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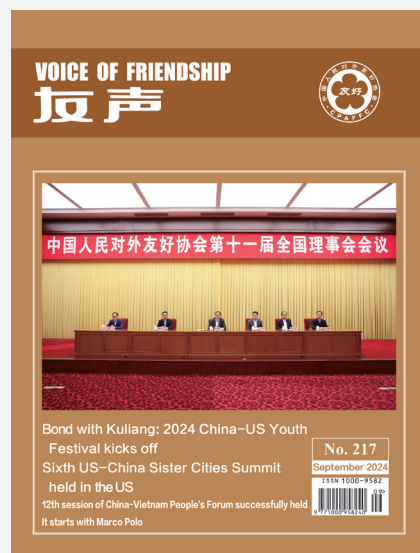
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# Bond with Kuliang: 2024 China-US Youth Festival kicks off

**Department of American & Oceanian Affairs**

On June 24, the Bond with Kuliang: 2024 China-US Youth Festival kicked off in Fuzhou, Fujian province. It was jointly hosted by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC), the People's Government of Fujian Province, and the All-China Youth Federation.

Chinese President Xi Jinping sent a congratulatory letter to the festival. Xian Hui, vice-chairman of the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, read out the letter.

In his letter, President Xi noted that the century-long bond with Kuliang is a story of friendly exchanges between the peoples of China and the US, and that he is pleased to see young people from all walks of life in China and the US gather in Fuzhou to revisit the story of Kuliang, pass down the bond of Kuliang, and help enhance exchanges and understanding between the two peoples.



**CPAFFC President Yang Wanming attends and addresses the opening ceremony.**

He emphasized that young people are the most energetic and full of dreams, and that the future of China-US relations lies in young people. He expressed the hope that Chinese and

US youth will have in-depth exchanges, bolster friendship, know each other better, and work hand in hand to carry forward China-US friendship.

President Xi added that he expects

young people to contribute to the sound and steady growth of China-US relations, and work with people around the world to build peace, promote progress, and create prosperity.

Zhao Long, governor of Fujian province; Yang Wanming, president of the CPAFFC; Hu Sheng, head of the All-China Youth Federation; Elyn Gregg Cheney MacInnis, representative of the US Kuliang Friends; Lisa Heller, US consul general in Guangzhou, Guangdong province; Cheryl Myers, deputy secretary of the state of Oregon; Mattie Bekink, regional director and chief representative of the Ford Foundation; and Wenston Wang, vice-chairman of the Amway Charity Foundation, attended and addressed the opening ceremony.

Xie Feng, Chinese ambassador to the US, sent a prerecorded video message. Guo Ningning, a member of the Standing Committee of the CPC Fujian Provincial Committee and secretary of the CPC Fuzhou Municipal Committee, chaired the opening ceremony.

Zhao Long said that President Xi's letter fully reflects the Chinese leader's high regard for deepening friendly people-to-people exchanges between China and the US, and his earnest expectations for continuing to write a new chapter of the Kuliang story.

"We welcome more and more young Americans to come to Kuliang, to Fujian, and to China to experience the vitality of Chinese modernization and gain a more authentic, multi-dimensional and comprehensive understanding of China," said Zhao. "May the young people of both countries ride the tide of the times, fulfill their life dreams and write a magnificent chapter in the great practice of building a community with a shared future for mankind."

Yang Wanming said that President Xi's letter is filled with deep affection, offers profound insights, and is very inspiring. It places high hopes on enhancing exchanges between Chinese and American youth, and provides important guidance for spreading the Kuliang story, carrying forward the Kuliang bond, and strengthening friendly bilateral relations. He pledged that the CPAFFC will implement the spirit of President Xi's letter and play a greater role in expanding exchanges and understanding between the Chinese and American people.

Yang put forward three suggestions on people-to-people exchanges between China and the US:

First, to enhance cultural exchanges and promote inclusive integration;

Second, to engage in practical and mutually beneficial cooperation for the

benefits of the two peoples.

Third, to tell stories of friendship between the two sides well so as to boost China-US relations.

"Guided by the spirit of President Xi's letter, the CPAFFC looks forward to strengthening cooperation with Chinese and American institutions, and building more platforms and bridges for young people of both countries to deepen exchanges, enhance friendship and get to know each other. Together, we will forge new bonds with Kuliang and write a new chapter in the Kuliang story in the new era," said Yang.

Hu Sheng said that under the guidance of the spirit of President Xi's letter, the All-China Youth Federation will conduct in-depth exchanges with American youth organizations and young people from all walks of life, enhance friendship, strengthen cooperation, promote mutual understanding, and build platforms to empower the common development of Chinese and American youth, and to contribute youth strength to global development and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Xie Feng noted that young people's cognition of bilateral relations determines the future direction of China-US relations. This requires our young friends to break through the so-called political correctness and the



information cocoon related to China, understand the trend of the times, and develop a global perspective. They should explore the right way for the two countries to get along in the new era, from the perspective of the common interests of the two peoples and the peace and well-being of mankind.

Elyn Gregg Cheney MacInnis passionately recounted her experience of seeking her roots in Kuliang nine years ago, as well as her journey in exploring the history of Kuliang and establishing the Kuliang Friends. She said that the core of friendship is understanding, respect, and trust, and that friendship can bring peace to the world. She hoped that through the activity, young people from both countries will carry forward the friendship, respect, and love embodied in the Kuliang story.

Lisa Heller said the Kuliang story is the story of ordinary people. A hundred years ago, ordinary foreigners came to Kuliang and lived in harmony with the local people, which promoted mutual understanding between the American and Chinese people. She encouraged young Americans to visit China, saying that China is the best choice for them to explore the wider world and broaden their horizons. The relationship between the US and China is one of the most important bilateral

relations in the world, and exchanges and cooperation will benefit both sides and people around the world.

Cheryl Myers agreed with President Xi's statement that the hope of the China-US relationship lies in the people, its foundation is in grassroots connections, its future depends on the youth, and its vitality comes from local exchanges. "This year marks the 40th anniversary of the friendly state-province relationship between Oregon and Fujian. We are optimistic about the development of this relationship and the future of US-China relations."

Mattie Bekink said, "The US-China youth exchange is timely. The Ford Foundation is committed to enhancing mutual understanding through people-to-people exchanges. We believe that the two peoples are far more similar than different. Interaction and cooperation between the US and China are crucial to solving global challenges. The two countries should open their hearts and work together to address current problems. I hope young people of both countries can become an important bridge to a better future."

Wenston Wang said that thousands of China-US friendship stories similar to the bond with Kuliang have built a solid public foundation for bilateral relations. Amway is willing to work closely with all sides to inject youthful vitality into China-US friendship.

The theme of the festival was "Carry Forward the Bond with Kuliang and Deepen Friendship". About 500 young people from various sectors in China and the US were invited to participate in a series of activities on topics such as China-US friendship, diversity and inclusiveness of Chinese culture, and climate change.

As a platform for youth of both countries to fully exchange ideas and enhance friendship, the event is the largest and most diverse youth exchange activity in terms of format and content since the establishment of China-US diplomatic relations. It is also a landmark program in implementing President Xi Jinping's significant initiative proposed last year to invite 50,000 young Americans to visit China for exchanges and study over the next five years.

Around 50 exchange activities will be held during the festival, including planting friendship trees by young people of both countries, dialogues, roundtable discussions, documentary screenings, art salons, concerts and friendly sports matches, as well as opportunities to experience intangible cultural heritage.

In addition, the young people of both countries at the festival jointly issued the Kuliang Proposal. The full text is as follows:

# Kuliang Proposal

From June 24 to 28, 2024, we, Chinese and American young people from different sectors of society, gathered in Fuzhou city, Fujian province, China, to learn about the centuries-old bond with Kuliang and explore future-oriented exchanges and cooperation, wishing to “Carry Forward the Bond with Kuliang and Deepen Friendship”. We all believe that the story of Kuliang stands as a testimony to China-US friendship. The peoples of China and the United States can rise above their differences to build a strong friendship. We youth of both countries have witnessed and benefited from the growth of China-US relations over the past 45 years. More importantly, we should be champions and promoters of

healthy and stable China-US relations in the next 45 years.

To this end, we would like to propose the following:

I. We shall continue the Bond with Kuliang: China-US Youth Festival. Besides, we shall hold events on a regular basis, of varied specialties and scales, for exchanges between Chinese and American youth to continue the bond and create a platform for young people of our two countries to conduct exchanges, enhance mutual understanding, build friendships, and explore cooperation in an open, inclusive, relaxed and friendly atmosphere.

II. We shall promote the story of Kuliang and continue our bond with

Kuliang so that more people in China and the United States will get to know about the story and together strengthen China-US friendship based on mutual respect, peaceful coexistence, and win-win cooperation.

III. We shall encourage Chinese and American young people to engage in exchanges and cooperation between the two countries in various fields and become envoys promoting mutual understanding and friendship between the peoples of China and the United States so that our friendship will grow and thrive like the millennia-old cedar trees in Kuliang.

We welcome more young people from China and the United States to join us next year in Kuliang, Fuzhou. ■



# CPAFFC President Yang Wanming attends opening ceremony of Fourth China-US Agriculture Roundtable

**Department of American & Oceanian Affairs**

On June 7, the Fourth China-US Agriculture Roundtable forum opened in Jinan, Shandong province.

Yang Wanming, president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC); Zhou Naixiang, deputy secretary of the Shandong Provincial Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and governor of Shandong province; Luan Richeng, deputy secretary of the Party Leadership Group of COFCO Corporation; Susan Thornton, vice-chair of the Board of the United States Heartland China Association (USHCA); and Robert Hanson, minister counselor for Agricultural Affairs of the US Embassy in China, attended and addressed the opening ceremony.

Nicholas Burns, the US ambassador to China, delivered a video message.

More than 200 people attended the forum, including delegates from industry associations such as the US Soybean Export Council and the US Grains Council, representative offices of five US states, including Georgia and California, think tanks such as the



**CPAFFC President Yang Wanming attends and addresses the opening ceremony.**

Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, and universities such as the University of Pennsylvania, as well as representatives from China's Jiangsu, Jiangxi, Henan, Hubei, Guangdong and Shaanxi provinces.

Zhou Naixiang said that Shandong is a big agricultural province and is working hard to develop modern agriculture. The agricultural development of Shandong and the US

is highly complementary, and there is a good basis for cooperation. Shandong was taking the forum as an opportunity to further connect with all sectors of the US in agricultural trade, reduction of food loss, smart agriculture, and to carry out practical cooperation in scientific and technological innovation, technology promotion, and personnel exchanges to continuously enhance the resilience of agricultural supply chains



and contribute to international food-security cooperation.

Yang Wanming said that in November last year President Xi Jinping and President Joe Biden met in San Francisco and launched the future-oriented San Francisco Vision, which added confidence and impetus to the promotion of China-US practical local cooperation and people-to-people exchanges. It is hoped that the two sides will further deepen cooperation in agriculture, education, culture, science, technology, youth exchange, and friendship cities. The CPAFFC will continue to act as a bridge and bond, open up channels and build platforms for the two countries to strengthen dialogue, exchanges, and practical cooperation in agriculture and other fields, thereby promoting steady progress in bilateral relations.

Susan Thornton spoke highly of the achievements of US-China agricultural

cooperation. She said, “Our gathering in Shandong fully reflects the significance of US-China agricultural cooperation. Agriculture is not just about trade and commerce; it is the cornerstone of a healthy US-China relationship. Facing challenges such as food security, climate change, and sustainable agricultural development, sincere cooperation and joint response are needed. I hope that our two sides will build on the existing foundation, work together to meet challenges, and create a better future for our two countries.”

Robert Hanson said that as the world’s two largest producers and consumers of agricultural products, the US and China have the responsibility to work together to address global food-security challenges and improve the ease of trade in agricultural products. The US has always been a reliable food supplier and partner of China, and looks forward to further developing the

partnership in the field of agriculture.

During the forum, Shandong province and the US established the China (Shandong)-US Agricultural Exchange and Cooperation Mechanism, launched the China (Shandong)-US Food and Agricultural Products Trade Express, and initiated the China (Shandong)-US “New Farmers” Exchange Program. Two panels of discussions on “Climate-Smart Agriculture” and on “Technological Innovation and Agriculture” were held to share experience in agricultural development and synergize practical cooperation projects.

The China-US Agriculture Roundtable forum was founded in 2021 by the CPAFFC and the USHCA, and has been held for three consecutive sessions. This year marked the first time that the forum was held in China. It was themed “Food Security and Agriculture Cooperation”. ■





# Sixth US-China Sister Cities Summit held in the US

**Department of American & Oceanian Affairs**

On July 19, the Sixth US-China Sister Cities Summit, co-hosted by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) and the Sister Cities International (SCI), was held in Tacoma, the US State of Washington. The theme of the summit was "Shared Visions for a Brighter Future".

Participating in the event were Yang Wanming, president of the CPAFFC; Zhang Shuping, vice-chairman of the Standing Committee of the Liaoning Provincial People's Congress; Peng Lin, vice-chairman of the Standing Committee of the Sichuan Provincial People's Congress; Li Xingwang, vice-chairman of the Shaanxi Provincial People's Political Consultative Conference; Zhang Jianmin, consul general of China in San Francisco; Zhou Zheng, minister counselor of the Chinese Embassy in the US; Carlo Capua, chair of the SCI; Amy Tong, secretary of Government Operations of California; Victoria Woodards, mayor of Tacoma, state of Washington; and David Haubert, supervisor of District 1, Alameda county, California. About 300 people attended the summit, including more



**CPAFFC President Yang Wanming speaks at the opening ceremony of the Sixth US-China Sister Cities Summit.**

than 30 representatives from 14 Chinese provinces and cities and 21 US states and cities.

Xie Feng, Chinese ambassador to the US, delivered a congratulatory video message. Derek Kilmer, US congressman of Washington's 6th District, and Nicholas Burns, US ambassador to China, sent

congratulatory letters.

Yang Wanming said that President Xi Jinping has repeatedly emphasized that the vitality of China-US relations lies at the local level. Since the first pair of sister cities between the two countries was established in 1979, sister provinces/states and sister cities have become important platforms for

promoting mutual understanding and friendship between the two peoples, and important windows for deepening exchanges and cooperation for mutual benefit and win-win results.

“We should give full play to the role of the Sister Cities Summit as a bridge and a link to enhance mutual trust, strengthen friendship, and deepen cooperation between local governments of the two countries,” he said.

Xie Feng noted that a good China-US relationship requires the pooling of efforts from all sides. The more frequently there are people-to-people exchanges and the closer local cooperation is, the broader the scope and more solid public support will be for the growth of China-US relations.

This year marks the 45th anniversary of China-US diplomatic relations. Xie expressed the hope that all parties attending the summit will seize new opportunities for opening up and cooperation, tackle the new challenges in people-to-people exchanges, and explore new dimensions of sister-city relations. “We will continue to participate in and support the cooperation between sister cities, and contribute more grassroots wisdom and local strength to the implementation of the San Francisco Vision and to the steady, healthy, and sustainable development of China-US relations,” he said.

Peng Lin stated that Sichuan province has established 13 pairs of sister cities with the US. The exchanges between the two sides have become

increasingly close and the cooperation has become more extensive, which has played a positive role in further promoting in-depth exchanges in the fields of economy, trade, education, and culture. Sichuan looks forward to sharing new development opportunities with its sister cities in the US, expanding new achievements in sister-city establishment, and making new progress in cultural exchanges.

Derek Kilmer said in his letter that sister-city partnerships are not only symbolic, but also practical, effective, and influential, providing a platform for the two countries to cooperate in areas of common concern, such as economic development, trade cooperation, educational exchanges, public health, and climate change. “Together, we are building bridges of understanding, cooperation, and peace. Let us seize the opportunity to strengthen cooperation and work together for a brighter and more connected future,” he said.

Nicholas Burns mentioned in his letter that sister-city programs have played an important role in advancing partnerships between the US and other countries around the world and creating new opportunities. In November last year, President Joe Biden and President Xi Jinping jointly stated in San Francisco that people-to-people relations between the two countries are crucial to revitalizing and expanding bilateral relations and should be strongly supported. Despite the many differences between the US and Chinese governments, we must

continue to bring the American and Chinese people together.

Carlo Capua said, “We are encouraged by President Xi Jinping’s announcement that China is ready to invite 50,000 young Americans to China on exchange and study programs in the next five years. The SCI is willing to work with friends from all walks of life to promote youth and cultural exchanges. We look forward to more wonderful surprises for our two countries and two peoples.”

Victoria Woodards thanked the Chinese delegation for coming from afar to attend the summit, saying that sister-city relationships have built bridges of friendship and cooperation that transcend national borders and have brought the two sides closer. “If we work together to meet challenges, we can create a brighter and more prosperous future for our people,” she said.

“President Xi Jinping has pointed out that the hope of the China-US relationship lies in the people, its foundation is in our societies, its future depends on the youth, and its vitality comes from exchanges at local levels,” Amy Tong said. “People-to-people exchanges are fundamental in dispelling doubts and misunderstandings, enhancing mutual understanding and building stronger bonds. The California government will, as always, strengthen exchanges and cooperation with the Chinese side in such areas as people-to-people exchanges, economic development, and

coping with climate change.”

David Haubert said that the US and China have established 286 pairs of sister cities, laying a solid foundation for bilateral exchanges and cooperation. “As supervisors and mayors, we must play an active role in addressing challenges and working together to create a better future,” he added.

After the opening ceremony, the participants carried out in-depth discussions, shared experiences, and explored cooperation on three subtopics: “Education and Youth”, “Business, Trade, and Economic Development”, and “Sustainable Development and Best Practices”.

In addition, the city of Ningbo in Zhejiang province and the city of Tacoma in Washington state, as well as the city of Shiyan in Hubei province and the city of Solon in Ohio, respectively signed letters of intent

to establish sister-city relationships. The Hubei People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries signed a memorandum of cooperation with the US-China Youth and Student Exchange Association.

The CPAFFC and the SCI announced that they will jointly launch the “Trip of Friendship, Way to the Future” program in 2025, and welcome thousands of young Americans to visit China. They will experience, feel and understand China, as President Xi Jinping hopes.

On the evening of the 18th, a welcome ceremony was jointly hosted by the CPAFFC and the SCI, with the support of the Tacoma city government and Native American tribes. The local orchestra performed *Kuliang, a Long-Cherished Dream Came True* and other pieces of Chinese music, and the Chinese community organized dragon boat races and other characteristic

Chinese activities. The atmosphere at the event was warm and friendly.

During the summit, Yang Wanming separately met with Carlo Capua, new chair of the SCI; Victoria Woodards, mayor of Tacoma; Patrick Erwin, director of Educator Pathways, Tacoma Public Schools; and Amy Tong, secretary of Government Operations of California. They discussed deepening cooperation between sister cities and expanding youth exchanges between the two countries. Yang also gave exclusive interviews to Sing Tao Daily and China Daily.

The US-China Sister Cities Summit was co-founded by the CPAFFC and the SCI in 2014. It has been held for six sessions so far and is one of the important mechanisms for local exchanges between China and the US. This is the first time the summit has been held in the US since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. ■



The Sixth US-China Sister Cities Summit is successfully held in the US.

# CPAFFC President Yang Wanming visits Muscatine in the US state of Iowa

## Department of American & Oceanian Affairs

From July 20 to 21, Yang Wanming, president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC), met with friends from all walks of life in Muscatine in the US state of Iowa. He came especially from Chicago to Muscatine after nearly four hours' drive during his visit to the US.

### Gala of friendship by the Mississippi River

On the evening of July 20, a welcome banquet, hosted by Sarah D. Lande Friendship Education Co. and the Muscatine-China Initiatives Committee, commenced against the red glow of sunset by the Mississippi River. Old and new friends from Des Moines, Iowa City, and Cedar Rapids, gathered in Muscatine to share stories of traditional friendship and discuss future cooperation with the Chinese delegation led by President Yang Wanming. The old friends included those over 80 years old, and the

youngest new friend, who had just returned from a visit to China, was only 12. Talking about friendship with China, everyone had fond and memorable stories to tell.

Dan Stein, chairman of the Muscatine-China Initiatives Committee, began by warmly welcoming President Yang Wanming on behalf of the old and the new friends from all walks of life in Iowa. He spoke highly of the long-term friendly cooperation between his committee and the CPAFFC, and recalled the two visits by President Xi Jinping to Iowa. In 1985, Xi, while working in Zhengding county of Hebei province, led a delegation to Iowa, known as "the granary and breadbasket of America". He stayed in Muscatine for two days, meeting with many local people. In February 2012, Xi, then vice-president of China, visited Muscatine again. He had a tea party with his old friends, and they shared memories of the past, and chatted about daily life and stories of friendship. He also extended an

invitation to his old friends to visit China. In June of the same year, a friendly delegation from Iowa visited China at Xi's invitation and was hosted by the CPAFFC during their stay in China.

Stein said that they well remember President Xi's two visits to Muscatine. The cordial friendship established by him between the Chinese people and people in Muscatine and Iowa has become even closer as time goes by. The friendly exchanges between the two peoples shouldn't be interrupted but strengthened despite the current complex US-China relationship, so as to advance the development of bilateral relations.

Rick Kimberly, owner of Kimberly Farm, joyfully recalled Xi's visit to his homestead, where Xi got onto a harvester. He and his son, Grant, both believe that the US and China, as the two most important countries in the world, have great potential in agricultural cooperation, which can bring substantial benefits to the



two peoples. He said that his farm is actively pushing forward expanded cooperation with China to benefit the Chinese people with more agricultural products from the US and to assist the modernization of China's agriculture.

Krista Regennitter had just finished a visit to China together with the students of Muscatine at the invitation of the CPAFFC. She said that she and the students returned from China with a rich harvest. She said that the students had exchanges with their counterparts in seven middle schools in five Chinese cities, through which they had gained a better understanding of China and Chinese culture. The

exchanges had made them fully aware of the fact that young people in the US and China have common concerns, and are enthusiastic and willing to strengthen bilateral exchanges and friendship. Regennitter believes that the youth of the two countries can definitely learn from each other for better development. She looks forward to more invitations from the CPAFFC for students in Iowa to visit China in the future.

CPAFFC President Yang Wanming said that Muscatine is a household name in China and has become a byword for friendship between the Chinese and the American

peoples cultivated by President Xi. He said that the visit to Muscatine has fulfilled his long-time expectation, experiencing in person the special friendliness of people from all walks of life in Muscatine for President Xi and the Chinese people. He also noted that there exists broad space of cooperation despite difficulties in bilateral relations. The two peoples have great passion for mutual learning and deeper mutual understanding. The CPAFFC stands ready to further advance the friendship between China and Iowa, and will promote its continuation from generation to generation by expanding youth exchanges between the two



Chinese visitors and American friends pose for a group photo.

sides.

### Visit to Sino-US Friendship House

On September 17, 2015, DeWayne Hopkins, mayor of Muscatine, announced that the house in which Xi stayed during his visit to Muscatine in 1985 was to be the Sino-US Friendship House. It has since been open to the public for free visits.

Yang entered the house, looked carefully at the photos on display, and shared the warm stories of President Xi's visits to Muscatine in 1985 and 2012 with Gary Dvorchak, whose father, Thomas Dvorchak, hosted Xi in the house during his stay in 1985. Yang said with deep emotion, "We should safeguard and tell well the precious history of friendship between the Chinese and American peoples, so as to encourage more people to join the cause of bilateral people-to-people friendship." Before leaving, Yang wrote in the guest book: "Let's walk on the path of Sino-US people-to-people friendship paved by President Xi Jinping to advance the cause of bilateral friendship between the two peoples!"

### Friendly Family Feast

Sarah Lande accompanied Xi Jinping during his entire visit to Muscatine in 1985. She warmly invited Yang to a family feast at her home.

Lande introduced every object and photo relevant to China at her home, and reminisced about her experiences of hosting Xi in 1985 and 2012 respectively. She cooked the meal and treated Yang to corn and watermelon, which are specialties of Iowa, and presented to him a book written by herself *"Old Friends": The Xi Jinping-Iowa Story*.

Lande said that President Xi is an admirable, amiable, and respected state leader who has cultivated close friendship with an ordinary American like herself. She and her fellow Americans treasure the renewed and deepened friendship with President Xi and the Chinese people, which has transcended time and space. Such friendship will be continued as long as there are opportunities for people to visit each other to deepen mutual understanding of the cultures of each other.

Lande added that the cause of friendship matters a great deal. A world of friendship is the precondition for a world of peace. Youth are the future of the world. She hoped more young people from the two countries will join the cause of bilateral friendship.

Yang Wanming noted that President Xi Jinping has always laid great emphasis on the cause of people-to-people friendship between China and the US. In 2012, when meeting with the friendship delegation from Iowa, Xi pointed out that people-

to-people exchanges constitute the cornerstone of bilateral relations and serve as the lasting driving force for advancing bilateral relations. Last year, in Xi's speech delivered at the joint welcome banquet hosted by US friendship groups, he recalled with emotion his visit to Iowa in 1985 and pointed out that the hope of the China-US relationship lies with the people, its foundation is in grassroots connections, its future depends on the youth, and its vitality comes from exchanges at sub-national levels. Xi said, "The future of China-US relations will be created by the two peoples. The more difficulties there are, the greater the need for us to forge a closer bond between our peoples, open our hearts to each other, and have more people speak up for the relationship."

Yang spoke highly of the unremitting efforts made by Lande in Iowa and other old and new friends to advance China-US people-to-people friendship and extended his heartfelt gratitude to them. On behalf of the CPAFFC, he pledged continuous close cooperation with friends from all walks of life in Iowa to build more bridges and roads for bilateral exchanges between the two peoples. Yang expressed the belief that when more streams of goodwill from the two peoples converge and more actions of reaching out to each other take place, the China-US relations will surge forward and continue as long as the Mississippi River. ■

# 2024 US-China Low-Carbon and Sustainable Cities Dialogue held in Chicago

**Department of American & Oceanian Affairs**

On July 22, the 2024 US-China Low-Carbon and Sustainable Cities Dialogue was held in Chicago, the United States. Co-hosted by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) and the Paulson Institute, the dialogue aims to implement the Sunnylands Statement on Enhancing Cooperation to Address the Climate Crisis reached by China and the United States and encourage local governments, enterprises, and think tanks of both countries to actively participate in relevant cooperation.

Yang Wanming, president of the CPAFFC; Zhao Jian, consul general of China in Chicago; and Henry M. Paulson Jr., chairman of the Paulson Institute, attended and addressed the opening ceremony. Officials from relevant cities, experts and scholars in the field of green development, and business representatives from China and the US attended the dialogue. Shen Xin, secretary-general of the CPAFFC, and Deborah Lehr, vice-chairwoman



**CPAFFC President Yang Wanming (2nd left) speaks at the 2024 US-China Low-Carbon and Sustainable Cities Dialogue.**

and executive director of the Paulson Institute, delivered concluding speeches at the closing ceremony.

Yang Wanming said that the dialogue aims to implement the spirit of the Sunnylands Statement, and carry out policy dialogue, information

exchange, and the sharing of best practices between local governments of China and the US. Climate change is a global challenge that can only be addressed effectively through concerted efforts. China and the US will work together within multilateral and



bilateral frameworks to address climate change, which not only serves the common interests of the two countries and their peoples, but also meets the expectations of the international community.

He noted that the Third Plenary Session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, which had just concluded, issued a communique, emphasizing that Chinese modernization is the modernization of harmonious coexistence between humanity and nature. China will continue to improve its institutional system of ecological civilization, actively respond to climate change, speed up the improvement of institutions and the development mechanisms for implementing the concept that lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets, and improve the mechanism for green and low-carbon development. This will provide important opportunities for cooperation between the two countries in this field.

“Local governments are participants and practitioners in bilateral relations and climate governance of both countries.” He hoped that the participants from both sides will take the dialogue as a new starting point, actively promote the sharing of best practices, carry out practical cooperation in green energy, green transportation, green buildings,

the circular economy and other fields, and fully demonstrate local vitality in tackling climate change and promoting green development.

Zhao Jian said that since the establishment of diplomatic relations 45 years ago, China and the US have made great progress in cooperation and exchanges in a wide range of fields, bringing great benefits to the people of both countries and the world. Accelerating the green transformation of the development mode and jointly addressing climate change are important contents of the San Francisco Vision reached by the Chinese and US presidents last November. He emphasized that China has always been a doer and participant in promoting green development and addressing climate change. China is not only striving to accelerate the green transformation of its own development mode, but also actively contributing Chinese wisdom to the global response to climate change.

“President Xi Jinping pointed out that the vitality of the China-US relationship comes from exchanges at local levels,” he said. “It is believed that with the joint efforts of all parties, we can do more practical things to promote the green development of our two countries and benefit our two peoples, which will also add more confidence and inject more vitality into global cooperation on climate change

and sustainable development.”

Henry M. Paulson Jr. said that in recent years, the US-China relationship has shown a competitive trend in many areas, which has even spread to areas such as climate change and environmental governance, where there is a good basis for cooperation. At the federal level, climate cooperation is increasingly giving way to a green trade war, making it imperative that local governments and NGOs in both countries work together to promote green development cooperation. Indeed, American and Chinese cities face many challenges, such as excessive carbon emissions and reduced biodiversity. Local governments in both countries should find ways to promote cooperation and jointly achieve sustainable urban development.

Zhang Dingfeng, executive vice-mayor of Fuzhou; Wang Chunxiao, secretary-general of Zhengzhou municipal government; Zhang Jiatao, vice-mayor of Xinzheng; Lori Lightfoot, former mayor of Chicago; Michael Nutter, former mayor of Philadelphia; Philip Clement, CEO of World Business Chicago; Kalindi Parikh, strategy director of Current; and Philip Enquist, former partner of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill (SOM) shared their successful cases and experiences in urban energy conservation, emissions reduction,



and environmental governance, and introduced the latest research results in urban development and biodiversity conservation.

Participants of both countries agreed that urban design and governance should respect the concept of green development, reduce carbon emissions, protect biodiversity, and strive to achieve ecological and economic benefits simultaneously, so as to improve people's overall well-being. Governments, the private sector, and

non-governmental organizations should strengthen their communication to jointly promote sustainable economic and social development.

During the event, Yang Wanming also met with Henry M. Paulson Jr. and had in-depth discussions on topics of promoting local government cooperation on climate change and continuing to successfully organize the US-China low-carbon and sustainable cities dialogue.

On July 23, Yang visited the

Niles North High School in Illinois, where he met with Principal Marlon Felton. He also exchanged ideas with representatives of teachers and students who had recently visited China as part of the American youth delegation "Youth Together" at the invitation of the CPAFFC. Yang encouraged them to practice the spirit of President Xi Jinping's message, build more bridges of mutual understanding and amity, and contribute to the friendship between the two peoples. ■

## 2024 US-China Low-Carbon & Sustainable Cities Dialogue 2024 中美省/州和城市绿色发展对话



# CPAFFC President Yang Wanming leads a delegation to visit Ireland

## Department of European & Asian Affairs

At the invitation of Asia Matters, Yang Wanming, president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC), led a delegation to Ireland from June 12 to 14.

Yang met with Jerry Buttimer, Cathaoirleach of Seanad Éireann; Mary Robinson, chair of The Elders and former president of Ireland; Bertie Ahern, former prime minister of Ireland and co-chair of InterAction Council; Joe Hackett, secretary general of Irish Department of Foreign Affairs; James O'Connor, convener of the Ireland-China Parliamentary Friendship Group; Martin Murray, executive director of Asia Matters; Frank O'Flynn, mayor of the County of Cork; and representatives from five higher learning institutions including University College Dublin, University of Limerick, and Munster University of Technology. He Xiangdong, Chinese ambassador to Ireland, attended relevant activities.

Yang said that Chinese President Xi Jinping made a successful visit to Europe last month, which sent a positive signal of unity, cooperation, and dialogue between China and Europe. Ireland is an important country in Europe, and China values its role in promoting the

development of China-Europe relations.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations 45 years ago, Yang said, under the strategic guidance and joint efforts of the leaders of both countries, the China-Ireland strategic partnership of mutual benefit has developed in a sound and steady manner, with frequent exchanges at all levels. Cooperation in trade and investment, green and low-carbon development, scientific and technological innovation, and many other fields continues to deepen, while cultural exchanges and educational cooperation enjoy broad prospects. Although China and Ireland are far apart and differ in national conditions, the two countries have always respected each other and treated each other as equals, setting a good example of friendly coexistence and win-win cooperation between countries with different histories, cultures, and political systems.

Yang pledged that the CPAFFC will work with Irish friends from all walks of life to further promote exchanges and cooperation between China and Ireland in areas such as local affairs, youth and culture, and contribute to the development

of the mutually beneficial strategic partnership.

The Irish side said that Ireland attaches great importance to developing relations with China, appreciates China's achievements in economic and social development, and expects China to continue to play an important role in international affairs.

"We'd like to take the opportunity of the 45th anniversary of the Ireland-China diplomatic relations to strengthen communication and dialogue, promote practical cooperation and jointly tackle global challenges," said the Irish friends. They congratulated the CPAFFC on its 70th anniversary and appreciated its significant contributions to the promotion of local cooperation and people-to-people friendship between China and Ireland, and expressed their strong support for exchange visits between Chinese and Irish young people and exchanges between friendship cities, as well as their willingness to promote local cooperation.

During the visit, the two sides had in-depth exchanges on topics of common interest and reached a series of positive consensuses. ■

# CPAFFC President Yang Wanming leads a delegation to visit Morocco

## Department of Asian & African Affairs

From June 19 to 21, at the invitation of the Morocco-China Friendship Exchange Association (MCFEA), Yang Wanming, president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC), led a delegation to visit Morocco.

Yang met with Abdellatif Maazouz, president of the Council of the Casablanca-Settat region; Zoubida Rouijel, vice-president of the Council of the Marrakech-Safi region; and Mohamed Khalil, chairman of the MCFEA. The two sides had in-depth talks on people-to-people exchanges, local cooperation and other topics of common interest.

Yang said that the friendship between China and Morocco crosses mountains and oceans and has a long history. Morocco is an important country in North Africa and the Arab world. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1958, China and Morocco have always been united in mutual assistance and bilateral relations have developed smoothly. In 2022, President Xi Jinping met with Prime Minister Aziz Akhennouch on the sidelines of the

first China-Arab States Summit, which injected new impetus into bilateral cooperation in various fields. With the deepening of high-quality Belt and Road cooperation between the two countries, practical cooperation in the fields of economy, trade, investment and culture is on a fast track.

Yang pledged that the CPAFFC is willing to work with the Moroccan side to further promote exchanges and cooperation in such fields as culture, economy and trade, science and technology, tourism and youth exchanges, foster high-quality practical cooperation between friendship cities and localities, and strengthen grassroots efforts to further advance the development of the China-Morocco strategic partnership.

Yang noted that the MCFEA has long been committed to deepening China-Morocco friendship, promoting mutually beneficial cooperation and making continuous contributions to the building of a China-Arab community with a shared future in the new era. He said that the CPAFFC will work with the MCFEA to maintain the existing

cooperation mechanism, continuously enhance mutual understanding and friendship, and further consolidate public support for friendly relations between the two countries.

The Moroccan side said that China is a reliable partner and true friend of Morocco. Morocco attaches great importance to developing relations with China and hopes to further align its development plans with cooperation with China. The local governments of Morocco look forward to strengthening practical cooperation with Chinese provinces and cities in the fields of new energy, artificial intelligence, vocational education, culture and tourism, so as to complement each other's advantages and achieve win-win results.

The Moroccan participants made positive comments on the important role played by the CPAFFC in enhancing mutual understanding and friendship. They expressed their willingness to jointly innovate the forms of exchanges, enrich the content of cooperation, better serve as a bridge, and deliver more practical benefits to the two peoples. ■

# 2024 RCEP Local Governments and Friendship Cities Cooperation (Huangshan) Forum kicks off

## Department of East Asian Affairs

On the morning of June 21, the 2024 RCEP Local Governments and Friendship Cities Cooperation (Huangshan) Forum kicked off in Huangshan, Anhui province. It was co-hosted by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) and the People's Government of Anhui Province.

Losang Jamcun, vice-chairman of the Standing Committee of the 14th National People's Congress of China, delivered a speech and announced the opening of the forum.

Han Jun, secretary of the Anhui Provincial Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC); Yang Wanming, president of the CPAFFC (via video); Sommad Pholsena, vice-president of the Lao National Assembly; Akmal Malik,

acting governor of East Kalimantan province, Indonesia; and LEE Hee-sup, secretary-general of the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat, delivered speeches respectively. Kao Kim Hourn, secretary-general of ASEAN, sent a congratulatory letter.

About 500 people attended the forum, including Zhang Yangbin, deputy secretary-general of the CPAFFC, envoys from member countries of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), delegates of local governments, heads of international organizations and multinational enterprises, as well as representatives of relevant Chinese ministries, experts and scholars, enterprises, business associations, and the media.

Wang Qingxian, deputy

secretary of the CPC Anhui Provincial Committee and governor of Anhui province, chaired the opening ceremony.

Losang Jamcun said that promoting the development of the RCEP is a major measure of China's high-level opening up. Since the RCEP's full implementation, the Chinese government has taken a series of practical measures to join hands with all parties and make greater efforts to further promote regional economic integration, fully implement its obligations under the RCEP agreement such as market opening, and continue to bring new opportunities to the world through its own development.

He noted, "Anhui, together with the CPAFFC, has jointly built an open platform for local exchanges and



cooperation between China and RCEP member countries, and will continue to deepen mutually beneficial and practical cooperation between local governments and friendship cities within the RCEP framework. We look forward to the participants using this forum to strengthen communication, enhance exchanges, deepen practical cooperation, jointly promote the high-quality implementation of the RCEP, and build an even closer Asia-Pacific community with a shared future.”

Han Jun stressed the effective implementation of the RCEP as a major opportunity for Anhui to expand its opening up. He said, “We have been actively expanding exchanges and cooperation with local governments and friendship cities of RCEP member countries, and vigorously facilitated trade and investment with fruitful results. We will continue to enhance the influence of the Huangshan forum, support competitive industries and high-quality production to go global, and further enhance cooperation with member countries in investment and trade. We will make greater efforts to promote high-level opening up, align with international economic and trade rules at high standards, actively expand friendship-city exchanges, create a first-class business environment that is market-oriented, law-based, and internationalized, and contribute

Anhui’s part to the building of a large RCEP regional market.”

Yang Wanming said that RCEP member countries have strong complementary economic structures, frequent trade and investment exchanges, extensive and in-depth cultural communication, and broad prospects for cooperation.

He pledged that the CPAFFC will take the forum as an opportunity to give full play to the leading role of people-to-people diplomacy and the bridging role of city diplomacy, establish more channels for exchanges and cooperation with RCEP member countries, encourage local governments, especially friendship cities, to translate friendly relations into more visible and tangible results, strengthen the network of partnerships between China and RCEP member countries, consolidate public support for friendship among the people of all countries, and contribute the strength of civil society to regional and world peace, stability, development, and prosperity.

Sommad Pholsena said that the forum is of great significance for fully and effectively implementing the RCEP, promoting mutual understanding among local governments of RCEP member countries, seeking cooperation opportunities, and deepening cooperative relations.

In recent years, he said, bilateral relations between Laos and China have deepened. China has become the largest foreign investor and the second largest trading partner of Laos, and a series of Laos-China cooperation and assistance projects have benefited the Lao people. It is hoped that Laos and the other members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and China will continue to strengthen mutual trust and promote all-round cooperation for achieving more fruitful results.

The forum, themed “Regional Cooperation for Common Development” and lasting until June 23, aims to enhance understanding and foster cooperation between the local governments of RCEP member countries.

At the opening ceremony, Anhui province and Indonesia’s East Kalimantan province signed a letter of intent for friendly exchanges and cooperation; the RCEP Regional Cooperation Development Report 2024 was released; agreements for economic, trade, and cultural projects were signed; and the establishment of the China-ASEAN New Energy Vehicle Industry Cooperation Council, the China-ASEAN Photovoltaic Industry Cooperation Council, and the RCEP Chinese Medicine Industry Cooperation Council was initiated. ■

# 12th session of China-Vietnam People's Forum successfully held

**Department of East Asian Affairs**

From June 24 to 26, the 12th session of the China-Vietnam People's Forum was successfully held in Xiangtan, Hunan province. The forum was co-hosted by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) and the Vietnam Union of Friendship Organizations, and supported by the Hunan People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, the Xiangtan Municipal Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the Xiangtan municipal government.

Yang Wanming, president of the CPAFFC, and Phan Anh Son, president of the Vietnam Union of Friendship Organizations, attended the forum, together with representatives from the sectors of politics, trade, culture, and media of the two countries. Before the forum, Zhou Qiang, vice-chairman of the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, and Shen Xiaoming, secretary of the CPC Hunan Provincial



**CPAFFC President Yang Wanming attends and addresses the forum.**

Committee, met with representatives of the two countries in Beijing and Changsha, Hunan, respectively. During the forum, the representatives visited Shaoshan, the hometown of late Chairman Mao Zedong, and presented flowers to the bronze statue of Chairman Mao.

The theme of the forum was “Carrying Forward Friendship for a Shared Future”. Yang Wanming and Phan Anh Son attended and addressed the opening and closing ceremonies. Liu Zhiren, secretary of the CPC Xiangtan Municipal Committee, and Pan Jin’e, leader of the Chinese

expert team of the forum and director of the Department of Research at the Institute of Marxism with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, delivered speeches at the opening ceremony. The attendees had candid and pragmatic exchanges centering on “politics and international relations”, “trade and sub-national cooperation”, and “cultural and academic exchanges”, offering advice on jointly deepening and elevating the China-Vietnam comprehensive strategic

partnership and promoting a stable and long-lasting bilateral relationship.

Yang said that Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee and Chinese president, and Nguyen Phu Trong, general secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam Central Committee, agreed to build a China-Vietnam community with a shared future of strategic significance, symbolizing a new positioning of China-Vietnam relations in the new era

and a new phase of relations between the two parties and two countries. Yang noted that the remarkable fruits borne during Xi’s visit to Vietnam and the important six-point proposal agreed by the state leaders of the two countries should serve as the fundamental principles in the cause of Sino-Vietnamese friendship.

Yang pointed out that hosting the 12th session of the China-Vietnam People’s Forum in Xiangtan, Hunan,





hometown of late Chairman Mao Zedong, was aimed at reviewing the special traditional friendship between China and Vietnam, expressing the common wish of the two parties, countries, and peoples to stay true to their original aspiration and embrace the future hand-in-hand. He applauded the forum as a vivid practice of the friendship associations of China and Vietnam carrying out the important consensus on deepening the two peoples' friendly feelings for each other reached by the leaders of the two parties.

Yang said that the representatives of the two countries had free and candid exchanges based on the new positioning of bilateral relations, contributing wisdom to deepening and substantiating the building of a China-Vietnam community with a shared future. He summed up three practical fruits of the forum: first, it helped the attendees to review their original aspiration and build consensus; second, it facilitated exchanges on the two sides' experience and bilateral cooperation; third, it helped provide a blueprint for the future and clarify the direction for ties. On behalf of the CPAFFC, he expressed willingness to work together with various sectors from China and Vietnam to stay true to the two sides' original aspiration, forge ahead, and continue jointly writing new

chapters in bilateral friendship, with the forum as a new starting point.

Phan spoke highly of the high-level development of Vietnam-China relations. He said that the traditional bilateral friendship, which was established and developed by Chairman Ho Chi Minh, Chairman Mao Zedong, and other older-generation leaders of the two countries, is an invaluable asset for the two peoples, which deserves to be treasured, safeguarded, and further developed.

Phan noted that last December, the leaders of the two parties made the historic decision to build a Vietnam-China community with a shared future of strategic significance and attended together the meeting of Chinese and Vietnamese friends and youths. Both leaders of the two parties stressed that the foundation of bilateral friendship lies with the people, and the future lies with the youth.

Phan said that the forum was successfully held against the historic background of new chapters in bilateral ties. He noted that the attendees from both sides carried forward the fine traditions of the forum featuring sincere, candid, and constructive exchanges, offering practical suggestions for future bilateral relations, and making contributions to implementing the consensus reached by the leaders of the two parties. He

pledged continuous close cooperation between the Vietnam Union of Friendship Organizations and CPAFFC to strengthen people-to-people friendship in all respects and make relentless efforts to build a Vietnam-China community with a shared future of strategic significance.

Liu Zhiren said that Xiangtan and Vietnam share a deep-rooted friendship, with fruitful cooperation in areas such as trade, culture, education, and tourism. Xiangtan is willing to leverage its advantages to carry forward the friendship with Vietnam, deepen bilateral exchanges and cooperation, and contribute to building a China-Vietnam community with a shared future of strategic significance on a sub-national level.

The China-Vietnam People's Forum was jointly initiated by the CPAFFC and the Vietnam Union of Friendship Organizations in 2010. It has become a platform to facilitate people-to-people exchanges, promote mutual trust, build consensus, and advance common development. Last December, the forum, as an important effort to deepen the two peoples' friendly relations, was included in the Joint Statement on Further Deepening and Elevating the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and Building a China-Vietnam Community with a Shared Future of Strategic Significance. ■

# CPAFFC President Yang Wanming meets and hosts a banquet for international friends commemorating 70th anniversary of Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence

**Department of General Affairs**

On June 27, Yang Wanming, president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC), met and hosted a banquet for international friends attending the commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the proposal of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence.

Thirty individual friends and representatives of friendship organizations from 21 countries, including India, Myanmar, and Pakistan, attended the event.

Yan Dong, vice-president of the CPAFFC, hosted the welcoming banquet.

Yang Wanming said that 70 years ago, Chinese leaders first put forward the five principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity,



**CPAFFC President Yang Wanming attends and addresses the event.**

non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence. Over the past seven decades, the Five Principles of Peaceful

Coexistence have been widely accepted and recognized by all countries in the world and have become basic norms governing international relations and basic principles of international law.

Yang noted that the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence are an ideological system advancing with the times. Facing the major issue of “what kind of world to build and how to build it”, President Xi Jinping has put forward the concept of building a community with a shared future for mankind. Over the past decade or so, the concept has expanded from a Chinese initiative to an international consensus, providing a Chinese solution to the common problems facing mankind.

Yang introduced CPAFFC as a national organization for people-to-people diplomacy, committed to enhancing people-to-people friendship, promoting international cooperation, safeguarding world peace, and promoting common development.

It is engaged in all-round, multi-level, and wide-ranging work to strengthen people-to-people friendship by following the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence.

Yang said, “Over the years, our work has also received strong support from friends around the world. We hope that the participants will follow the spirit of President Xi’s important speech, share insights, and build friendly consensus; jointly contribute grassroots wisdom and strength to carry forward the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, enhance friendship and cooperation between peoples, and promote world peace and development; inject new impetus into the building of a community with a shared future for mankind, an equal and orderly multipolar world, and economic

globalization that will benefit all.”

The foreign guests at the banquet thanked the CPAFFC for its warm invitation and reception on the important occasion of the 70th anniversary of the proposal of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. They spoke highly of the historical and contemporary significance and value of the five principles and praised China’s achievements under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, and its important contribution to global and regional security, stability, development, and prosperity. They expressed firm support for the one-China principle and willingness to work with China to carry forward the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and contribute to the building of a community with a shared future for mankind. ■



**CPAFFC President Yang Wanming meets international friends attending the commemorative event for the 70th anniversary of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence in Beijing.**

# Fifth Forum on China-Africa Local Government Cooperation held in Guangzhou

**Department of Asian & African Affairs**

On July 9, the Fifth Forum on China-Africa Local Government Cooperation was held in Guangzhou, which was co-hosted by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) and the People's Government of Guangdong Province. Liu Guozhong, member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and vice-premier of the State Council; Wang Weizhong, governor of Guangdong province; Yang Wanming, president of the CPAFFC; Chen Xiaodong, vice-minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Christian Ntsay, prime minister of Madagascar; and Lukia Nakadama, third deputy prime minister of Uganda, attended and addressed the opening ceremony. About 350 people attended the forum, including government officials, local government leaders, experts, scholars, business and media representatives from China and 29 African countries.

Liu Guozhong said that China and Africa have always been good

friends, good partners, and good brothers, who share weal and woe with each other. He pointed out that coming into the new era, the two sides have been working together to deepen and substantiate bilateral relations, under the guidance of the principles of sincerity, real results, affinity, and good faith proposed by President Xi Jinping, and with the commitment to the greater good and shared interests. "China and Africa have ushered in a new phase of jointly building a high-level China-Africa community with a shared future," said Liu.

Liu noted that changes and turmoil are intertwined in the current world with accelerating shifts unseen in a century. In this context, China and Africa need to strengthen their solidarity and cooperation more than ever before. The local governments of the two sides should make concerted efforts for common development and prosperity. "We should treat each other with equality and increase the sharing of experience; uphold mutually

beneficial cooperation with win-win results and expand the fields of cooperation; persist in innovation-driven development and speed up the pace of green development; persevere in inclusiveness and mutual learning, and enhance people-to-people and cultural exchanges," said Liu.

Liu emphasized that China is advancing the construction of a strong country and the great cause of national rejuvenation in an all-round way through Chinese-style modernization. China stands ready to provide new opportunities for African countries through its development and to promote high-quality cooperation in building the Belt and Road Initiative, the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, and the Global Civilization Initiative, while aligning these with the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the development strategies of various African countries, hence driving modernization for both China and Africa.

Wang Weizhong extended a warm



welcome to the African guests, saying that Guangdong has seriously carried out the important consensus reached by Chinese and African leaders in recent years. Practical efforts have been made to implement the Eight Action Plans and the Nine Major Projects for promoting Sino-Africa cooperation, under the frameworks of the Belt and Road Initiative and the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation. Through these efforts, the exchanges between the people of the two sides have become increasingly frequent, friendships at the sub-national level have deepened, and economic and trade cooperation has continuously expanded.

“Guangdong will follow the principles of sincerity, real results, affinity and good faith and will continue to deepen its cooperation with African countries in trade, investment, and infrastructure. It will strengthen connectivity with them, and promote exchanges and cooperation in areas such as education, medical services, and culture, hence making its contributions to the joint building of a high-level China-Africa community with a shared future,” said Wang.

Yang Wanming noted that more sub-national cooperation helps facilitate substantiation of collaboration at the national level, bringing tangible benefits to the Chinese and African people. “The CPAFFC has long been dedicated to advancing exchanges and cooperation between China and Africa at the local level. It has played an active role in deepening the friendship

between the peoples of China and Africa, and realizing mutually beneficial and win-win cooperation,” said Yang.

Yang expressed willingness to take the forum as an opportunity to work together with local governments in China and Africa to continuously improve the mechanism of the forum and jointly create new heights in local cooperation; strengthen cultural and people-to-people exchanges to tighten the bonds of people-to-people friendship; and promote youth exchanges to carry forward the friendship between China and Africa.

Chen Xiaodong said that the construction of Chinese-style modernization cannot be achieved without mutually beneficial cooperation with Africa, and Chinese-style modernization also offers new opportunities for the development of Africa. He expressed the hope that both China and Africa will leverage the advantages of sub-national cooperation, carry forward the traditional friendship, strengthen solidarity and cooperation, seize new opportunities, and build a new future together.

“We hope that local governments of the two sides will take a long-term perspective to create more effective cooperation mechanisms, thereby fostering greater creativity for high-quality and sustainable development and cooperation between China and Africa. By tapping into potential and continuously expanding cooperation areas and channels, we aim to inject

more impetus into the development of both sides with mutual benefit and win-win results,” he added.

Christian Ntsay said that since the establishment of diplomatic relations over half a century ago, the friendly cooperation between Madagascar and China has flourished in various fields and achieved fruitful results. In recent years, Chinese investment in Madagascar has steadily increased, making positive contributions to the economic and social development of his country. The exchanges between local governments of the two countries have been remarkable, with practical and efficient cooperation in trade, environment, and infrastructure.

“Mutual respect, solidarity, and cooperation serve as pillars of Madagascar-China and Africa-China relations. We look forward to leveling up cooperation with China and stand ready to work hand-in-hand with China to constantly cement local cooperation and exchanges between friendship cities of the two countries,” said Ntsay. He believed that through concerted efforts, the two countries can promote more balanced, sustainable and inclusive development, create a more beautiful future for the two peoples, and advance the building of a closer Madagascar-China community with a shared future.

Lukia Nakadama said that Uganda-China relations, as well as Africa-China relations, have stood the test of time and become even more cordial. She said that the trade

volume between Uganda and China has continued to increase in recent years, Chinese investment in Uganda has seen significant growth, and cooperation in building infrastructure and industrial parks has been consistently promoted, strongly stimulating local employment and economic growth.

She noted that Uganda highly appreciates the three global initiatives proposed by China, which are of great significance for Uganda to achieve the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. “Close cooperation between local governments is an important cornerstone of Africa-China cooperation. We’d like to work together with China to provide more

support for local cooperation between the two countries, promote mutual benefit and win-win outcomes, and move toward common prosperity,” said Nakadama.

At the opening ceremony, Liaoning province of China and the Busoga region of Uganda signed an agreement to establish friendly relations. Foshan of Guangdong province and Sambava in Madagascar, as well as Yuncheng of Shanxi province and Cape Coast of Ghana, signed cooperation intention agreements respectively.

During the forum, the attendees focused on the theme “Working Together for a High-level China-Africa

Community with a Shared Future”, and engaged in in-depth discussions on topics including industrial cooperation, green innovation, and talent cultivation. They shared experience and explored possibilities of cooperation.

The African guests also visited the factory of GAC Aion, the Fushan Circular Economy Industrial Park, and Guangdong University of Foreign Studies.

The Forum on China-Africa Local Government Cooperation is an important institutional activity under the framework of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation. It is a triennial activity first launched by the CPAFFC in 2012. ■



The Fifth Forum on China-Africa Local Government Cooperation is successfully held in Guangzhou.

# CPAFFC Vice-President Yan Dong attends founding meeting of the BRICS+ Association of Cities and Municipalities in Kazan, Russia

**Department of General Affairs**

From June 20 to 24, Yan Dong, vice-president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC), led a delegation to Kazan in the Republic of Tatarstan, Russia, to attend the founding meeting of the BRICS+ Association of Cities and Municipalities.

About 200 people attended the meeting, including Rustam Minnikhanov, Rais (Head) of the Republic of Tatarstan; Ilсур Metshin, mayor of Kazan; and representatives of 60 city and local government organizations from 20 countries.

Russian President Vladimir Putin sent a congratulatory letter to the meeting, and Yan Dong, vice-president of the CPAFFC, addressed the opening ceremony.

Putin noted in his letter that the heads of local governments gathering in Kazan to discuss issues, exchange experiences, and establish new contacts



**CPAFFC Vice-President Yan Dong attends and speaks at the meeting.**

is necessary for the stable development of urban areas and the improvement of people's quality of life. Establishing the BRICS+ Association of Cities and Municipalities and developing friendship-city relations will strongly motivate the BRICS member states

and their partners to jointly address challenges and deepen cooperation in various fields on the basis of mutual respect, equality, and mutual benefit.

Yan Dong said that seven years ago, during the BRICS Summit in Xiamen, President Xi Jinping pioneered



the concept of BRICS + cooperation. In recent years, the BRICS+ model has been deepened and expanded, becoming a model for emerging markets and developing countries to carry out South-South cooperation and gain strength through unity.

Yan stressed that local cooperation is an important way to deepen the friendship between the peoples of the BRICS + countries and achieve mutual benefit and win-win results. He hoped that the founding of this association will provide opportunities for local governments of all countries to further strengthen friendly exchanges and mutually beneficial cooperation in various fields, work together to address common challenges, promote

the interconnected development of all parties, effectively improve people's well-being, and bring more new impetus and vitality to BRICS+ cooperation.

Yan introduced CPAFFC as a national organization for people-to-people diplomacy, responsible for coordinating and managing the establishment and development of friendship-city relations between China and foreign countries.

“We look forward to working closely with all of the BRICS+ countries to build more platforms, provide more opportunities, and create better conditions for Chinese and foreign local governments to strengthen cooperation and seek

common development; and contribute more wisdom and strength to writing a new chapter of BRICS+ cooperation in the new era and building a community with a shared future for mankind,” he said.

During the meeting, Yan also attended a BRICS+ friendship tree-planting activity, presented President Xi Jinping's book *Up and Out of Poverty* to the BRICS+ library, and held talks with heads of city and local government organizations, reaching broad consensus on strengthening mutual contacts in the future and jointly promoting friendly exchanges and practical cooperation between local governments of the BRICS+ member countries. ■





# It starts with Marco Polo

## — Friendly exchanges and cooperation between Yangzhou and Italy

**Yang Yang**

**Marco Polo, “governor of Yangzhou”  
700 years ago, opened friendly  
exchanges between Yangzhou  
and Italy.**

Marco Polo (1254-1324), a native of Venice, Italy, was a famous traveler during the Middle Ages. A pioneer in China-Italy friendly exchanges, Polo made outstanding contributions to cultural exchanges between China and the West.

In the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368), with the development of the Silk Road, many missionaries and merchants from Western countries came to China, and Yangzhou, as the famous port of the East at that time, due to its convenient geographical position and economic impact, became a hub for them to go north to Dadu (today’s Beijing) or south to the coastal provinces.

In 1271, the eighth year of the Zhiyuan reign of Emperor Shizu, Polo, together with his father and uncle, left Venice and headed to the East, crossing the vast Asian continent before arriving in China, where they lived for many years.

In 1275, the 12th year of the Zhiyuan reign, Polo arrived in Dadu. Having won the trust of Emperor Kublai Khan, he was entitled to travel to various places as the emperor’s envoy, including Shanxi, Shaanxi, Sichuan, Yunnan, Shandong, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Fujian provinces. He lived in China for a total of 17 years and wrote a travelogue of his experiences.

In his famous *The Travels of Marco Polo*, he claims that in 1282 he came to an important city called Yangzhou and spent three years as its

governor as decreed by the Great Khan. He was deeply impressed by the wealth, prosperity, and beauty of Yangzhou. The travelogue vividly describes the culture and customs of Yangzhou and the towns under its administration. As he describes, “Yangzhou is vast and rich, and business is brisk.” Before his death, Polo recalled, “What I have mentioned is not even half of what I have actually seen.”

Edgar Snow (1905-1972), an American journalist who was known for reporting the Chinese Communist revolutions, gave a testimony to Marco Polo’s governing of Yangzhou in his book *Journey to the Beginning: A Personal View of Contemporary History*. As mentioned in his book, “I have visited all the famous places in the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River and the Grand Canal. I

saw beautiful ferry bridges and a statue of Marco Polo in Yangzhou. During the reign of Kublai Khan, Marco Polo administered Yangzhou for three years.”

Also on record is that on November 15, 1971, at the 26th United Nations (UN) plenary session when China was to regain its rights as a founding member of the UN and a standing member of the Security Council, Piero Vinci, a deputy of Italy, addressed the meeting and referred to Marco Polo's connection with Yangzhou, China, saying, “In November 1271, the great traveler Marco Polo left Venice and embarked on a historic adventure. After successfully implementing the tasks given by the Great Khan, he was appointed as governor of Yangzhou and is remembered as a talented and wise man by the Chinese people.”

In 2015, the 2,500th anniversary of the founding of Yangzhou city, an international seminar on Marco Polo was held to support the bidding for the Maritime Silk Road as a UNESCO cultural heritage. Experts and scholars from various countries discussed and reached a consensus on the statement that Marco Polo governed Yangzhou under the command of the Great Khan. They agreed that the reason Kublai Khan chose such a foreigner as governor of Yangzhou was because



**A statue of Marco Polo riding on a horse and about to enter the city, in the East Gate Square of Yangzhou.**

Marco Polo was well informed during his travels along the Silk Road and was capable of handling international issues related to cities along the Silk Road.

The year 2024 marks the 700th anniversary of Marco Polo's death. As the man who governed and promoted Yangzhou to the world, Polo's influence on Yangzhou is undoubtedly huge. His account of Yangzhou in the travelogue triggered the first “China craze” and “Yangzhou craze” in Western history. His book testifies not only to

Yangzhou's historical position as a significant port city on the Maritime Silk Road, but also this ancient Chinese city's legacy of inclusiveness, openness, and internationality that has given it a pivotal role in the development of the Belt and Road Initiative.

**A bronze lion presented by the district of Veneto has brought Marco Polo back to Yangzhou.**

Yangzhou's connection with Italy

was re-ignited quite coincidentally by an American Chinese.

In 1986, Dr. Wu Dingyi, vice-chair of the San Francisco-Shanghai Sister Cities Cultural Committee, led an Italian mission to Yangzhou and donated some rare documents on Marco Polo to the Yangzhou Museum. They were warmly received by Mayor Zhu Xinwu at the Osmanthus Hall by the Slender West Lake, and a friendship tree was planted. The Osmanthus Hall was announced as a temporary venue for displaying documents on Marco Polo.

In 1987, the Yangzhou municipal government decided to build a Marco Polo Memorial Hall in the newly restored millennia-old Buddhist temple, Tianning. “It is very meaningful to build the Marco Polo Memorial Hall as an important symbol of China-Italy friendship, a research center, and a bridge to promote cultural exchanges between the two countries,” said Mayor Yu Zhenxin. Italy’s ambassador to China, consul general in Shanghai, and the mayor of Venice all gave their enthusiastic attention and practical support to the construction work. The project was completed in October that year.

The Marco Polo Memorial Hall is located in the southwest of the Tianning Temple. At the entrance stands a huge dolomite tablet. On its right part is carved a bust of Marco Polo and on its left is a summary of his connections with Yangzhou. Exhibits include a map

showing Marco Polo’s travels in China; a copy of *Travels of Visiting Governor Marco Polo*, the book title being in the handwriting of Liang Qichao (1873-1929); a Latin-edition of *Travels of Marco Polo* annotated by Christopher Columbus (1451-1506); as well as research works contributed by Chinese and international scholars.

To commemorate Marco Polo’s historic contributions and as a token of Italy-China friendship, the district of Veneto, with Venice being its capital city, decided to present a plaza bronze lion, the city emblem and patron of Venice, to the Marco Polo Memorial Hall. On October 29, 1987, Jacob Parnosso, director of Veneto Tourism Industry, led a delegation to Yangzhou for the donation ceremony at the Tianning Temple. Yu Zhenxin, then mayor of Yangzhou, attended the ceremony. The bronze lion, so lively portrayed as if it is about to take a leap upward into the sky, holds an opened Bible under its claws. On the Bible is inscribed blessings for happiness and peace. Standing in front of the memorial hall, the lion has since become its patron.

In order to illustrate the long-term friendship between China and Italy, highlight Marco Polo’s great contribution to the friendly ties between the two nations, and deepen cultural exchanges between Yangzhou and Italy, and with approval of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the State Administration of Cultural Heritage,

the Yangzhou municipal government decided to build a new Marco Polo Memorial Hall at the east gate relics site of the old city by the ancient Grand Canal. The project started in 2010 and was completed in April 2011.

Covering 500 square meters, the new memorial hall has the theme “Amazing Travels in the East”, and consists of five sections—A Legendary Life, An Extraordinary Book, Travels in China, Governor of Yangzhou, and Profound Impact. The exhibition hall brings into full play the space to create different scenes, adopting multi-media to re-present what is described in the travelogue, which gives the audience vivid impressions of what Marco Polo experienced and his influence on the world.

A statue of Marco Polo was erected in the East Gate Square in front of the new memorial hall. A young, high-spirited Polo, dressed as a Yuan-dynasty official and riding a tall horse, pulls the reins with the left hand, holds a map of Yangzhou in his right hand, and is about to enter the city. Historical records show that Polo traveled on horseback from Taizhou to Yangzhou and entered the city through the east gate. The designer said that the sculpture is a symbol of respect for and recreation of the historical facts. To the right of the entrance is a bronze replica of the lion standing at the old memorial hall in the Tianning Temple.

The new Marco Polo Memorial Hall showcases the rich culture of

Yangzhou as a famous historical city, and is an important milestone in Yangzhou's endeavors to become a world-famous city.

### **Upgrading of the Marco Polo Memorial Hall and commemorating of the 700th anniversary of Marco Polo's death.**

In April 2021, ten years after the completion of the Marco Polo Memorial Hall, Michele Cecchi, the Italian consul general in Shanghai, was invited to attend the opening ceremony of 2021 Yangzhou World Horticulture Expo. During his stay, Cecchi made a special trip to the Marco Polo Memorial Hall. After returning to Italy, he wrote a formal letter proposing cooperation with the memorial hall, which opened the prelude to the upgrading of the memorial hall. Afterwards, the two sides exchanged letters several times to discuss the contents of the project. Acting Consul General Rocco Carlo Genchi and Consul General Tiziana D'Angelo respectively visited and met with leaders of Yangzhou, before the two sides finalized the upgrading project. With attention and support from both sides, the Yangzhou municipal government and the Italian consulate general in Shanghai jointly launched the upgrading project in December 2022, as an important event of the China-Italy Year of Culture and Tourism.

Through concerted cooperation and efforts of both sides, the upgraded

memorial hall was opened to the public on May 30, 2023. It has taken on a new look, displays more content, and features new hi-tech presentations. Multi-media digital and interactive illustrations allow people to immerse themselves in the scenarios Marco Polo experienced. On top of that, the consulate general of Italy in Shanghai collaborated with the Ca' Foscari University of Venice, the Treccani Encyclopedia, and the Venice City Museum to donate a number of exhibits which are of great historical importance. Among them was a copy of Marco Polo's will, donated by the Ca' Foscari University of Venice. Many of the donations were made in Marco Polo's time. These authentic exhibits with the characteristics of their historical time lead visitors back in time to feel the real life and culture of the city in those days.

In recognition of the contributions by the Ca' Foscari University of Venice, the Yangzhou municipal government awarded the university's president and sinologist Dr. Tiziana Lippiello the title of Distinguished Guest of Yangzhou, at the opening of 2024 Yangzhou "Flowery March" International Economy, Trade, and Tourism Festival.

The Marco Polo Memorial Hall symbolizes China-Italy friendship and embodies Marco Polo's spirit of openness, exchange, and common development that continues to this day.

On January 8, 2024, Yangzhou

and the consulate general of Italy in Shanghai jointly held the launching ceremony of "Carrying on Friendship and Creating a Bright Future", a series of activities to commemorate the 700th anniversary of Marco Polo's death at the Marco Polo Memorial Hall. Wang Jinjian, secretary of the CPC Yangzhou Municipal Committee, and Tiziana D'Angelo, consul general of Italy in Shanghai, attended and addressed the opening ceremony. Tiziana Lippiello, president of the Ca' Foscari University of Venice, and Massimiliano De Marin, vice-mayor of Venice, also participated in the event through a congratulatory letter and via video link respectively.

All parties agreed that the China-Italy friendship enjoys deep roots, with Marco Polo opening friendly bilateral exchanges more than 700 years ago. The year 2024 marks the 20th anniversary of China-Italy all-around strategic partnership and the 700th anniversary of Marco Polo's death. It is of great significance to hold Marco Polo-themed activities at such a significant time, to further promote China-Italy friendly exchanges in the new era, to strengthen China-Europe friendship, and to enhance the development of and communication between Eastern and Western civilizations. The Marco Polo Memorial Hall jointly built by China and Italy will serve as a platform for cultural, tourism, and economic activities, and for deepening Yangzhou-Italy exchanges in a wide range of fields in the future.



**“Cherish the Bond and Seek  
Common Development”—The  
Friendship-city relations  
continue to deepen.**

When the district of Veneto presented the bronze lion to Yangzhou in 1987, it also brought greetings from Marco Polo's hometown to the people of Yangzhou, receiving a warm response from Yangzhou in return. Since Venice had already established friendship-city ties with Suzhou, Jiangsu province, early in 1980, Yu Zhenxin, then mayor of Yangzhou, entrusted Veneto with the task of finding an appropriate city for Yangzhou to build up friendship-city relations with.

In 1996, Yangzhou, a historical and cultural city of China, and Rimini, an Italian city built in the Amelia-Romania District during the ancient Roman times and known for its historical legacy, tourism, and culture, attracted each other and carried out active and effective exchanges through visits, laying a sound foundation for the formal establishment of their friendship-city relations.

On March 16, 1999, the Yangzhou Friendship Delegation visited Rimini and the two cities signed the Agreement on Forging a Friendship-city Relationship Between Yangzhou and Rimini. Li Guoqing, cultural counselor of the Chinese embassy in Italy, and Gao Cunming, consul general of China in Milan, witnessed the

historic moment. All members of the delegation and nearly 100 people from all walks of life in Rimini attended the grand ceremony.

Since the two cities became friendship cities, frequent high-level visits and close personnel exchanges have been carried out, mutual friendship has been deepened, and remarkable cooperation results have been made in the fields of economy, trade, finance, science, education, culture, and sports.

Rimini has organized several delegations to attend the China Yangzhou Jianzhen International Half-Marathon and the China Yangzhou World Famous Canal Cities Expo. Similarly, Yangzhou has also sent delegations to Rimini for important events such as the Pink Night gala, and the Best Amelia-Romania promotions.

In 2009, as both cities celebrated the 10th anniversary of their friendship-city relationship, a delegation from Yangzhou attended the Pink Night gala, a celebration of the summer New Year.

In 2013, the two cities explored the “password” for developing world famous cities and agreed on how to promote their tourism-city brands.

In 2015, the Yangzhou Foodstuff Industrial Park Europe Office was established in Rimini, which opened a new channel for business exchanges.

In 2018, thanks to their fruitful cooperation, the two cities were granted the title of China-Europe

Green Tourist Cities. In the same year, the Italian Adriatic Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Yangzhou co-established the Belt & Road China-Italy Economic and Cultural Cooperation Center, contributing their wisdom and efforts to promoting Sino-Italian friendship.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the people of the two cities donated medical supplies to each other and joined hands to fight the disease, writing a special chapter in their friendship.

In March 2019, Chinese President Xi Jinping paid a state visit to Italy to strengthen high-level exchanges between the two countries, promote the further development of the China-Italy comprehensive strategic partnership in the new era, and lead bilateral relations on a new journey. In this context, Yangzhou and Rimini ushered in the 20th anniversary of friendship-city relations.

In order to strengthen the friendly exchanges between the two cities and cooperation in various fields, on March 25, Jamir Sadegholvaad, vice-mayor of Rimini, led a delegation to Yangzhou to celebrate the 20th anniversary and discuss cooperation plans in the new era. Liu Yutong, vice-mayor of Yangzhou, warmly welcomed the delegation. The two sides highly recognized the friendly exchanges and cooperation between the two cities over the past 20 years. Based on their consensus reached in areas

such as urban development, tourism cooperation, culinary arts, horticulture, cultural creativities, sports and health care, they formulated the Yangzhou-Rimini Friendly Exchange Plan in the New Era.

On August 23, 2023, Jamil Sadegholvaad, governor and mayor of Rimini, attended the 2023 World Canal Cities Forum in Yangzhou and met with Wang Jinjian, secretary of the CPC Yangzhou municipal committee. In-depth exchanges and discussions were held on strengthening friendly exchanges and deepening practical cooperation through the canal as a medium.

Wang Jinjian briefly introduced Yangzhou's economic and social development. He said that Yangzhou is a famous historical and cultural city with a history of more than 2,500 years. It is also a famous industrial and commercial city known for its openness and inclusiveness. He hoped to take this forum as an opportunity to strengthen economic, trade, and cultural cooperation in broader areas, expand connectivity at a higher level, and jointly write a new chapter of win-win development.

Sadegholvaad said that he would take the forum as a new starting point, focus on long-term and systematic planning, improve cooperation mechanisms, expand areas and enrich the content of cooperation, and push for new results in practical cooperation.

The year 2024 marks the 20th anniversary of the China-Italy

comprehensive strategic partnership and the 25th anniversary of Yangzhou-Rimini friendship-city relations. In order to deepen exchanges and promote industrial cooperation and common development, Pan Guoqiang, mayor of Yangzhou, led a delegation to Rimini to attend the celebration of the 25th anniversary. On March 27, Pan held warm and friendly talks with Sadegholvaad, governor and mayor of Rimini. They agreed that since the establishment of friendship-city relations, the two cities have continued the historical friendship between Marco Polo and Yangzhou, and carried out fruitful cooperation in the fields of economy, trade, culture, and tourism. In the next 25 years, they look forward to enhancing exchanges and cooperation and working hand in hand for a better future. The two sides signed the Memorandum of Understanding to Deepen Economic and Cultural Cooperation, anticipating the building of a model of China-Italy friendship-city exchanges.

Besides Rimini, Yangzhou has also built up friendship-city relations with Venice, Siena, and Parma, injecting fresh vitality and laying a solid foundation for exchanges and cooperation between Yangzhou and Italy.

**“Join Hands to Build a Bright Future”—Economic and trade cooperation yielding fruitful results.**

Yangzhou and Italy have a long

history of expanding economic and trade cooperation and achieving win-win results. Business cooperation between the two sides not only has a good foundation, but has also shown broad prospects.

As early as 2021, Italy was already Yangzhou's third biggest trading partner in the European Union, with turnover exceeding RMB1.4 billion yuan. Mevis Precision Metals, an Italian company, set up its first plant and R&D center in Yangzhou. After ten years of development, it has become a well-known supplier of engines and home appliances. Italy is known for its gastronomy, with modern agriculture, food processing, and brand marketing among the best in the world. The China-Italy (Yangzhou) Foodstuff Industrial Park is devoted to incubating food businesses, covering cross-border trade, distinctive catering, and food production, aiming at 10 billion-yuan turnover. It is now a vanguard in China-Italy cooperation. As Angello, an Italian food company in Yangzhou, said, “We are very pleased with Yangzhou's favorable business environment for investment and development. Therefore we have decided to continue our investment with our latest projects.”

As a matter of fact, the integration of advanced Italian technique, management, and market penetration and Yangzhou's local manufacturing capacity and scale effect is a perfect

match and generates momentum for both sides to explore more business opportunities.

On March 25, 2024, the Join Hands to Build a Bright Future—Yangzhou Industrial Promotion was held. It was supported by the consulate general of China in Milan, hosted by the Yangzhou municipal government, and co-organized by the Italy-China Chamber of Commerce.

More than 130 representatives from Chinese and Italian local governments, industry organizations, friendship associations, well-known enterprises, universities, and media attended the promotion, including Liu Kan, Chinese consul general in Milan; Vinicio Peluffo, member of the Italian Parliament and chairman of the Friends of China Association; and Hu Kun, president of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Italy.

Pan Guoqiang, mayor of Yangzhou, said that over 700 years ago, Marco Polo opened a historical preface to friendly exchanges between Yangzhou and Italy. Over the years, Yangzhou and its Italian partners have reached a number of consensus in the fields of economy, culture, tourism, heritage conservation, environmental protection, education, and sports, and achieved fruitful results. At present, Yangzhou is accelerating its efforts to be a world-renowned city of innovation, culture, and tourism; and an ecological and livable city. It continues to advance

its “Three Capitals” strategy, which are World Canals Capital, World Gastronomy Capital, and East Asia Cultural Capital. It is also focusing on the cultivation of six leading industries: high-end equipment, automobiles and auto parts, new materials, new energy, new information technology, and life and health. Yangzhou hopes to work with all sectors in Italy to push practical cooperation to new heights and further strengthen the friendship between Yangzhou and Italy.

Liu Kan said that exchanges between Yangzhou and Italy have deep historical origins. This year marks the 20th anniversary of the China-Italy comprehensive strategic partnership and the 700th anniversary of the death of Marco Polo, representing new historical opportunities for China-Italy relations. He sincerely invited Italian friends from all walks of life to visit Yangzhou and other places to seek cooperation opportunities and make greater contributions to deepening China-Italy friendly relations in the fields of economy, trade, culture, and more.

Vinicio Peluffo said that the Friends of China Association hopes to become the Marco Polo of the new era, and is willing to work with other friendly organizations to adhere to mutual benefit and strengthen bilateral cooperation in the fields of culture, economy, and trade. He will encourage

more Italian enterprises to invest and develop in Yangzhou, and carry out pragmatic cooperation and exchanges in more fields and at deeper levels to achieve win-win results.

At the promotion, Pan Guoqiang and Hu Kun jointly signed the Agreement on Strategic Cooperation Between the Municipal Government of Yangzhou and the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Italy. The agreement aims to promote exchanges and cooperation in industry, technology, and talent; realize resource-sharing and complementary advantages; encourage more Italian enterprises to invest and develop in Yangzhou; and build Yangzhou into a most favored destination for Italian investment. The two sides also pledged to build a China-Italy (Yangzhou) industrial park, so as to support project implementation and realize mutual prosperity.

What we learn from history serves to guide our future. Looking to the future, Yangzhou will always cherish its historical bond with Italy and keep pace with the overall trend of China-Italy friendship. We will seize the opportunities presented by the 700th anniversary of Marco Polo's death, the 20th anniversary of the China-Italy comprehensive strategic partnership, and the 25th anniversary of Yangzhou-Rimini friendship-city ties, strengthen exchanges and cooperation between Yangzhou and Italy, and write a new chapter of China-Italy friendship. ■

# Partnership forged with right approach defies geographical distance

— Delegation of Japanese university students visits Sichuan

## Sichuan Friendship Association

At the invitation of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC), a delegation of 73 Japanese university students led by renowned Japanese vocalist Nagai Kazuko, permanent member of the Japan-China Cultural Exchange Association (JCCEA) and honorary professor of Tokyo University of the Arts, visited

Sichuan from June 14 to 17.

The delegation was composed of students from over 30 Japanese universities. They visited the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding, the Sanxingdui Museum, and the Dong'an Lake Sports Park; had exchanges with teachers and students from Chengdu University and Sichuan Conservatory of Music at the

Universiade Village and the Chengdu City Concert Hall; enjoyed Sichuan's natural beauty and diverse culture; learned the innovative development and cooperative opportunities; and experienced the multiple facets of the Chinese path to modernization.

At the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding, the delegates couldn't contain their excitement



The delegation visits the Sanxingdui Museum.



in spite of the scorching sun. In the delivery rooms of the Sun House and the Moon House, the crowd burst into praises of “*kawaii*” (meaning “cute” in Japanese) when the adorable and plump giant pandas came out. Everyone raised their cameras or phones to record and share the vivid moments that showcased China’s ecological conservation and biodiversity protection.

Saying goodbye to the giant pandas reluctantly, the delegation headed to the first “China Travel Experience Base” – the Sanxingdui Museum, where everyone was amazed by the brilliant and mysterious ancient Shu civilization.

Yoshino Ayami, deputy director of the Affairs Bureau of the JCCEA and an archaeologist, said, “In the 1980s, I learned about the excavation of pits 1 and 2 in Sanxingdui, but I didn’t know much about pits 3-8. This visit has helped me learn a lot more. In the future, I will continue to study Sanxingdui and explore the beauty of Chinese civilization.”

Chengdu, a national historical and cultural city at the foot of snow-capped mountains, successfully hosted the 31st summer edition of the FISU World University Games last year.

The delegation took a coach tour of the Dong’an Lake Sports Park and visited the main sports stadium. At the Chengdu Universiade Museum, the students relived the wonderful

moments of the Universiade through the exhibits. They crowded around the podium to take pictures, sharing the joy of “Chengdu Makes Dreams Come True”.

Nakamura Nagisa from Waseda University admired, “The Dong’an Lake Sports Park is an interesting place that blends ancient and modern elements. One must feel very happy when jogging here.”

Departing Dong’an Lake, the delegation walked into Chengdu University and the Universiade Village. Every tree and bush, object and scenery here contained the wonderful memories of some of their teachers and classmates who participated in the Chengdu Universiade last summer.

At the Overseas Education Institute, the delegates tried their hand at brush painting on Chinese-style silk fans.

At the College of Chinese and ASEAN Arts, Chinese and Japanese students strolled along the shores of Lake Luming, exchanging ideas and making friends. Ishizaka Takuma, a student from Keio University, couldn’t help singing *Chengdu*, a folk song, in Chinese.

When it came to the time of parting, the young people, who had already become good friends, were reluctant to say goodbye with each other. Taniai Rina, a student from Chuo University, said, “I really hope to

have more time to communicate with students from Chengdu University.”

At Sichuan Conservatory of Music, the delegation visited the Chengdu City Concert Hall, observed the opening ceremony of the conservatory’s 2024 performance season, and enjoyed *Encounter Dongpo in the Song Dynasty*, a Chinese drama concert.

Itoh Ryo, a student from Tsuda College, learned to blow the cucurbit flute as a child. “‘The Yao Dance’, played by the Youth Orchestra of the Sichuan Conservatory of Music, instantly reminded me of my childhood. In the melodious sound of the music, I could feel the diversity and beauty of Chinese ethnic-minority cultures,” she said.

“I was deeply impressed by *Encounter Dongpo in the Song Dynasty*, where the actors wore traditional Chinese costumes and played Chinese instruments I had never seen before. This experience was fantastic,” said Yamaguchi Hana, a student from Kyorin University.

At the farewell party, the delegates and teachers and students of Chengdu University sang and danced, presenting a wonderful and diverse cultural feast.

Students from Chengdu University presented ethnic dances, songs of the Yi ethnic group, Sichuan face-changing opera, and a long-mouthed teapot performance to showcase the diversity of Chinese

culture.

The Japanese students performed traditional Noh opera and blew the trumpet. A Chinese student and a Japanese student, using Chinese brushes and paper, wrote down “交得其道 千里同好 (meaning “partnership forged with the right approach defies geographical distance)” and “遠い場所も繋がっているよ (meaning “A bosom friend afar brings a distant land near)”.

In a cheerful atmosphere, the young people of the two countries talked about their friendship and the future, and the seeds of friendship quietly planted will surely take root and sprout and grow strong under their care.

Liu Quansheng, president of the Sichuan Provincial People's Association for Friendship with Foreign

Countries, addressed the farewell party. He said that as the builders and disseminators of China-Japan friendship, youths of both countries should learn from each other and grow together through exchanges and mutual learning, so they can make positive contributions to strengthening bilateral relations and building a community with a shared future for mankind and a better world.

Nagai Kazuko, head of the delegation, expressed her gratitude to the Chinese side for the thoughtful arrangements and warm reception. She said, “The ancient Shu civilization over 4,000 years ago has amazed me, and visiting Chengdu University has enhanced understanding and friendship between the young people of Japan and China. The visit has written a profound chapter in bilateral

friendly exchanges. I hope that the youths of both countries will cherish their aspirations and work together to create a brighter future.”

Ryutaro Uchimura, a student from Waseda University, made a speech on behalf of the delegation: “I have grown up under the influence of Chinese culture since childhood. I enjoy reading *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, studying Yan Zhenqing's calligraphy, and appreciating Chinese music. Through the trip to Sichuan, I have personally experienced the breadth and depth of traditional Chinese culture. I have made friends with Chinese college students and we have all gained a deeper understanding of each other. In the future, I will pay more attention to China, understand China, and contribute to the friendship between Japan and China.” ■



The delegation visits Chengdu University and the Universiade Village.

# Giant Panda and Golden Monkey Cultural and Art Exhibition celebrates 60th anniversary of Sino-French diplomatic ties

## Sichuan Friendship Association

In celebration of the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and France, the Giant Panda and Golden Monkey Cultural and Art Exhibition was held in the National Zoological Museum of China, running from March 31 to mid-June 2024. The exhibition was aimed at promoting people-to-people and cultural exchanges between China and France, facilitating mutual learning between Chinese and foreign civilizations, displaying China's achievements in the protection of biological diversity, and sharing relevant stories of China with the rest of the world.

The exhibition was co-hosted by the Sichuan Friendship Association, the Beijing People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries,

the Institute of Zoology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Sichuan Xinhua Publishing and Distribution Group, the publicity department of the Ya'an Municipal Committee of the Communist Party of China, and the Baoxing county people's government, under the guidance of the China Wildlife Conservation Association and the All-China Philatelic Federation.

About 300,000 people visited the exhibition, including U Min Thu, Myanmar's vice-minister of Resources and Environmental Conservation; friends from the Netherlands, France, and Germany, who came to Beijing for exchange visits; as well as foreign teachers and students from around 10 international schools in Beijing. The audience experienced firsthand the ecological and cultural values of the

two treasures – the giant panda and the golden monkey. Nearly 50 mainstream media outlets of China including CCTV News, People's Daily, China Science Daily, and Sichuan Observation, as well as overseas media such as Silk Road New Observation and Huaren provided in-depth coverage of the event.

In 1869, French naturalist Jean Pierre Armand David, after field work in Baoxing county, Sichuan province, revealed to the world the giant panda, a species unique to China. The following year, he introduced the world to the Sichuan golden monkey. Thanks to his efforts, these two national treasures were scientifically named and people became more aware of the rich biodiversity of China. This also built a bridge of friendship between the Chinese and French people, forging an

inseparable bond from that moment on.

The giant panda and the Sichuan golden monkey are both native to Sichuan province. The former is black and white, just like the colors of the Taiji Diagram in Chinese culture; the latter has a golden color as bright as the morning sun. The exhibition on the theme of these two species was very intriguing. The exhibits included relevant photos, stamp albums, cultural and creative products, literary works, historical records and publications, which vividly depicted the deep friendship

forged by the two natural treasures, and the important contributions to international cultural exchanges made by these two distinctive envoys of friendship. The exhibits also highlighted China's achievements in biodiversity conservation and its philosophy of green development. The exhibition further advanced the cultural and people-to-people exchanges between the two countries, cemented the foundation of bilateral friendship, and contributed to the development of a community with a shared future for mankind.

**The exhibition told stories of the deep friendship between the Chinese and the French people with the help of giant pandas.** The exhibition featured a collection of precious photos, including China's first gift of giant pandas to France in 1973, the journey of Huan Huan and Yuan Zai from Chengdu to Beauval Zoo of France in 2012, and the naming of the giant panda Yuan Meng, born in France, by the first ladies of China and France in 2017. There were also photos of Armand David's descendants visiting Baoxing county to trace their



Chinese and French guests take a group photo at the opening ceremony of the exhibition.



ancestor's footsteps, and Luo Weixiao, a retiree from Ya'an who cycled 15,000 kilometers from Dengchigou in Baoxing county to Espelette, Armand David's hometown in France. All these images showcased the shared dreams and the long-lasting friendship between the people of China and France. Both Chinese visitors and representatives of French exchange students attending the exhibition agreed that the exhibition has enriched their understanding of the history of Sino-French friendship, saying that they will strive to become inheritors of the Sino-French friendship and contribute to the promotion of lasting friendship between China and France for generations to come.

### **The exhibition also told stories of the ecological civilization of China.**

The mutual symbiosis of giant pandas and Sichuan golden monkeys serves as a proof of China's biological diversity. China and France, as two of the world's most biologically diverse countries, take the protection of biological diversity as an important aspect of bilateral cooperation. To safeguard the shared home of giant pandas, golden monkeys, and mankind, and to advance low-carbon green development, the two countries are fulfilling their responsibilities as major nations by carrying out a series of pragmatic collaborations.

During President Xi Jinping's state visit to France in May, the two countries signed documents of further

cooperation in protecting biological diversity and tackling climate change. This exhibition displayed the colorful images of giant pandas and golden monkeys living harmoniously with each other, unfolded a scroll of a beautiful world where all living beings thrive freely, and vividly illustrated the concept that "lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets".

While enjoying the beauty of light and shadow, of culture and of creativity, the audience to the exhibition closely appreciated China's achievements in ecological civilization and modernization in which human beings and nature coexist harmoniously. The exhibition highlighted China's responsibility and commitment as a major country in building a community of all life on Earth, and aroused more concern and support from all sectors of society for the development of an ecological civilization in nature reserves, where giant pandas and golden monkeys are umbrella species. All this will contribute positively to the building of a community of all life on Earth.

**The exhibition also showcased beautiful Sichuan.** Sichuan, as the home of giant pandas, boasts 74.4% of all giant pandas living in the world. The exhibition, featuring both giant pandas and golden monkeys, not only showed their charm and cultural value to the audience, but also helped them to savor the province's ecological beauty, colorful culture, and vibrant

development. The event has attracted more attention to Sichuan, inspiring a longing for its cuisine, tea, opera, scenic spots, and culture among people from all walks of life. Christophe Troël, a professor from France now working at Peking University, said that he and his family adore the giant panda and the golden monkey very much. He said he has gained a clearer picture of Sichuan through the exhibition and expressed his hope to visit Sichuan with his family and friends in the future.

Giant pandas and golden monkeys are not only two major symbols of China's ecological achievements, but also embody the traditional Chinese cultural values of peace, friendship, and harmony, as well as the Chinese philosophical concept of harmonious coexistence. Whether the giant panda twins Huan Lili and Yuan Dudu, which respectively represent Paris and Chengdu, or the 2.5-meter-high bronze statue of a giant panda in Beauval Zoo of France, they all reflect the French people's heartfelt fondness for giant pandas, symbolizing mutual appreciation and reciprocal efforts between Chinese and Western civilizations. The bridge of friendship built through giant pandas and golden monkeys between the Chinese and the French people transcends time and space, bringing the hearts of the two peoples closer and making the flower of Sino-French friendship more beautiful. ■

# The Great Wall: A bridge for people-to-people exchanges between China and the rest of the world

**Gao Qiuyan**

On May 14, 2024, President Xi Jinping sent a letter of reply to residents in Shixia village, Badaling town, Yanqing district of Beijing. In his letter, he wrote that the Great Wall serves as a symbol of the Chinese nation and is an important emblem of the Chinese civilization. It represents a spirit of unrelenting efforts and patriotism featuring solidarity and resilience of the Chinese nation. “It is our common responsibility to protect and pass on this historical and cultural heritage,” said Xi, calling on the villagers to keep up their efforts for the long-term protection of the Great Wall. He also called for efforts to carry forward the Great Wall culture and spread relevant stories, so that more people will know about the Great Wall and engage in its protection. President Xi pointed out, “We should pass on the precious heritage left by our ancestors to future generations, contributing to the building of a culturally advanced socialist country and Chinese-style modernization.”



**In 1998, William Lindesay (right) presented the author (left) with an autographed copy of his book *Alone on the Great Wall*.**

## China-UK friendship through the Great Wall

My own life has been closely connected with the Great Wall. In 1984, I entered college, majoring in English.

In 1987, my junior year, I came across William Lindesay, a Briton who was passing Yulin during his hiking of the Great Wall. I was deeply moved to know that he was preparing to write a book about China’s Great Wall, to



**In 2005, William Lindesay, accompanied by the author, visited the Zhenbei Terrace in Yulin, the largest beacon tower on the Great Wall, for the first time.**

better present it to the rest of the world, when he finished his trek.

Eleven years later, I met Lindesay again when he led a team of volunteers to clean up garbage on the Beijing section of the Great Wall. He presented me with an autographed copy of his book *Alone on the Great Wall*.

In 2005, the Association of Volunteers for the Great Wall Protection founded by me in Yulin and the International Association of Friends of the Great Wall founded by Lindesay cooperated on a project in Yulin. We worked together to take photos of the Yulin section of the Great Wall to provide materials for Lindesay's new book *The Great Wall Revisited*,

which featured photos of the Great Wall in the past and the present for comparison. During his stay in Yulin, Lindesay fulfilled his dream of 18 years by climbing onto the Zhenbei Terrace, which was known as the "No. 1 Terrace of the Great Wall". He planted a tree as a symbol of China-UK friendship at the foot of the Zhenbei Terrace and was conferred the title of honorary citizen of Yulin by the Yulin Municipal Committee of the Communist Party of China and the Yulin Municipal People's Government.

In August 2016, in memory of the 30th anniversary of Lindesay's arrival in China, Lindesay and his family began a 41-day trip on the Great Wall. During their five-day stay in Yulin,

the two associations carried out eight themed activities. In the 700-square-kilometer exhibition hall on the theme of the Yulin section of the Great Wall, the people of Yulin and the British guests happily gathered together to share their wonderful stories about the Great Wall over the past 30 years. All the people present were touched by the stories of people-to-people exchanges between China and the UK connected through the Great Wall, and the great contributions the two associations have made to protect it. They were all looking forward to deepening people-to-people exchanges between the two countries and telling the story of the Great Wall in Yulin to more people around the world.

As president of the International Association of Friends of the Great Wall, William Lindesay has initiated many activities on the theme of the Great Wall, attracting the participation of many people. He has written many books about the Great Wall, one of which was a picture book with the title *The Golden Dragon*. It describes the important role played by the Zhenbei Terrace of the Yulin section of the Great Wall in facilitating ethnic integration in history, helping children to have a deeper understanding of the Great Wall. I hope that his book can be adapted into a musical or a stage play to be shown on the Zhenbei Terrace in Yulin in the future with our concerted efforts. It was a gift from Lindesay as an honorary citizen of Yulin to help the



latter delve into the values of the Great Wall in Yulin, and further integrate the local culture and tourism.

As a result of his research on the Great Wall and relevant efforts for its protection, Lindsey was conferred the 1998 Friendship Award by China's State Administration of Foreign Experts Affairs; in 2007, he was formally recognized as an honorary citizen of Yulin by the Yulin Municipal People's Government; in 2008, he won the Great Wall Friendship Award from the Beijing Municipal People's Government and was conferred the title of a "Prominent

Figure in Chinese Cultural Heritage Protection" by the China Foundation for Cultural Heritage Conservation. Under his influence, I've also become an expert on the Great Wall in the eyes of the local residents, and I too have been honored as an "Excellent Worker for Non-governmental Efforts in Cultural Relics Protection in Shaanxi Province", a "Most Beautiful Guardian of Cultural Relics Protection in Shaanxi Province", a "March 8th Red-banner Holder of Shaanxi Province", and an "Outstanding Female Cultural Worker of Shaanxi Province".

### Praying for Dorian on the Great Wall

On the morning of November 13, 2016, I saw a message when browsing my WeChat moments: Dorian, an eight-year-old American boy, who was suffering from cancer, asked his dad, "Do you know what I want before going to heaven?" His dad refrained from crying and said, "What is it?" Dorian replied, "I want to take a photo on the great bridge in China." His dad corrected him, "I think you are referring to the Great Wall." "Yes, the



Fifty-eight volunteers pray for Dorian, an American boy suffering from cancer, at the foot of the Great Wall, in Yulin.



Great Wall,” answered Dorian.

Dorian’s father later wrote on his social network, “Is there anyone in China who would like to send me a photo of somebody on the Great Wall in China, holding a card with ‘D-strong’ written on it? My eight-year-old boy, Dorian, has the last wish before going to heaven to see such a photo.”

When I read the message, I felt sorry for the little boy and was moved by his optimism and courage. I wondered what I could do for him and soon had an idea: to pray for Dorian in the name of the Association of Volunteers for the Great Wall Protection at the foot of the Great Wall in Yulin.

On the same day, I posted the proposal through my WeChat moments. More than 300 people shared the message and 80 people left a message of application for the activity. At about 16:00 P.M. of the same day, 58 volunteers came to the Zhenbei Terrace despite it being minus 27 degrees Celsius with chilly winds. Zhenbei Terrace in Yulin is the largest beacon tower on the Great Wall, standing as a representative architectural and cultural landmark of Yulin. It became even more majestic and beautiful against the background of the blue sky and white clouds.

Abundant photos and videos were taken thanks to two hours’ busy work by friends from enterprises, colleges, welfare societies, and media outlets. I prepared more than 10 banners with words written in Chinese and

English. Every photo was taken after careful organization and was full of blessings for Dorian. Every video clip was professionally made to show encouragement for him. One of the banners was written in both Chinese and English: “Dorian, we all love you! From the Zhenbei Terrace in Yulin, the largest beacon tower along the Great Wall of China!”

After the filming, my colleagues and I finished the post-production as fast as we could, and sent the greetings from the Yulin people and the Zhenbei Terrace of the Great Wall to Dorian’s father without any delay. Yulin TV and Shaanxi TV broadcast the story that evening, conveying a special love from Yulin to the other side of the Pacific Ocean.

Though we were oceans apart, I believe that Dorian could feel the wishes from the Chinese and their kindness. In this sense, I believe the Great Wall serves as a bridge of friendship and love, the backbone of China, and an emblem of the Chinese spirit.

When I came back home after the activity, it was already late at night. I had a sense of relief despite my exhaustion. Looking back on the day, I realized that my mind had been completely occupied by Dorian and the Great Wall for almost 20 hours, from seeing the news in the morning, to arranging the activity in the afternoon, and then to organizing and posting the relevant photos in the evening. It might be a trivial matter in other people’s

eyes, but it mattered a lot to me. As Chinese, we have the responsibility to understand the charm of our Great Wall, explore its mystery, spread its culture, increase its influence, and carry forward its spirit. I believe every volunteer taking part in the activity could feel its strength to comfort other people and touch themselves.

I often recall this experience and believe we have done something meaningful: Dorian must have been very happy to see the photos on the internet taken on different locations of the Great Wall, in which people were holding banners with his name on them. I think he must have been very happy to see his dream come true.

The Chinese civilization advocates harmony and coexistence. Because of the Great Wall, the International Association of Friends of the Great Wall developed friendship with the Association of Volunteers for the Great Wall Protection, and further engaged in many exchanges with Yulin; because of the Great Wall, an American boy was blessed by volunteers for the Great Wall protection and felt the kindness of the Chinese people; and because of the Great Wall, non-governmental exchanges between China and the rest of the world have explored new ways for open, innovative, inclusive, and mutually beneficial development, and for exchanges among civilizations featuring harmony in diversity. ■