



On June 20, 2019, CPAFFC President Li Xiaolin met with Yanibel Abrego, president of the National Assembly of Panama and a delegation.



CPAFFC Vice-President Song Jingwu stood with Chinese and Russian youths who attended the opening ceremony of the activity — retracing the 70 years of friendship between China and Russia.

Voice of Friendship stems from
Shi Jing (Book of Songs).

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Published in Chinese
and English

Front Cover: On Aug 12, 2019, CPAFFC President Li Xiaolin met with Ahad Mohammadi, president of the Iran-China Friendship Association.

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

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ISSN 1000-9582 CN11-1234/D

Interview with Bulgarian Ambassador to China H.E. Grigor Porozhanov

Staff Reporter

Bulgaria followed the Soviet Union in recognizing the People's Republic of China in 1949 and establishing diplomatic relations. This year marks the 70th anniversary. Over the past decades, despite some ups and downs, the China-Bulgaria relationship has become increasingly prosperous, with extensive exchanges and cooperation seen in various fields. In July this year, President Xi Jinping held talks with Bulgarian President Rumen Radev at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing during Radev's state visit to China. They lifted state-to-state relations to a strategic partnership. Would you share with us your views on the development of friendly ties between China and Bulgaria?

Answer: In 2019 we commemorate the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Bulgaria and China. Bulgaria was the second country to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China. On Oct 3, 1949, only a day after the Chinese government proposed the establishment of diplomatic relations, Bulgarian Min-

ister of Foreign Affairs Vladimir Popotomov sent a positive response to Chinese Foreign Minister Zhou Enlai. Now, 70 years later, China has developed into a prosperous country and has made remarkable economic and social progress, becoming the world's second largest economy. Over the past seven decades, through joint efforts, Bulgaria and China have made significant accomplishments in bilateral cooperation in the political, economic, cultural and educational spheres.

I take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to all former generations of politicians, diplomats, entrepreneurs, educators and artists who have contributed to the development of Bulgaria-China relations and to the increasing mutual understanding between both nations. I also express my sincere hope that our common efforts will further deepen and strengthen cooperation for the sake of future generations. Let us all look forward to strengthening our partnership in the years to come, bearing in mind the ancient saying of Confucius: "Looking into the future, learning from the past".

One very good example of our friendly bilateral relations, which also shows the mutual trust between our nations, was the search and rescue mission for a missing Bulgarian citizen around Xixabangma Mountain in May 2018. I would like once again to express our heartfelt gratitude to the Chinese government for the assistance it rendered to the Bulgarian government in organizing the unprecedented search and rescue mission in the PRC.

Bulgaria, as a bridge linking Europe and Asia, is in a prime geographical position. Under the Belt and Road framework and the 17+1 mechanism between China and Central and Eastern European countries, China and Bulgaria have conducted increasingly multifaceted exchanges. What are your expectations about pragmatic cooperation between the two countries?

Answer: During the last year, we advanced our high-level political dialogue and pooled efforts for raising relations to a new and higher level. The official visit of Premier Li Keqiang

to Bulgaria and the Seventh Summit of China and Central and Eastern European Countries in Sofia in July 2018 have provided substantial impetus for the aforementioned development and have further cemented our friendly and cooperative ties, raising them to a new height and adding a wider regional dimension to them. The fourth 16+1 Local Leaders Meeting in October 2018 provided an important follow-up, and today we are witnessing active exchanges between Bulgarian and Chinese provinces.

The cooperation between companies on both sides has further strengthened and resulted in a considerable impact on other important aspects of our relationship.

In July 2019, during his state visit to China, the president of Bulgaria, H.E. Rumen Radev, held talks with President Xi Jinping, and the two sides agreed to raise the bilateral relations to a level of a strategic partnership, with the aim of expanding cooperation in the areas of tourism, agriculture, trade, investment, innovation and technology infrastructure.

My expectations on the pragmatic cooperation are for an increase in Bulgarian exports to China and successfully attracting more Chinese investments, tourists and students to Bulgaria, strengthening academic, cultural, local government-level and people-to-people exchanges. Bulgaria hopes to bring more Bulgarian products to the Chinese market.

Here I will mention some of the pragmatic results of our bilateral

cooperation so far:

The establishment in Sofia of the Global Partnership Center will ensure the transparency of China-CEE cooperation and will raise awareness of the relevant EU rules and regulations. The center plans to organize training and consulting activities to promote cooperation in trade, investment and infrastructure to help Chinese businesses better understand the legislation of the EU, as well as that of Central and Eastern European countries. Our nation is the host of the center for promotion of cooperation in agriculture, as well as the first demonstration center for e-commerce under the 17+1 initiative.

We are happy that on the local government level the cooperation is increasing, and I commend Jiangxi province for organizing its first agricultural seminar for officials and experts from

the region of its partner, Sofia. This is just one example of how the strategic partnership can be implemented at the local level to improve people's lives and contribute to a better understanding of their partners.

Chinese culture is very popular among Bulgarians. In Bulgaria, more and more local people tend to celebrate the traditional Chinese New Year, watch documentaries on China and learn the Chinese language. How should China and Bulgaria further promote cultural exchanges?

Answer: Cultural and educational relations are experiencing unprecedented intensity. Significant steps have been taken toward further strengthening our cooperation in the areas of science and technology. The partnership between Bulgarian and Chinese universities is expanding, and people-to-people ties



Bulgarian Ambassador to China H.E. Grigor Porozhanov

are already shaping a better future for the next generation.

That idea is what leads Bulgarian university students to broaden their horizons by coming to China to study Chinese and what leads Chinese to study in Bulgaria, a proud member of the European Union. It's also what leads Chinese to travel to Bulgaria to explore its natural beauty and learn about its unique history at the crossroads of Europe. Currently, around 4,000 students in Bulgaria are studying the Chinese language and culture. At the same time, the number of Chinese students studying the Bulgarian language in the PRC is increasing, and I am happy that at the moment there are four universities in China where Bulgarian is taught.

Recently we held the first Bulgarian language speech contest, aiming to showcase the traditions and achievements of Bulgarian language studies in China and to urge businesses and local governments to engage with Bulgarian language experts for further solidification of bilateral relations, cooperation in trade and investment and people-to-people exchanges. In my capacity as the Bulgarian ambassador to China I will continue to assist in the establishment of contacts, cooperation and sister relationships between cities and provinces, universities, schools, think tanks and cultural institutions from Bulgaria and China.

Finally, I would like to mention that restaurants serving Chinese cuisine are extremely popular in Bulgaria and also that many Bulgarians prefer to do

their shopping in online Chinese stores.

Bulgaria, on the coast of the Black Sea, boasts rich tourism resources. It enjoys a time-honored history. There are a lot of historic sites in the country, some of which are world cultural and natural heritages. Bulgaria's rose oil and yogurt are also well-known to many Chinese people. China has been the world's largest outbound tourist source country for many consecutive years, and Bulgaria is one of the hot tourist destinations overseas for Chinese visitors. Could you please share with us the outline of Bulgaria's tourism? Can you recommend some scenic spots to our readers?

Answer: As I mentioned earlier, last year Bulgaria hosted two major meetings in the framework of the China-CEEC cooperation initiative, and we welcomed Premier Li in our capital, Sofia. In a news conference together with Bulgarian Premier Boiko Borisov, Mr Li shared his impressions about the oldest processed gold artifacts, which were found in Bulgaria from 7,000 years ago. The Chinese premier stated his intention to promote Bulgaria and its treasures to Chinese tourists.

As President Xi Jinping says, tourism is an important channel for different countries and cultures to communicate with each other, an effective way of developing a country's economy and a key industry to improve people's lives.

Bulgaria occupies only 2 percent of Europe's territory, but there are

about 40,000 historical monuments registered there, 36 cultural reserves, 160 monasteries, and more than 300 museums and galleries.

I would like to mention a few highlights for this year's tourism in Bulgaria. We are proud to have the European capital of culture for 2019 — Plovdiv. Many events and activities will be held throughout the year, and I encourage all of you to visit Plovdiv in this special moment.

We should not forget the famous Bulgarian products, such as yogurt, roses, honey and wine, which are an indispensable part of Bulgarian culture and cuisine. I encourage readers to also visit the rose festivals in the Rose Valley, the yogurt festivals, to spend some time in the luxurious Bulgarian wineries and chateaus and to indulge in spas around the country with their naturally hot mineral water.

The Bulgarian government, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Bulgarian embassy in Beijing are dedicated to facilitating the travel of Chinese tourists to Bulgaria. This year, Bulgaria has opened visa application centers in 15 cities in the People's Republic of China, and of course, all Chinese citizens can apply for Bulgarian visas there. We would also welcome the establishment of a direct flight link between Bulgaria and China, so that the distance between us would shrink, physically and metaphorically. ■

Former Bulgarian student reminisces about her days in China

Iskra Doumkova, PhD

It was an autumn morning and the cloudless crystal blue sky was shining brightly, reminding me of my hometown, Sofia, after having spent two weeks in Beijing.

At around 9 am, on Oct 1, 1962, as part of a group of overseas students studying at Peking University, we gathered in Tian'anmen Square in the viewing stand located at the foot of the front wall of the Forbidden City. Leaders of the People's Republic of China and the Communist Party of China could be seen on the balcony overseeing the square after they ascended the wall from the left.

I looked around, curious about everything. By my side was a Buddhist monk. It was the first time I had seen one of them, and I was amazed by his presence. His posture, the serenity on his face, the color and style of his robe were all impressive. I still remember his robe was purple-red and yellow, which, when matched together, created the so-called ancient golden robe. It was a peculiar color for European eyes, but one had to admit it was a successful

combination. I had been mesmerized by all the exotic colors and their mixtures since my first arrival in China. Colors such as red and blue can coexist harmoniously together. When they are matched perfectly, enchanting visual effects will be achieved. For example, the paintings on the ceilings and pillars of the Long Corridor of the Summer Palace exhibit the perfect combination of deep reds and blues.

Representatives of foreign embassies were also standing nearby. They were from European and Asian socialist countries, as well other countries such as Cuba and Switzerland. The stand next to ours held Party and government leaders, as well as leaders from factories, schools and research institutes, along with representatives from all walks of life.

The Party and country leaders of China could be seen on a balcony atop the wall. They were so far away that I could not clearly see their faces.

When everyone was standing still, the ceremony celebrating the 13th anniversary of the founding of the Peo-

ple's Republic of China began. Representatives from all sectors of society marched along the avenue in front of the stands. There were factory workers, university teachers and scholars.

The representatives of China's minority ethnic groups impressed me most deeply. They wore their traditional costumes, unique in color and style. Clothing from northern China was thick and warm, while that from the south was silky, light and thin, which offered us a glimpse of the beauty of the diverse cultures of China's minority ethnic groups.

Through extensive reading, I learned that China is a country of many ethnicities. Each group has its own unique culture. I was amazed by the display of different ethnic minority cultures, which is why I still remember people from those groups attending that ceremony.

The most remarkable thing was the vibrant enthusiasm and excitement aroused by the ceremony, given that the year, 1962, was such a harsh time for the new republic.

After the ceremony, the overseas student affairs division of Peking University, which had invited us, ushered us to the back of the stands and into the entrance of the Forbidden City. We saw a line of low houses with French windows on the left-hand side. Flower beds were planted at the foot of the windows. Chrysanthemums and dahlias were blooming in pots glazed a deep green, 60 to 70 centimeters high.

On the right were three to four rooms with their doors open wide. The rooms were relatively small, with doors made of brown wood. Around a dozen people were in the center of a room, all of them men. Several of the men faced the corridor, along which we moved slowly.

Two of them in bright gray gabardine suits immediately caught my eye. They were Chairman Mao Zedong and Premier Zhou Enlai, and they gently cast their eyes on us. That moment would remain fresh in my memory for years to come. That's perhaps the ability that leaders are endowed with. They not only unite people with great minds but also create lingering impressions.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between Bulgaria and China. The People's Republic of Bulgaria was the second country, after the Soviet Union, to recognize the People's Republic of China when it was founded.

In the past 70 years, Bulgaria-China relations have undergone successes, trials and tribulations.

* **Rapid development.** In the

1950s, the prime minister and other Bulgarian state leaders visited China. Bilateral relations began to develop across many areas, including student exchanges. Bulgaria was especially interested in the extraordinary progress China had made in agriculture at the time.

Unfortunately, the relationship between the countries stagnated in the 1960s and 1970s.

* **Normalization and expansion.** President Wang Bingnan of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries visited Bulgaria in the mid-1980s, which greatly promoted the development of Bulgaria-China relations. State visits by leaders of both countries in the late 1980s laid a solid foundation for the fast development of ties.

* **Cooperation.** In the 1990s, cooperation between the two countries narrowed. But from the early 2000s to the recent decade, they have carried out extensive cooperation in multiple sectors, including at the subnational level.

During the past 25 to 30 years, the two countries have made positive progress in cultural and educational cooperation. In 1990, Chinese literature as a major was established at Sofia University. The major was later established in another ancient Bulgarian city, Veliko Tarnovo. Chinese courses were taught in Sofia and other cities. A Confucius Institute was also established in Sofia.

Bulgaria has long expressed deep interest in what was happening in China. More books about China were

published in Bulgaria, and after the publication of *China: Revolution and Reform* in 1989, commemorating the 40th anniversary of the founding of the PRC and the 10th anniversary of the reform and opening-up policy, influential academic works by academician Nichol Popov were also published in sequence. They included *China's Economic Miracle*, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, *China's Agricultural Reform*, *A History of China's Social Economic Development* and others. A series of works on Chinese literature, both classic and modern, were also published.

Some of those works were authored by members of the Bulgaria-China Friendship Association. The Bulgaria-China Friendship Association, an NGO, was established in 1993. Since then, it had been chaired by Popov, a renowned economist, underground anti-fascist resistance movement activist in World War II and former president of Sofia University. He died in 2015. The leadership of the association comprises revered scholars, university professors, businessmen and famous Sinologists. The major tasks of the association include promoting the establishment and consolidation of Bulgaria-China relations in multiple areas and deepening Bulgarian society's understanding of China. The association has established its reputation through steady efforts to draw more attention from all sectors of Bulgaria to China.

One of the most important reasons Bulgarians are interested in learning more about China is its great success in

Former Czech President Klaus, promoter and practitioner of China-Czech relations

Huo Yuzhen

reform. During the past 40 years, China has been quite successful in its reforms. Its achievements in other areas were also notable. I was fortunate to witness the first 10 of those 40 years. From 1980 to 1990, I visited China almost every year. Apart from Beijing, I've been to many Chinese provinces and was happy to witness the tremendous transformation China had been through on an annual basis and the difficulties conquered one after another.

For example, the abandoning of commodity rationing and the rapid construction of new houses and roads was evident. During the 12 to 14 months of my two visits, the living standards of the Chinese people were greatly raised. There is no doubt that young Chinese enjoy more favorable living conditions than their parents. All these have added to the happiness of our Chinese friends and deserve serious thought by people from other countries.

May our Chinese friends enjoy the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the People's Republic of China, and may we make new achievements in the future!

(The author is secretary-general of the Federation for Bulgarian-Chinese Friendship) ■

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and Central and Eastern European countries, including the Czech Republic. It coincides with the 70th anniversary of the founding the People's Republic of China.

Looking back, one cannot help lamenting the passage of time. I still remember the day 10 years ago when I hosted events celebrating the 60th anniversary of New China and the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and the Czech Republic in my capacity as Chinese ambassador there, as if it had just happened yesterday. The picture I took with Czech President Vaclav Klaus brings to life all my best memories about that country and the president, who was the icebreaker, promoter and chief practitioner of China-Czech relations.

During his political career, Klaus served as finance minister and deputy prime minister of the government of Czechoslovakia; prime minister; chair of the Chamber of Deputies; and two-terms as president of the Czech Republic. As a revered statesman with a

unique style, he has been regarded as a political evergreen playing an active part in Czech politics since the drastic changes in Central and Eastern European countries.

The "Velvet Divorce" will not be unfamiliar to those who know modern European history. The Czech Republic and Slovakia became two independent countries on Jan 1, 1993. The peaceful split was hailed as a remarkable example in international history of two ethnic groups in one country peacefully parting ways. Klaus was the major propelling force behind the process.

As an economist, Klaus is also known as the chief designer of Czech economic reform. The privatization of investment vouchers, invented by him as part of the reform plan, not only offset the severe impact of institutional transformation on the Czech economy but also stimulated the public's interests in participating in the economic reform. Under his leadership, the Czech Republic successfully transformed its economy and led the new country out of the economic doldrums, ahead of other Central and Eastern European countries.

A staunch supporter of the Czech-China relationship, Klaus has contributed immensely to promoting pragmatic cooperation between the two countries. In November 1989, drastic changes took place in Czechoslovakia with its political, social and economic systems taking on transformation against the backdrop of China-Czech relations turning cold. After the Czech Republic achieved independence, Prime Minister Klaus keenly detected the huge potential of China in economic development, as seen in its reform and opening-up process. He expressed on many occasions his desire to visit China as early as possible to improve bilateral relations.

With joint efforts from both sides, Klaus visited Beijing in October 1994 as the new republic's first prime minister to visit China. The successful visit marked a milestone in Chinese-Czech relations.

In preparing for this visit with my Czech counterparts, I noticed that Klaus attached great importance to the visit, as he had done thorough research and investigation before embarking. He read Deng Xiaoping's famous 1992 speech in South China to acquire a deep understanding of China's top political design for its reform and opening-up.

During the visit, he concluded his impression of China's overall development with succinct remarks on three Chinese cities. He said that Xi'an represents the country's history, Beijing exhibits the status quo and Shanghai symbolizes its future. After the visit, he published an article in Czech newspapers sharing his impressions of China and briefing people on its social

and economic progress.

He mentioned in particular that China's reform and opening-up had raised people's happiness. Chinese people enjoyed a better material life, with abundant consumer products in their markets. He said he had noticed pedestrians much more fashionably dressed than in Europe. And the speed of China's development was unbelievably fast, enough to change the world's view of the country, he said.

In 2004, 10 years after his first visit, Klaus paid an official visit to China as the first president of the Czech Republic. No Czech president had visited China since the drastic changes undergone by the countries of Eastern Europe. Chinese-Czech relations witnessed an apparent growth after that visit, which lasted eight days, covering the cities of Beijing, Shanghai, Chengdu and Hong Kong. I was lucky to accompany him for a second time. I still remember he proudly told me: "When I visited China 10 years ago as prime minister, I predicted China's future development by describing three Chinese cities. I was full of confidence about China's rise. Ten years later, what I predicted before has become reality. It has been proved that the Chinese leaders and I share the same mindset."

As a politician with vision and sagacity, Klaus not only promoted the improvement and development of Czech-Chinese relations, but also played a significant role in promoting the development of Europe-China relations. In December 2008, the 11th China-Europe Summit, scheduled to be held in France, had to be put

off because the leaders of the host country's met with the Dalai Lama, which had been a severe blow to China-Europe relations. Klaus, whose country held the rotating presidency of the European Union at the time, actively promoted the reopening of dialogue between China and Europe.

The summit was successfully held in Prague. The Chinese delegation, led by the premier, Wen Jiabao, was received with high standards during the visit. The fruitful results achieved by the summit sent a positive political signal to the world and indicated that China-Europe relations had returned to a sound track of development, having profound significance in deepening political mutual trust and win-win cooperation between China and Europe and promoting the China-Europe comprehensive strategic partnership.

With the continuous development of Chinese-Czech relations, both the working relations and personal friendship between me and Klaus, together with his wife, went ever deeper. Klaus offered me some special favors, perhaps because of his respect for women, or perhaps because I was among the very few foreign ambassadors stationed in Prague who spoke no Czech. More than other reasons, however, I think it was because of China's important role as a major world power.

Klaus invited me to attend various activities held at the Presidential Palace and to introduce China's development in multiple fields. He also attended receptions and banquets held by the Chinese embassy. I was particularly

moved by the farewell banquet hosted by the president and his wife at the Golden Hall of the Presidential Palace honoring me and my husband upon my departure from office, making me the first foreign ambassador to be invited to the Golden Hall.

Not long ago, one of my former colleagues at the embassy told me that Klaus had asked about my recent condition when meeting with the newly appointed Chinese ambassador to the Czech Republic, Zhang Jianmin. After nine years, Klaus had kept me in mind. It tenderly touched my heart.

In retirement, Klaus continued to keep close watch on China's development, especially the Belt and Road Initiative. He spared no effort in enhancing the friendship between the Czech Republic and China. In May, he visited the Memorial Hall of the Victims of the Nanjing Massacre by Japanese Invaders. He presented a wreath of flowers to the victims and solemnly wrote down these words in the guest book: "We cannot forget this history and should prevent this anti-human atrocity from happening again." His profound sympathy for and friendliness toward the Chinese went beyond expression.

The 70th anniversary definitely marks a milestone in Chinese-Czech relations. At the threshold of a new phase of history, I hope people of vision from both countries follow Klaus's footsteps, taking the promotion of good relations as their own responsibility and jointly writing a new chapter of friendship between the people of the two countries. ■

An outstanding envoy of friendship between China and Romania

In memory of Florea Dumitrescu, president of the Romania-China Friendship Association

Luo Dongquan

It has been a year since President Florea Dumitrescu of the Romania-China Friendship Association passed away, but his voice and face still linger in my memory.

Florea Dumitrescu was born on April 4, 1927, into a peasant family in Teleorman in southern Romania. After graduation in 1949 from the Department of Finance and Loan at the Bucharest School of Economics, Dumitrescu engaged in the financial industry until being appointed minister of finance, a post in which he served from 1969 to 1978. He served as Romanian

ambassador to China from 1978 to 1983, governor of the National Bank of Romania from 1984 to 1989 and vice-president of the National Reserve Bank. He had been president of the Romania-China Friendship Association since 1995.

Dumitrescu had been involved in research on economy, trade and finance for many years, with fruitful achievements including a great number of publications and theses, and had made tremendous contributions to currency stabilization and the economic development of Romania. Dumitrescu won the

third level of the Labor Medal and the second level of the Star of the Republic of Romania Medal. Meanwhile, he devoted himself to developing friendly relations between China and Romania. He was always considered a great envoy of friendship between the two countries.

Deep condolences from the two peoples

News of Dumitrescu's death on April 16, 2018, broke the hearts of all his friends in China and Romania. Through emails and WeChat messages, people expressed their respect and condolences and praised his honesty, knowledge and earnest working style.

The Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the China-Romania Friendship Association jointly sent a message of condolence saying: "Florea Dumitrescu had long committed himself to the development of Romania-China friendly relations. Leading the Romania-China Friendship Association for years, he made tremendous contributions to promoting friendly and pragmatic cooperation, enhancing friendship between the peoples by introducing China's political and economic conditions and traditional culture. His death has deprived the Chinese of a great friend." China Radio International published the full message in Romanian on its website.

Chairman of the Romanian European Tithulescu Foundation and former prime minister Adrian Nastase said: "The death of Dumitrescu is a loss for all of us. He has done for our coun-

try and for Romania-China relations a great amount of good things."

The manager of the Romanian-Chinese House wrote: "Dumitrescu was a promoter of cooperation between Romania and China, a diplomat committed to developing traditional cooperative relations between the peoples of both sides."

A vice-president of the Association said: "Romania lost a great figure, a man whose feet were deeply planted in his motherland while his eyes were surveying the world, a man with Romania at heart and the whole world in his view."

Tania Iancu, daughter of David Iancu (a Romanian doctor who shared similar experiences with Dr Bethune): "The news of Dumitrescu's death almost broke my heart. What wholehearted devotion to relations between Romania and China! Before Spring Festival in 2018, at his advanced age, Dumitrescu still managed to attend and address the event held by the Chinese embassy to which he attached great importance and necessity in the further development of bilateral friendly relations and cooperation between Romania and China."

An excellent ambassador

During his tenure as Romanian ambassador to China, Dumitrescu had extensive contacts with Chinese people from all walks of life and was closely connected with many, from top leaders of China and heads of ministries and commissions to people in Romanian circles. He visited many prov-

inces to discover new areas, potentials and chances for mutual cooperation. Through his elaborate work and both sides' joint efforts, bilateral trade volume in the 1980s set a historical record of \$1 billion. Romania led other Eastern European countries by far in terms of trade volume.

In an interview by Li Jiayu from the CRI in 2003, Dumitrescu recalled his many meetings with Deng Xiaoping, the chief architect of China's reform and opening-up, when he accompanied important visiting delegations from Romania. During one of the meetings, Deng asked him his opinion as an economist on China's goal of quadrupling its gross domestic product in 20 years. He answered: "China has all the potential and chances to realize that grand goal. But the economic system must be changed. Only by reforming can people's initiatives and sense of responsibility be stimulated."

As it turned out, the policies carried out by Deng reached the goal in 15 years rather than 20.

Dumitrescu valued Romania-China relations highly. He noted that since the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries, relations had seen substantial development.

"As the leaders of both countries once said, deepened relations with fruitful achievements signal a special relationship that will bring win-win results."

Founding the Romania-China Friendship Association

The upheavals in Romania in

1989 led to changes in the country's social and political systems. In order to further traditional cooperative relations between the two countries under the new conditions, Dumitrescu pulled many good friends of China together in 1995 to launch the Romania-China Friendship Association. Soon after that, he began traveling around Romania tirelessly, gathering people from various provinces who were friendly to China to set up the association's local branches. Wherever he went, he made speeches to sow the seeds of friendship.

"During the process," he said, "I found that local administrations all had strong willingness to develop cooperative relations with China and that all political parties, though with different thoughts on governing, all had the same policy toward China — that is, striving for a better relationship."

However, as with most other political figures in Romania, Dumitrescu was unsatisfied with the post-1989 relations. He believed that Romania not only needed to develop relations with the European Union but also needed to maintain and further its relations with old friends like China. He went to many cities and rural areas to investigate and found that "the efforts so far made were far from satisfying the Romanian people's desire of developing relations with China. Romania particularly hoped to develop a good relationship because it will benefit both Romania and China."

Dumitrescu visited China many times. In articles published in Roma-

nian media after returning home, he objectively introduced the great achievements of China's reform and opening-up.

"China in the late 20th century surprised the world with the prospect that she will create even greater miracles in the coming new century," he wrote.

He spoke highly of the role of the Romanian branch of CRI in promoting friendly cooperative relations between the two countries. Every time a representative from CRI visited Romania, he would meet in person and host a welcoming banquet. Whenever CRI held an audience meeting in Romania, Dumitrescu would lead the leading members of the Romania-China Friendship Association to participate in the event. In 2004 he led a delegation of the association to visit CRI and was interviewed. He said: "The Romanian channel of CRI provides timely and objective reporting, which enjoys growing influence in Romania and has won an ever growing audience."

A masterpiece book on China-Romania relations

After the founding of the Romania-China Friendship Association, Dumitrescu and his fellow members of the association's leading council made an ambitious decision: edit and publish a series of books under the title *300-Year Deep Relations between Romania and China*. They invited Romanian Sinologists, Chinese-Romanian language scholars and other people who had made important contributions to devel-

oping friendly relations between the two countries to write reminiscences. The four volumes of the series — 234 articles written by 191 people — were published on the 50th, 55th, 60th, and 65th anniversaries of bilateral diplomatic ties every fifth year from 1999 to 2014. The publication and distribution of the books was another contribution made by Dumitrescu and his association to the cause of friendship between the two countries and will undoubtedly go down in history.

In 2009, Li Xiaolin, who was the vice-president of the CPAFFC at the time, visited Romania and gave the title of "Friendship Ambassador" to Dumitrescu. The title is the highest honor given by the Chinese government and Chinese people to friends of all countries who have made outstanding contributions to promoting friendship between peoples and maintaining world peace.

Dumitrescu worked unswervingly to enhance friendly relations between the Chinese and Romanian people until the last minute of his life. He once said: "The friendship between Romanian and Chinese people is the cornerstone of relations of the two countries. It is my lifelong mission to enhance this friendship."

Though Dumitrescu has left us, his words and deeds left a brilliant page in the history of China-Romania relations and will be cherished by both peoples forever. ■

Stories behind establishment of Czech-China diplomatic relations

Ivan Bakesova

Oct 6 this year will mark the 70th anniversary of the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between China and what is now Czechia.

On Oct 1, 1949, the People's Republic of China announced its founding to the world, and five days later it was recognized by the government of Czechoslovakia. It was one of the early countries to establish diplomatic relations with China, and it's widely known that the friendly relationship developed fast. However, few people know that ties between the Czechoslovakia government and the Communist Party of China took root before the founding of New China.

In the autumn of 1948, Czechoslovakia allowed the CPC to set up a branch of Xinhua News Agency in Prague, with eight staff members headed by Wu Wentao. Hu Guocheng and Zhang Chanhua were among the eight. At that time, they held passports issued by the Kuomintang government in Nanjing, and in Prague they could apply for visas to European countries, which made it convenient for areas of China liberated by the CPC to carry out international communication with countries in Europe and elsewhere.

In the spring of 1948, with support from the Post and Telecommuni-

cations Department of the Czech government, the Prague Branch of Xinhua set up a radio station, the agency's first overseas office, and officially started transcribing its English communications. The Prague Branch of Xinhua had three tasks. First was to transcribe the English communications of the agency, typing and mimeographing the contents, and distributing the information to Eastern and Western Europe, the United States, Africa, India and other places to publicize the situation in China at that time. Second was to distrib-

ute commentary from major European newspapers, magazines and radio stations about the CPC and Kuomintang in English and Chinese. Third was to act as an external liaison. The CPC Central Committee authorized it to conduct international diplomatic affairs on behalf of areas liberated by the CPC.

In Prague, Wu attended several nearby international conferences. Under his leadership, the Prague branch achieved excellent results in various fields. Wu once served as vice-president of Xinhua News Agency and head



Ambassador F. C. Weiskopf and his wife with staff of the embassy of the Czech Republic.

of Xinhua's northeast China bureau. In 1953, Wu returned to China and served as vice-president of the Foreign Language Press. Hu Guocheng married a Czech woman in Prague, and his children continue to live in the country.

In April 1949, the CPC sent a 40-member delegation led by Guo Moruo to attend the World Congress of Peace in Paris, France. On the journey by train across Siberia, they learned that the French government had refused to issue entry visas. At this point, Jaroslav Prusek, director of the Czech Oriental Institute, suggested that the government of Czechoslovakia invite the delegation to visit that country. The proposal was accepted. With the help of the Czech government, a branch meeting of the World Congress of Peace was set up in Prague, and the Chinese delegation read the text of the speech they had planned to deliver in Paris. Thus, the congress, which was attended by representatives from 72 countries, was simultaneously and successfully held in Paris and Prague. The congress also elected a permanent committee, which greatly promoted the development of the world peace movement.

The CPC delegation to Prague comprised writers, painters and intellectuals, including the famous painter Xu Beihong. They brought many novels, picture albums and other publications published in Yan'an, such as *The White Haired Girl*, which was loved by the public. The delegation presented all these books and publications to the Czech Oriental Institute. Sinologists began to translate them into Czech and English, actively introducing the cul-

ture of Yan'an to the world.

While the delegation was in Prague, it happened that the People's Liberation Army of China took Nanjing. The Czech government held a grand assembly with Chinese friends to celebrate the PLA's triumphant crossing of the Yangtze River. Later, Guo Moruo was invited to speak at the prestigious Charles University in Prague, where he was awarded an honorary doctorate. His speech was published in the magazine *Novy Orient*.

When the PLA first seized Nanjing, the Czech embassy was located in the city. But by then the ambassador had left China, and the first secretary had gone to Guangzhou with Li Zongren, the acting president of the Kuomintang government, leaving only one staff member at the embassy. After the PLA took over Nanjing, Huang Hua became director of the overseas Chinese affairs division of the Nanjing Military Control Commission. He invited embassy officials of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and Poland to discuss cooperation after the establishment of People's Republic of China. Later, those three countries were the first to recognize and establish diplomatic relations with the PRC.

In January 1950, the Czech embassy moved to Beijing — the second after the Soviet Union. At that time, when the Soviet ambassador was with Chairman Mao Zedong on a visit to Moscow, F. C. Weiskopf, the first ambassador of Czechoslovakia to the People's Republic of China, was the only foreign ambassador in Beijing.

Weiskopf was a senior diplomat

who had worked at the Czech embassy in the United States and then as the Czech ambassador to Switzerland. He began working in Beijing in January 1950.

There were many novices among the diplomatic staff of the newly established China. The Czech embassy in China enthusiastically helped China cultivate diplomats, and the embassy became a school for Chinese officials to learn diplomatic protocol. The information was multi-faceted and interesting. Czech experts taught the trainees international diplomatic etiquette, how to receive foreign guests, how to arrange a banquet and other important activities in welcoming foreign heads of state. Experts also showed how the wife of an ambassador should appear elegant and how the wives of all diplomats should behave during diplomatic activities.

Weiskopf forged profound friendships with Chinese diplomats and his work won accolades from the Chinese government and diplomats. His efforts and contributions to the diplomatic cause of New China are still deeply engraved in people's minds.

(This article was written and edited in Chinese with the help of Wu Ruijun of the CPAFFC.)

Ivan Bakesova, the author, graduated in Sinology from Charles University in Prague. She once worked for the embassy of the Czech Republic in Beijing and has been devoted to friendly exchanges between Czechia and China since her retirement. She is now the secretary of the Czech China Association. ■

“Wandering national treasures” witnessing blend of Eastern and Western civilizations

A visit of the National Treasures of Afghanistan exhibition

Lian Jianlei

Shining gold crowns, lifelike ivory relief and exquisite statues of goats ... Bright and dazzling, more than 230 pieces or sets of Afghanistan treasures presented a splendid picture of the country's civilization, demonstrated its unique value as a center where Eastern and Western civilizations converged and revealed the historical origins of the blend and exchange of civilizations along the ancient Silk Road.

During the Conference for Dialogue of Asian Civilizations, the *Utensils and Ornaments Endlessly Fine: National Treasures from Afghanistan at the Cultural Crossroad of East and West* exhibition was held at the Tsinghua University Art Museum. The theme of the exhibition, “Utensils and ornaments endlessly fine”, derives from an ancient Chinese classic, *Biography of Emperor Mu of the Western Zhou Dynasty* (Mutianzi Zhuan), which records the emperor's travels in the West Paradise where he met Queen Mother

of the West and saw lots of rare and priceless treasures. He used the phrase “utensils and ornaments endlessly fine” to describe the quality of various utensils, costumes and other objects he saw. Therefore, the current exhibition under this theme is highly significant.

At the cultural crossroad of East and West

Afghanistan, located in the heart of Eurasia, was surrounded by the Pamirs in the east, the South Asia sub-continent in the south, the Iranian Pla-



teau in the west and the central Asian steppes in the north. It is one of the central Asian countries connecting East and West and linking Central Asia, western Asia and South Asia. It has been called the “key” to the South Asia subcontinent in history, with a strategic position so important that it has been a place for which warring parties have contended since ancient times. The Persian Empire, the Turks and the Mongols all left their traces on this land, making Afghanistan a giant melting pot of civilizations that nurtures Islam and Hinduism and serves as a holy place for Buddhism. The famous master monk Xuanzang once traveled to this land.

In history, various cultures have collided and merged in Afghanistan. Cyrus the Great incorporated it into Persia during his expedition; Alexander the Great established Hellenistic city states here during his eastward expedition; the once prominent Greco-Bactrian Kingdom was founded around 250 BC. It was known as the Daxia Kingdom in ancient China and considered one of the richest areas in Asia and one of the most important regions in the middle section of the Silk Road.

Afghanistan’s ties with China date back more than 2,000 years. According to *Records of the Grand Historical Historian of China* (Shi Ji) and *The History of the Han Dynasty* (Han Shu), the Yuezhi nomads originally lived between Dunhuang and the Qilian mountains. When defeated by the Huns, they migrated westward, passed Da Yuan (today’s Fergana Valley), conquered the Greco-Bactrian Kingdom and built a

kingdom on the northern bank of Guishui (Amu Darya). Around 139 to 130 BC, the Yuezhi came to northern Afghanistan and destroyed the old Bactria of the Scythians and established a new Bactria. In 129 BC, Zhang Qian visited Afghanistan, leaving the first Chinese footprint on the land.

During his second diplomatic mission to the western regions, Zhang Qian also visited Balkh, the capital of Greater Yuezhi, now known as Wazirabad in Afghanistan. In the Tang Dynasty (618-907), the exchanges between China and Afghanistan became more frequent. Through the Silk Road, the two places’ knowledge about each other was enriched, and exchanges between them extended from economy and trade to culture and art.

Given its unique geographical location and historical value, Afghanistan occupies an important position in the history of culture and trade exchanges between China and the West. It has bred brilliant and distinctive culture and won a reputation as the crossroads of civilizations.

Shining civilization

The 230-plus pieces of Afghanistan treasures in the exhibit are divided into four parts according to the sites where they were unearthed — Tepe Fullol, Tilla Tepe and the city sites at Ai-Khanum and Begram, — displaying the precious cultural heritage of four historical periods: the Bronze Age, the Hellenistic period, the period from the invasion of the Yuezhi to the establishment of Kushan Empire and

the Kushan Empire period. All of these point to the blending of multiple ancient civilizations.

Tepe Fullol

In 1965, it was said that some farmers in Baghlan province, adjacent to the source area of lapis lazuli blue crystal, discovered some exquisitely made gold and silver objects at a place called Tepe Fullol. To divide and sell the products, the farmers cut them into small pieces in different shapes. With great effort by the staff of the National Museum of Afghanistan, pieces of five gold objects (940 grams in all) and 12 silver objects (1,922 grams) were recovered. The patterns on them can be divided into geometric patterns, animal patterns and plain patterns. Their ornamentation was common in the early civilization of central Asia, which may belong to the Amu Daryac civilization, a sedentary civilization in the Bronze Age of Central Asia, or to Mesopotamian civilization in the region of the Tigris and the Euphrates. It proves that Afghanistan has been a place where multiple cultures have overlapped since the development of early human civilization.

The Golden Cup, made between 2200 and 1900 BC, was the oldest artifact in the exhibition. Despite its incomplete shape, it displays clear and distinct exquisite patterns. Dr Jiang Ruixia from Renmin University remarked that “among those patterns, the image of the bearded bull was obviously influenced by Mesopotamian civilization, while other geometric patterns

show a strong flavor of Central Asia”. This provides evidence of the communication and interaction of civilizations in the Bronze Age.

City site at Ai-Khanum

In the late fourth century BC, Alexander, king of the Macedonian Empire, led his army to Persia and brought Greek civilization to Bactria (today’s Afghanistan). He built many Hellenistic cities. Ai Khanum, which means “lady moon” in Turki, was one of them. Ai Khanum is regarded as the Alexandria of the region by Amu Darya. Archaeological evidence shows that Ai Khanum was a cosmopolitan city in the second century BC, with priests, industrialists and intellectuals gathering here and possessing almost all the characteristics of a Hellenistic city.

Two Gods Driving A Chariot Plate, which was unearthed in Ai Khanum, shows a vivid picture of Helios, the god of the sun in Greek mythology, wearing a crown of brilliant rays and staring from above as Cybele, the great mother of the gods, and Nike, the god of victory, drive a Central Asian chariot drawn by a lion. The costumes of the two goddesses show distinct Oriental flavor and the relic reveals a combination of images from Greek mythology with local styles.

Tilla Tepe

Tilla Tepe, literally “golden hill” or “golden mound”, located in northern Afghanistan was originally an altar of Zoroastrianism in the Bronze Age and was later used as a cemetery. In 1978,

a joint team of archaeologists from the Soviet Union and Afghanistan excavated six tombs with vertical shafts and unearthed nearly 22,000 pieces of exquisite cultural relics made of various materials including gold, silver, copper, ivory and precious stones. This amazing collection of treasures, combining various cultural traditions and artistic styles, shows unique cross-cultural characteristics and is one of the greatest archaeological discoveries along the Silk Road so far.

The unearthed silver coins of the Parthian Empire, gold coins of Rome, icons of Greek gods, bronze mirrors and silk from China’s Western Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220), glassware of Syria and Egypt, ivory carvings of India and gold ornaments in prairie style further prove the internationality, creativity and diversity of Afghanistan as a crossroads of civilizations.

This dazzling array of gold shows

obvious nomadic traits. The lifelike ram, made of pure gold, has a powerful physique, and its curvy horns embody strength.

The Greek goddess Aphrodite on display has a spot between her eyebrows, which is an influence of the culture of India. Adding wings to the goddess is an element of local culture.

Chinese culture also had an important influence on the region, as can be seen from the image of double dragons, a typical Chinese element, on a gold scabbard and a decorative ornament.

City site at Begram

Begram is located at the convergence of two rivers, 60 kilometers north of Kabul, Afghanistan. Near Salang Pass at the southern foot of the Hindu Kush mountains, it is a place that links the northern and southern parts of the mountains necessarily and convenient-



ly. Its strategic location is particularly important, as it is still home to the Begram Air Base, a place difficult for outsiders to reach. During the age of Alexander the Great, the fortress here had been garrisoned by a large number of troops. Traditionally, this area was called Kapisa. Xuan Zang, a monk of the Tang Dynasty, passed through this area, which was called Kapis in *Si-Yu-Ki: Buddhist Records of the Western World*. After 125 AD, the Yuezhi nomads conquered the place and established the Kushan Empire, which became one of the four great powers, together with the Eastern Han Dynasty, Roman Empire and Parthian Empire. The history of Afghanistan turned a new page.

The Kushan Empire was located in a special geographical position, with China to the east, India in the south, grassland in the north and Persia in the west. It was not far from the eastern border of the Roman Empire, thus providing convenience to communicate with various surrounding civilizations. The Silk Road flourished during this period. From the 1920s, 2,000 archaeological discoveries of pieces of precious cultural relics were reported. They once again proved Afghanistan's unique historical significance as a hub of Eastern and Western civilizations.

Among those unearthed relics are bronze statues and plaster relief works of Greek and Roman style, Indian ivory carvings, Syrian glass, silver and stone ware from Egypt and even nine pieces of lacquerware from China's Han dynasties.

There is no lack of Indian-style objects among the relics found at Begram. An exquisitely crafted ivory plaque indicates that the South Asian style was once popular in the city.

A nation stays alive when its culture stays alive

It is hard to imagine that all these exotic treasures came from Afghanistan nearly 2,000 years ago. It is even harder to imagine that the people of that country, which once had such a splendid culture, should have suffered so much. Many cultural relics, including the famous Bamiyan Buddha statues, have been destroyed in the years of war.

At the exit of the exhibition hall are many big boxes, each of which was covered with customs clearance tags. Dr Jiang told us that the boxes have carried treasures to more than 20 museums in France, Italy, the Netherlands, the United States, Canada, Germany, Britain, Australia, Japan and South Korea.

Modern history, especially after the Opium Wars, shows that many of China's cultural relics were stolen or destroyed by Western invaders. The ruins of the Old Summer Palace and the headless Buddha at the Mogao Grottoes all speak of the days of suffering. We fully understand the mood of preservationists in Afghanistan. Therefore, China's major museums in Beijing, Dunhuang, Chengdu, Zhengzhou, Shenzhen, Changsha and other places began a relay race, sparing no effort to hold exhibitions for these treasures and give them shelter in the safe land of China.

What stands behind the dignity of cultural relics is in fact the dignity of the country and the nation. Only when a country or a nation is strong can it talk about dignity. As Chinese descendants, we are proud of the continued growing strength of the motherland and its splendid 5,000-year culture.

"A nation stays alive, when its culture stays alive" is engraved at the gate of the National Museum of Afghanistan. Culture lets us feel the pulse of our ancestors. Culture is a nation's blood as well as spiritual power for development and continuity.

President Xi Jinping, in his keynote speech at the Conference for Dialogue of Asian Civilizations, said: "People are the best carriers of exchanges and mutual learning among civilizations. Deepening people-to-people exchanges and mutual learning is an important way to eliminate estrangement and misunderstanding, as well as to strengthen mutual understanding and connection between peoples."

As a member of the Cultural Exchange Department of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, I deeply feel the important power of people-to-people and cultural exchanges. I sincerely hope that different countries, nations and cultures can maintain extensive in-depth communication, engage in mutual learning, overcome conflicts and break barriers, thus fostering a human civilization to pass on from generation to generation, and to make colorful cultures flourish in the garden of world civilizations. ■

Xi Jinping in my eyes and those of my Peruvian friends

Meng Kexin

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. The great changes that have taken place in China and its growing influence on the international stage have deeply touched me, a Chinese who lived in Peru for more than two decades.

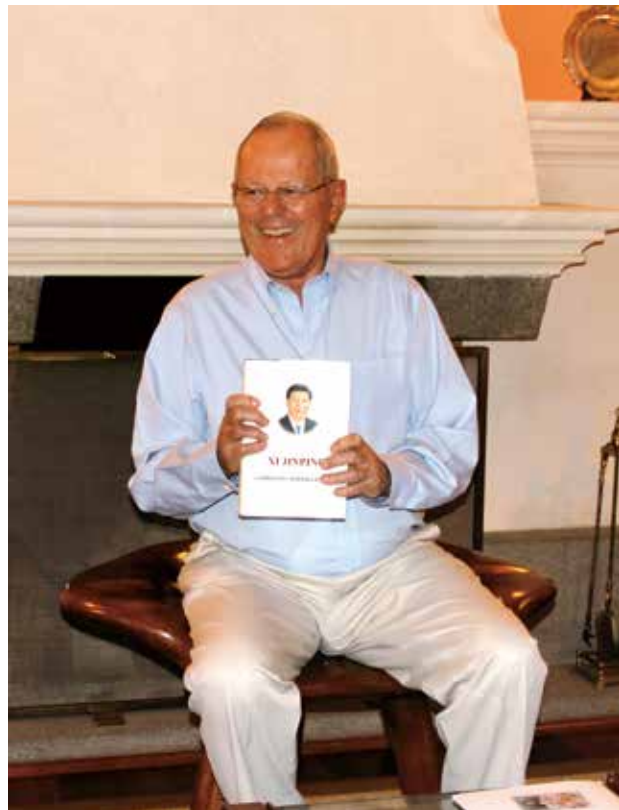
In 2016, on the occasion of the 45th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and Peru, I was invited by Pedro Pablo Kuczynski Godard, the Peruvian president at the time, to his home for an interview. During the interview, Kuczynski expressed his great admiration for Chinese President Xi Jinping. He showed me a hardback copy of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*, saying that he kept another copy in his office. In 2016, shortly after he was elected president, Kuczynski announced that he would make China the destination of his first overseas visit. The trip was made successfully in September that year. Two months later, Xi paid a state visit to Peru while attending the APEC Summit in Peru. It was unprecedented in the history of China-Peru relations for a Chinese head of state to pay a reciprocal visit within just two months. The visit pushed bi-

lateral cooperation in various fields to a higher level. President Xi's name also became familiar to the Peruvian people.

During Xi's visit, I was lucky to be present in the Peruvian Congress listening to his speech. I attended the meeting between Xi and representatives of overseas Chinese in Peru and

shook hands with him. I was deeply impressed by his unpretentious language, cordial greetings and amiable manners.

The Belt and Road Initiative put forward by Xi aims to set up a platform for building a community with a shared future for mankind. More than 140 countries and regions and 80 inter-



Pedro Pablo Kuczynski

national organizations have expressed support and participated. The associated Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank has been expanded five times, with its official membership rising to 93 by the end of 2018 and covering all continents. In Peru, both the politicians and public have expressed hope to participate in the opportunities brought by the BRI, to enhance the overall national strength of Peru.

I most admire the four new concepts put forward by Xi about China's foreign policy: a new type of major power relationship, big-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics, a community with a shared future for mankind and a new type of international relations.

In recent years, China has hosted a series of major international summits, which have attracted many world leaders to China, and President Xi has made frequent visits to other countries. Such "inviting in" and "going out" underlines Xi's thought on big-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics for the new era.

It is my great honor to be in charge of the printing and distribution of the Spanish edition of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*, which can be bought through subscriptions, bookstores, book fairs and online channels. I was pleased to find that about 1,000 copies had been sold directly through my hands. I interviewed many Peruvians who bought the book, including university professors, college students and ordinary readers. They all appreciated China's achievements in anti-cor-

ruption and poverty alleviation since Xi took office and were impressed by his governance experiences during his political career from the grassroots level to the central government. They wanted to learn to from his experience because Peru faces such social problems as corruption and unbalanced development. As more Peruvians have learned about Xi through the media and books, Chinese leaders' images are becoming more and more concrete in the eyes of the Peruvian people.

In recent years, major political events and economic developments have become the focus of Peruvian media reports about China. In particular, the Chinese New Year and zodiac culture are hot topics continually reported by major media outlets.

China's investment in Peru and bilateral trade volume have been growing steadily, becoming an important contributor to Peru's economic development. My Peruvian friends who have been to China in recent years are full of praise for China's high-speed railways, urban transportation and public security.

Those who have not been to China also pay close attention to it through the media. Reynaldo Trinidad, founder of the Peruvian magazine *Agronoticias*, told me that he was keen to bring China's experience in poverty alleviation and advanced agricultural technology to Peru.

Luis Alberto Torres, president of PROMPERU (the commission for promoting exports and tourism), said he fully agreed with Xi's Belt and Road

Initiative, noting that China had begun to implement the policy of "growing by buying from the world", which is very positive for the whole world.

Also, the first Shanghai Import Expo was a great success, he said: "Peru has made an unexpected achievement as one of the few Latin American countries invited to the Expo." As the second Import Expo approaches, Peru has coordinated with the Chinese embassy in Peru to expand its exhibition stands, hoping to introduce more Peruvian products to the Chinese market.

Alfonso Velasque, president of the Peru Exporters Association, said that China, led by President Xi, is making a decisive contribution to shaping a new global economic order based on global trade, investment and development.

Felix Paz, former editor-in-chief of the *El Peruano* newspaper, said Xi has been an important world leader. The Belt and Road Initiative is of great significance to Latin America, Paz said, "because it overcomes the previous mercantilist points of view on relations between the economy and politics and seeks to establish relations of mutual benefit and common development among nations".

Xi and China are also facing the challenge of trade protectionism, he noted. Those protectionists, he said, tried to return to the business relationships of the early 20th century and have forgotten all the global efforts to achieve open and fair business exchanges. ■

Our “Belt and Road”

Wang Qi

“It seems like we are going for team building!” I joked from the back of the car. Hearing this, colleagues in the front looked back at me and smiled, with faces overtaken by fatigue. By then, we had been trapped in the traffic snarl for almost two hours on our way to the China National Convention Center.

Car horns blared one after another during the evening peak, while raindrops beat the window panes, as if to echo the interlaced phone calls and discussions inside the vehicle. The Coaster was turned into a small office in which everyone was making last-minute confirmations and preparations. The next day, China’s biggest diplomatic event of the year, the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation would kick off.

Subnational cooperation

In the past, with the ringing of camel bells and splashing of waves, our ancestors traveled along ancient silk roads, on land and sea, passing the settlements of people of different countries and colors. They exchanged knowledge and culture, promoted goodwill and friendship and witnessed

the openness and inclusiveness of Eastern and Western civilizations, seeking common ground while putting aside differences. Together, our ancestors jointly created a great symphony of mutual enlightenment and mutual economic benefit.

Today, as part of the strong trend of world peace and development, China is pursuing the Belt and Road Initiative in the hope of inheriting the Silk Road spirit, encouraging countries to strengthen their policies, infrastructure, trade, financial connectivity and people-to-people links, to realize common development.

Since the launch of the BRI in 2013, local cooperation has played an indispensable supporting role as an important part in the all-around mutually beneficial cooperation by participating countries and regions. Over the past five years, local governments have carried out multilevel and wide-ranging pragmatic cooperation, and there have appeared numerous vivid examples of cooperation, such as the China Railway Express.

All of these have contributed to building a road of peace, prosperity,

openness, green development and innovation and a road that brings together different civilizations.

Some 1,023 Chinese cities have established sister-city relationships with counterparts in 61 countries along BRI routes, accounting for more than 40 percent of all the Chinese cities that have established connections with foreign counterparts. Among them, many are key BRI waypoints.

Ideas and suggestions

Given the growing importance of local cooperation in BRI construction, this year’s forum includes subnational cooperation as one of its themed branch forums for the first time, an idea warmly welcomed by both domestic and foreign guests. It was also the first time for the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries to host a themed forum during the summit.

On the afternoon of April 25, More than 300 delegates from the Chinese mainland, Hong Kong and Macao, along with more than 40 countries, attended the themed forum. Participants included state governors, mayors or their representatives, representatives of

numerous international organizations, entrepreneurs, experts and scholars. Under the theme “Deepening subnational cooperation and sharing development benefits”, participants shared their experiences and achievements in BRI local exchanges and discussed future cooperation prospects and opportunities. They not only learned about the high-quality resources around the world and heard stories of long-standing friendship cities but also studied various innovative cooperation examples and exchanged ideas on such issues as connecting BRI projects with those of the Eurasian Economic Union and encouraging cooperation in environmental protection.

One of the participants who impressed me most was Navin Dissanayake, minister of plantation industries for Sri Lanka. Just a few days before the opening of the forum, Sri Lanka had suffered a series of suicide bomb attacks, with heavy casualties. After learning the news, we immediately contacted the Sri Lankan guests who planned to take part in the forum and expressed deep condolences for the victims.

It was highly touching that Dissanayake managed to attend the forum at such a difficult time. In his speech, the minister said emotionally that the Sri Lankan people are strong and will not be intimidated by terrorism. He

called for help from the international community, thanked China for its support and expressed his appreciation for the Belt and Road Initiative.

Dissanayake said the BRI connects different cultures, countries and peoples, and it was a sign of the country’s firm friendship with China and high recognition of the BRI that they came to the forum. At the end of the themed forum, the Sri Lankan minister also signed a memorandum of understanding with China’s Hainan province. He expressed hope that through the forum, the partnership and local cooperation between China and Sri Lanka will take a new step.

The Hong Kong Session was an-



The themed forum on subnational cooperation was held during the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation.

other highlight. Led by Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor, chief executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, representatives from Hong Kong in the fields of finance, law, trade, risk management, culture and public services shared their opinions on the role Hong Kong can play in the BRI. Hong Kong and Macao have unique geographical locations and resources, and strongly support the Guangdong-

Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. Increasing the participation of Hong Kong and Macao in BRI sub-national cooperation will enable domestic and foreign enterprises to use the professional services and international experience of Hong Kong and Macao while helping the two areas further integrate into national development under the framework of the BRI, deepen mutually beneficial cooperation with the mainland and share the fruits of development.

Our Belt and Road

The friendship and passion brought by the BRI were not only reflected in the delegates' heated discussions but could be found in every detail of meeting preparations. As a crucial component of the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, the 12 themed forums were held simultaneously, gathering thousands of Chinese and foreign guests for discussion. The 12 high-level forums covered various aspects of BRI cooperation and were attended by large numbers of participants from diverse backgrounds.

To ensure the orderly progression of the forums, every department involved coordinated carefully. Every link of the procedure had a responsible operator who attended to every detail with meticulous care.

For example, the basic job of rearranging the meeting room between sessions required the assistance of people from three or four departments. Moving tables and chairs, refreshing tea cups and setting up table signs, to name a few tasks, all needed several groups of people to go through multiple rehearsals beforehand to make sure the rearrangement was done with precise timing and smooth cooperation.

This was my first time taking

part in the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation. In addition to their professionalism and efficiency, the strong political awareness and sense of teamwork also impressed me. In the preparation process for the themed forums, unexpected changes happened frequently, calling for emergency measures. Every time a short notice arrived, we immediately contacted our colleagues in different places who were responsible for inviting foreign guests and informed them of the latest change. All parties concerned were cooperative and made timely adjustments.

As the forum date approached, everybody extended their work hours,



Working staff of the CPAFFC and CIFCA

and you could always find colleagues staying even after quitting time.

Once, I received a call from a colleague of the National Development and Reform Commission during a weekend. Before hanging up the phone, she said, “Sorry to have bothered you on the weekend.” Holding the phone, I smiled and replied, “Not at all, it’s an ordinary extra hour, just like yours.” Then we both laughed, as if having an aerial handshake over the distance.

Many times when an emergency arose during the meetings, even staff members whom I had never met before would bring help and encouragement. The day the meeting of the themed forum I served was ending, I took some materials to the venue in a hurry. As I passed through the corridor, which was lined with photo displays, a young volunteer stood upright even though the tea break was well over with scarcely any conference attendees remaining. For a moment, a trace of sentiment welled up in my heart. I was touched by his strong sense of responsibility. I thought, in this extensive BRI circle of friends involving many countries, people come here as contributors to work hand in hand for a better tomorrow for mankind under this open, inclusive and globally oriented cooperation initiative.

This is my Belt and Road. It is our Belt and Road. ■

China’s Miracles

Jinith de Silva

On Oct 1, 2019, China will celebrate the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People’s Republic of China. On that day in 1949 Chairman Mao Zedong declared at Tian’anmen Square that the “Chinese People have stood up”. He created a state of people with the help of peasants by chasing away capitalists, imperialists, foreign invaders and their agents. The intention of Mao and his fellow Communist Party leaders was to improve the living conditions of the common people. Land owned by rich capitalists was taken over by the State and distributed to the peasants.

Western powers were hesitant to accept the people’s state. But in South Asia, Sri Lanka was the first country to recognize it. Soon after that, in 1952, Sri Lanka entered into the Rice-Rubber Pact with China, even though many countries wished to impose embargoes and isolate the new country.

Since the revolution of 1949 Mao, Deng Xiaoping and Xi Jinping could be rated as the outstanding leaders of China. All of them took bold steps to improve the living standards of the common people. Mao took many

steps to improve the agriculture of the country. A cooperative system was introduced to manage the country’s agricultural lands. Government factories were opened nationwide. Recognition of China in 1971 by the United Nations was a victory. Sri Lanka’s prime minister at the time, Sirimavo Banaranayke, performed a key role in achieving for China its due place in UN.

When Mao died in 1976, leadership of the country passed to Deng Xiaping, and in 1978, Deng made a dramatic change in national direction. He initiated reforms that paved the way for an open economy. First, he created new investment zones in the southeastern part of the country. Free trade zones were created in areas such as Shenzhen, Guangzhou and Shanghai. Subsequently, foreign investments started to flow to China, and all the famous companies had the opportunity to send their goods to the biggest population in the world.

The Chinese market opened to companies such as Coca-Cola, Apple and Panasonic and to automobile companies such as Toyota, Volkswagen and BMW. This created new employment opportunities for the people. A new

industrial economy was started to augment agriculture. The workforce in the western parts of the country migrated east to take advantage of this rapid development. China resumed the exercise of its sovereignty over Hong Kong and Macao in 1997 and 1999, respectively.

In 1978, a revolutionary change took place in China in the field of agriculture. Eighteen farmers in Xiaogang, a village in Anhui province secretly agreed to divide community-owned farmland into individual plots. The arrangement was accepted by the central government, and it dramatically changed the existing land distribution system of the country. In 2006 all taxes were removed from agriculture.

China's joining the World Trade Organization in 2001 was a major landmark, paving the way for Chinese products to enter European markets. Today, in every marketplace around the world, products with the "made in China" label can be found.

China opened its economy even more, with the advent of Xi Jinping as president. Laws were relaxed to encourage foreign investment. In addition, laws were streamlined so that foreign investors would be willing to come to China. Xi's major economic policy was a new Silk Road — the Belt and Road Initiative — a concept that has become popular around the world. Not only China but all countries have benefited from this project. Scotch whisky from the United Kingdom arrived in Chinese markets through modern railways built through European countries under the

BRI. The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank opened with the assistance of China and has become a driver of development in Asian countries.

As a result of this economic development, China's per-capita income of \$155 in 1978 has risen to \$9,000 today. The country has become the second-largest economic power in the world. It owns the biggest share of foreign reserves in the world. In recent years China has contributed more than 30 percent of world economic growth. During the last 40 years, 800 million people have risen from poverty. Under plans laid down by Xi, China will eliminate dire poverty by 2020. China has set a successful example for poverty reduction in the world. I think this is the best of China's countless achievements.

I have traversed 20 provinces in China and have been able to see the economic, social and cultural transformation with my own eyes. The biggest thing that attracted me was the country's high-speed trains. The trains, which continue to expand across China, can reach speeds of 350 kilometers per hour, reducing travel time between cities by at least 50 percent. For example, it takes 12 hours for a normal train to go from Beijing to Shanghai. High-speed trains have brought that down to five hours. In 2016 it took only one hour for me to travel from Lanzhou to Xining by fast train.

Although fast trains were a late-comer, China now has the world's largest high-speed rail network — 29, 000 km — as of the end of 2018,

about two-thirds of the world's total.

I also had the opportunity to meet young people during my visits to different areas of China. I noticed exuberance and cheerfulness in abundance. Though China has undergone radical changes one thing remains unchanged — its inclination toward hospitality.

China made history as the first to land a spacecraft, Chang'e 4, on the far side of moon on Jan 3, 2019. That is the country's greatest achievement in science and technology.

President Xi declared his two centenary goals recently. He wants to achieve a moderately well-off society by 2020, a year before the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China, and build a prosperous modern socialist country by 2050, one year after the centennial anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China.

People have begun to value his new concept of building a community with a shared future for mankind. His vision is that all world resources should be equally shared among all of humanity.

We congratulate the people of China on their 70th National Day. They are part of a proud nation, and we are proud to have it as our good friend.

(The author is vice-president of the Sri Lanka China Society) ■

Veteran diplomat shares stories with Chinese and Japanese youths

Shen Haiting

On the 40th anniversary of the signing of the China-Japan Treaty of Peace and Friendship, we were lucky to have persuaded a veteran diplomat to share with Chinese and Japanese youths his experiences in developing the friendship, including some behind-the-scenes stories.

It might be fate, the era or the social background

Liu Deyou is a retired diplomat who has been active in promoting exchanges between China and Japan since the 1950s. He has been a Japanese interpreter Chinese leaders, including Chairman Mao Zedong and Premier Zhou Enlai, and the People's Republic of China's first resident journalist in Japan for many years before serving as vice-minister of culture, a member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and a member of the 21st Century Committee for China-Japan Friendship. He has published many books, including *My 15 Years in Japan*, and translated many Japanese works, such as *Yam Gruel* by Akutagawa Ryunosuke.

Liu has been called "a living fossil of China-Japan friendship". Recalling the past, Liu said that all his daily work related to Japan — a fact he ascribes to

fate, the era or his social background. At 88 years old, he is hale, humorous, outspoken and approachable. He meets regularly with visiting Japanese friends and gives lectures at universities. As a poem goes, "Crossing these lush hills adds nothing to one's years." Though elderly, he has never slackened his efforts to help maintain friendship between China and Japan.

"Go to the Guangming Daily to be a journalist"

In April 1964, Liao Chengzhi, president of the China-Japan Friendship Association, and Japanese businessman and politician Tatsunosuke Takasaki signed an agreement in Beijing. The two sides established trade offices in Beijing and Tokyo and exchanged resident journalists. This marked the transition of Sino-Japanese relations from people-to-people exchanges to contacts involving both governmental and non-governmental people. At the time, Liu was an editor at People's China, a periodical published by the China Foreign Languages Publishing Administration. One day, Liao told him, "Go to Guangming Daily to be a journalist." So Liu was transferred to the newspaper and then sent to Tokyo as a resident correspondent. Because no journalist was

sent to Tokyo to replace him during the Cultural Revolution in China, Liu spent 15 years in Japan. He didn't return to work in China until June 1978, when the China-Japan Treaty of Peace and Friendship was to be signed. Just two days after he returned, Liu was grieved to learn of the death of Guo Moruo, the honorary president of the China-Japan Friendship Association whom he deeply respected.

Oppose those who stand for hegemony

Under the Sino-Japanese Joint Statement, the phrase "oppose hegemonism" would be included in the China-Japan Treaty of Peace and Friendship. However, when the Takeo Miki cabinet was formed, the Japanese side took an abrupt turn and decided against including the words. Liu said China had been oppressed under the hoof of world powers for over a century, so it was unwilling to make any concession on the issue. China insisted that opposition to hegemonism must be written into the treaty, and any attempt to exclude it was unacceptable.

In fact, the Takeo Miki cabinet was impeded by two political forces. One was the Japanese right-wingers, such as the Seiran faction. The other

was the Soviet Union, which felt it was being targeted by the language, as it was contending with the United States for global hegemony. The disagreement rendered the negotiations a standoff. When the Deng Xiaoping, vice-premier at the time, met with the Japanese delegation headed by Foreign Minister Sunao Sonoda, Deng said the core of the treaty was anti-hegemony and did not target any third party except those who stood for hegemonism and war. If China sought hegemony, Deng said, the world should oppose it, too. “The Soviet Union’s opposition to the article revealed its ambition,” he said.

Later on, when he visited Japan, Deng again stressed the need to oppose hegemonism. “According to the China-Japan Treaty of Peace and Friendship, China and Japan should exercise self-restraint and impose the responsibility on themselves not to seek hegemony, while fighting any other country’s or bloc’s attempt to build up hegemony,” he said. This demonstrated China’s position and the wisdom of Deng as an outstanding statesman.

Sonoda vows to commit seppuku without returning to Japan should negotiation fail

On Aug 8, 1978, Sonoda visited China to sign the China-Japan Treaty of Peace and Friendship. On Aug 12, Chinese Foreign Minister Huang Hua and the Japanese foreign minister signed the treaty.

Liu recalled that Sonoda had a strong sense of responsibility for fulfilling his mission. It was said that the Japanese Liberal Democratic Party right-wingers had vehemently opposed

Sonoda’s trip to Beijing and threatened to kill him. Sonoda did not shrink, saying he was not afraid of losing his life. He just sprinkled water on himself to pray for safety. After the plane took off, he told the pilot to fly a circle over his home — the Amakusa Islands in Kumamoto prefecture. He vowed to himself that he would commit seppuku (suicide) instead of returning to Japan if the mission failed.

In July 1954, Liu worked as an interpreter when the Japanese nonpartisan parliamentary delegation, which included Sonoda, visited Beijing. The delegation had just finished attending the World Peace Conference in Stockholm and had come to China via the Soviet Union. Delegates included such promising young leaders as Yasuhiro Nakasone, who would later become Japanese prime minister, and Yoshio Sakurauchi, who became foreign minister and speaker of the lower house of the Japanese legislature, or Diet. Liu and his colleagues called them “the up-and-coming” in Japanese politics. Liu heard that Sonoda, when young, had been forced to join Japanese special attack units at the end of World War II. However, Japan surrendered unconditionally before he took off to crash his plane into an American aircraft or vessel.

“It was the first time for me to be an interpreter,” Liu said. “I still remember the brief welcoming ceremony at Beijing Xijiao Airport. Though I was totally unprepared, I was designated as the interpreter. My legs were trembling. I was bathed in perspiration. Later, I interviewed Sonoda at the parliament house when I was a resident journalist in Tokyo. It was a delightful surprise to find

that he remembered me.”

Principles of the treaty are of great significance

Impeded and interrupted by the Japanese right-wing forces and the Soviet Union, the Sino-Japanese relationship experienced many twists and turns after the normalization of bilateral relations. It took six years for the two sides to finally sign the China-Japan Treaty of Peace and Friendship. The treaty affirmed in legal form the principles specified in the Sino-Japanese Joint Statement, setting the basic tone of peaceful coexistence and long-lasting friendship. Liu said that although some people continue to hype the “China threat” myth, China is not and will never constitute a threat to the world. The socialist system makes it impossible for China to threaten or bully any other country, and the Chinese people will not tolerate such threats or aggression.

Despite its rapid development in recent decades, China is underdeveloped in many areas and still has a long way to go. Peaceful development is China’s strategic choice, one that has come into being through its years of efforts in building socialism. For all the changes in the international situation, China has no alternative but to continue on the peaceful development path and will never wage a war, as determined by the nature of its socialist system. The China threat theory has existed for a long time. It emerged as early as the 1970s, when Kenzo Matsumura came to Beijing to consult with China on trade. Liu translated for Premier Zhou Enlai during the meeting. Zhou said patiently to the Japanese

delegation, “Even if China becomes stronger, it will not be a threat. China has been plagued by imperialist oppression in history. How can it impose this suffering on others?”

He also cited a saying by Confucius: “Do not do to others what you do not want them to do to you.”

Although it was signed 40 years ago, the principles set forth in the China-Japan Treaty of Peace and Friendship continue to be of great significance. It is important for China and Japan to observe the treaty correctly. Frictions and contradictions are inevitable in bilateral relations, but the principles of peace and friendship as stated in the treaty must be upheld. They are the general orientation the two countries should adopt.

Carry forward the tradition of people-to-people friendship

After more than 20 years of diplomatic endeavors by both countries’ governments and people, the Sino-Japanese relationship was normalized in 1972. It was the result of painstaking efforts by various people from both countries, including Chairman Mao, Premier Zhou, Kenzo Matsumura, Tatsunosuke Takasaki and Kaheita Okazaki.

People-to-people friendship, as one of the characteristics of Sino-Japanese relations, played an irreplaceable role. Common people have been a vital part of peaceful and friendly relations between the two countries. In the new era, China and Japan should continue to carry forward the tradition of people-to-people friendship, expand economic and trade cooperation and promote cultural and youth exchanges. ■

A Journal of Canaan

Li Zhe

Hu Sishe, vice-president of the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, led a delegation to Israel for a visit from June 8 to 13. I was lucky to be a member of the delegation and was brimming with expectation and excitement, as it was my first trip to the country. Departing from Beijing Capital International Airport in the early morning of June 9, we traveled for 10-plus hours, arriving at Tel Aviv’s Ben Gurion Airport before sunset.

Innovation and tradition

Tel Aviv and Jerusalem were our first two stops in Israel. An Israeli friend commented that “people in Tel Aviv see Jerusalem as too conservative, while Jews in Jerusalem despised Tel Aviv for having abandoned Jewish tradition”.

Built less than 100 years ago, Tel Aviv is located on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea. Its English name, Tel Aviv, is actually composed of two words: “tel”, referring to the mounds of accumulated remains, and “aviv”, meaning spring. Thus, Tel Aviv literally means the hills of spring, alluding to a piece of new land originating from ancient Jewish civilization. It is an appropriate name for such a modern city, Israel’s second-largest. It is the undisputed science and technology center of the country.

On the morning of June 10, we visited a pioneering company in Tel Aviv known for its innovation. After graduation from Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Naftali Spitzer, the company’s CEO, had been engaged in advertising design and marketing for many years before founding the brand design company named after himself. Holon, Israel’s seventh-largest city, is Spitzer’s pride. With his branding, this once obscure small city has become Israel’s famous “city of children”. As the city’s reputation grows, residents’ life satisfaction and the city’s competitiveness have increased as well.

Vice-President Hu thinks highly of Spitzer’s work and invited him to attend next year’s China International Friendship Cities Conference. Spitzer delightedly accepted the invitation and expressed his expectation of seeing his ideas and creativity bear fruit in China in the future.

Someone once said that “God gave 90 percent of the world’s beauty to Jerusalem”. If this is true, 90 percent of Jerusalem’s beauty lies in its history and tradition. The Old City of Jerusalem is surrounded by tall walls, inside of which stand assorted busy shops. With an area of only 1 square kilometer, the Old City represents the nonnegotiable beliefs of three major religions — Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The Wailing Wall (Western Wall) in

West Jerusalem is a holy place in the hearts of Jews and a must-see for visitors. There are strict rituals for praying at the wall, or even visiting. Men and women must enter Wailing Wall Plaza through different security gates. The wall is divided into two parts, with men praying along the northern section and women in the south. Before approaching the wall, we were required to wash our hands and don hats, customs originating in the Jewish belief that the sky above the Wailing Wall is where God is and that it's a blasphemy to point one's bare head to God. Since I did not prepare a hat in advance, I took a simple round one at the entrance and put it on. It was to be returned after the rite.

The scene at the Wailing Wall is solemn and majestic. What attracts people most are the orthodox Jewish rabbis, with their long earlocks and black gowns and hats. They either press their foreheads and hands against the wall, praying in whispers, or sit facing the wall, holding their Bibles and chanting sacred scriptures. Their piety is beyond words.

For visitors who come here, it is popular to write a wish on a slip of paper and stuff it into one of the crevices between the stones. It is said that God can hear your voice this way.

In modern times, Jerusalem has become special and sensitive because of political issues and territorial disputes. But apart from these disputes, it is undoubtedly a cultural treasure of mankind.

Masada shall not fall again

Masada is the other holy place

for Jews. With the Judean Desert at its back, Masada faces the Dead Sea. The steep mountain is easy to defend and hard to capture. It has always been regarded as a natural barrier. There are ruins of an ancient castle on the mountaintop, built in the age of King Herod of the Kingdom of Judah. It was occupied by the Romans in AD 6. A few decades later, the Jews regained Masada as their base camp against Rome. But before long, Masada was surrounded by the Roman army, and the Jewish soldiers who defended the city struggled to resist for several months but finally were overcome. At the last moment, Commander Ben Yar drew lots to select 10 warriors from among the 960 people and ordered them to kill other compatriots and then kill themselves. Among them, two women and five children survived by hiding in the reservoir at the top of the mountain. They later told the story of the defenders, and Masada became a symbol of the Jewish spirit.

It is said that the Israel Defense Forces hold a solemn ceremony every year at Masada to memorialize the ancient heroes. The first lesson for new recruits is to come to Masada, where they must climb the mountain from foot to top along the daunting rocky serpentine path at the fastest speed possible and then swear to the National Flag: "Masada shall not fall again!"

Today's "People's commune"

In Israel, a magical country endowed with honey and milk, there are not only unique natural landscapes and cultural scenery but also collective communities with distinctive character-

istics known as kibbutzim. Kibbutz is a transliteration from Hebrew, originally meaning "collective" and "aggregation." Kibbutzim initially resulted from the Jews' return in the early 20th century and later developed into a unique socioeconomic organizational structure in Israel, similar to the once popular people's communes in China. For more than a century, relying on the organizational form of public ownership and the power of collectivism, kibbutzim have promoted agricultural and industrial production, making indelible contributions to the national rejuvenation of the Jews and the funding of Israel's construction.

On June 13, we went to the Ein Gedi kibbutz by car, the last stop of our trip in Israel. We were received by Ms Ron, head of the international relations department of Tamar city and also an old friend of Deputy Director Jia Ling in our delegation. There was not much time for us to chat before Ron took us to the community's big dining hall. With its simple but practical arrangement, the dining hall can accommodate hundreds of people at a time. The dishes were rich, with ingredients produced from the community farm.

After each person was served, Ron took us to sit around a single table. She told us about the past and present of Ein Gedi kibbutz. In the 1950s, a group of Jewish youths gathered here with enthusiasm. They grew grain and vegetables and got water by digging channels. The farm used a socialist system under which everyone was equal and the means of production were owned by the public. Articles for daily

use were allocated in a unified arrangement. Children were raised by community schools. People shared wealth and labor. And they discussed matters together and made decisions by voting. As a result, they were able to build a homeland in the desert by the Dead Sea.

Over time, the kibbutz has undergone some changes, while retaining its inherent attributes. For instance, the distribution of the means of livelihood has basically changed from equal distribution to distribution according to labor contribution. People now get freely disposable pay according to their work performance.

Meanwhile, the kibbutz is facing a membership drain. As more young people prefer living in cities, sustainability of the kibbutz is facing challenges. Ron joked that “as long as the botanical garden that brings together exotic flowers from all over the world exists, Ein Gedi will not decline”.

The three-day trip to Israel came to the end, and it was time to say goodbye. At the airport, I said to our Israeli friends who came to see us off: “Before coming to Israel, some domestic friends were worried about our security, as they heard that there were wars here.” They responded with laughter: “It seems that these Chinese friends have an old understanding of Israel from the last century.”

We finally bid farewell to each other with smiles and handshakes. In fact, to know any country, not just Israel, one can never solely rely on old books and hearsay! ■

When “the most Chinese” meets “the most Italian”

20 years friendship between Yangzhou, Rimini

Yang Le

This year marks the 15th anniversary of the establishment of the China-Italy comprehensive strategic partnership, and next year will commemorate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries. President Xi Jinping’s goodwill visit to Italy last March has ushered in a new era of Sino-Italian relations.

Twenty years have passed since Yangzhou, Jiangsu province, signed a sister-city agreement with the Rimini region of Emilia-Romagna.

Sister-city ties: Marco Polo was the initiator

Seven-hundred years ago when Italian traveler Marco Polo came to China, he was ordered by the emperor of the Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368) to govern the city of Yangzhou for three years, as recorded in his writings. If he followed through, he could be called a foreign administrator in Yangzhou’s history.

His book vividly describes every aspect of the city in the 13th century. That’s why Marco Polo is widely recognized as the forerunner of friendly exchanges between Yangzhou and Italy. A memorial hall was erected in Yangzhou to honor the great envoy from Italy.

On Oct 29, 1987, Jacob Panoso, director of tourism for the Veneto region (Venice is the capital and hometown of Marco Polo) presented a replica bronze lion in the city plaza to the city of Yangzhou. By then, Yangzhou had formed sister-city relations with six foreign cities in Asia, the Americas and Europe. So it took the chance to express interest in forging friendly links with an Italian city. However, because Venice had already established a sister-city relationship with Suzhou in 1980, it was impossible for Yangzhou to forge a similar relationship. Therefore, Yu Zhenxin, then-mayor of Yangzhou, asked friends from Veneto to introduce another Italian city.

Thanks to the efforts of many friends, Rimini, a city known for its tourism culture was identified. Rimini also expressed strong interest in Yangzhou, a famous historical city of China. Contacts began in November 1996 and bore fruit three years later. On March 16, 1999, at the invitation of the then Rimini Mayor Gigi, a Yangzhou goodwill delegation went to Italy for a visit, during which the sister-city agreement was signed. The ceremony was witnessed by Li Guoqing, the cultural consul from the Chinese embassy; Gao Cunming, Chinese consul general in Milan; and dozens of local people from the government, business and media.

Pink Night festival commemorates 10th anniversary

The signing of the sister-city relationship gave a boost to the two cities in all-around exchanges in economy and trade, finance, science and education, culture and sports. On July 3, 2009, at the invitation of the mayor, Ravaioli, Wang Kanghua, deputy director of the Standing Committee of the Yangzhou People's Congress led a goodwill and artists delegation to Rimini to attend Pink Night, a festival to celebrate the summer new year, which coincided with the celebration of the 10th anniversary of Yangzhou-Rimini relationship.

A grand welcoming ceremony was held at the city hall, with recollections of friendly exchanges over the past 10 years. Wang extended greetings from the people of Yangzhou and expressed a wish for strengthening economic cooperation for mutual benefits. Ravaioli

suggested that both sides make better use of the established mutual understanding to promote governmental and civil exchanges to lift the sister-city relationship to a new height. Both parties discussed and reached consensus on an exchange plan.

Artists from Yangzhou made a five-day display of traditional folk arts and presented shows during Pink Night, including paper-cutting, cross-stitch embroidery and puppet performances, which were warmly received by tens of thousands of residents and tourists. The puppet show was the most popular. Hula-Hula, Fan Dance, Qiong Flower Dance, Changing Faces and the Puppet Painting Show won applause from the audience, which was amazed to see puppets dancing, writing, painting and performing stunts, all manipulated by the dexterous hands of the puppeteers. Calling it a "feast for the eyes", they thanked the artists from Yangzhou.

Exploring codes of building world-famous cities

In February 2013, Xie Zhengyi, Party secretary of Yangzhou led a delegation to Rimini and paid a courtesy call on the mayor, Andrea Gnassi. Xie noted that Rimini is renowned across Europe and the world and said that his mission was to learn about the secret of building a globally renowned city.

Gnassi replied: "People are sometimes worried that their secrets are leaked for fear of being put into a disadvantage against their rivals. However, we don't feel the threat because we are bonded with each other over a dozen years. We are very happy to share what, how and why."

The delegation investigated the city museum and relics protection sites and learned how Rimini protects and restores its ancient city and how it handles tourism development.



In “misty and flowery” March 2013, Gnassi visited Yangzhou at the invitation of Xie. At the tourism seminar held during the visit, Gnassi, who had many years experience in the tourism industry, noted: “Both Yangzhou and Rimini pride themselves on having a beautiful landscape, long history, and deep-rooted culture. Rimini branded itself as the ‘real flavor of Italy’ all through its tourism campaigns. It may well be an idea to position Yangzhou as ‘a place to taste the real China’.”

During the meeting between Gnassie and Yangzhou’s mayor, Zhu Minyang, both sides reached consensus on building closer cooperation between the “most Chinese city” and the “most Italian city”.

For years, Yangzhou and Rimini have shared similar ideas in developing the idea of a “green tourism city” and have exchanged thoughts without reservation. During the 2018 Sino-European Tourism Year, the World Green Design Organization and Europe-China Business News co-sponsored the Green Tourism City/District Award with the support of dozens of Chinese and European countries, UNEP, UNESCO, the European Council and European Commission. Yangzhou and Rimini were both awarded the honorary title among many candidates.

Yangzhou Food Industry Park sets up European office

In March 2015, the Yangzhou Food Industry Park European Office was established in Rimini, paving the way for economic cooperation be-

tween Chinese and European cities. On April 3, the Chinese consul general in Milan, Wang Dong, visited the office. She praised the Yangzhou food company’s move to set up a European office as having “set a good example for Chinese enterprises to internationalize business” and noted that it contributed to the promotion of exchanges and cooperation between the two countries.

On May 30, the Yangzhou economy and trade delegation visited Rimini and cooperated with the Rimini Department of Industry & Commerce to host a promotion introducing the Yangzhou Food Industry Park. More than 100 people attended the event, including Irene Pivetti, former president of the Council of Italy and chairwoman of the Italy-China Friendship Association; Jamil Sadegholvaad, vice-mayor of Rimini; Pesaresi Alessandra, deputy chief of commerce and local business; and representatives from the Yangzhou office. Both sides exchanged ideas on projects of common concern. The successful event was believed to have helped the Yangzhou Food Industry Park unfold its business across Rimini and Italy.

The event climaxed when Pivetti, who has always been enthusiastic in promoting China-Italy business and friendly exchanges, was appointed consultant for Italy-China food, culture and economic development. In appreciation, she said: “I am truly honored with this pleasant surprise. With the Italy-China Friendship Association, I will make still greater efforts to push forward exchanges, which will be con-

ducive to the economy and friendship of the two countries.”

Looking into the future

Over the years, the two cities have supported each other ardently in many international events. Rimini athletes have not missed the China Yangzhou Jianzhen International Half-Marathon, which started in 2006. The World Canal Cities Expo was initiated in 2007, with two international gatherings sponsored by Yangzhou. Rimini also joined Yangzhou and some other cities in initiating World Historical and Cultural Canal Cities Cooperation Organization in 2009, which led to the establishment of the WCCO Secretariat in Yangzhou in 2016. Likewise, when Rimini hosted the Pink Night festival, the Best of Emilia-Romagna and other cultural and tourist events, Yangzhou was always there to support her sister city and happily presented its own culture heritage.

Twenty years have passed since Yangzhou and Rimini forged sister-city relations. On March 25, 2019, Rimini Vice-Mayor Jamil Sadegholvaad led a goodwill delegation to Yangzhou to discuss a plan for promotion and cooperation in the new era, and was warmly greeted by his counterpart, Liu Yutong. Both parties agreed that a series of celebrations would be held to commemorate the 20th anniversary, and concrete action plans were drawn for urban planning, tourism, food, horticulture, innovative culture, leisure and sports. ■

Picking floating wine cups from winding creek

A review of renowned Chinese and Japanese calligraphy and painting exhibition

Liu Wenwen

If there is common ground that connects China and Japan in art, it must be their ink art. Oriental ink art, Western oil painting, watercolor and other art forms, constitute typical art forms of the East and the West.

Ink has had a far-reaching impact. In terms of means of expression, Western art in the past often emphasized the observation of appearance and follows a scientific logic in depicting objects, which is a truth-seeking process. Only in the last century did artists try to explore the spiritual world and express their inner feelings.

By contrast, Chinese painting, especially the ink school, has featured imagination about the unknown world and meditation on the internal world of artists from the very beginning. In turn, it sublimated into pure spiritual paint-

ing.

This is the most fundamental distinction between Eastern and Western arts. Therefore, the acme of Western painting is a grand historical or religious scene with fine, vivid depiction, ending in an effect of photorealism. The acme of Eastern painting is to simplify the work to a few strokes, but with profound artistic content, reaching the peak of expression through philosophical freehand brushwork.

Only artists and audiences in countries like China and Japan can feel the subtle and clever mysterious world and capture the intangible philosophical speculation contained in this unique way of expression.

Calligraphy and painting are the quintessence of Chinese culture and are deeply loved by the Japanese. A

cultural art work bears unique significance only for the people in the culture. Calligraphy and painting have been the choices of Chinese art for thousands of years, which has also been the case in Japan. Ink art is a cultural bond of friendly exchanges between the Chinese and the Japanese people.

During the G20 summit in 2019, the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries held the Renowned Chinese & Japanese Calligraphers and Painters Works Exhibition in Kyoto, an ancient city with profound culture. Exhibited were about 100 works by Su Shishu, Xu Li, Xu Peichen, Li Xiao, Hirayama Ikuo and Kuiseko Hakuju. CPAFFC President Li Xiaolin brought seven works of her own for the exhibition as a specially invited guest. More than 100 guests

attended the opening ceremony of the exhibition, including Yukio Hatoyama, former prime minister of Japan; Shinya Ono, former vice-minister of education, culture, sports, science and technology; Kyoto prefecture's Governor Nishiwaki Takatoshi; Kyoto Mayor Kadokawa Daisaku; Yamadaand Keiji, former governor of Kyoto prefecture; and Hirayama Toko, curator of the Ikuo Hirayama Silk Road Museum. The exhibition has become another successful model of communication between China and Japan in the field of calligraphy and painting.

It is often said that calligraphy and painting are of the same origin, which doesn't just mean that calligraphy was born out of hieroglyphics. In fact, the most essential reason is that calligraphy and painting have a highly consistent spiritual origin: Both start from the inner world of the artist and achieve a balance between objects and the artist's ego. As President Li Xiaolin said in her speech, China and Japan are significant neighbors and 2019 is a key year to put into practice the important consensus of the leaders of the two countries. The foundation of friendship between China and Japan lies in the people, cultural exchanges and people-to-people mutual understanding.

Cultural homogeneity allows China and Japan to meet each other halfway. We should put art into culture, sublimate culture to people's aspirations and plant the seeds of friendship and affection in the hearts of the Chinese and Japanese people.

Some people say that Westerners will not be able to understand Chinese calligraphy and painting even after another 100 years. What they refer to is the mystery and extent of ink art. Interestingly, this is exactly the common point between Chinese and Japanese cultures. This year marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. In the past seven decades, China's culture and art have developed into an extremely rich landscape from a series of innovations, and many outstanding talents and art masters have emerged.

Influenced by modern art and its own profound historical heritage, Japan has created colorful styles. Chinese and Japanese cultures also differ. Yukio, the former prime minister, remarked: "There are many differences between Japanese and Chinese cultures, but I always remember that Japanese learned Chinese characters (*Hanzi*) from China. Characters are the foundation of all cultures and we should always be grateful to China. While facing the differences in politics and cultures, Japan and China should recognize their common ground. This is the basis for sound, long-term development of our two countries."

Picking floating wine cups from a winding creek (*Qushui Liushang*) was a ceremonial activity in ancient China that dates to the early years of the Western Zhou Dynasty (1100-771 BC). It later developed into an elegant activity in which the literati at social gatherings would write and chant poems

while drinking wine. They sat along a winding creek upon which wine cups were placed to be floated downstream. As a wine cup stops, the person nearest to it picks up the cup, drinks wine and then composes and chants a poem.

Wang Xizhi wrote the world-renowned *The Orchid Pavilion* in one of these activities, which won him the reputation as the sage of calligraphy. Yang Xiong of the Han dynasties said that "calligraphy is a depiction of a man's heart". His words were the most accurate interpretation of the fact that calligraphy and painting have the same origin.

This kind of metaphysical means of expression can only be fully understood by calligraphers and painters whose thoughts have common origins, such as those of China and Japan.

The present exhibition also has a spiritual resonance, which stems from a consistent understanding of depiction of minds and from bosom friends' understanding and valuing each other. It is a kind of *Qushui Liushang* in the new era.

Communication with characters is also fun. With common characters, communication between Chinese and Japanese cultures is bound to become a trend. As good neighbors, the two will work together for everlasting friendship. ■

Musical Dream of Youth takes stage in the Great Hall of the People

Liu Wenwen and Hua Jiaguang

On the evening of June 17, *Dream of Youth*, a musical created by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, took to the stage in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. It represented another innovative move by the association to stay abreast of the times, and to recognize the aspirations of college students, after staging the musicals *Ode to Peace* and *Silk Road of Youth*.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China and the 100th anniversary of the May 4 Movement. The CPAFFC worked with the China Friendship Art Exchange Association and Dalian Art College to take a close look at contemporary college students and their commitment to the ideal of "remaining true to our original aspiration and keeping our mission firmly in mind" from the perspective of youth. The performance, with its rich staging, told stories of Chinese people striving to realize their dreams under the leadership of the Communist Party of China. The performance followed the story line of the Craftsmen of the Nation Spirit, the Saihanba Spirit, the Nanniwan Spirit and the AHS Spirit.

AHS refers to Chinese scientists and technicians who worked hard defying extremely poor conditions in the 1960s and 1970s to develop China's own atomic bombs, h-bombs and man-made satellites.

Madame Chen Zhili, vice-chair of the Standing Committee of the 11th National People's Congress; CPAFFC Vice-President Hu Sishe; and Secretary General Li Xikui watched the performance, together with about 6,000 audience members, including diplomats from Italy, Cuba, Oman, Zambia and 30 other countries. University teachers and students from Beijing also attended.

Foreign diplomats in China spoke highly of the performance, praising the excellent artistic level of the Chinese college students and their positive, optimistic, responsible and dedicated spirit. They said they were touched by the spirit of continuing aspirations, striving with unremitting efforts and promoting independent innovation, as shown in the performance. They said that they got a more direct and profound understanding of the great achievements China had made and praised the CPAFFC for its efforts to spread Chinese culture. ■

Cultural exchanges between China and Japan have a long history. In the late 1970s, films, animated cartoons and pop music from Japan were so popular in China that many Chinese young people tried to follow the trend. From the late 1980s to the mid-1990s, Chinese film and music, especially from Hong Kong and Taiwan, also had a positive influence in Japan. Since the late 1990s, cultural exchanges between Chinese and Japanese youths waned, while those on the government level were mostly focused on such traditional areas as relics and art. Exchanges in modern culture, especially pop culture favored by young people, were rare.

Cross-border cultural exchanges are multidimensional, covering historical, modern, classic and popular culture. So far, our cultural exchanges with foreign countries have been mostly carried out in the historical and classical fields because different national cultures can easily strike accord, and thus are guaranteed to yield fruit. These exchanges have stood the test of history.

By contrast, exchanges in modern and pop culture involve more uncertainties and difficulties and are influenced by various factors in society.

Modern Japanese culture enjoys an important position in the world. For instance, the animation industry accounts for 0.3 percent of Japan's total GDP, while other industries related to animation have a larger proportion.

Since the start of reform and opening-up, China has witnessed rapid growth in its animation industry, which

Cartoon exhibition promotes exchanges between Chinese, Japanese youths

Liu Wenwen and Wang Hao

was influenced by its Japanese counterpart in its early development. In recent years, exchanges in the animation industry between China and Japan have declined for a variety of reasons. But Japanese animation continues to enjoy a high place in the eyes of Chinese young people. The animation culture, which features optimism, passion and ideals, motivates many young hearts.

Since 2015, China Friendship Art Exchange Association, affiliated with the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, has been attempting to introduce the exhibition *Hello One Piece* (one of Eiichiro Oda's works) to the Chinese mainland. After two years of negotiations with Shinichi Hirono, managing director of Shueisha Inc., the China Friendship Art Exchange Association finally got permission for exhibition on the Chinese mainland, with the help of the Kouzan Fine-Arts Company and Masanori Aoyagi, a former officer of the Agency of Cultural Affairs of Japan. It broke the record for copyright royalties for a single-brand animation exhibition in China and ushered in the year-and-a-half tour of *Hello One Piece* on the mainland.

It was unprecedented in cultural exchanges between Chinese and Japanese young people. *Hello One Piece* is the symbol of the contemporary Japanese animation culture and one of the best-known animated cartoons of the nearly 100-year-old Shueisha.

Shueisha, having published a lot of popular cartoons including *Slam Dunk*, *Dragon Ball*, *Naruto* and *Saint Seiya*, enjoys a special position in comic book fans' hearts. The Japanese animation culture comes from the picture books of earlier times. They provide enlightening reading material about history and social culture.

Like traditional serial pictures in modern China, they are one of the choices for leisure, entertainment and education in Japan. It is common in Japan to see people of all ages reading comic books in the streets, and especially in the subway. Generally speaking, cartoonists have profound art accomplishments and literary attainments. They write highly readable stories with a quirky twist, which have literary and ideological nature. The plot and characterizations are excellent.

Hello One Piece is such a story. Monkey D. Luffy and his friends chase

their dreams during a marine voyage. *Hello One Piece*, which has circulated more than 440 million copies worldwide, can be regarded as the world's No 1 cartoon book, with its wide appeal to readers.

In this WeMedia era, every individual becomes a producer and reader of news. This transforms young people's way of thinking and knowing the world. On one hand, they need to be cultivated in traditional and classic culture; on the other, knowing what the young are interested in is important for filling the gap in international cultural exchanges.

The preparation for and operation of the exhibition involved immense efforts from the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, China Friendship Art Exchange Association, Kouzan Fine-Arts Company, Shueisha and the operator, East Ridge Art Works Co. It reflects the exchanges between the two countries in culture, youth, animation industry, brand operation and copyright protection.

The good news is that the exhibition has been held successfully in Shenzhen and Chengdu, representing the first time an animation exhibition

has been displayed at provincial museums in China. *Hello One Piece* is on display at the third stop, the Shanghai Himalayas Museum. On the first day, a 500-meter-long line formed outside the museum as people waited for admission. A total of 40,000 visitors came in a one-month span to enjoy the show, which had been meticulously designed and presented by Shueisha, Toei Animation, ADK and DNP.

It is often said that art is a carrier of culture and that culture is a bridge joining peoples' hearts. Although there are increasingly frequent exchanges and close links between different countries, the cultural differences are becoming deeper because of variant geographical environments and cultural backgrounds. Recognizing these differences is a precondition for cultural exchanges. They give culture its unique charm and should be cherished.

China and Japan, separated only by a narrow strip of water, use similar characters for writing and share many cultural threads. It is necessary to have more knowledge about each other's culture so that their differences can be understood. This is why the Sino-Japanese relationship makes progress through twists and turns.

This year is the China-Japan Youth Exchange Promotion Year. The Sino-Japanese relationship stands at a new starting point. So it is good timing for the *Hello One Piece* exhibition, which will awaken the enduring memories from the 1970s to the 1990s and enhance the friendship between the two peoples. ■

Once upon a time in Bussiere's Garden

He Yan

My name is Jean-Louis Bussière. I am a cardiologist in France. With my half-Chinese blood, I have deep affection for China, as well as curiosity.

Jean Augustin Bussière, my father, was also a doctor. He had lived in China for 41 years before he returned to France. He died when I was just 3, but he has remained in my mind as an old man with a white beard. Until 2013, when my mother, Wu Sidan, passed away, I didn't realize that I had missed something.

The things my father left were an unsolved mystery, and I longed for answers: What do the Chinese characters in the book mean? Who was standing beside Father in the photo? How did he meet Mother? What did he experience in China? It was an enchanting piece of history but little known.

The call of the East

"History comes from the meeting of wills and chance." In March 2014, I visited my father's former residence in China for the first time. It is a place Chinese locals call Bussiere's Garden, and I had only seen it in pictures.

The garden is in Xishan, or "western hills" of Beijing, and was originally designed by Father himself. I climbed

the stairs along the slope until a tree-shaded three-story barbican-like granite building came into view. The square building faced east, with a board over the main entrance inscribed with the words "For the People's Health" by Li Shizeng, a celebrity during the Republic of China period.

On the other side of the building the path forked, leading to two other groups of buildings in the garden. I followed the stone road to the northern side, where stood the main building of a two-story Chinese-style mansion.

Seen from the front, the building was four-rooms wide, with gray-tiled gable roofs, a veranda and red pillars with characteristic floral patterns in the Suzhou style. At the front of the building was a flat piece of land embellished by arbors, fountains, and ponds. The second floor commanded a good view of the beautiful scenery in the distance.

This was where Father lived for more than three decades. I saw the chestnut tree in front that he had planted. It had grown to dwarf the mansion. I felt tears welling in my eyes. Sixty years ago, Father and Mother left the garden and never returned.

My father loved China. He had planned to spend the rest of his life in

this country and even chose a site for his future burial. However, in 1954 he had to leave China quickly because of some sudden change, while Mother was asked to stay.

Jean Augustin Bussière, my father, was born on July 9, 1872 in Chard, Limousin, in central France. He was enrolled at the Bordeaux Naval Medical School at the age of 20. After graduating with a doctoral degree, he was sent to Senegal, India, Vietnam and Iran to fight plague and cholera.

In April 1913, he arrived in Tianjin to become a medical officer at the French consulate and was hired to teach in the medical school of China's Beiyang Fleet. A few months later, he was called to Beijing to serve as the French minister counselor's medical officer and principal of St. Michel's Hospital (also known as French Hospital). Meanwhile, he was appointed adviser for the presidential medical team of the Beiyang government. For the next 41 years, he lived in China.

Father was a successful doctor who specialized in general medicine and surgery. In his private album he stored many photos with VIPs of the time, including Yuan Shih-kai, Wang Ching-wei, Mei Lan-fang, the ninth Panchen Lama and a few unidentified debutantes. His medical expertise was widely recognized, and he was frequently consulted by the upper class in Beijing. He was once given a Wenhui Medal Third Class by Yuan Shikai, president of China from 1912 to 1916, for his achievements and contributions.

Later, Father became a professor

of medicine at Sino-France University and the campus physician at Peking University. In 1932, upon the establishment of the medical school of Aurora University in Shanghai, he was appointed the first director. During the following six years, he regularly traveled between Beijing and Shanghai.

In China, Father enjoyed a decent life and respect from social elites. France gradually faded to a distant memory. Told to return to France alone at the advanced age of 82, Father felt he was faced with a serious challenge to both body and mind.

My mother, Wu Sidan, a local Chinese woman just turning 30, had been married to Father for two years. She was born into an affluent family. Her father, Wu Mingyuan, was general

manager of the Sino-French Industrial Bank. His brother, Wu Dingchang, was Chiang Kai-shek's chief of staff.

Mother loved calligraphy, painting, guqin music and traditional opera. She graduated from the art school of Fu Jen University. With instruction from famous artists Pu Jin and Pu Quan, she made fast progress. She held exhibitions of her works and often went out to sketch in the suburban Xishan mountains, which is where she met Father. She came into Father's life by taking charge of the household. All those years they were each other's dependents. Who would she depend on if Father left?

Meanwhile, André Hyacinthe Roquette dit d'Hormon, Father's close friend, was also packing to leave. He



Jean Augustin Bussière and Wu Sidan in Bussiere's Garden.

was an outstanding sinologist, well-spoken, always wearing a Mandarin jacket like a Confucian scholar. From the period of the late Qing Dynasty to the Republic of China period, he had taught at the Imperial University of Peking, was hired as a presidential adviser and was a professor at Peking University and Sino-French University. He helped promote the overseas work-study program in France and initiated the Franco-Chinese Sinology Study Center during the Japanese occupation of Beijing. The center had trained a group of sinologists for France.

Roquette never married. His career, fortune and virtually all his friends were in China. He was so obsessed with collecting Chinese ancient books that he had accumulated more than 15,000 copies. Despite the political turmoil in China, he managed to save the entire collection without a book being lost. The books were packed into 34 cases, and he boarded a steamer heading for France with them in early June 1954, together with other members of the Franco-Chinese Sinology Study Center.

Belated love

Father wrote to Premier Zhou Enlai expressing hope that Mother could travel with him. He said: "I regard China as my second motherland, the Chinese people my compatriots. I believe that I deserve to be regarded as a guest and friend to the country where I placed all my fortune and most precious feelings. ... Could an old and sick man like me be allowed to continue

living in Beijing without doing any job and without causing any burden? If not allowed by the law, could a delay until late September be considered? Besides, I hope that my wife will be allowed to travel with me while retaining her Chinese citizenship."

The letter was sent when Zhou was in Geneva for an international conference. Father had to wait anxiously for an answer.

I spent all my spare time in two years after 2012 sorting literature and photos left by my father. I felt that he had revived from the characters and images and had begun telling stories of his life to me.

In 1923, his first wife died of an illness. He then lived by himself until he met my mother.

I discovered that their connection came in 1940, when he cured her lung disease. Mother later joined the Kunqu Opera club at the university, where she learned from the famous opera singer Han Shichang. She once played the role of heroine — Du Li-niang's maid — in *The Peony Pavilion* in a public performance organized by the club. Her vivid performance of the image of an unaffected girl radiating the beauty of youth touched Father, who was surprised to find that his once innocent patient had now morphed into a charming woman.

If not for the poem written in Mother's notebook, I would never have known that father was a poet under his white doctor's coat. The poem in French reads: "As light as the shallow of a swallow, as lively as the spring in the hills, thy brush strokes created a

paradise, surrounded by bamboo and guarded by pigeons, for which I'd love to retire from the world."

I found a camera among the things left by my parents. For a while they were obsessed with photography and even what are now called selfies. The director of the activities seemed to be Mother. One evening, Father fell down accidentally. Mother happened to be there and helped him up from the ground. She tended him carefully. It was probably at that moment that they realized they were in love.

In 1952, they registered their marriage with the government and threw a party to celebrate with about 20 invited friends. Mother's family did not approve of the marriage at first. Her father was particularly angry that they hadn't consulted him beforehand. But grandmother sent a newly sewn bedding set as wedding gift behind grandpa's back. For many, the marriage was inappropriate, given the age gap of 52 years. Even Roquette was seriously against it. Many times, he tried to make Father think over the potential consequences of such an imprudent decision.

On the other hand, Roquette certainly respected Mother's virtues and even wrote a letter to father's two daughters: "As for Sidan, I must clarify that she has no other intention at all but pure sincerity. It is brave for a Chinese girl under such circumstances to be bound with a foreigner from an accused imperialist state."

However, mother had to pay for her bravery. The reply from the Foreign Ministry was that Father would leave

without her by late September. Before his departure, Roquette came to the garden to say goodbye. During the 40 years in Beijing, Roquette and Father were like brothers who met almost every week. But now they faced separation.

They recalled that every Wednesday evening, Bussiere's garden became a social hub for French people in China. Besides Roquette, there were poet and archaeologist Victor Segalen; sinologists Paul Pelliot and Marcel Granet; anthropologist, philosopher and paleontologist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin; adventurer Alexandra David-Neel; judge and Orientalist Gustave-Charles Toussaint; and paleontologist and archaeologist Emile Licent, all in their prime.

Alexis Léger, secretary of the French legation, was also a frequent visitor who didn't speak Chinese but was fond of Chinese culture. Roquette, whom he admired so much, gave him a Chinese name pronounced as Lei Xi-ai.

Léger was a diplomat but known as a poet. In 1960, he wrote the epic *Anabase* under the pen name of Saint-John Perse, which won him the Nobel Prize in literature. The epic was inspired by a trip to Mongolia with my father and others in May 1920 and was completed at the Taoyuguan Taoist temple in Xishan. On Sept 22, 1917, Léger wrote to Dad describing the scenery in Xishan as "endless pleasure during the night with extreme vanity and absolute quietness leading one to go deep into his dream and not return till the daybreak".

Before the building of the garden, father lived in the 6 Datianshuijin hutong near Wangfujing. The residence had two yards flanking a five-room hall. In the garden of the west yard were planted pines and cypresses, flowering cherry-apples and bamboo. The hall in the middle was where salons were often held. Salons began to be held in the new residence after the Bussiere Garden was built in 1923. Guests came and went. Father remained like a silent tree witnessing the changes of the seasons.

The "Xishan" of Auvergne

When summer came in 1954, the time remaining for Father was running out. He and Mother packed things distractedly, but a photo captured their attention, reminding them of the Japanese occupation of Peking after the July 7 Incident in 1937. At the time, the guerrilla warfare areas of the resistance forces, led by the Chinese Communists, were suffering a severe shortage of medicine. Some underground personnel came to my father for help.

Father began to secretly transport medicines to the Eighth Route Army using his own car. When gasoline was controlled and rationed as "strategic goods", Father had to use a bicycle to smuggle it to the Communists, each time carrying a few gallons and traveling several dozen kilometers per round trip.

Each time, he had to pass many checkpoints set up by the Japanese army to bring the goods he had bought to his garden residence. Underground

soldiers put the medicines and gasoline on a donkey cart and transported the materials across mountains to the resistance force's base area. Father had done seven surgeries for wounded soldiers of the Eighth Route Army with Mother's help.

Father once made a donation to build a bridge to make transportation easier. Li Shizeng inscribed the bridge with "Bridge of Doctor Bussiere". Father had great sympathy for farmers and never charged them for medical treatment. He said: "I am a peasant. Soil is in my blood. I have a natural bond with all those who labor on land."

The day for departure came soon. On Oct 1, 1954, Father, with 30 US dollars in his pocket, left for Tianjin, where he would board a ship bound for



Dr Jean-Louis Bussière with his wife in Beijing on Oct 25, 2018.

France. Saying goodbye was hard. Letting go of hands would mean parting forever. Mother accompanied father to the wharf and was watching him pass through customs when a policeman ran over with a slip of paper. It was a pass for Mother, signed by Premier Zhou. Mother finally was able to travel along. Father opened the birdcage he was carrying and set free the lark he had intended to take to France. Wearing a *qipao cheongsam* and in tears, Mother followed him to board the ship.

They settled in central France in a small village called Auvergne in Chateauneuf-le-bain. The village had only about 400 residents. Father renovated an old building beside a river. Mother would often look at the mountains on the other side, which were covered with lush woods and emitted steam from hot springs, and would be lost in a *deja vu*, as if she had gone back to Beijing's Xishan.

They crossed the river every day to cultivate the land and plant trees. Mother had never done any farm work but soon became a real country woman. In his letter to Roquette, father wrote: "Sidan helped me farm the land. Illness had almost stopped me from doing anything." Mother couldn't bear to see Father laboring, so she took on most of the work.

By that time Roquette had moved to Abbye de Royaumont, which was built in the 17th century. UNESCO was planning to publish a series featuring Oriental literature. *Dream of the Red Chamber* was on the list. Roquette got the job of proofreading its French edi-

tion. Since then, he never had to sell anything from his collection of Chinese ancient books to cover living expenses.

The work took him 10 years. The lamp in his room in the Abbye always burned through the night. Roquette wrote to Father: "My dear brother, I feel physically and spiritually exhausted by the hard labor. As I write these lines, the day breaks and the sun is rising to cast rosy rays on the chestnut trees."

I was born the second year after Father and Mother settled in France. Father was happy to have a son at the age of 83 and wrote to Roquette, who replied soon. He gave me a Chinese pet nam "Xiao Ruier".

In June 1957, Father decided to visit Roquette. We three traveled to Paris by train. There was no direct transportation to Abbye de Royaumont, so we had to walk the last few kilometers. Father had trouble walking and needed a cane for support. He stopped every hundred steps or so.

It had been three years since they last met in Beijing. The reunion would be their final farewell. Roquette put aside what he was doing and showed us around the Abbye excitedly. We took our first and last group photo under the church spire.

Soon after that trip, Father fell ill. On Feb 5, 1958, he left this world at the age of 86 in his house in Chateauneuf-le-bain. Mother informed Roquette by letter and wrote: "There is nothing but emptiness in my mind. I am heartbroken ... he was so quiet in the last three hours, like a dying candle. I told him

that our hearts are together. I will follow his will to bring Jean-Louis up in France. I told him that I had the courage and that he need not worry. He understood my words but could not answer. He held my hands in his. I knew my own cross would carry more bitterness and would last longer."

Mother and I depended on each other for survival. She worked in the mountains and painted in her spare time for art exhibitions. I grew up and entered the same military medical university where Father once studied. After graduation, I became a cardiologist. Mother died at the age of 89 in June 2013 to reunite with my father in the other world. Bussiere's Garden was left untended for half a century. I thought it had been forgotten by everybody. To my surprise, the garden had been renovated by the government of Haidian district in 2013 and I was invited to visit China the following year. I saw my father's garden for the first time and met some of his patients, who told me they had never forgotten him. In 2015, the garden was named the China-France Cultural Exchange Base.

In late October 2018, I traveled to Beijing with my wife for activities commemorating the 60th anniversary of Father's death. On the morning of Oct 25, I gave a speech on Father's life, illustrated by pictures displayed in the peace garden. When I returned to my seat next to the writer, who was to help me write this article in Chinese, I said: "My father was not only a Chinese culture lover but also a humanist." ■

Lao Dong and his story of a small city

Lan Yan

In the eyes of his acquaintances, Lao Dong is a man with many stories.

A retired soldier of strong build and cheerful disposition, Lao Dong is always energetic in his work and dealings with people. He seems to be endowed with an ability of making everyone his close friend the first time they meet, whatever their age or nationality. This ability has helped him in his work. Put in his own way, he “has friends everywhere”, or, quoting an ancient Chinese poem, “Long distance separates no bosom friends.”

The city of Fushun, where Lao Dong lives, is a fourth-tier city with a population of 2.3 million. It was once known as China’s coal capital. In the 1960s and 70s, nearly every family there had a member working in the coal mines. The overall development of the city relied heavily on the coal industry. In recent years, as coal resources have shrunk, industrial upgrading and transformation have become an urgent need for the city. This is reflected in its relations with the outside world.

Since the early 1980s, the coal industry has connected Fushun with in-

ternational friendship cities, such as Japan’s Iwaki and Yubari, and with Germany’s Gladbeck. Lao participated in the establishment of friendship city relationships between Fushun and Gladbeck. In the 1980s, China and Germany began cooperating on coal mine security. Fushun’s western open-air mine was chosen as the experimental site. Germany donated ventilation equipment and other instruments to the site. During the process, a German expert introduced Fushun to Gladbeck, which showed strong interest and expressed willingness to establish friendly relations. After obtaining an overall understanding of Gladbeck, Fushun also expressed hope of cooperating with Gladbeck, thereby opening a new phase of friendship with European countries. Subsequently, the two cities dispatched delegations for mutual visits and began negotiations on establishing friendship city relations.

During this period, numerous letters, faxes and international calls (emails had not yet become popular), were exchanged between the two cities with repeatedly revised versions of

MOUs. Lao Dong and the interpreter often waited by the fax machine, which was also used to receive international calls, for numerous rounds of detailed discussions with their German counterparts. After one year of exchanges, the two cities officially signed an agreement to establish friendship city relations, forging the 14th pair of friendship cities between China and Germany.

International cooperation at the local government level was brisk in the 1990s. Lao Dong, then in his prime of life, was busily engaged in this work. He was often seen standing in front of a map of world, drawing lines between Fushun and cities on the other side of the world. Those lines mostly pointed to Finland, Britain, Germany and the United States. Fushun gradually expanded its international partnerships to more than 10 cities and countries in Europe and the Americas.

Lao Dong once told a story of a 1-yuan coin. When he visited Kokkola, a friendship city of Fushun in Finland, an environmental monitoring project was on the agenda. The company in-

volved in the project was in a neighboring city. Lao Dong and his colleagues decided to drive to that city.

On the way, Lao Dong realized he had not prepared enough gifts for his hosts. Learning that the project leader was a coin collector, he suddenly had an idea. Discussions about the project went on smoothly, and upon leaving, Lao Dong presented a picture album about Fushun and a 1-yuan coin to the project leader as a gift. He expressed his appreciation for what the Finnish official had done and invited him to visit China. The project leader had never visited China before. Lao Dong told him to use the 1-yuan coin when arriving in China to make a phone call to let him know.

“I will go to the airport to meet you right away. If you do not come, just keep the coin as a souvenir,” he said. The project leader smiled an “I know” smile.

The project turned out to be extremely successful. The project leader visited Fushun and became good friends with Lao Dong.

Nothing, not even mountains or seas, can separate people with common goals and ideals. Since establishing friendship city relations more than 20 years ago, Fushun and Kokkola have sent delegations to visit each other every year, promoting pragmatic exchanges in education, environmental protection, sports, food manufacturing, overseas students exchanges and labor.

As mutual understanding deepened, Lapland Food, Finland’s largest

dairy producer, located in Kokkola, eventually made an investment in Fushun by establishing a joint venture, which was the first of its kind in China’s fresh dairy industry.

Lao Dong concluded through his experience that when friendship cities were first established, one could only start with small matters, but as time went on, the seemingly trivial matters, put together, would amount to a big deal, achieving win-win results to benefit people of both cities.

With the robust economic development of the first two decades of the 21st century, China’s comprehensive strength and influence have grown dramatically. More and more countries in the world are willing to work with China to enhance cooperation and exchanges.

Coinciding with the world’s historical trend and trying to meet its ever-growing need for communication with the world, Fushun has formed a new

strategy for international cooperation, targeting Asia, Europe, the US and Oceania in that order of priority. Markings of red, yellow and blue were made on the global map in Lao Dong’s office.

It was also during this period that Fushun’s exchanges with foreign countries became as diverse as the colorful patches on that map. Those exchanges and cooperation projects focused more on people-to-people and cultural sectors. Unlike the usual early period after people make their first acquaintance, the values of East and West immediately became deeply integrated. This integration first took shape in education.

In early 2008, at the invitation of our association, a delegation from West Wood High School in the UK visited Fushun No 2 Middle School in a bid to find a Chinese partner. After this visit, both schools jointly applied to the Subjects Cooperation Fund offered by the UK’s Department of Education. A project called Homestay Mutual Visits



and Cultural Integration was officially established.

By the end of January 2010, the first group of 10 students from Fushun No 2 Middle School traveled to the town of Leek in central England for a six-day education exchange and homestay visit. When the students arrived, they were welcomed by rounds of “Hello, Duck”, a local form of greeting. Their visit also set in motion a whirlwind China craze. Every resident of the town was excited.

During their stay, the students learned a lot about the daily lives of the British people. They saw how they separated their garbage into different categories, how British parents talked to their children on equal footing and how much freedom British children had at home.

They also attended to lessons in British high schools. They studied and made reports alongside British students and together cooked traditional British food known as sausage and mash. In return, they taught British students how to make *jiaozi* dumplings and tie Chinese knots. Some of them even connected live online with their parents back home to ask how to make dumpling stuffings when lacking certain ingredients.

When visiting Oxford University, the art museum and Beatles Museum, and watching matches of the Leek Town soccer team, the Chinese students felt a strong atmosphere of culture and the joy the game brought to the local people. The Post Times of Leek cov-

ered the exchanges between Fushun and local schools at length, wishing to establish a new type of relationship between the two regions.

Over the next few years, Fushun worked with Yhteislyseon Lukio high school in Finland, and high schools in Japan and Singapore on homestay student exchange programs. High schools in Fushun have since been more actively engaged in robust international cooperation, creating win-win situations through people-to-people exchanges and mutual trust.

The happiest thing Lao Dong enjoyed in those days was to see young people from different countries, full of vigor and vitality, sit together sharing dreams and aspirations.

Lao Dong says that a city should possess its own culture and soul. In his eyes, Fushun is a city with soul. Its ancient industrial civilization has laid a solid foundation for its industrial development and unique culture.

The legacy of Chinese military hero Lei Feng is still appreciated and admired by Fushun citizens. As the Belt and Road Initiative sets the rhythm of the new era, China has shown itself as a great power on the international stage and expressed an unprecedented concern for the destiny of mankind. As the city where the Lei Feng legacy originated, Fushun has many stories to let the world know.

For a time, Lao Dong was often seen visiting the Lei Feng Museum, and stacks of documents were piled on his desk. He was working on the pro-

motion of Lei Feng’s legacy worldwide and wanted more people to better understand Fushun as a city full of shining humanity and glory.

On March 5, Lao Dong took the story of Lei Feng to Malaysia. A photo exhibition about Lei Feng’s legacy was successfully held in Kuala Lumpur, arousing great interest and rounds of discussion. The exhibition received favorable comments throughout its run.

Later, as Lao Dong entered his 50s, whenever the small city of Fushun and its international partnerships were mentioned, he always squinted his eyes when telling the anecdotes, as if he were counting family heirlooms.

He remembered the Japanese city of Yuparo, one of Fushun’s first friendship cities. Both had been running out of coal. However, Yuparo had successfully transformed itself into a tourist destination, while Fushun had yet to do so. Although interactions between the two cities were inconsistent, sweet melon seeds — gifts from Yuparo — had been sowed in the soil of Fushun, bearing abundant fruit with delicate fragrance. Before his retirement, Lao Dong had wanted to do more to make sure those friendship relations would be carried on from generation to generation.

(The author is an official of the Fushun Municipal People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries.) ■

Joseph Needham and Rewi Alley's China complexes

Liu Guozhong

Doctor Joseph Needham and Rewi Alley first met in Alley's cave dwelling in Shuangshipu town, Feng county, Shaanxi province, on Sept 18, 1943. Alley soon occupied a special status among Needham's close friends. Even many years later, when speaking of Alley, Needham remarked: "There cannot be a dearer friend and a more trusted colleague."

Although both of them came from Western countries, Needham and Alley were hardly the same in terms of education and their life and work experiences in China. Yet they shared the same passion for Chinese culture, and both supported the Chinese people's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1931-45), closely watched and helped unveil to the world China's achievements in building its economy and made positive contributions to the promotion of cultural exchanges between East and West and nurturing of people-to-people friendship. In 2009, when celebrating the 60th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, China Radio International,

the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the State Administration of Foreign Experts Affairs initiated Chinese Connection, an online rating program selecting the 10 most famous foreign friends of the Chinese people. Needham, the Briton who made ancient Chinese science and technology known to the world, and Alley, the New Zealander who had spent 60 years living and working in China, were both on the list of those honored — international friends who in the eyes of more than 56 million netizens had made the greatest contributions to China over the past 100 years and were most respected and loved by the Chinese people and most profoundly connected with China.

This article offers an analytical view of how their China complexes took root and what they contributed to China's construction and development.

Belief in Marxism

Although not a member of the Communist Party, Needham thought and behaved in a conspicuously Marxist

way. Many scholars, such as British Marxism historian Eric Hobsbawm, Australian humanist Helena Sheehan (who believed in scientific Marxism) and Gregory Blue, a professor in the Department of History at the University of Victoria, Canada, who had been a private assistant to Needham, regarded him as a true Marxist. Chinese scholars Yuan Zemin and Wang Fengxiang said Marxism had a strong impact on Needham's career.

According to Needham himself, in his studies of the history of Chinese science and technology, he used the method of historical materialism, or put another way, the Marxist method of studying science and technology history. He actually considered himself a Bolshevik when in high school. He read Karl Marx's *The Capital* and Friedrich Engels' *Dialectics of Nature* and became an extreme leftist in the British Labour Party and remained so throughout his life.

Despite the criticism from all sides because of his political slant, his sympathy toward leftists and his

friends, he stuck to his beliefs. When he heard that Chairman Mao Zedong had announced the founding of the People's Republic of China, he burst into tears. He declared openly that communism was the best social and political system for the governance of a country as big as China.

In his search for the truths of the Chinese revolution, Alley arrived in Shanghai in April 1927. He found a job at the Shanghai Municipal Council. In his capacity as an inspector at a factory, he witnessed the miserable lives of child workers under the control of the institution of indentured labor.

He traveled to Wuxi in March 1929. Six young people there were sentenced to death simply because they had fought for better living conditions. It greatly shocked him. He returned to Shanghai agonized by what he had witnessed and sought opinions from his friend Henry Baring, a school principal and an English newspaper editor in the city. At that time, Alley had no fixed political beliefs. All he had in mind were general principles of kindness. Baring offered him a copy of *The Capital*, and he read through it, finding its analysis to be sound.

Alley's experiences at the factory helped him understand the book. Baring not only provided him with works of Marx and Lenin, but also exchanged thoughts with him. His interests in purchasing and reading books on social progress grew. In 1934, a group of like-minded people, including German political economist Hans Shippe, American journalist Agnes Smedley

and Austrian progressive Ruth F. Weiss, formed a Marxism study group. From time to time, the group met to read and discuss Marxism classics such as *Manifesto of the Communist Party* and *Wage-Labor and Capital*, as well as other theories on surplus value, history of social development and the path of revolution in Asian societies.

As a result of this systematic study, Marxism became deeply rooted in Alley's mind. Years later, when he was working at the Bailie School, which was dedicated to training people for the Gung Ho movement, Alley put into practice Marx's thought that "part-time working and part-time schooling is the embryo of future education" and explored its application, training people in technical skills for building up China. Alley was a true practitioner of Marxism.

Support for the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression

When Japan invaded China, the British government explicitly declared that it would not impose sanctions on Japan. That infuriated Needham. Apart from participating in left-wing book clubs in London, he also went on marches supporting China's boycott of Japanese goods as his time permitted. He became known as one of the most ardent supporters of the Chinese people's war against Japan. In February 1943, Needham left the UK for China. It was the first Western professional delegation of scientists, led by an academician, to visit China since the

Wanli period of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). The visit was of historical significance.

During his stay in China, Needham served as science counselor to the British embassy. He soon prepared and established the Sino-British Science Cooperation Office, through which he provided Chinese institutions of science and technology, in areas blocked by the Japanese army, with scientific documents, instruments and chemicals for experiments. By conveying information and promoting science and technology exchanges, he helped preserve and promote scientific development in the war-torn country.

From spring 1943 to autumn 1945, he visited 10 Chinese provinces, covering more than 25,000 kilometers and nearly 300 institutions of education and research. In three years, he helped deliver 138 scientific papers written by Chinese scholars to the West. Eighty-five percent of those papers were published. A total of 6,775 books, various scientific equipment and 200 microfilmed periodicals on engineering and medical science were brought to China from the UK and donated to scientific and research institutes. He also applied, through the Sino-British Science Cooperation Office, to obtain £360,000 from the British Council to buy equipment for experiments at Chinese scientific institutions that had been forced to move to inland China and were in dire condition. The move provided timely support for China's science and technology research, which was still in its early stage of

development.

Meanwhile, the British Council dispatched six British and 10 Chinese scientists to different places in China for investigations.

When he was back in the UK, Needham went on the air to tell the British people what he had learned about Chinese scientists' lives and work during the war, in a bid to solicit international support for the Chinese people in the war countering Japanese aggression.

To support China, Rewi Alley initiated Gung Ho, or industrial cooperation, along with Helen and Edgar Snow. With the joint efforts of Alley and his friends, the China Industrial Cooperation Association was established in Wuhan in August 1938. Alley was appointed its executive director. He was also technical consultant to the association's executive council, which allowed him to carry out Gung Ho missions in areas under the control of the enemy.

From 1938 to 1942, Alley devoted all his energy to Gung Ho, trying to solve financial and technical problems in the movement's development. He visited inland China, where the Eighth Route Army and New Fourth Army were based. He talked to local farmers about the importance of forming cooperatives and directed preparations for the establishment of cooperatives and their regional branches. Despite difficulties in transportation, he visited more than 10 Chinese provinces, traveling no less than 10,000

kilometers.

According to incomplete statistics, Gung Ho spread to 17 provinces during the war, involving more than 1,700 cooperatives and 25,000 cooperative members, and benefiting more than 200,000 job seekers and refugees. The cooperatives produced more than 120,000 pieces of equipment and agricultural tools, 820 million square yards of canvas and other types of cloth for civilian use, 2.5 million military blankets, more than 11 million military suits and shoes and daily outfits, and other daily necessities, including leather, candles, soap and food. The products effectively supported Chinese armies fighting the Japanese aggressors.

During this period, Alley's work aimed at consolidating the basic structure of Gung Ho. Under his guidance, cooperatives united themselves into production associations, providing marketing and credit services. After 1943, in addition to his continuous participation in activities organized by the International Committee for the Promotion of Chinese Industrial Cooperatives, Alley mainly focused on the training of technicians and managers for Gung Ho, as well as on the construction and development of the Bailie School.

In 1944, when the international community was increasingly worried about the situation in China, Alley published an article in the August edition of the American journal *Free World*. He pointed out that Chinese Gung Ho not only constituted an

economic defense against Japanese invasion but was also useful in unifying China. His efforts in promoting Gung Ho conveyed to the world the Chinese people's determination to win the war.

The movement also played an active role in attaining international assistance. Gung Ho symbolized the Chinese people's faith in final victory against the Japanese fascists and their pursuit of democracy and progress.

Building a bridge of friendship between the Chinese people and people of the UK and New Zealand

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, Western countries, the US in particular, adopted a hostile stance toward China. They denied the legitimacy of the new Chinese government and imposed a trade embargo in an attempt to thwart the country's economic growth.

Despite their different situations, Needham and Alley both took it upon themselves to increase mutual understanding and friendship between the people of China and their own countries.

Needham was a true supporter of the new China. To enrich the British public's understanding, Needham, along with Derek Bryan and his wife, Liao Hongying, established the Britain-China Friendship Association in 1955. Needham was elected the chairman. Within 10 years, the association had enrolled 2,000 members to engage in consolidating connections between the UK and China. They criticized the Brit-

ish government's lukewarm China policy, lobbied to increase trade with China and initiated discussions on China's lawful seat in the United Nations.

After the Britain-China Friendship Association was dissolved, Needham established and chaired the Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding in 1965 to keep the cause of friendship going. When China was in complete isolation from international society, the SACU kept its connections. As a matter of fact, the SACU was the only channel through which Britons could visit China in the late 1960s. Needham himself visited many times.

Since its establishment, the SACU has been working to help the British people understand more about China, diminish misunderstandings between the two countries and clarify distorted facts. It made indispensable contributions to the promotion of Britain-China friendship.

In May 2015, the SACU celebrated its 50th anniversary. Chinese Ambassador Liu Xiaoming attended the celebration and pointed out:

"In the past 50 years, the Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding has been working to increase mutual understanding between China and the UK and between the people of the two countries. Facilitated by its efforts, misunderstanding and prejudice have been reduced. Influenced by its passion, delegations made up of ordinary citizens have visited each other. It has unveiled the real China to the British people, assuming responsibility

as a major channel for promoting mutual understanding, exchanges and cooperation between the two countries and between China and the West, making indelible contributions to the development of China-UK relations."

In 2015, the society initiated a plan called the Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding 2065, looking forward to its goals over the next 50 years. The society, reviewing the past while setting its eye on the future, would implement an innovative way of development, functioning as a bridge linking the two countries.

After the founding of New China, many foreign expatriates chose to leave, but Alley stayed to continue his efforts to promote friendship. It had always been his aspiration to help people understand each other through practical exchanges and to forge mutual trust. This was of particular significance to the newly established republic. He wrote to his friends in New Zealand, saying:

"At this particular time, the best possible assistance to China from overseas friends is to do everything possible to help the Chinese people maintain and strengthen friendship. May I venture to suggest that you establish the New Zealand-China Friendship Association with yourselves as core members. It is my honor to keep in touch with you and I will do my best to help."

Following his suggestions, starting from the 1950s, some New Zealand organizations in Auckland,

Whangarei and Christchurch formed the New Zealand-China Friendship Association. The establishment of the association not only increased people's understanding about China but also changed some preconceived notions.

The association played a positive role in New Zealand's recognition of the People's Republic of China. The two countries officially established diplomatic relations in 1972, expanding channels for mutual visits.

During the process, Alley played a unique role. He was known as a hospitable host for visitors from New Zealand. His home on Taijichang Street welcomed numerous delegations from the New Zealand-China Friendship Association, and all the guests treasured the honor to be invited to his home. Chris Elder, New Zealand's ambassador to China, said: "Despite different views held by past governments of New Zealand toward Rewi Alley, he has remained a strong connection linking ordinary citizens in New Zealand with China. He was a strong force in propelling the establishment of the New Zealand-China Friendship Association."

After the 1950s, Alley published books and made speeches on tours in New Zealand, improving his countrymen's understanding of China. He had many projects to finish in China, but he knew the particular importance of introducing China. Jack Ewen, former president of the New Zealand-China Friendship Association, said: "Rewi Alley and George Hatem

have paramount enthusiasm and unparalleled capability in introducing China.”

It is safe to conclude that Alley built a special bridge linking China with New Zealand. His long-term efforts helped connect people of different cultures and ideological habits. During his visit to New Zealand, Li Peng, then China’s premier, called Alley the symbol of people-to-people friendship between China and New Zealand. Li’s counterpart, David Lange, said Alley was the founder of the friendship between New Zealand and China.

In 2012, the New Zealand-China Friendship Association celebrated its 60th anniversary. Liao Hui, vice-chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, addressed the ceremony. In his speech, Liao expressed appreciation for the positive contributions made by the association in enhancing people-to-people friendship and promoting exchanges and cooperation between the two countries.

At the International Forum on Rewi Alley’s Internationalism and the Belt and Road Initiative held during the First Silk Road (Dunhuang) International Cultural Expo in 2017, Dave Bromwich, incumbent president of the association, stressed the significance of reviewing and cherishing the basic concepts followed by Alley when he founded it 65 years ago. Those concepts, Bromwich said, included promoting people-to-people

and cultural exchanges, strengthening friendly exchanges and supporting economic cooperation.

In its everyday work, the New Zealand-China Friendship Association has preserved and kept alive Alley’s legacy — Bailie education, cooperatives and New Zealand-China friendship.

Promoting Chinese culture

Both Joseph Needham and Rewi Alley loved Chinese culture. From the perspective of Westerners, they told the Chinese story to Western audiences, helping them understand. *Science and Civilization in China*, a monumental work by Needham, was written from a Western perspective, and with Western language and logic. It made the great ancient Chinese civilization known in the West. English readers obtained a better understanding of China’s great contributions to the world.

Needham took an interest in China in 1937. That year, three Chinese students arrived in the UK for their doctoral education. One of them was Lu Gwei-Djen, whose mentor was Dorothy M. Needham, wife of Dr. Needham. Lu did not expect that she and her fellow Chinese would have a profound influence on him, but a mystic magnetic force emerged between them.

The arrival of the young Chinese accelerated Needham’s interest in Chinese history and culture. To acquire a deeper understanding of Chinese culture, he picked up the study of its language in 1938. By 1942, before

his departure for China, he could speak Nanking Mandarin and write in Chinese.

He was fully aware of the profound bias Western people had against the Chinese and Oriental culture. Subconsciously, they believed that Western culture and knowledge were superior to any other. Needham saw this belief as the outcome of puerility and ignorance and tried to correct it by writing a book, hoping to change people’s minds.

From 1943 to 1945, he worked on the book. With courage-fueled his dauntless effort, Needham went to China to conduct field investigations and study Chinese history and science. His report was published in *Nature* to let the world know about Chinese science and technology.

In 1945, he and his wife co-authored *Chinese Science*, their first book about China. Back at Cambridge after his service to UNESCO, Needham devoted himself wholly to the study of Chinese science history. On Aug 18, 1954, the first volume of *Science and Civilisation in China* was published and well-received by the international intelligentsia. Arnold Toynbee, Cyril Hinshelwood, Richard Boston and Arthur Hummel all had high regard for the book. Laurence Picken, one of Needham’s colleagues and a renowned scholar of Chinese music, said in the *Manchester Guardian* that what Needham had achieved was “an immense success ... and was perhaps the greatest move by far taken by

a single person in comprehensive historical research and cross-culture exchange.”

Soviet scholars said Needham’s work “demonstrated the highest respect for the Chinese people, their creativity and their contributions to Chinese civilization.” The publication of the book greatly enriched people’s knowledge and understanding.

Needham returned to China in 1952, followed by more visits in 1958, 1964, 1972, 1978, 1984 and 1986, accompanied by Doctor Lu Gwei-Djen. While there, he met with old friends, made new ones, traveled across the country, collected materials for his writing and delivered speeches.

He devoted the latter half of his life to the writing and editing of *Science and Civilisation in China*, which was originally planned to include 35 books in seven volumes with more than 10 million words.

Starting from the 1950s, a team of scholars from the UK, US, China, Germany, France and Canada worked on the treatise. By 2000, 17 books had been published. This work greatly increased Westerners’ knowledge of Chinese culture and promoted scientific progress both in China and the world at large.

Needham’s greatest contribution was that he used plain, simple English that most Westerners could understand to explain China’s historical achievements in science and technology. The books were the most precious gift Needham gave to China

and helped spread the country’s story to the West.

The East Asian History of Science Library and the Needham Research Institute he founded have become chief institutions for Westerners to study the history of science development in China and East Asia. Both institutions are frequently visited by scholars from around the world. Through these institutions, Needham’s legacy will be kept alive for future generations.

As with Needham, Rewi Alley studied ancient Chinese civilization during his trips, and he collected new material to introduce to the outside world. When China began contacting peace activists after the founding of the new republic, Alley had already acquired a better understanding of the importance of reducing the bias and misunderstandings of people in the West against China.

Alley thought the best thing he could do was to introduce China through his writings. He realized he should introduce not only the dramatic changes that had taken place in the country but also the construction projects and major events that were then going on. Readers of his reports would far outnumber the audience that would listen to his lectures in other countries.

Yo Banfa, written by Alley in the early 1950s in the form of diaries, contains his observations of ordinary Chinese people. It was translated into several languages and proved a great success. Starting with this

report, he published a sequence of reports and books, including *People’s Power*, a book about ordinary farmers and workers uniting in cooperative organizations to strive for a better life, and *Humanitarian China*, which described places seldom visited by foreigners, such as Lanzhou, Xining and Baotou.

In addition, he composed prose and poems based on facts he had witnessed during his visits and stories about changes in people’s lives and their morale. These writings were all well-received by his readers. What Alley did was to mix with ordinary people and truthfully record what he had seen to convey to Western readers how hundreds of millions of Chinese were building a new world with creativity and hard work.

Meanwhile, he never avoided the problems China faced. His objective reports from the perspective of a Westerner won him credibility among Western readers.

Alley wrote poems describing Chinese people’s daily lives, translated ancient Chinese poems into English and introduced Chinese pottery in plain language. He tried to get Western people to understand more about ancient Chinese culture.

David Lange, former prime minister of New Zealand, said that Alley’s efforts were greatly admired and commended by the Chinese people and appreciated by people in other parts of the world. A prolific writer, Alley introduced Chinese culture and

Links between Shakespeare and Tang Xianzu debuts in British Museum

Jiangxi Friendship Association

history and demonstrated the value of friendship and humanity for human society. His efforts also contributed to the close relationship between New Zealand and China.

Though they observed Chinese cultural history and present-day developments from different angles, both Needham and Alley introduced Chinese culture to the Western world and helped lessen the West's bias and misunderstandings about Chinese culture and the new China.

Needham was a renowned chemist, a member of the Royal Society and an academician of the British Academy of Sciences. He pioneered British scientific assistance to China in the early 1940s and devoted the rest of life to researching the history of Chinese science and promoting friendship between the people of the two countries.

Alley witnessed the sufferings of the Chinese people in the first half of the 20th century. During the Chinese People's War Against Japanese Aggression (1931-45), he initiated the Gung Ho movement to support the Chinese armies on the economic front. After 1949, he devoted himself to publicizing China's domestic achievements and the promotion of friendship between the people of China and New Zealand.

Both contributed immensely to China's well-being and development and to the world's understanding of the country. They are well worth Chinese people's admiration and respect. ■

On June 25, the Integration of Culture and Tourism Practice and Knowledge Sharing Session was held at the British Museum as part of China Tourism and Culture Week. Christopher Kettle, chairman of the Stratford-upon-Avon District Council, was the first to share his experiences and thoughts about promoting links between William Shakespeare, the English poet, and Tang Xianzu, the Chinese playwright of the Ming Dynasty, with an audience of nearly 140 government officials and scholars from the fields of culture, tourism, science, education, industry and research.

Kettle said the link between Shakespeare and Tang Xianzu sprang from the initiative of President Xi Jinping, launched during Xi's visit to Britain in 2015, to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the deaths of Shakespeare and Tang Xianzu.

Subsequently, the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, the Jiangxi Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, the city of Fuzhou (Tang Xianzu's birthplace) and Stratford-upon-Avon (Shakespeare's birthplace) carried out exchanges and cooperation for four years. A peony pavilion (named for Tang's masterpiece) was constructed and moved to Stratford-

upon-Avon. Fuzhou built Sanweng Park to commemorate Tang Xianzu, Shakespeare and Cervantes (hence the word "sanweng", literally "three venerable literati"). The city also plans to build a replica of the town where Shakespeare lived near London.

The number of Chinese tourists visiting Shakespeare's birthplace has increased dramatically, ranking second in London's list for welcoming overseas tourists. For this reason, schools in the city have opened Chinese classes.

In recent years, the Jiangxi friendship association has actively optimized its own advantages in foreign exchanges to make friends from other countries through cultural exchange events. In April 2016, the JAFFC joined the Fuzhou Municipal Government and the CPAFFC to successfully hold a seminar in the United Kingdom to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the deaths of Shakespeare and Tang Xianzu. In September 2016, the JAFFC actively participated in hosting a series of events as part of the same commemoration, organized by the Jiangxi provincial government and the CPAFFC in Fuzhou. In 2017 and 2018, the JAFFC held a festival celebrating Tang in Fuzhou — the Tang Xianzu Theater Festival and International Theater Exchange Month. ■

Jiangxi attends Fifth China-US Governors Forum

Jiangxi Friendship Association

The Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the National Governors Association held the Fifth China-US Governors Forum in the state of Kentucky in the United States from May 22 to 24.

As this year marks the 34th anniversary of Jiangxi province's friendship with Kentucky, a delegation led by Wu Zhongqiong, vice-governor of Jiangxi, paid a six-day visit to the US to attend the forum at the invitation of Matthew Bevin, governor of Kentucky. With adequate preparation, a compact itinerary and fruitful achievements, the trip contributed to China's overall diplomacy and to the international promotion of Jiangxi.

The forum focused on agriculture, advanced manufacturing, infrastructure construction, e-commerce, cross-border trade, education and the humanities. Around 400 people attended, including Tang Liangzhi, mayor of Chongqing; governor of Jiangxi province; Zhang Shizhen, vice-governor of Gansu province; governors or vice-governors of the states of Kentucky, Tennessee, Washington, Colorado and Michigan;

and businesspeople from both sides.

In their speeches at the forum, many emphasized the importance of Sino-US relations and actively supported the exchanges and cooperation between local governments and people of the two countries from all walks of life. At the same time, there was a general appeal for proper handling of differences and frictions between the two countries and a stable development of bilateral relations.

Li Xiaolin, president of the CPAFFC, said at the opening ceremony: "This year marks the 40th anniversary of the establishment of China-US diplomatic relations, and it is of special significance to hold the Fifth China-US Governors Forum at this time. We sincerely hope that China and the US will grasp the momentum of cooperation, assemble all friendly people and pool the resources of provinces and states to create a new, splendid phase in Sino-US relations in the next 40 years."

Cui Tiankai, Chinese ambassador to the US, said: "The future of Sino-US relations should be defined by the people of the two countries. We

are looking forward to expanding cooperation between the two countries on the basis of mutual benefit, managing differences on the basis of mutual respect and jointly promoting Sino-US relations based on coordination, cooperation and stability."

Jiangxi Vice-Governor Wu Zhongqiong delivered a speech at the welcoming banquet and made a recommendation presentation at the forum, saying: "Jiangxi has continuously promoted extensive exchanges and cooperation between Chinese provinces and American states, and has achieved fruitful results. I hope that this forum will serve as an opportunity to further deepen Jiangxi's collaboration with the United States in the future, raise the level of cooperation, and make a positive contribution to the continuous development of Sino-US relations." His words had strong resonance and received unanimous accolades.

Wu and Kentucky Governor Matthew Bevin signed a memorandum of understanding between Jiangxi and Kentucky to strengthen cooperation

between the province and state. It was the only cooperation agreement signed by a province or state at the conference, and was acclaimed by the sponsors of the conference. In addition, China's Jiangxi Normal University and Louisville University of the US signed a memorandum of understanding for cooperation, and Jiangxi Zhengbang Group of China and International Source Corp of the US signed a letter of intent for cooperation in agricultural and food projects, with a joint investment of \$600 million. Of the four contracted projects, two are in Jiangxi.

Wu, the vice-governor, voiced his hope for holding the next China-US Governors Forum in Jiangxi. CPAFFC President Li expressed appreciation for what the province had done in conducting exchanges with the foreign countries on both governmental and nongovernmental levels. She said she agreed with Wu's suggestion.

In the entrance hall of the forum's main venue, an array of photos — themed "Beautiful Jiangxi: Showing her charm to the world" — was exhibited to promote the province's image. The exhibition drew extensive attention and acclaim. Ambassador Cui, CPAFFC President Li, Kentucky Governor Bevin and other leaders and guests attended the exhibition, speaking highly of the province's profound cultural heritage, beautiful natural scenery and rapid development. Bevin said he hoped for a personal experience with Jiangxi's culture and natural beauty in the near future. All the photos in the exhibition

would be collected by the Kentucky Museum to encourage educational exchanges between teenagers in the United States.

The Jiangxi delegation had a number of meetings and exchange events with Kentucky's local officials and major entrepreneurs. At the events, Wu briefed the hosts about what Jiangxi had done to promote Sino-US pragmatic, friendly cooperation and introduced the province's natural environment and social and economic development. Bevin, Tennessee Governor Bill Lee and Washington Vice-Governor Cyrus Habib were deeply impressed by the humanity, history, beautiful scenery and rapid development of Jiangxi's economy and society. They all expressed intent to further strengthen exchanges and cooperation with the province.

Wu also had a friendly talk with Alex Golden, a member of the city council of Charlotte, North Carolina. The talk led to the signing of a letter of intent to establish friendly relations between Xinyu and Charlotte.

Talks were also held with senior executives such as Luke Qisam, CEO of Yabao Co. The two sides negotiated for the launch of Phase III of a 25,000-ton, battery-grade lithium hydroxide production line project in Xinyu. They dismissed any concern on the US side about the safety of investments, and both sides reached a consensus on accelerating related work in the early stage of the project.

Yabao said the next step is to consider boosting Phase III to a

production line of 50,000 tons, rather than 25,000 tons, of battery-grade lithium hydroxide.

Talks were held with James Balger, vice-president of the State Legislative Leaders Foundation, and a consensus was reached on jointly establishing a study and research bases in Jiangxi tourist sites such as Poyang Lake and Lushan Mountain.

The Jiangxi delegation visited Bank of China's New York branch and talked with Wu Fulin, the bank's president. Wu said BOC would continue to support the development of Jiangxi, enhance its inclination toward Jiangxi in terms of policies, funds and projects and strive to serve Jiangxi's economic development.

Talks were held with Xu Chen, president of the Chinese General Chamber of Commerce in the United States. He expressed his support for holding the next China-US Governors Forum in Jiangxi, and promised to help invite more US governors and entrepreneurs.

Wu also visited entrepreneurs of the Jiangxi General Chamber of Commerce in the United States and introduced the great achievements made in Jiangxi's economic and social development in recent years. The success of the Second Jiangxi Business Congress was lauded. He forwarded the concerns of the provincial Party committee and government, expressing hope that Jiangxi entrepreneurs abroad would repay their hometown and support the development of Jiangxi. ■

2019 Hungarian Youth Guangdong Culture Tour a success

Guangdong Friendship Association

The Guangdong People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries held its 2019 Hungarian Youth Guangdong Culture Tour, inviting 20 Hungarian youths to visit and study in the southern Chinese province from June 22 to July 2.

The tour aimed to promote exchanges between young people from Guangdong and Hungary, deepening the Hungarian youths' understanding of Guangdong and China, and cultivating successors in the cause of maintaining China-Hungary friendship. It was part of Guangdong's effort to take an active role in cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European countries, as well to celebrate the 70th anniversary of China-Hungary diplomatic ties.

During the 10-day tour, the Hungarian youths learned kung fu at the Guangzhou Zen Martial Arts Cultural Center and visited Guangzhou Zhixin High School and the Guangzhou Tourism and Business Vocational School to experience traditional Chinese culture, such as paper-cutting, tea culture and Chinese cuisine. They were accompanied by Chinese teachers and students. They also visited the Guangdong Museum, Thirteen Hongs Museum, the Lingnan Impression Garden in Guangzhou and the China Folk Culture Vil-

lage, Dongshan temple and Dapeng Garrison in Shenzhen.

Besides the close-range contacts with traditional Chinese culture, the Hungarian youths gained a more intuitive understanding of the achievements of Guangdong's socioeconomic development. Their Chinese language ability also improved markedly.

At the closing ceremony of the tour, the students expressed their love for China and Guangdong, some of them tearful and reluctant to leave. Some expressed hope for further study in China in the future.

The 20 youths were all from the

Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School in Hungary.

During the tour, Cang Feng, vice-president of the GPAFFC, signed a gift agreement with the school under which the GPAFFC would donate a batch of Chinese textbooks and extracurricular books used by 12 grades in primary and secondary schools.

Cang encouraged the Hungarian youths to continue to learn the Chinese language and culture.

"Civilizations are colorful because of exchanges," he said, adding that China and Hungary both have splendid civilizations and much to learn from each other. "I hope you will learn Chi-



Cang Feng, vice-president of the GPAFFC, signed a gift agreement with the schoolmistress of the Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School.

nese well, pay more attention to China and Guangdong and play a bigger role in bilateral cooperation in various fields in the future.”

Ouyang Jiangxuan, vice-president of the GPAFFC, spoke at the closing ceremony. He encouraged the young people to continue to serve as ambassadors of China-Hungary friendship, to introduce Guangdong and China to their relatives and friends, to take the idea of “a community with a shared future for mankind” back to Hungary and to help more people to participate in the cause of China-Hungary friendship.

The tour was first held in 2017, and is one of the International Youth Exchange serial events organized by the GPAFFC. In recent years, the organization has been promoting friendly exchanges between Guangdong and Hungary continually, which have been widely welcomed and supported by all sectors of both countries. Those exchanges, based on people and oriented to the future, have promoted bilateral people-to-people bonds.

The Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School is an important friendly cooperative partner of the GPAFFC in Hungary. Founded in 2004, the school is now the only full-time public school in Central and Eastern European countries that uses both the official language of the host country and Chinese as its teaching language. It has become a branded project in people-to-people exchanges under the Belt and Road Initiative. A number of Chinese leaders visited the school during their trips to Hungary. ■

Dialogue deepens friendship between China, France

Wang Xi

The first dialogue between Sino-French historic cultural cities was held June 14 to 16, 2019, in Pengzhou, northwest of Chengdu.

It was jointly organized by the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, the Sichuan People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the Seine-et-Marne Council of France.

Attending the conference and making speeches were Li Shaoping, minister counsellor of the cultural department of the Chinese Embassy in France; Jia Ling, deputy director of the Cultural Exchange Department of the CPAFFC; Xiang Qionghua, general secretary of the Sichuan People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries; Patrick Septiers, president of the Senna-Man Provincial Council of France; and Xie Yang, director of the Standing Committee of the Pengzhou Municipal People’s Congress.

On March 25, 2019, President Xi Jinping held talks with French President Emmanuel Macron at the Elysee Palace in Paris. The two heads of state agreed to build a more solid, stable and powerful China-France comprehensive strategic partnership at a new starting point in history.

“France was the first among major Western countries to establish dip-

lomatic and strategic partnership ties with the People’s Republic of China, and was also the first country to have had strategic dialogue with China. To improve Sino-French relations, political mutual trust is the key to success, pragmatic cooperation is the only way and friendly sentiment among the two countries’ people is the basis,” said Xi, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee. The meeting also set the direction for China’s local governments to navigate foreign affairs.

An important gateway to Chengdu, capital of Sichuan province, Pengzhou is one of the cradles of the ancient Shu civilization, which originated from the Jianjiang River in the Longmen mountains. The river runs through the vast land of Pengzhou from north to south. A unique culture is vital for development, and the ancient Shu culture is to Pengzhou as romance is to Paris, music to Vienna, history to Xi’an and gardens to Suzhou.

In recent years, Pengzhou has made bold moves to raise its level of opening-up to the outside world, with the establishment of friendly, cooperative relations with 15 cities in 12 countries.

Pengzhou is not only developing green industries to accelerate the

building of a park city that is friendly for living, entrepreneurship and tourism but also deepening exchanges and cooperation with international sister cities in economy, trade and culture. Pengzhou cooperated with the governments of Seine-et-Marne and Morey, France, to build the Bailu Music Town in Pengzhou, which is characteristic of the 100-year relationship with France.

Since the first music and art festival in September 2013 featuring Pengzhou Bailu and French classical music, Pengzhou has successively signed a memorandum of friendship and cooperation and an agreement establishing friendship relations with Seine-et-Marne and the city of Morey after 18 mutual visits and exchanges.

Seine-et-Marne and the Morey-Sena-Luwan community also entered Bailu Town to set up a tourism office — Morey House — and Sichuan Morey Import and Export Trading Co in Pengzhou. These moves resulted from cooperation and exchanges between Bailu Music Town and the French cities, continuing the cultural exchanges between Bailu and France 150 years ago.

Over the past six years, the two cities have made in-depth exchanges many times, focusing on economic and trade cooperation and cultural, artistic and talent exchanges. As political mutual trust has been consolidated and the sustainable development of the sister cities has deepened, a window has opened for mutual exchanges and learning between the two cities, and a bond has gradually been formed. ■

Chinese Vice-President Wang Qishan marks 70th anniversary of Mongolian ties

Wu Jiong



On July 10 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, the Chinese embassy, the foreign ministry of Mongolia and the Mongolia-China Friendship Association held the Commemorative Conference on the 70th Anniversary of China-Mongolia Diplomatic Ties and the ceremony conferring the China-Mongolia Friendship Award. Wang Qishan, vice-president of China, who was on a friendly visit to Mongolia, and Enkhtevshin, deputy prime minister of Mongolia, attended the event and delivered speeches. Wang awarded the medals and certificates of the China-Mongolia Friendship Award to four Mongolians. More than 200 guests in the fields of politics, economy, culture, media and government from the two countries were present. It was hosted by Li Xiaolin, president of the CPAFFC.

Vice-President Xie Yuan meets UPS president of global public affairs

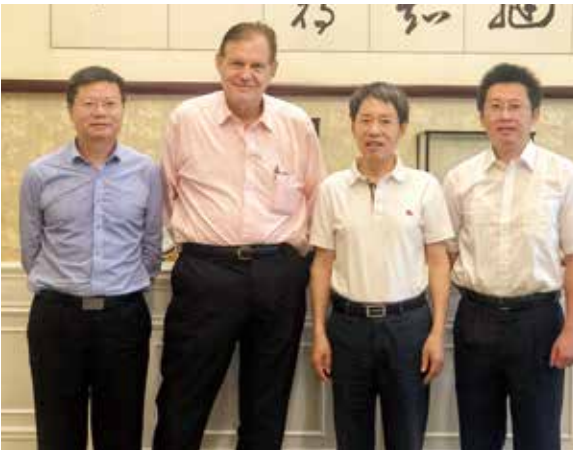
Jin Hanghang



CPAFFC Vice-President Xie Yuan met with UPS President of Global Public Affairs Laura J. Lane on July 25. Xie expressed appreciation for UPS and other American enterprises for their efforts to continue business in China and maintain friendship with Chinese partners amid the tension of China-US relations. He briefed the guests from the United States about the CPAFFC's plans in the second half of the year for exchanges and cooperation with American counterparts. He expressed hope of working with the US business community to enhance China-US friendship and promote the development of people-to-people communication and cooperation.

Vice-President Hu Sishe meets with Swiss federal parliamentarian

Liu Jiayun



On July 15, CPAFFC Vice-President Hu Sishe met with Claude Béglé, a member of the Swiss parliament and president of the Swiss-China World Silk Road Association.

Hu welcomed Mr. Béglé's visit and expressed gratitude for the hospitality given to CPAFFC staff members and the Yushu prefecture delegation during their visit to Switzerland. Hu said the CPAFFC would continue the friendly cooperation with the Silk Road Association and strengthen pragmatic cooperation between China and Switzerland in green sustainable development.

Vice-President Lin Yi meets with the new president of Swiss-China Association

Sun Jiao



On July 12, CPAFFC Vice-President Lin Yi met with Andries Diener, the new president of the Swiss-China Association, and Thomas Wagner, its honorary president.

Both parties had a pleasant discussion on cooperation and communication between the CPAFFC and the Swiss-China Association.

Vice-President Song Jingwu meets with Bologna vice-mayor

Wang Zeyu



Vice-President Song Jingwu met with Marilena Pillati, vice-mayor of Bologna, Italy, on July 25.

Song briefed Pillati about what the CPAFFC has done to promote local government cooperation between China and Italy and said that it would continue to support cooperation between Bologna and Chinese cities.

Pillati thanked the CPAFFC for its contribution to local government cooperation between Italy and China. She noted that Bologna is a center of culture, art and education in Italy and that the municipal government is dedicated to carrying out more pragmatic cooperation with Chinese local governments.

Secretary-General Li Xikui attends Zhejiang forum and ceremony

Shao Shuai



On July 28, the Zhejiang International Economic Forum and the founding ceremony for the Global Sustainable Development Fund, sponsored by the Zhejiang Foreign Economy Interchange Association and supported by the China Friendship Foundation for Peace and Development, were held in Zhejiang's Great Hall of the People in Hangzhou. Under the theme "Challenges and opportunities from economic globalization", the forum focused on the present major policies, hot topics and trends and explored innovative approaches to cooperative development. More than 1,000 guests attended the event.

Japanese delegation comes to Shenyang for exchange

Shenyang Friendship Association



On June 27, Wang Jingying, director of the Shenyang Foreign Affairs Office and secretary-general of the Shenyang People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, met with a delegation from the Dalian Exchange Association of Kitakyushu, Japan, led by Osako Masuo.

Wang Jingying welcomed the delegates, expressing hope that the visit would be a good start for further exchanges and cooperation between Shenyang and Kitakyushu in the fields of economy, trade, investment, innovation, humanities and youth to achieve win-win results.

Osako Masuo told his host that he would strongly introduce Shenyang in Kitakyushu to encourage more outstanding enterprises to come to Shenyang for business exchanges.