



President Li Xiaolin met with Edward Ssekandi, vice-President of Uganda and patron of the Uganda Association for China-Africa Friendship, who was attending the "2018 China International Friendship Cities Conference" in Wuhan on November 16.



Chinese Paintings and Japanese Ink Paintings & Art Exhibition themed "Peace Presents Blessing" kicked off in Beijing on Oct 26, 2018.



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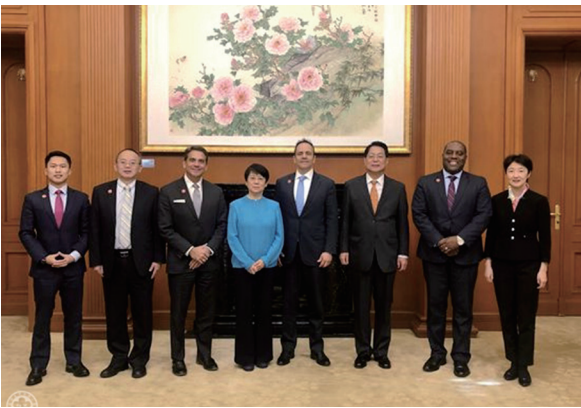
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President Li Xiaolin meets with Kentucky Governor Matthew Bevin

Yang Xuehe



President Li Xiaolin met with Kentucky Governor Matthew Bevin on Nov 9 in Beijing.

Li expressed her appreciation of Bevin's visit as the only US governor to come to China during the midterm election season and for his attendance at the First China International Import Expo, which signals China's determination to continue on the path of opening-up. She pointed out that regional and people-to-people exchanges between China and the United States are important factors in promoting the sound development of bilateral relations. She hoped that Kentucky would deepen cooperation with China in areas such as economy and trade, culture, healthcare and education.

Governor Bevin said that respect and understanding was the key to enhancing friendship. In the context of current US-China relations, it was even more important to strengthen the bilateral relationship through exchanges between local governments, businesses and people.

Vice-President Xie Yuan meets Iowa trade mission

Jin Hanghang



On Nov 8, CPAFFC Vice-President Xie Yuan met with an Iowa trade mission headed by Tiffany Tauscheck, chief strategy officer of the Greater Des Moines Partnership (CDME).

Xie invited the delegation to participate the first China International Import Expo. He spoke highly of the achievements made by Iowa in cooperation with China in various fields and expressed appreciation for the farsightedness and confidence Iowa had shown in building stronger ties with China.

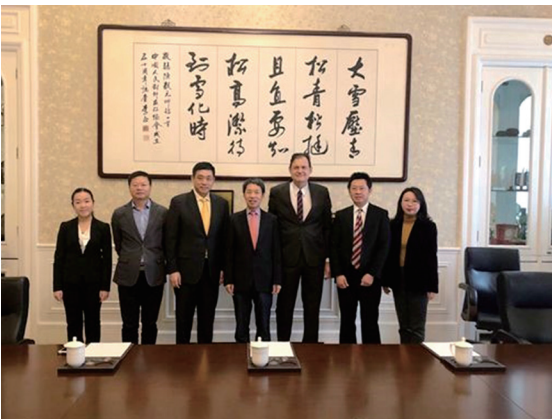
Tauscheck thanked the CPAFFC for the support and assistance it had provided in Iowa's cooperation with China over the years. On behalf of the Greater Des Moines Partnership, she expressed a desire to strengthen the ties with China in a wide range of areas including economy, trade, agriculture and education, and contribute positively to US-China relations.

Vice-President Hu Sishe meets with Swiss-China World Silk Road Association president

Sun Yajing

On Nov 13, Vice-President Hu Sishe met with Dr. Claude Begle, a member of Swiss Federal Parliament and president of the Swiss-China World Silk Road Association.

Hu first extended his welcome to Begle for his third visit to the CPAFFC this year and expressed congratulations for the official launch of the Swiss-China World Silk Road Association at the Swiss Embassy in China to be held the next day. He suggested that the two associations should seize opportunities that rise in the process of deepening reform and opening-up to improve cooperation and establish a mechanism of high-level dialogue on topics of inter-parliamentary exchanges, ecological protection, tourism, culture and innovation in science and technology.



Vice-President Lin Yi meets with Emir of Kano Muhammadu Sanusi II

Zhang Yujun

On Oct 22, CPAFFC Vice-President Lin Yi met with the Emir of Kano Muhammadu Sanusi II, the traditional leader in Nigeria.

Lin warmly welcomed the emir to China, noting that he had visited last year at the invitation of the CPAFFC, at which time the two sides made efforts to promote China-Nigeria exchanges in areas such as local government, trade and education. She said she expects that the CPAFFC will maintain contact with the emir to jointly deepen pragmatic cooperation in all areas between China and Nigeria.

The emir recalled with delight his visit to China last year. He expressed willingness to exert influence as a traditional leader to enhance Nigeria-China cooperation in trade, agriculture, production capacity and vocational training.



Vice-President Song Jingwu meets with new president of Icelandic Chinese Cultural Society

Zhang Hualu



On Nov 13, Vice-President Song Jingwu met with Thorkell Arnason, the newly elected president of the Icelandic Chinese Cultural Society, and Gunnar Gunnarson, Iceland's ambassador to China.

Song congratulated Arnason on his election and asked him to convey greetings to his predecessors, especially Arnthor Helgason, an old friend of the CPAFFC. Arnason said that after having been engaged in high-tech cooperation with China and elected the president of the ICCS, he will make new contributions to promoting Iceland-China friendship and cooperation. Ambassador Gunnarson invited Song to attend the reception celebrating the 100th anniversary of of Iceland's independence, which was scheduled later in November.

The two sides exchanged views on enhancement of people-to-people friendship and furthering cooperation on technology, cultural exchange, geothermal energy and Arctic affairs.

Secretary-General Li Xikui attends closing ceremony of ninth Formula Student China

Shao Shuai



Li Xikui, Secretary-General of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, attended the closing ceremony of the ninth Formula Student China on October 13, and gave awards to the winners.

The China Friendship Foundation for Peace and Development donated money to Xiamen University of Technology and Lushan College at Guangxi University of Science and Technology. Li attended the donation ceremony. He said the donation was for training more automobile talents, supporting college students in realizing their automobile dreams and promoting the development of the automobile industry. He expressed hope that the college students who had taken part in the Formula Student China would be active promoters of the automobile industry and would contribute greatly to China's development. He wished the college students great success in the future.

Chengdu International Sister Cities Higher Education Institutions League 2018 annual event held at Chiang Mai University

Chengdu Friendship Association



On Sept 20, a college league from Chengdu, Sichuan province, organized a student exchange forum in its Thai sister city, Chiang Mai.

The Chiang Mai University Forum, hosted by the League of Chengdu Institutions of Higher Learning for Exchanges with International Sister Cities, was part of the New Era, New Start Lancang-Mekong Conference on Belt and Road Initiative International Cooperation, which was held simultaneously.

SYPAFFC actively promotes exchanges between Chinese and South Korean youths at National Stadium

Shenyang Friendship Association



A 24-member delegation from Daejeon, South Korea, visited Shenyang from Oct 22 to 26. The Shenyang People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries has organized a series of exchange activities for telling the stories of Shenyang and promoting the "project of connecting people's hearts".

The boys and girls from South Korea visited families, classes, historic sites, museums, parks and streets in Shenyang. They learned and played together with their local counterparts. They acquired knowledge about the city's rich heritage, splendid culture and sunny vitality and enjoyed the charming look of an internationalized central city in northeast Asia. The two countries' youths have established a friendship they will never forget.

Editor's note marking the launch of this magazine 35 years ago

The Editorial Office



The Voice of Friendship was founded in 1983. This year coincides with the 40th anniversary of China's reform and opening-up drive. Our magazine, with its Chinese and English editions, is also celebrating its 35th birthday. Ever since its launch, Voice of Friendship has been forging along with China's development, witnessing the unremitting efforts of generations of nongovernmental diplomatic figures in making friends for China and recording what the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and other countries' friendly organizations and people have done to build up mutual understanding and friendship. This magazine is the crystallization of the profound friendship we have

established and constantly renewed in carrying out people-to-people diplomacy.

The magazine derives its name from a line in *Shi Jing* (The Book of Songs) — "The bird chirps to seek echoes from friends." The two characters of the magazine's Chinese name are exactly those in the line — *you sheng*, literally "voice of friend". The name was decided by Wang Bingnan, president of the CPAFFC at the time, and other founding members of the association. Today we still marvel at how wonderfully the two characters chime with our mission.

President Wang Bingnan published an article entitled *Work to Promote Friendship Among People of All Countries* in the magazine's inaugural

issue in June 1983, to introduce the CPAFFC's mission: Help friendly organizations and people from all countries to know China, enhance friendship between the Chinese people and those of other countries and promote world peace and development. Voice of Friendship has faithfully fulfilled this mission over the past 35 years.

On this occasion of the magazine's 35th anniversary, we review our mission and remain true to our original aspirations. In this issue, we set up a special column to carry commemorative articles contributed by Chinese and foreign writers, in tribute to the cause of civil diplomacy undertaken by Voice of Friendship and to the old friends of the Chinese people and the friendly years we have spent together! ■

Origin of the Voice of Friendship

The Editorial Office

Voice of Friendship is run by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries as its official publication.

In 1983, Wang Bingnan, president of the CPAFFC at the time, initiated the idea of publishing a magazine as the association's official journal. The organization selected a few staff members from its Comprehensive Research Office and Translation Office to form a working group to prepare the new publication. The first issue of Voice of Friendship appeared on June 1 that year, in both Chinese and English.

The Chinese title of the magazine is “友声”. The two characters literally translate as “friendly voice”. Therefore, readers and many colleagues in the CPAFFC, took it for granted that the title means “the voice of friendship”. Undoubtedly, it does have such a meaning. However, people may not know the intriguing story of its origin.

The magazine title was finalized by Wang after consultation with certain comrades involved in the preparatory

work. It originated from the poem *Lumbering in Shi Jing* (The Book of Songs). One line reads: “The bird chirps to seek echoes from its friends”. The passage depicts a beautiful scene in which a tireless bird flies over a deep ravine to land on a tree in the woods and chirped in search of response. The phrase later became an idiom widely quoted and recited. Literati often quoted it to illustrate that people should treasure mutual warm feelings, make friends with others of like mind and learn from one another for self-improvement. Many CPC and State leaders, including Chairman Mao, quoted the phrase many times.

The selection of “voice of friendship” as the name of the magazine came directly from the desire to commit to the CPAFFC's mission of nongovernmental diplomacy and the seeking of like-minded friends. As Wang, our distinguished former president, said in his article, *Strive to Promote Friendship among Peoples of All Countries*, in the inaugural issue: “The Chinese people attach great



The Seal Engraver Ms Kitamuro Nanen has been dedicated to promoting Chinese characters cultural exchanges between China and Japan.

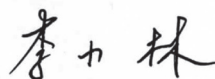
importance to friendship with peoples around the world. I hope the magazine will become a garden for cultivating friendship through the concerted efforts of its staff and with the support of our friends. May the flowers of friendship between people of all countries bloom

forever!”

The first issue had only 16 pages. Now, thanks to the efforts of the editorial staff over the years, it has become a full-color, well-illustrated quarterly with a circulation of 3,800 copies per issue in English and Chinese editions. The magazine was distributed to China-friendly organizations and people in more than 150 countries and regions; to some Chinese embassies and consulates overseas; to State leaders and ministries; CPAFFC’s directors; various nongovernmental organizations in Beijing; foreign embassies and news agencies in China; and to foreign affairs offices and friendship associations in China’s provinces, municipalities, autonomous regions and major cities. In addition to the print editions, each issue has an online version.

Voice of Friendship has traveled a remarkable path in the 35 years since it was founded. It is a testimony to the care of previous leaders, the persistence of several generations of staff members at the editorial office, the whole-hearted support of our colleagues at the CPAFFC and the support and companionship of friendly people from all walks of life at home and abroad. In the future, Voice of Friendship will continue to serve the CPAFFC’s core purpose and maintain its publication standards. As it remains committed to the cause of promoting nongovernmental exchanges between China and other countries and fostering affinity among different peoples, Voice of Friendship will continue singing songs of friendship in what former President Wang said was a beautiful garden of civil diplomacy. ■

Flowers of friendship blossom



Li Xiaolin

On behalf of the Party Committee of the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and in my own name, I would like to extend my warm congratulations and sincere thanks to the Voice of Friendship on the occasion of the 35th anniversary of its first publication. Thirty-five years of hard work have yielded fruitful results. The Voice of Friendship has followed the long journey CPAFFC has traveled in China’s people-to-people diplomacy, witnessed the work and devotion of our association’s staff, recorded what our association has achieved in its work during China’s reform and opening-up and told the touching stories of many foreign friends.

By 1983 when the Voice of Friendship was founded, I had worked at the CPAFFC for eight years. That year, I had just got my master’s degree from University of California, Los



CPAFFC President Li Xiaolin

Angeles and come back to continue my work at the association to “make friends for the country”. Like my dear colleagues in the association, I have

met and made so many friends, as countless as stars in the sky.

Here I would like to share my reminiscence of four of my good friends from foreign countries. The Voice of Friendship carried stories about them before.

The first is Frank Pestana. He is one of the founders of the US-China Peoples Friendship Association and former president of the USCPFA Los Angeles branch. He is also a well-known lawyer. He and his wife and other friends at the USCPFA gave me selfless help during my studies at UCLA. At that time, I deeply felt their warmth and sincerity.

After the June 4 incident in 1989, Frank Pestana broke the sanctions the US government had imposed on China and led a delegation to the country. They were the first American friendship group to be received by the then-president Jiang Zemin, demonstrating that a friend in need is a friend indeed.

The second special friend I want to mention here is Gian Franco Terenzi, who once served four terms as captain regent of the Republic of San Marino and is the incumbent president of the San Marino-China Friendship Association.

The Republic of San Marino covers an area of 61 square kilometers, with a population of 32,000. As a well-known "state within a state" in Europe, it is surrounded by Italy. Terenzi is full of admiration for China, a big oriental country. Every time a Chinese delegation visited his country, he treated the guests with the grandest welcoming ceremony. Once, when Terenzi visited China in the 1980s as captain regent of San Marino, Li Xiannian, China's

president at the time, met him. At the welcoming banquet, Li stressed that all countries, big and small, are equal. The words touched Terenzi greatly, and since then, he has been devoted to enhancing friendship between San Marino and China. His friendship with China is so profound that every time we meet I feel our hearts were brought closer by the angel of friendship transcending time and space.

The third friend is the legendary Fransabank Group Chairman Adnan Kassar. Fransabank is Lebanon's third-largest bank. Since he first visited China in 1953 (the year I was born), Kassar has been committed to advancing cooperation between Arab states and China in politics, economy, trade and culture.

Not long ago, Fransabank Group issued the first Belt and Road China Union Pay credit card in Lebanon and other countries in the Middle East Region. Fransabank also joined hands with the CPAFFC in holding Belt and Road cultural activities. In January 2016, during his state visit to Egypt, President Xi Jinping presented Kassar with the China-Arab Friendship Outstanding Contribution Award. After winning the honor, this old friend to China told everyone he met: "I will not only keep the medal on my desk but also in my heart."

Kassar has built a bridge for the friendship between China and Lebanon. Though it hasn't been very long since I began communication with him, I feel that holding his hand is like embracing the Arab world's traditional friendship with China.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty

of Peace and Friendship between China and Japan. On Oct 25, the CPAFFC held a grand reception at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. We sent an invitation to Hiromasa Yonekura, former chairman of Keidanren (Japan Business Federation). However, the 80-year-old man was unable to come because of illness.

He told me that he regretted his absence, and I admire the Japanese entrepreneur for his sincerity and frankness. Every time I raised a question about Sino-Japanese relations, some of which were sensitive to both sides, he always shared his views frankly. When it comes to the matter of Diaoyu Islands, he stressed on many occasions that the two sides should follow former Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping's proposal to shelve disputes and leave it to future generations for final settlement. In his opinion, top priority should be given to economic and trade cooperation between Japan and China.

This Japanese friend has a distinctive facial feature: With his two long, white eyebrows, the amiable gentleman looks like China's legendary god of longevity Shou Xing.

In 2011 during a visit to Japan, I went to Sumitomo Tower to call on Yonekura. It was extremely cold that day. The elderly man greeted me at the building entrance, disregarding the bitter wind. The scene has been inscribed in my memory. Whenever I recall it, I can feel the warmth and strength of our friendship.

I know that many in-service and retired staff members of our association have made many foreign friends and published stories in the

Voice of Friendship. It is an effective way to record these stories, improve our colleagues' writing ability and give readers a full understanding of the work of the CPAFFC, as well as that done by local friendship associations across the country.

It is encouraging to see that the Voice of Friendship has made noticeable progress in recent years including a redesign, expansion of columns and online edition. The magazine has reported the innovative results of our work and various activities held by our association through local exchange mechanisms and on the friendship city platform. An "excellent article" selection is held annually, which in turn has aroused great enthusiasm among the contributors and led to more stories of high quality. Today, the Voice of Friendship enjoys rising influence at home and abroad.

In the new era, we should continue to closely unite around the CPC Central Committee with General Secretary Xi Jinping as the core. We should study and implement General Secretary Xi's instructions on people-to-people diplomacy and local-level exchanges. We should expand our circle of friends, do a good job telling Chinese stories and make the Voice of Friendship a better publication. ■

Oct 30, 2018

Tribute to the hero and friendship

Hao Zhongwei



"You must be insane! I've decided to go home and stop risking my life accompanying you!"

When the captain of the supply ship hung up, my head buzzed. Would the more than one year's hard preparation end up being futile? No, I must continue! My mother and brother's archaeological research could not be wrong. It was in these canoes that the ancestors of Polynesians sailed from the southeastern coast of the Chinese mainland all the way to various corners of the Pacific Ocean thousands of years ago. I had to go on to complete the root-seeking journey.

I managed to persuade the other five crew members to keep sailing. Four months and 16,000 sea miles later, after reeling from typhoons, whopping waves and torrential rains, and facing whales and other life-and-death moments, we reached China before the closure of the Shanghai World Expo.

Every time Hiria told me a story about his soul-stirring and historic journey, I would find myself immersed in the scenes and deeply touched.

And my impression of Hiria suddenly changed. He was no longer the gentle scholar he was at the time when we first met in 2003, nor the

chief representative of the Autonomous Government of French Polynesia in China back in 2004. He has become a tough guy in my estimation, a hero who pursues his dreams and never gives up until he reaches his goal. Who else would sell his home to build an ancient-style canoe just to fulfill a dream as he did? Who would bid farewell to a wife of just three months to embark on a perilous journey whose outcome was uncertain? And who would, just for a dream, take an ocean voyage without a supply ship?

I asked Hiria more than once, “Didn’t you think of giving up when the sailing was so difficult and treacherous?”

“Surely I did,” the Polynesian replied. “On the third day I became so seasick that I wanted to quit. Yet I thought of my mother, my wife and all my friends in French Polynesia who had afforded me tremendous support, as well as my friends in the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries. I told myself that I must follow through with the voyage. It was they who spurred me forward and helped me realize the biggest dream of my life at the age of 40.”

Today, the canoe Hiria sailed — with the Chinese inscription “Root-Seeking Journey” and the flags of the nine countries he passed en route hanging from the mast — are kept permanently in the Maritime Museum of China.

Whenever I think of Hiria, respect and pride well up in my heart. I hope more compatriots and friends will come to know of his deeds. ■

Danillo Dos Santos, the Brazilian version of “Mountain-removing Old Man”

Lin Zhichang

Danillo Dos Santos, a renowned Brazilian lawyer, stays hale and hearty and is full of passion despite turning 84 this year. This humorous and sagacious gentleman is an old friend of the Latin America Office of the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries.

Mr. Santos’s connections with China began with the noted Nine Red Hearts incident in the history of China-Brazil relations. Back then, at the age of 30, he helped find lawyers and testified in court for the nine Chinese journalists and trade workers framed and detained by the Brazilian military junta in 1964. He charged the Chinese defendants no fee and even dug into his own wallet to help with defense. Ultimately, the nine were successfully brought back to China.

When attending the meeting marking the 60th anniversary of the founding of the CPAFFC held in Beijing, Santos recalled the incident.

“In the prison, I saw the Chinese heroes, who appeared intrepid and astute in front of torture. They had their motherland in their hearts, which were filled with justice and innocence. My friendship with them has lasted for nearly half a century. It was their heroic deeds that triggered my love for China.”

“One should not be sloppy at his official post, but should rather be honest when enforcing decrees,” Confucius said. Since serving as president of the Brazilian China Friendship Association, Santos has achieved a number of “impossibilities” and overcome many “difficulties”. In 1974, China and Brazil officially established diplomatic relations. As a mandatory lawyer, Santos helped China establish its embassy and sign the construction agreement. Later, he actively promoted the establishment of sister-city relations between Rio de Janeiro and two Chinese cities, Beijing

and Tianjin.

Moreover, he personally received innumerable Chinese delegations and businesses seeking help. Under his leadership, members of the Brazil-China Friendship Association coordinated their resources, gave play to their talents and held a wide variety of activities such as China Film Week and the Cultural Photo Exhibition. In addition, Santos helped arranged China visits by several delegations of Brazilian lawmakers, government officials and members of the business community. He also initiated a very creative move at that time: recommending a group of Chinese youngsters to go to Brazil for soccer training.

Small steps led to distances far afield. Santos has been tireless working for Brazil-China friendship. His efforts came to full fruition as his fame and influence grew in Rio de Janeiro, and throughout Brazil. In 2003, Cheng Siwei, former vice-chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress and president of the China-Latin America Association, awarded Santos the China-Latin America Friendship Medal.

The Foolish Man Removing the Mountains is Santos's favorite Chinese story.

"The friendship between Brazil and China is the very beginning as well as the end of my life; there is no other possibility in my life", he said.

This endearing and respected gentleman has always remained true to his original aspirations. With his most sincere emotions, he has composed beautiful stories in his life and passed on the China-Brazil friendship. ■

Korn Dabbaransi: a good friend of the Chinese people

Xu Yiyi



Korn Dabbaransi

He was born to a family of statesmen, with Chinese blood running in his veins.

He witnessed the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Thailand, with the seeds of friendship sprouting in his heart.

He has remained true to his original aspirations, with great devotion

to the friendship between China and Thailand.

He is Korn Dabbaransi, president of the Thai-Chinese Friendship Association and a faithful friend to China who is dedicated to safeguarding amity between the two countries.

Korn was born in Bangkok on Sept 14, 1945. His ancestral home was

in Chenghai, Guangdong province. He is the nephew of Chatichai Choonhavan, Thailand's former prime minister. Since he entered politics in 1974, Korn has served as minister of the Office of Prime Minister and head of the ministries of science and technology, tourism and sports, industry, and public health. Since 1996, he has been appointed as deputy prime minister three times, well worth being called an all-around statesman.

In February, 1998, Korn succeeded his uncle Chatichai Choonhavan as president of the Thai-Chinese Friendship Association. He often says that his position is temporary while his friendship with China is permanent. In his words, his lifelong pursuit is to help more Thais to acquire knowledge about China.

Korn, in whatever position, spares no effort to advance friendly relations and cultural exchanges with China. He has contributed to many "firsts" in the two countries' bilateral relations.

In 1975, as a member of a Thai government delegation, he assisted in the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Thailand and met with the elder generation of Chinese leaders, including Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping.

Then, on behalf of the Ministry of Transport of Thailand, he signed an agreement with the Civil Aviation Administration of China on the opening of direct flights.

He was Thailand's first minister of public health to have brought traditional Chinese medicine to his country. Dedicated to promoting TCM, he was instrumental in setting up the first TCM medical school and hospital



Korn Dabbaransi led a motorcade from Bangkok through Thailand, Laos and Vietnam and then across China's Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region and Guangdong province to the city of Chaozhou.

in Thailand.

To popularize the teaching of the Chinese language, he managed to enhance collaboration between the Thai-Chinese Friendship Association and Hanban, the government office in charge of teaching foreigners the Chinese language. As a result, the first Confucius Institute came into being in Thailand.

In his view, Thais and Chinese are as close to each other as blood kinsmen, and the key to Thailand-China relations lies in people-to-people friendships. As president of the Thai-Chinese Friendship Association, he has committed himself wholeheartedly to friendly relations between the two countries. Now well over 70, he has visited China more than 140 times, never declining any invitation.

To find his roots, he led a motorcade from Bangkok through Thailand, Laos and Vietnam and then across China's Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region and Guangdong province to the city of Chaozhou.

He thinks highly of the Chinese

Dream and has been promoting the Belt and Road Initiative in Thailand. In 2006, his association joined the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and other friendship organizations from ASEAN countries to launch the Conference on ASEAN-China People-to-People Friendship, which boosted friendly people-to-people cooperation between China and ASEAN countries. He also upheld justice on the South-China Sea question.

To motivate more young people to contribute to friendly relations between the two countries, he sends youth delegations from his country to participate in the ASEAN-China Youth Cultural Exchange Festival and organizes China-Thailand badminton games and China-Thailand golf matches every year. He is intelligent, passionate, mild and easygoing. He is a practitioner, advocate and propeller of the friendship between China and Thailand. He is a respected friend of the Chinese people. ■

May peace and friendship last forever

Zhang Xiaoping

In the early evening of Oct 25, 2018 there was a cloudless sky and a pleasant breeze in Beijing. The national flags of China and Japan were fluttering on Tiananmen Square. The Great Hall of the People was lit up warmly, as more than 800 representatives from various circles and many friends gathered in celebration of the 40th anniversary of the China-Japan Treaty of Peace and Friendship.

This year's commemorative reception was the first event attended by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe during his visit to China. It was the first official visit of a Japanese prime minister after a lapse of seven years during which the bilateral relationship was at low ebb. Chinese Premier Li Keqiang and Abe both addressed the event, endowing it with special significance.

Forty years ago, the conclusion of the China-Japan Treaty of Peace and Friendship charted, in legal form in four key documents, the orientation both nations would follow in their relations — peaceful coexistence and everlasting friendship. During the last four decades, under the guiding principles established by the four documents, bilateral relations have stuck to the cause of peaceful and friendly cooperation despite adversity and setbacks, bringing tangible benefits to the two peoples.

Over four decades, China-

Japan relations have not always been smooth sailing. There have been both proud achievements and serious setbacks. Advancement happened in twists and turns. Every step along the extraordinary journey reflects the profound wisdom of the leaders of both nations, and the efforts and hard work of farsighted people from both sides, which deserve to be treasured and protected with great care.

Many guests at the reception had been working for decades on the front lines to strengthen the China-Japan relationship, both young people and seniors. In good times and bad, they have been firmly holding high the banner of friendship and contributing to the sound and stable development of China-Japan relations. The development of bilateral relations

relied not only on correct guidance by the two governments but also on the contributions made by such people.

A few years ago, relations were faced with severe setbacks, which negatively affected people-to-people communications. During a meeting with one of the Japanese friends, Shiro Minamimura, he encouraged us by saying that the current difficulties were nothing compared with the situation before the normalization of relations. These difficulties, he said, would definitely be overcome so long as we had firm confidence. When we asked him why he was so passionately devoted to the cause of developing Sino-Japanese friendship, even at the risk of his life, he recalled the story of an old woman he had met during his first visit to China. The woman had lost her son



The reception to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the signing of the China-Japan Treaty of Peace and Friendship

during Japan's invasion of China. The tragedy shocked him, convincing him that the war atrocities committed by the Japanese were unforgivable and must never happen again. "We want peace, not war," he said.

This must have been the original intention shared by many friendly people in their engagement in the cause of advancing China-Japan friendship with unshaken faith and ceaseless hard work.

Peace needs its guardians. Friendship needs its successors. Many of those friendly individuals have passed on their faith to people around them, especially the younger generation. Among them was the president of Shorinji Kempo, Yuki So, whose father, Dojin So, the martial art's founder, once lived in China and witnessed the war during his youth. He believed that without China-Japan friendship, there would be no peace in Asia or the whole world. He remained firmly committed to the friendly cause thereafter. Yuki accompanied her father on a visit to China at the age of 17 and has inherited his beliefs about carrying on the cause. She is now in her 60s. Her son, who frequently accompanies her to friendship activities, is expected to take the baton and carry forward his mother's efforts.

Peace will last and friendship will continue. It is a common aspiration and in the fundamental interests of the two countries and peoples. On the 40th anniversary of the China-Japan Treaty of Peace and Friendship, let us rekindle the spirit, stay true to the mission, maintain the peaceful achievements, carry forward the friendship into the future and jointly open a new future for China and Japan. ■

Friendship across the ocean

Wang Lidan

Positioned next to the international date line in the western Pacific, Tonga receives some of the world's first official sunshine every morning.

More than 3,000 years ago, the first Polynesians settled on Tongatapu, starting the longest history of any Pacific island.

In AD 950, the Kingdom of Tonga was founded and the Tu'i Tonga Empire began to rule.

In the mid-18th century, British navigator Captain James Cook landed in Tonga, which he called "the island of friendship" because of the local people's simplicity and hospitality.

In June 1970, the Kingdom of Tonga declared independence.

Ten thousand kilometers away is China, located on the western side of the northern Pacific.

More than 3,000 years ago, China entered its Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, and began the last hereditary slave dynasty in history.

In AD 960, General Zhao Kuangyin of the Late Zhou Dynasty usurped the throne to commence his Song Dynasty.

At the beginning of the 15th century, the great navigator Zheng He made seven voyages to the "western ocean", pulling off a feat that remains

extraordinary in human history.

In October 1949, the People's Republic of China was founded, putting an end to the country's humiliation and enslavement of more than a century by foreign aggressors.

Innumerable links between these two distant ancient countries, China and Tonga, intertwined across time and space. One day in 1998, a Tongan father and his daughter arrived in Beijing from Taipei. The old man had just been to Taiwan to sever his country's ties with it, regardless of strong opposition from inside and outside the court. Princess Salote Pilolevu Tuita later recalled that it was in Beijing's Grand Hotel that her father, King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV of Tonga, met with many Chinese friends to discuss the establishment of diplomatic relations between Tonga and the rightful government of China. It was also during that trip, Princess Tuita recalled, that she got to know a new country and unexpectedly forged a bond with it that has been strong ever since.

In 2008, Tonga, a developing island country, twice helped China generously with money to support disaster relief efforts in the snowstorm in southern China and the earthquake in

Wenchuan, Sichuan province. Although the money wasn't much, it showed the sympathy the Tongan government and people had for the Chinese people. When some Western media said that China was strong enough and did not need assistance, Princess Tuita angrily retorted that any country under such circumstances needs support from all around. It is not about money but about the care and friendship between people, she said.

On a stormy night in 2009, the airport in Tonga's capital, Nukualofa, was brightly lit as Princess Tuita led the country's entire cabinet — nearly 50 people, including the prime minister, deputy prime minister and cabinet minister — to await the arrival of a Chinese delegation. The hosts had prepared Tonga's most solemn and traditional welcoming ceremony. The rain was so heavy that half the lights on the airfield runway were out of order and the plane nearly missed its landing after circling in the air for more than two hours. Outside the aircraft, the storm was violent. Li Xiaolin, president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and head of the Chinese delegation, broke her left ankle on the slippery gangway and couldn't walk. But seeing the warmth of her Tongan friends, she endured the pain and insisted on sitting in a wheelchair and attending all the activities of the welcoming ceremony. Everyone present was moved and applauded the Chinese who had come from afar.

The Tonga-China Friendship Association was officially established that year, with Princess Tuita as

its president. President Li and her delegation made a special trip to offer congratulations. During the visit, Li attended every scheduled event, still in a wheelchair, and held cordial exchanges with local people from all walks of life. She developed a deep friendship with Princess Tuita and the Tongan people. The princess affectionately called her "my Chinese sister".

In 2010, Princess Tuita, fascinated by Chinese culture, visited the Confucius Temple and Mount Tai. She listened to the guide's explanations carefully, unwilling to miss a single sentence or story. When talking about the visit a few years later, it surprised everyone that she still remembered many famous sayings of Confucius, including, "The gentleman is in harmony with those around him but not on their level. The small man is on the level of those around him but not in harmony with them"; "Do not do to others what you do not wish others do to you"; "Learning without reflection will end up in confusion; reflection without learning will end up in peril"; and "Take disciples of all backgrounds without discrimination and teach students in accordance of their aptitude". She could also recite verses carved on Mount Tai rocks and retell the folk tales about the god of Mount Tai.

She often said, Chinese culture is profound and beautiful, with much wisdom, and is really fascinating.

The Tongan folk culture also has many similarities with that of China.

For example, they both have strong family values. Both attach great

importance to family affection, with such traditions as keeping records of the family tree, observing long periods of mourning for a deceased parent, living in the same household from generation to generation and visiting relatives and friends at the end of the year.

There are many Tongan words that sound similar to Chinese, such as *haoa*, which sounds a bit like the Chinese word *hao* — and both mean "good". "Ta kai" (open) is pronounced "dakai". Even the genes are similar. Tonga's newborn babies, like those in China, often have a blue-black birthmark on their hip or back in the first few months of life. Therefore, the old king of Tonga persisted in the belief that Tongans belong to the Mongolian race.

In 2016, President Li led a delegation to visit Tonga once more for the establishment of the Pacific-China Friendship Association.

The idea of establishing a regional friendship organization between China and the Oceanian countries was first put forward at the 2010 America & Oceania Friendship Forum.

After six years of discussions and negotiations, representatives of eight friendly organizations from seven Oceanian countries and regions — including Princess Tuita — gathered in Tonga to sign a joint communique and officially established the association.

In the airport lounge, a Tongan girl placed a garland of flowers around President Li's neck, to express good wishes. Princess Tuita told her guests that the girl, named Lidan, was their "Mount Tai baby".

Tuita related a beautiful story that happened on Mount Tai when she visited Shandong province in 2010.

At that time, she was accompanied by a long-time maid named Lydia, whose son had no offspring after many years of marriage. His only daughter had died soon after birth. On Mount Tai, Lydia was told of the Chinese folk custom of worshipping Goddess Mount Tai to be blessed with pregnancy, so she made a wish in silence.

True to her wish, a baby girl was born not long afterward, bringing great joy to the whole family. She asked Princess Tuita to give her granddaughter a name.

Tuita said, "Since there is such an intimate relationship between the child and China's Mount Tai, let's use the name of our Chinese friend who is from the CPAFFC and has accompanied us to Mount Tai, to name the child.

The princess also hoped the girl would become a messenger of friendship between China and Tonga in the future and continue the beautiful relationship between the two countries from generation to generation.

Now, little Lidan, dressed in traditional holiday costume, always smiles brightly, just like the sunshine in Tonga, reaching everyone's heart.

What is precious in people's acquaintance is mutual knowledge. What is precious in people's mutual knowledge is the understanding of each other's heart. If you ask what connects people so closely across the ocean, I would say it is those friendly sentiments rooted in the heart. ■

Ruth F. Weiss: Where my heart settles, that is where my home is

He Yan

Ruth F. Weiss and I met in 1996 when she was 88 years old.

On the evening of May 10, 1996, the auditorium of the CPAFFC had a warm atmosphere. The association was about to confer the title of *friendship ambassador* upon Elisabeth Comber, a Chinese-British writer also known as Han Suyin.

An elderly foreign woman with silvery curly hair, red lips and light, smooth skin was sitting in front of me, dressed in an orange coat. She was a little chubby, holding a walking stick in her hand.

I called "Grandmother", and she turned to talk to me in fluent Chinese. I asked her, "May I know your name?" She took my notebook and carefully wrote three Chinese characters — Wei Lushi — and then Ruth F. Weiss in English letters. She also wrote down her apartment phone number, memorably watching me with her blue eyes, and said, "I live at the Beijing Friendship Hotel and you can call me."

First time to Shanghai

As early as 1940, Ruth F. Weiss and Elisabeth Comber became friends

as they both attended a weekly Bible study gathering at a missionary's house in Chengdu, Sichuan province. In fact, the discussion was all about forbidden topics at that time, such as the rural economy, the meaning of fascism and what happened in Yan'an.

As Han Suyin's autobiography described:

Ruth F. Weiss, a very brave Austrian woman, got married to a younger Chinese man and had two sons. A few years later, her husband went to the United States... Weiss chose to remain in China, saying that her two children were Chinese and thus must stay. At first, she had a hard time, and no one knew what kind of sufferings she had experienced. But she was always smiling and her demeanor emanated a sense of humor.

When meeting her again in Beijing, I found that her face was smooth without any wrinkles, just like 25 years before in Chengdu, when she was with her husband and life was full of joy and vigor. She even invited me over for dinner.

Vienna, the home of music, is Weiss's hometown. She later recalled

in an article:

“Every year on Oct 1 when the People’s Republic of China celebrates her birthday with great joy, my mind cannot help going to the next day, which is a very important day in my life. On Oct 2, 1933, I came to Shanghai for the first time. ...

“After leaving Vienna, I went straight to Shanghai by boat from Venice. Before the departure, I consoled myself and comforted my family by telling them not to worry. That trip was just a half-year study trip to Shanghai as a freelance reporter for Wiener Zeitung.

“A year before, I had just graduated from the Language Department of the University of Vienna. The ceremony for the doctor’s degree was so tedious and long that the head of the Philosophy Department responsible for the ceremony complained, ‘Granting you guys the doctor’s degree is as tedious as making sausages in a factory!’”

Weiss had the idea of going to China to study for a long time. In Vienna, there were many opportunities for people to have a connection with the distant country. For example, a symphony by Gustav Mahler, an Austrian composer, was created on the basis of poems by Chinese poets Li Bai and Wang Wei in the Tang Dynasty. A play called *The Chalk Circle* written by Alfred Henschke, an Austrian writer under the pen name Klaybund, described a trial in China. The staging of the play incited in the members of the audience a boundless imagination of China.

In 1929, Weiss began to learn Chinese at the beginning of her third

year of university studies. In Vienna, she met many Chinese students and office clerks sent by the Chinese government. Through contacts with them, she sensed that there might be opportunities for her to live in China.

At that time, Hitler’s power was growing in central Europe. A girl like Weiss, who came from a Jewish family, had no place to live. Therefore, she came to China alone, but with a good dream.

As usual, reality fell short of her desires. Her articles on China’s social economy and politics were opposed by the Japanese consul general in Shanghai, and her work as a freelance writer for Wiener Zeitung could not go on. She had to find some other means of making a living, and accepted a job at the Shanghai Jewish School, which was actually a charity organization.

Witness to suffering

While in Shanghai, Weiss met Rewi Alley, the legendary New Zealander. Alley had initiated China’s Gung Ho movement to help the country’s laborers.

She recalled:

“In the fall of 1933, Rewi Alley gave me special help by showing me around slums and shabby workshops where workers lived and labored. The workers were poorly paid. Many of them were child laborers, who lived in attic storage rooms and had meals by the side of machines.

“After successive floods, droughts and famines, coupled with relentless oppression by the Chiang Kai-shek regime, large numbers of rural people poured into the cities. Labor contractors took the opportunity to make money.

They first lured rural people to the cities with sweet promises. Once they sold the laborers to the employers, they changed face and backed out of their original promises. The working people became the target of exploitation by the ruling class and foreign investors. ...

“When I took a passenger ship through Port Said on the Suez Canal, I knew a little about how imperialism and the Caucasians exploited the people of poor countries. Today’s field trip to the workshops in Shanghai gave me a profound lesson on class and class struggle, and helped me recognize the pains the laboring people in the feudal society suffered because of capitalist exploitation.”

At the same time, what Weiss saw and heard about “charity” at the Shanghai Jewish School made her see clearly how the Western hierarchy functioned in China. The British and the Americans were at the top, the Russians were second, the Indians were third and the miserable Chinese — who were also oppressed by the Chinese ruling class — were at the bottom. It was like being in the same geographic environment but living in two different worlds.

The Shanghai Jewish School was set up by some British Arabs who made their fortune from land speculation, opium and other dirty trades. Their filthy lucre was a source of charity for the Russian and Jewish children, whose fathers were taxi drivers or watchmen at night, and mothers were dancers in nightclubs or sales clerks in shops. The children in Weiss’s class often came to school with an empty stomach in the morning. A free midday meal provided by the school was probably all they ate in a day.

After a six-month internship as a teacher, Weiss was fired, which was agreeable to her:

“Because I was sick of their hypocrisy in asking me to perform religious rituals, and their nasty faces requiring the children to show genuine gratitude for a little bit of education and food provided by the school. This experience made the depiction in novels of Britain’s orphanages in 19th century all the more believable and hateful!”

Then, Weiss met Agnes Smedley, an American journalist. Smedley was the second writer, after Edgar Snow, to tell the world about China’s communist “Red Zone”. By this time Weiss had read some books about China and began to get some idea of what Marxism was.

She wrote:

“At that time, China was in a semi-colonial state, with warlords supported by their imperialist masters fighting each other for influence. The laboring people led a dog’s life. I saw every day that poor people in the streets were used as livestock to pull wheelbarrows loaded with heavy cargoes; the gaunt rickshaw men were carrying the rich men and women and sweating like donkeys; the police were despotic, often seen wielding batons to shoo away the poor and beggars in the street. They completely neglected the basic human rights of the laboring people. I remembered once showing a boy sleeping under the roof of a store to a Russian woman who was with me. She shrugged and said dismissively, ‘So what? It’s just a Chinese.’”

With a friend and teacher like Agnes Smedley, Weiss found new

meaning in life. She said:

“I can be a screw in the wheel of history and do things within my capabilities to turn the wheel. Since foreigners have greater freedom for carrying out activities than the Chinese progressive people, I became an ‘inquirer’ delivering messages from place to place. In the process, I learned about the Long March, and saw some Chinese who kept the country’s destiny in mind, rather than just pursuing personal interests.”

Weiss was introduced to Soong Ching-ling, widow of Dr. Sun Yat-sen, and maintained a lifelong friendship with her. She also met the writer Lu Xun, whom she admired very much. Lu Xun introduced the woodcut works of Kaethe Kollwitz, a German artist, to China, in a move to propagate revolutionary thoughts. Lu died on October 16, 1936. A few days earlier, Weiss held an exhibition of woodcut works in Shanghai. It was the last time she was with Lu. On the day of Lu’s funeral, Weiss saw tens of thousands of people braving the risk of being persecuted by the authorities. They walked around the coffin to pay their final respects to the fearless hero.

Fight side by side

In late 1937, Weiss landed a job in Chengdu, Sichuan province, which gave her a precious opportunity to continue living in China.

On the night she left Shanghai on a passenger ship, the Japanese invaders began large-scale bombing, and the whole city was in flames. Buildings were reduced to rubble. People rushed around to dodge the bombs falling from the sky.

Weiss lived through the eight-year War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression, including six years in Chengdu and two years in Chongqing. In Chengdu, she married a Chinese engineer and got a job as a teacher and secretary, which gave her more opportunities to contact Chinese people, especially students.

Weiss later reminisced:

“The war threw all of us into social services, although the KMT authorities, out of their narrow-minded partisan interests, did not allow us to do more. We formed a wartime service corps to rescue soldiers and civilians who were wounded in the bombings. ...

“After much consideration, I decided to apply for Chinese citizenship because China has always stood with the anti-Nazi states and I felt like living in the ‘One World’, as in the title of the book written by Wendell Lewis Willkie, an American politician who visited China during the war.

“In Chengdu, you could see people from all over the world. For example, Sir Stafford Cripps from the United Kingdom, Jawaharlal Nehru from India, the Indian medical aid team to China led by Dr. Eider, the Red Cross team from the Philippines, the youngest daughter of renowned physicist and Nobel Prize laureate Madame Curie and many journalists.”

In 1943, Weiss moved from Chengdu to Chongqing and lived there for two years. She worked as a secretary in the Office of Diplomatic Missions, at the Canadian embassy and at the Photo and News office of the United Nations. She also helped Madame Soong Ching-ling rebuild the China Defense League and served

as a member of the league's Central Committee. In November 1945, after the victory in the war, she went to Shanghai to work at the China Welfare Institute.

Devoted to New China

In 1943, Weiss's husband went to the US to study for a doctorate at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In March 1946, she boarded a cargo ship bound for the US to join her husband. Through hard work, she landed a secretarial position at the United Nations headquarters and worked there for five years.

The passports issued by the KMT government allowed them to return to China to visit relatives once every two years, and she returned to China in the summer of 1949. At that time, Beijing and Shanghai had been liberated, but some southern provinces had not. Therefore, those who wanted to return to China were forced to take a ship from Hong Kong and sail north. It was quite an effort for Weiss to buy a ticket for a British ship sailing from Hong Kong to Tianjin. It had falsely claimed to be bound for Inchon, Korea, to avoid being bombed by the KMT's air forces.

Weiss went to Beijing, met many friends and saw all the preparations underway for the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. After the conference, the founding of the People's Republic of China was about to be announced. The new government promised that she and her husband and children could come back whenever they wanted, and there would be no problem arranging jobs for them. In mid-September 1949, she left Beijing and returned to New York

to continue her work at the UN.

Weiss recalled:

"One impression I got during that trip to Beijing was that after World War II, rickshaws pulled by men were replaced by the pedal rickshaws in the streets and people were no longer treated like livestock.

"One day, my mother-in-law took me to visit some friends. She sat in the front row and I sat in the back seat, enjoying the street scene when the tricyclist suddenly began to sing *Without the Communist Party, There Would Be No New China*. Subconsciously, I hissed at him to make him sing in a lower voice because when I left China in 1946, nobody dared to mention the Communist Party in public, let alone sing it out loud during the rule of the KMT government. When I came to my senses, I realized that Beijing had truly been liberated — that the people had become masters of the country and rickshaw drivers were able to sing loudly."

In the autumn of 1951, Weiss completed her employment contract with the UN and decided to return to China. Despite the fact that her husband chose to stay in the US and the KMT embassy confiscated her passport, she was determined to go and was finally able to return to Beijing with her two young sons at the end of the year after overcoming numerous obstacles. From then on, she worked on the distribution of China's publicity to foreign countries.

In 1964, she was employed as a German language expert by China Pictorial, responsible for the review of all manuscripts written in German.

In 1955, she acquired Chinese

citizenship for the second time, connecting her fate closely to China. The "cultural revolution" did not shake her loyalty, despite the unfair treatment she suffered during the period.

Although she had to take a crowded bus to work every day, she never stopped working and completed all the proofreading and translation of German manuscripts by herself for each issue of *Letters from China* by Anna Louise Strong.

The 10-year "cultural revolution" was ended in 1976, prompting Weiss to work with greater enthusiasm. She wrote articles for some overseas newspapers extolling the victory of the Chinese people and made many speeches introducing China when traveling in the US, Canada, Austria and West Germany.

In her 70s, Weiss still cared about the *China Pictorial* and proofread every German edition. She believed it was a kind of happiness for a person to continue to do something useful for society and people during old age.

When she was over 90, she could no longer walk but had to lie in bed. However, she remained optimistic and kept a regular daily routine. Whenever a friend came and brought her chocolate, she would open the package eagerly and relish eating it right away. In March 2006, Weiss died at the age of 97 and was buried in the Shanghai Soong Ching-ling Cemetery. Her good friend Huang Hua wrote the epitaph.

Weiss made her wishes come true in life. She once said affectionately: "I have a feeling that I belong to China. ... China is my home." Her words echoed a Chinese verse, "Where my heart settles, that is where my home is." ■

China becomes closer to me

Meng Kexin

When I first came to Peru 20 years ago, I felt that the country and China were really far apart, not only because of physical distance but also because of the inconvenient communication conditions the time. I remember communicating with my family through letters that would travel for about seven days each direction, and it was a luxury to make an international phone call in Peru. Also, Chinese goods were rare in Lima's Chinatown except for a few imported condiments.

Now in Peru, I feel that China is getting closer to me. Chinese goods are everywhere in markets; more Chinese companies are coming to Peru; Chinese cultural elements such as the Spring Festival, the Mid-Autumn festival and the Chinese zodiac have been increasingly loved and chased after by the Peruvians in recent years. These are the results of the great changes that have taken place in China since reform and opening-up began four decades ago.

Communication and transport facilities manufactured by Chinese companies, as well as Chinese commodities, have become integrated into the daily lives of Peruvians. China appears on the local TV news and in newspapers and magazines, it's talked about by people more and more

frequently and has attracted greater attention.

My Chinese friends in Peru

Twenty years ago, Cantonese was the only language you heard in the Chinese circles of Peru, because most of the locals were from Guangdong province. Mandarin was a rarity.

I have a Chinese-Peruvian friend named Marta Chang, a retired school principal in her 70s. She began learning Mandarin after making several trips to China a few years ago. I asked her why she did so at her age. She said it was her childhood wish. Her father was an early immigrant from Guangdong and her mother was Peruvian. As a second generation of Chinese descent, she was eager to learn her father's native tongue when she was young. Her father didn't allow her to learn Mandarin, arguing that it would be useless since there was no possibility they go back to China. This had been a regret of her life until this day. Ethnic Chinese make up 10 percent of Peru's population, and many elderly ones shared Marta's feelings.

Last year, I attended an international book fair in Peru. I met a Peruvian girl who spoke fluent Chinese. I asked her where she learned the language. She said she taught herself on YouTube and had been doing it for two years. I was amazed that she was fluent

in everything from pronunciation to expression. She said she hoped learning Chinese would win her an opportunity to work for a Chinese company in the future.

With the reform and opening-up policy, China has gained more economic strength and elevated its international status day by day. Having Chinese ancestry has become a matter of pride and honor. More and more ethnic Chinese who don't look Chinese have begun to acknowledge their ancestry.

Mercedes Araoz Fernandez, second vice-president of Peru, could be European with her blond hair and blue eyes. In 2010, when serving as Peru's minister of foreign trade and tourism, she signed the China-Peru Free Trade Agreement and revealed at a news conference that she, too, has Chinese forebears. She is one-eighth Chinese and proud of her ancestry, she said.

In April 1997, the Chinese Navy guided missile destroyer *Harbin* and frigate *Zhuhai*, together with supply ship *Nancang*, sailed across the Pacific Ocean and arrived at Callao, Peru — the first port call by Chinese vessels in that country. Hearing the news, Chinese people in Peru were excited and looked forward to the arrival of the ships. At that time, I was working at the *Diario La Voz De La Colonia China*, an old

overseas Chinese newspaper, and also eagerly awaiting the historic day.

Twenty-one years later, the warm welcome to the Chinese ships was still fresh in my mind. Thousands of Chinese residents waited at the wharf and cheered as the warships sailed into the harbor to the sounds of drums, firecrackers and dragon and lion dances. It was a stirring moment that meant a lot to the ethnic Chinese living in Peru who witnessed Chinese military vessels berthing at the port of Callao for the first time.

The port holds much history and memory. The first 75 Chinese laborers landed there in 1884. At that time, China was weak and poor. Seeking subsistence, a large number of Chinese people left their homeland and spent more than half a year at sea, suffering from the harsh environment and various diseases, at arrived in Peru. Many old overseas Chinese now wept when they saw China's modern Navy ships sailing into Callao. In the welcoming crowd was an old man in his 80s, Erasmo Wong, who set up the first Chinese supermarket chain, E•Wong, in Peru. He told me in Cantonese: "It is a blessing for me to be able to see Chinese ships in Peru. I wanted to get onboard to have a look and touch our own warship."

As a journalist, I followed the Chinese sailors in all their activities, hoping to record every moment of their stay in Peru. At that time, photography was done with film, which was particularly time-consuming since the film needed to be developed and enlarged. I remember handing a carefully prepared photo album to the Chinese commander, Wang Yongguo, at

the ceremony the night before the ships departed, after spending a whole night sorting out all the pictures that captured the beautiful moments of the Chinese sailors. I created an elaborate album as a surprise for the sailors and to express the goodwill of the Chinese people in Peru. Wang was deeply moved by the gift and said it was one of the most precious gifts they had received in Peru.

Heat of China in Peru

With the acceleration of China's reform and opening-up in recent years, more Chinese enterprises have come to invest in Peru. The investment has come in three stages. In the early 1990s, the first batch of State-owned Chinese enterprises, such as Shougang and Petrochina, entered Peru to initiate the first round in what would be an investment boom. Starting from 2007, Minmetals, Chinalco and a group of large mining enterprises and engineering contractors entered Peru and set off the second investment wave. In September and November 2016, the historic exchange of visits between President Xi Jinping and Peruvian President Pedro Pablo Kuczynski led even more Chinese enterprises to set their sights on Peru, which raised yet another investment tide.

Currently, there are more than 170 Chinese enterprises in Peru with a total investment of more than \$20 billion, covering a number of industries and fields such as minerals and energy, electricity, infrastructure, communications, finance and manufacturing. China is Peru's largest trading partner, largest source of imports, largest export destination and

a major source of investment. Peru is China's seventh-largest trading partner and second-largest investment destination in Latin America.

Topics about China gain popularity in Peru. Peruvian television and newspapers carry increasing numbers of reports about China. Local people's impression of China is no longer limited to the Great Wall, Tian'anmen Square, pandas and Terracotta Warriors. They now recognize the great changes that have taken place in China since the start of reform and opening-up, such as high-speed railways, aerospace science and technology, mega construction projects and high-tech products.

Products made in China are everywhere in Peru and favored by local customers. Peruvians drive Chinese cars of various types and brands and use Chinese mobile phones such as Huawei and ZTE. Chinese products are no longer the formerly cheap goods of inferior quality and low price but have become the preferred choices for Peruvians.

Ricardo Montero, president of El Peruano, Peru's official newspaper, pays close attention to China's development. On the opening day of the 19th CPC National Congress, he published a signed article, *Similarities in Development Between China and Peru*, in the newspaper, and a commentary, *China's New Era*, on the same page. It indicated the influence of China's reform and opening-up on Peruvian media. The latest communication technologies have become increasingly popular, prompting the Peruvian public to develop greater interest in China. A taxi driver once asked me how China solved the problem

of feeding its 1.3 billion people and how the government deals with poverty. He said Peru only has over 30 million people and poverty is widespread.

“What the Chinese government has done is really amazing,” he said.

Some people have expressed admiration for the Chinese government’s anti-corruption measures and said Peru should learn from China’s experience. Some expressed hope that China’s agricultural technology would help Peru overcome poverty and achieve prosperity. Many are surprised by how much China has changed in just four decades. At present, both government officials and common people in Peru are paying greater attention to China and showing more interest. They not only want to learn Chinese but also hope to catch a ride on China’s fast economic development.

As President Martín Vizcarra of Peru said at a ceremony marking the Phase II expansion of Chinalco, investment by Chinese enterprises in Peru has brought tangible benefits to the Peruvian people. The Peruvian government is pleased with the expansion of areas of Chinese investment, from minerals and energy to transportation, communication and infrastructure, and is willing to create a favorable investment and business environment for foreign enterprises, including Chinese businesses, to attract more investments and promote more projects in the future. It is believed that with the deepening of bilateral relations, exchanges and cooperation between China and Peru in political and economic fields will be further elevated to a new level. ■

Friendship across half a century: Stories of Mokolo, a friend from the DRC

Fang Ying



Edouard Mercola visits Hubei province.

He was once the honored guest of Chairman Mao Zedong, Premier Zhou Enlai and Vice-Premier Deng Xiaoping. He favors Chinese Maotai liquor and has visited China 29 times. He is Edouard Mokolo Wa Mpombo, president of the DRC-China Friendship Association and first vice-president of the Senate of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In 1972 when the world was

overshadowed by the Cold War, the Republic of Zaire (former name of the DRC from 1971 to 1997) identified itself as a “diplomatic ally” of Taiwan. During a banquet held by Ahmed Sheku Turay, president of Guinea, Mokolo met with the ambassador of China to Guinea. The meeting, Mokolo thought, was like a ray of sunshine breaking through haze. Over the next six months, Mokolo traveled to

Guinea nearly once a week for secret meetings with the Chinese ambassador. He would set off early in the morning from Kinshasa, arrive in Conakry late in the evening and then return the next morning. His tireless efforts finally paid off. China and Zaire established diplomatic ties that November.

In January the next year, Beijing welcomed Zaire's President Mobutu Sese Seko. When Mao received the delegation, Mobutu pointed to a young delegation member and noted: "He was the one in charge of the negotiations." The man, then 29, was Mokolo, the major contributor to the normalization of bilateral relations.

Later, Mokolo visited China several times to advance the two countries' relations and friendship between the two peoples. In June 1978, he led a delegation to visit China and was received by Deng Xiaoping, who was vice-premier at the time.

To enhance people-to-people friendship, Mokolo, who was in his 70s, had set up the DRC-China Friendship Association in July 2018.

Then, in September, Beijing once again welcomed a visit by the Chinese people's old friend, who came in the capacity of the DRC-China Friendship Association's president after an invitation by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries. During a meeting with Wang Yang, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and chairman of the CPPCC National Committee, he said that no matter how his title might change, he would remain a good friend of the Chinese people forever. ■

Stories of Ivan Vasilyevich Arkhipov

Cai Yunzhe

He had a face with distinct Caucasian features but had devoted his whole heart and lifetime to an Eastern country. He was a Westerner but will be remembered in China forever. He is Ivan Vasilyevich Arkhipov, a dear old friend of the Chinese people.

Born on May 1, 1907, in Kaluga, Russia, Arkhipov was admitted to the Department of Mathematics and Physics at Lomonosov Moscow State University in 1928 and joined the Communist Party of the Soviet Union later that year. It was the beginning of an eventful life for a loyal communist.

When the People's Republic of China was founded in 1949, the Chinese people — who began to enjoy their rights as the masters of their own destiny — engaged themselves enthu-

siastically in rebuilding the impoverished and enfeebled China. However, years of wars had left the land in ruins, and too many things were waiting to be done. In 1950, the Soviet Union offered help as it sent a group of experts to China to support the effort. Arkhipov, who led the group, was appointed as economic adviser to the Chinese State Council. Under his supervision, 156 aid projects supported by the Soviet Union were officially launched, ensuring the smooth implementation of the first Five-Year Plan. Here in this article, we'll get close to Arkhipov's seemingly ordinary life to get an idea of the scope of his extraordinary deeds.

Beijing, 1950

The generation that had grown up in 1950s will never forget the

passionate days during the first Five-Year Plan period, when the nation was first being built. From south to north, from land to sea and from ground to underground, workers devoted themselves wholeheartedly to building a prosperous and powerful country. They worked relentlessly in high spirits day and night. The Soviet experts toiled together with them, braving rain and scorching sun and ignoring fatigue.

Among the experts, Arkhipov was the one with the heaviest burden of responsibility, and he was thus the busiest of all. Though he did not have to operate the boilers or manipulate the machine tools on the production line, he toiled with his mind as he had to manage what all the other Soviet experts did in China.

To ensure a smooth implementation of all the projects, Arkhipov, with other Soviet and Chinese experts, traveled to almost every construction site, looking into all aspects, including exploration for resources, plant location selection, technical design, machinery, workshop building, training of workers and testing of manufacturing and production. He carried out careful investigations, letting no detail slip by. Wherever there was an aid project, there was Arkhipov working. News of success kept pouring in after 1953.

Six modern textile factories in the country came into full operation. Anshan Iron and Steel Group Corp successively opened a new large-scale modern steel rolling mill, the first seamless steel pipe mill and its first automated sheet-steel mill. The first flight of the first domestically built aircraft was announced a

success. Changchun First Motor Factory was completed and put into operation. And the official opening of the Wuhan Yangtze River Bridge turned the original deep chasm into a thoroughfare.

During the first Five-Year Plan period, more than 1,000 Soviet experts were sent to China. It was not an easy task to direct such a large expert group, not to mention the supervision of such a number of projects. Arkhipov, however, did an excellent job with devotion and commitment and without complaint. It seemed to people around him that the busier he was, the happier he felt, just as he once said: "We came here not for sightseeing or for any empty talk, but for work. Purely work."

Manzhouli, early 1951

The Soviet Union decided to call Arkhipov home "for another assignment", which surprised the Chinese side. Premier Zhou Enlai tried contacting the Soviet embassy several times to keep him, only to receive an apology letter from Moscow on Jan 17, 1951, saying that the Soviet administration had decided to appoint Arkhipov as the first vice-minister of its nonferrous metallurgy industry. Before Arkhipov's departure, Zhou hosted a farewell dinner, during which he pinned a China-Soviet Friendship medal on Arkhipov's chest.

On the border between China and the Soviet Union, after the attendants moved Arkhipov's luggage from the Chinese train to the Soviet one, a Chinese attendant asked Arkhipov to check all his belongings in case anything had been left behind.

"Ah, yes of course, I did leave one

thing behind," Arkhipov whispered, but stood rooted there, seemingly having no intention to get it back.

"What is it? Let me go and get it for you," said his diligent interpreter.

"No, you don't have to. No one can get it back for me," Arkhipov said in tears.

"The thing he left in China is half his heart," Arkhipov's wife Jekaterina said gently.

"It has always been you who knew me best," Arkhipov kissed his wife, took her by the arm and walked slowly toward his country.

Beijing, December 1984

When it came to the year 1984, the Soviet Union's Communist Party Central Committee sent Arkhipov to visit China as a guest of the embassy there. When Moscow asked for China's opinion, the Chinese Foreign Ministry replied that China would only welcome Arkhipov as the guest of Chinese government, not of the Soviet Embassy. The reply surprised the Soviets but delighted Arkhipov. He realized that he was still regarded as a dear old friend by the Chinese people.

Arkhipov and the visiting delegation were cordially received by his old friends Chen Yun and Peng Zhen, who had become members of China's top leadership. He and his old friend Vice-Premier Yao Yilin signed a trade agreement between the two countries that greatly pushed forward the improvement of China-Soviet relations and laid a foundation for Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's visit, during which Gorbachev and Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping talked about a restoration of ties between the

two communist parties.

During the 1990s, Arkhipov came to China many times as a member of the Russian Duma delegation or as a leader of civil societies and was always warmly welcomed by his Chinese friends. They called him Ar Lao — literally “respectable old Ar”. Arkhipov was among the outstanding Soviets who have won the Chinese people’s sincere respect.

In 1992, he was elected honorary chairman of the Russia-China Friendship Association. In 1996, in celebration of his 80th birthday and his more than 50 years of contributions to friendship between the two peoples — as well as for helping and supporting the development of China — the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries awarded him the title of Friendship Ambassador. He was given honorary citizenship by the Dalian Municipal Government in the same year.

Ivan Vasilyevich Arkhipov died on Feb 28, 1998. He was buried in Troyekurovskoye Cemetery in Moscow, with a stone engraved with an image of the China-Soviet Friendship Medal.

In November 2009, the Conference on International Exchange of Professionals, held in Shenzhen, selected Arkhipov as the most influential overseas expert during the 60-year development of the new China. He was chosen for his outstanding contributions to the reconstruction of the national economy, to the successful implementation of the first Five-Year Plan and for maintaining and improving friendship between the two peoples. ■

Forty years of friendship with Chinese people

Jo Okada

The year 2018 marks the 40th anniversary of the China-Japan Treaty of Peace and Friendship, as well as the 40th year of China’s reform and opening-up. Four decades seem to have elapsed as quickly as a snap of fingers, as I recall my contacts with China over the years.

In 1972, President Richard M. Nixon of the United States visited China. The world began to learn about Chinese acupuncture anesthesia, which was demonstrated successfully and applied in surgeries. As a doctor, I was surprised by the news and began to learn acupuncture — and about China. I finally made it to China in June 1976, when the so-called cultural revolution was about to end, though I was shocked by many things I saw during the visit. After that I visited China several more times. Many things left deep impressions on me.

One of the unforgettable experiences was my stay in Harbin in 1980 as I led a delegation to launch a cooperative effort between Tonami General Hospital in Toyama prefecture, Japan, and Heilongjiang Provincial Hospital. The two were the first Chinese and Japanese hospitals to establish



Jo Okada

relations of friendship and cooperation. For the last 40 years, the two hospitals have maintained the friendship with ever-growing exchanges in medical affairs.

What impressed me most was the delegation of the Sakamoto Institute, which was organized by Misoji Sakamoto, the chief cabinet secretary. I accompanied that group in 1994 to establish friendly relations with the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries. I then became

head of the institute and often cooperated with the CPAFFC to organize various fruitful exchanges between the Japanese and Chinese peoples. In 2014, the institute and some people with lofty ideals about international friendship founded the Japan-China Friendship Association of Nanao, Ishikawa prefecture. I was elected the president and led the association to continue friendly exchanges with the CPAFFC. Recently, in October, I was again invited by the CPAFFC to visit China. During the trip to Qingyang, Gansu province, I got the chance to introduce to the local authorities the experience of integrating medical care and care for the elderly in Japan.

Over the past 42 years, I've been to many cities, as well as to rural counties in China, and have come to know people from various circles. I have learned much about Chinese culture and local customs and introduced to my Chinese friends the Japanese way of thinking. As is widely known, China has a long history. Japan has learned historically learned from China about its culture and religions. Modern Japan has also used its advanced technology and experience to contribute to China's development.

As neighbors connected by water, the two countries share a great deal in their cultures. It is necessary for the two peoples to build and maintain a strong friendship. As a nongovernmental civilian who is concerned about bilateral relations, I firmly believe that friendship between the two can only be strengthened through more exchanges, communications and mutual understanding. ■

Adnan Kassar: An old friend to Chinese people

Ai Lin

"Among the numerous awards I've received, the one conferred by President Xi Jinping is the greatest honor of my lifetime, which I will keep not just at home but also in my heart. ... I am excited today that the friendship between me and the Chinese people has been acknowledged by President Xi. This feeling is just like what I sensed 63 years ago when I first introduced China to the Arab world. That passion of mine has never faded over more than half a century wherever I go."

The words came from an 88-year-old Lebanese man, Adnan Kassar, an old friend to Chinese people.

Looking hale and hearty, the renowned Lebanese entrepreneur, financier, honorable president of the General Union of Arab Chambers of Commerce and president of Fransabank Group, the third-biggest bank in Lebanon, has been working to promote friendly communications between Arab countries and China in the economic, trade and cultural fields since 1954.

He was one of 10 winners of the China Arab Friendship Outstanding Contribution Award given by President Xi during his visit to Egypt in January 2016. He appeared in the group photo

with Xi.

Adnan has always supported the one-China policy. In 1955 before the establishment of bilateral diplomatic ties, he managed to convince the president of Lebanon at the time, Camille Chamoun, to invite a delegation from China. The visit resulted in the first trade agreement between the two nations. With Adnan's help, China soon opened a commerce office in Beirut, where for the first time the five-star red flag rose in the country.

Adnan continues to pay close attention to China's new strategy and development. He has his own understanding of the Belt and Road Initiative, believing it will greatly deepen China-Arab relations in trade and other fields. From July to November 2016, the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and Fransabank Group, led by Adnan, carried out a series of Belt and Road cultural activities, including a gourmet festival, merchandise show, book fair and conversation between enterprises to enhance the people-to-people friendship. Fransabank has issued Belt and Road credits associated with China's Union Pay in the Middle East region. ■

Speech by President Li Xiaolin at the opening ceremony of the Third China-U.S. Sub-National Legislatures Cooperation Forum

Li Xiaolin

Respected President Lakis,
Respected legislative leaders of
provinces and states,
Ladies, gentlemen and friends,

Good morning. Now it is the time of the year when autumn changes into winter and the weather gradually cools down. In the meantime, the China-US relationship is also experiencing a downturn with quite some difficulties. I'm very much grateful that all of you could come to Las Vegas at such time to discuss on legislative exchange and cooperation between Chinese provinces and US states, with the faith in and enthusiasm towards the China-US relations. I want to express my sincere gratitude to President Lakis and the SLLF team for all your hard work making this forum possible. My thanks also go to all the distinguished guests from both China and the US for your thoughtful preparation for the forum.

Jan 1, 2019 will mark the 40th anniversary of the establishment of China-US diplomatic relations. Chinese philosopher and educator Confucius said at the age of 40, after having experienced what life has to offer, a man should begin to be immune from perplexities and come closer to inner enlightenment. Likewise,

after 40 years of ups and downs, there should have been a clearer path for China and the US to steer their relations into the future. Unfortunately, uncertainty has arisen from recent actions taken by the US government toward China. The current trade friction is also causing damage to many businesses and individuals in both countries. The future development of the China-US relationship calls for joint right choices by both China and the United States. While it's difficult to predict the future, looking back into history might be a way to get inspiration. China, being an ancient nation with a history of 5,000 years, has experienced countless rises and falls with the evolution of nationalities and dynasties. But our civilization has continued despite conflicts and wars. The secret or driving force behind it, as historians and knowledgeable men have reflected, lies in the integration between different nationalities and the mutual trust and cooperation between peoples. Taking a broader look globally, similar examples can be found in modern world history. During the process of the establishment and development of capitalism, Western countries struggled with unification and division, as well as alliance

and confrontation. The two world wars not only brought catastrophe to mankind but also profound inspiration to the international community, that only peace and cooperation can drive human society forward. Regional and international multilateral organizations, such as the UN, WTO and EU, were born in response to this enlightenment. Connection, instead of isolation and cooperation instead of confrontation has become the irresistible trend of the times.

The 41st president of the United States, George H.W. Bush, emphasized many times that the China-US relationship is the most important bilateral relationship in the world, and their economic and trade cooperation lays a solid foundation. Our economic and trade relations have developed steadily since the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and the US, with fruitful results achieved in trade and investment. The two-way trade is highly complementary and mutually beneficial. Statistics show that trade in goods between China and the US in 2017 amounted to \$583.7 billion, a 233-fold increase from 1979. In 2017, US exports of goods to China amounted to \$129.89 billion, a 577 percent increase from \$19.18 billion in 2001, and far high-

er than the 112 percent average growth rate of overall US exports. The bilateral economic and trade cooperation helped both China and the US to tap the market potential of the other side. It created a large number of business opportunities and significant profits, and allowed people of the two countries to enjoy concrete benefits such as more job opportunities and lower prices.

Tremendous changes have also taken place in terms of cultural and people-to-people exchanges. In the tourism section, according to the US Department of Commerce, by 2016 the number of Chinese mainland visitors to the US increased for 13 consecutive years, with double-digit growth in 12 of those 13 years. In 2017, 3 million Chinese tourists went to the US, spending as much as \$33 billion while traveling there, which is \$10,000 per person. What strong purchasing power! According to a Gallup poll dated March 2018, 53 percent of the American people surveyed hold a favorable opinion of China. It is the first time in the past 30 years that the number topped 50 percent. Today, as the world is becoming more open, different cultures are blending with each other, and economies are highly interdependent. The desire for mutual understanding and exchanges between the people of China and the United States has become even becoming stronger.

The spirit of win-win cooperation is best reflected at sub-national level between China and the United States. I have talked widely with US governors, lieutenant governors and state legislative leaders, and most often I was told that states in the US attach great importance to the trade and investment opportunities from China.

No matter how the federal government changes its policy toward China, they would keep their doors open for exchanges and cooperation. With the aim of facilitating China-US sub-national exchanges and cooperation, the CPAFFC initiated several programs in recent years, such as China-US Governors Forum, our forum and the China-US Sister Cities Conference. These programs have provided good platforms for Chinese provinces and US states to share experience and land cooperation in areas of economy and trade, environmental protection, education, legislation and city management. I hope that all the participants in this forum can open your minds and hearts and have in-depth discussions so that better understanding will be achieved and new spotlights be identified for future collaboration.

There's a saying in China: "Range far your eyes over long vistas." The ship of China-US friendship and cooperation is now encountering some disturbances. However, I believe that the difficulties are only temporary. As long as our two countries focus on cooperation and properly manage our differences in the spirit of mutual respect and win-win cooperation, China-US relations will be able to embrace sound and stable development in the long run. China is fully prepared and ready to take action to this end.

At the First China International Import Expo, which concluded earlier this month, President Xi Jinping announced five new measures for further opening up, including stimulating the potential for increased imports, continuing to broaden market access, fostering a world-class business envi-

ronment, exploring new horizons of opening up and promoting international cooperation at the multilateral and bilateral levels. These measures respond exactly to the major concerns in the United States. To deepen reform and further open up, China will create a better environment for cooperation with other countries, including the United States. And China will eventually benefit from such actions.

Is China, in such a spirit, a friend or a foe to the United States? I think you could make a judgment. I myself have studied and worked in the US, so I hold friendly feelings whenever I come to the US. I always regard America as a great country. Talking about greatness, I would like to turn to the wisdom of Lao Tzu, one of the greatest Chinese philosophers. He said: The sky and the earth are everlasting. How can they be so? Because they serve the interests of all things else and do not care about their own lives. But in the end, they benefit from their selflessness and gain eternity. Do we ever think the sky and the earth are not great? President Kennedy had a famous line: "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country." I think it bears the same essence. Contribution comes first before demands.

Thank you again, ladies and gentlemen, friends from different sectors of life from both China and the United States, for attending today's forum. I hope that, starting from here, we can help with our own efforts to make China-US friendship and cooperation step into spring and blossom with new flowers.

Thank you! ■

Magazine articles keep track of my steps

Zhang Heqiang

Voice of Friendship has recorded 35 years of people-to-people diplomacy in the four decades of China's reform and opening-up, resonating with the pulse of the times and keeping pace with the steps of an era.

My first contribution to Voice of Friendship revealed my personal thoughts after my return from a short-term study in Regina, the capital of Saskatchewan, Canada — my first overseas trip. The visiting delegation was led by Li Jianping, deputy director of a CPAFFC division and later vice-president of the organization, who told me about the importance of the association's work. We were well-received by Professor Dell upon our arrival in Regina. His thoughtful kindness demonstrated the profound friendship of the Canadian people toward us Chinese and the significance and charm of being engaged in people-to-people diplomacy, to which I then decided to devote my career.

I later published a short article on the origin of sister cities in Western countries, which probably was the only

article on this topic ever published by Voice of Friendship up to that time. The article was frequently cited. The association is entrusted by the government with coordinating and overseeing the work of establishing and developing friendship-city relationships between Chinese cities and those in other countries. It was necessary to make a clear explanation on the origin of the practice.

After I returned to the Department of American and Oceanian Affairs, I published three articles in Voice of Friendship — *Saying Farewell to Mayor Garcetti at Beijing Airport*, *Governor Brown Revisits China After 27 Years* and *The Call of Alaska* — all related to visiting governors and mayors from the United States. The series of articles recorded the fast development of the association's exchange mechanism with local governments in the United States, as well as its growing influence abroad.

Each of the three articles had unique features. The one about seeing off the mayor of Los Angeles was completed on my cellphone on the way

back from the airport — an almost real-time recording on the half-hour chatting with him in the VIP room at the airport.

In the article about California Governor Jerry Brown's visit to China, I recalled an interesting episode when he was about to get off the plane and called me "Mr Friendship". I sincerely thanked him for conferring the title and asked for his and his wife's signature in witness whereof, which I then showed off to foreign friends from California.

In *Call of Alaska*, I boldly suggested an auto relay race for drivers from China, the United States, Russia and Canada, with the route crossing the Bering Strait. The idea was to promote the Belt and Road Initiative and celebrate the forthcoming 40th anniversary of China-US diplomatic relations.

In the recent two years I mainly wrote about the idea of innovation as demonstrated in an article titled *Telling the World about the Red Flag Canal*. Another one, *The Cloud Silver Line*, was written in response to President Xi Jinping's call to make China an innova-

tive nation and his instructions about poverty alleviation. I mentioned my experience attending to poverty relief.

The article records what happened in Xingxian county, Shanxi province, when representatives from the Department of American & Oceanian Affairs visited there to promote poverty alleviation. The article was probably the first of its kind published by Voice of Friendship. It named the plateau geology Loess Landform, which was extensively distributed in North China, and called for protection and proper utilization.

I further suggested that provinces and regions with similar landscapes jointly apply for world geological heritage, as had been done by people in areas characterized by the Danxia Landform. The success of the application would greatly promote the anti-poverty program and bring noticeable economic benefits to the regions. The ingenuity showed in the article earned it third place among the nine best articles to appear in Voice of Friendship in 2017.

I never regarded Voice of Friendship's soliciting my contributions as a burden. On the contrary, I considered it an opportunity to introduce my work and opinions to more readers. I will continue to write my thoughts and convey creative ideas developed in my work regarding relations with the United States. I hope they will receive further welcome from the readers of Voice of Friendship.

No words can fully express my feelings toward Voice of Friendship, for which I have high expectations and to which I convey my best wishes. ■

‘Peace Is a Blessing’

Yu Xiaodong

To commemorate the 40th anniversary of the China-Japan Peace and Friendship Treaty, the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the Japan-China Cultural Exchange Promotion Association jointly presented an art exhibition at the Peace Palace in the CPAFFC compound in Beijing.

Nearly 200 guests participated in the exhibition, Peace Is a Blessing—paintings by well-known Chinese artists, with Japanese ink and wash paintings. Attendees included celebrities devoted to the cause of promoting friendship between China and Japan, students and representatives from various circles.

VIP list:

Li Xiaolin, president of Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries; Song Jingwu, vice-president of the CPAFFC; Takeo Kawamura, former chief cabinet secretary of Japan and president of the Japan-China Cultural Exchange Promotion Association; Yoshitaka Ito, chairman of the Japanese House of Representatives Standing Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry; Ebihara Rogen, a prominent Japanese ink and wash artist and the cultural exchange ambassador of the Japan Agency of Cultural Affairs; Okura Shonosuke, a noted musician; and Itikawa Akemi, professor of Nihonkoryu Ikebana.

CPAFFC President Li Xiaolin, addressing the opening ceremony, said that since the normalization of

diplomatic relations between China and Japan, the two countries have achieved unprecedented development in their communication and cooperation in all fields, and have brought many benefits to the two peoples, including stability and happiness. Their history has proved, Li said, that peace is a blessing, as stated in the theme of the exhibition.

“Peace, friendship and cooperation is the only path that is in line with the fundamental needs of the two countries and their people, and is the only way in which the two countries can contribute to the peace, stability and prosperity of Asia and even the world,” she said. She expressed her hope that, through the painting exhibition, mutual understanding and friendship between the people of China and Japan would be further advanced and the call for peace would win support among more people across a broader range.

Takeo Kawamura, president of the Japan-China Cultural Exchange Promotion Association, stressed in his speech that Japan and China had established frequent and close cultural exchanges as early as the Sui and Tang Dynasties. Historically, Japan absorbed and modified Chinese culture to create Japanese culture, he said. In recent years, the cultural exchanges between the two countries have greatly satisfied and pleased the two peoples. He expressed his wish that the exhibition would help further enhance cultural exchanges and that the friendship between the two countries would reach wider and rise higher.

The Chinese paintings displayed in the exhibition have great historical significance. In 1945, as the country was celebrating victory in the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression, artist Zhu Qizhan and his elder brother Jishen launched an activity with the themes of “Restore our lost territories”, “Celebrate the victory” and “Peace is a blessing”. They collected paintings from art circles to express their delight in this unique way. With brushes and paint, the artists depicted beautiful scenes of harmony and expressed their longing for a peaceful life. The works were exhibited in Tokyo, Beijing, Taipei and Shanghai in 2015 and received widespread attention. On this occasion, the 40th anniversary of the China-Japan Peace and Friendship Treaty, the exhibition of these works was of far-reaching significance. The Japanese paintings exhibited were created by the noted Japanese ink and wash artist, Mr. Ebihara Rogen, whose works are highly valued around the world. In addition to holding individual exhibitions, he has also produced art for many films, stage productions, TV shows and books and has been featured in multiple calligraphy art performances at home and abroad. In 2012, the Japan Agency of Cultural Affairs appointed Ebihara Rogen as its cultural exchange ambassador.

On the day of the inauguration, the exhibition was decorated with all sorts of flower arrangements, with stirring and refreshing fragrances. Witnessed by the guests, Ebihara Rogen wielded his writing brush and wrote “Peace Is a Blessing”, bringing the atmosphere to the climax. ■

Interview with Kurt Karst

Staff Reporter



Kurt Karst at the opening ceremony of the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation

Kurt Karst, 72, is friendly to China and fond of Chinese culture. He is president of the Wiesbaden-Mainz Germany-China Friendship Association and the Federation of German-Chinese

Friendship Associations.

In 1986, when in his 30s, he participated in the founding of Villa Musica Rheinland-Pfalz, one of the most influential music education

institutions in Germany.

In 1993, an exchange program between Chinese and young German musicians was launched thanks to the efforts of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and Villa Musica. Every year, a Chinese music group goes to Germany while a German arts group comes to China. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the program.

Q: Mr Karst, nice to meet you. We know that you have decades of friendship with China. Would you like to share with us when you began to associate with this country?

A: In 1993, I was asked whether a Chinese folk music group could have a concert at Villa Musica. At that time, Villa Musica had frequent music exchanges with many countries, but not with China. So inviting a music group from China did arouse my interest.

After some efforts, the Chinese artists were finally invited to stay at Villa Musica in Mainz for a time. Then in April 1993 they presented three concerts in Rheinland-Pfalz. The concerts were a great success, appealing to the local residents who were unfamiliar with Chinese folk music.

In my opinion, cultural exchanges are two-way communication instead of one-way transmission. My view coincides with Chen Haosu, who was CPAFFC president. So back in January 1995, with our joint efforts, the mutual visits between Villa Musica and Chinese folk music groups were launched. Villa Musica went to China



Kurt Karst at the Temple of Heaven

in 1995 and later the Chinese music group came to Rheinland-Pfalz.

Q: May I ask why you have been committed to China-Germany friendship, especially cultural exchanges between the two peoples? What attracts you most in terms of the Chinese culture?

A: In June 1995, the Chinese folk music group brought nine concerts to Rheinland-Pfalz. Thus, I met and made friends with those Chinese artists, including pipa soloist Miu Xiaoqin

and percussion musician Li Chunyong. Many of them paid several visits to Germany later on. Every time I go to China, I always try to find the time to meet them. Now through WeChat, I can follow their performances wherever they go.

In November 1995, Villa Musica for the first time sent its performance group to such Chinese cities as Beijing, Hangzhou and Shanghai. Since then, we began to have closer contacts with the CPAFFC. Here I want to extend my thanks to the CPAFFC for its careful organization of all activities and

considerate arrangements for us.

My love for music and people is the reason I have long devoted myself to cultural exchanges between the two countries. Only when people know and respect those from other cultures can they understand each other's culture. Based on this, we have conducted regular culture exchanges with China.

Chinese culture has thousands of years of history. Since I come from Mainz, home of Johannes Gutenberg, inventor of movable type printing in Europe, Chinese printing will always come to my mind when you mention the charm of Chinese culture, along with paper-cutting and shadow play, the two world intangible cultural heritages. Chinese culture also calls to mind the Dunhuang frescoes in Gansu province and the Terracotta Warriors in Xi'an, Shaanxi province.

Although there are various musical instruments in China, they receive scant attention in Germany or elsewhere in Europe. To be honest, if I tried to make a comparison between the erhu and violin, I might be laughed at in my country.

Chinese culture, with its rich content, is so attractive that I want to further spread it in Germany.

Q: This year marks the 40th anniversary of the start of China's reform and opening-up policy. Would you like to talk about the changes in China you have seen during your visits to the country?

A: Great changes have taken place



Kurt Karst with the performer

in Chinese people's lives. In terms of China's development, I recall that in 1995, when I first went to Beijing, I saw millions of bicycles in downtown and just a few vehicles.

Today, millions of vehicles are running in the city with fewer bikes than before.

Changes can also be seen in the Beijing metro. It was difficult for foreigners to take the subway in the past. Since the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, when electronic stop-reporting systems and signs in both Chinese and English were promoted along the metro lines, it has been much easier for foreigners to travel by underground.

Also amazing are the great

achievements in China's economic development. Take German-Sino trade relations as an example: On Oct 6, 2008, the container unit train from China to Hamburg, Germany raised the curtain on freight transportation cooperation between China and European countries. As of 2018, about 90,000 containers carried by 3,600 trains have arrived in Hamburg. I believe that under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative it will take less time and become more convenient to carry goods between China and Europe.

China has also achieved success in digital technology, such as electric vehicles and e-commerce. Now I use WeChat every day to keep in touch

with my friends all over the world.

Apart from so many changes, there is one thing that will never change — the friendship bonding my Chinese friends with me. As long as you make friends with the Chinese people, they will always be your friends. I really appreciate that. I am longing for having more chance to meet with my Chinese friends in Germany or in China.

Q: To celebrate the 200th anniversary of the birth of Karl Marx, the CPAFFC and its German partners held a series of cultural exhibitions over four months in Trier, Germany. The exhibitions caught public attention in both China and Germany, which included cultural exchange programs from Jiangxi, Shandong and Qinghai provinces, as well as cities such as Beijing; Baoshan, Yunnan province; Chengdu, Sichuan province; and Shaoxing, Zhejiang province. Mr Karst, you played an important role in the exhibitions. What is your comment on this event?

A: Karl Marx, a great philosopher, enjoys admiration in China. This great man was born in Trier, Rheinland-Pfalz.

Since Rheinland-Pfalz is also my hometown, it is of great significance for me to hold such an event with Chinese characteristics in Trier on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of the birth of Karl Marx.

Within the cooperative agreement signed by the General Directorate for Cultural Heritage Rhineland-Pfalz and

the CPAFFC, Thermen am Viehmarkt in downtown Trier became the center of Chinese culture, where cultural exhibitions from China's different provinces lasted for four months. From June 1 to Sept30, each exhibition, with its own unique charm, showcased the variety of China's landscape. The exhibitions planned in China and held in Trier could be seen as another big event by the CPAFFC.

The German audience was too excited to stop applauding the artistic performances during the exhibitions, including ceramic musical instrument performances from Jiangxi province, the performance of the Chinese song *Jasmine* by Beijing International Studies University and dancing and singing in the opera *Wonderful World* from Pengzhou, Sichuan province and *Monkey King* from Shaoxing, Zhejiang province.

I think the exhibitions were successful from arrangement to implementation.

Here I would like to extend my sincere thanks and best wishes to CPAFFC President Li Xiaolin, working staff from the CPAFFC and delegates from Jiangxi, Shandong and Qinghai provinces and cities including Beijing, Baoshan, Chengdu and Shaoxing.

On the occasion of the 200th anniversary of Karl Marx's birth, the exhibitions have injected vigor into the commemorative activities. All the participants will feel proud when they recall the exhibitions.

I believe that the audience might go to China to look for what they saw

in the exhibitions and that they will be impressed by China's beautiful scenery and the Chinese people's hospitality.

Q: 2018 marks the 40th anniversary of the establishment of Wiesbaden-Mainz Germany-China Friendship Association. As its president, what is your expectation or advice on further enhancing people-to-people friendship between Germany and China?

A: Laozi, a great philosopher in China, once said that a thousand-li journey begins with the first step. What one longs for determines where he goes.

I sincerely hope that by enhancing mutual trust the bilateral relationship between Germany and China can be promoted and that mutual understanding and mutual respect for each other's culture can be built.

The two countries should also learn from each other in such areas as economy, culture and education.

Young people are the key to the development of friendship between the two peoples. These future policymakers should have a chance to build their own vivid and unbiased attitude toward foreign countries.

I place great hope in the cultural exchange programs between our two peoples.

I am convinced that with our joint efforts the two countries will enjoy a relationship of stability and peace. ■

Sincerity brings friends, innovation promotes cooperation

Ningxia Friendship Association



Teachers and students of Yinchuan Hui Middle School visit Kyongsan Hayang Girls' Middle School in South Korea for friendly exchanges.

Yinchuan, capital of the Ningxia Hui autonomous region, is located in China's northwestern hinterland. Compared with other provincial capitals, Yinchuan has a smaller area and a smaller population. At the end of 2017, its land area was 9,025 square kilometers, and its population was 2.22 million.

As a pivotal city on the routes of the Belt and Road Initiative, Yinchuan

is active in communicating with the outside world. The prefecture-level city started its sister-city program earlier than many other cities in the region and has achieved success. So far, it has established sister city relations with 13 foreign cities and signed MOUs with nine others.

Exchanges with Mastue, Japan

The friendly exchanges and

cooperation between Yinchuan and Mastue go back to June 1994, when Matsue's House speaker and mayor came to Yinchuan to discuss the establishment of friendly cooperative relations. After 10 years of exchanges, the two cities signed an agreement in September 2004 to become sister cities. Since then, exchanges between the two have become frequent.

In June 1995, Yinchuan sent

an official to Mastue to study the prospect, for the first time, of exchanging personnel. As of this year, the two cities have exchanged more than 90 civil servants and lecturers. The exchange program has covered, among other things, environmental protection, tourism, preschool education, cultural relics protection, vocational and technical education, physical education, welfare systems, fruit growing, government service and maternal and child health. The training period has ranged from two weeks to eight months. The regular personnel exchange mechanism helped greatly with our work to introduce to our Japanese partner the latest situation and prospects in Yinchuan's economic and social development. It also helps maintain information exchanges, as well as understanding and friendship between the two cities at various governmental and civilian levels. It is also favorable for our city's professionals in various fields to improve their professional quality and broaden their international vision, which in turn will build up a talent pool to help with our city's opening-up.

In addition, Yinchuan and Mastue jointly applied to several Japanese nongovernmental organizations for assistance projects — the Yinchuan City Water Supply Technology Cooperation Project (2007-08); China-Japan Friendship Forest Project (2010); and the Agricultural Technical Cooperation Project (2015-16). Each exchange project was implemented in two years, during which the two cities sent experts for reciprocal visits to conduct on-the-spot investigations

and exchange of information and technology. These projects, conducted in cooperation with the city of Mastue, demonstrated the positive role foreign friendly exchanges can play in serving local economic development. They also provided an example for future exchanges between Yinchuan and other sister cities.

People-to-people exchanges play an important role in the friendship between Yinchuan and Mastue, including the performing arts, sports competitions, martial arts exchanges and traditional culture shows and exhibitions. In October 2011, a youth delegation from Yinchuan visited Mastue to exchange thoughts and skills with Japanese folk martial arts groups, such as the Mastue Martial Arts Association and Taichi Association. To commemorate the 40th and 45th anniversary of the normalization of Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations, junior high school students from Yinchuan and Mastue participated in the China-Japan Friendship Table Tennis Competition in 2012 and 2017. In December 2014, Yinchuan sent an art delegation to Mastue to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the sister city relationship. After that, a Mastue cultural exchange delegation, consisting of city officials and local cultural association members, visited Yinchuan to experience local culture, such as paper-cutting and Hui music.

Exchanges between Yinchuan and Gyeongsan

Exchanges between Yinchuan and South Korea's Gyeongsan began in 2003. At that time, the mayor and

deputy mayor of Gyeongsang led a governmental delegation to Yinchuan — the prelude to many friendly future exchanges between the two cities. In 2008, the cities signed an agreement to clinch their friendship city relationship. Since then, they have conducted several reciprocal visits to discuss and promote exchanges and cooperation in areas such as economy, trade, culture and education.

Gyeongsan is an important developer and producer of cosmetics in South Korea. Daegu Haany University, famous for its biomedical and cosmetic research and development, is located in the city. To promote friendly exchanges and pragmatic cooperation between the two cities and move forward, Yinchuan invited representatives of well-known cosmetics companies of Gyeongsan for a visit in August 2015, during which both sides discussed possibilities for cooperation in the cosmetics industry. In October that year, the Yinchuan and Gyeongsan municipal governments, together with Daegu Haany University, signed the Framework Agreement for Cosmetics Industry Cooperation between Yinchuan and Gyeongsan, and agreed that the two cities would cooperate in technological exchanges, personnel training, product development and brand promotion. Later, Gyeongsan sent a delegation to Yinchuan to conduct on-site investigations and to implement the planned cooperative projects. In April 2018, an Imported Cosmetics Exhibition Hall from Gyeongsan opened a branch in Yinchuan.

Youth represent the future and carry on goodwill. To enhance

friendship between the two cities' young people, Yinchuan and Gyeongsan signed a youth exchange agreement, under which the two cities would send delegations of youth regularly on reciprocal visits. The move was expected to broaden the horizons of teenagers and enhance mutual cultural understanding.

This year marks the sixth installment of the annual student exchange between the two cities.

From Aug 27 to Sept 1, 20 junior high school students from Gyeongsan visited Yinchuan for a six-day summer camp. The Korean kids and the students from Yinchuan No 9 Middle School tried traditional Chinese painting and calligraphy together. They attended a physical education class featuring shuttlecock kicking and rope skipping.

At Shuidonggou, a local tourist site, the students rode camels and tried sand sliding to get a taste of the flavor of the desert. They also visited Helan Mountain rock painting sites and Xi Xia Kingdom imperial tombs.

Over a short six days, these Korean students acquired an in-depth knowledge of the culture of Yinchuan. Before leaving, everyone said that they would tell their families and friends about what they saw and experienced in the Chinese Hui region. They said they hoped to have a chance to revisit Yinchuan with their families and friends.

On the basis of the regular student exchanges, Yinchuan Huimin Middle School and Gyeongsan Heyang Girls' High School officially formed a sister-school relationship in 2014. To date, the two cities have exchanged more than 400 students in 15 delegations. ■

Wine grape cooperation between Ningxia and New Zealand

Ningxia Friendship Association



Xian Hui, chairwoman of Ningxia meets with the head of Marlborough, New Zealand.

Marlborough is situated at the northeastern tip of New Zealand's South Island, due west of Wellington. It covers an area of 12,400 square kilometers and has a population of 40,000-50,000, mostly living in coastal cities and towns of the country's northern area. Its administrative center

is Blenheim.

Marlborough features the largest vineyard in New Zealand. Its wine production accounts for 79 percent of the total output of the country. Sauvignon Blanc is the flagship grape variety of Marlborough, which gives Marlborough its fame as the

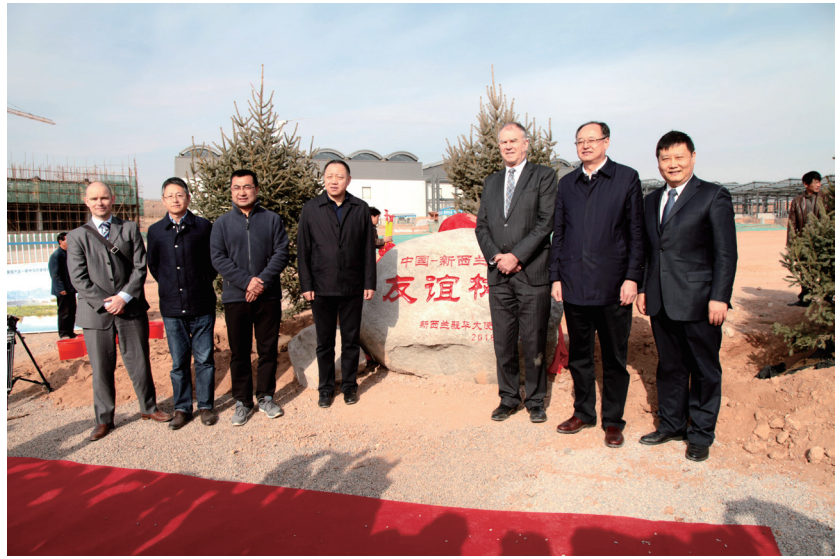
“Hometown of Sauvignon Blanc”. It has unique advantages in wine-brewing technology and talent.

As the saying goes, “A bosom friend from afar brings a distant land near.” Based on their common understanding of wine, Marlborough and Ningxia, though geographically separated by great distance, became great friends — or “friends from afar”, one in the South Pacific, the other in the hinterlands of Eurasia.

Ningxia Helan Mountain’s eastern section lies at 37-39 degrees north latitude and covers 200,000 hectares. The area is acknowledged in the wine industry as one of the world’s golden zones for planting wine grapes and brewing high-end wine. It is believed by many to rival Bordeaux, France. Ningxia Helan Mountain’s eastern area was listed as a National Geographic Product Protection Zone in 2002, and it was included in The World Atlas of Wine in 2013.

Relations between Ningxia and Marlborough began when Ningxia held the World Winemakers Tournament in 2012. Winemaker David Tyney from New Zealand was invited to the first World Winemakers Helan Mountain Eastern Region Tournament and won a double championship of red and white wine. In Marlborough, Tyney had worked in the wine production area for eight years and had acquired superb skills. After the tournament, he stayed in Ningxia and became a signature winemaker for a local label.

With his affection for the people of Ningxia, Tyney contacted the Marlborough government and showed the potential and prospects of cooperation. He suggested associating



Mr John McKinnon, then Ambassador of New Zealand to China, visits the Yuge Vineyard and planted a friendship tree.

the two regions’ wine industries to create high-end and marquee-brand wines, which would also spur the two areas’ economic growth. Thanks to Tyney’s matchmaking, frequent high-level reciprocal visits and business and educational personnel exchanges ensued.

On March 2016, Ningxia and Marlborough signed an MOU to establishing a sister city relationship, and formally launched it in September 2017.

The two sister regions then discussed concrete measures for cooperation on common interests. They decided there is great potential in wine cooperation. Among other planned projects, they agreed to build a cooperative winery to demonstrate the most advanced wine industry technology and to enhance Ningxia’s wine production for win-win results.

After signing the sister city agreement, the Yuge Winery began construction — the start of the China-New Zealand Marlborough Training and Demonstration Winery.

The winery is located in Ganchegnzi, Qingtongxia city in the Ningxia Hui autonomous region, with an area of 22,000 square meters. The investment was 300 million yuan (\$44.7 million).

The winery incorporates advanced technologies from New Zealand, while retaining characteristics of Ningxia. It was the first in the wine industry to introduce an advanced temperature control system developed in New Zealand.

The operation of the winery was jointly managed by teams in Ningxia and Marlborough. After beginning operations, the winery was capable of producing a sales volume of 800

million to 1 billion yuan with a tax payment of 200 million.

The wine professionals' training is a major component of the bilateral cooperation.

In 2017, a group of technicians — both young ones and more experienced backbone workers — from Ho-Lan Soul Winery, Chateau Bacchus and Chateau Huahao went to New Zealand for a month of training in advanced wine making technology.

Several past presidents of the Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology visited Ningxia and signed agreements with the Ningxia Grape Wine Development Bureau for the joint training of postgraduates majoring in wine production.

They also reached agreements with Ningxia University and Ningxia Teacher's College to start a "2+2" overseas study program to train talent in grape planting and wine making for the Chinese region.

At present, the first group of undergraduates and postgraduates of the program are studying at the Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology.

The bilateral relationship between Ningxia and Marlborough began with wine, and through the international sister city platform the cooperation of the two regions' wine industries has scaled new heights.

With the deepening of international sister city exchanges, both sides are tapping ever-greater potential for cooperation in wider fields to accelerate economic development and bring benefits to the people of both regions. ■

Strengthening cross-region communication for mutual learning

Ningxia Friendship Association



The 21st Conference for local friendship associations

From Oct 23 to 26, the 21st National Work Conference for Exchanges Between Regional Associations for Friendship with Foreign Countries took place in Yinchuan, Ningxia Hui autonomous region.

About 120 delegates of local foreign affairs offices (which also serve as local associations for friendship with foreign countries) from 21 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions attended.

After the opening ceremony,



A group discussion

the conference featured experience exchanges, panel discussions, theme-exclusive lectures and practical teaching.

Shen Xin, director-general of the Eurasia department of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, addressed the opening ceremony. He told the group that people-to-people diplomacy should be conducted on the basis of utilizing both governmental and nongovernmental functions in direct and indirect ways. Concerns at both upper and lower levels should be taken into account, while attention should be given to both external and internal affairs, he said, adding that while supporting governmental diplomacy, people and organizations engaged in

civilian diplomacy should lighten the ideological and official color of their work.

Instead, they should go to the grassroots level to do more fundamental work. People-to-people diplomacy should be done in a careful and meticulous manner so it can have its influence and bear fruit naturally, Shen said.

In the experience-exchange session, delegates from Shandong, Sichuan, Liaoning and Shenzhen reported their work in people-to-people diplomacy and put forward their suggestions. They also exchanged experiences and thoughts on how people-to-people diplomacy can help in implementing the Belt and Road Initiative and described what they had

done in this regard.

In the panel discussion session, delegates drew inspiration from each other through creative thinking and innovative suggestions. For instance, establishing a quality assessment system for sister cities' communication, carrying out investigations with sister cities, setting up a sister cities governmental scholarship for foreign students, applying for special funds from governments for sister city activities and setting up an accreditation system for granting honorary titles.

The delegates agreed that because the level of economic development is not the same in China's eastern and western regions, there should be differences in these regions in terms of opening-up and nongovernmental

diplomacy. Delegates agreed that, under the new historical conditions, local friendship associations should conduct more cross-regional exchanges and establish new platforms for such exchanges. They also made the following suggestions:

- * Local friendship associations set up regional leagues under the framework of the CPAFFC to facilitate exchanges and communication between grassroots associations;

- * The annual national exchange conference sets up a particular theme each year so that attendees can help and learn from each other around the theme;

- * Collect and compile delegates' speeches and the conference's conclusions into books that can be distributed to people and organizations engaged in foreign friendship work;

- * Encourage provincial and municipal associations to establish partnerships with each other to exchange information and share resources.

The conference was an important event in Ningxia in 2018 and also a major move by the city to implement a pilot project entrusted to it by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for strengthening communication between Chinese cities and foreign sister cities.

The conference created an important exchange platform for friendship associations from different places to carry out people-to-people diplomacy. It also offered a precious opportunity for them to exchange their experiences and share local resources. At the same time, it burnished Ningxia's image of being open to the outside world. ■

Let the flowers of Ningxia-Shimane friendship bloom more beautifully

Ningxia Friendship Association

As a common saying goes, friendship between people is the foundation of state-to-state relations. People-to-people diplomacy has always been an important part of national diplomacy and a significant way for local governments to conduct exchanges and engage in cooperation with foreign counterparts.

In recent years, using its advantages in location, industry development and resources, the Ningxia Hui autonomous region has been vigorously developing international sister cities relations. To date, it has established international relationships with 59 local governments in 46 countries. Its circle of international friends has been continuously optimized and is steadily expanding.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the establishment of a sister city relationship between Ningxia and Shimane, Japan. After 25 years of exchanges and cooperation, the friendship has deepened, cultural exchanges have become more frequent and pragmatic cooperation has

achieved fruitful results that have set a good example for the development of international sister city relations generally.

Shimane University of Japan and the Ningxia Academy of Social Sciences began to exchange scholars for academic research and communication as early as 1990, which marked the beginning of the friendship. In October 1993, they formally finalized the agreement to establish an international sister city relationship and opened a new chapter in bilateral friendly relations, which have lasted for 25 years.

To celebrate the anniversary, Ningxia and Shimane held a series of celebration events. In April, Shimane presented an exhibition of photography. The photographs showing Ningxia's beauty, and the friendship created a platform for people in Shimaneto get a deeper understanding of Ningxia.

In July, a delegation of Ningxia youth went to Shimane to take part in the Wings of Northeast Asia Exchange Program. In August, a delegation of



Wang Ziyun, vice chairman of the CPPCC Ningxia Committee, attended the tree-planting event to mark the 25th anniversary of the sister-city relationship between Ningxia and Shimane together with Zembei Mizoguchi, governor of Shimane.

youth from Shimane came to Ningxia for the Ningxia International Youth Friendship Camp. In September, Wang Ziyun, vice-chairperson of the CPPCC Ningxia Committee, led a delegation to visit Shimane and attended the celebration activities. In October, Fujihara Takayuki, Shimane's deputy governor, and Oya Oshihiro, speaker of the prefecture's parliament, led the Shimane delegation to attend the celebrations in Yinchuan. All these activities got strong support from the governments of both sides, and the people of both regions participated with great enthusiasm.

Tree planting cultivates friendship

In 1997, under the international sister cities framework, Ningxia and Shimane signed an agreement to grow a "Friendship Forest". From 1998 to 2018, the two regions invested

more than 5.6 million yuan, with each side putting in half. The project was conducted in three phases in the Baijitan National Nature Reserve in Lingwu, Ningxia.

More than 130,000 spruces, locust trees and raspberry bushes were planted, covering more than 100 hectares. For 21 consecutive years since 1997, Shimane has sent delegations to visit Ningxia every year. The delegation size has varied from a few dozen to more than a hundred. Members ranged from a governor and parliamentary speaker to ordinary citizens. Further, Shimane citizens carried out cultural and sports exchanges with Ningxia. They donated relief funds to Ningxia's flood-stricken areas, and books and teaching materials to Ningxia's children. They also established a tree-planting fund. Through all these activities, the

understanding and friendship between the people of two sides has deepened.

Since the launch of the Friendship Forest program, politicians, experts and scholars from 89 countries and regions have come to visit. About 20,000 young people and civil servants went to the project area to plant trees and learn about the importance of ecological conservation. The Baijitan National Nature Reserve in Lingwu, Ningxia, has been designated as an education and training center for multiple purposes, including offering education about how to develop an ecological culture, training for directors of State-owned forest farms, accommodating foreign visitors' investigation tours in Ningxia, providing on-site education and training for Ningxia's own government officials, offering education on conservation and training of Yinchuan's CPC members.

Exchange program implemented in earnest

After Ningxia and Shimane established their international sister city relationship, Shizuishan and Yinchuan in Ningxia, along with Shimane's Hamada and Matsue, formed sister city relations in 1994 and 2004 respectively. Through cooperation projects in environmental protection, healthcare, epidemic prevention, agriculture, forestry, science and technology, the cooperation and exchanges between the two regions have become increasingly vigorous.

In the past 25 years, Ningxia and Shimane have jointly carried out research programs on diseases, such as hemorrhage, an illness commonly seen locally, and hydatidosis, as well as environmental protection research on acid rain, desertification and air pollution. In addition, the two sides organized and implemented three phases of Japan JICA grassroots technical cooperation projects — projects on the comprehensive utilization of sludge; projects on the construction of a benign living environment around urban areas; and projects on sewage treatment for the Aiyi River's soil layers.

During the nine years of implementation of these projects, Shimane sent 70 technical experts to Ningxia to provide instruction and guidance, while Ningxia sent 38 technicians and management personnel to Shimane for training.

Japanese experts familiarized their Ningxia hosts with a large number of advanced technologies and scientific methods in urban sewage disposal, sludge treatment, livestock manure composting fermentation and river

water pollution prevention.

The Ningxia technicians visited Japan's waste treatment sites, where they learned about technologies and were greatly enlightened. Hayashi Hideki, a Japanese expert who participated in the cooperation projects, won Ningxia's Liupanshan Friendship Award in 2017.

In recent years, Ningxia has actively carried out cooperation with Shimane in the training of talent for healthcare and nursing. Yinchuan University and Shimane Nursing School reached an agreement for cooperation. In August 2017, the inauguration ceremony for the Education Base built by the Health Management College of Yinchuan University and the Shimane Health Management College was held on the Binhe Campus of Yinchuan University.

Youth exchanges to bring up new generation to carry on friendship

Ningxia and Shimane both attach great importance to youth exchanges. Through visiting and studying, young people from both sides get the chance to broaden their horizons and communicate with each other, which effectively deepens and enriches the sister city relationship and strengthens friendship between Ningxia and Shimane citizens, as well as between the Chinese and the Japanese people more generally.

In 2002, to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations between China and Japan and the 10th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and South Korea, the Sino-Japanese-Korean People's

Year of Exchanges was declared by the governments of China, Japan and South Korea, and a series of activities were organized.

Among those activities, Ningxia, Shimane and Gyeongsangbuk-do held the "Wing of Communication" program in the three places. Seizing the opportunity, Ningxia carries out an international youth exchange program every year, inviting young people from Shimane and other sister-cities. Shimane also invited the Ningxia youth delegation to participate in the exchange program in Japan.

At present, the youth exchange activities have been successfully held for 17 consecutive years. The teenagers in the exchange programs experience life in another country and learn about the local culture and customs, which will not only enable them to fully appreciate the value of peace but also to build a new bridge for furthering friendly Sino-Japanese relations.

As friendly neighbors, China and Japan are particularly important in Asia. The youth of the two countries not only represent the hopes of their own nations but also shoulder the heavy responsibility of promoting China-Japan friendship.

Carrying out youth exchange activities is a worthy undertaking by Ningxia and Shimane — a way to create a peaceful future. By joining hands with Shimane to plan, organize and implement various youth exchange activities, urging the young people to maintain peace, promote respect, expand cooperation and write a new chapter of friendship, we can make further contributions to the everlasting friendship between China and Japan. ■

Thoughts on promoting Ningxia's international sister cities development

Ningxia Friendship Association

With the changes that have taken place both internationally and domestically, sister-cities are playing an increasingly important role in serving the country's overall diplomacy and local economic and social development. In recent years, the Ningxia Hui autonomous region has given high priority to promoting its sister cities network in its own way in accordance with its unique geographical, cultural and socioeconomic conditions.

I. Sister cities of Ningxia

Though a small province, Ningxia has established sister city relationships with quite a few regions in other countries. As of October this year, Ningxia cities have established such relationships with 59 foreign cities, of which 35 are in Asian and African countries and 24 in European, American and Oceanian countries. The global international sister cities network of Ningxia has taken shape.

Among the 59 pairs of sister cities, several can serve as models. Nongovernmental exchanges between Ningxia and Shimane prefecture in Japan have never stopped over the past 25 years. Meanwhile, fruitful results have also been achieved in the region's cooperation with Marlborough, New

Zealand, in wine production and education. In addition, regular youth exchange activities have been held with participants from North Gyeongsang, South Korea; Sanford, Norway; Uvurkhangai, Mongolia, and Pest Megye, Hungary. Ningxia has reached out to expand its youth exchange activities by inviting more young people from its sister cities.



Opening ceremony of the Ningxia International Forum for Friendship Cities

II. Suggestions on promoting friendship with Ningxia's foreign sister cities

In 2018, Ningxia was chosen by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as one of the eight pilot provinces for promoting international sister cities. To fulfill the task, we mapped out the procedure to be followed:

Once one group of sister cities has been established, activate them while starting the next group; and when the second group is activated, efforts will be made to consolidate the first, while yet another new one will be launched. On the basis of what Ningxia has done in this regard, we are going to unfold our work as follows:

First, choose the right projects and try to find the most suitable sectors for cooperation.

Economic cooperation is the driving force and fundamental condition for building and developing sister cities. Ningxia, as an underdeveloped inland province, lags behind other provinces in industrial scale and development quality, though certain industries have unique features. This unfavorable condition makes it difficult to establish international sister city relations.

Given this condition, we plan to explore cooperation opportunities in education, culture, health and youth exchanges as a first step. When cooperation has succeeded in these areas, it can extend to economic and trade areas. So long as there are cooperation projects, the sister city relationship will last.

Second, be pragmatic in carrying out cooperation projects so as to establish fame among international sister cities.

Although it is a minor province, Ningxia has certain unique advantages in agriculture, animal husbandry, energy, tourism, modern textiles and big data technology. Making use of the opportunities created by the provincial leaders' overseas visits, the reception of foreign guests and promotion of events,

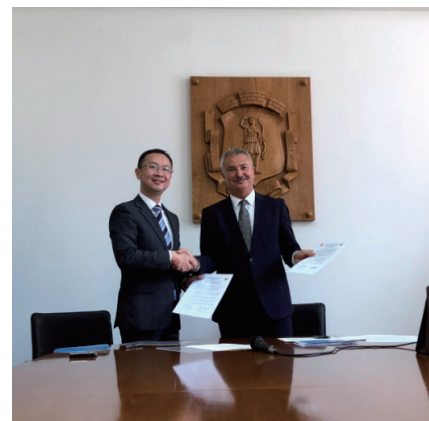
Ningxia can explore the possibility of cooperating with some developed Western countries and in doing so establish international sister city relationships with more foreign cities. For the agriculture and wine industry, Ningxia can cooperate with the United States, France, Australia, New Zealand and Argentina; for the energy and chemical industries, with Germany, the US and Australia; for big data, with Britain, the US and Australia.

Third, open wider channels to build resource databases.

Strengthen contact with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Chinese embassies and consulates stationed abroad, and with foreign embassies and consulates in China, to find out about the economic policies, industrial structures, and conditions of sister cities, and establish a database covering investment, trade, international organizations and large enterprises. Greater efforts should be placed on analyzing the conditions in different types of sister cities. At the same time, an information-sharing mechanism can be established to compile and publish sister cities' information regularly on the government's public online platform or on other internet platforms. This information-sharing mechanism could provide references to the Party committee and government of the Ningxia Hui autonomous region as well as serve enterprises and industries.

Fourth, invite more organizations to participate in the mechanism planning and establishing sister city relationship.

To make better use of the resources of sister cities, and encourage more departments and industries in the



Sun Xueqing, deputy mayor of Yinchuan, signed an international sister-city agreement between Yinchuan and Montana with Zlatko Zhivkov, mayor of Montana, Bulgaria, at the conference hall of Yinchuan on Aug 22, 2018.

region to understand and participate in the work of sister cities, we plan to establish of a joint conference mechanism to coordinate the sister city work throughout the region.

The joint conference system will be led by the Foreign Affairs Office of the Ningxia Hui autonomous region, with the participation of all relevant departments and enterprises, such as the Development and Reform Commission, the Agriculture and Rural Affairs Department, the Education Department, the Commercial Affairs Department and the Culture and Tourism Department. They will meet regularly to discuss the development direction of the sister cities and share resources. The promotion of sister cities can be included in plans for annual overseas visits for the foreign affairs offices of all localities and government departments in Ningxia. This will arouse the enthusiasm of these organizations to participate in the sister-city work. ■