes feel confused and don't know how to comprehend Chinese culture. In other words, what is China's culture or the new China culture?"

"What is the spirit of new China or China spirit? At the forum, Vice President of the Yan'an Municipal Party School Liu Weiping quoted President Xi Jinping: 'We need to stick to the Marxist culture of seeking the truth from the facts. This is a scientific culture.' Professor Liu's words enlightened me, helping me understand that Marxism is a conviction that demands perseverance, especially when one is faced with hardship.

"Marxism is the seed of the idea of serving the people when you believe that people's interests are above all else. Because the CPC has persisted in the belief that the Party should take the people's interests as the top priority in its development, communism has become widespread."

From April to May, from Trier to Brussels, to the British Museum, to Highgate Cemetery and back to Yan'an, we followed the footprints of

Karl Marx. Though a single month is a very short period in one's lifetime, this one-month journey created a sparkling and unforgettable memory.

Director General Li Xinyu of the CPAFFC's Research Center for People-to-People Diplomacy wrote in her work diary: "Why did the Chinese people choose to follow Marxism in the past and now come up with the need to localize Marxism in China? With that question in mind I set out on a journey to trace the great man's thoughts. I harvested a great deal along the way.

"Finally, when I stood in front of Karl Marx's grave, I found the answer to all the questions mentioned above: 'The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways. The point, however, is to change it.' Isn't that the source of Marxism's localization in China? Just as President Xi Jinping has said, 'Empty talk will lead the country astray, while hard work rejuvenates the nation.' Only when integrating theories with practice can we bring about real changes. Karl Marx's statement that the philosophers' point is to change the world happened to strike chord with the Chinese culture that emphasizes the importance of practice."

The world has never stopped studying and arguing about Marxism as a thought and a theory. Understanding has evolved from "Marx was right" to "Marx might be right", and then to "Marx, you were definitely right!"

It is noticeable that whenever the mankind is at loss about its progress or when the world gets confused as where to go, Marxism is there to guide mankind in the right direction in its persistent pursuit of the ideal society. ■

Old friend from Japan visits China amid fragrance of acacia flower

Zeng Guangming



He is a rigorous, pragmatic, wise and rational Japanese senior. He is both a veteran politician in Japan and “an old friend of Chinese people”, as Chinese President Xi Jinping called him, who has been committed to China-Japan friendly exchanges and cooperation for years. He is Toshihiro Nikai, the current secretary-general of the Liberal Democratic Party of Japan.

Toshihiro Nikai led large delega-

tions to visit China several times and has been working energetically for the healthy development of Sino-Japanese relations. In 2015, Nikai led a delegation of 3,000 people to China for the China-Japan Friendship Exchange Conference. President Xi attended the conference and made an important speech. In December 2017, Nikai led another delegation to visit the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign

Countries and was warmly welcomed by CPAFFC President Li Xiaolin. Less than half a year later, Nikai was once again invited to lead a large delegation of Japanese lawmakers, representatives of business and government officials to visit Liaoning and Sichuan from May 25 to 29. Song Jingwu, vice-president of the CPAFFC, accompanied Nikai in various activities.

Amid the warm spring breeze

and fragrance of acacia flowers, Nikai and his delegation visited Dalian to attend the 29th Dalian Acacia Festival, the 2018 China-Japan Tourism Dalian Exchange Conference (Forum) and the Kitamae-nune Mooring Harbor Forum — Japan's largest port city economic development and tourism forum — the Dalian Conference and related activities. During the period, Nikai went to Dongbei University of Finance and Economics and visited the cherry garden built with the money he had raised since 2004. Thousands of cherry trees swayed in the breeze, predicting a bloom for next year. At Dalian Forest Zoo, Nikai, Song and Dalian Deputy Mayor Lu Lin planted 16 blue cedar trees, symbolizing the long-lasting friendship between China and Japan. As an honorary citizen of Dalian, Nikai also visited the Dalian Library, and donated 500 books of literature, art and library science. He said he hoped to further enhance peace, friendship and cultural exchanges between the two countries.

On the morning of May 27, the delegation went to Chengdu by air. Ten years ago, the devastating earthquake in Wenchuan had brought tragedy to the Chinese people. One month after the earthquake, Nikai, who was then chairman of the LDP General Affairs Council, flew to Sichuan with a 31-ton relief package, including 300 large tents, to the earthquake-stricken area.

Ten years later, Nikai once again set foot in Sichuan. At the site of quake-hit Xuankou Middle School in Wenchuan County, Nikai and other delegation members presented flowers

at the 5.12 Wenchuan Earthquake Monument and held their hands in silent tribute. In the solemn atmosphere, Nikai had tears in his eyes. When he saw the new buildings and happy expressions of the people on Yingxiu New Street, smiles returned to his face.

In a subsequent interview, Nikai said: "I deeply respect the strong will, courage, and hard work of the Sichuan people in rebuilding their homes."

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the signing of the China-Japan Treaty of Peace and Friendship. Facing the future, China and Japan are deepening exchanges and cooperation in various fields. In Dalian, the 2018 China-Japan Tourism Dalian Exchange Conference (Forum) and Kitamae-nune Mooring Harbor Forum were successfully held. China and Japan reached consensus on pragmatic cooperation in areas of economy, trade, tourism and humanities. In Chengdu, to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the China-Japan Treaty of Peace and Friendship and the 10th anniversary of the 5.12 Wenchuan earthquake, a China-Japan disaster prevention and mitigation forum was held, jointly hosted by the CPAFFC, the China-Japan Friendship Association, the Sichuan Provincial People's Government and the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Yin Li, governor of Sichuan; Song Jingwu, vice-president of the CPAFFC; and Takashi Yamauchi, vice-chairman of the Japan Business Federation, attended the forum with Nikai and delivered speeches. Chinese and Japanese attendees had in-depth discussions on topics such as

disaster prevention and community construction, emergency response and emergency logistics, and earthquake-resistant construction of buildings. More than 240 people from China and Japan attended the meeting.

In his meetings with the leaders of Liaoning and Sichuan provinces, Nikai repeatedly said he would remain committed to promoting people-to-people communication, local exchanges and youth exchanges to help foster a lasting and close cooperative relationship between the two sides.

At the disaster prevention and mitigation forum, Nikai also expressed the hope that the two countries would strengthen exchanges and cooperation in carrying out post-disaster mutual support, sharing their experience in disaster prevention and mitigation and popularizing disaster prevention knowledge among young people. He hoped the two sides would take the forum as an opportunity to increase mutual trust, realize common development and create a better future for both countries.

The five-day visit to China was fruitful. In the context of Sino-Japanese relations returning to normal, Nikai's visit enhanced mutual political trust between the two countries, promoted friendly cooperation between the two peoples and put into practice his resolve as a veteran statesman to develop Sino-Japanese friendship.

I wish that, with the joint efforts of both sides, the Sino-Japanese relations will proceed steadily along a normal development track. ■

The call of Alaska

Zhang Heqiang

“Before my trip to China, people asked me if it was the right time to visit the country in the midst of trade frictions between America and China. My answer was a big yes.”

Bill Walker, governor of the US state of Alaska uttered some version of this on many occasions during his visit to China in May. Given the strained relations in the trade war, the governor’s visit was of great significance, for it revealed extensive common interests between the two economies and the huge potential for cooperation between China’s provinces and America’s states — in particular a bright prospect for economic and trade cooperation between Alaska and China.

Winding up his trip for trade talks in the United States, Vice-Premier Liu He returned to Beijing on May 20. The next day he met with American delegates, including Walker, at the Fourth China-US Governors’ Forum. The vice-premier briefed his American guests on the common understandings both sides reached during the talks in

Washington. In his words, the Sino-US economic and trade relations are mutually beneficial. The differences should be handled through negotiations on the basis of mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit, Liu said.

“Resorting to tariff hikes and sanctions goes against international rules on trade and economic relations, and they won’t coerce China into submission,” he said.

He encouraged Governor Walker to use his prominent position to tell the American public the importance of economic and trade ties with China so that they would help push for healthy and stable development of the bilateral relations. The governor expressed thanks to the vice-premier for his efforts to help clinch the Sino-US framework agreement, adding that his state was determined to strengthen cooperation with China in various areas.

The forum, presented by the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and

the Sichuan provincial government, was held in Chengdu, Sichuan province, on May 22. Walker led a delegation of 50 members from economic and trade circles in the US and the Alaska state government, which attended for the first time. The forum is a flagship project for local government exchanges between the two countries. History won’t forget Walker’s contribution and the Alaskan people’s friendly feelings toward China.

The governor’s visit was also important for Alaska. Last year, witnessed by Chinese President Xi Jinping and US President Donald Trump, the Alaska state government, Alaska Gasline Development Corp, Sinopec, the Bank of China and China Investment Corp signed a memorandum for a \$43 billion project to exploit liquefied natural gas on Alaska’s North Slope. During his tour in China, Walker visited the Chinese companies and urged them to ensure the project proceeded smoothly. When it is completed, the gas supply from

Alaska to China can last 100 years and trade volume can reach a whopping \$1 trillion.

As a Beijing resident, I hope the project will succeed. If so, the heating system in winter can be guaranteed and more blue skies will be seen in Beijing and Tianjin municipalities and in Hebei province. Foreseeing the benefit it will bring to future generations, I always imagine showing my children and grandchildren photos of me and my peers to let them know how we worked hard for their happiness.

The delegates from economic and trade circles held promotional events in each city they visited, presenting Alaska's tourism, mineral resources, winter sports facilities and seafood. They went to the headquarters of Alibaba Group in Hangzhou and visited HemaFresh, hoping they could sell more Alaskan marine products in Chinese markets through Alibaba's e-commerce platform — so that China's growing middle class could taste the delicious Alaskan King Crab.

Governor Walker said to his Chinese friends on many occasions: "Every time I visited China, I was warmly received. So this time I've brought the delegation along to let them experience the Chinese people's hospitality as I felt it."

I think the delegation's visit was fruitful. Besides winning friendship, the Alaskan businesses were able to conduct an all-round exploration of the Chinese market.

Walker is a typical American statesman — competent, hardworking and public-friendly. In his early career,

he ran a construction business and served as chairman of the Alaska Bar Association. He is eloquent and capable of responding to different occasions. Modest and gentle, he maintained a good relationship with everyone in the delegation and often helped them promote their products and services.

Seeing that he chose to fly in economy class, sitting together with the whole delegation on all his flights in China, I admired him for having no official airs.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of China's reform and opening-up, while next year will be the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the US. The healthy and stable development of Sino-US relations has played a positive role in China's reform and opening-up drive. We need to think seriously what we should do in next 40 years to let the bilateral relationship continue developing in a healthy and stable manner so as to bring tangible benefits to the two peoples.

To celebrate the forthcoming 40th anniversary, we should prepare some grand and special activities that are innovative. A bold idea struck me: Why not launch an automobile relay race starting from China through Russia across the Bering Strait to Canada and America? The race could be named the "Eastbound Belt and Road Initiative".

The auto race would motivate more people to take notice and become more aware of the importance of Sino-US relations. With climate change, the Arctic maritime route has become a reality. It is no longer a remote dream

to travel between Earth's eastern and western hemispheres across the Bering Strait. The relay race would stimulate people's imagination and in-depth thought about how the four major countries will get along in the next 40 years.

"I thought only Alaskans were venture-minded. Mr Zhang, you are so imaginative and venturesome!" Laura Edmonson, vice-president of Bering Straits Native Corp, exclaimed upon hearing my explanation of the plan. Jiang Zhigang, vice-chairman of the Silk Road Planning Research Center, added: "Taking the Belt and Road Initiative eastward is a good idea. It can go even farther. The eastern route can even become the seventh economic corridor of the Belt and Road."

When I saw Walker off at Shanghai Pudong International Airport, I had mixed feelings. But what most tumbled through my mind was expectation. In November this year, Bill Walker will again stand for election as governor of Alaska. I hope he wins. My memory brings me back to the permanent snow on the peaks of Alaska's mountains, the ice field of the Bering Strait and the hard-working and kindhearted Inuit, or Eskimo, natives. May the cooperative project between Alaska and China succeed. May the Chinese and American people enjoy lasting friendship and mutually beneficial cooperation. ■

The author is director-general of the Department of American and Oceanian Affairs of the CPAFFC.

The bond between Michigan and China

Zhang Yang



People in Detroit welcomed the Chinese ping-pong players in April 1972.

What comes to your mind when you hear the word Michigan? The Great Lakes surrounding the state? The right-across-the-water country of Canada? Or Detroit, nicknamed Motor City, which experienced both glory and bankruptcy?

For most Chinese people, the State of Michigan is probably hard to

locate on the map of the United States. It is not as well-known as Washington DC, with its Capitol Hill, New York with the Statue of Liberty; or California, with Hollywood. In short, Michigan is unfamiliar and far away.

Having been engaged in people-to-people diplomacy in the United States for many years, and even

having helped with the itinerary for the Michigan governor's visit to China in 2017, my limited knowledge of the American state is no better than most of my fellow countrymen.

That explains why I was deeply shocked and moved when I first set foot on the land of Michigan, witnessing its vitality and economic revival, and

learning about its long-lasting bond with China. It gave me the impulse to write this article, in the hope that more people might get to know the history of Michigan's exchange with China, feel the bond between the two sides and pass along this precious friendship.

Sowing the seed: Michigan opened up a window for China to look outward

Michigan's exchange with China traces to the mid-19th century. Back then, China was still a mysterious oriental country, covered in gold but closed to the Western world. Coincidentally, Michigan was the first US state to knock on the door of the mysterious kingdom. Anson Burlingame, a graduate of the University of Michigan, was appointed by President Abraham Lincoln as minister to the Qing Empire in 1861. He later served as a diplomat representing the Qing government in its relations with the United States and Europe. With his participation and encouragement during negotiations in 1868, China and the United States signed the Burlingame-Seward Treaty, which amended the Treaty of Tianjin. Through this treaty, the first signed by China on equal footing with a foreign country in its modern history, formal friendly relations were established between the two nations, with the US granting China most-favored nation status. The treaty also made the US the top destination to which the Chinese government would send students to study abroad. In 1872, the first batch of young Chinese students embarked on

their journey to the United States.

James B. Angell, the longest-serving University of Michigan president, had a profound influence on the Chinese educational circle's exploration of the outside world. Through the efforts of Mr. Angell and other far-sighted Americans, the US Senate passed a resolution in 1908 to remit to China much of the US share of the Boxer Indemnity to sponsor Chinese students' studies in the US. Part of the money was later used to establish the China Foundation for the Promotion of Education and Culture. With the help of the returned indemnity, Tsinghua Xuetang, predecessor of Tsinghua University, was founded in 1911. It is now one of the best universities in China. In the meantime, UM was selected, together with Yale, Harvard, Columbia and Cornell, as one of the top five US universities to receive Chinese students. These universities provided precious opportunities for Chinese students and scholars to expand their horizons and increase their knowledge. Wu Yifang, president of Ginling Women's College and the first female college president in China, is an excellent example of these Chinese talents.

Sprout: Ping-pong diplomacy opened a new chapter in China-US relations

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, China and the United States were isolated from each other for a long time. In the 1960s, as the New China continued to grow, the US wanted to form an alliance as a counterbalance to the Soviet Union.

At the same time, China also wished to resume diplomatic relations with the US in the hope of raising its global political profile and resuming its seat in the United Nations. The evolution of the world situation made it possible for the two countries to normalize bilateral relations. In April 1971, during the 31st World Table Tennis Championships in Japan, US table tennis player Glenn Cowan and Chinese player Zhuang Zedong met each other by chance. The happy coincidence lifted the curtain on China-US exchanges. Later that month, the American table tennis team was invited to visit China. Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai met with the delegation in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing and said to the American guests: "You opened up a new chapter in Sino-US people-to-people relations. I believe that the new chapter of our friendship will be supported by the majority of the two peoples." In the meantime, the US announced a series of measures lifting a decades-long ban on China.

In February 1972, eight months after the visit of the American table tennis team, US President Nixon arrived in Beijing, starting the historical visit known as "the week that changed the world". The two countries issued a joint communique in Shanghai announcing the normalization of the bilateral relations.

In April 1972, at the invitation of the University of Michigan's table tennis team, the Chinese team went to Detroit, visited the city's industrial base and then traveled to Ann Arbor where the university is located. Alexander Eckstein, professor of economics at the

university and a founding member of the National Committee on US-China Relations helped arrange the visit. A friendly table tennis match was held between the Chinese and US players in Detroit. The audience held signs written in Chinese, such as “Welcome to Detroit” and “Understanding, Friendship, Peace” to welcome the players.

Blossom: Educational cooperation with China took the lead

Since the establishment of diplomatic ties, relations between China and the United States have maintained steady and sound development with both nations’ interests increasingly intertwined. Exchanges and cooperation in all aspects have continued to deepen. The two countries have maintained close communication on international and regional issues. The China-US relationship has become the most important bilateral relationship in the world. The sound development of bilateral relations provided a solid foundation for Michigan’s exchanges and cooperation with China. In recent decades, Michigan’s educational cooperation with China, including by the University of Michigan, has achieved notable results.

In 1976, Robben W. Fleming, the UM president at the time, led a delegation on a three-week visit to China. It was the first US academic delegation to set foot on the Chinese mainland after 1949. In 1977, Michel Oksenberg, professor of political science and former director of the Center for Chinese Studies at UM,

was appointed special assistant to President Jimmy Carter and senior staff member for East Asia and China on the National Security Council. He did a lot of work for the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the US in 1979. In the 1970s and ’80s, UM carried out a number of academic exchanges with China, including the establishment of the Collaborative Research Center at the Institute of Psychology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the release of a report on the status of the humanities and social sciences at major Chinese universities and the signing of agreements for exchanges and cooperation with around 10 major Chinese research institutions. A reception was also held for a delegation of Chinese archivists during their visit to the US.

Entering the 21st century, the partnership between the University of Michigan and China was further consolidated and developed. In 2005, during a visit to China by UM President Mary Sue Coleman, the university decided to host the Michigan-China University Leadership Forum after reaching an agreement with the Chinese Ministry of Education. The forum, focusing on the management of world-class research universities, was held successfully in Ann Arbor in 2006, 2008 and 2010, providing a platform for education officials and university administrators from both sides to share information and experience. In addition, the university conducted extensive and fruitful cooperation with Chinese universities and institutions, including Peking University, Tsinghua

University, Renmin University of China, Fudan University, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, the State Archives Administration of China and the China Medical Board on joint school programs, personnel exchanges and training, as well as the application of scientific and technical achievements and other projects in various fields.

Bearing fruit: Michigan sets an example for other US states in cooperation with China

From May 6 to 9 this year, the CPAFFC coordinated delegations from six Chinese provinces to attend Michigan China Week. The activity was the first of its kind in the US to be hosted by a state government. Michigan invested great amounts of manpower and material for the event. The itinerary was carefully designed. More than 750 representatives of state government, city governments, science and technology industry, education and smart mobility sectors, IoT, food processing, medical devices, finance and investment participated in China Week. During the four day program, the Chinese delegation attended several meetings, including the Michigan China Business Summit, CEOs Business Roundtable and Michigan-China Industry and Innovation Dialogue, and visited Detroit-based Quicken Loans, the American Center for Mobility (also located in Detroit), and the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor and Amway in Grand Rapids. During the visits, the Chinese delegation communicated with people from

different sectors of life in Michigan, discussing experiences in innovation and exploring opportunities for cooperation.

Michigan China Week represents the summit of Michigan-China cooperation in recent years. Since Governor Rick Snyder took office in 2011, he has visited China in seven consecutive years, topping all other US governors. Snyder's visits played a significant role in strengthening Michigan's ties with China and enhancing cooperation in areas such as trade, investment and tourism. Michigan's commodity exports to China in the past decade have increased more than 200 percent and created nearly 30,000 local jobs. Michigan has set an excellent example among all US states for sub-national cooperation with China. During China Week, Snyder attributed his state's rapid growth in recent years largely to its fruitful cooperation with China. He said he expected to have more cooperation in broader fields to make Michigan the Nov 1 US state in attracting investment from China. Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan said that no matter how the federal government may change its policy towards China, Detroit will always welcome China with open arms.

Looking back, the early contacts between Michigan and China were occasional but sparkling. Looking ahead, the two sides will definitely open up new horizons on the basis of existing cooperation, bringing further benefits to the people of our two great countries. ■

Lianyungang fascinates Tanzanian visitors

Zhang Liang and Shi Min

March in Lianyungang saw mild breezes, sprouting grass, twittering birds and an eye-ful of flower clusters. In this beautiful season, the city welcomed a delegation from Tanzania.

The 20-plus-member delegation representing the national executive committee of Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM, Tanzanian Revolutionary State Party) was led by Rodrick Mpogolo, deputy secretary-general (mainland) and member of the CCM Central Committee.

With excitement and curiosity, the guests visited rural areas and local enterprises, climbed mountains from which they could look out to the sea and toured the city proper. During the tour, they felt the pulse of Lianyungang's development as part of building the Belt and Road, marveled at the city's achievements in creating a new

countryside, enjoyed the local people's hospitality and acquired understanding of the city's unique mountain and maritime culture.

Impact of targeted poverty alleviation

The visitors' first stop was Heilin town in northwestern Ganyu district, which has been called Jiangsu province's most beautiful orchard town and a model of public cleanliness.

Heilin, located in a hilly area along the border of Jiangsu and Shandong provinces, was once on the government list of key areas for poverty alleviation. In recent years, the township government and people have adhered to the practice of developing industries with local characteristics while preserving the local ecosystem. Carefully considering local conditions, the most suitable fruit trees have been

planted in an area of about 30,000 mu (20 million square meters), including the province's biggest red kiwi plantation. The project led to the establishment and growth of two leading manufacturing enterprises and two public listed agricultural companies. This once poverty-stricken rural town has now become the municipal and even provincial model of modern civilization with thriving businesses, a growing economy and moderately prosperous lifestyles.

The introduction by Secretary Ma Xiuyun of the Heilin Committee of the Communist Party of China greatly impressed Mr. Mpogolo, head of the delegation, who marveled at the power of the targeted poverty alleviation plan and the outcomes of economic development.

During the visit, Hexi village, a national model for the One Village, One Product campaign, and its application of water-saving irrigation technology featuring integral control of water and fertilization were also highly appreciated by the delegation. When visiting the Richland Group and Xinggu Biotechnology Co Ltd, members of the delegation listened carefully to the companies' leading officials about the techniques of growing blueberries and mushrooms, raised questions frequently and took notes. The African friends' studious attitudes deeply moved the Chinese staff.

Predestined relationship that ties people together

The delegation also went to Donghai county, where members visited

Zhangzhuang, a provincial model village noted for public cleanliness and healthy ecological environment. The clean and tidy streets and the neat and uniform buildings impressed the guests about what the village had achieved in following the nation's campaign to build a new countryside. As they watched an advertising video and photos showcasing the village's development, one of the visitors suddenly let out a "Wow!" in Mandarin — "Isn't that me?" It turned out that it was Mr Elasto Molase, chairman of the Arusha Region of Tanzania, who found himself in one of the photos. What serendipity! The photo contained a remarkable story involving Donghai county and Tanzania. Donghai was known as one of the world's major distribution centers for crystals and quartz stones; while the Arusha region of Tanzania was home to the newfound gem of tanzanite. A few years ago, when Donghai was committed to developing its crystal industry and was looking for overseas partners, the county government sent a delegation to Arusha. Mr Elasto Molase happened to be commissioned to receive the delegation. The photo was taken then, witnessing the quiet sowing of the seeds of friendship between Lianyungang and Tanzania.

Unique and fascinating culture of mountains and sea

Lianyungang has been known not only for crystal but as the home to the Monkey King, Sunwukong. It is also located at the eastern end of the new Eurasian Continental Bridge, a

strategic element of the Belt and Road. All these aroused the delegation's interest to discuss with accompanying staff members.

Inside the crystal city, the guests were attracted by displays, such as sculptures of the Buddhist goddess of mercy and a herd of galloping horses. They stopped before the delicate works one after another and responded to the exquisite craftsmanship. Meanwhile, they acquired new understanding of the extensive and profound Chinese culture.

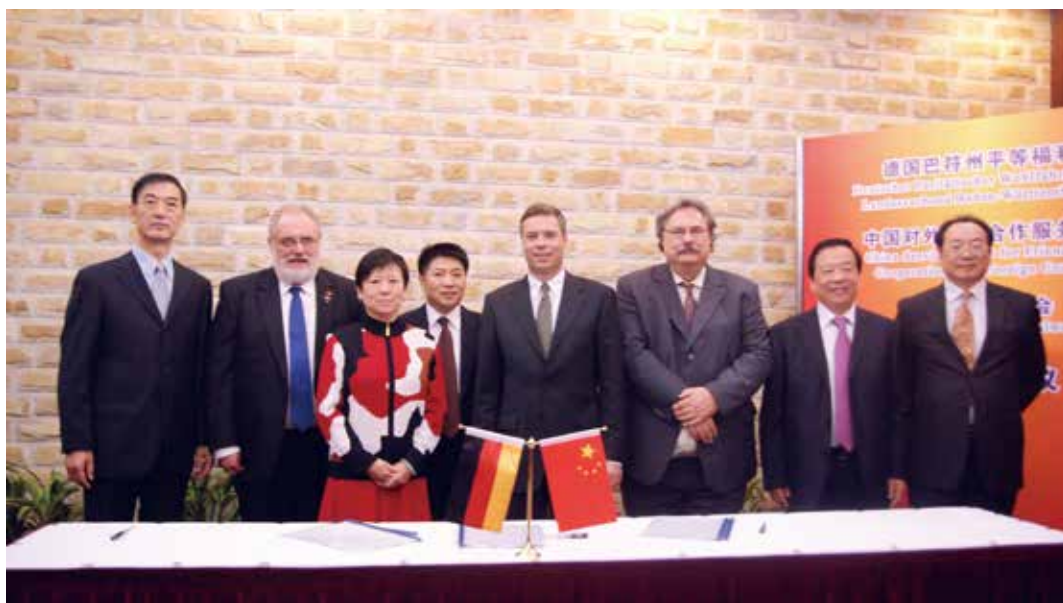
When visiting the Monkey King's mountain of flowers and fruit and the Yuntai islet, the delegation met a group of Chinese tourists, who showered them with warm hospitality. The African guests greeted the tourists with newly learned Chinese words, and posed to take pictures with them.

Time flew by and happy moments were always short-lived. At the end of their visit, Mr. Mpogolo said the delegates were all deeply impressed by the picturesque scenery, time-honored local culture, booming industries and hospitable people.

"I was fascinated by this amazing and romantic city of Lianyungang," he said. He saw great potential for development in the harbor city, with its ecological environment, cultural heritage and advantageous location. He said he would take Lianyungang's experience back to Tanzania and share with his friends at home what he had seen in the city to promote the economic development of his country, as well as multi-level exchanges in trade and culture with Lianyungang. ■

Sino-German vocational education cooperation kicks off

Cheng Yifei



On Oct 28, 2013, the signing ceremony was held.

Thirteen women radiant with youthful vigor gathered in a newly festooned meeting room in the compound of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries in Beijing on Jan 3, 2018. They were the protagonists at a seeing-off ceremony hosted by the association's Friendship Center for a Sino-German Nursing Exchange Program. They were to fly to Germany that night.

The women were the first group of this year's program for a two-year

vocational training internship for eldercare at the nursing school of Imland Clinic in Rensburg, in the German state of Schleswig-Holstein. After finishing the program they will be awarded a German federal certificate of vocational qualifications and start working at nursing homes as professional providers of eldercare.

It was the beginning of a new life as these women bravely sought a different future from that of their peers back home. It also showed the steady progress and continuity of the nursing

exchange program — part of a Sino-German vocational education exchange project that's in its fifth consecutive year.

Youth exchanges continue from generation to generation

The Sino-German Nursing Exchange Program was initiated by Rainer Dold, who has for 28 years enjoyed a personal friendship with Chinese Premier Li Keqiang.

In 1990, Li, then a member of the secretariat of the Central Committee of

the Chinese Communist Youth League, led a youth delegation to Germany. Dold, who had been engaged in youth development for years, received the guests and accompanied them as they toured the Neckar River. That was the beginning of his decades-long friendship with Li. In May 2013, Li made his first official visit to Germany as China's premier. He made arrangements to meet Dold in Potsdam, where they recalled their first meeting 23 years before. Li invited Dold and other old friends to visit China at a convenient time.

On Oct 28, 2013, Premier Li met with Dold at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. Dold told Li about a plan for China and Germany to exchange nursing personnel in cooperation with the CPAFFC. The program would select youths in China who were dedicated to caring the elderly and provide them with professional training in Germany. After completing the training they would work in the country for a short period of time to accumulate experience before returning to China. The program would help China build up a reserve of talented people specializing in the care of senior citizens.

Li spoke highly of the idea, saying that youth development is a future-oriented cause, and that young people in each country should be encouraged to visit the other for study and practice and to learn from each other for common progress.

In the afternoon of that day, an agreement was signed for the launch of the Sino-German Nursing Exchange Program by the CPAFFC Friendship Center, the Equal Welfare Association

of the German Federal State of Baden-Württemberg and the German-Sino Welfare Association. The signing was witnessed by CPAFFC President Li Xiaolin and German Ambassador Michael Clauss in the CPAFFC's conference room.

Over the past five years since the launch of the program, around 200 young Chinese have been sent to Germany to learn skills and theories in nursing care for elderly people. Their success in Germany showed the image of a new generation of aspiring and striving Chinese youths. The roughly 200 Chinese have merged into German society after 28 years. As friendship developed, exchanges between Chinese and German youths continued and reached new heights thanks to the efforts of the current generation.

“It looks beautiful” and “It has to be practiced personally”

Anything that promises a beautiful future involves difficulties. The benefits the nurse exchange program will bring to China and Germany are obvious. China can prepare enough nurses to serve its increasingly elderly society, while Germany can ease the labor shortage in its nursing industry. In reality, however, both sides found that soon after the program was launched it was not an easy job to make it work. To study and work in Germany, the Chinese nurses need to be proficient in the German language (to reach at least the B1 standard). In China, however, few people learn German, much less those who are both good with the language and seek to work in the nursing profession.

Therefore, the first thing to

accomplish was to recruit nursing personnel interested in studying and working in Germany and provide language training. Another hindrance to be overcome was the stereotype in Chinese society about elderly nursing. People tend to regard it as an inferior job, waiting on a senile person and assisting with his or her daily necessities. This concept won't fade quickly.

After several months of grueling selection throughout China, 22 people were recruited for further training. Some of them were nurses with years of work experience, while others were newly graduated from nursing schools. Some others were college graduates who majored in German language.

After going through several months of intensive language training, 21 candidates passed the examination administered by the German eldercare institution. Then, with the help from various Chinese and German organizations, the candidates got their visas and set off for Germany on Oct 10, 2014, marking the first step in implementing the Sino-German Nursing Exchange Program.

Based on its difficulty with candidate selection, the Friendship Center decided in November 2014 to change the way things are done. With help from the Sichuan People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, the first Sino-German Nursing Exchange Program Training Base was established at Sichuan Nursing Vocational College, marking the commencement of a new way of conducting Sino-German exchanges, starting with students.

The first group of 21 finished

their training in Germany in October 2017 and have worked in different places in the country for nearly a year. The training base at Sichuan Nursing Vocational College also achieved remarkable results: So far, 50 students have gone to Germany, where they won hearty commendations from the German school and nursing institutions for their diligence, cheerfulness and skills in cooking Sichuan-style food.

Both the pioneers of 2014 and the Sichuan women in recent groups met with untold difficulties in their early days in Germany — inadequacy in language, the alien culture and the heavy study burden. One can imagine how much hardship they overcame during the initial adaptation period to become accepted and gain confidence. The parties in the program, including the Friendship Center, performed arduous and solid work to take the program from concept to maturity.

Success heralds a tougher journey ahead

On Oct 28, 2017, the fourth anniversary of the program, the Sino-German Summit Forum on International Cooperation in Nursing opened its first session at the Peace Palace of the CPAFFC. More than 200 Chinese and German representatives attended the forum.

CPAFFC Vice-President Hu Sishe made a key-note speech. Representatives from the Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Civil Affairs, National Hygiene and Health Commission and the German Embassy to China took part in the meetings and delivered speeches. Dold, the old friend of Premier Li, came to Beijing

especially for the forum and spoke at the meeting.

The forum reviewed what had been achieved in carrying out the program. By 2017, the program had covered a dozen or so provincial regions across China, including Yunnan, Sichuan, Chongqing, Gansu, Shaaxi, Henan, Shandong, Hebei, Liaoning and Heilongjiang. More than 30 universities and colleges have participated in the program to build 18 training bases, which prepared and sent more than 100 nursing students to Germany, where they studied and worked in more than 30 places, including the cities of Berlin and Hamburg, and the states of Baden-Württemberg, Hessen, Schleswig-Holstein, Niedersachsen and Bayern.

The forum arranged online video dialogues with the Chinese nursing students in Germany, who showed the forum attendees the German sites where they studied and worked and shared their feelings and thoughts about the program. Representatives from the Chinese universities and colleges, partner institutions and elderly care businesses then exchanged ideas with the German participants and experts.

The successful convening of the first session of the forum marked a milestone in the progress of the Sino-German Nursing Exchange Program. It indicated that the program had developed a training model with stable, long-term personnel exchanges as its basic content and had begun to try a higher-level training model comprising teacher training, the introduction of professional subjects and occupational education.

Starting from 2015, interested Chinese universities and colleges sent

staff members to visit Germany every year to exchange ideas and discuss cooperation possibilities with German nursing schools. Both sides also explored the possibilities of cooperation in massage, acupuncture and other traditional Chinese medicine therapies. Coordinated by the Friendship Center, representatives from Yunnan TCM University visited Germany in October 2017 to discuss cooperation and exchanges with various schools and institutions in promoting TCM therapies.

The Friendship Center also plans to extend the vocational education cooperation with Germany from nursing to more fields. The plan was raised on the background of an agreement secured by the two countries — “Joint Innovation: Action Platform for Sino-German Cooperation in Manufacturing Industries”.

Twenty-eight years have passed since young Chinese and German nursing professionals met for the first time on the banks of River Neckar. Today, more young Chinese are going to Germany to start a nursing career. Many significant events have unfolded over nearly three decades. Premier Li, Dold, the CPAFFC, thousands of students from around 40 Chinese universities and colleges and numerous cooperation partners in the program from both countries have jointly written a beautiful, never-ending story. The Sino-German Nursing Exchange Program opened a new channel for nongovernmental diplomacy between the two countries. Vocational education meets here with dazzling sparks, which will ignite a lot of young people’s passion to realize their dreams. ■

The Rosens' connection with China

He Yan

At the end of May 1998, Huang Hua, president of the China Society for People's Friendship Studies, received a handwritten message from New York:

"Dear Huang: I've got the briefing on your commemorative event in honor of Edgar Snow and the mourning ceremony for Helen Snow. They were both respectable people who reminded me of many old friends, of Sam and of Chinese acquaintances. It was his fortune to have you and all the good people by his side when he was passing away in Beijing."

The letter, dated May 14, was from Helen Rosen, our old friend in the United States. She was over 90 years old with poor eyesight. Judging from the handwriting, she must have written the letter with a magnifying glass and trembling hands.

Full support for the China in the war against Japanese aggression

The person named Sam mentioned in Helen's letter was her husband, Dr Samuel Rosen, a world-famous ear-surgery pioneer. Rosen was born in 1898

to a Jewish family in Syracuse, NY. His father was a crockery retailer who barely made a living. Young Rosen was determined to becoming a doctor from the age of 8, hoping to cure her mother's asthma someday. Because of poverty, his siblings gave up their chance of going to college in order to support him in his studies at Syracuse University. Rosen achieved a doctor of medicine degree in 1921.

After graduation, Rosen spent two years at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City as an intern and continued to work there after the internship. There he met Helen during her sister's hospitalization. Helen was born in 1906 to an affluent family of lawyers. Her sister was rescued by Rosen with his superb medical skills, and the family felt very grateful. Helen developed affection for him, and it wasn't long before they married.

In the late 1930's, the Rosens made their connection with China — a friendship that lasted throughout their lifetimes. It was at the onset of the

Japanese invasion of China, and the Rosens were making efforts to support the Spanish people in their anti-fascist war. They deeply sympathized with Chinese people for their sufferings.

In 1937, Norman Bethune visited New York before going to China. At a gathering in Chinatown, he shared his point of view on the situation in China. He mentioned the lack of medicine in the country's war against Japanese aggression and urged his American friends to offer their help.

The Rosens were there. Soon after the meeting, they founded an organization to raise donations of medicine and medical facilities for China. At first, the pharmaceutical materials they collected could not be sent to Yan'an directly because of political reasons. They made a detour and managed to transport the materials to the base of the Chinese Communist forces by way of Canada.

In June 1938, Madam Soong Ching-ling founded the China Defense League in Hong Kong. The Rosens

got in touch with Soong. Every month they sent parcels of medicine to Hong Kong, from which the packages were forwarded to various military operation base areas in China. Despite their efforts running hither and thither, it was not easy to get sufficient donations in America. Sometimes they had to pay out of their own pocket. However, Hong Kong eventually fell to Japan after the outbreak of the Pacific War in 1941. Deliveries were suspended because the postal route became impassable.

The Rosens closely followed all reports on China's resistance to the Japanese. In 1937, *Red Star over China* written by American journalist Edgar Snow was published. The Rosens read the book thoroughly and came to know another China, one in which they saw hope.

On Oct 1, 1949, the People's Republic China was born. Upon hearing the news on the radio in New York, the couple was so excited they took to the street arm in arm with black singer Paul Robeson singing *March of the Volunteers*, the new republic's national anthem.

They supported the normalization of China-US relations with actions that irritated the Truman administration, which supported the Chiang Kai-shek clique. McCarthyism at that time was prevalent in the United States. The Rosens were reduced to a more difficult life when patients did not dare come to their clinic, obviously for fear of surveillance by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. They could not afford tuition fees for their children. However, the difficulties never shook their faith. They firmly believed that the friendship

between the people of the United States and China would be restored and then develop. The countercurrent could never become the main current.

In this time of hardship, Dr Rosen devoted more time and energy to medical research. In 1952, he performed a groundbreaking operation of stapes mobilization and successfully cured a patient who had been deaf for 19 years. The success created a sensation throughout the US. However, for political reasons, his innovation was boycotted by the authorities instead of being recognized and embraced.

Given the predicament they suffered in the US, Dr Rosen went to Europe, Africa, the Middle East and South Asia, visiting more than 40 countries, accompanied by his wife. During the tour, he demonstrated the surgical method he invented and guided thousands of specialists to cure countless patients, which won him worldwide acclaim. He was then recognized and honored by the American Medical Association.

The couple wished to come to China to pass the surgical technique to Chinese colleagues. Every time they had a stopover in Hong Kong, they looked in the direction of the mainland, hoping for a visit. In the 1960s, Dr Rosen visited Leningrad, then part of the Soviet Union, on invitation to attend an international conference on otology, where he met several doctors from China and shared his experiences with them. He gave those peers from China the gift of a surgical instrument he had invented.

Later, the couple visited India and was received by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, who told them

he had a younger cousin who was ambassador to China and was suffering from conductive deafness. He hoped that Rosen could help. Because the US government prohibited its citizens from visiting China, the ambassador had to go to Hong Kong for the surgery.

Then, at a reception for foreign diplomats in Beijing, Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai found with surprise that the Indian ambassador could hear. The ambassador told Zhou about the operation in detail and how the Rosens loved China and yearned for a visit.

Shortly afterward, Zhou asked the Chinese Medical Association to send an invitation to the Rosens. The couple was so excited over the news that they immediately set about packing for the trip. Sadly, the visit was blocked by the US State Department.

Fulfilling the long-cherished wish to visit China

In April 1971, China and the US began the ping-pong diplomacy that opened the door to friendly exchanges between the two peoples. The Chinese Medical Association sent a second invitation to the Rosens. Also invited were cardiologists Paul D. White and E. Grey Diamond, public health associate professor Victor W. Seidel and their wives. It was the first American delegation of medical specialists to come to China.

In September that year, the delegation traveled to China via Canada after arrangements were made by the Chinese ambassador to Canada, Huang Hua. A direct flight was impossible at the time, as China and the US had not yet restored diplomatic relations.

On the eve of Chinese National

Day, Premier Zhou received the delegation at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. He shook hands with each of the representatives and said to the Rosens: "I've heard about what you did for the Chinese people. I am very glad that you've finally come to Beijing." His words made the couple feel at home.

The next day, at the National Day reception in the Great Hall, the Rosens met Premier Zhou again. Before the reception, Helen had learned the Chinese phrase for congratulations and wrote down its pronunciation on her left arm in English as a reminder. However, she forgot all of it because of nervousness when she made a toast to Premier Zhou. She stood with her right hand rising, hurried to look for the reminder on the other arm, and stumbled over letters in Chinese: "Warm congratulations to your National Day!" The humorous expression on her face prompted hearty laughter from Zhou.

The couple was also invited to Soong Ching-ling's home. Having kept up their correspondence for decades, both Madam Soong and the Rosens were pleased when they finally met. Helen once said: "Madam Soong Ching-ling shares our values in pursuit of world peace and against nuclear war. We all hope that later generations will live in a world of peace and friendship."

During their stay in China, the Rosens went to Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and other places to share the ear surgery technique with Chinese aurists and initiated the first medical cooperative project between the US and China on acupuncture therapy to

cure ear nerves.

They finished their visit in November when the world witnessed a historic event: China resumed its seat in the United Nations. Gao Liang, a member of China's advance team, had arrived in New York beforehand. He was invited to visit the Rosens and was introduced to people from various circles at the party.

The New York Times published a full body shot of Gao Liang wearing a Chinese tunic suit, and called it "Mao style". A few days later, the Times devoted a full page to Chinese attire. One of the photos showed Helen in a Chinese brocade outfit that looked elegant and tasteful. Though Gao never considered it as properly serious, Helen said to him: "It is of significance to let the American people know about Chinese culture. Especially as they know little about the new China and are eager to know, we have to grasp every opportunity to introduce China's beautiful image."

The Rosens were founders of the US-China People's Friendship Association. From 1971 to 1979, the couple toured the United States, delivering more than 200 lectures about what they had seen and heard in China. They believed that the American people were very much interested in China, which was a "reservoir of friendship" to be explored and developed.

During their visit to China in January 1976, Premier Zhou died. The Rosens were stricken with grief as deep as that felt by the Chinese people. To comfort them, Madam Soong gave them a photo of Zhou and wrote on the back: "To my dearest friends, Mr. and Mrs. Rosen". They put the photo

on their desk back in the US, in lasting memory of the Chinese premier.

China and the United States established formal diplomatic relations formally on Jan 1, 1979. Overseas Chinese living in New York organized a parade to celebrate the event. The Rosens attended the parade and the celebration party, though it rained heavily and was unusually cold. Helen gave a speech at the gathering. Soon afterward, they flew to Washington DC for the launch ceremony of the Chinese embassy. They called the day "the thaw of winter".

After that, the Rosens organized American delegations of medical specialists to visit China every year. In November 1981, the Rosens made their ninth visit to China. The tight agenda left them visibly tired. On Nov 4, Dr. Rosen suddenly felt unwell. A friend and fellow physician, Wu Weiran, immediately drove him to the hospital for a checkup. In the evening, they sat in the ward recalling the day when they took part in the rainy parade to celebrate the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and the United States, and the continuous development of the bilateral relations. Rosen mentioned the need to raise more money to send young Chinese doctors to further their studies in the United States.

The next morning, Rosen felt a sharp pain in his abdomen and lapsed into coma before the doctor arrived. At about 4:30 in the afternoon, he died of internal bleeding. On Nov 10, the funeral was held in Beijing. The vice-premier and foreign affairs minister, Huang Hua, attended the funeral and delivered a speech. Rosen's lifetime

friends, George Hatem, Wu Weiran, Elisabeth Comber and 200 other people were present. The Rosens' children came to Beijing with visa-free access arranged for them by Huang. Following Helen's wishes, half of Rosen's ashes were brought back to the United States; the other half were left on the land of China.

Friendship of three generations

Her husband's death dealt Helen a heavy blow. She said: "I've lost my closest comrade-in-arms. For the first time in my life, I feel lonely. Back from Beijing to the States, I spent quite a while to finally get myself out of the grief and resume my spirit. I am determined to continue his unfinished mission."

In May 1982, Helen donated her husband's lifetime savings and founded a memorial fund in his honor to accomplish the plan of sending select young Chinese doctors to America for a year of study. Helen committed herself fully to the work of raising funds. Once, after she had just returned from China, she heard about a gourmet club's plan to organize its members to travel to the country to sample and study of local cuisine. Ignoring her fatigue, she immediately volunteered to help coordinate the trip and then led the 40-person delegation of epicureans to China. The trip proved well worth the effort. It not only helped the members of the delegation learn more about China, but also helped raise money for the Rosen fund.

In August 1990, Gao Liang, executive vice-president of the China Society for People's Friendship Studies, visited Helen in New York

on his way to Kansas for a seminar commemorating the journalist Edgar Snow. Because of her deteriorating eyes, Helen could barely see and looked old and haggard. She had moved from her former roomy house into an ordinary apartment with only one domestic worker to help with daily needs. The money she saved had all been used to sponsor Chinese students' trips to America. All her Chinese friends who saw her with a cane as she tried to raise money were deeply moved.

When Helen came to China in 1993 and stayed at the Beijing Hotel, Gao went again to see her and invited her to be an honorary committee member of his association. Gao told her that the year marked the 125th anniversary of the birth of American black activist, writer and sociologist W.E.B. Du Bois, whose work transformed the perception of race in society. In honor of Du Bois, the association was planning to hold an academic seminar. Helen was excited about the news and suggested that they play some Negro songs at the seminar. After returning home, she asked a friend to bring a collection of cassettes of black singer Paul Robeson. His rendering of March of the Volunteers was played during the seminar.

A year later, Helen sent Gao an article written on her behalf as the afterword for her husband's autobiography: "The similarities among all nations in the world are much greater than the differences, though. We shall always show our respect toward the differences among peoples. All men and women around the world require dignity, equality, chance of education,

happy life and happy family. ... I deeply believe that I have many dear friends in China where I feel I've got a second home."

In 1998, at the age of 92, and suffering serious illness, Helen seemed to sense that she was dying. She wrote a last letter to her intimate friend Huang Hua. Less than a month later, the sad news came. She died in New York on June 12.

By that day, Helen had visited China 27 times and sponsored 88 Chinese doctors' studies in the US, a feat that lived up to her husband's dying wish. Her son John Rosen wrote to Huang about her mother's desire to spread half her ashes on the land of China, as had been done with her father's.

On the morning of Oct 1, accompanied by his wife, Margaret, daughter Judy and son Carlow, John brought his mother's ashes to the former residence of Madam Soong Ching-ling and met with old friends and new acquaintances. John Rosen was an outstanding pediatrician who specialized in plumbism, a condition related to absorption of lead. This quiet, scholarly man in front of the Chinese friends possessed affection for China no less than his parents.

On that day, the Chinese friends held a ceremony to bury the Rosen couple's remaining ashes together in the international friendship forest in Beijing's Changping District, and planted two cypresses at beside the tomb. Three vice-presidents of the China Society for People's Friendship Studies — Epstein, Gao Liang and Wu Weiran — attended the ceremony.

Upon returning to the US, John

wrote to Huang Hua, saying that “Helen and Sam now symbolically join with each other in a country which they admired, surrounded by friends like you and. He Liliang (Huang’s wife) whom they appreciated.”

In the late 1980s, John Rosen cooperated with Shanghai Second Medical University to conduct research on children’s plumbism in China. With his help, a children’s plumbism control research center and a research center for children’s environmental health were successively set up. Both centers were the first of their kinds in China.

The rapidly developing transportation industry has caused severe environmental problems that have affected children, but the problem of plumbism didn’t get much attention.

To address that, John wrote several letters to the Ministry of Public Health of China to share his point of view. He offered free training to professionals about controlling lead poisoning in China, for which he was given the Friendship Award by the government. On Dec 7, 2012, John Rosen died in Connecticut, in the United States, at the age of 77.

In another letter to President Huang, John Rosen wrote: “Our son, Carlow Rosen, first-aid pharmacologist, would become the representative of the third generation of the Rosen Family to continue the friendship with Chinese peers.”

In September 2005, John brought his whole family to Beijing again to pay tribute to his parents. The two cypresses representing the evergreen friendship between the peoples of China and the United States were thriving. ■

Fruitful results of poverty relief on the Yellow Land

Geng Zifeng

On June 27 and 28, the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the Shanxi Provincial People’s Government held a symposium in Xingxian county, Lyuliang city, Shanxi province, to discuss ways of helping the local people out of poverty. More than 160 people from 16 countries, including embassy officials, heads of well-known multinational enterprises, representatives of nongovernmental organizations and senior experts and scholars specializing in poverty alleviation, participated in the China (Xingxian) International Symposium on Poverty Relief.

At the symposium, the participants shared their experiences in poverty reduction and explored ways to help Xingxian county lift itself out of poverty. They were concerned about the local people’s livelihoods and of-

fered suggestions on poverty reduction. The CPAFFC has conscientiously implemented the central government’s arrangement to contribute to the country’s poverty reduction campaign. The association followed President Xi Jinping’s thoughts about “precisely-targeted poverty reduction and alleviation” and used domestic and overseas resources gathered from its unique channel of people-to-people diplomacy to help poverty-stricken areas.

Recently, the story of Xi Jinping living and working in Liangjiahe, Shanxi, for seven years during his late teens and early twenties has gone viral on the internet. Two hundred kilometers north of the village on the Loess Plateau is Xingxian, identified by the central government as poverty-stricken county. It is under the administration of Lyuliang city. Endowed with the same red gene of revolutionary history,

the county remains short of food and clothing. Everyone is concerned about what life for people in Xingxian is like and whether they will get out of poverty as expected and enter the moderately prosperous society together with the rest of the country, as the nation's battle against poverty is in full swing.

Caijiaya tells stories cemented with the blood of revolutionary forerunners.

Caijiaya, a town located 8.5 km from the county seat of Xingxian, was the headquarters of Division 120 of the Eighth Route Army and served as the capital of the Shansi-Suiyuan revolutionary base area during the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression — hence the nickname “Little Yan’an”. On March 25, 1948, leaders of the Communist Party of China, including Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai and Ren Bishi, crossed the Yellow River to arrive in Caijiaya, where Mao published his famous Speech at the Conference of Senior Cadres of the Shansi-Suiyuan Border Region and A Talk to the Editorial Staff of the Shansi-Suiyuan Daily. The Shansi-Suiyuan Revolutionary Memorial Hall, a historical site on the list of major cultural relics under national protection, is located here.

During President Xi Jinping's inspection tour to Shanxi province in June 2017, Xingxian was his first stop. He visited the Shansi-Suiyuan Revolutionary Memorial Hall, presented a flower basket to the revolutionary martyrs and had a cordial talk with the veterans who had fought Japanese aggressors in the Shansi-

Suiyuan border area.

Countless revolutionary forerunners fought and shed blood on this piece of land. Their heroic deeds have inspired later generations to continue the revolutionary cause. The “red spirit” nurtured in the old revolutionary base area has become an indispensable spiritual conviction to encourage Chinese people in their effort to build a moderately prosperous society in all respects.

People of Xingxian still live in poverty.

As in most other former revolutionary areas, Xingxian's economic and social development has some natural disadvantages such as poor geological conditions and an underdeveloped transportation network. It is undeniable that since the founding of the People's Republic of China, especially since reform and opening-up 40 years ago, profound changes have taken place in Xingxian and other old revolutionary areas. People's living standard has improved significantly from the past; nevertheless, the county remains one of the country's main targets of poverty alleviation, with its comparatively stagnant development, weak infrastructure and low living standards. People of the old revolutionary areas should not be left behind when the Chinese people's overall living standards are greatly improved; and they should not be forgotten as the whole society strives to become moderately prosperous. As President Xi has said, “During the revolutionary war, sons and daughters of Lyuliang forged the great Lyuliang Spirit with their blood and lives. We

must carry forward this spirit and carry on the struggle to strive for the people's happiness and the Chinese nation's great rejuvenation.”

Fruitful results of poverty relief accomplished on the Yellow Land.

The key to success in poverty alleviation lies in accuracy. The local CPC committees and the government of Xingxian county are now facing a demanding task: how to exert the county's advantages and create a set of accurate poverty alleviation plans. During the war, people in the old base areas defeated and drove away the invaders with their wisdom and millet, plus rifles. In the new era, they must be able to win the battle against poverty using their wisdom and hard work. Fruitful results of poverty alleviation have been accomplished by the local people, such as promoting “red tourism” in the Shansi-Suiyuan revolutionary base area; selling high-quality coarse cereals of millet and corn; developing an eco-friendly economy by returning farmland to forest; developing industry through its abundant mineral resources of magnesium and aluminum; and developing e-commerce.

People-to-people diplomacy helps with poverty alleviation.

“Many hands make light work” — or poverty alleviation through economic development — is the common responsibility of the whole Party and society, calling for the participation of all social forces. Since October 2015, the CPAFFC has actively responded to the call of the CPC and the government and undertaken the arduous task of

An overview of Xiongan New Area

Hebei Friendship Association

helping Xingxian county out of poverty by making full use of its people-to-people diplomacy. The association has mobilized all its resources and has collected added friendly resources from both home and abroad. Over the past three years, the CPAFFC has carried out more than 20 poverty alleviation projects in education, healthcare, agriculture and livelihoods for Xingxian. More than 3 million RMB has been invested directly, and capable cadres have been sent to work on the front line of poverty alleviation. They eat, live and work every day with the local poverty-stricken people with sincerity, and thus have won the trust of local residents. CPAFFC staff members have pledged that they will not leave Xingxian as long as poverty still exists.

Xingxian has guests from both home and abroad.

Three years of hard work has yielded a bumper harvest. On the first anniversary of President Xi's inspection tour of Shanxi, the China (Xingxian) International Symposium on Poverty Relief jointly launched by the CPAFFC and the Shanxi provincial government opened. Nine well-known international organizations, or enterprises, from both home and abroad signed strategic cooperation agreements on poverty alleviation with the Xingxian County People's Government and donated computers for students, school bags, youth STEM incubation facilities and cultural products. With the generous help of friends from all walks of life, the Xingxian people are more confident of winning the battle against poverty. ■

On April 1, 2017, the CPC Central Committee and the State Council issued a notice announcing the decision to create the Xiongan New Area in Hebei. On April 14, 2018, the two central institutions formally approved the Outline for Planning of Xiongan New Area in Hebei.

The area includes the administrative jurisdictions of Xiongxian, Rongcheng and Anxin counties (including Baiyangdian Lake); Maozhou, Gougezhuang and Qijianfang townships of Renqiu city; and Longhua township of Gaoyang county. It has a total planned area of 1,770 square kilometers.

Superior location

The New Area sits at the heart of the triangular area formed by the junction of Beijing, Tianjin and Baoding —105 kilometers from Beijing and Tianjin respectively, 155 km from Shijiazhuang, 30 km from Baoding and 55 km from the site of Beijing's new airport.

Convenient transportation

The New Area is close to the national railway arteries of Beijing-Guangzhou, Beijing-Kowloon and Tianjin-Baoding. It has easy access to

the new Beijing airport, and it enjoys smooth connections with the ports of Tianjin and Huanghua. In a word, the New Area is part of a well-functioning regional transportation network.

Excellent ecological environment

Embracing Baiyangdian Lake, the New Area boasts a complete water system comprising lakes and rivers, including the Nanjuma, Baigouyin, Tang, Fu and Zhulong rivers. Forests, vegetation and wetlands make up a well-developed ecosystem.

Stable geological conditions

The New Area boasts generally stable geological conditions, as it is located in an area where seismic activity is relatively weak in the northern part of the North China Plain. It is suitable for urban construction, and highly adaptable to a variety of construction.

Ample space for development

Currently the New Area is underdeveloped, though it has plentiful land resources that are highly malleable. In brief, the New Area has sufficient conditions for excellent urban development. ■

Friendship Associations from Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei contribute to common development

Hebei Friendship Association



The delegation in Xiongan New Area

Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei province (or Jingjinji, as they are jointly called) are located in the heart of the Bohai Rim. The three regions are geographical neighbors and share intimate people-to-people bonds and similar regional and cultural backgrounds. Jingjinji has solid

historical foundation. They had been a single region during the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties for more than 800 years before they were separated in the Republic period (1911-1949). In recent years, with China's continuously deepening reform and opening-up, Jingjinji has attracted ever more

attention from China and the rest of the world.

On February 26, 2014, Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China, presided over a symposium in Beijing, calling for integrated and coordinated development of Beijing, Tianjin and

Hebei as part of the national strategy. In March 2015, the Outline of the Planning for Coordinated Development of Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei was approved, triggering many processes. To contribute, the associations for friendship with foreign countries of the three areas jointly held a forum to explore the matter in Beijing on Aug 20, 2015, marking the beginning of cooperation between the associations. In the past three years, the three associations have held seven forums to study how to organize activities and pursue joint efforts for common development.

Also, the three associations jointly organized a number of activities, including the 2015 Binhai Forum on Peace and Development in Northeast Asia, the 2015 Beijing International Forum on People-to-People Friendship, the 2016 Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei Model United Nations Assembly for High School Students and fourth Tianjin Foreign Language School Pan-Bohai Sea Model UN Assembly for High School Students, the 2018 Jingjinji International Communication Week and the 2018 China-Sri Lanka Culture Week. A delegation from the Australia-China Friendship Society visited Hebei.

Of these activities, the 2018 China-Sri Lanka Culture Week was jointly held by the three regions' friendship associations and the Sri Lanka-China Social and Cultural Cooperation Association.

Running from May 30 to June 3, the culture week included various forms of cultural exchanges and gave a strong push to people-to-people friendship and cultural communication between China

and Sri Lanka. During that week, a number of cultural exchange activities were arranged, including Sri Lanka Food Nights. There was also a touring exhibition of 102 paintings created by Chinese and Sri Lankan teenagers — the award-winning works from an art competition with the theme of “Belt and Road”.

In addition, the three associations held an essay competition titled “Me and Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei”, which involved foreign students in the three areas.

In the past three years, the areas' friendship associations have worked together and shared resources to set up a platform for people-to-people friendship and cooperation with foreign countries.

In May 2018, the friendship associations jointly hosted Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei International Communication Week to help other countries' China-friendly organizations learn more about the fruitful results China had achieved in the 40 years of its reform and opening-up drive, as well as to acquire an all-around, multilevel understanding of the Jingjinji strategy for coordinated development.

Invited by the Hebei association, a delegation of 71 representatives from Chinese and foreign friendship organizations visited Xiongan New Area and Baoding, Hebei province, on May 30.

That morning, the delegation toured Xiongan New Area accompanied by the leaders of the Beijing and Tianjin associations. The guests visited Baiyangdian Lake and the Xiongan New Area Administration Service Center, and spoke with local leading officials.

The delegation's visit to Xiongan New Area coincided with the launch of the administrative center. A leading official of Xiongan briefed the visitors about the New Area's role of taking over Beijing's “non-capital” functions. The New Area, the officials said, “will be built into a modern socialist city, an important pole in the Jingjinji world-class city cluster, a new engine of a modernized economic system, a national model of high-quality development and a “future city” featuring innovation, green ecology, opening-up, collaboration and resources-sharing.”

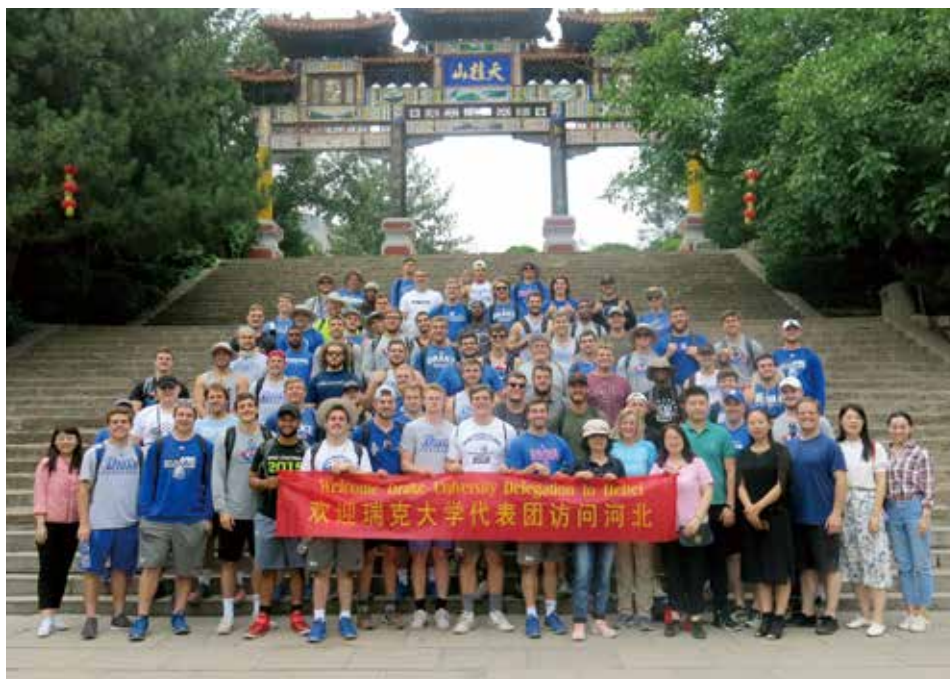
New construction concepts were adopted in the building of the Xiongan Administration Service Center, such as green development and intelligent innovation. New technologies in building materials and wall structures helped reduce pollution and waste in the process of construction, and the high-tech equipment of the internet of things greatly improved work efficiency.

Leading officials of the friendship organizations from different countries in the delegation said they were impressed by vivid scenes in Xiongan New Area, even though the visit was short.

We gained direct knowledge of the new area from the high-tech of the Administration Service Center and the original ecology of Baiyangdian Lake. The visit showed that as a future city, Xiongan New Area is smart, green and innovative. It also showed the area's exquisite natural landscape and profound culture and history. It was a rewarding trip, thanks to which we gained a better understanding of China. ■

Interlinked hearts bring nations closer

Hebei Friendship Association



The Drake University delegation tours Tianguai Mountain.

In May 1983, the governor of Hebei province, Zhang Shuguang, and the governor of the US state of Iowa, Terry Branstad, signed an agreement to establish friendly relations between the two areas in the state capital, Des Moines.

Two years later, in May 1985, Xi Jinping, secretary of the Zhengding County Committee of the Communist Party of China in Hebei, led an agricultural delegation to visit Iowa, laying a solid foundation for exchanges and cooperation in various fields between the province and state.

In the years since the two governors met, friendly exchanges and cooperation between Hebei and Iowa have deepened, and people from all walks of life have become increasingly connected. In October 2013, Hebei held a celebration in Iowa to mark the 30th anniversary of the sister-states relationship. President Xi Jinping sent a special congratulatory message, noting that Hebei and Iowa had made great progress in cooperation in various fields and had brought tangible benefits to both peoples and set a good example of China-US practical cooperation at the

sub-national level. He expressed hope that the exchanges and cooperation would continue to go deeper and grow stronger.

This year marks the 35th anniversary of the sister-states relationship. As one of the commemorative activities, a delegation of 78 teachers and students from Drake University visited Hebei province from June 2 to 4 at the invitation of Hebei People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (HPAFFC). During their stay, the delegation visited Shijiazhuang Foreign Language

School, the Hebei Museum and Tianguai Mountain. They experienced the Shijiazhuang subway and tasted local traditional food among other exchanges in sports, culture and art.

At Shijiazhuang Foreign Language School, the delegation was invited to classes. The local students taught the guests Chinese painting, paper-cutting and cucurbit flute playing. Afterwards, each Drake student's work was signed and laminated and given to their guests as a gift. The cucurbit flutes were also given. The Drake delegation taught the local students the basic rules and skill of American football. The hosts and guests played a table tennis game. Although sweat soaked their clothes, their faces beamed with excitement and happiness.

At the Hebei Museum and Tianguai Mountain, the delegation experienced some of the long history and culture of Hebei and its magnificent natural scenery. They lingered at every site, reluctant to leave. It was the American students' first trip to China, and most of them had never been outside the United States before. To give them an authentic experience with Chinese culture, the HPAFFC elaborately drafted the itinerary and meals. For the first time, the delegation took a high-speed train and Chinese subway, tasted authentic hotpot and entered Chinese classes. Everyone was deeply impressed by these "first times" and said the visit would never fade from their memory. They said they came away with a livelier view of China and the Chinese people and had experienced a completely different China from the previous impression they had of the country. They now

recognized its splendid civilization, long history, friendly people and highly developed modernization.

When President Xi Jinping visited Iowa again in 2012, he said to his old friends: "A new suit is better than an old one, but an old friend is best. Iowa was my first stop in my first contact with the United States. You are the first American friends with whom I became acquainted. For me at that time, you were America."

For the members of the Drake delegation, the experience in Hebei was packed with first-time impressions of China. I believed they would also convey to their close associates what they experienced. They will also become "old friends" of China and become the messengers of friendship between the two countries.

The key to sound relations between states lies in the affinity between their peoples, which largely stems from mutual understanding.

Over the years, the HPAFFC has been committed to carrying out friendly exchanges between the two states, promoting people-to-people communication. It has carried out a number of cooperation projects with various partners in Iowa. At present, the two states have developed a cooperative model of exchanging teachers and international students. Eleven universities and colleges in Iowa have established scholarships for Hebei students, up to a maximum of \$40,000 a year. Iowa has sent more than 200 English teachers to Hebei. They were assigned to schools at different levels— primary schools, secondary schools and colleges — and have helped enhance the internationalization

of education and quality of English teaching in Hebei.

The China-US Demonstration Farm jointly established by Hebei and Iowa officially began construction in September 2017. A number of internationally renowned agricultural enterprises in Iowa, such as Hy-line, have set up factories in Hebei, bringing tangible benefits to both peoples.

Branstad, served as governor of Iowa for more than 20 years. He held the post longer than any governor in the history of the US. During his tenure, every group of international students from Hebei would be invited to his office. In July 2017, Branstad officially became the US ambassador to China. On July 16, he visited Hebei and fulfilled his promise that he would visit there first after taking office. He visited Hebei three times in 2017 to promote all-around cooperation not only between the province and Iowa but with the US at large, in the fields of agriculture, environmental protection, education and clean energy.

As a Chinese saying goes, "A mountain is formed by accumulation of earth, and an ocean is formed by accumulation of water." Extensive people-to-people exchanges and a solid foundation of friendship are powerful guarantees for the development of national diplomacy. Every visit, and every detail, helps build the tower of friendship between the two peoples. It is hoped that the friendship between Hebei and Iowa will be passed on from generation to generation, that it will play a more important role in diplomacy with Chinese characteristics in the new era and that it will broaden win-win results for the people on both sides. ■

Xiongan — a vision for the future of cities

Hebei Friendship Association

On May 28, 2018, an event presented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs — China in the New Era: Xiongan, a Vision for the Future of Cities — unfolded in Beijing. State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi attended and made a speech, joined by Zhang Yesui, secretary of the ministry's CPC Committee, as well as leading officials from Hebei province, where Xiongan is located.

Wang Dongfeng, secretary of the Hebei Committee of the Communist Party of China and director of the Standing Committee of the Hebei People's Congress, delivered a speech. Hebei Governor Xu Qin, who is also a deputy secretary of the province's CPC Committee, made a presentation introducing Xiongan.

The diplomatic corps and representatives from more than 160 countries and international organizations, executives from the world's top 500 enterprises, business associations and scientific research institutions, as well as journalists from home and abroad, numbering about 500, participated in the event. It was the largest of the series of activities the Foreign Ministry

has hosted so far to promote China's provinces and major municipalities in terms of the number of attending diplomats and journalists.

"Today's presenting event is unique because the protagonist is not a province but a new area — Xiongan," State Councilor Wang said.

"Xiongan New Area in this new era will serve as a national model for China's high-quality development. The publishing in April of the Outline for Planning of Xiongan New Area in Hebei heralded the full implementation of the New Area's construction. The outline states that Xiongan New Area will be built into an ecologically livable urban area, which will play the role of leader in innovation-driven development, a model of coordinated development and a pioneer in open development. Xiongan represents the future of China, leads the global trend and forecasts the direction of human development."

Wang stressed that the establishment of Xiongan New Area is a major decision of China for deepening reform. A large number of reform and innovation measures that

are in line with the future development direction will be launched for trial in Xiongan first. The construction of Xiongan New Area adheres to a world vision, international standards, Chinese characteristics and high goals, with distinctive characteristics of the times, and of global significance.

Wang expressed hope that foreign diplomats and friends from other circles will pay attention to and support Xiongan and participate in its construction in mutually beneficial cooperation.

Hebei Party Secretary Wang Dongfeng said the establishment of Xiongan New Area in Hebei was a major historical and strategic choice made by the CPC Central Committee. Xiongan is the third new area of national significance, following Shenzhen and Shanghai Pudong. "General Secretary Xi Jinping, the chief architect, has made tremendous efforts personally to plan, deploy and promote the new area's establishment and has charted the orientation of its development. The general secretary's instruction has given us strong confidence and motivation and created

a platform for innovative and pragmatic international cooperation toward a community with a shared future in the new era. Hebei will mobilize the whole province's force to carry out the new area's construction and innovation. Xiongan, with openness and inclusiveness, will welcome friends from around the world to participate in the construction and development of the city believed to herald the world's future."

Governor Xu Qin told attendees about his province's plan to implement Xi's strategic thoughts on Xiongan New Area. Xu introduced the future city from five aspects. Xiongan will spare no effort to build itself into a model city of ecological civilization in the new era. The innovation-driven future city will focus on creating a new engine for a modern economic system. Xiongan will become a digitized city with strong ability to upgrade its technologies. It will be a livable city providing high-quality public services shared by all. And it will be an open and inclusive city in a new round of reform and opening-up.

At present, Xu said, under the leadership of the CPC Central Committee with General Secretary Xi Jinping as the core, Hebei is mustering all forces and gathering all wisdom to build a new city of historical significance.

"We sincerely welcome friends from home and abroad to share opportunities in Xiongan, join hands to shape its future," Xu said.

During the presentations, guests watched a promotional video of Xiongan. British Ambassador Dame Barbara Woodward, Singaporean

Ambassador Stanley Loh Ka Leung, Italian Ambassador Ettore Francesco Sequi and Senegal Ambassador N'diaye delivered speeches. They said the international community attaches great importance to the farsighted plan to build Xiongan New Area and highly praised President Xi Jinping's foresight in initiating the project. They said they were willing to support and participate in the construction of Xiongan and share their experience in cooperation with their Chinese hosts.

In April 2017, the CPC Central Committee headed by General Secretary Xi announced the decision to set up Xiongan New Area. In May this year, shortly after the Central Committee approved the Outline for Planning of Hebei Xiongan New Area, the MFA presentation of Xiongan will show the world "a city exploring the future development of the human race", as well as declare China's confidence and determination to continue its reform and opening-up, striving for high-quality development.

The participating diplomats left autographs in the guest book praising the event for its Xiongan features, Chinese characteristics and international vision. British Ambassador Dame Barbara Woodward wrote: "Best wishes to Xiongan! A great vision for our future cities."

Namibia Ambassador Elia George Kaiyamo wrote: "Namibia is always happy to support the MFA Programme in promoting the China-Namibia Africa win-win situation."

Egyptian Consul Lu Di wrote: "It's a great pleasure to attend the event of the Xiongan new development area, I am looking forward that this new



Xu Qin, governor of Hebei province, introduces the future city to the guests.

project represents a great leap forward toward the development of China's big dream. All the best!"

Many diplomats expressed willingness to cooperate with China in the construction of Xiongan, and to witness the flourishing development of the city.

Xiongan is a new exploration. With the exploration of Shenzhen and Shanghai, we know the importance of opening up. And great changes have taken place in China today. With the exploration of Xiongan, we know how the future city can be transformed into a beautiful reality in our unremitting struggle. Designed with wisdom and technology, and built with diligence and innovation, Xiongan New Area, the future city with a millennial plan for national affairs, will surely stun the whole world. ■

An old Japanese man's friendship with China

Hebei Friendship Association

On an early summer day in 2000, a 72-year-old Japanese man, hale and hearty, was planting and watering trees on a mountain in Pingshan county of Shijiazhuang, Hebei province. Every year thereafter, the old man and a group of friends persisted in planting trees on barren mountains. Spanning 18 years, their afforestation campaign moved from Pingshan county of Shijiazhuang to Yixian county of Baoding, and then to Neiqiu county of Xingtai.

This old man is Toshiro Yamane, vice-president of the Nagano Prefecture Japan-China Friendship Association and president of the Nagano Municipal Japan-China Friendship Association. He is also an old friend of Hebei province.

President Yamane is not only a practitioner of friendly exchanges between China and Japan and a pioneer in the China-Japan afforestation work but also a friendship envoy who deeply loves China and Hebei.

A practitioner of friendly exchanges

Hebei province and Nagano prefecture established a sister-state relationship on Nov 11, 1983. After that, Nagano prefecture started a new model of maintaining friendly ties with China that integrated the roles of both govern-



Yamane leads a delegation visiting Hebei province.

ment and people roles. Shuichi Abe, governor of Nagano prefecture, has visited China every year since he took office, and attaches great importance to the friendship and cooperative relationship with Hebei.

The most influential and active Japan-China association, the Nagano Prefecture Japan-China Friendship Association, boasts a history of more than 60 years, with 22 regional branches and 2,000 members. Its work receives support from the Nagano prefecture government and the Chinese Embassy to Japan.

Before the Nagano Prefecture Japan-China Friendship Association was set up, Yamane did a lot of work pushing for its establishment. In its early years, the association was short of funds. Yamane often dug into his own pocket to keep the association running. He is the backbone of the association and has committed himself to friendly exchanges between China and Japan. He would warmly welcome every Chinese guest who visited Nagano.

Tang Jiakuan, chairman of the China-Japan Friendship Association, praised the relationship between Hebei

and Nagano as a “model of friendship and cooperation at the sub-national level between China and Japan”. The Chinese embassy in Japan has repeatedly commended the exchanges between Hebei and Nagano, saying that they had “set an example for Chinese and Japanese sub-national regions in sister-city relations”.

These feats should be attributed to both sides’ adherence to friendship, as well as to the wise decision to follow the historic trend, and the courage to be a pioneer. The achievements were also the result of the efforts by many friendship-minded people in Hebei and Nagano, among whom Yamane was the most prominent.

A pioneer in the China-Japan afforestation cooperation

In 2000, a China-Japan afforestation cooperation project, the Obuchi Foundation, was launched. Since then, the Hebei People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the Nagano friendship association have joined hands to carry out the project in Hebei. At present, the project has been fully implemented in Pingshan, Yixian and Neiqiu, contributing significantly to the improvement of the local ecological environment.

Yamane has taken part in the tree planting every year since the beginning of the project 18 years ago. He not only comes in person, but also brings along a large number of friends every time for the tree planting.

Eighteen years have passed and Yamane is now 90 years old. Although he remains hale and hearty and can still recite ancient Chinese poems — “the

wind whistles over the chilly Yishui River” — his old body can no longer readily respond to his heart’s call. He now uses a cane when he visits China. Even so, he insists on planting trees by himself.

Seeing him shoveling earth and watering trees with trembling hands, people around offer to help, but he always declines with a smile, saying that he wants to turn Hebei into a green landscape with his own hands. Every time he finishes planting the trees, he politely asks the local residents to take care of them.

Once he fainted from too much exertion. The first thing he did upon waking up was ask whether he could come to plant trees in Hebei again.

His family worried about his health and often tried to dissuade him from tree planting, but it didn’t work. They finally understood that it has become a firm matter of faith for him to plant trees in China. To take care of him, his eldest daughter, Toko, accompanies him every time he comes to China. This past May, Yamane led an afforestation delegation to Hebei once more. The Hebei People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries held a welcome banquet, where Yamane said affectionately: “I will live 10 more years. I will come to Hebei 10 more times, and I will plant trees in Hebei for 10 more years!”

A friendship envoy who deeply loves China and Hebei

Yamane was born in 1928. Because of certain factors with regard to the times, he developed an interest in China when he was young and fell in love with it. He particularly

admired Chairman Mao Zedong and familiarized himself with Mao’s works such as *On Practice* and *On Protracted War*. He learned more about Mao Zedong Thought and Chinese history and culture than many Chinese people. When he named his firstborn daughter, he chose the Chinese character “dong”.

The Japanese senior citizen who travels across China in a wheelchair and walks with a cane is a righteous, enthusiastic and responsible man. He is learned, versatile and well-versed in *The Analects of Confucius*. Once when he met with Hu Chunhua, then-governor of Hebei province, they even exchanged thoughts on the Battles of Khalkhin Gol, or Nomonhan Incident, in depth.

At the age of 80, Yamane invited tutors to teach him Chinese. He studied in earnest. Whether he is receiving Chinese guests or visiting China, he used Chinese to greet people and speak as much Chinese as he could. “Wo ai Zhongguo” (I love China) is his favorite mantra.

Yamane has been to China more than 40 times. He comes to Hebei almost every year and has a special feeling for it. Once when he visited another province, the receptionist reviewed the advantages of the province. Yamane interrupted him and joked: “Your province is very good, but I think Hebei is better.”

For 18 years, the man who loves to wear split-toe shoes, has persisted in flying to Hebei every year to plant trees. Some of the saplings he planted have grown into towering trees. They bear witness to Yamane’s dedication to China-Japan friendship and his deep feeling toward China and Hebei. ■

Pavilion extends friendship between Chinese and American cities

Li Yi



The unveiling and bon-voyage ceremony

On May 3, a ceremony was held at Shiyang Lake, Changsha, Hunan province, to mark the completion of a Chinese style pavilion that would be erected in the United States. Witnessed by Lu Xingying, deputy secretary-general of the Changsha Municipal People's Government; Zheng Lihu, director of the Changsha Foreign Affairs Office; and Changsha-based sculptor Lei Yixing, the Xiangjiang Pavilion began its trip to St. Paul,

Minnesota.

Changsha and St. Paul established sister-city relations in May 1988. Twenty-seven years later, St. Paul's Phalen Regional Park and Changsha's Yanghu Wetlands Park set up sister-park ties and decided to exchange gifts with each city's characteristics to be installed in their respective parks. Changsha would present to St. Paul the Xiangjiang Pavilion, a replica of Changsha's famous Aiwan Pavilion, one of China's

four most famous pavilions.

On March 20, five statues of Peanuts cartoon characters created by cartoonist Charles Schulz began their journey to the Yanghu Wetlands park amid bon-voyage wishes by St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter, Chicago Chinese Deputy Consul General Liu Jun, Minnesota China Friendship Garden Society President Linda Mealey-Lohmann and many St. Paul residents.



Dalian holds China-Japan people-to-people friendship exchanges conference

Dalian Friendship Association



China-Japan People to People Friendship Exchanges Conference

To mark the 40th anniversary of the signing of the China-Japan Treaty of Peace and Friendship and promote people-to-people exchanges with Japanese cities, Dalian in Northeast China's Liaoning province held the Conference for People-to-People Friendly Exchanges between China and Japan at the city's Financial Conference Center on May 26.

The conference was initiated and hosted by the Dalian People's Association

for Friendship with Foreign Countries. More than 100 people attended, including government officials from 15 Japanese counties and cities, representatives from Japanese nongovernmental organizations and businesses, Japanese investors and organizations based in Dalian, Japanese people who had been granted the status of honorary citizens of Dalian, representatives from Dalian colleges and nongovernmental organizations focused on friendship with Ja-

pan.

Luo Dongsheng, vice-mayor of Dalian, spoke highly of the conference, saying, "It is of positive significance and held at the right time." He expressed hope that the conference would help Japanese friends acquire a better understanding of Dalian and boost people-to-people exchanges and cooperation between the two countries.

Addressing the conference, CPAFFC Vice-President Song Jingwu

said the meeting was a “significant occasion for friends from various circles in China and Japan” to frankly exchange ideas on “enhancing mutual understanding and trust, and to promote nongovernmental exchanges and cooperation” between the two countries, as indicated by the conference theme. “People-to-people friendship has been a major driving force in advancing Sino-Japanese relations,” Song said, adding that it played a unique, irreplaceable role in the development of bilateral ties. He praised Dalian for its achievements in maintaining close contacts and cooperation with Japan in economics, trade, culture, sports and talent training. “The city has been in the front rank of cities developing relations with Japan.”

Many leading officials of China-friendly organizations from Japanese counties and cities attended the conference. Most of them are old friends of Dalian, for example, Kiga Katuki, president of Japan Sea International Exchange Center, who is an honorary citizen of Dalian; and Inaba Yosinori, president of Kagoshima Credit Corp and winner of the Dalian Xinghai Friendship Award. Some were new friends visiting Dalian for the first time, such as friendship association chiefs from Tottori, Tokushima, Fukushima and Niigata. These friends, old and new, all expressed their appreciation for Dalian’s achievements in social and economic development.

It was the unanimous understanding among all the Japanese guests that Dalian’s hosting of three meetings in one week attested to the city’s attachment to exchange and cooperation with Japan. The three meetings were the “Kita maebune”, the

Conference for Sino-Japanese Civilian Friendship and Exchanges and the Sino-Japanese Tourism Development Forum. The Japanese guests said they would launch more nongovernmental activities in various forms to enhance friendship with Dalian.

Katukim, the exchange center president, said that Kanazawa, Ishikawa prefecture, would make greater efforts to strengthen cooperation with its Chinese counterparts in education and culture. The city had received more than 100 primary and middle school teachers from Dalian for training. Sakai Kazunori, vice-president of the Kitakyushu Association for Communications with Dalian, said his association had received approval from the Kitakyushu government to set up a Dalian exhibition hall on the second floor of the Dalian Friendship Memorial at Moji Port. The new exhibition hall will use audiovisual means to show Kitakyushu’s residents the progress Dalian has made in economic and social development.

Kagoshima Credit Corp’s Yosinori told the host that his company had organized 13 visits to Dalian involving the company’s client enterprises and would further promote cooperation between Kagoshima and Dalian. Lin Quannan, executive vice-president of the Ehime Japan-China Friendship Association, said that after returning to Japan, the association would organize the county’s enterprises to participate in the Japan commodity fair in Dalian scheduled for June 15.

Yosinori, from Aomori prefecture, said his county would focus on economic and youth exchanges in the county’s cooperation with Dalian



Kiga Katuki addressed the conference.

and would arrange for its enterprises to participate in the China-Japan Investment and Trade Fair to be held in Dalian in September. Fukuoka-Dalian Future Committee Chairman Hurukawa Kimitoshi said his city would organize a large delegation to visit Dalian in September for the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the two committees. The visit will be used to exchange ideas about the major fields for future cooperation and exchanges.

At the conclusion, the conference passed a proposal to enhance mutual friendliness between members of the public in both countries. The proposal called for more economic and technological exchanges and cooperation between the two and suggests that cultural and sports exchanges be held frequently to increase mutual understanding. The two countries should set their sights on the future by carrying out more youth exchanges to bring forth more friendship envoys, and they should enhance mutual understanding and trust for common peaceful development and everlasting friendship, it said. ■