

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

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People-to-people



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Front Cover: On February 28, a concert was held in Shanghai to mark the 50th anniversary of Shanghai Communique.

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Editor-in-Chief: Gao Weimin

Address: 1 Taijichang St, Beijing,
100740, China

Fax: (010) 81441265

E-mail: yousheng_ys@sina.com

<http://www.cpaffc.org.cn>

<http://www.qikan.com>

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CPAFFC President Lin Songtian: Human rights and democracy are all about people

Chen Min

On March 16 (Geneva time), Lin Songtian, president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, spoke via video during debate on the promotion and protection of human rights in the 49th session of the UN Human Rights Council.

Lin said, human rights and democracy are all about people. Increasing people's sense of gain, happiness and safety in all countries is the fundamental duty and common goal of the world's human rights cause.

Lin noted that the Communist Party of China and the Chinese government always adhere to a people-centered human rights philosophy. In the face of COVID-19, the Chinese government puts people first, spares no effort in saving every single life and safeguarding the health of each citizen, and never gives up people's right to subsistence. Facing the issue of poverty, the CPC and the Chinese government have taken people's aspirations for a better life as their goal and lifted



CPAFFC President Lin Songtian delivers a video speech.

more than 1.4 billion Chinese people out of poverty with no one left behind. According to the Global Happiness Survey 2020 by Ipsos of France, China leads the world with 93 percent of its people feeling happy.

Lin pointed out, the government of the world's biggest developed country talks about human rights to others every day but adopts a “lying

flat” policy in response to the raging pandemic within its own borders and turns a blind eye to the fact that one-fourth of its population is infected. Thousands of lives are lost every day — more than 1 million in total, he noted.

“What is the meaning of human rights in such a country? The answer is clear,” Lin said. ■

CPAFFC hosts online briefing on China's 2022 two sessions

Liu Wei

On March 18, the CPAFFC hosted an online briefing on China's 2022 "Two Sessions" for international friends from transnational corporations, chambers of commerce, NGOs and local organizations. CPAFFC President Lin Songtian attended and delivered a speech, as did Pan Jiang, deputy director-general of the department of international cooperation with the National Development and Reform Commission. Shen Xin, director-general of the Department of American and Oceanic Affairs chaired the activity. Branch venues were set in some foreign affairs offices and people's associations for friendship with foreign countries at the provincial and municipal level.

Liu Xueyan, director and researcher of the Macro-Economic Situation Research Office under the Economic Research Institute of the NDRC, and Shen Xianjie, associate researcher for the institute, were invited to introduce the two sessions. They answered questions from foreign guests.

More than 620 representatives, including Michael Hart, president of the American Chamber of Commerce in China; Julian MacCormac, chairman

of the British Chamber of Commerce in China; Obara Masamichi, vice-president of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce in China and vice-president of Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ (China); Zheng Yi, president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai; and others with transnational corporations, chambers of commerce, UN agencies in China and NGOs from nearly 20 countries and regions, were present online for the activity in Beijing, Shanghai, Sichuan, Chongqing and Shaanxi.

Lin said in his speech that China had presented a host of good performances since the beginning of spring. It successfully hosted the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics and Paralympic Winter Games and held the 2022 "two sessions", which shows the international community a different world featuring peace, unity, cooperation and development.

The two sessions, Lin said, matter very much to Chinese people's political lives. They also serve as an important window for the international community to observe China's people-oriented democracy as well as its con-

sultative politics.

The two sessions, Lin said, have three main characteristics:

First, they represent the collective wisdom of the people. The nearly 3,000 deputies to the National People's Congress, including outstanding representatives of migrant workers and sanitation workers, came from different regions, ethnic groups, fields and social strata and were elected from the bottom up. The more than 2,000 members of the CPPCC National Committee are all people of insight from different parties or with no party affiliation, and from people's organizations and various social sectors. They offer comprehensive intellectual support to the Chinese government for scientific decision-making and targeted decision implementation.

Second, they represent extensive public opinion. Before attending the meetings, NPC deputies and CPPCC members need to solicit opinions from the general public and submit motions and proposals regarding national governance and policies so that the opinions and needs of the people can be translated into the will of the State.

Third, the motions and proposals they submit are backed by the people's strength and hence feasible in practice. Chinese democracy is a whole-process people's democracy, which emphasizes procedural democracy with an open mind to the people's wisdom before making any decision. More important, it puts greater stress on results-oriented democracy and substantive democracy with all the motions and proposals from the NPC deputies and the CPPCC members being answered and followed and public opinion being fully respected.

Lin said that against the background of the global COVID-19 pandemic, sluggish global economy and turbulent geopolitics, the Chinese government and people have overcome difficulties at home and abroad and achieved comprehensive economic and social development under the strong leadership of President Xi Jinping. The annual government work report deliberated and approved by the fifth session of the 13th National People's Congress not only summarized the economic and social achievements made in 2021 but also specified goals, policies and measures for better development in 2022.

The report, Lin said, upheld the underlying principle of prioritizing stability while pursuing progress; set the economic growth target of 5.5 percent; and launched a series of reforms that focus on a stable economy, facilitating innovation and promoting people's welfare. Releasing positive signals, the report injected positive energy into the world, which is now in confusion



CPAFFC President Lin Songtian attends and addresses the briefing on China's 2022 two sessions.

and disorder. China has always valued credit and is keen on keeping its promises. The targets set by the NPC pointed the way the Chinese government is heading.

"We believe the forecast development goal will be achieved to contribute more to global economic recovery," Lin said.

Pan Jiang said that, generally speaking, China's economy has been deeply integrated into the world with the total amount of imports and exports accounting for over one-third of its GDP, with 70 percent of industrial added value contributed by imports. China has been the second-biggest import market for 10 consecutive years and the second-biggest export destination in the world for five consecutive years.

"We will unswervingly expand high-standard opening-up, advancing the stable development of foreign trade and investment to facilitate in-depth reform and high-quality development," Pan said.

"First, we will carry out a series of measures to stabilize foreign trade; second, we will encourage foreign investment; third, we will stick to high-quality cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative; fourth, we will deepen multilateral and bilateral economic and trade cooperation.

"The NDRC would like to strengthen communication with foreign business circles to enhance multilateral and bilateral exchanges and cooperation and to optimize the local business environment."

Pan said the NDRC and CPAFFC

have established a good foundation for cooperation. He expressed hope that all the guests invited to the briefing would take the opportunity to share stories of friendship, seek cooperation and share opportunities in China's economic development to be better integrated into China's new development paradigm.

Liu Xueyan introduced the main content of the 2022 government work report and reviewed its positive signals. She said the economic indices set in the two sessions, including the 5.5 percent annual growth target, planned increase of urban employment, surveyed urban unemployment rate, CPI and deficit rate are rational and reasonable.

China's macro policies, she said, will be kept consistent and made more effective; the proactive fiscal policy will be more effective, more precisely targeted and more sustainable; the prudent monetary policy will be both flexible and appropriate, with ample liquidity being maintained.

"We can see that the Chinese government has full confidence to make the economy grow steadily this year," the NDRC economist said.

Shen Xianjie from NDRC's Economic Research Institute shared with the online guests his understanding of urban and rural development, regional development, carbon peak and carbon neutrality. He noted that China is staunchly expanding domestic demand and promoting coordinated regional development and new urbanization.

"Also," he said, "we will remove all impediments to national economic

circulation by smoothing the procedures of production, distribution, circulation and consumption and see that domestic demand plays a bigger role in driving economic growth.

"China will advance its carbon peak and carbon neutrality in a systematic way and implement the action plan for carbon dioxide emissions to peak at the scheduled time. We will advance an energy revolution to facilitate research and development, while promoting and applying environmentally friendly low-carbon technology. We will transition from assessing the total amount and intensity of energy consumption to assessing carbon emissions."

The two experts also answered questions on matters raised by the guests, such as expanding foreign asset admission, stimulating domestic consumption, realizing common prosperity and achieving the carbon peak and carbon neutrality targets.

Hart of the American Chamber of Commerce pointed out that the Chinese market matters immensely to American enterprises.

"We've been calling for constructive contact between the Chinese and American governments to facilitate the launching of policies and measures that can benefit both sides," he said.

"We've noticed that the Chinese government promised in the 2022 government work report to deepen reforms, expand opening-up and continue improving the business environment. It promised better use of foreign investment and good implementation of the negative list for foreign invest-

ment market access, expansion of the fields for foreign investment and solid progress in the development of piloted free trade zones.

"In the meantime, the Chinese government is committed to pushing forward work related to the carbon peak and neutrality in a good order and implementing an action plan. The members of the American Chamber of Commerce in China appreciate and welcome all the promises mentioned above."

MacCormac of the British Chamber of Commerce said that according to his chamber's latest survey, 2021 had a higher percentage of enterprises who are optimistic about business and trade between the UK and China. More than 70 percent of British enterprises' annual revenue exceeded that of 2020. Meanwhile, 60 percent of the enterprises have restored their business to the level occupied before the COVID-19 pandemic. The chamber's member enterprises expect the Chinese government to further improve the business environment and market access criteria.

"The British Chamber of Commerce in China is ready for help in more dialogues and exchanges between the British enterprises in China and the Chinese government," he said.

Obara Masamichi said that the Japanese Chamber of Commerce in China gives advice to its members on ways to cooperate with the Chinese side by releasing a white paper annually and through other channels of exchange. Its member enterprises are

mainly concerned about the business environment in China, including fair play, China's opening-up, policy implementation and relevant procedures.

It is hoped, Masamichi said, that foreign companies will make full use of opportunities to open up new areas in a better business environment this year so that they can enjoy high-quality and efficient development together with China's economy.

All the guests applauded and appreciated the briefing. They said that the authoritative interpretation and the Q&A given by the Chinese experts had given them an objective, comprehensive and deep understanding of the main content of the 2022 two sessions and now have more confidence in cooperation with China for win-win results and common development. They said they will further study the lecture texts provided by the experts after the activity for better understanding.

To satisfy the pressing needs of foreign enterprises, chambers of commerce and international friends based in China for a better understanding of China and to enhance understanding, friendship and mutual trust, the CPAFFC plans to host a "Chinese policy interpretation" briefing once per quarter to help foreign friends in China acquire a deeper understanding of the trend of China's economic and social development and its policies and practices at home and abroad. It will answer their questions and remove unnecessary doubts. In this way, we can strive for win-win cooperation and common development. ■

Meeting commemorating 50th Anniversary of Shanghai Communique held in Shanghai

Liu Wei

From Feb 21 to 28, 1972, US President Richard Nixon visited China at the invitation of Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai. China and the United States made the historic handshake across the Pacific Ocean and ended the prolonged estrangement between the two countries. At the end, in Shanghai's Jinjiang Hotel, China and the US jointly issued what is known as the Shanghai Communique.

This year, on Feb 28, another meeting was held in the same hotel to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the communique. The gathering was jointly organized by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, the Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs, the Shanghai Municipal People's Government and the China-US People's Friendship Association.

Li Qiang, a member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and secretary of the Shanghai Municipal Committee, attended and addressed the opening ceremony.

Wang Yi, state councilor and foreign minister of China, delivered a keynote speech via video entitled "Drawing Wisdom from History to Light Up the Road Ahead". Also speaking on site or online were Lin Songtian, president of the CPAFFC; Wang Chao, president of the Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs; Qin Gang, Chinese ambassador to the US; Henry Kissinger, former US secretary of state; and Jacob Lew, chairman of National Committee on US-China relations and former US treasury secretary. David Meale, charge d'affaires of the US embassy in China; James Heller, head of the US consulate in Shanghai; and Lisa K. Heller, head of the US consulate in Guangzhou, also attended the opening ceremony.

In his speech, Li Qiang said: "Since last year, President Xi Jinping and President Joe Biden have met by phone or via video and reached consensus on many aspects of China-US relations. They charted the way forward for the development of bilateral

relations. Shanghai is a participant and witness to the growth of China-US relations and an important bridge for deepening exchanges and cooperation between the two countries in various fields.

“Many vivid stories in Shanghai show that it is the best choice for both sides and the common aspiration of the two peoples to promote sound and steady development of China-US relations.

“Looking into the future, Shanghai will actively implement the decisions and arrangements of the CPC Central Committee, uphold the principles of mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation, promote friendly exchanges and practical cooperation with the US in various fields, and play a more active role in promoting the development of China-US relations.”

In his speech via video, Wang Yi noted that China and the US, guided by the spirit of the Shanghai Communique, have achieved a series

of major progress in their relations. He gave a comprehensive review of the communique, especially on the Taiwan question and the one-China principle, explaining why the ice had thawed and barriers had been removed in China-US relations and how the relationship can forge ahead in the future.

He said that three lessons could be drawn from the development of China-US relations over the past 50 years, noting that “by following the trend of the times we can make the right strategic choice. By seeking common ground while reserving differences, we can attain peaceful co-existence between countries with different social systems. And by following the basic norms of international relations, we can build real guardrails for China-US relations.”

He put forward a four-point proposal on developing and maintaining China-US relations. First, he said, we must uphold the one-China principle and consolidate the political foundation of China-US relations.

Second, we must respect each other and stick to the right direction for advancing China-US relations. Third, we must pursue win-win cooperation and promote the development and prosperity of both countries. Fourth, we must shoulder our responsibilities as major countries and provide the world with more public goods.

He urged the US to reinstate a reasonable and pragmatic China policy, and work with China to put into real action the common understandings between the presidents to get China-US relations back on the right track at an early date.

The CPAFFC’s Lin said: “The historical value of the Shanghai Communique is that it has set an example of ‘seeking common ground while reserving differences and pursuing win-win cooperation’ for the development of China-US relations. It has also provided a useful reference for handling bilateral ties today. History and reality over the past 50 years tell us that as long as both sides abide by the spirit of the Shanghai Communique, uphold the principles of mutual respect, peaceful co-existence and win-win cooperation, value not only one’s own culture but also the culture of others, China and the US can undoubtedly achieve win-win cooperation for common development and bring more benefits to the people of both countries and the world.”

Wang Chao noted that the Shanghai Communique is a milestone in the history of China-US relations. The commemorative meeting aimed to review history, learn from the past,



create the future and draw wisdom from history to light up the road ahead.

“We will put into real action the common understandings between the two countries’ heads of state, so as to put the China-US relations back on the right track at an early date. The three China-US joint communiqués, including the Shanghai Communiqué, have established the guiding principles for the growth of China-US relations and constitute an important political foundation. They should never be forgotten or shaken.”

Qin Gang said the Chinese embassy in the US will continue to serve as a bridge and bond between the two countries and will work with people from all walks of life in the US to inherit and carry forward the spirit of the Shanghai Communiqué. The embassy will put into practice the common understandings between the presidents, firmly grasp common interests, stick to the right way of coexistence, safeguard the one-China principle and promote friendship between people to put China-US relations back on track for sound and stable development at an early date.

Kissinger recalled wonderful stories from the normalization of US-China diplomatic relations. He noted that the US and China are big countries with different histories and will not agree on all issues. Looking forward, he said, both sides should do their best to maintain communication and tell each other candidly about their major concerns.

At present, Kissinger said, the economic interests of the two countries

are highly intertwined, and both sides are facing the challenge of COVID-19.

“We should jointly promote world progress and development while safeguarding the interests of our own people,” he said. “I’m confident that the US and China can find ways to talk and work together in the years ahead.”

Jacob Lew said the way the US and China fulfill their responsibilities to ensure sustainable development of the global economy and maintain stability will shape the future of the two countries and the whole world. The US and China have common interests in climate change and global public health that require cooperation. They should properly guide bilateral exchanges to avoid catastrophic misunderstandings.

After the opening ceremony, some of the Chinese and American dignitaries were interviewed live by Ji Xiaojun, host of the China Global Television Network. They included Cui Tiankai, former Chinese ambassador to the US; Tang Wensheng, adviser of the All-China Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese; Chas W. Freeman Jr., former US assistant secretary of defense; J. Stapleton Roy, former US ambassador to China; Bill Ford, executive chairman of Ford Motor Company; Tong Jisheng, chairman of Oriental International Group; Wu Yun, deputy general manager of Nantong Zhenhua Heavy Equipment Co, Shanghai Zhenhua Heavy Industry Group; Jay Marshall Strabala, chief architectural designer of Shanghai Tower; Jeffrey S. Lehman, executive vice-president of New York University

Shanghai; and Chen Dongxiao, president of the Shanghai Institute for International Studies.

Focusing on the themes of “taking history as a mirror for the future” and “pursuing win-win cooperation and common development”, they vividly recounted stories of participating in China-US exchanges and cooperation and expressed their expectations for the recovery and further development of bilateral relations.

Participants all agreed that by working together, China and the US can accomplish many big things that will benefit both countries and the world. Both stand to gain from cooperation and lose from confrontation. At present, certain conflicts and problems seem unavoidable. But as long as the two seek common ground while reserving differences in the spirit of the Shanghai Communiqué, a mutually acceptable solution can be found. History cannot step backward. The two sides should draw wisdom and strength from history, build bridges, strengthen exchanges, enhance understanding and consensus, bring bilateral relations back on track and steadily move forward.

More than 700 people from all walks of life in China and the US attended the meeting on site or online. More than 20 Chinese and foreign media outlets, including People’s Daily, Xinhua News Agency, China Media Group, Bloomberg News, The Associated Press, ITAR-TASS, Nihon Keizai Shimbun, Lianhe Zaobao, South China Morning Post and Phoenix TV, covered the event. ■

Chinese and foreign media interview CPAFFC President Lin for the 50th anniversary of Shanghai Communique

Liu Chang

On Feb 28, 2022, a meeting commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Shanghai Communique was held in Shanghai's Jinjiang Hotel, where the communique was issued in 1972. The activity was jointly organized by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, the Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs, the Shanghai Municipal People's Government and the China-US People's Friendship Association.

After the meeting, Lin Songtian, president of the CPAFFC, was interviewed by journalists from CGTN, Dragon TV, Phoenix TV, China Daily, Global Times, The Paper, South China Morning Post and eastday.com. He shared his opinions on the significance of the commemorative meeting, the friendship between the Chinese and American people and people-to-people diplomacy.

Fifty years ago, Lin noted, leaders of China and the United States overcame differences in ideology, political

systems and cultural values and jointly issued the Shanghai Communique, which laid down the basic principles and political foundation for the development and maintenance of China-US relations.

Given the current pandemic and international situation, it was of great significance to hold the meeting as scheduled. It aims to review history, pay tribute to the strategic vision and extraordinary political wisdom and courage of the leaders of China and the US and to express sincere thanks to people from all walks of life in both countries who have long been committed to China-US friendship and cooperation.

We look forward, Lin said, to drawing wisdom and inspiration from history. He called on US politicians and elites to demonstrate the wisdom, strategic vision and political courage of a major country and expressed hope that the American people would cherish the China-US friendship and the fruits of mutually beneficial cooperation to

achieve win-win results and move forward together.

Lin said that people from all walks of life in China and the US attached great importance to the commemoration. Li Qiang, a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and secretary of the Shanghai Municipal Committee, attended and addressed the opening ceremony. State Councilor Wang Yi delivered a keynote speech via video. More than 700 people from all walks of life in China and the US attended the event on site or online, including Dr. Henry Kissinger, former US secretary of state, and Jacob Lew, chairman of National Committee on US-China relations and former US treasury secretary.

In his speech via video, Wang noted that, guided by the spirit of the Shanghai Communique, China and the US have achieved major progress in their relations in a series of steps. He gave a comprehensive review of the communique, especially the Taiwan

question and the one-China principle, explaining why the ice had thawed to remove barriers in China-US relations and how the relationship can forge ahead in the future.

Wang said three lessons could be drawn from the development of China-US relations over the past 50 years: “By following the trend of the times, we can make the right strategic choices; by seeking common ground while reserving differences, we can attain peaceful co-existence between countries with different social systems; and by following the basic norms of international relations, we can build real guardrails for China-US relations.”

He put forward a four-point proposal on developing and maintaining China-US relations. First, he said, we must uphold the one-China principle and consolidate the political foundation of China-US relations. Second, we must respect each other and stick to the right direction for advancing China-US relations. Third, we must pursue win-win cooperation and promote the development and prosperity of both countries. Fourth, we must shoulder responsibilities as major countries and provide the world with more public goods.

He urged the US to reinstate a reasonable and pragmatic China policy, and work with China to put into real actions the common understandings between the presidents, so as to put China-US relations back on the right track at an early date.

Lin said that the Shanghai Com-



CPAFFC President Lin Songtian gives an interview to the media.

munique, issued 50 years ago, laid down the basic principle for developing China-US relations. That principle is to acknowledge and insist that both sides of the Taiwan Straits belong to one and the same China, and that Taiwan is part of China. The one-China principle is the premise and political foundation for the development and maintenance of China-US relations, he said. It is a red line and a bottom line that is independent of man’s will. In the past, no one dared to overstep it, and now there is even less reason or conditions to overstep it.

The Shanghai Communique has set an example of seeking common ground while reserving differences and pursuing win-win cooperation in China-US relations. It has also provided a useful reference for handling China-US relations today. As long as both

sides abide by the spirit of the Shanghai Communique, there is no doubt that China and the US can find the right way to coexist with mutual respect, peace and win-win cooperation under new circumstances. They can continue to benefit the people of both countries and the world.

Recently, during the Beijing Winter Olympic Games, Chinese and American athletes gave blessings, took pictures, exchanged gifts and got along with each other, which brought a heart-warming scene to a cold ice rink. It was a reminder that the Chinese and American people have always been friendly to each other and share a common aspiration to live peaceful, harmonious and better lives. There is every reason for win-win cooperation and common development.

“The people are the beneficiaries,

builders and promoters of state-to-state relations,” Lin said. “They should also be firm defenders of common interests. The friendship and mutually beneficial cooperation between the Chinese and American people have become a reality that no force or power can shake or change. This is the inexhaustible driving force and source of strength for advancing and developing China-US relations. I have full confidence in growing the friendship between the two peoples and promoting China-US relations.”

Lin introduced the glorious history, functions and characteristics of people-to-people diplomacy. He said that people-to-people diplomacy is an important foundational work through which official diplomacy, or state-to-state relations, can deliver tangible benefits to the people, enhance friendship and build consensus.

Friendship cities, media and think tanks and individual people are the main participants in people-to-people diplomacy. The CPAFFC is willing to uphold the principle and concept of telling stories with emotion and reason and promoting culture, morality and justice, Lin said. It will actively carry out friendly exchanges and mutually beneficial cooperation with the people-to-people bodies of other countries, enhance mutual understanding and affinity among peoples of different nations, promote win-win cooperation and common development and build the broadest international consensus for building a community with a shared future for mankind. ■

Concert held in Shanghai to mark 50th anniversary of Shanghai Communique

Zhang Yang

On the evening of Feb 28, a concert commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Shanghai Communique was held in Shanghai, co-hosted by the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the Shanghai Municipal People’s Government.

Gong Zheng, mayor of Shanghai, attended and delivered a speech.

More than 200 guests from political, business and academic circles of China and the United States attended the concert, including Lin Songtian, president of the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries; Wang Chao, president of the Chinese People’s Institute of Foreign Affairs; Cui Tiankai, former Chinese ambassador to the US; Tang Wensheng, adviser to the All-China Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese; David Meale, charge d’affaires of the US embassy in China; and James Heller, head of the US consulate in Shanghai.

Well-known Chinese and American art groups and artists gave wonderful performances live or via video, including the Shanghai Philharmonic

Orchestra, Shanghai Opera House Choir, Zide Guqin Studio, Philadelphia Orchestra, Brigham Young University Art Troupe, Shanghai Quartet and performers Liao Changyong and Shi Yihong.

In his speech, Mayor Gong noted that it was 50 years ago that the Shanghai Communique was issued, marking the beginning of the normalization of China-US relations and laying the foundation for the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between the two countries.

“Music is a universal language,” he said. “This concert has been actively participated in and strongly supported by people from all walks of life in China and the US.”

He expressed hope that through the bridge of music, the audience would fully appreciate the good wishes of the two peoples and jointly write a new chapter of enhanced China-US friendship.

Nicholas Platt, former US ambassador, and Matias Tarnopolsky, president and CEO of the Philadelphia Orchestra, delivered video remarks.

Handshake across the Pacific

During US President Richard Nixon's visit to China in 1972, Premier Zhou Enlai arranged for a band to play *America the Beautiful* at the welcome dinner, which left a deep impression on the American guests. As this year's commemorative concert opened, the Shanghai Philharmonic Orchestra performed the classic piece again, making the audience feel as if they were once again part of the welcoming atmosphere of 50 years ago. Liao Changyong, a famous Chinese singer, sang *Redwood* — a song written by Chinese artists about the touching story of President Nixon personally planting a redwood tree in Hangzhou during his visit to China and wishing for everlasting friendship between China and the US.

Surprise cultural blending

At the concert, Zide Guqin Studio, a Chinese traditional orchestra, and the Shanghai Philharmonic jointly performed *Over the Rainbow*, theme song of the American movie *The Wizard of Oz*. The crossover collision between traditional folk music, the symphony and jazz was refreshing. Shi Yihong, a noted Peking Opera artist, performed the opera *Icy Moon Rising Above the Sea*, which she has performed on her many tours in the US. The quintessential Chinese culture captivated audiences in both countries. *Butterfly Lovers* performed by the orchestra, as well as the Chinese acrobats, won prolonged applause from the audience. *Magical Surprise*, performed by Shanghai Disney Resort showed the



mutual learning and common prosperity of Chinese and American cultures and conveyed youthful vitality.

Common vision for bright future

As the first American art troupe to perform in China after the establishment of China-US diplomatic relations, the Brigham Young University Art Troupe had recorded a song and dance titled *Sit Down, You're Rocking the Boat*, specifically for the concert. The Shanghai Quartet, a chamber music group that has long been committed to promoting cultural and artistic exchanges between China and the US and now teaches at the Tianjin Juilliard School, played *String Quartet No. 12 in F Major* by Antonín Leopold Dvorak. Nearly 100 children from Shanghai Little Star Art Troupe, Little Companion Art Troupe of CWICP and Shanghai American School, performed

a Chinese folk song, together with US business representatives. The performance brought the concert to a climax. It was a perfect interpretation of the theme of China-US friendship, as well as a reflection of the shared aspiration for a future of bilateral friendship. The concert ended amid warm melodies with good wishes.

Cui Tiankai said the concert was the most positive event in China-US relations in recent years. The Chinese and American audience spoke highly of it, saying its distinct theme was full of warmth and created positive expectations for China-US relations.

Six Chinese video websites, including Tencent Video and Bilibili, broadcast the concert live online. It attracted nearly 600,000 viewers, according to preliminary data. ■

Friendship bodies of China and Arab countries hold dialogue, issue joint declaration

Xiong Liang

On May 10, the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the Arab-Chinese Friendship Societies' League hosted a video dialogue themed "Safeguarding world equity and justice and achieving common development". It gave voice to the Chinese and Arab people for justice in a concrete move to safeguard world peace and the common interests of the people.

Lin Songtian, president of the CPAFFC, delivered a keynote speech — "Defending world peace serves the common interests of the people of all countries". Ali Yousif Ahmed, secretary-general of the ACFSL, and leaders of friendship organizations from Egypt, Algeria, Iraq, Morocco, Tunisia, Yemen, Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon and Sudan attended the dialogue online, along with experts and scholars.

Participants expressed their views through candid and friendly exchanges on four topics: safeguarding world equity and justice and the common inter-

ests of China and Arab countries; giving full play to each side's advantages and promoting win-win cooperation and common development between China and the Arab world; enhancing mutual learning between civilizations; and building a China-Arab community with a shared future, strengthening friendship organizations and carrying forward the traditional friendship.

They reached a broad consensus and issued a joint declaration of friendship organizations from China and Arab countries on safeguarding world equity and justice and achieving common development. Luan Yutao, deputy director general of the CPAFFC's Department of Asian and African Affairs, presided over the dialogue.

Lin said China and Arab countries share similar values and have made important contributions to human civilization and social progress. Both sides and their people are severe victims and staunch opponents of Western colonialism, imperialism and hegemonism.

The two sides have always understood and supported each other. Under the strategic guidance of the leaders of both sides, the China-Arab strategic partnership has not only achieved fruitful results but also brought benefits to both peoples. Moreover, it has become a strong force for firmly upholding multilateralism, defending world equity and justice and safeguarding world peace and development.

Lin noted that at present, people around the world are eager to live lives of peace, harmony and prosperity. This common pursuit is not only challenged by the natural disaster of COVID-19, but also suffers from man-made disaster, as is seen in the Russia and Ukraine conflict, which was triggered by geopolitics and a Cold War mentality. The outbreak of this crisis, Lin said, looks accidental, but it is actually an inevitable event.

"In essence, the conflict is the result of an ideological confrontation and group confrontation instigated by

the North Atlantic Treaty Organization led by the United States to safeguard its own interests and hegemony,” Lin said. “It has fully exposed the greedy, barbaric, bloody, selfish and hypocritical nature of capital monopoly.”

Participants from the Arab countries thanked the CPAFFC for hosting the event. They said it was a timely move to hold the dialogue at this critical juncture, as the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the pandemic have jeopardized people’s livelihoods around the world. In the face of the global crisis, Chinese and Arab people-to-people friendship organizations are closely united to make a timely call for safeguarding world peace and the common interests of the Chinese and Arab people and jointly building a China-Arab community with a shared future for the new era.

Lin said both sides should give full play to their advantages and mobilize people’s strengths to deepen cooperation in such fields as local government, friendship cities, education, culture, media think tanks and scientific and technological innovation, and should make positive contributions to promoting mutual understanding and affinity between the peoples of China and the Arab world and consolidating the interests and popular support of China-Arab friendship.

Participants agreed that the Ukraine crisis had harmed people around the world and seriously damaged the security and stability of global industrial chains, supply chains and



CPAFFC President Lin Songtian attends the dialogue and delivers a keynote speech.

capital chains, though it happened in Europe. It has severely frustrated the efforts and prospects of sustainable development in developing countries and made working people around the world, including Arab countries, face a serious production survival crisis and a threat of famine. Through the crisis, the United States can not only control the global energy and food markets and shift its domestic crisis but can also deprive Europe of its strategic autonomy, weaken Russia and deter China. The Ukraine crisis presents the danger of dragging on and getting more complicated. This must arouse the high vigilance of people around the world.

Participants believed that hegemonism seeks personal interest at others’ cost and will thus enjoy no sup-

port. It is not acceptable, they said, that one country pursues its own absolute security while ignoring others’ security concerns. Instigating ideological antagonism and group confrontation will only undermine world peace and order. Imposing sanctions by exercising double standards and breaching the moral bottom line is obviously undemocratic and respects no human rights at all.

The participants all called on governments and people around the world to actively put into practice the Global Development Initiative and Global Security Initiative and to jointly follow a new path of win-win cooperation, common development and common security, against the old zero-sum game of “You lose, I win” and group confrontation.

Joint Declaration of friendship organizations from China and Arab countries on safeguarding world equity and justice and achieving common development

FULL TEXT:

We, leaders of friendship organizations from China and Arab countries and the Association of Arab-Chinese Friendship Societies, had an online dialogue themed “Safeguarding world equity and justice and achieving common development” on May 10, 2022. We had candid, friendly and in-depth exchanges, reached a broad consensus and agreed to issue a joint declaration as follows:

We agree that the Chinese and Arab people share the same destiny and historical experience. We are both victims and opponents of Western colonialism, imperialism

and hegemonism. We have a broad common language and interest in upholding the common values of all mankind, adhering to multilateralism, opposing hegemonism, defending equity and justice, safeguarding world peace and promoting common prosperity.

We express serious concern about the harm that the current crisis in Ukraine poses to people around the world, especially in developing countries. We note that the geopolitical crisis has seriously damaged the stability and security of global industrial chains and supply chains; triggered a global energy and

food crisis; led to sharp increases in global inflation, unemployment and consumer prices; and frustrated the unremitting efforts and prospects of developing countries to achieve sustainable development. It pushes people around the world to stagflation, unemployment, famine and other production and survival crises.

We agree that the theme of the times, peace and development, faces severe challenges. The world is neither safe nor peaceful. It is the common aspiration of people of all countries to promote peace, development and cooperation and jointly build a community with a shared future for mankind. The



Friendship bodies of China and Arab countries held a dialogue online successfully.

Cold War mentality and actions of provoking ideological confrontation and group confrontation and seeking one's own absolute security and absolute interests at the expense of the security of others are outdated and harm others without benefiting oneself. We highly appreciate the firm position of China, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, India, Indonesia, South Africa, Brazil and other emerging countries, as well as the vast majority of countries in the world, on equity and justice and the firm determination to safeguard world peace and stability.

We emphasize that an early resolution of the Ukraine crisis and safeguarding world peace, security, development and prosperity serve the common interests of people around the world. The international community should uphold a common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security concept, abandon the Cold War mentality, adhere to true multilateralism, oppose unilateralism and refrain from pursuing group politics and camp confrontation. The international community should continue to resolve national differences and disputes by peaceful means of dialogue and consultation, support all efforts conducive to a peaceful resolution of the crisis in Ukraine and oppose any inhumane words and deeds that may prolong the crisis. All parties highly appreciate the Global Security Initiative proposed by President Xi Jinping for providing Chinese wisdom and solutions to address international security challenges.

We highly appreciate the people-centered development philosophy put

forward by President Xi Jinping and agree that win-win cooperation and common development are the right way to solve all problems. We strongly call on China and Arab countries to unite and work together to overcome difficulties, build a high-quality Belt and Road, promote the China-Arab strategic partnership to benefit the peoples of both sides and jointly build a China-Arab community with a shared future for the new era. We support the Global Development Initiative, actively promote practical cooperation in key areas, accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and promote the building of a global development community.

We firmly support the just cause of the Palestinian people seeking to restore their legitimate rights, the two-state solution and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with a borderline drawn in 1967 and with East Jerusalem as the capital, and strive to achieve lasting peace in the Middle East. We firmly uphold our respective national unification and oppose any attempt to interfere in other countries' internal affairs.

We call on governments, institutions and enterprises of China and Arab countries to provide necessary support for the development of friendship organizations. We encourage friendship organizations to strengthen capacity building, give full play to their respective advantages and promote friendly exchanges and mutually beneficial cooperation among think tanks, media, youth, local governments and friend-

ship cities. We support the Association of Arab-Chinese Friendship Societies to host the China-Arab Friendship Conference under the framework of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum.

We welcome Qatar's holding of the Sixth China-Arab Friendship Conference and hope the conference will become a platform for people-to-people exchanges and contribute more to China-Arab win-win cooperation and common development.

Participating organizations:

- Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries
- Arab-Chinese Friendship Societies' League
- Algeria-China Friendship Association
- Egyptian-Chinese Friendship Association
- Palestinian-Chinese Friendship Association
- Lebanese-Chinese League for Friendship and Cooperation
- Morocco-China Friendship and Exchange Association
- Sudanese-Chinese Friendship Society
- Tunisia-China Friendship Association
- Yemeni-Chinese Friendship Association
- Iraqi-Chinese Friendship Association for Cooperation and Development
- Jordanian-Chinese Friendship Association ■

CPAFFC President Lin Songtian meets Algerian ambassador

Liu Lu

President Lin Songtian of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries met with Algerian Ambassador Hassane Rabehi on March 15 at the association's headquarters in Beijing. Sun Xueqing, director-general of the association's Department of Asian and African Affairs, was also present at the meeting.

Lin congratulated Rabehi on his second term as ambassador to China and appreciated the positive trend of bilateral relations under the strategic guidance of the two countries' heads of state.

With their profound traditional friendship, Lin said, China and Algeria have always been true friends and brothers. In the past, we offered mutual understanding and support to each other's just cause of national independence. Now we are committed to win-win cooperation and common development with joint efforts to eradicate the common enemy of poverty, he said.

Lin said China will always bear in mind the historic contribution Algeria made in helping restore the

People's Republic of China's lawful seat at the United Nations. "Since long ago," Lin said, "the two countries have resolutely supported each other on core interests and major concerns. Fruitful results have been achieved in friendly exchanges and mutually beneficial cooperation in various fields."

He said China would like to strengthen political mutual trust, further win-win cooperation with Algeria within the framework of high-quality cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative and beef up close coordination and cooperation in international and regional affairs. "In this way, we can make new contributions to enhance our comprehensive strategic partnership," he said.

Lin noted that China, under the strong leadership of the Communist Party of China and with a commitment to President Xi Jinping's people-centered philosophy of development, had won the victory on schedule in the tough battle against poverty. It has realized the goal of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects,

created the two miracles of rapid economic development and long-term social stability and successfully overcome the "three world conundrums" of political corruption, environmental pollution and absolute poverty.

Lin briefed his guest about the results of the 13th National People's Congress and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, which had concluded several days earlier. He told the Algerian envoy that the government work report deliberated and approved by the fifth session of the 13th NPC summarized the economic and social achievements made in 2021 and specified goals for development and policy measures to be taken in 2022.

"The development goal aims at making progress while guaranteeing stability," Lin said, adding that the report helped establish consensus, boost people's confidence and inject positive energy into a world that has recently plunged into confusion and disorder.

Lin noted that the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics and Paralympic

Games had successfully concluded. China fulfilled its promise to guarantee high-quality organization and services by overcoming a slew of challenges such as the global COVID-19 pandemic. The Beijing 2022 Winter Games set a new benchmark for the Olympic Games, perfectly interpreted the Olympic spirit and the idea of building a community with a shared future for mankind. It showed the beautiful side of the world and injected confidence, strength, peace, friendship and solidarity into a turbulent world.

Lin said that China is willing to work hand in hand with Algeria and other African and Arab countries for win-win cooperation and common development and strive for a community with a shared future for mankind. The CPAFFC would like to give full play to its advantages in people-to-people diplomacy to establish closer ties with the Algerian embassy and friendship organizations in Algeria.

“We will exchange ideas on governance and experience in independent and sustainable development, so as to make new achievements in people-to-people exchanges and cooperation between the two countries,” he said.

Rabehi spoke highly of the long-lasting stable traditional friendship between China and Algeria. He said that China was the first non-Arab country to recognize Algeria, sending its first medical team to aid Algeria in 1963. Algeria was first among Arab countries to establish a comprehensive strategic



President Lin Songtian presents a book to Ambassador Hassane Rabehi.

partnership with China.

The two countries have always understood and supported each other on issues of core interest and major concern, setting a good example of bilateral friendship.

Rabehi applauded China’s astounding achievements in development. He said that China had not only made remarkable social and economic achievements at home but also served as a good example for the world in terms of morals and development. The Algerian government and people have full confidence in China’s future. The Belt and Road Initiative proposed by President Xi Jinping is dedicated to facilitating interconnections between China and the rest of world, win-win cooperation and common develop-

ment. Developing countries, including Algeria, expect more experience and philosophy sharing from China for better development, as well as deeper mutually beneficial cooperation.

Rabehi expressed appreciation for China’s success in hosting the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics and Paralympic Games despite the COVID-19 pandemic. He congratulated China on the successful conclusion of its two sessions for 2022 and wished the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China a complete success.

The two sides also exchanged ideas and reached consensus on promoting people-to-people friendship, advancing exchanges and cooperation between friendship cities, local governments and enterprises. ■

CPAFFC President Lin Songtian meets Ethiopian ambassador

Huang Xiaowei

On April 20, Lin Songtian, president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, met with Teshome Toga Chanaka, Ethiopia's ambassador to China. Sun Xueqing, director-general of the CPAFFC's department of Asian and African affairs, also attended the meeting.

Lin extended welcome to Teshome for visiting the association again, speaking highly of the traditional friendship and comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership between China and Ethiopia. It has developed into a model of China-Africa and South-South friendly and mutually beneficial cooperation under the strategic guidance of the two countries' leaders, he said.

Lin briefly recalled State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi's proposal for an "initiative of peaceful development in the Horn of Africa" during his tour to Africa at the beginning of the year. Lin commended the Ethiopian government and people for their unremitting efforts in promoting

national peace, dialogue, reconciliation, harmony and independent sustainable development, and he expressed China's willingness to actively support regional countries in addressing the triple challenges of security, development and governance in an independent manner to achieve long-term peace and stability, development and prosperity.

Lin said, the crisis in Ukraine has severely disrupted global production and supply chains, as well as capital chains, and it has triggered a global food and energy crisis, stagflation and other economic and social problems. People around the world, including in Europe and the United States, are paying and will continue to pay a heavy price for this.

He said that less-developed countries in Africa, especially those dependent on food and energy imports, have been and will continue to be the innocent victims of the Cold War mentality of the US and the West, and will remain victims of the current world crisis.

"Only by upholding justice and

calling for a ceasefire can the international community get out of its survival crisis," he said.

Noting that Africa is rich in natural and human resources, Lin praised the continent as "the youngest, most dynamic and most promising continent" and one that "has been rising". He said Africa enjoys broad prospects for China-Africa cooperation, adding that China has always kept its word and never made empty promises.

"We will fully implement the outcomes of the eighth Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation and continue to help Africa overcome the three development bottlenecks of lagging infrastructure, insufficient human resources and lack of capital, so as to achieve independent and sustainable development," Lin said.

Lin pledged that the CPAFFC will continue to give full play to the advantages of people-to-people diplomacy, actively promote friendly exchanges and mutually beneficial cooperation between friendship provinces and cities of the two countries, constantly enrich

the content of cooperation and encourage more Chinese private enterprises to invest in Ethiopia to support the country in building an industrial belt headed by the Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway, so that the country can realize independent and sustainable development.

Teshome briefed his host about the current domestic situation in Ethiopia, saying that the Ethiopian government is committed to national reconciliation and dialogue. He said he appreciated China and believes it will actively push relevant parties to resolve problems through dialogue and consultation and provide more humanitarian assistance. Ethiopia highly appreciated China's initiative for peaceful development in the Horn of Africa and expected that China would play a bigger role in regional peace, stability and development, he said.

Teshome spoke highly of relations between the two countries. He said China is Ethiopia's most important development partner and thanked it for its long-term support for Ethiopia's economic and social development. He said he wants his country to work with the CPAFFC to implement the outcomes of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, make good use of friendship cities to induce more Chinese enterprises to invest and start businesses in Ethiopia and help rebuild schools, medical and health infrastructure and support the country's vocational education and training.

The two sides also candidly exchanged in-depth views on international and regional issues of common concern. ■

CPAFFC President Lin Songtian meets Rwanda ambassador

Zhang Peng

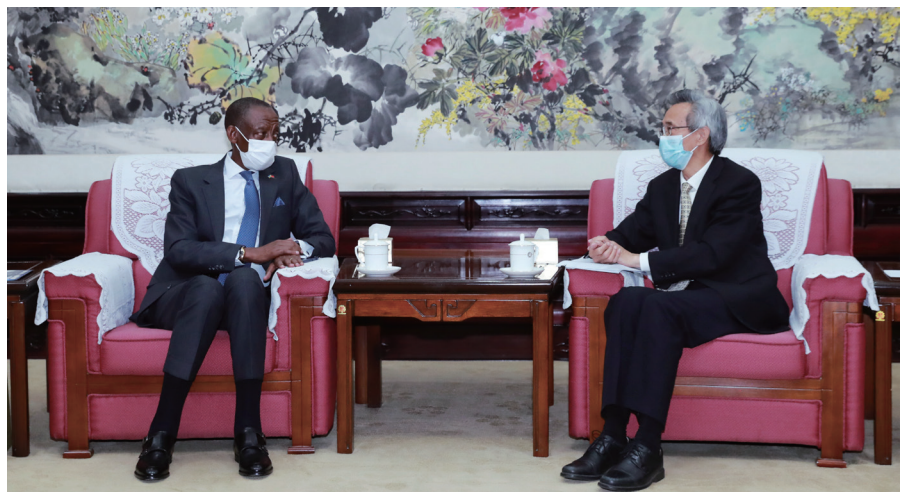
On Apr 21, Lin Songtian, president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, met with James Kimonyo, Rwanda's ambassador to China. They had in-depth exchanges on bilateral and China-Africa relations, as well as on international issues of common concern. They reached broad consensus. Sun Xueqing, director-general of the CPAFFC's department of Asian and African affairs, also attended the meeting.

Lin spoke highly of relations between China and Rwanda, noting that under the guidance of their respective

leaders relations have been steadily upgraded to new heights in recent years. The friendly and mutually beneficial cooperation in various fields has yielded fruitful results, and the friendship between the two countries has been embedded in people's hearts.

Lin expressed appreciation for Rwanda's firm support for China's position on matters of core interest, including Taiwan, Hong Kong, Tibet and Xinjiang.

He introduced China's Africa policy and the outcomes of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation,



President Lin Songtian had a conversation with Ambassador James Kimonyo.

saying that China has always honored its promises and is committed to helping Africa enhance its capacity for independent and sustainable development. The fruits of cooperation have brought tangible benefits to its people, he said.

The United States and the West have churned out a lot of slogans about their Africa policies, paying lip service but failing to deliver, he said.

Lin said that the ongoing crisis in Ukraine has seriously undermined the world economic order and the stability of global industrial and supply chains, caused global food and energy crises and stagflation and worsened

the already sluggish recovery of the world economy. The less-developed and least-developed countries in Africa are particularly vulnerable to severe famine and other threats to production, survival and security, he said, and it is unfair for the people of the world to pay the bill while only certain countries benefit from the crisis.

Only when the people of the world, especially the people of Europe and the US, wake up and uphold justice, can war and crisis come to an end and peace and prosperity come to be shared.

Lin said the CPAFFC is willing to strengthen cooperation with the embassy of Rwanda in China to actively

promote friendly exchanges and mutually beneficial cooperation between local governments, friendship cities, traditional leaders and youth think tanks to bring more benefits to the people.

Ambassador Kimonyo spoke highly of bilateral relations and China's policies, ideas and actions towards Africa. He said Rwanda and China have always supported each other in sincere friendship, solidarity and cooperation and he thanked China for its strong support in energy, infrastructure and healthcare. He looks forward to deepening bilateral exchanges and mutually beneficial cooperation in an all-around way, especially in people-to-people areas, so as to further enhance understanding, friendship and mutual trust between the two peoples.

Kimonyo attributed China's rapid and successful development to the extraordinary leadership of the Communist Party of China and the great strength and solidarity of the country's 56 ethnic groups. The miracle of China's successful development not only inspires African countries and people, but also sets an example for global poverty reduction and common progress of mankind, he said.

Kimonyo said the African side highly appreciates the nine programs proposed by President Xi Jinping at the eighth Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation and is confident that Africa will achieve independent and sustainable development with China's firm support. ■



President Lin Songtian and James Kimonyo, Rwanda's ambassador to China, pose in front of the slogans 'Common development' and 'Cooperation for win-win results'.

Inciting conflict between Russia and Ukraine is unfair to the people of the world

Huang Xiaowei

On April 26, Lin Songtian, president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, met with Allan Joseph Chintedza, Malawi's new ambassador to China. They had in-depth exchanges and reached broad consensus on bilateral relations, China-Africa cooperation and international issues of common concern. Sun Xueqing, director-general of the Department of Asian and African Affairs of CPAFFC, attended the meeting.

Lin spoke highly of the achievements in China-Malawi and China-Africa relations, saying that under the strategic guidance of leaders in both countries, mutual political trust between China and Malawi has been continuously enhanced, the one-China principle has been deeply rooted in the hearts of the people and the results of cooperation in various fields are visible and tangible, benefiting the two peoples.

Chintedza praised China for honoring its promises and taking concrete action to help Malawi and other African countries achieve independent and sustainable development. He said Malawi is ready to work with China to implement the important points of agreement reached by leaders of the two countries on the phone, as well as the outcomes of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, to promote win-win cooperation and common development.

The two sides agreed to maintain communication and coordination, actively push for establishment of friendship cities and encourage exchanges between traditional leaders, parliamentarians, local officials and youth representatives. They will strengthen mutually beneficial cooperation in poverty reduction, agriculture and infrastructure construction and will steadily consolidate the foundation of China-

Malawi friendship in terms of interests and public opinion.

Lin said the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, triggered by geopolitics and a Cold War mentality, has seriously undermined the stability and security of the world's industrial, supply and capital chains. It has created a global food and energy crisis and stagflation.

People around the world, especially in Africa and in developing countries elsewhere, are facing threats to their employment and subsistence and have to pay the bill for the consequences of conflict. It is unfair to the people of the world and should arouse high vigilance among people of all countries.

Only by upholding justice and promoting peace and dialogue — rather than adding fuel to the fire — can an early ceasefire be achieved, along with ending the crisis to enjoy peace, tranquility, development and prosperity. ■

2022 US-China Agriculture Roundtable a success

Zhang Yang

On March 22, the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the United States Heartland China Association co-hosted the 2022 US-China Agriculture Roundtable forum online.

Nearly 100 guests from all walks of life in China and the United States attended the event online. Opening remarks were made, online or via recorded video, by Lin Songtian, president of the CPAFFC; Qin Gang, Chinese ambassador to the US; Bob Holden, chairman and CEO of the USHCA and former governor of Missouri; Ken Quinn, strategic adviser to the USHCA and president emeritus of World Food Prize Foundation; David Meale, chargé d'affaires of the US embassy in China; Jason Hafemeister, acting deputy under-secretary of the US Department of Agriculture; and Darin LaHood, congressman of Illinois.

Lin said spring is the time to sow the seeds of hope. "Last Friday, Chinese President Xi Jinping and US President Joe Biden had a candid and constructive video call," he said. "It is timely to hold the second forum today, with the hope that it can bring a warm current of spring to the chilly China-US relations and help drive the relations back on track."

Not long ago, Lin said, a series of commemorative activities were held in Shanghai on the 50th anniversary of the issuance of the Shanghai Communiqué. The event generated three inspirations, he said.

First, the Chinese and American people have always been friendly to each other. It is in the common interests of the two countries and two peoples to maintain and develop the friendly cooperative relations. Despite the continued deterioration of international geopolitics and bilateral relations, China-US economic and trade cooperation remained strong last year, with the total value of trade in goods rising by 28.7 percent. Of that, China's agricultural imports from the US accounted for about one-fifth of total US agricultural exports, making China the largest importer of American agricultural products.

Second, China and the US are capable of coexisting peacefully and achieving common development, as long as both sides uphold the principle of mutual respect and seeking common ground while shelving differences.

Third, China and the US need to draw on each other's strengths in exchanges and cooperation. There is huge potential and a promising future

for cooperation between the two sides. When the Chinese people's demand for a better life meets the supply of high-quality agricultural products from the US, it will generate huge development opportunities for American farmers and unlimited space for China-US cooperation.

Lin hoped that both sides would take the forum as an opportunity to have candid exchanges, tap the potential of mutually beneficial cooperation in agricultural imports and exports, cross-border e-commerce, green agriculture, agricultural science and technology innovation and other fields to deepen cooperation and mutual trust between the two countries and make positive contribution to the sound development of China-US relations.

Qin Gang said in his video remarks: "As a highlight of pragmatic China-US cooperation, agricultural cooperation is well-grounded and highly complementary between our two countries. Since the phase-one trade deal was signed in 2020, China has been faithfully fulfilling its agricultural procurement commitment. As a result, our agricultural trade registered a quick comeback.

"Agricultural cooperation best

explains the win-win nature of our economic and trade relations. It also speaks to our highly complementary economic structures and deeply intertwined interests. Deeper agricultural cooperation will not only benefit both countries' agriculture and people but will also carry strong significance for global food security and agricultural development.”

Holden said: “When we launched the first Agriculture Roundtable a year ago — in the middle of the pandemic and at a time of significant transition and turmoil in our country — I was encouraged to see that there was broad bipartisan US support for, and participation in, our forum. This was based on a common perception of the importance of increased agricultural exports from the American heartland to China.

“We all come from vastly different backgrounds and beliefs, but we share a common goal in helping guide our world toward a better and more productive future.

“The world today faces three major challenges: food security, climate change and the pandemic. For our planet to survive, we must have open dialogue, common purpose and wise leadership from every country in the years ahead.”

Hafemeister noted that the US and China are among each other's most important agricultural partners. The two sides are maintaining strong trade ties. Last year, US agricultural exports to China increased significantly. Hafemeister said he believed that through joint efforts,



CPAFFC President Lin Songtian attended the event and delivered the opening remark.

China's agricultural import market will continue to grow and the common interests of both countries will continue to expand.

After the opening ceremony, heads of agricultural departments of Chinese provinces and US states, such as Hubei, Henan, Oklahoma and Kansas, as well as representatives of agricultural enterprises and trade associations, introduced the fruitful achievements of agricultural cooperation between the two countries in the past decades from different aspects.

They agreed that China-US agricultural cooperation had brought tangible benefits to the two peoples and provided an important basis for bilateral exchanges and cooperation in

other areas. They also agreed the two sides should resolve existing problems through dialogue and communication, deepen bilateral agricultural cooperation and jointly contribute to world food security and sustainable agricultural development.

Concluding the program, the Iowa High School Choir performed a Chinese song recorded during this year's Chinese Lunar New Year — *Love Keeps Everlasting Memories* — which tells the story of friendship between Iowa and China. The event ended with a warm and positive atmosphere.

The forum consisted of three sections: enterprise dialogue, education dialogue and think tank dialogue. ■

US-China sister cities dialogue successfully held via video link

Liu Yi

On April 28, the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and Sister Cities International co-hosted the US-China Sister Cities Dialogue online. The theme of the dialogue was "Building resilient partnerships".

Participating in the opening ceremony and delivering online or video speeches were Qin Gang, Chinese ambassador to the United States; Lin Songtian, president of the CPAFFC; Guo Ningning, vice-governor of Fujian province; Zhang Jiandong, vice-mayor of Beijing municipality; Zhou Xi'an, vice-governor of Anhui province; He Jinping, vice-governor of Henan province; Leroy Allala, Sister Cities International president and CEO; Terry Branstad, former US ambassador to China; David Toland, lieutenant governor from the state of Kansas; John Wobensmith, secretary of state of Maryland; and Shemia Fagan, secretary of state of Oregon.

Representatives of local governments, legislative bodies or sister city committees from nine provinces of China and nine states in the US gave speeches. More than 300 people from all walks of life in China and America attended the dialogue online.

Xinhua News Agency, People's Daily, The Paper and other mainstream Chinese media outlets covered the event. The whole activity, filled with a warm atmosphere and pragmatic contents, brought a warm spring breeze to the China-US subnational exchanges.

Lin noted that this year marks the 50th anniversary of the Shanghai Communique. The development of China-US relations over the past 50 years shows that the two countries, despite various differences, can co-exist in a peaceful way for common development so long as they respect each other and seek common ground while shelving differences. Both the Chinese and the American people want lives featuring peace, prosperity and harmony.

"It is in the interest of the people of the two countries and the world at large to safeguard and advance a friendly and mutually beneficial Sino-US relationship," Lin said. "The two sides should make the right strategic choice based on the well-being of the two peoples to better benefit the two peoples and the whole world."

He spoke highly of the role of China-US sister city relations as an important bridge and driving force

in enhancing bilateral relations. He said the CPAFFC would like to work with the American side to encourage more friendly exchanges and win-win cooperation between enterprises, think tanks, media and non-governmental organizations based on the philosophy of carrying out consultation, making joint contributions and sharing benefits under the principle of mutual respect, equality and mutual benefits. In this way, the two sides can work with concerted efforts to facilitate mutual understanding, friendship and trust to realize common development with win-win results.

Qin said the foundation of China-US relations lies with people-to-people ties at the grassroots level. The driving force for a stable China-US relationship is the numerous people who are dedicated to promoting, defending and contributing to friendly exchanges and practical cooperation.

In the past two years, Qin said, China-US subnational exchanges have met some headwinds due to the political atmosphere in the US and the worst pandemic of the past century.

"However, the aspiration of the Chinese and American people for peace, development, exchanges and

cooperation is not to be stopped,” he said. “The resilience of our sister cities is the resilience of China-US relations.”

Allala said that the aim of former US president Dwight Eisenhower in creating Sister Cities International was to develop friendship between individuals, as well as groups, to avoid war. This philosophy still matters a lot, Allala said. For many years in the past, the CPAFFC and SCI have been carrying out multiple activities to promote exchanges and cooperation between sister cities. The dialogue this time was held via the cloud. The COVID-19 pandemic led to new methods of communication that have enabled China-US sister states and provinces, and sister cities, to maintain efficient exchanges with each other.

Branstad recalled his meetings with President Xi Jinping in the past. In 1985, he received Xi, who was then secretary of the county CPC committee of Zhengding, Hebei province. In 2012, Xi warmly called Branstad “my old friend” when they met again. As the former governor of the state of Iowa, Branstad signed a memorandum establishing a sister state/province relationship between Iowa and Hebei. He said the continuous active friendship between Iowa and Hebei in the past decades gives him great pride and satisfaction. During his term as ambassador to China, he developed sincere friendships with the Chinese people and said his wish is for both sides to deepen friendly cooperation with shared efforts.

Other representatives from the



CPAFFC President Lin Songtian attended the dialogue and delivered the opening remark.

states or provinces of the two countries delivered online or video speeches in which they spoke highly of their achievements in sister city partnerships and reminisced about the pleasant past cooperation. With a strong belief in the role of resilient sister city partnerships as the basis in advancing state relations, they expressed appreciation for the efforts of the CPAFFC and SCI to enhance people-to-people friendships between the two countries, and they expected to extend collaboration on culture, economy, trade and clean energy technologies, joining hands to meet global challenges including climate change, pandemics and sustainable development.

After the opening ceremony, local representatives from both sides shared their insights on three topics: sports diplomacy and subnational cooperation,

climate change and green development and innovative economy and future cooperation. They shared their fruitful achievements in various fields that benefited from sister city partnerships and looked forward to more promising cooperation. Both sides agreed that consolidating and deepening sister city partnerships is in the interest of the two sides and will empower them at the grassroots level to achieve common development with win-win results.

We should promote sound and stable bilateral relations together so that the two peoples can benefit more from the good relations, they said.

They all expressed hopes for an early end to the COVID-19 pandemic and looked forward to a reunion at the next session of the China-US Sister Cities Conference. ■

CPAFFC President Lin Songtian attends Global Youth Conference

Jiang Jing

On May 13, the Global Youth Conference was held successfully. It was jointly hosted by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, the Shandong People's Government, the All-China Youth Federation and the China Soong Ching Ling Foundation.

At the opening ceremony, Li Bin, vice-chair and secretary-general of the Chinese People's Political Consulta-

tive Conference National Committee and chair of the Soong Ching Ling Foundation, delivered a video speech. Li Ganjie, secretary of the CPC Shandong Committee made a keynote speech. Lin Songtian, president of the CPAFFC, and Fu Zhenbang, secretary of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League of China and vice-president of the All-China Youth Federation, gave online

speeches. Zhou Naixiang, governor of Shandong province, presided over the opening ceremony.

A number of important guests attended the opening ceremony online or sent video remarks, including Aleksandar Vucic, president of Serbia; Taneti Maamau, president of Kiribati; Artem Semenov, member of the Central Committee of the United Russia Party and head of the CPC Liaison Working



Group of the party's Supreme Council; Zhang Ming, secretary-general of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization; Rahamtalla M. Osman, African Union representative to China and representative of diplomatic envoys; Siddharth Chatterjee, United Nations Resident Coordinator in China; and Katja Kruger, vice-president of the Regional Council of Brittany, France, among others.

The conference's main venue was in Shandong. It had 16 sub-venues — in Beijing and other places at home and abroad. More than 5,000 Chinese and foreign guests from 48 countries and regions attended the conference in person and online, including diplomatic envoys to China, representatives of international friendship cities and international organizations, youth leaders, experts, scholars and media representatives. Focusing on the theme "Vibrant Shandong for shared future", participants had in-depth exchanges and discussions and unanimously expressed common aspirations for global youth unity and cooperation, sharing opportunities, common development and shared responsibility.

In his speech, Lin noted that Shandong is the hometown of Confucius and Mencius and the cradle of Chinese civilization and Confucianism. It has become a new front-line for high-quality development philosophy. The Confucian culture and Chinese civilization, with "benevolence, righteousness, manners,

wisdom and credit" at the core, has been the moral standard and value orientation of the Chinese people. They have also contributed Chinese wisdom to the progress of human civilization. Advocating "peaceful and harmonious co-existence", "seeking common grounds by shelving differences" and "benefiting all the people in the world", the Chinese nation deeply understands that peaceful, civilized and common development is the right choice for people of all countries.

Lin said that for more than 40 years China has upheld the concept of peaceful, open and innovative development in a civilized way, having created the two miracles of rapid economic growth and sustained social stability. China has promoted global development through its own development. Faced with profound global changes unseen in a century, he said, President Xi Jinping bears in mind the well-being of the world and proposed a people-centered philosophy of development, the Global Development Initiative, Global Security Initiative, the Belt and Road Initiative and the vision of building a community with a shared future for mankind. These proposals draw a beautiful vision for future development and contribute Chinese wisdom and solutions to the world and gaining global recognition.

Lin noted that people throughout the world crave a good life featuring peace, harmony and affluence. But

such a common pursuit is not only spoiled by the raging COVID-19 pandemic as a natural calamity but also by a man-made disaster — the Russia-Ukraine conflict instigated by geopolitics and a Cold War mentality.

He said the Ukraine crisis has severely jeopardized the security of global industrial, supply and capital chains, causing global food, energy and financial crises and leaving the people of the world, especially those in underdeveloped countries, under the threat of production and subsistence crises and famine. It has also severely thwarted developing countries' efforts to realize sustainable development.

The future of mankind is now at a historic juncture, Lin said, and young people are the hope of a nation and represent the future of the world. The CPAFFC, he said, is ready to work with young friends all over the world in the following aspects:

First, firmly uphold justice and safeguard world peace. Second, remain open and inclusive and promote exchanges and mutual learning among civilizations. Third, keep the whole world in mind while building a community with a shared future for mankind and working to create a better world.

During the conference, Shandong also held the Huanghewan Youth Economic Forum, China and the World in the Eyes of the Youth International Youth Art Exhibition and other activities. ■

CPAFFC Vice-President Jiang Jiang attends launching ceremony of China-New Zealand people-to-people friendship activities

Jin Hanghang

On March 29, the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the New Zealand China Friendship Society jointly launched a series of China-New Zealand people-to-people friendship activities in a video meeting. With the theme of "Carrying forward Rewi Alley's spirit and jointly writing a new chapter of friendship between the two peoples", the event aimed to commemorate the 50th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between China and New Zealand and the 95th anniversary of the outstanding international friend

Rewi Alley's coming to China.

Jiang Jiang, vice-president of the CPAFFC, and Dave Bromwich, president of the NZCFS, attended the ceremony online and delivered speeches. Wang Xiaolong, China's ambassador to New Zealand, and Clare Fearnley, New Zealand's ambassador to China, delivered video messages of congratulation. Shen Xin, director of American and Oceanian Affairs of the CPAFFC, and Chris Lipscombe, president of the Wellington branch of the NZCFS, co-chaired the meeting.

Jiang Jiang said: "Since the es-

tablishment of diplomatic ties, China and New Zealand have transcended political, historical and cultural differences, respected each other and carried out win-win cooperation. Our relations have long been at the forefront of China's relations with Western countries. The historic achievements of bilateral relations would not have been possible without the hard work and care of people from all walks of life in both countries.

"Among them, Rewi Alley, an old friend of the Chinese people and a bridge-builder for China-New Zealand friendship, was the most well-known. We will always remember Rewi Alley and carry forward the spirit of internationalism he embodies."

Jiang noted that friendship-city exchanges and cooperation are an important force for promoting state-to-state relations. Since 1981, China and New Zealand have established 42 pairs of friendship cities. The efforts have played an irreplaceable role in enhancing mutual understanding and friendship between the two peoples, deepening local exchanges and practical cooperation and consolidating public



support for China-New Zealand friendship.

He said the CPAFFC is ready to work with the New Zealand side to promote the high-quality development of friendship-city relations and contribute to the overall development of bilateral relations.

Bromwich noted that COVID-19 has hindered people-to-people exchanges, but it has not cut off the friendship between the two peoples. The NZCFS will always uphold the spirit embodied by Rewi Alley and be committed to promoting friendship and understanding between the two peoples, he said.

Wang Xiaolong said: “Holding a series of activities is an important measure to implement the consensus reached by leaders of our two countries and deepen bilateral relations.

“As long as we adhere to mutual respect, openness and inclusiveness, seek common ground while reserving differences, pursue win-win results and uphold the common vision of improving people’s well-being, we can better seize opportunities, promote the steady and long-term development of the China-New Zealand comprehensive strategic partnership and continue to deliver tangible benefits to our two countries and peoples.”

Clare Fearnley added: “As Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said, the relationship between New Zealand and China is one of our most important relationships, and New Zealand has invested a lot of effort and energy in this regard.



CPAFFC Vice-President Jiang Jiang attended the ceremony online and delivered a speech.

“The series of activities will be an important opportunity for China and New Zealand to celebrate and strengthen bilateral relations. I would like to thank the CPAFFC for its great work in telling the story of Rewi Alley.”

Zhuang Rongliang, vice-mayor of Xiamen; Andy Foster, mayor of Wellington; Zhang Baojun, president of the Gansu People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries; and Dave Adamson, secretary of NZCFS and immediate past president of the Christchurch branch of NZCFS, introduced exchanges and cooperation between friendship cities of the two sides.

Shi Hong, director of the Alley Research Center at Lanzhou City University, and Maurice Alley, a nephew of Rewi Alley, shared practices and ideas of inheriting and carrying forward Alley’s spirit. All participants

agreed that China-New Zealand friendship is deeply rooted in the hearts of the people and that there is great potential for practical cooperation at the local level and for people-to-people exchanges between the two countries. They will continue to carry forward the Rewi Alley spirit and play a greater role in consolidating public support for China-New Zealand relations, Shi said.

More than 100 people attended the event, including representatives from 10 Chinese friendship associations, including those from Jiangsu, Fujian, Jiangxi, Hubei, Shaanxi and Gansu provinces; as well as officials from the Chinese embassy in New Zealand and the Chinese consulate general in Christchurch. Also included were people from 10 branches of the NZCFS in Wellington, Auckland, Christchurch, and Hamilton, among others. ■

CPAFFC Vice-President Yuan Mindao attends Fourth Shaoxing Friendship Cities Conference

Gao Yuan

On May 19, CPAFFC Vice-President Yuan Mindao attended the Fourth China Shaoxing International Friendship Cities Conference and delivered a speech via video.

Saluting the successful convening of the conference, Yuan said that friendship city relations are an essential channel for subnational as well as friendly people-to-people exchanges, and it has provided a strong basis and pillar for maintaining relations between China and the rest of the world. Since the establishment of the first pair of sister cities in 1973, the cause of encouraging more Chinese cities to set up sistership with foreign counterparts has borne fruit. To date, 2,876 pairs of sister cities (province/state) in 139 countries, have been created, forming an international circle of friends and a net of partners worldwide.

Yuan said that over the past 50 years or so Sino-foreign friendship cities have been carrying out extraordinary exchanges and pragmatic cooperation in various fields. With concerted efforts to tackle challenges and promote common development, they have consolidated both material and mental bases for friendship and made significant contributions to world peace and development.

China has established a new philosophy and paradigm for development and created an even broader space for other countries to share its development



CPAFFC Vice-President Yuan Mindao speaks at the conference.

opportunities. This in turn created an essential opportunity for international friendship cities to strengthen their cooperation.

Yuan said that the CPAFFC and the China International Friendship Cities Association will continue to support China's subnational exchanges with the rest of the world.

"Together with international friends, we will strive for a more friendly and better-developed future so that we can build a community of shared future for mankind," he said.

The conference was hosted by the Shaoxing Municipal People's Government and supported by the CPAFFC. Themed "Hand in hand for common development", it had branch venues in Shaoxing's 15 friendship cities and four international friendship organizations. Yue Shengchun, secretary of the Com-

munist Party of China's Shaoxing Municipal Committee, delivered a speech at the opening ceremony. Shaoxing Mayor Shi Huifang delivered a keynote speech. Ambassador of the Republic of Mali to China Didier Dacko, Ambassador of Mauritius to China Marie Roland Alain Wong Yen Cheon and representatives of foreign cities and friendship organizations from Russia, Belarus, Finland, Japan and Colombia delivered video speeches or exchanged views during the Mayors' Forum. Online signing ceremonies nailed down cooperation projects by Shaoxing and its international friendship cities. The Shaoxing Initiative was launched at the conference, where broad consensus was reached on closer economic and trade ties, deepening cultural mutual learning, promoting people's well-being and facilitating green development. ■

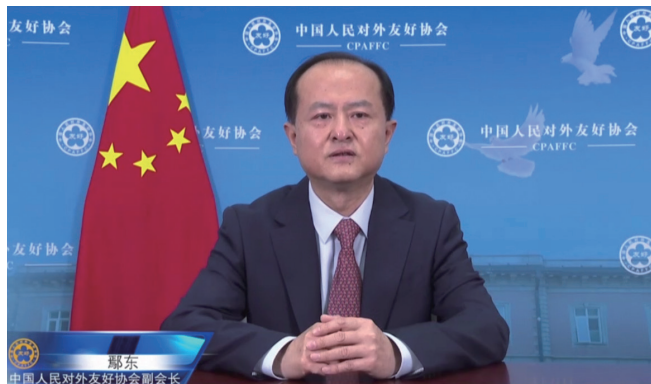
CPAFFC Vice-President Yan Dong attends 2nd assembly of 21st Century Maritime Cooperation Committee and Smart Ocean Forum

Lyu Yanxia

On May 17, Vice-President Yan Dong of the CPAFFC attended the Second General Assembly of the 21st Century Maritime Cooperation Committee and the Smart Ocean Forum and delivered a speech. Also attending were the mayor of Fuzhou, Wu Xiande; United Cities and Local Governments Secretary-General Emilia Saiz; the president of UCLG ASPAC, Ashok Kumar Byanju Shrestha; UCLG ASPAC Secretary-General Bernadia Irawati Tjandradewi; and Myanmar's Ambassador to China U Myo Thant Pe.

Yan of the CPAFFC said current times are characterized by a mixed impact of changes unseen in a century and the ravages of COVID-19. The new round of the sci-tech revolution and industrial transformation are bringing even more fierce competition. Human society is facing the unprecedented impact of climate change, marine pollution and other global problems.

Following President Xi Jinping's idea of building closer partnerships along routes of the Belt and Road Initiative, China has been promoting the concept of green development and practicing a global governance philosophy featuring extensive consultation, concerted contribution and shared



CPAFFC Vice-President Yan Dong speaks at the forum.

benefits. With “hard connectivity” as the direction, “soft connectivity” as the support and “heart connectivity” as the link, high-quality BRI cooperation has been promoted with tangible results, contributing to global development.

Yan said the CPAFFC and Fuzhou would continue to give full play to the 21st Century Maritime Cooperation Committee's role as a bridge, explore more channels of foreign exchange, seek out more maritime cooperation and new routes for maritime development to inject momentum into the BRI.

U Myo Thant Pe said the BRI, which was proposed by President Xi in 2013 for building the Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century

Maritime Silk Road, was of vital importance in promoting international stability, maritime cooperation and sustainable marine development. Since its inception five years ago, the 21st Century Maritime Cooperation Committee has served as an important platform for connecting cities and local governments in areas reached by the BRI. It facilitates exchanges and mutually beneficial cooperation between countries in the Asia-Pacific area, especially ASEAN countries and China, in the fields of maritime economy, environmental protection and tourism.

He said Myanmar looks forward to more efficient cooperation with member cities of the 21st Century

Maritime Cooperation Committee, Chinese cities and others in the Asia-Pacific area so that concerted efforts can be made to promote sustainable and efficient development of the ocean economy.

Saiz delivered an online speech in New York to address the opening ceremony. She said that the UCLG was going to appeal at the 2022 United Nations Ocean Conference for more global attention given to maritime development and governance and call for following the successful experience of ASPAC members of UCLG to ensure more consensus on marine ecology and commercial development to achieve innovative breakthroughs.

The conference was cohosted by the CPAFFC, Fuzhou municipal government and 21st Century Maritime Cooperation Committee online and offline. More than 120 people attended the opening ceremony, including representatives from UCLG, the World Association of Major Metropolises, representatives and counselors of member agencies of the 21st Century Maritime Cooperation Committee in China and abroad, representatives from the China Center for Contemporary World Studies, officials from UNESCO and other international organizations, diplomatic envoys from 22 countries, experts, scholars and enterprisers from home and abroad.

After the opening ceremony, participants shared their insights in the forum on smart oceans. Eight guests delivered keynote speeches in which they shared information and discussed ways to achieve greater development. ■

Letter of Thanks to the CPAFFC from Founder of Sierra Leone China Friendship Association

Mariatu Kargbo



23 February, 2022

Dear Ambassador Lin,

Thank you and your team for the invitation to attend the amazing Opening and Closing ceremonies of the 2022 Winter Olympics, an experience I will never forget.

It was a great honour to see the President and his wife's warm welcome to us all and to watch these wonderful events like a family. I am full of admiration for the hard work of the Director, the production team and the thousands of performers of all ages. Likewise, great thanks should go to all the volunteers for their positive attitude in welcoming us to the Bird's Nest Stadium and their perseverance despite the cold weather.

I was also very impressed by the CPAFFC's wonderful efforts to organize so many foreign friends and it was good to see so many people from so many countries. The organization of the COVID testing was impeccable and the arrangements for registration on the event days were so professional.

I would like to single out Vivian and all the members of the team that was responsible for our delegation and to thank them for their concern for our safety at all times.

Finally, I would like to thank the Chinese government, BOCOG and the people of the city for contributing to a wonderful Olympics experience, to congratulate the Chinese team on its amazing performance and to wish everybody in China all success in future Games.

Yours sincerely,

Mariatu Kargbo
Founder, Sierra Leone China Friendship Association
Founder, Smallsmallchinese

Amity torch project

Jinith De Silva

Friendship entered Sri Lanka centuries ago through the fabulous Silk Road route from ancient China. Since then, the two countries have developed close relations in the economics and cultural fields.

China-Sri Lanka relations gathered momentum after both countries gained independence. Sri Lanka was one of the first countries to recognize the People's Republic of China when it was established in 1949.

When then-Prime Minister S W R D Bandaranaike initiated diplomatic ties in 1956, the relations between the two countries became very warm, laying the foundation for cooperation in several fields.

In the past several years, relations have been rapidly enhanced through the Belt and Road Initiative, which was put forward by President Xi Jinping in 2013 with the aim of building a trade, investment and infrastructure network connecting Asia with Europe and Africa along and beyond the ancient Silk Road routes. Direct Chinese investment and aid started to flow to Asian and African countries under this concept. BRI projects have contributed in a big way to economic development and have created a large number of jobs in participating countries. The port city of Colombo, built under the BRI, is solid testimony to the altruism practiced under the thought of President Xi. In this project, Sri Lanka will get 269 hectares of reclaimed land and job opportunities

for more than 100,000 people.

China will continue to share its development opportunities with other countries and welcome them aboard the fast train of its development.

In times of disaster, China has been among the first to come to Sri Lanka's assistance. In 2004 when the Indian Ocean tsunami devastated Sri Lanka, China helped with reconstruction.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, not only the Chinese government but also many Chinese organizations offered their assistance in numerous ways.

The Sri Lanka China Society is pleased and highly appreciative of the stand taken by the Amity Foundation (Nanjing) and Alibaba Philanthropy to help the poorest of the poor children living in Sri Lanka who were badly affected by the fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic resulted in lowering the living standard of everybody, but especially the poor, who were laborers earning a meager living on a daily basis by working in their neighborhoods. The worst-affected were children of these workers who could not go to work because of lockdowns imposed by the health authorities to control the epidemic. Poor parents who lost their livelihoods could not send their children to school for lack of resources.

Thanks to the Amity Foundation and Alibaba Philanthropy for stepping in at a time like this to help 455 of the poorest children by offering Rs 18,000 (600 yuan) in cash, Rs 3,000 (100 yuan)

of stationary and Rs 3,000 of essential food items per child. For this purpose, the society selected 455 students from 12 rural schools on the recommendation of school principals, government officers and divisional secretaries.

Preparing the lists of 455 students to provide cash, school packs and essential food items was an arduous task taken on by committee members of the Sri Lanka China Society. School principals and parents highly appreciated the donations at a time of need and conveyed their satisfaction and appreciation to the society.

School dropouts were reduced to a minimum, as the resources provided by various Chinese foundations allowed children to overcome their difficulties and proceed with their studies for some time. It was timely help.

The Governance of China Vol. 3

The Sri Lanka China Society has translated Chinese President Xi Jinping's *The Governance of China Vol. 3* into Sinhalese. This translation was edited jointly by R Jinith de Silva, president of the society, and Herald Peiris, the organization's social secretary, with support from a few eminent members of the society. The society will distribute this book to public and school libraries in Sri Lanka free of charge.

The first copy was presented to Zhang Yingbao, cultural counsellor of the Chinese embassy in Colombo on May 4, 2022. ■

Grasp the opportunities of the Asian century; practice the spirit of “Asia is One Family”

— Youth salon between China and South Asian countries
held successfully

Hou Mengwei

On April 28, about 20 young people from China and South Asian countries gathered online for a youth salon to discuss issues concerning peace and development in the region.

The forum was hosted by the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the People’s Government of Yunnan province. Lin Songtian, CPAFFC president; Luo Hongjiang, vice-chairman of the Standing Committee of the Yunnan Provincial People’s Congress; Moin ul Haque, Pakistan’s ambassador to China; and K.K. Yoganaadan, charge d’affaires of the Sri Lanka embassy, addressed the meeting.

Under the theme “Pool development efforts and build a vision of peace together”, 15 students, business employees and government workers — all acknowledged as “outstanding” in

their realms from China, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka — shared their views on regional development and people-to-people exchanges, contributing to peace and development in the region.

More than 200 students and teachers from Peking University, Yunnan University, Sichuan University, Shanghai University and Shenzhen University, as well as Cheena-Bhavana, Visva-Bharati University of India, attended the meeting as observers. Zhu Dan, director-general of the cultural exchange department of the CPAFFC, gave concluding remarks.

Addressing the forum, President Lin said that China and South Asian countries share a common mission for development, as they “are geographical neighbors and culturally connected, with similar historical sufferings.”

By sharing mutual sympathy and assistance in response to the challenges imposed by the COVID-19 epidemic, both sides have safeguarded people’s health and safety, “demonstrating the virtues of oriental cultures and true love in the human world, while vividly interpreting the concept of building a community with a shared future for mankind”.

However, Lin said, certain countries, in a bid to shift their domestic contradictions and crises to other countries and divert their people’s attention and gain benefits from the chaos, have artificially instigated the Russia-Ukraine conflict, jeopardizing the stability of global chains of production, supply and capital and causing a series of economic and social problems including a food and energy crisis, inflation and stagflation. It is unfair that

their bills are being paid by the people of the world, especially people in underdeveloped countries.

Lin noted that President Xi Jinping recently delivered a keynote speech at the opening ceremony of the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference 2022 and proposed a global security initiative to tackle the security challenges faced by the world today. Lin said the proposal contributed Chinese wisdom and China's solution to the problem.

"I sincerely hope young people in China and South Asia can get a clear understanding of the situation, grasp opportunities of the 'Asian century', practice the spirit of 'Asia is One Family' and firmly promote fairness and justice," he said. "I hope they will strive to build a more peaceful, cooperative and unified Asia and world and make contributions to win-win cooperation and common development in the region."

Haque expressed condolences to the Chinese victims in the recent terrorist attack in Pakistan. He said, "Inter-cultural communication is of paramount importance to fostering a spirit of dialogue, appreciating diversity of thought and ideas and building bridges of cooperation and understanding."

He spoke highly of the youth salon and encouraged the young people to have a deeper understanding of the true meaning of the Asian spirit, play



President Lin Songtian addresses the opening ceremony.

a constructive role beyond the barriers of doubts and misunderstandings and contribute positively to the peace, progress and prosperity of the entire region.

Speaking of China-Sri Lanka relations, Yoganaadan praised China as a "true friend defying all difficulties" and expressed gratitude to China for the emergency economic aid and ample supply of anti-COVID-19 materials it had provided to Sri Lanka.

The youth participants spoke highly of the friendly cooperation between China and South-Asian countries, saying that they were ready to use their expertise to promote intercultural

exchanges and deepen mutual understanding for the continuation of the traditional friendship in the region. They pledged to contribute to the building of a community with a shared future for China and South Asia.

Since its inception in 2008, the China-South Asia International Cultural Forum has enabled a variety of cultural interactions to enhance mutual understanding and friendship between the peoples of China and South Asian countries and created a sound platform for people-to-people and cultural exchanges in the region. ■

Sister cities at 40, always young at heart

— Written on 40th anniversary of friendship between Guilin, Hastings

He Xin

On March 4, 2021, Rebekah Mawson, New Zealand’s consul general in Guangzhou, departed by train for Guilin, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, at 11:27 am and returned to Guangzhou at 5:16 pm. What prompted her to make such a round trip in a single working day, despite the fatigue?

She made the trip to see, in person, the 40th anniversary photo exhibition of friendship city relations of Guilin and Hastings, New Zealand, at the Guilin Museum.

Mawson told Shen Weihu, the

vice-mayor and a member of the Standing Committee of the CPC’s Guilin Municipal Committee, who greeted her, that Guilin and Hastings was the first pair of sister cities between China and New Zealand, and “it means a lot” as the two cities celebrated the anniversary of friendship. Over the years, the two cities have carried out a variety of activities in many areas, and the relationship has always been active and fruitful, setting a good example for other sister cities in both countries.

Let’s flash back to the same day in 1981, when the mayor of

Guilin at the time, Liang Shan, led a delegation to Hastings and signed the Sister City Protocol with the mayor of Hastings, Jim O’Connor, formalizing the friendly relationship that straddles the Pacific Ocean and the northern and southern hemispheres. Today, the original copy of the protocol is on display in the permanent exhibition — titled “Friendship of Guilin” — at the museum.

The friendship between Guilin and Hastings originated with the seemingly insignificant kiwi fruit. In the late 1970s, Don McKenzie, a horticultural scientist working for the New Zealand Ministry of Science and Industrial Research in Hastings, started business exchanges with the Guangxi Institute of Botany in Guilin with the kiwi. He was the first to propose a sister city relationship between Hastings and Guilin.

The seeds of friendship, once sown, grew strong and blossomed. Exchanges between the two sides have expanded from horticulture to trade, tourism, culture, education, youth and other fields. The friendship between the two cities has not diminished with the passage of time but rather has grown stronger.

Strong leadership, clear vision

Since the twinning, Guilin has



High School students of Hastings experienced Chinese calligraphy at Ronghu Primary School in Guilin in 2016.

seen a succession of 14 mayors; Hastings has had four. But the original passion in the relationship has shown no sign of waning. Leaders of Guilin have always attached great importance to the sister city relationship, holding regular meetings with their Hastings counterparts to lay out strategic plans and pinpoint areas of exchange and co-operation.

On the occasion of the 40th anniversary, Mayor Qin Chuncheng of Guilin and Mayor Sandra Hazelhurst of Hastings signed a memorandum celebrating the Sister City Protocol and reaffirming their common aspiration to further develop the relationship and enhance friendship between the two cities and their residents.

The three previous mayors of Hastings — Jim O'Connor, Jeremy Dwyer and Lawrence Yule — all served for more than a decade. Their friendly stance toward China has been passed on from one generation to the next and has become the overall consensus of the Hastings District Council. Dwyer visited Guilin nine times during his tenure of office, and Yule visited eight times in his 16 years as mayor. All the mayors of Hastings, past and present, have spared no effort in personally encouraging wide participation of all sectors of society in the relationship, and helping to nurture a favorable atmosphere of public opinion.

Thanks to the leadership and promotion by the leaders of the two cities, the friendship city relationship has come a long way since the 1980s, with confidence and determination and steps firm and steady.



In 2018, Guilin Folk Music Group went to Hastings for exchange performance.

Channels of communication

A well-established working mechanism is essential for a healthy relationship, and the Guilin Foreign Affairs Office has a dedicated section responsible for the work of friendship cities. A staff member is assigned to engage with Hastings. The person in charge is familiar with Hastings and has a wide range of contacts in the area. Communication has progressed from telephone and fax in the early days to email and WeChat today. Both sides are online virtually 24 hours a day and can communicate whenever needed.

Although the Hastings District Council does not have a department for foreign affairs, staff members are always available to connect with Guilin. The mechanism has gone through constant adjustment and optimization, with responsibility passing from public services and

economic divisions to the offices of the CEO and mayor. Nowadays, a councilor is directly responsible for international sister city relations, so that communication is efficient and effective.

In addition to government departments, the Guilin People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries maintains working contacts with non-governmental friendship organizations in Hastings, so sister city relations involve both public and private players and have joined forces for development.

Deep roots among the people

Affinity between peoples is the key to state-to-state relations, while mutual understanding is the key to people-to-people relations. The relationship between cities is, ultimately, a relationship between people. The most important thing in dealing with

friendship city relations is to focus on people-to-people relations.

Hospitality is deeply rooted in the blood of Chinese people, who are warm, friendly, thoughtful and considerate. For visiting official delegations from Hastings, everything is meticulously planned to offer a high level of courtesy and hospitality in both official activities and accommodations. Some were so impressed with what they had experienced in Guilin that they remarked, "We've been treated like royalty."

Guilin pays equal attention to various other visitors from Hastings. For example, tourists and students find a warm welcome in Guilin. It also keeps in mind some major figures of Hastings, especially those contributing to the relationship between the two cities. After the death of McKenzie, his widow and children were invited to Guilin to personally experience his commitment to friendship. Guilin awarded Dwyer, the former mayor of Hastings, an honorary citizenship for his lifelong dedication to Guilin-Hastings exchanges. When Guilin delegations visit Hastings, they often visit the families of these old friends and attend events to commemorate them.

Guilin visitors to Hastings, be they civil servants, entrepreneurs, technicians, artists, teachers or students, all work in their own way to promote Guilin and sister city friendship. In the meantime, they feel firsthand the sincerity and friendship of the Hastings people. Visits and activities of all kinds have brought the citizens of the

two cities much closer, and many have become friends. The public support for sister city ties grows increasingly stronger.

Interests and signature programs

Over the decades, Guilin and Hastings have explored many areas of exchange, with meaningful results. Some take place in a two-way and reciprocal manner, others run on a yearly or regular basis. These area-specific exchanges, so successful and popular, have become evergreen trees in the sister city relationship.

1. Education

Education has always been a hot area of exchange between the two sides. As there are no education authorities in Hastings, a Hastings education link group was created within the sister city framework to coordinate exchanges with Guilin at all levels of educational institutions.

So far, the two cities have organized 11 education study tours involving 68 visitors. Educators spend time at each other's universities, primary schools, secondary schools and kindergartens, observing, interacting and discussing. They benefit from new ideas and enhanced understanding.

In addition, Hastings teachers take teaching positions at Guilin universities and secondary schools, and students come to Guilin for short-term study. Guilin sends students to Hastings and places them in secondary schools. Exchanges of visits between secondary schools occur on a regular

basis. Six pairs of sister schools partner up for year-round interaction and exchanges.

2. Culture

Guilin and Hastings have different cultural backgrounds, not only of East and West but with their own regional and ethnic characteristics. Cultural events relate directly to the general public and have always been highlights in sister-city activities. The two cities have organized 15 cultural visits involving 257 participants and covering a wide spectrum of music, dance, acrobatics, photography and television.

Some of the most talked about include the outbound Guilin acrobatic group, children's art groups, folk music groups and the inbound Hastings Citizen's Band, Hawke's Bay Orchestra Society and Maori cultural groups. These groups bring something exotic and foreign and easily become hot topics among members of the public, even a sensation.

In addition to visits, games and competitions are good ways to discover other cultures. Hastings has organized four Ultimate Challenge events in which students are asked to find out a Guilin individual's identity in a cyber manhunt. Their only clue is a photo of the person. The process itself is a great way to learn about China, and the public appearance of the mystery figure creates excitement.

3. Youth and citizens

Guilin and Hastings make good use of art in promoting exchanges be-

tween young people. The Guilin Little Osmanthus Art Troupe children made school visits during the day and enjoyed homestays with local residents at night. They go for activities with their New Zealand buddies, gaining both knowledge and friendship.

The Hastings youth music exchange groups, not only visit and perform at various schools in Guilin but also get to try their hand at Chinese calligraphy, opera and table tennis. They share cheers and laughter with Guilin students.

People from Hastings regularly organize tours to Guilin, with the group size ranging from a dozen to more than 30. In addition to what other tourists do, they also visit factories and rural areas to gain insights into the development of China and Guilin. Derek Brownrigg, former member of the Hastings District Council, has led seven groups to Guilin, doing his part to enhance New Zealand people's understanding of China and Guilin and develop friendship between the two sides.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, some of the activities marking the 40th sister city anniversary had to be scaled down or rescheduled, but the aspiration of Guilin and Hastings to develop the relationship has not been diminished in the slightest.

As Confucius said, "At 40 I had no more doubts." Guilin and Hastings are also mature and confident. When the pandemic ends, the two cities look forward to packing up for their continued journey and adding a new chapter to their friendship. ■

Neither mountains nor seas can separate people of common goals and ideals

— Zhangzhou and Isahaya co-organize online student exchanges

Su Mengyuan

While the pandemic has prevented people from carrying out cross-border exchanges, the Foreign Affairs Office of Zhangzhou, Fujian province, has been innovative in its efforts to deepen international communication between friendship cities. For instance, it launched the Cloud Foreign Affairs activity to implement the spirit of the memorandum of understanding on exchanges and cooperation for the 30th anniversary of friendship cities.

On March 17, the Foreign Affairs Office organized an online exchange activity between the Zhangzhou No 1 Foreign Language School and Japan's Isahaya Commercial High School. More than 70 people from the Foreign Affairs Office of Fujian province, the Foreign Affairs Office of Zhangzhou, Zhangzhou No 1 Foreign Language School, Nagasaki Prefecture Government of Japan, the Isahaya Municipal Government and Isahaya Commercial High School attended the event.

The exchange activity first broad-

cast scenery videos of Zhangzhou and Isahaya. The students made "online trips" to each other's cities to experience the latest developments. The charming scenery and intangible cultural heritage of Zhangzhou aroused great interest among Japanese students. The beautiful scenery of Isahaya also attracted students in Zhangzhou.

The representative from the international division of Nagasaki Prefecture said that Zhangzhou and Isahaya had carried out exchanges in many fields since tying the knot of friendship. Last year marked the 30th anniversary of the establishment of international friendship city relations, which "is very memorable". He expressed the hope that the students would improve their friendship through the meeting and enhance mutual understanding.

At the meeting, the students introduced their hometown cultures, food and campus life to each other, and enhanced their understanding of each other's cities. Liu Jingrou and Zhuang

Peihong of Zhangzhou No 1 Foreign Language School showed their Japanese counterparts “Fu” culture:

The character “Fu” represents good fortune and best wishes. During Chinese New Year, every household will paste “Fu” on the gate. The students from Zhangzhou showed the Chinese “Fu” culture, the Chinese women’s volleyball team, the old town of Zhangzhou, southern Fujian dialect, Zhangzhou glove puppets and Zhangzhou Gezi Opera to the students of Isahaya through performances, pictures and handicrafts. By introducing the campus scenery and cultural activities of the Zhangzhou school, the Chinese students impressed their Japanese peers. The students from Isahaya showed the history, culture and customs of Isahaya and expressed their admiration for the development of Zhangzhou. They said they hoped to

have a chance to visit Zhangzhou in the future.

The atmosphere was warm throughout the whole meeting. The students communicated actively, enriching their understanding of each other’s cities and cultures, and deepening the friendship between the youths of the two places.

The students from Isahaya expressed their hope that in the future, they can go to Zhangzhou to experience Zhangzhou’s “Fu” culture and appreciate the beautiful scenery. The students of Zhangzhou No 1 Foreign Language School also expressed appreciation for the Isahaya students’ efforts and sincerity, and sent out warm invitations, hoping to meet again in Zhangzhou after the epidemic to deepen friendship.

The Zhangzhou Foreign Affairs Office attaches great importance

to international exchanges and cooperation with friendship cities. It actively organizes young people to participate in activities of friendship, building bridges for foreign exchanges and cooperation in education, to help improve the level of cultural openness, continue to strengthen international communication and tell the Zhangzhou chapter of the China story.

In the early stage of the activity, to ensure that it would come off smoothly, leaders of the Foreign Affairs Office of Zhangzhou led teams to Zhangzhou No 1 Foreign Language School several times to guide the preparatory work. Through close cooperation and attentive organization, Zhangzhou displayed the vigor and vitality of the high school students and built a bridge of people-to-people bonds. ■



Chinese and Japanese students interact online.

Sister-city friendship flows across young hearts

— A glance at friendly exchanges between schools in Yinchuan and Japan

Zeng Mingming

Eye-catching spring couplets, vigorous calligraphy, delicate paper-cutting, vivid painting, crafts made with beverage cans and paper and envelopes carefully sealed with beautiful decorations — although they have diverse forms and meanings and were made by different people, they all express the affection and best wishes of Yinchuan No 21 Primary School toward the teachers and students of Compulsory Education School affiliated with the Faculty of Education at Shimane University in Japan’s Shimane Prefecture. The gifts will be mailed to Japan in the near future.

It is a warm episode in the friendly exchanges between the two schools this year, the third year since they began exchanging. In 2020, with support from the Foreign Affairs Office of the Ningxia Hui autonomous region and the Culture and International Department of Shimane, 21PC and CSFESU reached a consensus for friendly exchanges, marking the first move of the inter-school friendship, which also greatly enriched friendly relations between the two.

Though the unexpected COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 put the visit of 21PS to Shimane on hold, the stu-



Students of the CSFESU introduce the former site of Songjiang city.

dents from both schools have never forgotten the commitment they made for communication. The Ningxia pupils were deeply touched and cheered by a video greeting from Shimane that read: “May the spring without a pandemic come early, bringing peace and health to mankind.” At that moment, friendship swept through the hearts of the youngsters in both places, and the wish to carry out friendly exchanges became much stronger.

In March 2021, thanks to the joint efforts of government departments and both schools, an online exchange activity between 21PC and CSFESU made a successful debut. Nearly 100 teachers and students met via the internet under the theme “My hometown and I”, with pupils telling stories about growing up in their own hometowns with time-honored history, picturesque landscapes and unique customs.

The youngsters could hardly control their excitement and curiosity, raising questions one after another for their friends on the other side of the internet. With eyes full of expectation and earnest faces, they burst into exclamations and applause repeatedly. The online exchange brought the hearts of the youngsters much closer and opened a new chapter of friendly exchanges between the two schools.

In April last year, the CSFESU sent videos to 21PS, conveying strong interest in Ningxia and expectations for more exchanges in the future. One of the Japanese students said: “The Tenggeli Desert is amazing, and I wish to see the desert in Ningxia with my own eyes.” Another said: “We would like to become a bridge of hearts connecting China and Japan, and will definitely pass the friendship to the next generation.” Those words were simple, but full of sincerity, showing how much they valued the friendship.

From that time on, the seeds of friendship between Ningxia and Shimane have become deeply rooted in the hearts of those youngsters and have begun to sprout.

One month later, the pupils from 21PC made an album about themselves in return. The 4-centimeter-thick album contains photos, paintings and articles introducing to their Japanese friends the history and culture of thousands of years of Ningxia, its fast-growing industries and its delicious local cuisine. On the title page they

wrote: “We wish, through this album, to enable you to know more about Ningxia, our beloved hometown, and also wish the COVID-19 pandemic to be ended early so we can gather together.” The words expressed great concern about the friends at CSFESU and clearly conveyed their expectation for more exchanges in the future.

Although the pandemic is still severe after more than a year, and the students who took part in the previous year’s exchange activity had advanced to a higher grade, nothing could stop the passion of the two schools’ youngsters for more exchanges. The baton of friendship is still passing in a swift and resolute way.

At the beginning of this year, the two governments and schools discussed and planned a new round of exchanges, themed “Better understanding and stronger friendship through exchange of videos”. It has taken about two months and focuses on the daily life and study of students in Ningxia at a deeper level and with more angles. Its purpose is to advance mutual learning and make the youngsters grow up hand-in-hand.

The students from 21PS made a video of the colorful life of winter, interesting customs of Spring Festival, landmark historical relics, clean and neat streets and countless delicious snacks. The video garnered great interest and received strong echoes from the Japanese friends.

The students from CSFESU made

a video, too, despite the pandemic sweeping Japan, to introduce their school and share their lives. They greeted the Ningxia students with simple Chinese and English phrases, expressing their kind wishes and inviting their Chinese peers to visit Japan.

For the important role of promoting friendship between Ningxia and Shimane, this round of exchange has been included in the Sino-Foreign Countries People-to-People Exchange Program, and has fostered great confidence among the youngsters by encouraging them to further understand and consolidate their friendship.

According to a Chinese saying, “Real friendship makes distance disappear.” Despite being separated by mountains and oceans and thousands of miles, Ningxia and Shimane developed friendship in a sound and sustained manner, showing infinite vitality and continuously inspiring the two peoples, generation by generation.

Next year will mark the 30th anniversary of the establishment of friendly relations between Ningxia and Shimane. Exchanges between the two schools will definitely be the best gift for the event. The friendship is growing stronger and the youngsters are deeply touched.

Looking ahead to the next 30 years, the friendship between Ningxia and Shimane and the two peoples will continue to develop with great vitality and fruitful results. ■

Thomas Rabe: Four generations of friendship

He Yan

London plane trees extended their branches like arms to embrace a delicate building with red tiles and sloping roofs. In front stands a bronze bust figure gazing into the distance with a dignified expression. On the marble pedestal is inscribed a German name: John H.D. Rabe.

The address is 1 Xiaofenqiao Alley, Guangzhou Road, Gulou District, Nanjing, Jiangsu province, site of the John Rabe and International Safety Zone Memorial Hall. On the morning of May 1, 2009, Thomas Rabe, together with his wife Elisabeta, visited this place, a place where his grandfather, John Rabe, had once lived. Dressed in black suit and a yellow tie, the younger man gazed at his grandfather's statue affectionately. It was his third visit to Nanjing.

Reminiscence about the past

Thomas brought with him the original volume of the collected diaries of his grandfather. He pointed out some details: "This is the list of the 602 refugees with the fingerprint of each of them on it. This list was a part



Thomas Rabe took a photo with his grandfather's statue at the John Rabe Center of Communication in Heidelberg, Germany.

of a letter saying thank you to the owner of Siemens company Mr. Geheimrat Carl Friedrich von Siemens in Berlin, sented January 6th, 1938."

He turned pages of the diary slowly and explained: "I brought two volumes of my grandfather's diaries from the John Rabe Center

of Communication in Heidelberg, Germany, to present them before his statue. I believe this will fulfill his wish."

John Rabe was born in Hamburg, Germany, on Nov 23, 1882. His father, who was a captain, died early, when Rabe was still a child. Rabe worked as

an apprentice and then as an assistant at trading companies after graduation from middle school and worked for a British company in Africa later.

In 1908, Rabe came to China and married his girlfriend, Dora, the next year in Shanghai. They lived in China for 30 years with their daughter, Margret, their son, Otto, and their granddaughter Ursula. At first, he worked in Beijing for a German company. In 1911, he changed to work at the office of Siemens in Beijing. From 1931, he served as Siemens business representative in its office in Nanjing responsible for the business of Siemens in all China. The headquarter of Siemens for Asia was based in Shanghai.

In 1937, Japan launched an all-out war of aggression against China. At the end of November that year, just before the Japanese army broke through the defense line of Nanjing, Rabe and more than 20 other foreigners who had stayed in the city established the Nanjing Safety Zone. He served as chairman of the International Committee of the Nanjing Safety Zone. During the Nanjing Massacre committed by the Japanese army, they saved nearly 250,000 Chinese lives in the safety zone, which covered 3.86 square kilometers.

On Dec 12, 1937, the day Nanjing fell, Rabe wrote that night in his diary that "huge fire lit the entire sky. Some people pounded at the two doors at the

courtyard gate. Women and children pleaded with us to let them in. I couldn't ignore their imploring voice so that I opened the doors to let them all in." In this way, he sheltered more than 600 refugees in his own yard. Another 650 refugees found shelter in the John Rabe house, garden and the German school behind (name: "Siemens center" for refugees).

Rabe recorded atrocities committed by the Japanese invaders in his diary day by day until he was ordered to return to Germany in 1938. In December 1996, his granddaughter Ursula Reinhardt made The Diaries of John Rabe public in New York, causing a sensation immediately. The diaries were recognized as important historic materials, the most voluminous and complete and having the most research value among all the testimonial materials provided by Chinese and foreign witnesses to the Nanjing Massacre.

Thomas brought two volumes of the diaries which recorded the details of the massacre. In his diary on Jan 29, 1937, Rabe wrote that John Magee found two girls, one age 4 and the other 8, whose 11 family members had been slaughtered. They stayed beside their mother's body in a room for 14 days until they were rescued by their neighbors. The older sister kept herself and her little sister alive with a small amount of rice they found in the house.

The 8-year-old, Xia Shuqin, is

now aged over 80. Thomas held her hand with excitement in front of his grandfather's statue and said "I'm so glad to see you in good condition! My grandfather would be very pleased to see you so well now!"

Xia sank into memory:

"Mr. Rabe liked me very much," she said. "Before he returned to Germany in 1938, he came to see me and my uncle on a rainy and snowy day. He cuddled me closely with his overcoat around me, ignoring the lice on my head. He said that he would like to bring me back to Germany with him. My uncle didn't agree because my sister had already been sent to an orphanage, leaving me the only family member by his side. All the others had been killed in the massacre.

"It has been so hard for me to live until now. However, the Japanese have tried to deny the facts."

Xia wiped away her tears with trembling hands. The three scars left by a Japanese bayonet could still be seen on her body. On Feb 5, 2009, she won the case in the final judgment in Japan after nine years of litigation in which she charged the Japanese right wing with infringement of right of reparation. She planned to go to Japan herself to receive her compensation. Thomas was gratified to hear that and said, "That is what the Japanese ought to do. The Germans made reparations to Jewish people years ago."

Li Jun, 85, and his wife Ding

Zhenglan, 80, held Thomas's hands tightly on meeting him, and kept saying thanks. Li pointed at the lawn beside the residence and said, "I was only 13 years old back then. Together with my family, we hid here and lived in shacks temporarily set up with reed mats in the yard of Mr. Rabe. Right here!"

Li still remembered the kindhearted German gentleman. "He was a kind-looking tall man, bald and wearing glasses. He was always here and there in the yard. Sometimes, he came to comfort the refugees and told us not to be afraid because he would try his best to protect us."

In Li's memory, no refugee in the yard was injured by the Japanese army during the month he lived there. Even when they almost ran out of food, each got some watery porridge once a day. So every time Rabe appeared, the refugees knelt on the ground with heartfelt gratitude and called Rabe "a living Bodhisattva". In his diaries, Rabe wrote that he was saddened to see these Chinese people kneeling in the dirt and worshipping him as if he were a god.

On Jan 31, 1938, more than 600 refugees surrounded Rabe and presented him with a Chinese New Year's greeting card with words written in red ink on a white package, and his Chinese name: "We wish Mr. Rabe a prosperous New Year!" Rabe recounted in his diary: "When I walked out from

the sparks of the firecrackers, all the servants and staff lined up in a grand formation and kowtowed to me which is a common etiquette during the New Year celebration." The greeting card is now exhibited in the John Rabe and International Safety Zone Memorial Hall.

"I am a doctor, not a historian," Thomas said. "In the name of my family, I will submit these historic materials to historians both in China and Japan for research. Understanding and recognizing historical facts is the precondition for forgiveness and also the basis for future peace." He left a note in the hall's memorial book. It said: "Saving a life is equally important as saving the whole world."

Deeper understanding about grandpa

Born on Jan 18, 1951, Thomas is now a medical professor emeritus at Heidelberg University working previously at the University Women's hospital and past President of the German Society of Gynecological Endocrinology and Reproductive Medicine.

"It's a pity that my grandpa passed away the year before my birth. I knew him from my father, who often told us about his youth and my grandpa's experience," Thomas said.

Thomas's father, Otto Rabe, was born in Beijing in 1917 and returned

to Germany at age 14 to continue his schooling. Thereafter he studied medicine at the University of Munich and Heidelberg University. As a specialist in obstetrics and gynecology, he chose to work as a general practitioner in Gaggenau and Ottenau, two small country towns in the South of Germany in the black forest.

In the preface to the book *John Rabe*, Thomas wrote: "In our childhood, my father shared with us his thrilling experience in China. When he talked about the sandstorms in Gobi, the termites in the coastal huts near Peitaho or how the local people hunted snakes, we were fascinated. As to the good deeds done by my grandpa, I didn't know them until I graduated from high school. I inquired many times about the contents of the diaries, which were kept in wooden boxes in the storeroom of Gaggenau, where my father lived and worked as a general practitioner.

"Our parents didn't want the children to see the outrageous photos of the war. ... It was not until I went to college to major in medicine that I opened the diaries written by my grandpa in Nanjing. I began by reading excerpts of the diaries and was seized by terror about the world of fights and death and the possibility of another war.

"My grandpa chose to stay in Nanjing when the Japanese attacked the city. He spared no effort to help

his Chinese friends. I believe he experienced strong emotional shock and a sense of fear.”

On Aug 13, 1937, the battle of Shanghai broke out. Later on Japanese planes launched airstrikes on Nanjing now and then. At that time, Mr and Mrs Rabe were on vacation in Peitaho — bathing beaches in northern China. When Rabe came back to Nanjing in September, the war had become white-hot and the invasion of the Japanese had escalated to all-out bombings.

“Should I escape from here?” Rabe wrote in diary, “Can I and should I escape now? I don’t think so! I believe anyone who has the experience of holding one quivering child in each hand and squats in a bomb shelter during airstrikes for several hours would share the same feelings with me.”

Thomas commented: “My grandfather is a typical businessman from Hamburg who is decent, confident, plain and modest. As a Christian, he believed in good human nature. His sense of humor can be found between the lines of his diaries even when in desperate conditions.”

On Oct 17, 1937, Rabe wrote in his diary:

“If the sky falls down, there is no doubt that all sparrows are doomed to die; if a bomb happens to fall on a crow (the word “rabe” means “crow” in German), there will only be a dead crow who will not caw anymore. Even then, I believe nothing will stop the Yangtze River from flowing as freely

as usual.

“So I pray in the morning and evening like this: Dear God, please protect my family and my humor and leave the trivial concerns to my own care.”

This kind of courage against all odds touched Thomas very much.

On the night of Dec 12 1937, a heinous massacre began after Nanjing fell. About 300,000 Chinese were slaughtered within 50 days, which means five people killed every minute. Even the refugees hiding in the International Safety Zone were not immune from the slaughter. In Rabe’s diaries, he recorded in detail over 400 atrocities by the Japanese army he saw or heard about from Sept 7, 1937, to Feb 26, 1938. He kept more than 60 documents of protest and negotiation, and over 100 photos of Japanese atrocities.

“For those several months in a row, my grandpa slept little and was tortured by diabetes every day. He almost ran out of insulin,” Thomas said. He added that despite this, his grandpa was still engaged in rescuing Chinese refugees.

To stop further atrocities by the Japanese army, Rabe and other international friends shuttled from one massacre site to another to record the details for use in reports to the American, British and German embassies in China and to protest and negotiate with the Japanese.

The Japanese embassy in China once forced Rabe to leave China for

Germany. Rabe said, “If I lived in Japan for 30 years and got well treated by its people, there would be no doubt I would never leave the Japanese people if they were in a situation as dangerous as this in China.”

In 1938, Rabe was awarded the Blue Order of Collar of Brilliant Jade by the government of the Republic of China.

Rabe once said, “History can be forgiven but not forgotten.” On Jan 5, 1950, Rabe died of a stroke. He left 10 books about the Nanjing Massacre which comprises 2,460 pages among his papers and other books. According to the wish of John Rabe the diaries and all other books and historical documents were inherited by John Rabe’s son, Otto and later to Thomas Rabe.

Thomas noted: “In 1995, Chinese American writer Iris Chang searched for as many materials as possible for her book *The Rape of Nanking*. During the process, she found relevant documents at Yale University about my grandpa’s deeds. However, these materials were not very detailed. Therefore, she inquired through every possible channel and connected with Ursula Reinhardt [granddaughter of John Rabe], and learned from her about the wartime diaries.”

Urged by Iris Chang, Ursula Reinhardt visited America at the invitation of Shao Tzuping, president of the Alliance in Memory of Victims of the Nanjing Massacre in New York and made *The Diaries of John Rabe*

public in New York on Dec 12, 1996.

Twenty years later, on April 6, 2016, Thomas donated the original of *The Diaries of Rabe* to the National Archives Administration of China. In December 2017, a photocopy edition of the book was published. Thomas said that his grandpa's books consisted of 24 volumes, with three of them lost during the war. Ten of the 21 remaining volumes recorded the Nanjing Massacre. History is objective. We need to face it squarely and understand. The historical facts cannot be altered by anyone.

Engagement in humanitarianism

Thomas had always expected to visit China with his father. However, the plan was not fulfilled until the summer of 2001 because of financial problems at first and then the health condition of his father. In 2001, Thomas finally made it to China with his mother, Else, after his father's death.

"We specially visited Nanjing and contacted the person in charge of managing the former residence. When we heard that the residence might be demolished, we went to the CEO of Siemens to discuss whether we could keep it from demolition. Also, I wrote open letters to several organizations to express my wish to keep and renovate the residence. We are honored to have Nanjing University, the German consulate in Shanghai and Siemens and Bosch-Siemens Haushaltsgeräte carry



Thomas Rabe (R.) consulted at the Beijing Maternity Hospital in September, 2019.

out the repair work."

In 2003, the President of Germany, Johannes Rau, visited Nanjing and asked Siemens to financially support the restoration of Rabe's former residence. On Oct 31, 2006, at the opening ceremony of the John Rabe and International Safety Zone Memorial Hall, Thomas Rabe laid flowers at his grandpa's statue and said: "This residence will serve as a bridge of German-Chinese friendship to help people understand and remember historical facts and avoid conflict."

Thomas and his family now live in Heidelberg, Germany, a historic city located in the mountainous Odenwald region near the Neckar River. Thomas

bought his neighbor's courtyard — more than 1,000 square meters, and developed it as the John Rabe Center of Communication. On August 13, 2005, the opening ceremony of the center was hosted by H.E. Erwin Wickert, former German ambassador to China.

"My grandpa set me a good example with his humanitarian contributions," Thomas wrote. "Under his influence, my family has been devoted to facilitating mutual understanding among people all over the world. I established an apartment for international students with a small museum inside. In the yard, there is my grandpa's statue. All of these are parts of the first John Rabe Center of Communication. After that, we established John Rabe

Centers of Communication in four other countries, including Germany, China (one in Nanjing and another in Beijing), Romania (two centers) and Spain.

On April 2, 2009, the film *John Rabe*, co-produced by China and Germany, was publicly released in Germany and won four categories of Lola Awards. Later, on April 28, its debut on Asian screens was made at Beijing New Century Cinema. During the news conference that afternoon, Thomas showed the originals of Rabe's diaries and awarded the Japanese actor of the film, Kagawa Teruyuki, the first John Rabe Award. He applauded Teruyuki for his courage as a Japanese actor to play the role in the film and shoulder the responsibility to reflect on history. On April 30 2009, at the film's debut in Nanjing, Thomas proposed that Nanjing and Hiroshima could become friendship cities with each other. He expressed his belief that mutual understanding and friendship is the key to peaceful coexistence and cooperation.

Five years later, in August 2014, Thomas visited the Nanjing Archives Bureau to check the five volumes of original documents that recorded how Nanjing people funded Rabe and his family after World War II. He recalled: "My grandpa made several reports about the Nanjing Massacre after returning to Berlin in 1938. Also, he wrote a report to Adolf Hitler, but what happened next surprised him

immensely."

Several days after sending this report, he was arrested by the German Gestapo and interrogated for several hours. His diaries, and the film footage shot by John Magee, were also taken away by the Gestapo. He was released two days later, after Carl Friedrich von Siemens vouched for him on condition that he would not make any reports or publish his diaries; he received back his diaries but not the film footage shot by John Magee.

Rabe founded a German school near where he lived in Nanjing in 1934. To obtain funding from the German government, he joined the Nazi Party without any official function – only as a simple member of this party. However, since he stayed in China for a long time, he knew little about the true nature of Nazis. After the end of the war in 1945, the allied forces hunted for all Nazi Party members. Rabe was arrested and interrogated. He was soon mired in protracted de-Nazification litigation, which cost most of his savings and wore him out. The whole family squeezed themselves into a small house, tortured by hunger and cold. It wasn't until much later that the court of review of the Nazi-purge tribunal set by the allied forces ruled that Rabe was not a Nazi member .

Thomas said: "Grandpa was seriously ill after the war. He had to sell the antiques and housewares he brought from China in exchange for some potatoes to feed the family. The

heavy labor to disassemble and load the equipment of Siemens factories for Russians knocked him out. He finally got some meager income when he was rehired by Siemens at the end of 1947."

In 1948, when news about Rabe's plight spread to China, the people of Nanjing raised \$2,000 for him, which was a big sum of money at the time. As food was hardly available in Berlin, the money was used to buy food in Switzerland, which was then sent to Berlin; also food parcels were sent from the US by the wife of one American missionary staying with my grandfather in Nanjing. "We are so grateful for those who helped my grandpa out of difficulties," Thomas said.

Rabe died in 1950 and was buried in Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church Cemetery, which was in a western suburb of Berlin. In 1985, the lease on his tomb expired. The old tombstone of Rabe was transferred to the Memorial Hall of the Victims of the Nanjing Massacre by Japanese Invaders in May 1997 and kept there permanently.

At the request of Thomas, the Nanjing municipal government renewed the lease and renovated the tomb. The renovation was completed in December 2013.

In March 2015, Thomas was awarded the title of Honorary Citizen of Nanjing. Later, in September that year, he and his wife were invited to China for grand celebrations marking

the 70th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese people's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the world's anti-fascist war. He was awarded a medal in commemoration of this anniversary by President Xi Jinping. In December 2017, on National Memorial Day for Nanjing Massacre Victims, he was received again by President Xi.

Thomas said: "China is a responsible country that values peace and regards peace as the foundation of development. It's beyond my comprehension that some Japanese denied history despite ample evidence. We Germans got one most precious lesson from the war that we need to live peacefully with people in other countries, reflect on the wrongs committed in the past and make apologies to avoid a new war.

Promoting Sino-German people-to-people friendship

Thomas has been working at the University Women's Hospital as part of the School of Medicine at Heidelberg University in Germany for almost 40 years until 2015 and has served as the President of the German Society of Gynecological Endocrinology and Reproductive Medicine for around 15 years. During five years of cooperation with the World Health Organization, he was in charge of giving advice and guidance on women's health.

Thomas said his friend Alfred O.

Mueck talked with him many times about cooperation with Professor Ruan Xiangyan's team at Beijing Obstetrics and Gynecology Hospital of the Capital Medical University. Thomas had exchanges with medical hospitals in Nanjing, Wuhan, Shanghai and Beijing during his first visit to China in 2001. He said he had a strong feeling that more advanced international technology was needed in the field of Gynecological Endocrinology in China. With Mueck's recommendation, he joined Ruan's team without hesitation and shared abundant medical materials.

Mueck was professor of endocrinology at Eberhard Karls University of Tübingen and president of the German Menopause Society. He was a friend of Thomas for 30 years. Also, he tutored Ruan when she studied in Germany. Ruan rose to become director of the department of Gynecological Endocrinology at Beijing Obstetrics and Gynecology Hospital.

At an international conference, Mueck told Ruan about a gynecological endocrinology expert named Thomas Rabe, whose grandfather saved numerous Chinese people during the Nanjing Massacre. Ruan watched the movie John Rabe when she returned to China and was moved to tears.

In September 2013, Ruan invited Thomas via Mueck for an International Symposium on Menopause and Gynecological Endocrinology hosted by Beijing Obstetrics and Gynecology

Hospital. She also arranged a seminar for Thomas to tell stories about his family in China, which greatly touched the hundreds of experts present and received warm applause. In 2014, he was appointed visiting professor in "Obstetrics and Gynecology" at Beijing Obstetrics and Gynecology Hospital. In September 2015, he began his service as vice-president of the Sino-German Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology.

Ruan said: "Professor Rabe, Professor Mueck and I co-edited three books. We also carried out lots of international cooperation projects, including founding the Sino-German Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology. Under this framework, they helped our hospital establish the first ovarian tissue cryobank in April 2012.

"On Sept 9, 2016, we succeeded in transplantation of cryopreserved ovarian tissue, an unprecedented move in China. Later, we established the International Fertility Protection Center, the first Center of Interdisciplinary Endometriosis in Asia certified by Europe and teaching consultation mechanisms for intractable diseases. With these efforts, China has moved its studies forward in gynecological endocrinology and menopause by 10 to 20 years to reach the international level. Therefore, Thomas Rabe won the Chinese Government Friendship Award in August 2018. As a Chinese doctor, I really appreciate the contributions

made by Rabe's family to my country.”

Thomas has served as a reviewer for many international academic journals. The number of books he compiled exceeds 40, some with translations in 10 languages. With his help, Beijing Obstetrics and Gynecology Hospital has introduced 19 new medical projects from abroad. For future cooperation, he said with confidence, “I plan to cooperate with Beijing Obstetrics and Gynecology Hospital to establish a database of Chinese and foreign publications on gynecological endocrinology and reproductive medicine (a “Virtual Academy of Women’s Health”). In addition, we’d like to set up a workshop to evaluate the risks of Western medicine in treating Chinese female patients.”

At the end of September 2019, Thomas visited Beijing by invitation to attend celebrations marking the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People’s Republic of China. On the morning of Sept 2, 2019, the opening ceremony of the Beijing John Rabe Center of Communication was held at Beijing Union University. It was the sixth John Rabe Center of Communication to be established globally.

On Sept 3, an exhibition to recast 30 years of John Rabe’s deeds in China opened at the Museum of the Chinese People’s War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression. Later, in a themed lecture, Thomas awarded the fourth John Rabe Award to Professor

Liang Yi of Beijing Union University to honor her contributions to establishing the Beijing John Rabe Center of Communication and advancing humanitarianism in China.

Liang said: “In November 2003, when I was a senior visiting scholar at Heidelberg University, I lived in an apartment in Thomas’s house in Heidelberg and paid two visits to the Heidelberg John Rabe Center of Communication. I found the handwritten original by Rabe about his 17 years of living and working in Beijing. I wrote and published articles about it for Historical Archives.

“After five years’ hard work sorting and translating Rabe’s manuscripts, I published in April 2009 five volumes of his writings recording his life and work in Beijing. The book was titled *Beijing in My Eyes*. After that, I was invited to introduce Rabe’s deeds to the Chinese people every year, especially his relations with Beijing’s history and culture.

Thomas was appointed a visiting professor for “Moderne Chinese History” by the Beijing Union University. On Jan 20, 2021, Thomas Rabe delivered a video speech during an online conference of the academic committee of the Beijing John Rabe Center of Communication.

“I am cooperating with my Chinese friends in preparing a new book of over 650 pages telling stories of my grandpa at different stages. From 2020-2021, Professor Ruan

Xiangyan, who was also a member of the academic committee, led over 20 doctors from her hospital to translate Thomas’s book *John Rabe* from English into Chinese.

The book will be published this year by the publishing company as part of the China Publishing Group to better spread humanitarian spirit of John Rabe.” Thereafter a German, English and Spanish edition will follow.

Thomas said he will never forget the gifts of anti-pandemic materials he received from agencies in Beijing, Nanjing and other places in China after the outbreak of COVID-19. He once contacted H.E. Wu Ken, the Chinese ambassador to Germany, to ask for a medicine produced in China. The staff of the embassy acted immediately and transported large amounts of anti-pandemic materials, including a specific antiviral medicine, to Heidelberg, which satisfied the urgent need of his family and Heidelberg in their fight against the pandemic. Thomas felt again that the Chinese people are always ready to help when their friends are in need.

Thomas noted that the Rabes have had close ties with China for four generations.

“My son Maximillian is now a college student majoring in business economics,” he said. “As the youngest generation of our family, he is trying to learn Chinese. He will carry forward the respected cause of his great-grandfather.” ■