

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



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**Front Cover: On April 3, CPAFFC awarded former Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo title of “Friendship Ambassador”.**

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# CPAFFC holds meeting to interpret spirit of the Two Sessions for foreign friends

**Wang Wei**

On the morning of April 4, the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries held a meeting to interpret the spirit of this year's annual sessions of the National People's Congress and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (briefly called "the Two Sessions") for foreign friends.

CPAFFC President Lin Songtian attended and delivered a speech. Yang Changyong, director of the General Office of the Institute of Foreign Economic Research of the Academy of Macroeconomics Research, made a speech to interpret the spirit of the Two Sessions. Deng Lan, director general of CPAFFC's Research Center for People-to-People Diplomacy, presided over the meeting.

Local friendship associations in Shanghai, Hubei, Guangdong, Chongqing and Sichuan also attended the meeting online.

More than 700 participants from 62 countries and regions, including heads and representatives of 19 foreign chambers of commerce, 72 multinational companies in China, and 12 international organizations, as well as foreign diplomats, think tanks and media representatives and leaders of overseas students, attended the meeting



**CPAFFC President Lin Songtian speaks at the meeting.**

on site or online.

Lin Songtian said in his speech that this year's Two Sessions were the first national event to fully implement the spirit of the 20th national congress of the Communist Party of China, noting that the meetings had attracted worldwide attention. The most important outcome of the Two Sessions, Lin said, was that Comrade Xi Jinping was unanimously elected president of China and chairman of the Central Military Commission. "It fully reflects the common wish of the whole country and the aspiration of the

people," he said, adding that "it is not only a unanimous affirmation of the historic achievements made in the past decade, but also a common expectation for comprehensively promoting the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation through Chinese modernization."

Lin stressed that at present, China's economy has found new sources of growth and is advancing to a high-quality, high-level and modernized way of development. In the future, it still has great potential for growth, he said, citing three expected directions of development.

First, the economy will pursue an upward course of high-quality development, based on such new concepts as digital economy, Internet, Internet of Things, AI, green and low-carbon innovation.

Second, it will keep a downward perspective, eyeing rural revitalization and urbanization, accelerating the building of a large unified national market, and tapping the potential of domestic consumption.

Third, it also eyes a horizontal development. Guided by the high-quality Belt and Road Initiative, it will promote connectivity and common development between China and the rest of the world.

At present, Lin said, China-Europe freight trains have connected more than 200 cities between China and 25 European countries. A high-speed rail network is being built linking China and ASEAN countries, and connectivity with Africa and Latin America is accelerating.

Lin said, “guests present today are our old friends who have long supported the work of this association and have witnessed, participated in, contributed to and benefited from China’s reform, opening-up and modernization. I thank all parties for your positive contributions to the cause of friendship between China and other countries. I hope you will continue to leverage your strengths and seize opportunities to further deepen friendly exchanges and mutually beneficial cooperation in the fields of economy, trade, science, technology, culture, think tanks and media, and help more people acquiring a rational understanding of China and

its development.”

Centering on high-level opening-up, Yang Changyong explained the profound connotation of high-level opening-up from five dimensions, namely a wider scope, more areas, deeper levels, more initiative and greater security. He also expounded on the goal and significance of China’s high-level opening-up from the perspectives of promoting high-quality development, pushing for deeper reform and pursuing win-win cooperation with the world.

Yang introduced the concrete approaches China is taking to promote high-level opening-up:

First, attracting and utilizing more foreign investment; second, accelerating the efforts to build China into a trading powerhouse; third, promoting high-quality development under the Belt and Road Initiative; and fourth, expanding institutional opening-up step by step.

Yang also exchanged views with online and offline guests on hot topics of common concern, such as China’s policies and measures to attract foreign investment and how to create a market-oriented and law-based international business environment.

Michael Hart, president of the American Chamber of Commerce in China, said, “China is one of the most important markets for most AmCham China member companies. China has a long-term and stable development goal, a huge market prospect and a predictable business environment that the government attaches great importance to. Developing in China is a long-term strategic goal for

multinational companies. We hope that China will continue to expand the list of foreign investment access, strengthen communication and cooperation, continue to improve the business environment, and help more foreign companies invest in China.”

Dong Huijuan, global vice president of ABB Group, said that over the past decades, ABB had witnessed the continuous improvement of China’s business environment and its laws and regulations. It is encouraging, she said, to learn that the Two Sessions proposed to promote high-level opening-up and make greater efforts to attract foreign investment. She told her host that ABB is more confident about a long-term development in China and will continue to increase investment in the research and development of green intelligent technologies and production facilities.

Participants appreciated and thanked the CPAFFC for holding the meeting. They agreed that through authoritative interpretation from the hosting side and exchange of ideas, they had gained a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the spirit of the Two Sessions and measures taken by the Chinese government to promote high-level opening-up and improve business environment. The meeting has strengthened their confidence in developing their businesses in China, they said. They looked forward to more events held by the CPAFFC to help them better understand China’s development orientation and major policies, enhance mutual understanding and trust, and promote win-win cooperation and common development. ■

# CPAFFC President Lin Songtian visits Japan, receives warm welcome from heads of 15 Japan-China friendship groups in Kansai

## Department of East Asian Affairs

At the invitation of the Japan-China Friendship Center, Lin Songtian, president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, led a delegation to Osaka, Japan, on March 28 for a five-day visit.

On the evening of their arrival, the presidents of 15 Japan-China Friendship Associations in Kansai, including Osaka, Kyoku, Wakayama, Nara, Hyogo, Shiga and Kagawa prefectures, gathered to warmly welcome Lin and his delegation.

Xue Jian, consul-general in Osaka; Fang Wei, deputy consul-general; and Cheng Haibo, director-general of the CPAFFC's Department of East Asian Affairs, were also present on the occasion.

Xue thanked Lin for making Osaka his first stop in Japan. He said Lin's visit comes at the right time and is of great significance, as it would surely promote the full resumption of friendly exchanges and cooperation at the people-to-people and local levels between China and Japan — activities

that have been suspended for three years because of COVID-19 — and meet the urgent expectations of all sectors in Japan.

“As the epidemic situation eases and prevention and control policies are adjusted, the need for face-to-face exchanges and cooperation between the two sides becomes urgent and is ready to take off,” Xue said. “Our two sides should take the 45th anniversary of the signing of the China-Japan Treaty of Peace and Friendship as an opportunity to actively plan for exchanges and cooperation in various fields and further improve the bilateral relationship.”

On behalf of the local friendship associations, Tokuhiko Kajimoto, president of the Japan-China Friendship Association in Osaka prefecture, welcomed Lin and his delegation. He congratulated China on the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China and the two sessions of the National People's Congress and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference on their complete success and expressed hope that China's cause

of socialist modernization with Chinese characteristics achieves new progress.

Kajimoto noted that the two countries agreed in legal form 45 years ago to develop long-term, peaceful and friendly relations. Under the current circumstances, the two sides should recall and treasure the significance of that treaty. Although there are some problems between the two countries, it is important to maintain the momentum of peace and friendship and promote mutual understanding, mutual respect, mutually beneficial cooperation and common development.

The friendship associations of the two countries have played an indispensable role, Kajimoto said, adding that the friendship associations in Kansai are willing to contribute wisdom and strength to promoting Japan-China friendship from generation to generation.

Lin responded: “This is my first visit to Japan since taking office as CPAFFC president, and also my first overseas visit after the Two Sessions. The main purpose of the visit is to

carry forward friendship, promote exchanges of visits, share ideas and enhance cooperation.

“The CPAFFC has always attached great importance to friendly exchanges and mutually beneficial cooperation with all sectors of Kansai, actively carried out mutual visits of entrepreneurs and youth and built numerous platforms for deepening friendly exchanges and expanding mutually beneficial cooperation between Kansai and China.

“As epidemic prevention and control has entered a new stage, the CPAFFC is ready to work with friends from all walks of life in Japan, especially in Kansai, to promote the resumption of local and people-to-people exchanges and cooperation and to revitalize the friendship between the two peoples. We sincerely invite all friendship organizations and friends to visit China again at an early date to experience the new changes in China in the new era.”

Lin said that Kansai has always been an important window for friendly exchanges and cooperation between China and Japan. He was glad to visit, have a friendly talk with Japanese friends and discuss future exchanges and cooperation. He thanked the leaders of friendship associations in Kansai for coming from all over to attend the welcome dinner in Osaka, as it fully demonstrates the fine tradition and solid

foundation of China-Japan friendship in Kansai and the firm commitment to the cause of China-Japan friendship. It is very encouraging, he said.

Lin introduced important achievements made at the 20th CPC National Congress and the two sessions, as well as the main features of Chinese modernization. He stressed that China’s modernization will never follow the old Western model of relying on colonialism and bloody plunder, nor the crooked approach under which “a strong country is bound to seek hegemony”. He said China will find a new path of peaceful development and win-win cooperation to achieve modernization and development while maintaining world peace. In this way, it will make an even greater contribution to world peace and common development.

Last year celebrated the 50th anniversary of the normalization of China-Japan diplomatic relations, Lin continued, and this year marks the 45th anniversary of the signing of China-Japan Treaty of Peace and Friendship. It is because of the political wisdom, foresight and determination of the older generation of Chinese and Japanese leaders that China and Japan have not only realized the normalization of diplomatic ties but also ensured the general direction of peace, friendship and cooperation in legal form.

Lin stressed that China and Japan

are permanent neighbors that cannot be moved away — an objective reality that cannot be changed. The only thing that can be changed is the way the two sides treat each other. Mutual respect, peaceful coexistence, win-win cooperation and joint opposition to extraterritorial interference are the right choices for both countries.

Leaders of friendship associations in Kansai made speeches in turn, sharing their experiences and thoughts on the development of friendship between the two peoples. They expressed willingness to continue to uphold the faith of Japan-China friendship, always bear this faith in mind and carry on and develop it, make efforts to promote personnel exchanges, enhance mutual understanding and amity between the two sides and contribute to the cause of Japan-China friendship.

“The three-hour activity was fruitful,” Lin said. “Everyone spoke freely, offered suggestions and encouraged each other. It has strengthened our determination and confidence in promoting the development of China-Japan friendship. The CPAFFC is ready to make joint efforts with friendship associations and people from all walks of life in Kansai to push for new progress in friendly exchanges and cooperation between the friendship groups, youth and local governments.” ■

# CPAFFC President Lin Songtian gives speech at Soka University in Japan

## Department of East Asian Affairs

At the invitation of Soka University, Lin Songtian, president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, who was on a goodwill visit to Tokyo, visited Soka University on March 31 and made a speech. He was warmly welcomed by the teachers and students.

Leaders of the university, including President Mashashi Suzuki and Chairman of the Board Yasunori Tashiro, accompanied Lin and his party to see the exhibition on the international exchanges and cooperation of Daisaku Ikeda, founder of the university, and held friendly exchanges.

On behalf of the university, President Suzuki warmly welcomed and thanked Lin and his party for the visit, calling it a timely and significant visit that met the expectations of the Japanese side.

Lin introduced the mission, purposes and main achievements of the visit and made a speech afterward.

More than 80 participants attended



**President Lin Songtian speaks at Soka University.**

the welcome ceremony, including President Mashashi Suzuki; Chairman of the Board Yasunori Tashiro; Vice-President Koichi Kandachi; Vice-President Masaru Osanai; Vice-Chairman of the Board Yoshi Akiya; the head of the International Department,

Yoshihiko Kawakami; visiting Chinese scholars at Soka University; doctoral students of Japanese Studies at Nankai University; and student representatives of Soka University for Chinese studies and related majors.

In his speech, Lin said he was

delighted to visit Osaka, Nagasaki and Tokyo, where cherry blossoms were in full bloom and the skies were clear. The visit was warmly welcomed by people from all walks of life in Japan, indicating that China-Japan relations would also clear up after the rain and usher in a new era of new development.

“We paid a special visit to three people and a political party,” Lin said. “During our stay in Osaka, we visited the Konosuke Matsushita Museum of History, paying tribute to Matsushita for taking the lead in supporting China’s development and expressing our gratitude to all the Japanese people who have contributed to China’s reform, opening-up and modernization.

“During our stay in Nagasaki, we went to trace the footsteps of the Chinese Zen master Yinyuan Longqi, known as Ingen Ryuki in Japan, more than 360 years ago, and explore the common values and spiritual bonds formed by mutual learning between China and Japan.

“In Tokyo, we held talks and exchanges with the president of Soka Gakkai and the leader of Komeito, paying high tribute to Daisaku Ikeda for his historic contribution to the normalization of China-Japan relations and to Komeito for its commitment to the spirit of peace at home and independence and peaceful diplomacy abroad.”

Lin noted that Soka University, founded by Daisaku Ikeda, is a well-known university with a fine tradition of China-Japan friendship. He said it was also the only university he visited

during his first visit to Japan.

Lin mentioned two main purposes of the visit:

First was to pay respect to Daisaku Ikeda and generations of Soka people who had been committed to China-Japan peace and friendship.

Second was to call for more people of the new era to stand up and contribute political wisdom and strategic vision when bilateral relations face difficulties.

Lin invited teachers and students of Soka University to visit China as early as possible and make new contributions to the cause of China-Japan peace and friendship.

He shared his opinion on three main reasons why China-Japan relations are facing difficulties, including low public opinion.

First, China’s rapid development over the past decade has made some people in Japan and the ROK feel uncomfortable and unwilling to accept it.

Second, over the past three years, COVID-19 has blocked people-to-people exchanges and face-to-face communication between the two countries, resulting in increased mistrust and lack of mutual understanding.

Third, some countries have hyped up geopolitical and ideological confrontation, poisoning public opinion. In addition, some media outlets followed suit to exacerbate public hatred.

At present, Lin said, both sides need to solve three major problems:

First, mutual knowledge; second, political and strategic decisions; and third, understanding of the world’s overall trend and pursuit of long-term development.

Lin expressed his conviction that leaders of both countries and people of vision from all walks of life will stick to the essence of the mutual understanding agreement reached 45 years ago, make the right political and strategic decisions and jointly push for a steady, long-term growth of bilateral relations.

Lin introduced the main spirit and important achievements of the 20th CPC National Congress and the two sessions of the NPC and CPPCC. He noted that in October the 20th CPC National Congress drew up a blueprint for comprehensively promoting the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation with Chinese modernization. In March this year, the two sessions translated the major policies and development blueprint adopted at the 20th CPC National Congress into the will of the state and government actions in accordance with the law, and realized the orderly transition of leadership at both the central to local levels. The election of Comrade Xi Jinping as leader of the Party, head of state and commander-in-chief of the armed forces by a unanimous vote was not only a unanimous acknowledgement of China’s historic achievements in the past decade but also a unanimous expectation for China’s future modernization drive.

From now on, Lin said, the



Communist Party of China has only one central task, which is to unite and lead all the Chinese people to realize Chinese modernization and the second centenary goal.

Lin briefed his hosts about China's national conditions, development achievements and five distinctive features of Chinese modernization, saying that China will follow a new modernization path of peaceful development and win-win cooperation and will never follow the old Western way of relying on colonialism, bloody plunder or the crooked path of "a strong country seeking hegemony".

Lin stressed that peaceful development has been an important prerequisite and has provided valuable experience in China's success over the

past four decades and more. It comes from the Chinese nation's cultural values of treasuring peace and helping the world. It is also the goal and purpose of the CPC, which has been written into the Chinese Constitution and the Constitution of the CPC. It is China's solemn commitment to the world and serves the common interests of people in China and the rest of the world.

Lin expressed hope that people will follow the example of Daisaku Ikeda and make new contributions to promoting peace and friendship between China and Japan from generation to generation. He said he expects that teachers and students of Soka University will visit China at an early date to witness and experience

new changes in China and contribute wisdom and strength to China-Japan friendship in the new era.

At the conclusion of Lin's speech, the audience applauded warmly.

Suzuki spoke highly of Lin's speech and thanked the CPAFFC for its support and cooperation over the years. He said Soka University is willing to make unremitting efforts to promote understanding and friendship between the young people of Japan and China.

Before the ceremony, Osanai and Kawakami accompanied Lin to visit cherry blossoms commemorating Mr. and Mrs. Zhou Enlai. At the end of the activity, Suzuki and other university leaders, as well as teachers, students and staff lined the road to bid farewell to Lin and his party. ■



President Lin (4th right) takes a group photo with Japanese friends before the cherry blossoms commemorating Mr. and Mrs. Zhou Enlai.

# CPAFFC President Lin Songtian gives exclusive interview to Japan's TBS

## Department of East Asian Affairs

On March 31, Lin Songtian, president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, gave an exclusive interview to TBS before concluding his visit to Japan.

Lin answered questions from journalists about COVID-19 pandemic's impact on China-Japan relations and shared his views on their future, as well as China's relations with Africa and the Middle East.

On the impact of COVID-19, Lin said it had blocked face-to-face exchanges and cooperation between China and Japan over the past three years, seriously affecting mutual recognition, understanding and trust between the two peoples. He noted that maintaining peaceful and friendly bilateral relations from generation to generation serves the common interests of the two countries and peoples and should also be a priority of people-to-people diplomacy. That's why he chose Japan and the Republic of Korea for his first overseas visit after China's Two Sessions.

"This is also my first visit to Japan after taking office as president of the CPAFFC," Lin said, adding that his

mission was to promote implementation of the important consensus reached by the President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Fumio Kishida at their Bangkok meeting in November.

Lin said he hoped the visit would achieve four goals:

- First, promote the resumption of face-to-face people-to-people exchanges and cooperation between China and Japan;
- Second, restore our original aspiration to normalize diplomatic ties and reactivate people-to-people exchanges and cooperation mechanism that have been suspended due to COVID-19;
- Third, stimulate the vitality of the people through extensive coordination, exchanges and cooperation;
- Fourth, seek future cooperation.

Lin noted that the visit was a great success. Wherever the Chinese delegation went, it was warmly welcomed by all walks of life in Japan. The Japanese side praised the CPAFFC's timely and meaningful initiative. The delegation had a deep impression that both sides share a common belief that they should be

firmly committed to friendly China-Japan exchanges and cooperation and uphold the peace, stability, development and prosperity of Northeast Asia. Both sides have a common expectation that mutual visits and cooperation will resume as soon as possible.

Lin shared his opinion on three main reasons China-Japan relations are facing difficulties, including low public opinion on both sides about each other.

First, China's rapid development over the past decade has made some people in Japan feel uncomfortable.

Second, over the past three years, COVID-19 has blocked people-to-people exchanges and face-to-face communication between the two countries, resulting in misunderstandings.

Third, some countries have hyped up geopolitical and ideological confrontation, poisoning public opinion. In addition, some media outlets follow suit to exacerbate public hatred.

To break the current predicament in China-Japan relations, Lin said the two sides should focus on three issues:

First, mutual knowledge: Forty-five years ago, the two sides signed the China-Japan Treaty of Peace and

Friendship, which, together with three other political documents, confirmed the mutual understanding of peace and friendship between China and Japan from generation to generation and a mutually cooperative partnership, rather than threats. It is a contract made between the two countries, and both sides are bound to honor it.

Second, political and strategic decisions: Fifty years ago, leaders of both countries set an example. It is believed that leaders today will act on the fundamental interests of both countries and the well-being of the people, act on a global vision and political foresight and make political and strategic decisions that are conducive to peace and friendship between China and Japan from generation to generation and to peace and stability in Northeast Asia.

Third, understanding global trends and pursuing long-term development: At present, the political and economic center of the world has shifted from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific. The rise of the East and decline of the West has become a general trend in today's world. The 21st century is the Asian century.

Lin said the rise of the East includes not only China, but also all Asian countries, including Japan, the ROK and the ASEAN. He thanked Japan for its positive contribution to China's reform, opening-up and modernization over the past four decades and hoped that in the course of future modernization China and Japan would work together for common development and the benefit of

mankind.

On whether the recent arrest of Japanese nationals in China would affect personnel exchanges between the two sides, Lin noted that China is a country governed by the rule of law and is civilized. In case of an incident, China follows regulations and procedures and acts in strict accordance with the law. China will never detain anyone, especially a foreigner, on trumped-up charges.

"I am not aware of the specific matter you mentioned," Lin said, "but I am sure that there is a reason for it, and I believe the person concerned knows it. Peace, friendship and win-win cooperation are the main theme of China-Japan relations. No individual case will affect normal personnel exchanges between the two sides."

Lin also shared his views on the expectations and goals of future China-Japan relations. He said that China and Japan are close neighbors that cannot be moved away and have become an increasingly close community with common interests and a shared future.

"We live in a common home, and we are close to each other. Bumps and bruises are normal. This is an objective fact that we cannot change. The only thing we can change is our attitude toward each other. Mutual respect, mutual learning, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation are the only right choice."

Lin pledged that the CPAFFC will work with people from all walks of life in Japan, give full play to geographical proximity, cultural affinity and

friendship between the two countries, actively carry out cultural and people-to-people exchanges, promote mutual understanding and friendship between the two peoples and consolidate public support for the maintenance and development of China-Japan peace and friendship for generations to come.

At the end, Lin mentioned China's growing presence in Africa and the Middle East. He spoke of the needs of Africa and the Middle East and the achievements of friendly and mutually beneficial cooperation with China, saying that China's presence and influence in the region are indeed growing day by day because China is keeping its promise of carrying out friendly, mutually beneficial cooperation. It never makes empty promises, and it actively supports cooperation partners to achieve lasting peace and independent and sustainable development.

Lin said fruitful achievements have been made in infrastructure construction and in the improvement of people's livelihoods in Africa and the Middle East. Some countries have spent decades making empty talk about democracy and human rights but have failed to support any country there in effectively addressing such basic livelihood issues as employment, food security, healthcare and education. China welcomes Japan's active participation in the industrialization and modernization of Africa and the Middle East and its new commitment to building of a community with a shared future for mankind, Lin said. ■

# CPAFFC President Lin Songtian and party warmly welcomed in ROK

## Department of East Asian Affairs

On March 26, Lin Songtian, president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, had dinner with Shin Jung-seung, president of the Korea-China Friendship Association, and Lee Hee-ok, vice-president of the KCFA in Seoul. Lin also had a tea talk with Chung Kuchong, chairman of the China-Japan-ROK Cultural Exchange Forum on the ROK side, and Kwon Byong-hyon, former ROK ambassador to China.

The two sides reviewed the development history and fruitful results of bilateral relations over the past 30-plus years since the two countries established diplomatic ties. They had in-depth discussions on strengthening the cooperation and exchanges of friendship cities and youth, along with enhanced cultural understanding, and reached positive consensus.

In the evening, Lin attended a welcome dinner for the delegation that was hosted by President Qu Huan of the Korea-China Cultural Friendship Association. He delivered a keynote speech upon invitation.

People from the political, business, school and media sectors warmly welcomed Lin and the group,

including Choi Seung-jae, a member of the ROK National Assembly; Choi Jae-cheon and Choi Won-sik, former members of the assembly; and Kim In-ho, former speaker of Seoul city.

Choi Jae-cheon spoke highly of Lin as "the first penguin to jump into the cold water after winter". He said he looked forward to the continued growth of the brave penguin team.

Representatives from different walks of life in the ROK expressed high expectations for the future development of bilateral relations and hoped the visit would bring more people of vision to invigorate the popularity and frequency of people-to-people exchanges between the two countries.

Korean youth representatives sang songs that were familiar to people of both countries in their newly learned Chinese. Participants chatted happily and toasted frequently. The event was filled with a warm and friendly atmosphere.

Lin first thanked the heads of the ROK friendship organizations for hosting the delegation over the weekend, especially President Shin Jung-seung, who had come back from the United States to meet the delegation

and host a dinner.

Lin spoke highly of the strategic vision and political wisdom of the leaders of both countries in making the decision to establish diplomatic relations and the unremitting efforts made by diplomatic predecessors and other friendly people for the establishment and sustainable development of bilateral relations.

Lin noted that the mission of his visit was to implement, through people-to-people diplomacy, the important consensus reached by President Xi Jinping and President Yoon Suk Yeol at their Bali meeting in November.

He hoped the visit would achieve four goals:

- First, to release a positive message that China and the ROK can resume face-to-face exchanges and cooperation;
- Second, to renew, together with people from all walks of life in the ROK, the original aspirations of China-ROK friendship and activate the stalled cooperation mechanism;
- Third, to stimulate the vitality of the people, bring about a revival of exchanges and cooperation in various fields and promote win-win cooperation

and common development.

- Fourth, to show that China and the ROK are a community with a shared future and shared interests.

Lin introduced the important achievements of the 20th CPC National Congress and the two sessions of the National People's Congress and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the fruits of China's economic and social development over the past decade, the essential characteristics of Chinese modernization and the prospects for China's development.

He said that under the leadership of the CPC China has completed in a few decades the process of industrialization that took the West hundreds of years. China has created three miracles in the history of

human civilization — rapid economic development, long-term social stability and the success of a populous country breaking away from the COVID-19 pandemic. China has effectively solved the four major global challenges of poverty, pollution, corruption and social polarization.

Noting that China and the ROK are inseparable neighbors, friends and partners, Lin said the two countries have become a close community with shared interests and a shared future. China is the ROK's largest trading partner, export market and source of imports. The ROK is China's second-largest trading partner. Mutual investment between the two countries exceeded \$100 billion, and mutual visits exceeded \$10 million each year before COVID-19.

Lin stressed that China needs

the ROK in its development, and the ROK cannot develop without China. There is no fundamental conflict of interest between the two. They share an interest in maintaining peace, stability, development and prosperity in Northeast Asia and realizing common development.

Both sides expressed their expectations for an early and comprehensive resumption of face-to-face exchanges and cooperation between the two countries and sustained and in-depth development of bilateral friendly and mutually beneficial cooperative relations. The ROK side said that bilateral relations involve not only communities of common interest and shared future but also shared civilization, heart and science and technology. ■



President Lin (5th left) takes a photo with Korean friends of various social circles.

# CPAFFC President Lin Songtian interviewed by Korea Central Daily

## Department of East Asian Affairs

On March 27, Lin Songtian, president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, was interviewed by You Sangchul, vice-president of the Korea-China Friendship Association and director of the China Studies Center of Korea Central Daily (JoongAng Ilbo), on topics including the purpose of the visit, public opinion in China and the Republic of Korea and the future of people-to-people friendship.

### Purpose and expectations

Lin noted that this was his first visit to the ROK as president of the CPAFFC, and also his first visit to a Northeast Asian country after China's two sessions of the NPC and CPPCC. The ROK was the first stop, which demonstrated great importance and eager expectations the Chinese side attaches to enhancing the friendship between the two peoples, developing China-ROK relations and safeguarding regional peace and stability.

Lin said the mission of his visit was to implement, through people-to-people diplomacy, the important consensus reached by President Xi

Jinping and President Yoon Suk Yeol at their Bali meeting in November.

Lin expressed hope that the visit would achieve four goals:

- First, to release a positive message that China and the ROK can resume face-to-face exchanges and cooperation;
- Second, to renew the original aspiration of China-ROK friendship, together with people from all walks of life in the ROK, and activate the stalled cooperation mechanism;
- Third, to stimulate people-to-people exchanges and bring about a revival of exchanges and cooperation across the board;
- Fourth, to show that China, Japan and the ROK are a community with a shared future with shared interests and that they can work together for win-win cooperation and common development.

With regard to China-ROK relations, Lin said that since the establishment of diplomatic ties more than 30 years ago, bilateral relations had been developing rapidly and achieving fruitful results even though they started late. China has become the ROK's largest trading partner,

export market and source of imports, while the ROK has become China's second-largest trading partner, bringing tangible benefits to the two countries and two peoples. Development has also played an important role in maintaining peace, stability, development and prosperity in Northeast Asia.

Lin noted that state-to-state relations must serve each side's fundamental interests and bring benefits to the two peoples. China and the ROK enjoy geographical proximity, close friendship and cultural affinity. Lin said he believed that people with vision from all walks of life in both countries will cherish and safeguard their friendly and cooperative relations and work together for win-win cooperation and common development.

As for high-level interactions between China and the ROK, Lin said head-of-state diplomacy plays an irreplaceable role in the development of bilateral relations. Over the past year, leaders of the two countries have had close interactions in various forms. Those interactions have charted the course for the warming of bilateral relations and have fully demonstrated the great importance China attaches

to the development of China-ROK relations.

Lin said that the ROK, as it maintains strategic diplomatic independence, “will help promote friendly exchanges and mutually beneficial cooperation in various fields and create a favorable atmosphere and conditions for the exchange of visits between the heads of the two countries”.

Lin shared his take on why China-ROK relations face difficulty in public opinion, which is not satisfactory in either country. There are many reasons, he said.

First, major changes have taken place in the economic structure of China, Japan and the ROK, and people in the latter two countries feel uneasy about China’s rapid development.

Second, over the past three years, COVID-19 has blocked people-to-people exchanges between China and the ROK, resulting in lack of mutual learning, understanding and trust.

Third, some countries outside the region have tried their best to suppress and discredit China, artificially poisoning international public opinion and misleading public opinion in both countries.

Lin said he regrets that public opinion in both countries does not match the rapid development of mutually beneficial economic and trade relations. But he expressed a firm conviction that as long as the two peoples fully resume face-to-face exchanges and cooperation, public opinion will surely return to reason and

push bilateral relations back toward stability and further improvement.

Lin said China attaches great importance to people-to-people exchanges with the ROK in culture and actively promotes bilateral cooperation in cultural industry. The 2016 THAAD incident has had a serious impact on bilateral relations and has affected cultural exchanges, he said. Facts show that people-to-people exchanges and economic and trade cooperation are directly influenced by state-to-state relations, Lin added.

Promoting China-ROK people-to-people exchanges and cooperation requires both sides to meet each other halfway, Lin said, adding that he hopes the two sides will make joint efforts to activate cultural and people-to-people exchanges as soon as possible and enhance mutual understanding and friendly feelings between the two peoples.

Lin also introduced the CPAFFC’s historical role and the major goals of its work. He said next year marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of the association. As an important supplement to official diplomacy, people-to-people diplomacy always plays a unique role when official diplomacy becomes difficult or inconvenient, he said.

Shortly after its founding, the People’s Republic of China encountered difficulties in its foreign diplomacy, Lin recalled. The CPAFFC held a series of important people-to-people diplomatic activities and played a key role in

winning the broad understanding and support of countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America; breaking the Western blockade; maintaining friendly Sino-Soviet relations; promoting normalization of China’s diplomatic relations with Japan, the US and ROK; and supporting China’s reform and opening-up.

Looking ahead, Lin pledged that the association will focus on friendship cities, friendship associations, friendly organizations and friendly people; actively promote the resumption of exchanges and mutually beneficial cooperation between China and other countries; make new contributions to enhancing mutual understanding and amity between Chinese and foreign people and to achieving peaceful, common development.

Summing up, Lin said that China and the ROK are inseparable neighbors, friends and partners, and have become an increasingly close community with shared interests and a shared future. These are facts that cannot be changed, he said. The only thing that can be changed is the attitude toward each other.

Lin stressed that mutual respect, peaceful coexistence, win-win cooperation and common development constitute the only right choice for the two countries and two peoples. He expressed hope that the people of both countries would join hands to raise the voice of reason and bring bilateral relations back to the right track for steady, long-term growth. ■

# New Zealand foreign minister attends unveiling ceremony of Rewi Alley's statue

**Zhang Yang**

**O**n March 24, New Zealand Foreign Minister Nanaia Mahuta paid a special visit to the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and visited the former residence of Rewi Alley, a most outstanding representative of China's international friends and a devoted envoy for China-New Zealand friendship. Lin Songtian, president of the CPAFFC, accompanied her at the unveiling ceremony of the Statue of Rewi Alley.

More than 40 participants attended the ceremony, including Ambassador of New Zealand to China Grahame Morton, Foreign Minister Mahuta and her delegation, Shen Xin, director general of CPAFFC's Department of American and Oceanian Affairs, Tang Zhiwen, deputy director general of Department of North American and Oceanian Affairs of the Chinese Foreign Ministry, as well as people from mainstream media and staff of the CPAFFC.

Lin Songtian welcomed Mahuta, noting that Rewi Alley was an old friend and comrade of the Chinese people. He was not only a pioneer and witness of China-New Zealand

friendship, but also a participant and contributor to China's progress. Alley worked and lived in China for 60 years, leaving an immortal chapter in Chinese revolutionaries' history of struggling for the well-being of the people.

Alley spent nearly 30 years in the compound of CPAFFC, Lin said, which was his home in China. "We are always proud of Alley, and regard him as a noble example in our efforts to promote mutual understanding and friendship between Chinese and foreign peoples.

"In order to pay high tribute to his outstanding contributions to China's revolution, construction, reform and opening-up and the sincere friendship he helped forge with the Chinese people, carry forward his spirit, and encourage more people of vision to participate in the friendship cause between China and other countries, we have not only renovated his former residence, set up a photo exhibition of his life, but also sculpted a bronze statue of him. It is a great honor for me to join Foreign Minister Mahuta to unveil the statue of Rewi Alley today. The CPAFFC is willing to work with friends from all sectors in New

Zealand to make new contributions to promoting our bilateral relations to a new high, so as to bring more benefits to the peoples of our two countries," said Lin.

Mahuta thanked the Chinese side for the warm reception and said that Rewi Alley had devoted all his life and made great contributions to the development of New Zealand-China friendship from his arrival in Shanghai in 1927 till his death in Beijing in 1987. Reviewing Alley's work and life in China, Mahuta said she was particularly moved by Alley's sincere feeling for the Chinese people. New Zealand and China, she noted, cherish the value of Alley's outstanding contributions. She said it was her great honor to attend the unveiling ceremony, "which once again proves that the friendly people-to-people exchanges between the two countries are solid and lasting and has laid a sound foundation for the growth of bilateral relations."

The two sides also traded ideas on promoting exchanges and cooperation between friendship cities and other localities of the two countries and reached positive consensus. ■



# Celebration of 100th birthday of Heydar Aliyev, national leader of Azerbaijan, held in Beijing

Department of European & Asian Affairs

On April 17, the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, the Heydar Aliyev Foundation and the Embassy of Azerbaijan in China jointly held a meeting to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the birth of Azerbaijani national leader Heydar Aliyev at Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing.

About 200 participants attended the event, including Lin Songtian, president of the CPAFFC, Anar Alakbarov, executive director of Heydar Aliyev Foundation and assistant to president of Azerbaijan, Zhang Ming, secretary-general of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, as well as diplomatic envoys of some countries, officials from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and Foreign Language Administration of China, and representatives from cultural, academic, business and media sectors of both countries.

Addressing the meeting, Lin noted that friendly relations between China and Azerbaijan go back to ancient times



President Lin Songtian attends and addresses the meeting.

and the ancient Silk Road once closely linked the two nations in history. The beautiful and fertile land of Azerbaijan has been home to a hard-working and intelligent people for generations, of whom President Heydar Aliyev, a respected and extraordinary statesman, was an outstanding representative.

Lin said President Aliyev has

been deeply respected and loved by the Azerbaijani people, and is honored as father of the nation. The Chinese people will not forget him as a good and true friend.

The best way to memorize this great man is to follow in his footsteps, Lin said, adding that more than 30 years earlier, China and Azerbaijan

established diplomatic relations. Thanks to joint efforts of both sides, the thousand-year-old traditional friendship between the two countries has withstood the test of international changes and grown stronger with new vitality and bright prospects.

Last September, Lin said, both countries' heads of state held a successful bilateral meeting at the Samarkand Summit of the SCO, drawing up a new blueprint for future cooperation in various fields.

Lin pledged the CPAFFC will work with the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, the Embassy of Azerbaijan in China and people from different sectors in both countries to promote cultural and people-to-people exchanges and cooperation among localities, young people, think tanks and media outlets, and constantly expand and consolidate the interests and public support for friendly relations

between the two countries.

Alakbarov said, "Heydar Aliyev, national leader of the Azerbaijani people, was an outstanding statesman who led our people through hardships and embarked on the road of development of stability and prosperity. He was a true legend and chief designer of modern Azerbaijan, and we will always remember him. We have arranged commemorative events in different parts of the world. Given our deep friendship and cooperation, the first of these events will be held in China."

"As a good friend of the Chinese people, Aliyev attached great importance to bilateral relations and made important contributions to the development of friendly ties. His historic state visit to China in 1994 laid a solid foundation for bilateral relations."

Today, Alakbarov continued,

Azerbaijani President Iham Aliyev has successfully carried forward the political wisdom and strategic vision of Heydar Aliyev in developing bilateral relations and maintained close interactions with President Xi Jinping.

Alakbarov expressed conviction that Azerbaijan-China friendship is the common aspiration of the two peoples and will make important contribution to world peace and prosperity.

At the reception, a famous Azerbaijani musical and dance group, who made a special trip to China for the event, presented the Azerbaijani ethnic music and dance, and won rounds of applause. The big screen showed the geographical features, cultural customs and economic and social development of Azerbaijan, giving the local audience a fresh feeling.

The event went on in a friendly and warm atmosphere, praised by all participants as a complete success. ■



Celebration of 100th birthday of Heydar Aliyev, national leader of Azerbaijan, held in Beijing.

# CPAFFC President Lin Songtian visits Russia

## Department of European & Asian Affairs

On the evening of April 20, Lin Songtian, president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, and his party arrived in Moscow, Russia.

The next day, Ivan Melnikov, first vice chairman of the Russian State Duma, first vice chairman of the Russian Communist Party Central Committee and chairman of the Russia-China Friendship Association, met with Lin and his delegation in the Duma.

The two sides held talks on implementing the important consensus

between the two countries' heads of state and promoting friendly exchanges and cooperation at the local and people-to-people level and reached positive consensus.

Lin thanked Melnikov for his kind invitation and high-level reception, saying that Russia was the first stop of his first visit to Eurasia after he took office as president of the CPAFFC. It fully demonstrated the great importance China attaches to developing people-to-people friendship with Russia, Lin said.

Lin told his host that the mission of his visit was to promote implementation of the important consensus reached between President Xi Jinping and President Vladimir Putin on deepening people-to-people and local cooperation during President Xi's visit to Russia.

Lin said he hoped to attain three goals:

First, carry forward the traditional friendship;

Second, build on the people-to-people friendship;



President Lin Songtian (7th left) takes a photo with Russian friends of various social circles

Third, for both sides to work together for new development of local cooperation.

Lin noted that one month earlier, President Xi had paid a state visit to Russia immediately after being unanimously re-elected. It was a historic visit made at a difficult time when the world was involved in a volatile situation. It demonstrated China's commitment to an independent foreign policy of peace and attested to the strong resilience and strategic firmness with which the China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination in the new era withstands the test of various risks. The visit also embodied China's commitment to its responsibility as a major country to maintain world peace, equity and justice.

"Presidents of our two countries signed and issued two joint statements with important consensus on deepening China-Russia local cooperation, promoting mutual understanding and amity between our two peoples and making certain that both countries' populace want the friendship lasting for generations," said Lin.

Lin pledged that as a national people's organization engaged in people-to-people diplomacy, the CPAFFC will fully implement the important consensus of the heads of the two countries and work with the Russian side to promote the following priorities:

First, implement the initiative put forward by the heads of the two countries, carry out and make a success of key projects such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization People-to-people Friendship Forum and

Friendship Cities Forum, and explore the feasibility of continuing to hold dialogue between local leaders of China and Russia;

Second, deepen mutually beneficial cooperation between localities and friendship cities of both countries, promote greater complementation and development potential, and enhance exchanges and cooperation between localities and friendship cities under multilateral frameworks such as BRICS and SCO;

Third, strengthen people-to-people and cultural exchanges between the youth of both countries through holding brand activities such as Mutual Visits of Chinese and Russian Youth Elite Delegation, Walking the Friendship Road Together and Friendship Night between Chinese and Russian Youth, and promote exchanges and cooperation between think tanks, media outlets, culture and sports of both countries.

Lin also introduced the main spirit of the 20th CPC National Congress and the Two Sessions, as well as China's important and historic achievements in the new era, noting that Chinese modernization and high-quality development will provide Russia and other countries with greater opportunities for common development.

Melnikov welcomed Lin and his delegation to Russia, noting that a month earlier, President Xi paid a successful state visit to Russia and had candid and in-depth exchanges with President Putin, charting the course for future bilateral cooperation in various

fields and drawing a new blueprint.

Thanks to the strategic guidance of the two presidents, Melnikov said, the Russia-China comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination in the new era has reached an all-time high, bringing huge benefits to the two peoples. He praised the timing of Lin's visit, which "will surely push forward friendly exchanges and cooperation between the two countries at the people-to-people and local level."

Melnikov said that Vyacheslav Volodin, chairman of the Russian State Duma, attaches great importance to developing Russia-China friendly relations and has shown great concern about Lin's visit to Russia.

"All parties of the Russian State Duma will stay consistent in strengthening friendly cooperation with China. In the future, the RCAF will work with the CPAFFC and the China-Russia Friendship Association to constantly strengthen friendly exchanges and mutually beneficial cooperation between the two peoples in various fields and promote mutual understanding and friendship under the guidance of the important consensus reached by the two heads of state," said Melnikov.

Before the meeting, Melnikov invited Lin to visit his office.

After the meeting, a banquet was hosted for Lin and his delegation, attended by Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Rudenko and other Russian participants.

The two sides also exchanged deep-going views on international and regional issues of common interest. ■

# CPAFFC President Lin Songtian addresses seminar on President Xi Jinping's state visit to Russia and China-Russia relations

**Department of European & Asian Affairs**

On April 22, Lin Songtian, president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, attended a seminar on President Xi Jinping's state visit to Russia and China-Russia relations at the Ivanovo State University of Chemistry and Technology in the Russian city.

The seminar was hosted by the Ivanovo branch of the Russia-China Friendship Association. Lin delivered a keynote speech.

Galina Kulikova, first vice-president of the Russia-China Friendship Association, Natalya Gordina, president of Ivanovo branch of the Russia-China Friendship Association and president of Ivanovo State University of Chemistry and Technology, and Liu Qinghua, minister counselor of the Chinese Embassy in Russia, attended the seminar.

Lin noted that President Xi Jinping paid a historic state visit to Russia in March at a difficult time when the world was mired in a volatile situation. The visit, Lin said, fully demonstrated China's adherence to an independent foreign policy of peace



**President Lin Songtian speaks at the seminar.**

and its firm commitment to China-Russia traditional friendship as well as attested to the strong resilience and strategic firmness with which the China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination in the new era withstands the test of various risks. The visit also embodied China and Russia's commitment to their

responsibility as major countries to jointly maintain world peace, equity and justice.

During the visit, President Xi and President Putin signed two joint statements, outlined a new blueprint for deepening China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era and defined priorities for

bilateral economic cooperation before 2030, which will surely guide China-Russia relations to new heights.

Looking back on the 102-year history of the CPC, Lin said, China's revolution, construction, reform, opening-up and modernization have received valuable and selfless support from the people of the Soviet Union and Russia. Today, under the leadership of the CPC, China has embarked on a new journey to comprehensively build a modern socialist country.

"China needs the world for its development, and the world cannot develop without China," Lin said. "Russia, which stretches across Europe and Asia and connects east and west, is an important link for China to connect with the world. We are ready to work

with our Russian friends to give full play to our strengths in political mutual trust, economic mutual benefit, geographical connectivity, resource complementation and the two peoples' friendship, deepen non-governmental and local exchanges and cooperation, and work together for common development on the new journey of modernization."

Gordina said that Ivanovo, birthplace of the first soviet in the world, has a proud tradition of long friendship with China. She expressed hope that under the guidance of the Russia-China comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era, the two sides will further strengthen exchanges and cooperation in education, science and technology, youth and other fields so as to further

advance Russia-China friendship.

The Russian participants all praised the significance of President Xi's visit, saying that a friend in need is a friend indeed. Both Russia and China are great countries and the Russian and Chinese people are great peoples. The friendship between the two countries has been cemented with the blood and sweat of the two peoples. "We always trust China and stand ready to work with the Chinese people in our common pursuit of modernization," she said.

After the seminar, Gordina hosted a banquet for Lin and his delegation, during which the two sides made in-depth exchange of views on jointly promoting friendly people-to-people exchanges and cooperation between China and Russia. ■



A seminar on President Xi Jinping's state visit to Russia and China-Russia relations was held successfully.

# First Vice Chairman of Russian State Duma Ivan Melnikov hosts farewell party for Lin Songtian

## Department of European & Asian Affairs

On April 23, Ivan Melnikov, first vice chairman of the Russian State Duma, first vice chairman of the Russian Communist Party Central Committee and president of the Russia-China Friendship Association, met with Lin Songtian and his party and held a farewell luncheon in the Red Hall of Hotel Metropol Moscow, where a reception had once been held to celebrate the signing of the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance in February 1950.

Galina Kulikova, first vice-president of the Russia-China Friendship Association, and Liu Qinghua, minister counselor of the Chinese Embassy in Russia, attended the luncheon.

Melnikov noted that in March this year, President Vladimir Putin and President Xi Jinping reached important consensus on deepening bilateral friendly exchanges and cooperation at the people-to-people and local level.

The CPAFFC's visit showed the sincere friendship and support of the Chinese people, he said, adding that the Russian people thank China and the Chinese people "from the bottom of their hearts."

Melnikov told his guests that the RCFA cherishes its long-term friendly relations with the CPAFFC and the China-Russia Friendship Association and is willing to work with the Chinese side to strengthen friendly exchanges and cooperation at the local and youth level and pass on the friendship from generation to generation.

Lin thanked Melnikov and the RCFA for their warm reception and thoughtful arrangements for the Chinese delegation.

Lin noted that President Xi Jinping had stressed many times that one who wants to stride ahead should not forget the path that had been trodden. The Chinese people will never forget the contributions and huge

sacrifices made by the Soviet Union to the founding, development and growth of the Communist Party of China, the building of socialism in new China, and the victory of the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression and the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea, Lin said. "Here lies the red gene of the unbreakable China-Russia friendship."

Lin expressed the CPAFFC's willingness to work with the Russian side to fully implement the important consensus reached by the two countries' heads of state, deepen friendly exchanges and cooperation at the people-to-people and local level, push forward Ivanovo and other new benchmarks for China-Russia local cooperation, actively carry out youth exchanges, promote mutual understanding and friendship between the two peoples, and commit to China-Russia solidarity, cooperation and common development. ■

# CPAFFC awards former Philippine president title of “Friendship Ambassador”

## Department of East Asian Affairs

On April 3, a ceremony was held at the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries to award the “Friendship Ambassador”. On behalf of the CPAFFC, President Lin Songtian presented the medal and certificate of “Friendship Ambassador” to former Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo.

More than 70 guests and youth representatives from China and the Philippines attended the event, including Yuan Mindao, vice-president of the CPAFFC, Luo Linquan, vice-president of the China Public Diplomacy Association, Jiao Yutong, vice-president of the Beijing Friendship Association, Jaime A. FlorCruz, ambassador of the Philippines to China, and Raul Loyola Lambino, chairman of the Association for Philippines-China Understanding.

Lin warmly welcomed Arroyo to visit China to retrace the path of friendship. Arroyo was leading a delegation from the Association for Philippines-China Understanding and the Philippine youth for the visit.

Lin thanked Arroyo for the important role she had played in promoting China-Philippines relations,



**President Lin Songtian presents medal and certificate of “Friendship Ambassador” to former Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo.**

enhancing people-to-people friendship and deepening non-governmental communication.

Lin said, “50 years ago, your Excellency founded the Association for Philippines- China Understanding with sincere feelings towards China and the Chinese people, which opened a solid bond between you and China. Over the past half century, no matter how the international landscape changed,

Your Excellency has remained committed to advancing the cause of China-Philippines friendship. Such political wisdom and strategic vision are invaluable and should be doubly cherished and learned from.”

Lin praised Arroyo for sticking to the faith of China-Philippines friendship from generation to generation and making unremitting efforts to this end. “You are a worthy



old friend and a true friend of the Chinese people and a pioneer, builder and tiller of China-Philippines friendship,” Lin said.

During her 10 years as president, Arroyo visited China 15 times, making important contributions to enhancing political mutual trust, deepening mutually beneficial cooperation and people-to-people exchanges between the two countries.

Lin told the meeting that Arroyo had been working hard to promote China-Philippines friendship for decades and attached great importance to the inheritance of friendship. “This time, she leads the youth delegation to retrace the path of friendship. This is highly meaningful and touching. The Friendship Ambassador title bestowed on her today is well deserved. It is not only an expression of respect and gratitude from the Chinese people, but also an expression of hope that more people of vision will devote themselves to the cause of China-Philippines friendship.”

“Whether China-Philippines relations are close or far apart depends on the hearts of the people,” Lin went on. “The foundation of China-Philippines friendship lies in the people, its vitality lies at the local level and its future lies in the youth. I hope that the young friends present at this meeting will commit themselves to carrying forward the cause of China-Philippines friendship and safeguarding regional peace and stability, so that China-Philippines friendship will be passed on from generation to generation.”

Lin pledged that the CPAFFC will work with various social circles of the Philippines to follow the consensus reached by the leaders of both countries, renew the millennium friendship, push for steady and long growth of China-Philippines comprehensive strategic cooperative relations, and contribute people-to-people strength to regional and world peace, stability, development and prosperity.

Arroyo thanked the CPAFFC for awarding her the title of “Friendship Ambassador”. She happily recalled her first visit to China in 1977 at the invitation of the CPAFFC, adding that she had seen with her own eyes China’s tremendous achievements in economic, social and cultural fields in the past 45 years of reform and opening-up. “It is fair to say that I am a witness of China’s reform and opening-up.”

Arroyo said during her tenure as Philippine president, she attached great importance to friendly relations between the Philippines and China and visited China 15 times. After leaving office as president, she continued to cherish friendship between the two countries. This time, she led 12 young Filipinos to retrace her first visit to China, so that they could have a first-hand experience of China’s tremendous development achievements in the past decades, she said. She looked forward to more and more mutual visits between the two countries’ young people to build up a correct understanding of each other and stronger bilateral ties so that the friendship will last forever.

Jaime Adriano FlorCruz, the

Philippine ambassador to China, said that he had had a bond with China for 48 years and witnessed with his own eyes China’s success in the battle against poverty and the dramatic changes that have taken place since its reform and opening-up. As Philippine ambassador to China, he said, he will continue to increase mutual understanding between the two countries, strengthen post-pandemic exchanges and cooperation in various fields, and push the friendship going from generation to generation.

Youth representatives from China and the Philippines spoke at the ceremony. Gao Haisheng, a student of the University of International Relations, said that young people of China and the Philippines should face the future and work together to write a new chapter in China-Philippines relations.

Lukas Alejandro Bautista Horn, a Philippine youth representative, said that he was working hard to learn Chinese. It is a great honor for him to visit China as a member of the delegation and see the real China, he said, adding that he hoped to have more opportunities to visit China.

Before the ceremony, Lin had a brief talk with Arroyo and her delegation, during which they had candid and friendly exchanges on the main spirit of the 20th CPC National Congress and the Two Sessions, bilateral relations, people-to-people friendship, youth exchanges and other topics of common concern and reached positive consensus. ■

# CPAFFC awards Tonga princess title of “Friendship Ambassador”

## Department of American & Oceanian Affairs

On May 12, Lin Songtian, president of the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, presented the “Friendship Ambassador” medal and certificate to Salote Pilolevu Tuita, princess of Tonga and patron of the Pacific China Friendship Association, who was in Beijing to attend the China-Pacific People-to-people Friendship Forum.

Tuita thanked the CPAFFC for awarding her the title, saying that the honor is not only for her, but also

for all members of the Pacific China Friendship Association. Looking into the future, she said the Pacific China Friendship Association will remain committed to enhancing friendship and understanding between the two sides and pushing for more fruitful friendly cooperation.

In recognition of Tuita’s outstanding contribution to the development of friendly relations between the Pacific islands region and China over a long period of time,

the CPAFFC awarded her the title of “Friendship Ambassador” in 2021. Due to COVID-19 at that time, the two sides agreed to present the certificate and medal in person at a later date. It is the highest honor awarded by the CPAFFC to international friends with high reputation who have made outstanding contributions to the cause of friendship between China and other countries. Tuita is the first international friend from the Pacific islands region to receive this prestigious title. ■



# CPAFFC President Lin Songtian meets former US ambassador to China and his party

Jia Ji

On May 16, Lin Songtian, president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, met with and hosted a banquet for Terry Branstad, former US ambassador to China and honorary chairman of US-China Green Institute and his party.

The two sides had in-depth friendly exchanges and reached positive consensus on issues of common concern such as promoting friendship between the two peoples and working together to stabilize and improve China-US relations.

Jonathan Krane, executive chairman of UCGI; David Adelman, vice chairman of UCGI and former US ambassador to Singapore; Shen Xin, director general of CPAFFC's Department of American & Oceanian Affairs; and Wang Longshe, secretary general of China Friendship Foundation for Peace & Development, attended the meeting.

Lin welcomed Branstad and appreciated his positive contributions to enhancing friendship between the two peoples during his tenure as governor of Iowa and as US ambassador to China, particularly his efforts to help establish and deepen friendship-

province/state relations between Iowa and Hebei province.

Lin said the blueprint for Chinese nation's great rejuvenation has been drawn. China is committed to advancing its modernization in an all-round way, opening up to the outside world at a high level and pursuing high-quality development. China's high-quality development will give the United States and other countries new opportunities for cooperation and development.

Lin noted that both China and the US are global strategic nuclear powers. Confrontation and conflict are not an option for either side, he said. "The only alternative is win-win cooperation and common development. Maintaining and advancing friendly and cooperative relations serves the common interests of the two countries and peoples. It is also the common responsibility of both sides and the common expectation of the international community.

"China is ready to work with the US for the future." Lin pledged that CPAFFC will work with the UCGI and other organizations and people of vision to play a unique role of people-to-people diplomacy, develop innovative friendly exchanges and mutually beneficial cooperation in ecological and

environmental protection, new energy, green agriculture, youth, culture and other fields, achieve mutual benefit and win-win results, and actively promote the steady development of bilateral relations.

Branstad happily recalled that as governor of Iowa, he decided to establish friendship-province/state relations with Hebei province in 1984, adding that he took pride in such unforgettable experience and his long-term commitment to friendship with China. He appreciated China's great achievement in economy and poverty reduction, saying that it is of great importance to promote friendship and trust between the two peoples at a time when US-China relations are facing difficulties. He expressed hope that the two sides will actively explore new opportunities for mutually beneficial cooperation in green fields and third-party markets to promote common development.

The two sides also exchanged in-depth views and reached positive consensus on strengthening friendly exchanges and cooperation in such areas as friendship cities, climate change, carbon sink trading and youth exchanges. ■

# CPAFFC President Lin Songtian speaks at the University of Havana

**Department of American & Oceanian Affairs**

On April 26, Lin Songtian, president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, delivered a speech at the University of Havana on China-Cuba relations, major achievements of the 20th CPC National Congress, fruitful results and inspirations of China's reform and opening-up. He also answered questions on high-quality Belt and Road cooperation.

Fernando Gonzales, president of Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP), and Caridad Diego, member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba and president of the Cuba-China Friendship Association, and more than 80 students and teachers of the university attended the event, which was reported live by Cuban state television.

Prior to the speech, Miriam Nicado Garcia, member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba and rector of the University of Havana, met with Lin and his party and held discussions on inter-university



**President Lin Songtian delivers a speech at the University of Havana.**

cooperation and youth exchanges between the two countries.

Lin said that both China and Cuba are socialist countries under the

leadership of the Communist Party, shouldering the common mission of developing economy, improving people's livelihood and eliminating

exploitation. Leaders of the two parties and two countries have always attached great importance to the development of China-Cuba relations.

Last November, Lin continued, Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel, first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, was invited to visit China, becoming the first Latin American and Caribbean head of state to visit China after the 20th CPC National Congress. President Xi Jinping and President Miguel Diaz-Canel reached important consensus on jointly building a community with a shared future and drew a new blueprint for relations between the two parties and two countries.

Lin introduced the history, policies and achievements of China's reform and opening-up drive and the

major inspirations it has generated, saying that the essential difference between socialism and capitalism lies in whether the people come first or capital comes first, and whether the fruits of development would be shared by all the people or owned by just a few interest groups. China is ready to share development experience with Cuba unreservedly and translate the high level of political mutual trust between the two parties and two countries into practical cooperation outcomes that benefit the peoples.

Lin noted that the Belt and Road Initiative upholds the principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, promotes policy communication, infrastructure connectivity, unimpeded trade, financial integration and people-

to-people amity, and is committed to realizing win-win cooperation and common development between China and other countries. It has become the most popular international public good in the world and greatly promoted the connectivity between China and countries in Asia, Europe, Africa and Latin America and their economic and social development .

After the speech, Lin received an interview from Cuban media such as Youth, Workers and Always with Cuba, on main purposes and feelings of his visit, as well as people-to-people and local exchanges and cooperation between the two peoples. He also held talks with the ICAP and the Cuba-China Friendship Association, and attended a donation ceremony at the Luxun Children's Home. ■



**President Lin Songtian (4th left) takes a photo with Cuban friends.**

# CPAFFC President Lin Songtian visits Panama

## Department of American & Oceanian Affairs

On April 27, Lin Songtian, president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, and his party visited Panama.

Aristides Royo, former President of Panama and minister for Panama Canal Affairs; Yill Otero, vice minister of foreign affairs of Panama; and Jose Luis Fabrega, mayor of Panama city, met with the delegation.

Wei Qiang, Chinese ambassador to Panama, and Shen Xin, director general of CPAFFC's Department of American & Oceanian Affairs, also attended the meeting.

Lin gave an exclusive interview to the Panamanian newspaper La Estralla. He also talked with Annette Vial Chen, president of Panamanian Association of Friendship with China, and Oyden Ortega, honorary president of the Panamanian association and former Supreme Court justice.

Lin said that as early as 170 years ago, Chinese laborers had traveled across the high seas to participate in the railway and canal construction in Panama.

"In 2018, one year after the two countries established diplomatic ties, President Xi Jinping paid a historic state visit to Panama, during which leaders of both countries made comprehensive strategic plans for bilateral relations and cooperation in various fields. China has kept its promise. No matter how the international situation changes, China's firm commitment to China-Panama friendship will not change," Lin said.

Lin stressed that the Taiwan question, a trouble left over from history, was historically resolved by the UN Resolution 2758 adopted in 1971. The resolution makes it clear that there is only one China in the world, that the People's Republic of China is the sole legal representative of China and that Taiwan is part of China. It is the due obligation and responsibility of all UN members to abide by the One-China principle. It is a basic norm governing international relations and the prerequisite and foundation for China to establish and develop bilateral relations with other countries. China appreciates Panama's firm support on core and major issues concerning the

two countries.

Lin noted that since the establishment of diplomatic relations five years ago, China-Panama cooperation has embarked on a fast track in all respects, and bilateral trade has doubled. The centenary of the opening of the Panama Canal and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road Initiative have created broad opportunities for win-win cooperation and common development.

Lin said that if China-Panama relations are compared to a tree, people-to-people diplomacy is the root of the tree. The purpose of his visit, he said, was to fully implement the important consensus reached by leaders of both countries, actively promote people-to-people and local exchanges and cooperation, translate political mutual trust and people-to-people friendship into more fruitful cooperation for the two peoples, and make the tree of China-Panama friendship grow luxuriant and fruitful.

Royo said it was a great honor to have participated in the founding of the Panama-China Friendship Association

and made every effort to facilitate the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. He said he admires China's development miracle, hopes to actively promote local cooperation and youth exchanges and welcomes Chinese companies to take part in the construction of high-speed rail and other infrastructure in Panama.

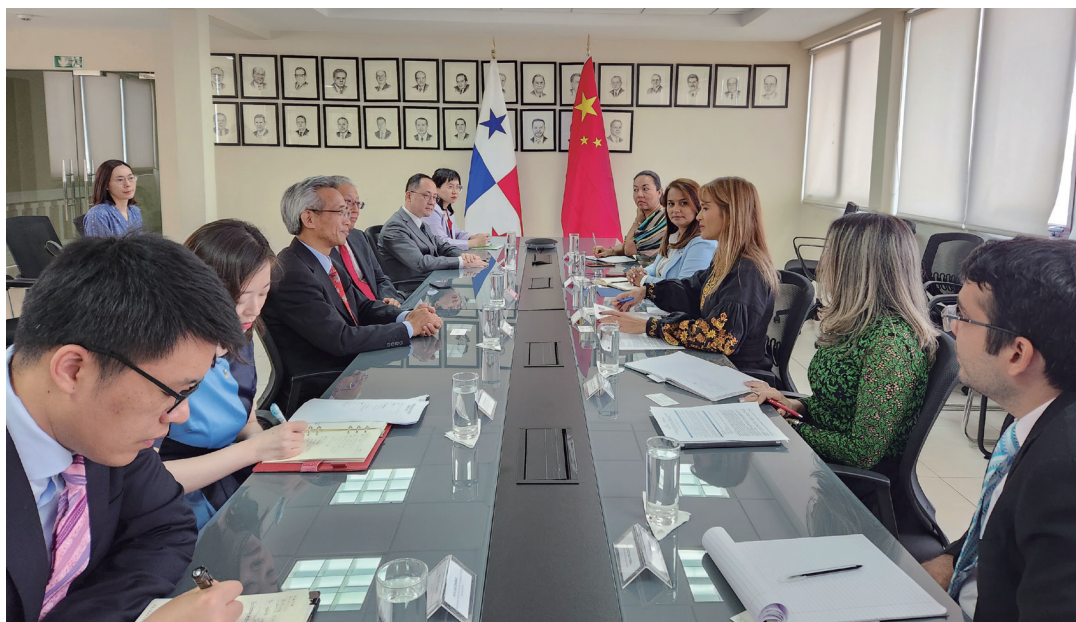
Otero thanked China's friendship associations at all levels for their support in his country's fight against COVID-19. He said Panama will continue to abide by the One-China principle and work closely with China on multilateral occasions such as the United Nations. Panama appreciates and looks forward to strengthening

exchanges and cooperation at the local and people-to-people level of the two countries and hopes to carry out dialogues on women, health, environmental protection and poverty alleviation, he said.

Fabrega said that in the 1960s, Chairman Mao Zedong called on the Chinese people to support the Panamanian people in their just struggle for the sovereignty of the Canal and greatly inspired the independence struggle of Panama, which is still a treasured memory for the Panamanian people. The Panamanian side is willing to work for establishment of friendship-city ties between Panama City and Chinese provinces and cities, strengthen local exchanges and

cooperation, and carry forward and develop the friendship between the two peoples.

Annette Vial Chen and Ortega said the Panama-China Friendship Association was founded to promote establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries and had made unremitting efforts to this end. The association will continue to strengthen cooperation with the Chinese side, help resume the exchange programs suspended due to COVID-19, and enhance the Panamanian people's understanding of China by organizing delegation visits and seminars, so as to promote friendly people-to-people exchanges and mutually beneficial cooperation. ■



**The CPAFFC delegation having a discussion with the Panamanian friends.**

# China-Pacific People-to-people Friendship Forum held in Fujian

## Department of American & Oceanian Affairs

On May 12, the China-Pacific People-to-people Friendship Forum was held in Fuzhou, Fujian province. It was co-hosted by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the People's Government of Fujian Province, with the theme of "building bridges of friendship and pursuing win-win cooperation".

Lin Songtian, president of the CPAFFC; Guo Ningning, member of the Standing Committee of CPC Fujian Provincial Committee and executive vice governor of Fujian province; Zhou Haicheng, ambassador of the Department of North American and Oceanian Affairs of the Chinese Foreign Ministry; Salote Pilolevu Tuita, princess of Tonga and patron of the Pacific China Friendship Association; and David Carter, former New Zealand speaker of parliament and national patron of the New Zealand China Friendship Society, attended and addressed the opening ceremony.

More than 100 Chinese and foreign guests, including diplomatic envoys, former political leaders, local government officials, heads of friendship organizations and representatives of friendship cities and overseas students from nine Pacific countries and regions, including Australia, New Zealand, Papua New

Guinea, Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Tonga, as well as delegates of relevant Chinese provinces and cities, universities and enterprises, gathered in Fujian to renew friendship, discuss cooperation and seek common development. They reached broad consensus on deepening friendship and local cooperation between the Chinese and Pacific peoples.

Lin Songtian said the forum was the first large-scale "invite in" international exchange activity held by the CPAFFC in China in more than three years and received high attention and positive response from both sides.

He said that Fujian is an important place where the Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era was conceived and practiced, and the first place in China to successfully achieve poverty alleviation. Fujian has rich experience in opening up and development. "It is of great significance that the forum chooses Fujian as the hosting place with well-arranged visits and communication activities," he said, adding that he believed that foreign guests would be inspired by what they see and feel through face-to-face participation.

Lin said, China has always attached great importance to developing

friendly and cooperative relations with Pacific islands countries. During his two visits to these countries, President Xi Jinping advocated building an even closer China-Pacific community with a shared future and reached important consensus with leaders of friendly countries in the region. "China honors its promises and means what it says," Lin said.

Last year, Lin continued, China's then State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi visited island countries in the Pacific region to implement the important consensus reached by President Xi and leaders of the countries in the region. "It is also the reason why this forum is held," he said.

Lin pointed out that China's successful development offers new options to countries and nations that want to speed up their development while maintaining their independence. He expressed hope that the forum would build a bridge of friendly exchanges and mutually beneficial cooperation between the Chinese and Pacific peoples and promote win-win cooperation and common development.

Guo Ningning said Fujian is an important breeding and practice ground for the Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics



for a New Era. When working in Fujian, Xi Jinping personally promoted friendly exchanges between Fujian and countries in the Pacific region and initiated a series of innovative ideas and practices.

“Fujian continues to deepen friendly exchanges and practical cooperation with countries in the Pacific region, and has established 12 pairs of international friendship cities. Positive results have been achieved in eradicating poverty and sharing development experience,” Guo said.

At present, Guo continued, Fujian is committed to studying and implementing the spirit of the 20th CPC National Congress, continuously expanding opening-up at a high level, and is willing to deepen economic and trade cooperation, strengthen people-to-people exchanges, enhance unity and coordination with countries in the Pacific region, jointly implement the Global Development Initiative and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and realize high-quality development featuring openness, cooperation, inclusiveness and win-win results.

Princess Tuita said China regards all countries, big or small, near or far, as friends who treat each other as equals and respect each other. The country, Tuita went on, actively practices the foreign policy of “teaching people how to fish” (rather than merely giving them fish) and supports the Pacific islands countries to realize independent and sustainable development by providing them with substantive aid, investment and trade opportunities and helping them build up development capacity. “But it never interferes in our internal

affairs,” said the princess.

Tuita said the Belt and Road Initiative proposed by China had played an important role in promoting world economic development. She told her hosts that the Pacific China Friendship Association hopes to extend the Maritime Silk Road to the Pacific region and develop it into the Maritime Pearl Road, so as to further enhance economic and trade cooperation and cultural exchanges between the two sides and build a lasting foundation for friendship and win-win cooperation between the two peoples.

Former New Zealand parliament Speaker Carter said, “What I admire most is China’s economic achievements over the past 75 years. It is the most amazing economic take-off in the history of human civilization that I have ever seen in my life. It is also the greatest economic miracle that I have ever seen in the history of mankind. To deny China’s values and international status is to ignore reality. Chinese values are different from New Zealand values. Each country has the right to define its own unique values, but not to impose its own values on others. We should look at our differences on the basis of mutual respect and understanding, develop and uphold the values of our respective countries, and enable our people to enjoy a better life.”

Zhou Haicheng said, China and countries in the Pacific region are located in the same Asia-Pacific region. Over the years, the two peoples have learned from and supported each other. Through strengthening practical cooperation, improving people’s well-

being and enhancing people-to-people exchanges, understanding and mutual trust between the two sides have been deepened.

The 20th CPC National Congress, Zhou noted, had drawn up a blueprint for comprehensively advancing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation through Chinese modernization, “which has created new historical opportunities for Pacific island countries and other developing countries.”

He said China will uphold the principles of justice and shared interests, sincerity, amity and good faith, deepen its comprehensive strategic partnership with Pacific islands countries, and help them speed up economic development and improve people’s livelihood.

During the Forum, Chinese and foreign guests shared their experiences and successful practices on targeted poverty alleviation and rural revitalization, green development and marine economy, friendship-city cooperation and people-to-people exchanges, and looked forward to broad prospects for cooperation in relevant fields. They reached positive consensus and expressed their appreciation and gratitude to the hosts for building a platform for people-to-people and local friendly exchanges and cooperation between China and countries in the region.

The CPAFFC, the Fujian Provincial People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the Shanghai Ocean University signed memorandums of cooperation with the Pacific China Friendship Association respectively. ■

# CPAFFC Vice-President Li Xikui attends International Ancient Capitals Forum, delivers speech

**Jiang Jing**

On April 26, the 4th International Ancient Capitals Forum and Youth Forum on Asian Initiative for Cultural Heritage Conservation opened in Luoyang, Henan province, co-hosted by the State Administration of Cultural Heritage and Henan Provincial Government and supported by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries.

Zhang Min, vice governor of Henan province, Xie Bing, deputy director general of the State Cultural Heritage Administration, Li Xikui, vice president of the CPAFFC, and Xu Yixian, mayor of Luoyang, attended the launching ceremony and delivered speeches.

Kong Vireak, deputy state secretary of the Ministry of Culture and Arts of Cambodia, Bakhodir Abdikarimov, director general of the Department of Cultural Heritage of Uzbekistan, and Webber Murungweni Ndoro, director general of the International Center for Cultural



**CPAFFC Vice-President Li Xikui attends and addresses the forum.**

Heritage Conservation and Restoration, were also present.

Li Xikui said that as the only civilization in human history which has lasted for more than 5,000 years, the Chinese civilization has continuously shown new vitality through exchanges and mutual learning with other civilizations and made important contributions to the progress of human civilization.

In March this year, Li noted, President Xi Jinping put forward the Global Civilization Initiative, a sincere call to the world to further promote exchanges and dialogue among civilizations and promote progress through exercising inclusiveness and mutual learning. The Initiative conveys China's sincere wish to write a new chapter of cooperation among civilizations in which all

countries appreciate the culture of others as do their own. We will once again contribute China's wisdom and solutions to advancing high-level international cooperation and building a community with a shared future for mankind, Li said.

"Asia is an important cradle of human civilization. It is of great significance that we discuss cultural heritage conservation and sustainable inheritance and development of civilizations through ancient capitals. It helps us review the extraordinary history of ancient civilizations, talk about profound friendship among different civilizations, so as to

create a bright future for the colorful civilizations of mankind," Li said.

Li expressed hope that young friends, with an open and inclusive mind, will be envoys of dialogue and mutual learning among civilizations and jointly write a new chapter in the development of world civilizations. He pledged that the CPAFFC would continue to leverage its strengths in people-to-people, public and city diplomacy, promote cultural exchanges and dialogue among civilizations, deepen practical cooperation among local governments, media, think tanks and the youth, and enhance amity and mutual understanding between

the peoples, so as to contribute to the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.

The forum was themed "Ancient Civilizations, New Stories-Mission of the Youth". More than 150 delegates of cultural and museum institutions, experts, scholars, youth representatives and journalists from 17 countries and international organizations, including China, Cambodia, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan and the United Kingdom, attended the forum to discuss conservation of cultural heritage and sustainable inheritance and development of ancient capital civilization. ■



# Reception held to celebrate 5th anniversary of China-Dominica diplomatic relations

**Chen Kuanghuai**

On May 25, a reception was held in Beijing to celebrate the 5th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the Dominican Republic, jointly hosted by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the Embassy of the Dominican Republic in China.

Jiang Jiang, vice president of the CPAFFC, and Briunny Garabito Segura, Dominican ambassador to China, addressed the reception.

About 80 participants attended the event, including officials from relevant departments of China, such as International Department of the CPC Central Committee, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Commerce, All-China Women's Federation, Council for the Promotion

of International Trade, Western Returned Scholars Association, and diplomatic envoys from Panama, El Salvador, Venezuela, Colombia and a few other Latin American countries, and representatives of Dominican nationals and students living in China, as well as journalists.

Jiang noted that China and the Dominican Republic formally established diplomatic relations on May 1, 2018, opening a new chapter in the history of bilateral relations. Over the past five years, he said, thanks to the strategic guidance of the leaders of both countries and joint efforts of the two peoples, the friendly cooperative relations had made substantial progress, with significantly enhanced political mutual trust, fruitful practical cooperation and ever-increasing local

exchanges, which had brought tangible benefits to the two peoples.

"The establishment of diplomatic relations conforms to the general trend of history and the fundamental interests of the two countries. China-Dominica relations have a bright future and great potential," said Jiang.

"Looking ahead, China will work with Dominica to implement the important consensus reached by the leaders of both countries and push bilateral relations to a new level."

The CPAFFC vice-president pledged that his organization would take the 5th anniversary of the diplomatic establishment as a new starting point and work with friendship organizations in Dominica to further expand people-to-people and local-level exchanges, build wider platforms

for cooperation, consolidate popular support, enrich the connotation of bilateral relations and make non-governmental contributions to a steady and long-term growth of China-Dominican relations.

Briunny Garabito Segura noted that despite the short history of diplomatic relations, the two

sides had signed 22 cooperation agreements covering commerce, culture, education, tourism and other fields and bilateral relations had been developing vigorously. “Especially after the outbreak of COVID-19,” he said, “China immediately responded to the request of Dominica and actively carried out vaccine cooperation with it,

which we deeply appreciated.”

The Dominican ambassador spoke highly of CPAFFC’s contribution to promoting bilateral people-to-people exchanges over the years and expressed readiness to work with the Chinese side to further advance the exchanges and cooperation in various fields. ■



CPAFFC Vice-President Jiang Jiang takes a photo with Briunny Garabito Segura, Dominican ambassador to China.

# CPAFFC Vice-President Yuan Mindao meets acting president of Japan-China Friendship Center

## Department of East Asian Affairs

On May 29, Yuan Mindao, vice president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, met with Yuji Miyamoto, acting president of the Japan-China Friendship Center and former Japanese Ambassador to China.

The two sides had a candid exchange of views on enhancing people-to-people friendship and strengthening exchanges and cooperation in various fields, including that between both countries' young people.

Yuan Mindao welcomed Miyamoto to the CPAFFC and conveyed to him the cordial greetings from CPAFFC President Lin Songtian. He thanked the Japan-China Center for its warm reception of President Lin during his visit to Japan in March and praised Miyamoto for his long-term enthusiasm and contribution to China-Japan friendly exchanges and cooperation.

Yuan noted that China and Japan are both important countries in Asia and the second and third largest economies in the world. Maintaining and developing China-Japan friendly cooperative relations not only conforms to the fundamental interests of the two countries and peoples, but also contributes to regional and world peace, stability and development, said Yuan.



CPAFFC Vice-President Yuan Mindao (right) talks with Yuji Miyamoto.

At present, Yuan continued, China-Japan relations are facing complex challenges. The two sides should bear in mind the overall and long-term interests, meet each other halfway, and push for sustained improvement and development of bilateral relations on the right track. The CPAFFC is willing to pool wisdom and make joint efforts with friendly organizations in Japan to promote exchanges and cooperation, deepen ties and strengthen public support in both countries.

Miyamoto spoke highly of President Lin's visit to Japan in March and asked Yuan to convey sincere greetings and best wishes to Lin. He

said Japan and China are important neighbors and peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation is the right choice for both sides.

Miyamoto said that people-to-people exchanges are crucial to maintaining Japan-China friendly relations. He expressed hope that friendly organizations of both countries will work together to carry out exchanges in various fields and at various levels when celebrating the 45th anniversary of the signing of Sino-Japanese Treaty on Peace and Friendship, so as to constantly improve feelings between the two peoples and enhance mutual understanding and friendship. ■

# CPAFFC Vice-President Yan Dong delivers video speech at Smart City Forum for International Friendship Cities

Department of European & Asian Affairs

On May 26, the Smart City Forum for International Friendship Cities was held at the China International Big Data Industry Expo 2023 in Guiyang, Guizhou province.

Yan Dong, vice president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, delivered a speech via video link.

Zhang Jingping, vice governor of Guizhou province, and Ante Simonic, former vice premier of Croatia, attended and delivered speeches respectively.

Yan said, the report of the 20th CPC National Congress has mapped out the way for developing China's digital economy. Building a digital China becomes an important engine to promote Chinese modernization in the digital era. It will also help the world economy recover and grow and bring new momentum to more countries' development.

Yan pledged that the CPAFFC would actively support Chinese cities to join hands with cities around the world to build Smart City brand projects, deepen industrial cooperation in digital economy of friendship cities, enable high-quality digital economy



CPAFFC Vice-President Yan Dong delivers a video speech.

development and positively interact with the Big Data Industry Expo, so as to make due contribution to the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.

With the theme of “Sharing Results of Smart Cities to Improve Effectiveness of Urban Governance”, the forum invited about 100 guests, including delegates from friendship cities of Guizhou province and Guiyang, and representatives from

Austria, Malaysia, Pakistan, Serbia, South Korea, Cambodia and some other countries.

The guests discussed hot topics such as smart city, digital governance and artificial intelligence, explored the way to carry out digital transformation and innovation of cities, so as to deepen exchanges and mutual learning among international friendship cities, and promote common prosperity and development. ■

# Nantong holds meeting for exchanges and cooperation with Spain, Portugal and Italy

**Sun Weitie**

On March 28, the municipal government of Nantong, Jiangsu province, and the Jiangsu Foreign Affairs Office co-hosted the Jiangsu (Nantong)-Spain, Portugal and Italy Cooperation and Exchanges Conference at Nantong's Zilang Lake.

Speeches were delivered by Wu Xinmin, secretary of the Nantong Committee of the Communist Party of China; Sun Yi, director-general of Foreign Affairs Office of the Jiangsu People's Government; Luis Calvo, consul-general of Spain in Shanghai; Silvia Inacio, consul-general of Portugal in Shanghai; and Giacomo Bove, board director of the China-Italy Chamber of Commerce and president of its Jiangsu branch.

The conference attracted commercial officials from the consulates general of the three countries in Shanghai, representatives of their tourist bureaus in China, heads of business associations and representatives of key enterprises. Through activities such as the opening

ceremony, economic and trade promotion and cultural experiences, the conference showcased Nantong's investment environment, enhanced cultural understanding and promoted the mutual trust and cooperation of all parties.

## **Consolidate the foundation of economic and trade cooperation and deepen the integration of interests**

Nantong is a city that General Secretary Xi Jinping has visited and encouraged. With breakthroughs achieved at an accelerated rate in strategic transportation infrastructure construction and the integration of the Yangtze River Delta stepped up for joint development, Nantong is greeting a new round of golden opportunities and moving faster toward become an important growth pillar for high-quality development in Jiangsu.

Spain, Portugal and Italy are well developed in manufacturing and highly compatible with Nantong's industry,

which presents bright prospects and great potential for economic and trade cooperation.

Over the years, Nantong and the three countries have cooperated extensively in economic development and industrial park construction and achieved fruitful results, with a total annual trade volume amounting to nearly 10 billion yuan (\$1.5 billion). The Sino-Italian Hai'an Ecological Park has achieved initial success in creating a cluster of small and medium-sized Italian enterprises. Seventy-five enterprises have taken root in Nantong, including Simon Electric, while 17 projects from Nantong have also settled down in Spain, Portugal and Italy.

During the conference, representatives of consulates, chambers of commerce, trade promotion agencies and enterprises held seminars and exchanges in different fields, bringing out efficient communication and raising the level of economic and trade cooperation.

Silvia Inacio, consul-general of



Portugal in Shanghai, remarked that she hoped to use the conference as an opportunity to expand the scope of cooperation in mutual investment, tourism and international direct flights.

Giacomo Bove, board director of the China-Italy Chamber of Commerce, expressed strong confidence in a vision for the development of exchanges and cooperation between Italy and Nantong, saying he would continue to build a good platform to promote practical exchanges for enterprises on both sides.

#### **Tighten human ties and enrich the content of communication**

General Secretary Xi Jinping

advocates robust international people-to-people exchanges and cooperation. He said countries need to explore the building of a global network for intercivilization dialogue and cooperation, enrich the contents of exchanges and expand cooperation channels to promote mutual understanding and friendship among people of all countries and jointly advance the progress of human civilization.

China, Spain, Portugal and Italy have all nurtured splendid cultures and have time-honored civilizations. They have had lasting cultural and human exchanges. Nantong shares their common cultural genes in terms of history and cultural heritage, art,

cuisine and tourism. Luis Calvo, consul-general of Spain in Shanghai, noted that this year marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and Spain, as well as the “Year of China-Spain Culture and Tourism”. It was meaningful to attend the conference before Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez’s upcoming visit to China, he said.

Culture can connect hearts, and art can string the world together. During the event, guests at home and abroad were able to further understand Jiangsu and feel Nantong through immersive activities — including intangible cultural heritage interactions,



**Jiangsu(Nantong)-Spain, Portugal and Italy Cooperation and Exchange Conference held successfully.**

cuisine from four countries, cultural performances and light and water shows — to continuously enhance the level of cultural exchanges and jointly build multifaceted and interactive means of interaction.

**Build bridges of friendship and mutual trust and promote cultural exchanges**

President Xi Jinping has pointed out that both China and Europe are in a key stage of development and are facing unprecedented opportunities and challenges. Both sides should work together to build a bridge of friendship and cooperation across the Euro-Asian continent, he said.

China has built a comprehensive

strategic partnership with Spain, Portugal and Italy. Communication between sister cities is an integral part of overall diplomacy and an important link in bringing people from China and the three countries closer and in promoting cultural ties.

In recent years, Nantong has implemented the consensus reached between Xi and the leaders of the three countries and actively carried out exchanges and cooperation with the three. Nantong has established sister-city relations with two Italian cities, and has made positive attempts to communicate with several others in Spain and Portugal. People-to-people and cultural exchanges were conducted, writing a remarkable chapter in the four cities' friendship.

In a particularly significant move, Nantong and the Italian city of Siena signed a memorandum of understanding last year to create a “model of international sister-city cooperation”. During the COVID-19 epidemic, the two cities helped each other and vividly epitomized the growing traditional friendship between countries in the new era.

“The event has broadened the channels of cooperation and exchange, deepened the relationship between international sister-cities and built new bridges of friendship and cooperation,” said Pan Qiang, director of the foreign affairs office of the Nantong government.

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, cooperation and exchanges between Nantong and the three countries have not only been continuing but also have generated new highlights. Exchanges between sister-cities have been deepened and strengthened, economic and trade cooperation has grown against the adverse trend and cultural activities have been flourishing — all of which has added a new driving force for both sides to jointly expand the Belt and Road Initiative and inject inexhaustible energy for long-term friendship between Nantong and the three countries. The success of this conference conveys the goodwill of both sides to deepen practical cooperation and achieve mutual benefits. ■



**Cuisine appreciation.**

# Astor Court witnesses China-US cultural exchanges

**He Yan**

In the fall of 2018, I visited the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York for the first time.

On the second floor of Asian Art, I saw a moon-shaped gate guarded by stone lions, and two Chinese characters “Tan You” — literally “explore a secluded land”— inscribed on the gate lintel. I stepped into the gate and passed through the dim vestibule, and found an exquisite Suzhou garden just a few feet beyond.

A winding corridor led to the main hall. On the other side of the garden was a pavilion with upturned eaves, in front of which was a small pond dotted with rockeries. A gray bricks paved path half-hidden in bamboo and banana groves glistened in a delightful contrast with the shimmering ripples of the pond, as if illustrating the name of the pavilion — Cold Spring Pavilion.

Entering the main hall, visitors can see a plaque of two Chinese characters “Ming Xuan”, literally “Ming Study”. The study housed a collection of Ming dynasty calligrapher and painter Wen Zhengming’s art works. The hall was furnished in simple and elegant Ming style. Desks



**The Astor Court.**

and chairs were made from sandalwood or pear wood. Four palace lanterns hung from the ceiling, radiating soft light to make the landscape reliefs on the wall more vivid. Looking through the hollowed wooden windows, one could see the bamboo trees wavering to cast their shades on the white rocks.

In the courtyard, visitors kept taking photos, or rested in the corridor, or lingered by the Cold Spring Pavilion, which made me feel like being in a

warm afternoon in Suzhou. I wandered for a long time, unwilling to leave.

## **Mrs. Astor’s garden of dreams**

Back in February 1972, US President Richard Nixon visited China and the two sides signed a joint communique in Shanghai, marking the normalization of Sino-US relations.

At that time, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, led by

Wen C. Fong, director of the museum's Asian Art Department and head of the Art and Archaeology Department at Princeton University, was expanding its collection of Chinese and Oriental calligraphy, painting and art.

In 1976, funded by the Vincent Astor Foundation, the museum acquired a collection of Ming dynasty hardwood furniture from the New York antiquities dealer and collector Robert H. Ellsworth.

Ming dynasty furniture is known for the precious wood it was made from and its exquisite designs and meticulous carpentry, as well as for its association with the dynasty's unique art of gardening.

Where to put the furniture on display? Fong thought of a patio on the northern floor of the museum, which provides light for the Egyptian gallery, and discussed it with Maxwell K. Hearn, staff of the museum's Far-eastern Art Department. Hearn climbed up to the attic and discovered that the patio, flooded with natural light, was an ideal choice.

The two made the proposal to the museum, but Thomas Hoving, the curator, quickly rejected it. Because the museum had just spent a million dollars to install a new set of air-conditioning ducts and electrical wiring for the Egyptian gallery.

Fortunately, Brooke Russel Astor, director of the museum and chairwoman of the Far-Eastern Art Department's advisory board, and head of the Vincent Astor Foundation, liked the plan enough to fund it.

Mrs. Astor is a well-known

American philanthropist and art collector. As wife of the head of the fifth generation of the Astor family, her name has been shining in New York for 50 years because of her outstanding artistic contributions.

Mrs. Astor was born in 1902 into the family of a US Marine Corps commander. As a child, she traveled with her father around the world, but she never stopped thinking about China. "I felt the interconnection between all things: the sky, the sun setting, the moon rising, the birds flying, the branches swinging, the rain at the window, the snow falling. I felt associated with them. I owe it all to having lived in Beijing for four years."

Mrs. Astor has been fluent in Chinese since the age of seven. She spent her childhood in Beijing, and her memory was full of the beautiful gardens of the Chinese capital. The summer experience in the Xishan Temple on the outskirts of Beijing left a deep impression on her. "The monks taught me to enjoy the flowers blooming and falling and the pomegranate trees bearing fruit, listen to the wind and watch the ripples in a stream. It was all part of life, they said," she recalled.

After entering adulthood, she became an editor of the House and Garden magazine for eight years. Her marriage to Vincent Astor in 1953 brought her one step closer to the Chinese garden in her dreams.

Vincent Astor was son of New York real estate magnate John Jacob Astor IV. His parents died on the Titanic's maiden voyage. Vincent

inherited a large fortune from his father. Six years after his marriage with Brooke, Vincent died of a heart attack, leaving his wife with the burden of managing the family foundation.

Her idea was that a courtyard in the Chinese art section of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York would create an atmosphere of classical Chinese culture, and would provide a place for visitors to rest, meditate or relish the experience. Then, what kind of Chinese courtyard would it be? Wen C. Fong came to the help as Astor tried to find a leader for the project.

Fong, a native of Xianju, Zhejiang province, was born in 1930 in Shanghai. He learned Chinese calligraphy and painting at a young age. When he was only 12 years old, he held a personal book fair in Shanghai and was hailed as a prodigy.

In 1948, Fong went to Princeton University for higher education and became the school's first doctor of Chinese Art History. In 1971, he was invited by the Metropolitan Museum of Art as special adviser and director of the Asian Art Department.

For half a century, Fong has been pioneering the study of the history of Chinese painting with the method of modern art history study, and made more contributions than almost anyone else in the field.

At first, the museum commissioned Chinese-American stage artist Ming Cho Lee to design it. However, Fong was not satisfied with the initial plan presented by Lee.

Soon, Fong turned to Chinese-

American architect Ieoh Ming Pei for advice.

Pei was born in 1917 to a famous family in Suzhou, which owned a famous garden --- Lion Forest. In 1935, Pei moved to the US to study architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University. Later, he became an architect in New York and was well-known for his exquisite architectural designs.

### **Modeling on Peony Study in the Master-of-Nets Garden**

Pei recommended Chen Tsung Chon, a professor at the Tongji University in Shanghai, to Fong.

Born in 1918 in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, Chen Tsung Chon was influenced by Chinese literature from a young age. He learned from Xia Chengtao, master of Ci-poetry, and Wang Quchang, great calligrapher, and had his own style in writing poetry. He was also a disciple of Zhang Daqian, a Chinese painting master. Boasting the unique temperament of traditional Chinese literati, he integrated garden art with poetry, painting and calligraphy and Kunqu opera to attain the realm of mastery.

In 1956, Chen Tsung Chon published a monograph Suzhou Gardens.

Pei admired the book greatly when he read it in the US in the 1960s. Pei asked his friends to inquire about the author. However, in the political environment of that time, it was impossible for the two to contact each

other.

In April 1974, Pei and his wife visited China as part of a delegation of American architects, the first trip back home in 39 years. Arranged by relevant departments, Pei met Chen Tsung Chon at the Jin Jiang Hotel in Shanghai. They were very happy and hit it off with each other.

One day in early autumn of 1977, the Shanghai Foreign Affairs Office contacted Chen Tsung Chon at Tongji University, saying that a US delegation came for business talks. It turned out that the US cultural relics and museum circles had organized a Chinese ancient painting delegation to visit China. As a member of the delegation, Fong had visited Fujian, Zhejiang, Beijing and other places, and then came to Shanghai.

At the Jin Jiang Hotel, Fong told Chen that “The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York has some Ming dynasty furniture. I’ve been wanting to display them, but I don’t know where to put them.”

“Ming furniture should be placed inside Ming buildings,” Chen Tsung Chon replied. He examined the plan brought by Fong and found it very difficult to put into construction. The courtyard could only be built on the second floor of the museum, which was a concrete laminate of less than 500 square meters. The display room would occupy a small area while there should be some picturesque scenic spots. But the floor’s bearing capacity was limited, leaving it impossible to either open a pond or stack large rockeries.

“But where am I going to find a

Ming building in the US?” asked Fong.

Chen Tsung Chon immediately thought of the Master-of-Nets Garden, “a perfect mini-version of Suzhou Gardens” as he called it. In the Master-of-Nets Garden, there is a small courtyard called Peony Study, where his teacher Zhang Daqian once lived and created paintings.

“That’s easy,” Chen Tsung Chon laughed, “I’ll find you a ready-made one. The Peony Study in the Master-of-Nets Garden is a perfect match. You move it to the US and it settles all problems.” Fong was overjoyed at Chen’s words.

The next day, they drove to Suzhou together.

China boasts a long history of building gardens, of which those in Suzhou are the most famed.

Suzhou is a waterside town with rivers passing by or through. It is also an ancient city known for its literary and art heritage. Compared with other cities in China, Suzhou suffered less war ravages in history. The serenity and beauty of the water town made it an attraction for many high officials and business gurus to build garden-style residence here, which in turn drew crowds of architects, craftsmen and, later, artists. At its prime in Ming and Qing dynasties, Suzhou had more than 170 gardens. Now about 60 are well preserved.

Arriving at the Master-of-Nets Garden, south of Suzhou, Chen Tsung Chon told Fong: “The preserved Ming dynasty gardens are mainly in Suzhou. The Master-of-Nets Garden is small but looks attractive; neither excessively

glamorous nor monotonous. Just right.” Fong watched carefully and nodded his agreement.

The Master-of-Nets Garden was first built in the Chunxi period of the Southern Song dynasty (1174 AD). It covers an area of about half a hectare. It has waterside pavilions, with compact layout and ingenuity, in typical Ming dynasty style.

The two visitors came to the northwestern corner of the Rosy Clouds Pool of the garden, and stayed in the Peony Study for a long while.

This place used to be famous for planting peony. Because peony blossoms last in spring, it got the name “Dian Chun Yi”, which means cabin of later spring.

Chen Tsung Chon said, “Among all Suzhou gardens, this one was built with the best architecture concepts. It is most appropriate for the Metropolitan Museum of Art.”

Noticing that Fong was enchanted by the scene, Chen went on: “I would like to quote a poem by Northern Song Dynasty poet Yan Jidao.

Fong agreed with what Chen Tsung Chon said and became good friends with him.

### **First major cultural exchange between China and the US**

During the construction of the garden, Chen Tsung Chon suggested using Chinese timber nanmu for the beams and columns. The wood is known for its smooth and solid texture and fine grain and is said to be able to remain unrotten for a thousand year

and thus makes top-grade furniture.

For tiles and bricks, Chen suggested using those baked by the centuries-old Lumu Royal Kiln for they had been standard building materials of Suzhou gardens. He also suggested using the Taihu rockery taken from Huqiu, which was traditionally regarded as the best stone for building miniature mountains due to its rocky feel and exquisitely carving.

All these would best represent the elegant and simple style of Ming dynasty garden architecture, Chen said. Fong agreed, awed by Chen’s architectural expertise.

In early 1978, after returning to the US, Fong wrote to Wang Yeqiu, director of the State Administration of Cultural Heritage of China, in the name of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, asking for help in building the garden. The State Administration of Cultural Heritage forwarded the letter to the State Construction Commission for assistance. The Commission’s Urban Construction Bureau called the Suzhou Gardens Administration Office. After receiving a positive reply, the Cultural Heritage Bureau and the State Construction Commission jointly reported the matter to The State Council of China.

Meanwhile, Perry Morgan, an architect at Princeton University, drew up a sketch of the garden. Ming Cho Lee was appointed as the designer of the new Chinese garden. On this basis of Morgan’s sketchy and the photos taken by Fong of the Peony Study, Lee made the design drawing and a model.

On May 26 that year, the State

Construction Commission of China issued a document stating that “Approved by the State Council, China will help the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York build a Chinese garden, modeled on the Peony Study in the Master-of-Nets Garden.”

In June, Fong and Lee came to China, and the Suzhou Gardens Administration also sent technician Zhang Weiren to Beijing. Accompanied by officials from the State Administration of Cultural Heritage, the two sides met.

Fong and Lee brought a small model to discuss specific technical measures. Three days later, they went to Suzhou for a field study.

Zhang Weiren accompanied them to visit the Suzhou’s gardens, among which they spent the longest time in the Master-of-Nets Garden.

Lee said frankly, “I am not able to do it anymore. Please let the Suzhou side do it.”

Fong did not give his opinion and took a lot of photos.

When Zhang Weiren saw them off before they took train back to Beijing, Fong said to him, “I will give you a reply as soon as possible.”

On Sep 18, 1978, the Urban Construction Bureau of the State Construction Commission held a meeting in the Master-of-Nets Garden, and decided to set up a Suzhou Gardens Administration Task-force for Foreign Aid.

Suzhou Urban Construction Bureau assigned technical, mapping and management personnel, a total of six people, to start the project.

The US side sent a set of survey maps.

The actual designing was done by three people: Zhang Weiren from the Suzhou Gardens, Zou Gongwu, student of Chen Tsung Chon, and Wang Zuxin from the Suzhou Urban Construction Bureau. They spent a month working on the design in a house in the Master-of-Nets Garden.

On Nov 11, the same year, Chen Tsung Chon, as a design consultant, flew to New York with design drawings and models together with Zhang Peorong, deputy director of Suzhou Gardens Administration Office, and Tao Weiliang, deputy director of the bureau's Planning and Construction Department.

Mrs. Astor, Pei and a number of architectural experts reviewed the draft, and the plan was approved.

Chen Tsung Chon proposed that the Suzhou side organize artisans to make parts and components and ship them to the US for installation. His suggestion was adopted.

Then they went together for a site survey.

On Dec 12, 1978, Xie Qimei, cultural counselor of the Liaison Office of China in the US, signed a construction contract with the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York on behalf of the Chinese side. The project was named Ming Xuan, Chinese name of the Astor Court.

According to the contract, two sets of the same project should be made. The first set should be built as the sample and put in the East Garden of Suzhou, and the second set should

be shipped to the US for installation after being confirmed by the US side.

The US side did not bargain with their Chinese counterpart for the project price. It also became the first major cultural exchange between China and the US since 1949.

### **A glorious page in the history of Chinese gardens**

In February 1979, the actual sample project of Ming Xuan was started in the East Garden of Suzhou.

Chen Tsung Chon took charge of the construction. He traveled between Shanghai and Suzhou frequently but never complained. Under his careful guidance, the project proceeded smoothly and was completed ahead of schedule in April of the same year.

At the end of May, Mrs. Astor led a team to visit the Ming Xuan in Suzhou. Birds chirped and pavilions on hillocks and lakeside were bathed in the spring beams. She was amazed by the beautiful scenery, saying: "This is so Chinese! It is like a dream. I wake up to a beautiful courtyard." She invited Chen Tsung Chon to dinner and asked about details of the project.

In October 1979, the whole set of prefabricated components of Ming Xuan for New York was completed. Eight 20-ton flatbed trucks were used to move 20-plus containers filled with 193 wooden boxes. The vehicles left Beisi Tower in Suzhou at 4 a.m. and trundled all the way to Shanghai. Four days later, the construction components arrived at the Shanghai port, where they were shipped to the United States

via Hong Kong. The cargo finally arrive in New York on Dec 5.

On Dec 30, Zhang Peorong, deputy director of the Suzhou Gardens Administration Office, led a construction team of 27 people to New York.

It was the first anniversary of the establishment of China-US diplomatic relations.

On Jan 2, 1980, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York held a grand groundbreaking ceremony. The Chinese and US sides gave each other helmets printed with their national flags. During the installation process, the US side sent more than 20 workers to carry out small tasks such as moving things, building walls and painting. During the six months of construction, Chinese and American workers got along very well with each other.

Chinese workers applied Ming-dynasty handicraft to make decorative windows, used planers to smooth the floor, and set up traditional tripods to lift rockery. Their American fellow workers said they felt the Chinese were more like making furniture rather than building house. One of the officials of the American team remarked: "The Chinese worked in an ancient way using the same tools they used hundreds of years ago."

During the new garden's construction, Chai Zemin, China's first ambassador to the US, visited the worksite several times. Former US President Richard Nixon, former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, John Rockefeller, Ieoh Ming Pei and other famous personages, visited the

site, too. Mrs. Astor showed up at 6:45 a.m. every morning. Five major New York City television stations conducted live interviews for feature stories about the garden, claiming that the garden opened the door to diplomacy. The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York hired a movie company to make a documentary recording the full course of the construction.

On May 23, 1980, the Ming Xuan project was completed. On May 30, it passed the project acceptance.

On June 18, New York and Suzhou opened the Ming Xuan gardens simultaneously. In the US, it was called the Astor Court.

Meanwhile, the Douglas Dillon Gallery set up corridors along the east, north and west sides of the Astor Court to exhibit ancient Chinese paintings and calligraphy.

The opening ceremony of the Astor Court was held in the evening. Many of the guests were political and business celebrities in the US. Visitors

came in an endless stream. Some even queued until 10 o'clock at night to enter the garden.

"I am so moved by the ingenuity of the Chinese," said Mrs. Astor. "It is a miracle! I sincerely thank them for bringing such fine arts of the Chinese garden architecture."

Philippe de Montebello, director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, said, "In a museum like the Met, the sudden transition from one civilization to another is a source of exhilaration and contentment for visitors. The Astor Court has opened a touching new chapter in the history of the museum."

"A whiff of imperial China has been brought to New York in an unusual way," The New York Times wrote on June 12, 1981. After visiting the Astor Court, the then US President Jimmy Carter praised Chen Tsung Chon as "father of the Astor Court", saying that Chen's name, together with the Astor Court, would remain in the

US forever.

In 1980, Fong helped curated three major exhibitions of Chinese history and culture at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York: Exhibition of the Great Bronze Age of China, Exhibition of "Ming Xuan" : Courtyard of the Ming-dynasty Study, and Exhibition of Ancient Chinese Calligraphy and Painting at the Douglas Dillon Gallery. Fong wrote two academic monographs for the calligraphy and painting exhibition, published by the Metropolitan Museum of Art. In addition, He collaborated with art historian Alfreda Murck to write and publish the book *A Chinese Garden Court: The Astor Court at The Metropolitan Museum of Art*.

The Astor Court project was the first time that a classical Chinese garden was presented to the western world in an integrated form, leaving a brilliant page in the history of Chinese gardens. Over the next four decades, nearly 100 gardens blossomed overseas. ■



Mrs. Astor (seated in the center) poses with the staff of the Asian Art of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, with Wen C. Fong (3rd from the right in the front row).