

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

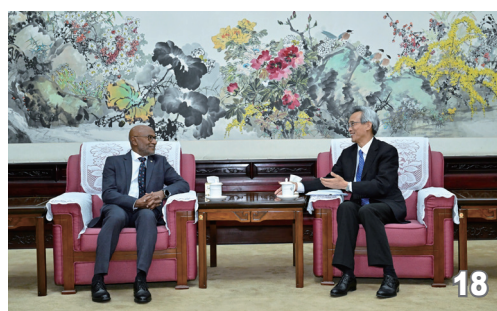
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Published in Chinese
and English

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

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ISSN 1000-9582 CN11-1234/D

Words to our audience

Yang Wanming



On August 19, the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries National Council passed a decision that Yang Wanming serve as member of the Executive Council and president of the Association.

Following are words from CPAFFC President Yang wanming to our audience:

Friendship, which derives from close contacts between peoples, holds the key to sound state-to-state relations.

The Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) is a national people's orga-

nization engaged in the people-to-people diplomacy of the People's Republic of China.

Over the past 70 years since its founding, the CPAFFC, under the strong leadership of the Communist Party of China, has pursued an independent foreign policy for peace. The aim of the association is to enhance people's friendship, further international cooperation, safeguard world peace and promote common development. It has made extensive and profound contacts with the international community and countries around the world and plays an irreplaceable and unique role in enhancing friendship between peoples, acting as a go-between for international cooperation and paving the way for state-to-state relations.

President Xi Jinping has pointed out that the foundation for the development of state-to-state relations lies in people, and people-to-people diplomacy is the basic work to enhance friendship between peoples and promote the development of state-to-state relations, and it is an important part of overall state diplomacy.

On this new journey of building a strong country and striving for national rejuvenation, the CPAFFC will rally more closely around the CPC Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping

at its core, take Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, especially Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy, as its guidance, keep the country's fate in mind, make friends on behalf of China, deepen friendly exchanges, promote mutually beneficial cooperation, do a good job in telling China's stories, and enhance people-to-people bonds.

The CPAFFC will play a leading role in people-to-people diplomacy, a backbone role in public diplomacy, and a bridge role in exchanges between local governments at home and abroad, so as to serve China's overall development and comprehensive state diplomacy.

The CPAFFC welcomes friends from all walks of life to continue to care for and support China's people-to-people diplomacy, to work together to promote mutual understanding between the Chinese people and people around the world, and to contribute wisdom and strength to the building of a community with a shared future for humanity.

Yang Wanming
president of the CPAFFC

A stylized signature of Yang Wanming in black ink.

August, 2023 ■

3rd China-Russia Youth Friendship Road launched in Beijing

Department of European & Asian Affairs

On August 21, the 3rd China-Russia Youth Friendship Road hosted by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries was officially launched at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing.

Xia Baolong, vice-chairman of the National Committee of 13th Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) and Chinese chairman of the China-Russia Friendship Committee for Peace and Development (CRFCPD), attended the activity and addressed the launch ceremony.

Yang Wanming, president of the CPAFFC, accompanied Xia Baolong to the event.

Andriyan Dorzhiyev, counselor of the Russian Embassy in China, read the written congratulatory message from Yuryevich Titov, Russian chairman of the CRFCPD and plenipotentiary of Russian President Vladimir Putin for the protection of the rights and interests of entrepreneurs.



Yan Dong, vice-president of the CPAFFC, presided over the ceremony.

Xia Baolong said that under the strategic guidance of the heads of state of the two countries, the China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination in the new era has maintained a high level of development. The two presidents attach

great importance to youth exchanges, and the two sides have held a series of colorful activities to build bridges for enhancing mutual understanding, friendship and trust between the youth.

Xia expressed the hope that the youth of the two countries will actively devote themselves to the cause of China-Russia friendship,

further promote the mutual learning of civilizations, jointly cope with global challenges, live up to their mission, forge ahead and make new and greater contributions to consolidate the foundation of China-Russia friendship from generation to generation, so as to create a better future for bilateral relations.

In his written message, Yuryevich Titov said that the youth are the future. In recent years, youth exchanges and cooperation between Russia and China have increased significantly. Events such as China-Russia Youth Friendship Road have laid a solid foundation and provided more opportunities for friendly exchanges and cooperation between the two countries' youth. He hoped that young people of the two countries will carry forward the traditional friendship.

A flag-giving ceremony was also held. Xia Baolong and Andriyan Dorzhiyev waved flags of the 3rd China-Russia Youth Friendship Road and then gave the flags to youth representatives of the two countries, marking the official launch of the event.

Shen Yishu, a student of the School of Russian Studies at Beijing Foreign Studies University, and Petykhin Leonid, head of the Russian youth delegation and assistant to the chairman of the Russia-China Friendship Association, spoke on behalf of Chinese and Russian youth respectively, sharing their understanding and thoughts on



CPAFFC President Yang Wanming attends the activity.

China-Russia relations in the new era, China-Russia friendship from generation to generation and youth exchanges between the two countries.

The International Choir of the China Children's Art Troupe sang beautiful Chinese and Russian songs, creating a warm and friendly atmosphere.

The China-Russia Youth Friendship Road is an institutional youth exchange program initiated and hosted by the CPAFFC. It aims to fully implement the important consensus reached between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin on strengthening friendly exchanges between the youth of both countries,

and has been successfully held on two previous occasions in 2019 and 2020 respectively, involving hundreds of Chinese and Russian youth participants.

This year, the event was scheduled to organize nearly 50 Chinese and Russian youth to visit Beijing, Shenyang and Shanghai, providing them with a platform to experience Chinese modernization, enhance mutual understanding and deepen traditional friendship.

Xinhua News Agency, People's Daily, CCTV, China News Service, Information Telegraphic Agency of Russia-TASS, and other Chinese and Russian mainstream media outlets reported extensively on the event. ■

Bond with Kuliang: 2023 China-US People-to-people Friendship Forum successfully held

Department of American & Oceanian Affairs

On June 28, the “Bond with Kuliang: 2023 China-US People-to-people Friendship Forum”, co-hosted by the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the People’s Government of Fujian Province, was successfully held in Fuzhou, Fujian province.

About 150 participants attended the forum, including diplomats of Chinese and US embassies and consulates, as well as representatives of people-to-people organizations, local governments, enterprises and other social sectors. They recalled the touching story of Comrade Xi Jinping helping elderly Americans realize their Kuliang dreams 31 years ago, and carried out in-depth exchanges on the theme of “Carrying Forward the Torch of Friendship and Creating a Better Future”.

It was the first time that the CPAFFC invited American friends to visit China on a large scale for face-to-face exchanges after the COVID-19 pandemic. The event was highly valued and actively participated in by both the



A sub-forum on sub-national cooperation was held during the activity.

Chinese and American sides.

Chinese President Xi Jinping sent a congratulatory letter to the forum.

Zhou Zuyi, secretary of the CPC Fujian Provincial Committee, read President Xi’s letter and delivered a speech.

Lin Songtian, then-president of the CPAFFC, Lisa K. Heller, consul general of the United States in Guangzhou,

and Elyn Gregg Cheney MacInnis, daughter-in-law of Donald MacInnis, addressed the opening ceremony.

Xie Feng, Chinese ambassador to the US, sent a video message.

Zhao Long, governor of Fujian province, presided over the opening ceremony of the forum.

Lin Baojin, member of the Standing Committee of CPC Fujian

Provincial Committee and secretary of CPC Fuzhou Municipal Committee, Wang Jifu, vice-governor of Fujian province, and Wu Xiande, mayor of Fuzhou city, attended the forum.

More than 20 domestic and foreign media outlets conducted on-site interviews and reported on the forum, sending positive messages in a timely and widespread manner.

In his letter, President Xi said that back in 1992, he invited Mrs. Elizabeth Gardner to Kuliang, helping her fulfill the wish of her late husband to return to his childhood home. In the following 30 years and more, members of the Kuliang Friends and people from various sectors of both countries have delved deep into the history of the town, actively spread its culture, and worked tirelessly to deepen mutual understanding and friendship between the Chinese and American peoples.

“Stories of Kuliang Friends have shown once again that the Chinese and American peoples can transcend differences in system, culture and language, and build profound friendship,” said Xi.

Amity between peoples holds the key to the relationship between countries, and people are the cornerstone for the relationship’s growth, Xi said. “I hope that you will continue to write the Kuliang story and carry forward the special bonds, so that the friendship between our two peoples can stay forever strong and robust like the thousand-year-old cedar trees in Kuliang.”

Zhou Zuyi said that President

Xi’s letter was full of sincere feelings towards friends old and new in the US, placed high hopes on enhancing friendship between the two peoples, and provided important guidance for strengthening exchanges and cooperation between the two countries at the local and people-to-people levels.

Zhou pledged that Fujian will continue to deepen local practical cooperation with the US, tighten people-to-people ties, spread the seeds of friendship, deepen friendship, and jointly pass on and carry forward the Kuliang story and the Kuliang friendship.

Lin Songtian said, “President Xi’s letter makes us feel his profound sentiment for old friends in the US and ardent expectations that the friendship between the two peoples can be further developed. It also shows the great importance President Xi has attached to maintaining and developing China-US relations, his goodwill and sincerity in promoting friendship between the two peoples, and his benevolent feelings for the people and the world.

He said that the letter once again expressed President Xi’s good wishes for the continued friendship of the Chinese and American people, and pointed out the direction for promoting and carrying forward the Kuliang story, sending a positive signal for strengthening the friendship between the two peoples.

Lin said, “We should work together to understand and implement the spirit of President Xi’s letter, carry forward the Kuliang story and Kuliang

friendship, treat each other with sincerity, promote friendly exchanges and mutually beneficial cooperation between the two peoples, and contribute to the peaceful and stable development of China-US relations.”

Xie Feng said that President Xi Jinping is an advocate and facilitator of people-to-people friendship between China and the US. The Kuliang story is a tale of China-US friendship discovered by President Xi himself.

“We are gathered here today to continue writing the Kuliang friendship that has spanned the mountains and seas for a century. We will continue our bond and write a new chapter of friendship between our peoples, pool our strengths to create new opportunities for win-win cooperation, remove obstacles and explore ways for our two countries to get along in the new era,” said Xie.

Lisa K. Heller said the Kuliang story embodies the friendship between the two peoples passed down from generation to generation. The US and China have a long history of cooperation, and should not let some differences affect their long-standing and important relationship.

The steady and sustained development of bilateral relations will help invigorate economic and trade cooperation, promote the sharing of expertise, address the common challenges facing mankind, and benefit the American and Chinese people, Heller said. “Today is the most positive day since I took office more than two years ago. The forum takes the lead in

implementing the important consensus reached by the heads of the two countries.”

Heller suggested that people should cultivate US-China relations with the same care they devote to jasmine flowers, create favorable conditions and provide necessary resources to promote people-to-people and cultural exchanges between the two countries, and ensure the sound and steady development of US-China relations.

President Xi’s letter was warmly received by the American friends attending the forum. Kuliang Friends such as Elyn Gregg Cheney MacInnis, daughter-in-law of Donald MacInnis, and Lee Ray Gardner, descendant of Milton Gardner, shared touching stories of Kuliang and their love for Kuliang, saying that they were very touched and encouraged by President Xi’s letter.

Elyn Gregg Cheney MacInnis said, “The history of Kuliang tells us that people from different countries and cultures, despite their differences, can build friendship and pass it on from generation to generation. The Kuliang spirit stands for friendship, peace, love, understanding and respect. We are all the inheritors of the Kuliang spirit. We must cherish, inherit and carry it forward.”

Luca Berrone, President Xi’s longtime friend from the US state of Iowa, stressed that the importance of people-to-people friendship cannot be overstated. “The spirit of mutual respect, harmonious coexistence and common development contained in the



Kuliang story has given us profound inspiration,” he said. “The friendship between the Kuliang Friends and the people of Fujian is an inspiration to us and sets us an example. We have the responsibility to maintain such a bond and write a new chapter of Kuliang Friends.”

Experts, enterprises and youth representatives attending the forum made speeches. They said the forum gave them a sense of a friendly atmosphere between China and the US that they had not felt for a long time. They expressed their conviction that as long as the two sides actively engage in dialogue and exchanges, respect each other, enhance understanding and cherish friendship, the two peoples will surely be able to transcend their differences, live in peace and develop and move toward the future together.

During the forum, China Foreign Language Administration Interpretation of China Studio, Fujian Radio, Film and Television Group, and the Fuzhou

Municipal People’s Government Information Office jointly held a launch ceremony for the documentary Kuliang Kuliang, friendship-city exchanges and cooperation, enterprise negotiations and other activities, and signed a number of cooperation agreements on friendship cities, economy and trade.

On June 27, Governor Zhao Long, on behalf of the CPC Fujian Provincial Committee and the provincial government, hosted a banquet for the US delegation.

On June 28, Lin Baojin, member of the Standing Committee of the CPC Fujian Provincial Committee and secretary of the CPC Fuzhou Municipal Committee, accompanied the visiting Kuliang Friends to Kuliang and hosted a seminar.

That evening, Lin Baojin and Wu Xiande, mayor of Fuzhou, met and entertained the American guests.

Lin Songtian attended the above activities, discussed and exchanged ideas with the American friends. ■

The Kuliang Friends Seminar held in Kuliang, Fuzhou

Department of American & Oceanian Affairs

On the morning of June 28, the Kuliang Friends Seminar was held in Kuliang, Fuzhou city.

Sixteen Kuliang Friends gathered together to recall the Kuliang story and share profound friendship, including Elyn Gregg Cheney MacInnis, daughter-in-law of Donald MacInnis; Lee Ray Gardner, descendant of Milton Gardner; Liu Zhonghan, writer of the book *Kuliang*; Lin Yinan, associate professor of East China University of Science and Technology; and Guo Gonghong, son of Guo Maolu, who accompanied Mrs. Elizabeth Gardner when she first visited Kuliang, a town known for its hospitality toward foreign visitors.

Lin Songtian, then-president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, attended and made a concluding speech.

Lin Baojin, member of the Standing Committee of the CPC Fujian Provincial Committee and secretary of the CPC Fuzhou Municipal Committee, attended and delivered a welcoming speech.

Chen Yunshui, deputy secretary of the CPC Fuzhou Municipal Committee and president of Fuzhou Municipal People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, presided over the seminar.

Liu Zhonghan introduced the background and process of writing the book *Kuliang*, as well as his experience of accompanying Mrs. Gardner to visit Kuliang in 1992; Lee Ray Gardner recalled his four encounters with the Fuzhou Cedar King; Elyn Gregg Cheney MacInnis retold the stories of the villagers in Kuliang caring foreign children and the Chinese and American people helping each other; Guo Gonghong said he could not sleep at night in anticipation of meeting his American friends, and recalled his father playing football with Mrs. Gardner as a child.

Lin Songtian said the Kuliang story and its special significance in helping forge the Chinese-American bond has left three deep impressions:

First, we are deeply impressed by the brilliant personality of President Xi Jinping and his demeanor as the

people's leader. The Kuliang story is a precious tale of friendship between China and the US. It is because of the concern of President Xi and the enthusiasm of Kuliang Friends that the Kuliang story, in which thousands of Americans shared water from a same well with the people in Kuliang more than 100 years ago and lived together in peace and harmony, could be retold and continued.

Second, the Chinese and American people have every reason to respect each other and live in peace and harmony. Although the two peoples are different in skin color, language, cultural values, religious beliefs and political systems, so long as they respect and help each other, learn from each other and cherish their friendship, the two sides can live in peace and harmony, and can continue to be friendly and build a better future.

Third, telling the Kuliang story well and carrying forward the bond with Kuliang is of great significance to enhancing the friendship between the two peoples and promoting the stability and improvement of China-US

relations. It is hoped that by recalling the Kuliang story and its special bond, we can jointly understand the way that the Chinese and American people can live together in peace and harmony, and jointly materialize President Xi's ardent hope for strengthened China-US friendship and the important consensus reached by the heads of the two countries, so as to make new and greater contributions to a bright prospect of harmonious coexistence and common development between the Chinese and American people.

Lin Baojin said that during his work in Fuzhou from 1990 to 1996

as the city's top leader, President Xi Jinping helped Mrs. Gardner realize her dream and the Kuliang story became a good tale in friendly exchanges between China and the US. At that time, the Chinese and foreign people in Kuliang drank from the same well and lived in harmony. Today, the Kuliang Friends gathered here to reminisce the past and continue their friendship for centuries.

"The Kuliang story," Lin Baojin said, "a seed of friendship sown by President Xi himself, has taken root, sprouted, blossomed and borne fruit under the joint efforts and witness of both the Chinese and American

people. It has built a bridge of China-US friendship across time and space. It is hoped that people can join hands to carry forward the Kuliang bond, continue to write the Kuliang story in the new era, and add positive energy to the development of bilateral relations."

Participants to the seminar thanked the Chinese side for its unremitting efforts to bring the Kuliang Friends together for the first time to renew their friendship, and said that they will continue to explore and carry forward the Kuliang spirit and its special bond, and continue to write good stories of China-US friendship. ■



Group photo of guests attending the Kuliang Friends Seminar.

2023 RCEP Local Governments and Friendship Cities Cooperation Forum successfully held

Department of East Asian Affairs

On June 9, the 2023 RCEP Local Governments and Friendship Cities Cooperation (Huangshan) Forum was held successfully in Huangshan, Anhui province. It was hosted by Anhui provincial people's government and the CPAFFC. About 500 guests attended the forum including Cai Dafeng, vice-chairperson of the Standing Committee of China's 14th National People's Congress and chair of the Central Committee of China Association for Promoting Democracy; Wang Qingxian, deputy secretary-general of the CPC Anhui Provincial Committee and governor of Anhui; Lin Songtian, then-president of the CPAFFC; Wissanu Krea-ngam, deputy prime minister of Thailand (via video); Chanthavong Senarmadoundy, vice-president of Lao Front for National Development; Tin Maung Swe, ambassador of Myanmar to China; and other representatives of embassies



Lin Songtian, then-president of the CPAFFC attends and addresses the forum.

and consulates of RCEP signatory countries in China; Leth Xayyaphone, governor of Attapeu province of Laos and other Representative of local governments and friendship provinces/states of RCEP member countries; representatives of 48 international business and commercial associations

and international organizations; representatives of relevant Chinese provincial and municipal governments, foreign affairs offices and friendship associations; executives and representatives of the world's top 500 enterprises; and representatives of renowned expert think tanks and media

outlets at home and abroad. Sun Yong, vice governor of Anhui province, chaired the opening ceremony.

Cai said that the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) has come to an important stage of full implementation. The opening of the current forum bears great significance, he said, noting that facilitating RCEP procedures is an important move taken by China to further enhance high-level opening-up.

He told the meeting that the Chinese government had taken a series of pragmatic steps to join hands with other parties to improve regional economic integration and had earnestly honored its commitment to opening its market and the obligations laid out in the agreement. It will bring new opportunities to the world through its own development, constantly unleash policy bonuses in the free trade region and promote stable and robust regional economic growth, he said.

“China would like to work together with all other countries under the framework of RCEP to raise the level of the RCEP’s development, continuously deepen regional cooperation in industry and supply chains, try to meet high-standard economic and trade rules, improve regional inter-connectivity, boost common development and prosperity in the region and deliver benefits to people in the region,” he said.

In his speech, Wang noted that

this forum was among the earliest activities after all-round efforts were commenced to implement the RCEP. Anhui provincial government, as one of the initiators of the activity, took this opportunity to express its positive attitude and commitment to China’s policy of all-round opening-up.

The warm response from RCEP signatory countries showed that the trend of economic globalization is irresistible whatever difficulty or obstacle may stand in the way in the volatile world. Collaboration is the key to navigating difficulties of the times, sharing opportunities and enjoying a win-win future. The down-to-earth cooperation among regional local governments serves as an important driving force for the effective implementation of RCEP, Wang went on to say.

He noted, “We hope that the forum can build a better platform and develop a more practical mechanism to facilitate collaboration among local governments and enterprises in the region. That way, we can have normal exchanges and collaboration models.”

Wissanu Krea-ngam stressed that the forum was well timed at the moment of full-force implementation of the RCEP pact. Thailand is devoted to facilitating, opening wider and normalizing investment to boost comprehensive and sustainable regional development, he said.

“Thailand attaches great

importance to comprehensive sub-national cooperation with China and hopes to take this opportunity to strengthen collaboration with China as well as other RCEP member countries in medical and health care, tourism and so on.”

Chanthavong Senarmadoundy said that Laos has taken the advantage of the RCEP and the Belt and Road Initiative to change itself from a land-locked country to a land-linked country with a higher level of opening up. Laos would like to work together with China and other RCEP signatory states to take the opportunity of the full force implementation of the RCEP to deepen cooperation in investment and trade, share experience in development and achieve a win-win future, he said.

Lin noted that the forum gave full play to China’s strong political will to deepen friendly exchanges and mutually beneficial cooperation with relevant countries to achieve win-win cooperation and common development.

He added that despite the apparently chaotic side of the international situation, the trend of the times featuring peace, development, cooperation and win-win results has not changed. Nor has the common wish for peace, development and cooperation among countries or the common aspirations for better lives among people all over the world.

He said the comprehensive coming-into-effect of RCEP as

scheduled is a big victory for multilateralism and free trade. It has conveyed the clear message of the times that countries want to pursue unity instead of separation, dialogue instead of confrontation, and win-win cooperation instead of decoupling.

Lin pledged that the CPAFFC would give full play to its role as a bridge to provide more platforms for RCEP signatory states to strengthen exchanges and cooperation in sub-national, people-to-people and friendship city exchanges. “In this way,” he said, “we can contribute non-governmental wisdom and friendship to safeguarding regional peace, stability, development and prosperity.”

The forum, themed “regional cooperation for a win-win future”, comprised an opening ceremony and keynote speeches, a dialogue on friendship cities among RCEP signatory countries, a symposium on cooperation on business, trade and economic development zones, a symposium on cooperation in the cultural and tourist industry, and a sub-forum on life and health, among others.

Participants spoke highly of the forum saying it had built an important platform for local governments, especially friendship cities of countries under the RCEP framework, to foster exchanges and cooperation. They explored new opportunities of joint

development based on the theme and relevant topics of the forum, reaching consensus and achieving abundant results.

Participants from the industrial and commercial circle issued the 2023 RCEP Huangshan Forum Initiative, signed 13 cooperation documents concerning the establishment of friendship cities and engaging in more cultural and tourist exchanges. For example, Anhui province and Attapeu province of Laos signed an agreement to establish a friendship province relationship and Huangshan and Laoag of the Philippines signed a memorandum on friendly exchanges and cooperation. ■



The opening ceremony of the activity held successfully in Huangshan.

Qingdao hosts SCO Forum on People-to-People Friendship and Forum on Friendship Cities, announces the Qingdao Initiative

Department of European & Asian Affairs

On June 15, the SCO Forum on People-to-People Friendship and the Forum on Friendship Cities, jointly hosted by the Good-Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation Commission of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the People's Government of Shandong Province, was held in Qingdao, Shandong province.

Shen Yueyue, vice-chairperson of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) and chairperson of the Good-Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation Commission of the SCO; Lin Wu, secretary of the CPC Shandong Provincial Committee; Lin Songtian, then-president of the CPAFFC; Edil Baisalov, deputy prime minister of Kyrgyz Republic; Valeri Mitskevich, deputy chairman of the Belarusian House of Representatives; and Nurlan Yermekbayev, deputy



Lin Wu and Lin Songtian speak at the forum.

secretary-general of the SCO, attended and addressed the opening ceremony of the forum.

Ivan Melnikov, first deputy speaker of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation and chairman of the Russia-China Friendship Association, delivered a speech via video.

More than 400 participants, including diplomatic envoys from 17 SCO countries, heads of local governments and friendly organizations, as well as representatives of think tanks, media, enterprises, science and technology, education and youth, attended the forum.

Shen Yueyue said, "The SCO has

always promoted friendly cooperation and paved the way of people-to-people friendship with SCO characteristics, in line with the development needs of all countries. We are committed to implementing the consensus reached by the heads of our countries, strengthening people-to-people friendship, building bridges between the peoples, and contributing to the common development of all countries.”

Shen noted that President Xi Jinping pointed out at the 20th CPC National Congress that building a community with a shared future for humanity is where the future of people of all countries lies.

“We should act as practitioners of the Shanghai Spirit, inheritors of everlasting friendship, promoters of common development and inclusiveness and mutual learning. We should pool the strength of people-to-people friendship, expand international friendship-city cooperation, and contribute wisdom and strength to building an even closer SCO community with a shared future,” said Shen.

Lin Wu said that in recent years, Shandong has carefully implemented the important instructions and requirements of President Xi Jinping, actively served and integrated into the building of the Belt and Road Initiative, and constantly expanded local exchanges and cooperation with the SCO countries and achieved positive results. Guided by the Shanghai Spirit, Shandong will make good use of the forum as a bridge and bond to promote

people-to-people and friendship-city exchanges, deepen local economic and trade cooperation, strengthen cultural exchanges, and strive to achieve more practical results.

Lin Songtian said, “The forum is a concrete action taken by the Chinese side to implement the important proposals of President Xi Jinping at the SCO Samarkand Summit and the important consensus reached by heads of the SCO countries. It fully demonstrates the fine style and unique character of China’s diplomacy of keeping promises and delivering results.”

Lin pledged the CPAFFC will work with all SCO members to carry forward the Shanghai Spirit, expand and consolidate the interests and public opinion foundation of mutual friendship, and make new and greater contributions to the common development of the SCO family.

The foreign guests unanimously acknowledged the significance of the forum. They spoke highly of the contribution made by the SCO since its establishment to enhancing friendship between the peoples and promoting regional peace and development since its establishment, and expressed their willingness to take this forum as an opportunity to further strengthen solidarity and cooperation and deepen people-to-people exchanges and cooperation with friendship cities under the guidance of the SCO Spirit. They expressed their will to translate the important consensus of the heads of SCO countries into practical actions

that benefit the people and jointly promote the building of an even closer SCO community with a shared future.

The theme of the forum was “Carrying Forward the Shanghai Spirit and Promoting Friendly Cooperation.”

Besides the opening ceremony and the main forum, there were three sub-forums, namely Forum on Science and Technology Innovation, Forum on Education and People-to-people Exchanges, and Forum on Poverty Reduction and Development, along with a kickoff of Poverty Alleviation Training Course.

The opening ceremony included the launch of the China (Shandong) - Shanghai Cooperation Organization Countries Friendship Cooperation and Exchange Season and that of the SCO Youth Sports and Culture Festival.

The Good-Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation Commission of the SCO and the CPAFFC signed memorandums of cooperation with friendly organizations of the relevant countries, and Qingdao signed agreements on friendship cities with relevant countries and localities.

Before the opening ceremony, the Chinese and foreign guests visited an exhibition showcasing some of the achievements of people-to-people friendship and friendship-city exchanges among the SCO countries.

At the closing ceremony, representatives of the three sub-forums exchanged their achievements and consensus. Lin Songtian gave a summary, and the forum organizers issued the Qingdao Initiative.

SCO Forum on People-to-People Friendship & Forum on Friendship Cities announce Qingdao Initiative

To implement the important initiative put forward by Chinese President Xi Jinping, on June 15, 2023, the SCO Forum on People-to-People Friendship & the Forum on Friendship Cities, were jointly hosted in Qingdao, China, by the Good Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation Commission of the SCO, the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, and the Shandong Provincial People's Government.

Under the theme of "Carrying Forward the Shanghai Spirit and Promoting Friendly Cooperation" representatives of the SCO member states, observer states and dialogue partners, held in-depth discussions and reached extensive consensuses on such topics as people-to-people friendship, friendship through city-to-city cooperation, scientific and technological innovation, educational exchanges, and poverty relief.

The Forum participants agreed that the SCO countries should always uphold the Shanghai Spirit, advocate dialogue between civilizations, seek common ground while shelving differences, and pursue common

development under the principles of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits. The Forum created a new paradigm featuring mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit among countries regardless of their size, and has provided an engine for driving integrated regional economic development, and built a bridge of friendship, inclusiveness, and mutual learning among diverse cultures.

The Forum attendees believe that people-to-people and city-to-city diplomacy have unique strengths and should play a more significant role in pooling the strength and enhancing the friendship of the peoples of SCO countries, so as to forge deeper people-to-people connections, promote city-to-city collaborations and mutually beneficial cooperation, thus building a closer SCO community with a shared future.

To consolidate the outcomes of the forums, the Forum proposes the following five initiatives:

First, we need to strengthen people-to-people interactions. The Forum supports the organization of future sessions of the Forum on

People-to-People Friendship, the Forum on Traditional Medicine and the Women's Forum. The Forum seeks to use these opportunities to further strengthen exchanges and cooperation with people-to-people friendship organizations in the SCO countries, and to promote the constant development of people-to-people friendship among the SCO countries.

Second, we need to strengthen cooperation among friendship cities. The Forum seeks to promote closer friendly exchanges between local governments and establish more friendship relationships between provinces, states, and cities. The Forum also seeks to continue deepening cooperation between friendship cities in various fields including the economy and trade, science and technology, and culture and youth. The Forum intends to facilitate specific exchanges and communication and sustainable development in friendship city cooperation, to share development achievements, and bring the people in the SCO countries a stronger sense of gain, happiness, and belonging.

Third, we need to strengthen mutually beneficial cooperation.

By leveraging the platform of the China-SCO Local Economic and Trade Cooperation Demonstration Area, the Forum seeks to promote the establishment of a data and information sharing hub that incorporates governments, companies, industrial parks and zones, business associations, and other related organizations, so as to promote coordinated local and private economic development in various countries, and to translate complementary advantages into a synergistic driving force for economic development. The Forum welcomes the aim of the China-SCO Technology Transfer Center to carry out, under a multilateral framework, exchanges between local governments, cooperation between colleges and schools, and mutually beneficial collaboration between companies; to regularly hold scientific and technological innovation activities such as the SCO Member States Youth Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition; and to build the network for scientific and technological innovation collaboration among SCO countries.

Fourth, we need to strengthen people-to-people exchanges. For this purpose, the Forum plans to hold the SCO Children's Art Exhibition, the SCO Teenagers' Summer Camp, and the SCO Teenagers' Sports and Culture Festival. The Forum will continue to carry out the Lifeline Express Journey of Vision, and make full use of mechanisms such as the SCO Hospital Cooperation Alliance



and remote medical platforms, as well as the Medical Cooperation Development Conference, to improve people's health and well-being. The Forum encourages universities, middle and primary schools to establish international friendship relationships and supports universities strengthening joint programs in such fields as math, surveying and mapping, and mining. The Forum supports schools and educational institutions of all types and at all levels to engage in regular exchanges and to jointly build the International Cultural Air Corridor. The Forum intends to enhance mutual understanding and people-to-people connections, and to consolidate the foundation of popular opinions for building a community of a shared future for humanity, by holding such events as the SCO International Marathon, the International Team Chess Tournament, and the Fareast Cup International Regatta.

Fifth, we need to strengthen experience exchanges and

cooperation in poverty alleviation.

The Forum intends to hold poverty alleviation training programs in order to share effective practices in poverty mitigation and elimination and rural revitalization, so as to provide new and constructive frameworks for the poverty alleviation endeavors of SCO countries. Moreover, the Forum intends to assist SCO countries to explore methods and to implement measures for poverty alleviation and rural development and modernization, so as to strengthen their ability to alleviate poverty and to create impetus for sustainable development.

The Forum calls on all parties to carry forward the Shanghai Spirit, deepen friendship and mutual trust between friendship cities, continue to promote mutually beneficial cooperation at the local level, steadfastly enhance the sound and sustainable development of the SCO, jointly build a peaceful, stable, prosperous and beautiful SCO Family, and create a bright future for the Eurasian Continent together. ■

Celebration of the 65th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Cambodia held in Beijing

Department of East Asian Affairs

On July 19, a reception was held in Beijing to celebrate the 65th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Cambodia, co-hosted by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the Embassy of Cambodia in China.

Wu Weihua, vice-chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China, and Khek M. Caimealy, Cambodian ambassador to China, attended the meeting and delivered speeches.

Then-CPAFFC President Lin Songtian presided over the reception.

About 280 participants attended the event, including Gu Xiulian, vice-chair of the Standing Committee of the 10th National People's Congress of China and president of the China-Cambodia Friendship Association;

Sun Weidong, vice-foreign minister of China; Zhang Ming, secretary-general of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization; delegates of relevant Chinese ministries, universities and media outlets, diplomats of the Embassy of Cambodia in China, representatives of Cambodian enterprises and institutions in China, as well as diplomatic envoys from other ASEAN countries.

Wu Weihua said: "Today marks the 65th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Cambodia, which deserves grand celebration. China and Cambodia enjoy geographical proximity, cultural affinity and a close human bond. The traditional friendship between the two countries, jointly created and carefully cultivated by Chairman Mao Zedong, Premier Zhou

Enlai and other leaders of the older generation and Cambodian King Father Norodom Sihanouk, has gone deep into the hearts of the two peoples and has become a precious treasure shared by the two countries and peoples."

Since the beginning of this year, President Xi Jinping has met with Cambodian King Norodom Sihamoni and Prime Minister Hun Sen respectively, Wu said, and the two sides have reached important consensus on jointly building a high-quality, high-level and high-standard China-Cambodia community with a shared future in the new era. The two sides have drawn a blueprint for the development of bilateral relations and charted the way forward.

Under the strategic guidance and personal care of both countries' top leaders, Wu continued, the China-

Cambodia comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership has made continuous headway, which has not only brought tangible benefits to the two countries and peoples, but also made important contributions to regional and world peace, stability, development and prosperity and set a good example for state-to-state relations.

Standing at a new historical starting point, Wu said, the Chinese side is ready to work with the Cambodian side to fully implement the important consensus reached by leaders of both countries, continuously deepen friendly exchanges and practical cooperation in various fields, jointly build a Belt and Road of high quality, and promote

the building of an even closer China-Cambodia community with a shared future.

Khek M. Caimealy spoke highly of Cambodia-China bilateral relations and the Belt and Road Initiative, saying that 65 years ago, Cambodia and China established diplomatic relations. Since then, the two countries have made great progress and achieved fruitful results in politics, the economy, trade, culture and other fields, which have benefited the two countries and peoples. No matter how the world situation changes, Cambodia-China friendly relations are as firm as a rock.

He went on to say that the Cambodian side will work with

the Chinese side to consolidate the “ironclad” traditional friendship, deepen mutually beneficial cooperation in various fields, achieve win-win results, and promote the building of a high-quality, high-level and high-standard Cambodia-China community with a shared future.

At the reception, an unveiling ceremony of commemorative envelopes and stamps marking the 65th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Cambodia was also held. Artists and young students from the two countries gave wonderful performances with unique national characteristics, and the atmosphere was warm and friendly. ■



Celebration of the 65th anniversary of the establishment of China-Cambodia diplomatic relations held in Beijing.

Lin Songtian meets Maldives People's Friendship Delegation

Department of Asian & African Affairs

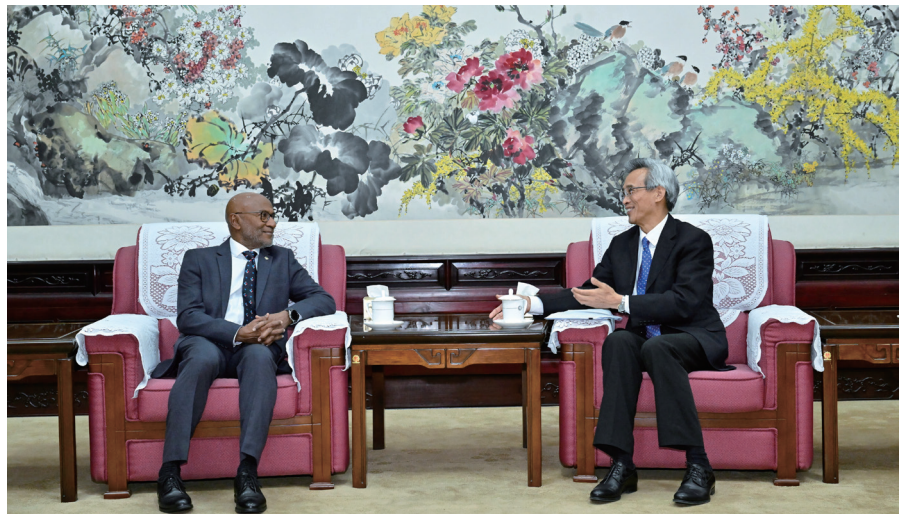
On July 17, Lin Songtian, then-president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, met and hosted a banquet for H.E. Ahmed Latheef, foreign secretary of the government of the Republic of Maldives, and his delegation.

The two sides exchanged views on enhancing people-to-people friendship and promoting cultural exchanges and cooperation between the two countries.

Lin Songtian welcomed Latheef and thanked him for leading a people's friendship delegation to China to commemorate the 50th anniversary of China-Maldives Ping-Pong diplomacy, so as to renew and promote friendship between the two peoples.

Lin said the traditional friendship between China and Maldives has a long history. China attaches great importance to developing friendly cooperative relations with Maldives and actively supports its economic and social development.

Since the establishment of diplomatic ties more than 50 years



Lin Songtian meets with H.E. Ahmed Latheef, foreign secretary of the government of the Republic of Maldives, and his delegation.

ago, Lin continued, the two countries have treated each other with mutual respect, equality, solidarity and mutual assistance. Bilateral friendly relations have yielded fruitful results and benefited the two peoples. It has set a good example of equality and mutual benefit between countries large and small.

Lin said, "Your Excellency and all friends of the delegation are pioneers and practitioners of China-Maldives Ping-Pong diplomacy. You are old friends and good friends of the Chinese people who have been firmly committed to the cause of China-Maldives friendship for a long time with positive contributions to this end."

Lin introduced the important spirit of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, as well as the latest achievements of reform and opening-up and the Belt and Road Initiative. He said China adheres to high-level opening-up and high-quality development. Entering a new stage of development, Chinese modernization will provide new opportunities for the development of the world.

Adding that China cherishes the friendship between the two peoples and values the development of bilateral relations, Lin said the CPAFFC is willing to strengthen communication and coordination with the Maldivian side, deepen people-to-people exchanges and cooperation and promote the future-oriented

comprehensive friendly cooperative partnership between China and Maldives, to bring more tangible benefits to the two peoples.

Ahmed Latheef thanked the Chinese side for its kind invitation and reception and expressed deep appreciation of China's great contribution to Maldives' economic and social development.

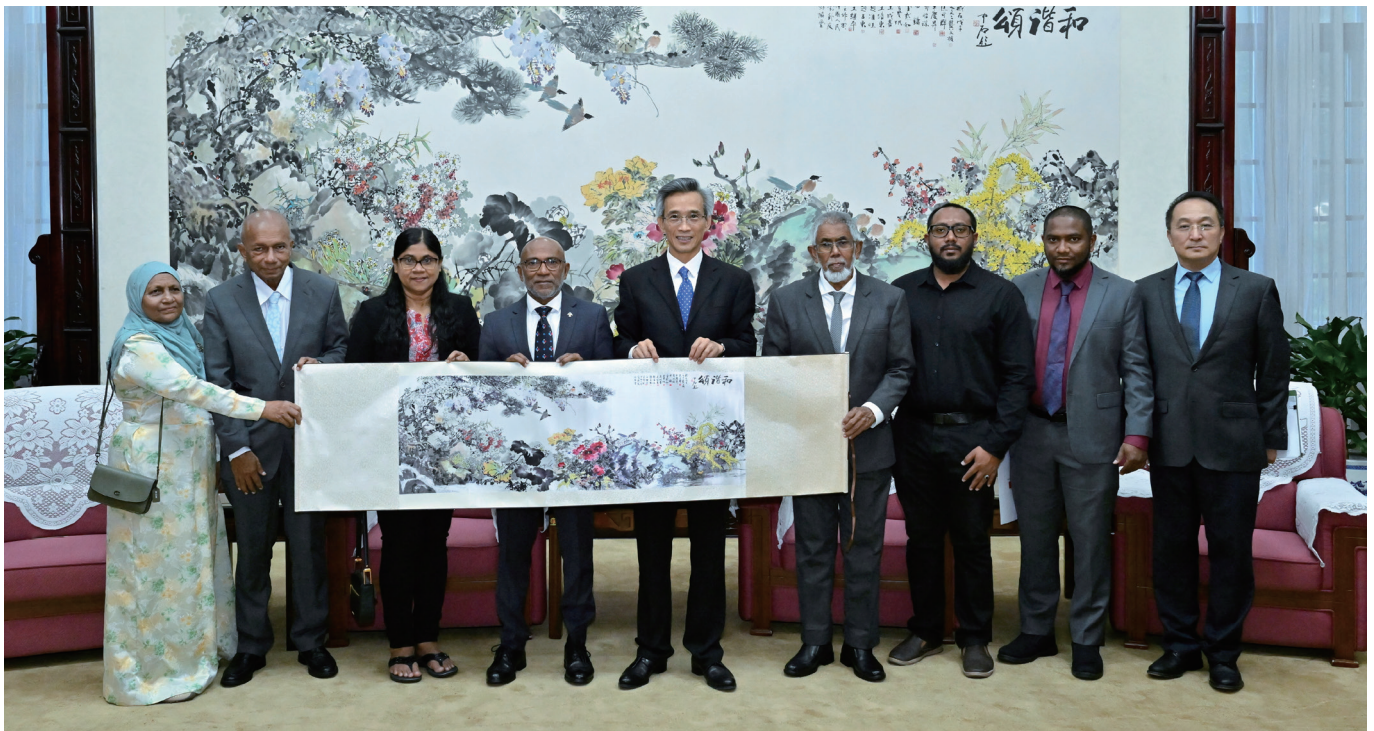
Latheef said that many members of the delegation came to China 50 years ago as members of the Maldivian National Table-tennis Team to attend the first friendly competition between teams from Asia, Africa and Latin America. The purpose of the current visit is to commemorate the 50th anniversary of China-Maldivian Ping-Pong diplomacy, renew friendship, retrace the course of that year and witness China's

development and change.

"I have visited China many times and served as Maldivian ambassador to China. I have witnessed with my own eyes the earth-shaking development and changes in China. What remains unchanged is the sincere friendship of the Chinese people towards the Maldivian people," said Latheef.

Latheef pledged the Maldivian side is willing to work with the Chinese side to promote more exchanges and cooperation and enhance the friendship between the two peoples.

The two sides also exchanged in-depth views and reached positive consensus on strengthening friendly exchanges and mutually beneficial cooperation in culture, sports, youth and friendship cities. ■



Lin Songtian takes a group photo with the Maldives People's Friendship Delegation.

Lin Songtian meets chairman of Japan-China Friendship Center

Department of East Asian Affairs

On July 4, then-CPAFFC President Lin Songtian met with Massashi Ogawa, chairman of the Japan-China Friendship Center, who was on a visit at the invitation of the Chinese side. The two sides engaged in sincere and friendly exchanges on topics of common concern and reached consensuses. The topics included speeding up face-to-face cultural exchanges among the youth of the two countries, promoting people-to-people friendship, and jointly safeguarding peace and development in Northeast Asia. Tian Zhigang, deputy director-general of the department of East Asian affairs, and Huang Xingyuan, Chinese representative of the Japan-China Friendship Center also attended.

Lin welcomed Ogawa's visit to China. He applauded Ogawa and his center for their long-term commitment to promoting bilateral people-to-people friendship. He noted that the Japan-China Friendship Center, as one of the seven Japanese organizations maintaining friendly relations with China, has always maintained good cooperation with the CPAFFC by carrying out people-to-people

exchanges in the fields of education and culture and among the youth.

Lin spoke highly of Ogawa's devotion to the cause of Sino-Japanese friendship as an experienced diplomat and expressed his hope that the CPAFFC and the Japan-China Friendship Center under Ogawa's guidance can strengthen their cooperation and make new contributions to bilateral friendship.

Lin told his guests that China upholds the values of prioritizing peace and being friendly to all. It adheres to a path of peaceful development and focuses on achieving the goal of modern development featuring common prosperity for all.

He noted that China and Japan are close neighbors that are unable to move away from one another. The two countries share common interests as well as the responsibility to safeguard regional peace, stability, development, and prosperity. As two countries in the same Confucian circle, they share the same cultural foundation, face common development opportunities and the only correct choice is for them to live in peace and harmony for common

development.

Ogawa expressed his gratitude for the invitation of the CPAFFC. He reviewed his work experience as a Japanese diplomat to China in the 1980s. He noted that it had been 12 years since he left China and this was his first visit to the country since he became chairman of the Japan-China Friendship Center. The tremendous changes in Beijing gave the delegation a clear sense of the rapid achievements of China's economy and society, he said.

He stressed that this year marks the 40th anniversary of the signing of the China-Japan Treaty of Peace and Friendship. He said he wanted to take this opportunity to push forward more people-to-people friendly exchanges and cooperation so that mutual understanding and friendship among the two peoples, especially the youth, can be enhanced, mutual trust and collaboration can be consolidated, and common development can be realized.

"In this way, we can contribute wisdom and strength to bilateral relationship as needed by the new era," he said. ■

Lin Songtian meets delegation of the 2023 China-Arab Friendship Youth Ambassadors Program

Wang Kai

On July 3, then-CPAFFC President Lin Songtian met with Smail Debeche, president of Algeria-China Friendship Association, and Bushra Mohammed, executive-director of the Arab-Chinese Friendship Societies' League and general coordinator of the program's Arab side, and hosted a reception to welcome their attendance at the 2023 China-Arab Friendship Youth Ambassadors Program.

Milia Jabbour, ambassador of Lebanon to China, and deputy head of the diplomatic corps of Arab countries in China, attended the reception and delivered a speech. Over 100 representatives from home and abroad attended, including Jiang Jiang, vice-president of the CPAFFC, Hussam Al Hussein, ambassador of Jordan to China, Ali Shaglah, chargé d'affaires of the embassy of Yemen to China, as well as diplomats from Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria and all the members of the Arab delegation.

Lin said the program was a pragmatic action taken by the CPAFFC to carry out the eight cooperation initiatives put forward by President Xi Jinping at the first China-Arab States



Lin Songtian (2nd right) has a conversation with the delegation.

Summit. He said he was pleased to see 80 youths from 14 Arab countries come to China to attend the activity at the invitation of the CPAFFC.

He noted that this program was the largest-scale exchange activity among the youth of the two sides since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. It drew great attention from the Chinese side. Lin said he looked forward to friendly exchanges with the Arab

delegation to explore the potential of cooperation and a shared future of friendship.

Lin mentioned that China and Arab states enjoy a long history of friendly exchanges. The two sides are good friends, brothers and partners. The first China-Arab States Summit guided Sino-Arabic relations in the right direction and laid out a blueprint for it. Young people, he said, are not

only the inheritors of the traditional friendship between the two sides but also the driving force for stronger unity, cooperation and common development.

He noted that the CPAFFC stands ready to work together with the Arab side, continue providing more opportunities and platforms for more exchanges among young people so that they can make greater contributions to building better Sino-Arab relations in the future.

He expressed great pleasure at seeing a new outlook of peaceful development as the Middle East peace process has rolled forward with the concerted efforts by China and relevant countries in the region. China has always served as a guardian of world peace and is a main contributor to current global economy. Reality shows

that China's own development boosts world peace.

He said that the Arab countries are important participants, contributors and beneficiaries in the process of promoting a high quality construction of the Belt and Road Initiative. The Chinese side would like to join hands with the Arab side to develop a China-Arab community with a shared future in the new era and bring people a better life featuring peace, harmony, prosperity, and beauty.

Debeche spoke highly of the CPAFFC for organizing this program immediately after the COVID-19 pandemic. He said that this activity, as the third regular activity of exchanges among Sino-Arab youths, provided a good opportunity for young Arab people to learn about China's

development process and experience its changes and achievements.

Debeche thanked China for its constructive role in advancing the Middle East peace process. He appreciated the sense of justice shown by China on the issue of Palestine and regarded China as a reliable brother and partner for Arab states.

Jabbour applauded the program and expressed the hope that the Arab youths who participated in the activity could fully experience the extensive and profound Chinese civilization, learn about China's experience in environmental protection and the achievements it has made in innovative green and low-carbon development, and study the advanced ideas and technology of China so as to apply them to promote the development of their countries. ■



Lin Songtian takes part in a group photo with the delegation of the 2023 China-Arab Friendship Youth Ambassadors Program.

2023 China-South Africa Friendship Night held in Beijing

Jiang Jing

To celebrate the 25th anniversary of the establishment of China-South Africa diplomatic relations and to wish the BRICS Summit in South Africa a success, the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the Embassy of South Africa in China jointly held the 2023 China-South Africa Friendship Night on July 27.

The Elvis Sibeko Dance Group of the Artcape Theatre Center, a visiting art group from South Africa, and the Youth Dance Group of Hebei University of China performed dances with unique ethnic characteristics, and won frequent bursts of applause.

Lin Songtian, then-president of the CPAFFC, and Siyabonga C. Cwele, South African ambassador to China, jointly held a reception and delivered speeches.

More than 130 participants attended the event, including ambassadors from eight African countries, diplomats from 20 African countries, representatives of African youth leaders in China, heads of relevant Chinese institutions, people in charge of friendly links with Africa,

and performers of Chinese and South African art groups.

The Chinese and South African dance groups performed splendid dances with respective ethnic characteristics, including *MANYANO The Spirit of Ubuntu*, Jiaozhou Yangko *A Long River*, the Mongolian dance *Song of Chile* and Dai ethnic dance *Source of Dai*. The two sides then jointly performed the red silk dance rich in Chinese style. Their performances displayed the unique flavors of the two cultures, conveyed the sincere friendship between China and South Africa, mirrored the colorful variety of diverse cultures, and showed Chinese and South African people's common pursuit and yearning for peace, friendship and a better life.

Lin Songtian said in his speech that friendship between nations lies in affinity between their peoples, which in turn lies in mutual understanding. Both China and South Africa have a long history and an open, inclusive and colorful culture.

Lin noted that the Chinese civilization has always advocated the

values of harmony amid diversity and co-existence in peace. The Ubuntu culture observed by South Africa and other African people features a pursuit of harmony, friendship, inclusiveness, solidarity and cooperation for common development. The two cultures, he said, share similar cultural concepts and have natural affinity. "Despite differences in skin color, language, culture and customs, China and Africa have always respected and learned from each other for win-win cooperation and common development."

Lin said he was glad to see that President Xi Jinping's important vision of building a community with a shared future for humanity and a series of other major ideas and initiatives, such as the Belt and Road Initiative, the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative and the Global Civilization Initiative, have been widely acknowledged by South Africa, other African countries and the international community. They have been translated into joint actions and fruitful results by China and other countries to strengthen solidarity and cooperation, seek common development, promote

peace and benefit the people of the world. He said he believed that Chinese modernization drive will bring more opportunities to South Africa and other African countries as well as the rest of the world.

Lin pledged the CPAFFC will work with African friends to uphold the concept of sincerity and affinity and the right approach to justice and shared interests, seize new opportunities of high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, carry forward the traditional friendship between China and South Africa, promote exchanges and mutual learning between the two civilizations, strengthen people-to-people friendship, promote mutual understanding and amity, and make unremitting efforts to build an even closer China-Africa and China-South Africa community with a shared future.

Siyabonga C. Cwele noted that the two countries' heads of state have been guiding and encouraging the two sides to strengthen people-to-people exchanges and cooperation.

"People-to-people friendship in culture, art, education and sports is an effective means of promoting mutual awareness and mutual understanding and friendship. Friendly people-to-people exchanges are a valuable asset for in-depth development of bilateral relations," said Cwele.

Cwele told his host that Chinese culture has become hugely popular in South Africa. He expressed the hope that the values of humanity, solidarity, cooperation and common prosperity espoused by the Ubuntu culture of South Africa will go into the hearts of people around the world and inject new vitality into the building of a community

with a shared future for humanity.

Nomthandazo Mlungwana, head of the Elvis Sibeko Dance Group, introduced the background for the cooperation between the dance troupe and China, saying that the group's visit at the invitation of China had let them fully feel the love, warmth and friendship of the Chinese people.

He said the performance, *MAN-YANO The Spirit of Ubuntu*, incorporates a variety of traditional local dances designed to convey the values of deep awareness and unity, as well as the spirit of harmony and benevolence that South African Ubuntu culture advocates. He expressed hope that by carrying out art exchanges between the two countries, cultural diversity will be promoted, the spirit of Ubuntu will be carried forward and the friendship between the two peoples will be enhanced. ■



Lin Songtian meets friendly delegation from Nagano, Japan

Department of East Asian Affairs

On August 1, then-CPAFFC President Lin Songtian hosted a reception at CPAFFC to welcome the Japanese delegation from Nagano prefecture led by Governor Shuichi Abe. The two sides exchanged ideas in a deep and candid way on a number of issues including people-to-people exchanges and subnational cooperation and reached consensus.

Cheng Yonghua, executive vice-president of the China-Japan Friendship Association; Cheng Haibo, director-general of the CPAFFC's Department of East Asian Affairs; Tian Zhigang, deputy director-general of the CPAFFC's Department of East Asian Affairs; Shoji Sasaki, speaker of the Nagano prefectural assembly; and Shoji Noshibori, vice-president of the Japan-China Friendship Association in Nagano prefecture, were also present on the occasion.

Lin warmly welcomed Abe's visit to China and spoke highly of his long-term devotion and that of the friends in Nagano prefecture to promoting bilateral friendship as well as



Lin Songtian (2nd right) has a conversation with the friendly delegation from Nagano, Japan.

exchanges and cooperation among local governments. He expressed gratitude for the support from Nagano for the Beijing Winter Olympics by giving full play to its advantages in winter sports and sharing relevant experience in hosting winter Olympics with China. He also expressed appreciation for

Nagano's significant contribution to the development of winter sports in China.

Lin noted that China and Japan are close neighbors that cannot move away from each other. In the history of bilateral exchanges that have lasted for more than 2,000 years, the mainstream of the relationship features peace,

friendship, and cooperation despite a miserable and regrettable period. In their long-term exchanges and mutual learning, the two countries have cultivated common values and pursuits which prioritize peace, harmony in diversity, unity against difficulties, and universal concord. This has been conducive to not only their own development, but also the progress of global civilization.

Lin briefed the delegation about China's historic achievements since the the launch of reform and opening-up, especially those over the past 10 years in the new era; the main content of the 20th National Congress of the CPC; the five characteristics of the Chinese pattern of modernization; and the abundant fruits borne by the Belt and Road Initiative.

He noted that China is fully implementing a new development philosophy, speeding up the layout of a new development paradigm featuring domestic and international circulations reinforcing each other, and pursuing a unified national market in a bid to realize high-level opening-up and high-quality development. The new development in China will afford other countries, including Japan, more opportunities and inject new impetus for their development.

This year marks the 45th anniversary of China-Japan Treaty of Peace and Friendship. CPAFFC stands ready to review the essence of the Treaty with people of insights from all walks of life in Japan and carry forward the fine tradition of carrying



out people-to-people diplomacy to push official diplomacy and strengthening economic exchanges to push forward state relations, Lin said.

He called on the two sides to deepen friendly exchanges and mutually-beneficial cooperation in various fields, especially in the field of pragmatic subnational cooperation. "In that way," said the CPAFFC chief, "the two countries can live in peace and harmony and realize win-win results and common development."

Abe expressed gratitude for the arrangement of the meeting and the warm welcome from Lin. It had been four years since he last visited China. He said he felt quite at home during this visit and expressed his sincere congratulations on the extraordinary achievements made by China.

He said he hoped to take this

opportunity to consolidate people-to-people friendship by pushing forward collaboration among friendly cities, youngsters and on winter sports. Nagano prefecture would like to join hands with the CPAFFC to help the two countries live in peace and realize common development by learning from history and facing the future, he said.

Noshibori noted that the Nagano prefectural assembly held high the banner of Sino-Japanese friendship and whole-heartedly sought to advance friendly exchanges and cooperation with China. It is the trend of the times that the East is ascending while the West is descending, he said. He expressed the hope that the two countries would hold on to the common values embedded in Oriental culture and advance peaceful, friendly, and prosperous development of the two countries. ■

Forum aims to promote cooperation among emerging markets and developing countries

Liu Chang

On July 25, the EMDC (emerging markets and developing countries) Development and Cooperation Beijing Forum, jointly organized by Xinhua News Agency, the Beijing Municipal Government and the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, was successfully held.

As a concrete move to implement President Xi Jinping's speech delivered at the opening ceremony of the BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting, the forum aimed to build a top-notch platform for broad and deep cooperation among EMDC countries.

Under the theme of "Promoting Solidarity and Cooperation, Building Momentum for Growth", the forum consisted of an opening ceremony, the main forum, and three sub-forums on the business environment, vocational education and listed companies' cooperation and capital.

More than 300 participants from China, France, South Africa, India, Brazil and Cambodia attended the forum, including local government officials, diplomats, representatives



Lin Songtian attends and delivers a speech.

of enterprises, media, think tanks, and overseas students.

Fu Hua, president of Xinhua News Agency; Yin Yong, mayor of Beijing; and Lin Songtian, then-president of the CPAFFC, attended and delivered speeches.

Paul Zilungisele Tembe, senior researcher at the Department of Linguistics and Modern Languages, Chinese Section, at the University of South Africa; and Atul Dalakoti, executive director of the Federation of

Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, who was also the founder of the BRICS Center for Economic Cultural Research & Services, addressed the main forum.

Fu Hua briefed the meeting about the purpose and expectations of organizing the forum. He said it is a common task for emerging markets and developing countries to find a path of modernization that suits their own realities. The vivid practice of Chinese modernization has, he said, proved

that emerging markets and developing countries are fully capable of exploring a modernization path suited to their national conditions based on their own social systems, resource endowments, history and culture, and jointly drawing a new picture of human society's modernization in full bloom.

"Xinhua News Agency will further strengthen its news reporting, think tank research and information services, and be a recorder, disseminator and promoter of cooperation and progress among emerging markets and developing countries," said Fu.

Yin Yong introduced Beijing's new achievements and new vision, saying that in the process of promoting Chinese modernization, Beijing will pay more attention to innovation cooperation and accelerate the building of an international science and technology innovation center. He pledged that Beijing will focus more on industrial cooperation, and strive to build a modern industrial system, and will expand opening-up and deepen the construction of "two zones", namely the National Comprehensive Demonstration Zone for Expanding the Opening-up of Service Industry and the China (Beijing) Pilot Free Trade Zone.

Yin also said Beijing will optimize services, strive to create a world-class business environment, and work with emerging markets and developing countries to seize the opportunities of a new round of technological and global industrial transformation, and jointly

create a better future.

Lin Songtian noted that the collective rise of emerging markets and developing countries had become an irreversible trend of the times. "Development is the absolute truth, and people's livelihood is the biggest politics."

He said that, "We should not be misled by Western politicians' empty talks about politics. At present, it is more important than ever to strengthen solidarity and cooperation among emerging markets and developing countries to achieve win-win cooperation and common development."

Lin pledged that the CPAFFC will build more platforms for people-to-people and local friendly exchanges and mutually beneficial cooperation between China and emerging markets and developing countries, promote cultural exchanges among the youth, think tanks and media, enhance mutual learning and friendship between peoples, safeguard world peace and promote common development, and contribute people-to-people forces to the building of a community with a shared future for humanity.

Paul Zilungisele Tembe praised the Chinese side for its innovation in organizing the forum. "The forum is of great significance," he said.

"As the largest developing country, China's successful development has set a good example for South Africa and other emerging markets and developing countries, giving us new

hope for development. Emerging markets and developing countries have unique development advantages, broad development opportunities and huge potential. As long as we strengthen solidarity and coordination, we will surely play an increasingly important role in the world landscape."

Atul Dalakoti said emerging markets and developing countries should work together to meet common challenges. "Both India and China are ancient civilizations in the world and have made important historical contributions to the progress of human civilization. Facing new opportunities brought by the new technological revolution, both countries should work together to maintain and promote economic globalization, enhance mutual understanding and friendship between peoples, and promote common development and the building of a fairer and more open world order."

The participants spoke highly of the hosts for organizing the forum. They held that in the face of various risks and challenges, strengthening solidarity and cooperation among emerging markets and developing countries is more important than ever. The forum was held at the right time and was of great significance, they said. They also exchanged views on topics of scientific and technological progress, industrial upgrading, financial innovation, social governance, economic and trade cooperation, and people-to-people exchanges. ■

CPAFFC Vice-President Li Xikui attends 2023 Global Youth Conference

Wu Yuxuan

On July 7, the Global Youth Conference, co-hosted by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, Shandong Provincial People's Government, All-China Youth Federation and China Soong Ching Ling Foundation, opened in Jinan, Shandong province.

Yang Zhen, vice-chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference; Lin Wu, secretary of the CPC Shandong Provincial Committee; Xu Xiao, executive secretary of the Central Secretariat of the Communist Youth League and vice-president of the All-China Youth Federation; Shen Beili, vice-president of the China Soong Ching Ling Foundation; Li Xikui, vice-president of the CPAFFC; Seoule Davidson Simeon, president of the Republic of Vanuatu; Peter Charles Paire O'Neill, former prime minister of Papua New Guinea; and Siyabonga C. Cwele, South African ambassador to China, attended and addressed the opening ceremony.

More than 1,000 participants,



CPAFFC Vice-President Li Xikui speaks at 2023 Global Youth Conference.

including diplomatic envoys from 85 countries and regions, international organizations and chambers of commerce, business leaders, experts, scholars and youth representatives from all walks of life, attended the conference.

Li Xikui said in his speech that the world today is undergoing a period of great development, great change and great adjustment. In the face of global

challenges, no country can stay out of the way and stay alone. All countries need to work together and coordinate their actions in a responsible manner. Since the 18th CPC National Congress, Li said, President Xi Jinping has stood at the height of human history, put forward the Global Development Initiative, Global Security Initiative and Global Civilization Initiative, proposed and promoted the Belt and Road Initia-

tive, and led the building of a community with a shared future for humanity. This has contributed Chinese wisdom and solutions for the building of a better world and created more opportunities for mutually beneficial cooperation among countries around the world.

Li expressed his belief that youth is not only the hope of China, but also the future of the Chinese nation. Young people have great strength to promote innovative development and solve the problems facing the modern world. Under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, the Chinese people are advancing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation through Chinese modernization.

Li pledged that the CPAFFC will work with the youth of all countries to hold high the banner of multilateralism, strengthen cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative, build a bridge of mutual understanding and amity among peoples through cultural exchanges and practical cooperation, and tighten the bond of win-win cooperation and common development between countries, so as to contribute to building an open, inclusive, clean and beautiful world of lasting peace, universal security and common prosperity.

At the opening ceremony, 10 international youth exchange projects, including the Jinan Declaration of the 2023 Global Youth Conference and the

Shanghai Cooperation Organization Youth Development Forum, were announced. Two international organizations, the Global Youth Conference and the World Young Entrepreneurs Innovation and Entrepreneurship Alliance, were launched. The conference also held the main session of the Huanghewan Global Youth Economic Forum, as well as sub-forums of the Shandong Dialogue Global Generation Z Sharing and Exchange Meeting and the Global Youth Innovation and Entrepreneurship Forum, and organized a number of supporting activities, such as the World Youth Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition, International Youth Gala and theme visits of cities, among others. ■



Group photo of Chinese and foreign guests in 2023 Global Youth Conference.

The Third China-Africa Future Leaders' Dialogue a success

Department of Asian & African Affairs

On July 14, the third China-Africa Future Leaders' Dialogue hosted by the CPAFFC was held successfully in Beijing. The dialogue was themed "China-Africa Youth: Working Together for High Quality Belt and Road Cooperation Between China and Africa". Jiang Jiang, vice-president of the CPAFFC, and Didier Dacko, Mali ambassador to China, attended the meeting and delivered speeches. About 100 people were present, including representatives of council members of the China-Africa People's Friendship Association and youths from all walks of life of the two sides.

Jiang spoke highly of Sino-African relations and said that the Belt and Road Initiative, which well meets the needs of African countries for further development, received great popularity among African countries. Abundant fruits have been harvested thanks to the concerted efforts the Chinese and African sides have made in implementing the Belt and Road Initiative. With deepened



CPAFFC Vice-President Jiang Jiang attends and delivers a speech.

cooperation in the development of infrastructure, the independent and sustainable development of African countries has been greatly boosted; with active economic and trade cooperation, the integration of African countries into global market has been facilitated; and with colorful people-to-people and cultural exchanges, the mutual fondness among people of the two sides has been

increased.

He expressed hope for more bilateral exchanges and mutual learning among young people so that they could carry forward the traditional friendship, participate in bilateral cooperation, contribute their wisdom and power to high-level cooperation in developing the Belt and Road Initiative in a bid to build a more beautiful future of Sino-

African relations.

Dacko noted that the relationship between African countries and China has always featured mutual respect and trust in the process of joint development. Nowadays, the volatile international situation is compounded by an increasing number of challenges including the sluggish global economic recovery and climate change, among others. Adhering to high-quality Belt and Road cooperation matters a lot for the two sides, he said, adding that he looked forward to consolidated col-

laboration among the young people and concerted efforts in bringing more benefits to the people.

Young participants from the two sides shared their thoughts and suggestions based on their study and work experience centering on three themes, namely the belt of development for shared opportunities, the road to happiness through improved livelihoods, and bridge of hearts that brings people together. They reached a consensus that the Belt and Road Initiative has brought infinite opportunities and

bright prospects for bilateral cooperation and has built a broad platform for them to exercise their talents and realize their dreams.

The China-Africa Future Leaders' Dialogue is a regular activity launched by the CPAFFC in 2021 under the framework of China-Africa Cooperation Forum. It is aimed at creating new opportunities for Chinese and African young people to deepen dialogues, work together, exchange ideas, and cooperate for a better future. ■



Chinese and Foreign guests in a group photo taken at the Third China-Africa Future Leaders' Dialogue.

CPAFFC Vice-President Yuan Mindao attends forum for trilateral cooperation

Wang Lei

On July 3, the 2023 International Forum for Trilateral Cooperation was held in Qingdao, Shandong province. About 350 representatives from all walks of life in China, Japan and the Republic of Korea attended, including Foreign Minister Wang Yi, member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and director of the Office of Central Foreign Affairs Commission of the CPC Central Committee; Lu Zhiyuan, deputy secretary-general of Shandong provincial committee of the CPC and secretary of the Qingdao municipal CPC committee; Ou Boqian, secretary-general of the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat; Wu Hailong, president of China Public Diplomacy Association; Kang Chang Hee, former parliament speaker of the Republic of Korea; Seiichi Kondo (online), former commissioner of the Agency for

Cultural Affairs of the Government of Japan.

Park Jin, minister of foreign affairs of the ROK, and Yoshimasa Hayashi, minister of foreign affairs of Japan, delivered video speeches. Vice-president of the CPAFFC Yuan Mindao attended and gave a speech themed “mutual perception improvement: through the lens of local community exchanges”.

Yuan said that China has established 2,900 pairs of friendship cities with 143 countries since the inception of international friendship city relations between China and the rest of the world in 1973. Exchanges between friendship cities and between other subnational regions are important channels to implement state-to-state relations and benefit the people. Over the years, the friendship cities among the three countries have carried out

colorful exchanges and collaborations based on their own characteristics, which has increased mutual understanding and fondness among the three peoples, facilitated economic and social development, and safeguarded the peace and stability of East Asia.

Meanwhile, he expressed regret for the fact that the people-to-people exchanges among the three countries haven’t fully recovered to the level they were before the COVID-19 pandemic due to multiple factors including the pandemic and geopolitical reasons. The mutual fondness among people of the three countries is still lingering at a low level. Without mutual trust and affinity among the people, the relations between the countries will not go far and will not be stable.

Yuan said that looking to the future, the three countries should try to cultivate mutual recognition featuring

fondness and kindness. He has the following three expectations:

First, he expects that people of insights at the grassroots level and from all walks of life in the international friendship cities of the three countries will advocate the importance of trilateral peace, friendship, and cooperation based on their own stories of friendship, cooperation and common development. “We should resume all-round friendly exchanges in the post-pandemic era,” he said.

Second, he expects the local governments especially the governments of the friendship cities of the three countries to extensively mobilize friendly people and organizations in the post-pandemic era. In this way, he said, they could carry out more accessible and popular cultural and people-to-people exchanges, especially those aimed at the youth who shoulder the future of trilateral friendship. “We should deepen cooperation to achieve higher-level mutual benefits and win-win results.”

Third, he expects that the three countries will get rid of obstacles, exercise their own advantages, unlock new potential for cooperation so that they can keep their mutually beneficial cooperation updated and upgraded. There is broad room and realistic need for closer cooperation among the three countries in the fields of digital economy, smart cities, innovation of science and technology, green and low-carbon development, and healthcare for the elderly, among others. ■



CPAFFC Vice-President Yuan Mindao attended and addressed forum for trilateral cooperation.

China-Russia Media Dialogue held in Beijing

Wen Guangmei

On July 31, the China-Russia Media Dialogue and a media briefing for the 3rd China-Russia Youth Friendship Road was held in Beijing. It was hosted by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries.

Yan Dong, vice-president of the CPAFFC, Li Xiaohong, member of the International Department of the People's Daily, Maxim Chernyshev, cultural counselor of the Russian Embassy in China, Igor Chernyak, first deputy editor of Rossiya Daily, as well as representatives of more than 20 mainstream media outlets from China and Russia attended the event.

Yan Dong said in his speech that media exchanges are an important part of China-Russia strategic and cultural cooperation.

In recent years, Yan said, under the strategic guidance of the heads of the two countries, mainstream media of China and Russia have played an important role in enhancing mutual understanding between the two peoples and narrowing the distance



CPAFFC Vice-President Yan Dong attends and delivers a speech.

between their hearts, making positive contributions to the building of a community with a shared future for humanity.

Yan pledged the CPAFFC will continue to play the leading role of people-to-people diplomacy and the backbone role of public diplomacy, and actively facilitate exchange channels

and build dialogue platforms for Chinese and Russian media.

Maxim Chernyshev said Russia-China media cooperation has been constantly reaching new heights and has great potential for development. The media of the two countries should continue to enhance the sharing of information, improve the timeliness,

objectivity and authenticity of their news reports, and strengthen cooperation within the framework of global and regional information alliances.

Mainstream media representatives of the two countries recounted their personal stories of China-Russia friendship based on their actual work, analyzed and looked forward to the development of bilateral relations in the new era from the perspective of media professionals, and thoroughly

summarized the positive outcomes achieved since the launch of the Belt and Road Initiative 10 years ago. The atmosphere of the dialogue was relaxed, friendly and warm.

In addition, a media briefing was also held to introduce the 3rd China-Russia Youth Friendship Road. The activity hosted by the CPAFFC was scheduled to be carried out in late August. It aims to implement the important consensus reached between Chinese President Xi Jinping and

Russian President Vladimir Putin on strengthening friendly exchanges between the young people of both countries, and has been successfully held on two previous occasions, in 2019 and 2020.

The 3rd China-Russia Youth Friendship Road will invite youth representatives from all walks of life in China and Russia to visit Beijing, Shenyang and Shanghai to deepen the concept of friendship and carry forward the China-Russia friendship. ■



Review of the 35-year friendship between Liuzhou and Cincinnati

Deng Zhiyong

The Ohio River runs through the city Cincinnati in the USA. On the other side of the Pacific Ocean, the jade-clear Liujiang River flows through Liuzhou, Guangxi. These two cities, born and thriving from water, embarked on a journey of friendship 35 years ago and that current continues to grow stronger.

The cultural garden represents our evergreen friendship

Liuzhou has maintained friendly interactions with Cincinnati since 1988. Over the years, the two sides have carried out extensive exchanges and cooperation in the fields of intergovernmental mutual visits, education, culture, tourism, the economy and trade, health care and the arts.

In 2008, the city of Cincinnati raised \$100,000 from the private sector, and Liuzhou invested matching funds. Architects from both countries collaborated to build the Cin-Liu Friendship Garden in Longtan Park of Liuzhou City, commemorating the 20th anniversary of the establishment



A member of the TE13 is introducing the Chinese new year to American students.

of sister city relations between Liuzhou and Cincinnati. With the design concept of “friendship can shorten the longest distance”, a scaled down replica of the iconic bridge of Cincinnati was built in the garden. The bridge closely connects the garden landscapes that are rich in the regional cultural characteristics of the two cities, showcasing Cincinnati’s Queen’s Square and Landscape

Pavilion and Liuzhou’s Dragon Square and the wonder rockery of Liuzhou. In November of the same year, the mayor of Cincinnati led a delegation of over 50 China-friendly people to attend the opening ceremony of the Friendship Garden. The mayors of the two cities jointly planted an osmanthus tree in the garden, symbolizing the long-standing friendship between Liuzhou and

Cincinnati, which remains evergreen throughout the years.

One bridge connects two gardens; one tree forges friendships, allowing Eastern and Western cultures converge here. "Which plants to be cultivated in the garden was confirmed through discussions with Cincinnati via email, and all the artworks were shipped from the United States," said Chen Yu, director of the Longtan Garden Management Office.

Professor He Zhenhai of Guangxi Arts University, the main designer of the Friendship Garden, recalled the creation of the relief patterns on the bridge, saying that both sides created cultural landscapes representative of their own cities while exchanging ideas to highlight each other's cultural characteristics.

The Friendship Garden has witnessed many important historical moments in the 35-year friendship between the two cities. Friends from many countries and regions have come all the way to visit the garden. Blue jacaranda and Liriodendron chinense grow vigorously, while the Queen's Square and the Dragon Square face each other on the eastern and western ends of the bridge. The osmanthus sapling planted by the two city mayors is now a towering tree, telling a touching story of the connection between China and other countries. Exchange and mutual learning have made the tree of friendship continue to flourish, and the friendship of mutual understanding under the tree is continuing. From a tree to two cities,

the seeds of friendship sown back then have taken root, sprouted, blossomed, and borne fruit in the hearts of the people of both cities.

Education helps promote friendly exchanges and integration

In 1994, the two cities launched a teacher exchange program (TE program). Every two years, a group of 8 to 10 people from Liuzhou whose work involves English visit Cincinnati for a five-month home-stay training, including English grammar, pronunciation, writing, speech, vocabulary, reading, American slang, and English teaching skills. So far 93 middle school teachers, English docents from parks and museums and other English workers in Liuzhou City have been trained in 14 batches.

Most of the American teachers are retired and are lovers of Chinese culture. Many have come to Liuzhou multiple times for exchanges and are familiar with both cultures. Joseph Hamrick, the teacher of vocabulary, has been awarded the title of "Honorary Citizen of Liuzhou City". He has been volunteering for the project for a long time, and treats every guest with sincere consideration.

"I still feel it unbelievable that I could experience a completely different life on the other side of the ocean." In 2017, Zhao Mingcui, a high school teacher of TE 14, wrote down her feelings in her study report. "The exchange in Cincinnati has enriched my life experience. What I have gained

is not only improvement in my English proficiency, but also an understanding of advanced education concepts". Zhao Mingcui said that she was deeply touched by Americans' love for public welfare, and she also wanted to benefit more students through public welfare classes.

Six years later, in Liuzhou, Zhao put into practice what she had gained from the TE training, conducting free parent education courses at the school where she worked, and mobilizing a team of teachers to provide one-to-one counseling services for parents. Her family education course, "Break Through the Threshold to Force Growth" won an award in the 2022 Liuzhou Teacher Training Outstanding Typical Case Selection.

Qin Yaoyao, a primary school teacher from TE 14, said that the homestay visit was an enjoyable experience. She stayed with Michael, a retired teacher, during the Chinese New Year, so he took her to a Chinese restaurant for dinner. Michael took her to buy Luosifen, so that she could taste the delicious food of her hometown in a foreign country. She also cooked many Chinese dishes for Michael's family and got along very well with them.

In the close interaction between educators in Cincinnati and Liuzhou, the TE members were attracted by the cultural atmosphere of Cincinnati and moved by the enthusiasm and friendliness of their American teachers. Many heartwarming and friendly stories kept emerging that resonated with each other, creating a

touching symphony movement.

Looking forward to a steady and promising future

Over the past 35 years, the two cities have continued to deepen exchanges in the fields of culture, education, health care and catering, and have organized many delegations of citizens for exchange visits. In 2018, the two cities signed the Memorandum of Understanding between Liuzhou People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and Cincinnati-Liuzhou Sister City Committee (2018-2023) to further strengthen friendly exchanges between the people of the two cities and promote people-to-people bonds.

"The art exchange has brought the two peoples closer to each other."

He Zhenhai was still deeply impressed by his study in Cincinnati. In 2019, seven artists from Liuzhou went to Cincinnati for an on-site sketching and painting exchange, and He Zhenhai was one of them. The artists of the two countries enhanced their understanding of each other's cultures through activities such as holding a joint exhibition and making impromptu creations. The artists spread sister-city friendship through their excellent paintings.

Liuzhou has also invited teenagers from Cincinnati to participate in the International Sister City Painting Exhibition held in Liuzhou. Teenagers from the two cities depicted the vivid scenes of China-US friendship in the paintings, and the friendship has taken roots in the hearts of a new generation.

"A friend in need is a friend

indeed." In 2008, Sichuan province was hit by a devastating earthquake; in 2009, Liuzhou was hit by floods. In response, the Cincinnati-Liuzhou Sister City Committee and other friendship organizations launched a fundraising campaign for Liuzhou. Additionally, the Cincinnati-Liuzhou Sister City Committee donated \$10,000 as well as computers and books to Liuzhou Zhiliu Special Education School.

This year marks the 35th anniversary of the two cities' establishment of their sister city relationship. In order to celebrate this "coral anniversary", the two cities are actively preparing a series of commemorative activities, hoping to continue to learn the wisdom of equality and friendship from the two cities' mother rivers, and make their friendship last forever. ■



The scaled down iconic bridge of Cincinnati was built in the Cin-Liu Friendship Garden in Liuzhou.

Remembering Prof. Gerd Kaminski

He Yan

“Here comes a young girl!” said Mr. and Mrs. Kaminski, pleasantly surprised when they first saw me.

Prof. Gerd Kaminski has been called “Lao Ka” by his Chinese friends. He was executive vice-president of the Austria-China Friendship Association (ACFA) and one of the founders of the ACFA.

It was 28 years ago. Lao Ka accompanied Austrian President Thomas Klestil to China in late September 1995.

On September 19, a launch ceremony for *The Biography of Jacob Rosenfeld* (Chinese version) was held in the auditorium of the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries. The book’s German version was called *General Rosenfeld with the Big Nose*. I was then covering the event as a reporter just

graduated from school.

It was a grand ceremony, attended by more than 100 people from Austria and China who worked for friendship between the two countries. The Austrian defense minister and the director general of the Department of Asian Affairs of the Austrian Foreign Ministry, who accompanied President Thomas Klestil to China, were also invited.

The launch of *The Biography of Jacob Rosenfeld* was part of the activities arranged for Austrian President’s visit to China. Lao Ka was the author of the book, and the Chinese readers were lining up for autographs that day. When it was my turn, I asked for a separate interview as he signed the autograph. Lao Ka kindly said, “The interview could only be arranged through the CPAFFC.” I took the

signed book and thanked him.

Soon, I got in touch with Shi Qiaoying, a member of staff in CPAFFC’s Department of European & Asian Affairs.

Two days later, accompanied by Shi Qiaoying, I went to a guest room of the Grand Hotel Beijing to interview Lao Ka.

Mrs. Hongbin Kaminski opened the door and greeted us. She was a native of Shandong province, a slender figure in a short black miniskirt with short, playful hair. Her image was quite a contrast with Lao Ka’s slightly fat body and composed scholarly demeanor. She shook hands with me and ushered us in.

Lao Ka greeted me like an old acquaintance. He invited me to sit on the sofa, sat himself on the bed, and talked excitedly.

He told me that the Austrian doctor Jacob Rosenfeld was an anti-fascist fighter, who in 1939 fled to Shanghai to escape Nazi persecution. From 1941 to 1949, he participated in the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression and the War of Liberation, successively serving in the military headquarters of the New Fourth Army, the Shandong Military Region of the Eighth Route Army and the Northeast People's Field Army, and held important positions in the health department.

During his nine years in China, Rosenfeld saved the lives of a large number of Chinese soldiers and civilians with his superb medical skills, and fostered a deep friendship with the older generation of revolutionaries such as Liu Shaoqi, Chen Yi and Luo Ronghuan – all important leaders of the Communist Party of China and its armed forces. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, Rosenfeld left China and returned home. He died in 1952 in Tel Aviv, Israel.

To commemorate this important figure in the history of Austria-China friendship, the ACFA carried out multiple surveys and studies.

In 1992, in order to write *The Biography of Jacob Rosenfeld*, Lao Ka made a special trip to Junan county, Shandong province, to interview local people, including Zhang Yueqin, an



Prof. Gerd Kaminski and Han Xu, the then-president of the CPAFFC, attended an activity in memory of the Austrian doctor, Jacob Rosenfeld.

abandoned child saved by Rosenfeld. Zhang Yueqin told his Austrian friend: “Without Dr. Rosenfeld, there would be no me, nor my family.”

The Biography of Jacob Rosenfeld was written in German. After its publication in Austria, in 1993, Lao Ka commissioned Professor Du Wentang of the Institute of World History of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences to translate the book into Chinese and publish it on the 50th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression

and the World Anti-Fascist War.

At that time, the level of Lao Ka's Chinese was described by his old friend Prof. Du Wentang as “jumbling words”, and although his words were not coherent, they did not affect others' understanding of his meaning.

“The year 1996 marks the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Austro-Hungarian diplomatic mission in China and the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the ACFA. Austria and China have a lot of friendship deeds to publicize.” said Lao Ka, “In early

April next year, we will hold the Jacob Rosenfeld Exhibition at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, and the Austrian Minister of Scientific Research will attend the opening ceremony. We also plan to move the exhibition to Beijing, Nanjing and other places.”

From Lao Ka's talk, I learned about another important figure in the history of Austria-China friendship. Lao Ka said the ACFA made a film about the deeds of Arthur Elder von Rosthorn. Rosthorn was the Austro-Hungarian Minister to the Qing Empire. He loved China and understood the feelings of the Chinese people. When the Boxers (Yihetuan) were suppressed by Western powers and the Qing government, Rosthorn said, “If I were Chinese, I would be a boxer too.” “That's a great attitude,” said Lao Ka. He was full of admiration for Rosthorn and wrote a book about him, *If I Were Chinese, I Would Be a Boxer Too*, which was published in Chinese in 1991.

Lao Ka was born on December 14, 1942, into a middle-class family in Vienna. He was the only child of a mechanical engineer and a hospital nurse. In high school, he became interested in China and read a lot of books about the country. Encouraged by his English teacher, he established correspondence with a female student in Hong Kong, who was one of his first Chinese contacts.



A greeting card sent by the Karminski family.

After graduating from high school, Lao Ka entered the Law Department of the University of Vienna, specializing in international law. His mentor, Prof. Stephan Vrosta, was a leading authority on European international law. Prof. Xu Zhixiu was his first teacher of Chinese. She graduated from the Chinese Department of Ginling College, later

married an Austrian engineer, teaching Chinese at the University of Vienna. Lao Ka came to her place every week for one to two hours of Chinese lessons.

In 1965, Lao Ka was appointed an assistant at the Institute of International Law of the University of Vienna. At that time, he had a keen interest in

China and Southeast Asian studies.

In the early 1970s, as an expert in international law at the University of Vienna, he wrote a letter to the Austrian National Assembly, explaining the necessity and importance of establishing diplomatic relations with China from the perspective of international law, which won the attention of the Parliament.

On May 28, 1971, Austria and China officially established diplomatic relations.

At that time, many Austrians did not know much about distant China. All they knew was: “Chinese is difficult, Chinese people’s skin is yellow, and rice is grown there.”

Lao Ka was also worried to see that some radical factions were doing things to damage Austria-China relations and China’s reputation. He believed that friendly and cultural relations with China should be developed on the basis of the trust of the Austrian people.

Under his initiative, the Austrian Chinese Studies Institute was established (the predecessor of the Austria-China Friendship Association, which was renamed the Austrian Association for the Promotion of Friendship and Cultural Relations with China in 1973).

Lao Ka said, “The ACFA, like a man, needs strength to walk well.

It now has thousands of members, and the board of directors includes political and public figures. We work very well with the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where I am a senior adviser on China affairs and director of the Austrian Institute for China and Southeast Asian Studies.”

Since its founding, the Austrian Chinese Studies Institute faced financial difficulties. At first, its activities were funded by private donations, and Lao Ka donated his meagre salary several times. Despite the financial strains, its staff worked wholeheartedly with the spirit of self-reliance. The institute had no fixed venue, and it was sometimes here and sometimes there that they borrowed space for its activities.

Later, with the support of Dr. Bruno Buchwieser, president of the Austrian Young Workers’ Movement, they got a place for an office and the bimonthly China Report was launched, thus expanding its influence to foreign countries.

In the autumn of 1977, they moved to Wickenburggasse Street, where they had their own premises. In order to settle down as quickly as possible, the staff used their evenings and weekends to repair and paint the house themselves, working hard for several weeks.

The institute also faced political pressure. Those who were pro-

Kuomintang saw Lao Ka as a thorn in their side and constantly attacked him. Some said he went to the Chinese embassy just to taste Chinese cuisine and was an eating animal; some even threatened to cut off his livelihood if he continued to engage in Austria-China friendly activities. Faced with these difficulties, Lao Ka did not give in. He was determined to tear down the wall of ignorance about China and build a bridge of contact between the Austrian and Chinese people.

Since its establishment, the ACFA has been committed to introducing China to the Austrian people and making the two peoples understand each other through cultural exchanges. The relationship between the ACFA and the CPAFFC has been very close, and the two sides continue to send delegations on exchange visits.

In early 1995, under the promotion of Lao Ka, Austrian TV and Zhejiang TV cooperated in the production of a feature film *Marry China*. The film tells the story of a 19-year-old Viennese girl Gertrude Wagner, who fell in love with and married Du Chengrong, a Chinese youth during the 1930s. Du was sent by the Chinese government to study in Austria. Having experienced war, turmoil and migration, Wagner finally followed her lover to the rural Dongyang village, Zhejiang province, and lived there for most of her life.

After 56 years, through the efforts of Lao Ka, the Austrian woman returned to her hometown, met her relatives, and realized her wish for many years.

In September that year, on the first day of Austrian President Thomas Klestil's visit to China, China Central Television aired this special film, which caused a huge sensation.

Besides the exchange of visits between the two peoples, the ACFA has also carried out other activities, such as organizing China Day activities and painting competitions, holding Chinese language teaching, introducing Chinese calligraphy and painting, tai chi and so on, to enhance Austrians' understanding of China.

Lao Ka loved collecting Chinese art works. Entering his Vienna home is like entering a Chinese art palace. There are Rongbaozhai calligraphy and painting pieces and antique red wood cabinets. On a decorative shelf, there are bronze mirrors from the Warring States Period, celadon ware of the Song Dynasty, and snuff bottles of the Qing Dynasty. Hanging on the wall is a single copy of a couplet written by Lin Zexu, the late Qing dynasty official who was known for his daring fight against the Britain-smuggled opium. Even above the door frame is inlaid with carved wood window mullions typical of Dongyang, Zhejiang.

In 1991, Lao Ka married Hongbin

Kaminski. At the age of 52, Lao Ka had a son. "Having children is a good thing. Because no family is complete without children. My in-laws are also very happy that they can finally have their grandchild." Lao Ka took out a picture of his son and said happily, "My son is six-months old."

In the picture, a little boy with black hair, black eyes and white skin is smiling mischievously. "He is so cute!" I blurted out. Lao Ka gave me this picture and I have kept it to this day as a treasure.

"Lao Ka, when your child grows up, do you want him to work for Austria-China friendship?" I asked.

"I hope he grows up and does what he wants to do!" Lao Ka said with a happy smile.

Lao Ka has made many Chinese friends. "Europeans are used to comparing the Germans to the Japanese," he said, "I think the Chinese and Austrians have something in common. For example, the Chinese are as attentive to etiquette as the Austrians. The Austrians are gentle, and the Chinese are mild. When you make friends with the Chinese and do something nice for them, they won't forget it. Although Dr. Rosenfeld has passed away, the people of Junan, Shandong province still remember him. They erected a white marble statue of him and renamed the Junan County

Hospital the Rosenfeld Hospital. I admire this character of Chinese people very much. Last year, Shandong province awarded me the title of honorary citizen."

During the Austro-Hungarian Empire, there was a man named Josef Ressel who invented the engine for ships. Christian Broda, Austrian Minister of Justice, once called Lao Ka 'Josef Ressel', comparing him to an engine propelling the development of Austria-China friendship.

Lao Ka talked about his feelings of engaging in the friendship work: "A wise man works for a cause. If you work hard, you will be rewarded. The best reward for work is its results. I have been engaged in Austria-China friendship for many years, and the best reward for me is my wife, dear Hongbin."

His wife couldn't help cutting in: "He is just good at talking sweet."

In the midst of our laughter, Lao Ka added: "In the last four years, my work has been very smooth, and life is so happy. I have a Chinese wife and now a child, and I will never forget my relationship with China."

When my interview with Lao Ka was published, it got a good response.

The Austrian Embassy in China faxed my article to Prof. Du Wentang.

Not long after, Mr. And Mrs. Kaminski asked Shi Qiaoying to bring

me a gift. In the office of the CPAFFC, when I opened the small dark green box, I saw a 14K chicken heart-shaped pendant set off on dark green velvet, and a rhine-diamond was inlaid at the center. You can imagine a young girl's happy mood when receiving such a precious gift.

I immediately wrote to Mr. And Mrs. Kaminski to express my thanks. The following spring, during their visit to China, the couple invited me to have breakfast with them at the Grand Hotel Beijing and presented me with a CD of Viennese music.

Seven years later, in 2003, the outbreak of the SARS epidemic caused panic among the people. When many foreign delegations canceled their visit to China, Anna Haselbach, executive vice-president of the Austrian Federal Parliament, led a delegation to China as scheduled to attend the 100th anniversary of Rosenfeld's birth. Mr. and Mrs. Kaminski were also members of the delegation.

On the morning of April 12, the opening ceremony of the exhibition on Rosenfeld's life was held at the National Museum of China. The launch ceremony for Lao Ka's new book *The Diary of Rosenfeld in China* was also held.

Wang Zhaoguo, the then vice chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of

China, Anna Haselbach, executive vice-president of the Austrian Federal Parliament, and Chen Haosu, then president of the CPAFFC, cut the ribbon at the opening ceremony.

After his death, Rosenfeld's manuscript was lost for half a century.

In 2000, Rosenfeld's niece Ann Margret Freja, when sorting through his belongings, accidentally found his notes about his medical practices in China and revolutionary activities, including letters, abstracts and notes, and gave them to Lao Ka to organize into a book, the German version of which was titled *They, I Know Them All*, published in Austria in 2002. It was Lao Ka's another masterpiece after *The Biography of Jacob Rosenfeld*. Under the promotion of the CPAFFC, the book was translated into Chinese by Prof. Du Wentang and published by China Social Sciences Press.

I was invited to attend the launch ceremony and received an invitation from Dr. Helmut Sohmen, honorary president of the ACFA, and his wife Prof. Anna Pao Sohmen, to attend a reception at the Capital Club on the 50th floor of the Capital Building at 4 PM on the same day.

Prof. Du Wentang revealed to me that Zeng Qinghong, then vice-president of China, once told Lao Ka that his parents had been rescued and treated by Dr. Rosenfeld. At that time,

Rosenfeld was a doctor in the military department of the New Fourth Army in northern Jiangsu. Zeng Qinghong's father, Zeng Shan, was secretary of the Communist Party of China Soviet Jiangxi Provincial Committee, and his mother, Deng Liujin, was a female soldier of the Red Army in the Soviet Area of the CPC. Therefore, Zeng Qinghong made a special trip to visit the exhibition on Rosenfeld's life.

Leaders of China attached great importance to the event. Then Chinese President Hu Jintao sent a congratulatory letter for the publication of the book, saying that Dr. Rosenfeld had devoted his most precious years to the liberation of the Chinese people, and his glorious deeds had already entered the annals of history. Austrian President Kleinstill also sent a congratulatory letter, saying this Austrian doctor and humanitarian had become a symbol of Austria-China friendship. NPC Chairman Wu Bangguo met the delegation.

At the launch ceremony, I was surprised to find that Lao Ka could now speak fluent Chinese. Amid a lot of transactional work, Lao Ka wrote every night, at the rate of one book a year, sometimes two, and so far had published 90 books, most of which were about Austria-China friendship. China's Position on International Law was his first book on China, published

in 1973.

The most representative work is *The History of Austria-China Friendship*, co-authored by Lao Ka and Ms. Else Unterrieder, which is the first comprehensive and systematic record of the relations between Austria and China and the friendly exchanges between the two peoples. To write this book, Lao Ka spent 10 years collecting a large amount of historical data. It was published in Europe in 1979. The book has become a must-read for Austrians to understand China. The Chinese version of the book was translated by Prof. Du Wentang and published in 1986.

Since his first visit to China in March 1972, Lao Ka visited China more than 80 times.

In 1997, he was awarded the Austrian Cross of Honor, First Class, for Science and Art by the Austrian Government.

In 2003, the Austrian government awarded him the Award for Friendship among the Peoples.

On July 15, 2004, Lao Ka was awarded the title of Friendship Ambassador by the CPAFFC. Also on October 19, 2004, the Austrian government awarded Prof. Du Wentang the Rosthorn Medal.

When Lao Ka was about to turn 80, Heinz Fischer, current president of the ACFA and former speaker and



A photo of the Karminski family.

president of Austria, asked him how long he would continue to work for the ACFA. Lao Ka firmly said that he was not tired, and did not want to set a time limit. “As long as I can, I will keep working.”

But the unfortunate news came. On the evening of August 6, 2022, when Lao Ka attended the wedding of a family member and danced with his wife, he died suddenly in just a few seconds, at the age of 79. The sudden death shocked everybody with great grief. As Fischer put it, “He ended his work in an unexpected and irreversible

way.”

Theo Kaminski, the only son of Lao Ka, has grown into a handsome man. He inherited his father’s business, graduated from the University of Vienna majoring in law. He is also a fan of Shaolin, a famous branch of Chinese martial art. I am now in my 50s. I hope that one day, I will present the precious gift given to me by Mr. and Mrs. Kaminski to the CPAFFC for preservation and continue to make my modest contribution to the friendship between the Austrian and Chinese people. ■