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Saihanba is a cold alpine area in northern Hebei Province bordering the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. It was once a barren land but is now home to 75,000 hectares of forest, thanks to the labor of generations of forestry workers in the past 55 years. Every year the forest purifies 137 million cubic meters of water and absorbs 747,000 tons of carbon dioxide. The forest produces 12 billion yuan (around US\$1.8 billion) of ecological value annually, according to the Chinese Academy of Forestry.



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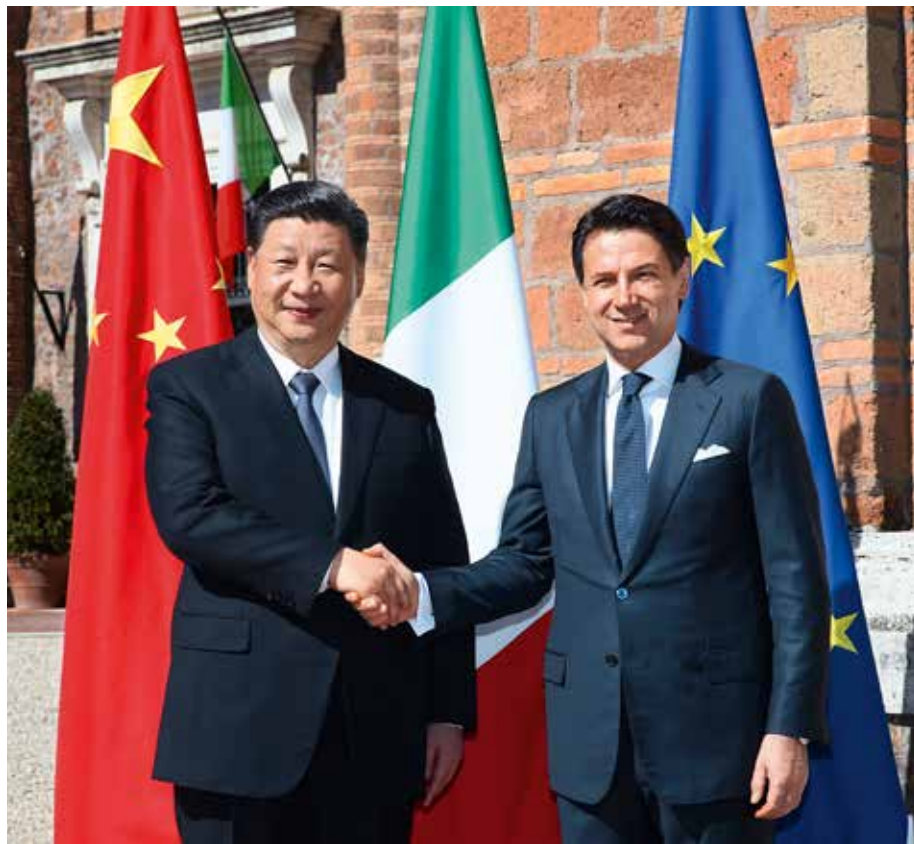
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Cover caption

Nepalese kids in a development activity organized by Rainbow Volunteer Club in a school in the suburb of Kathmandu, Nepal. courtesy of Rainbow Volunteer Club



by Lan Hongguang/Xinhua



MoU on Belt and Road

March 23, Rome, Italy: Chinese President Xi Jinping and Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte hold talks on elevating China-Italy relations in the new era and witness the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to advance the construction of the Belt and Road. China and Italy marked the two endpoints of the ancient Silk Road, so they have every reason to carry out cooperation on the Belt and Road, Xi said.

After Italy, the Chinese president also paid state visits to Monaco and France. Xi's three-nation Europe tour is both his first overseas trip in 2019 and his second trip to Europe in about four months, which demonstrates the importance China has attached to its relations with European countries.



VCG



2,000 China-Europe Freight Trains

March 15, Urumqi, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region: The 2,000th China-Europe freight train heading to Krasnodar, Russia leaves the freight logistics center. Since it began operation in 2016, trains departing the freight logistics center in the regional capital have reached 2,000, along 21 lines serving 26 cities and regions in 19 countries of Central Asia and Europe. The center has become an important logistics hub along the Silk Road Economic Belt.



VCG

Landmark Debut in New York

March 15, New York, United States: People enjoy the view aboard the interactive "Vessel." Comprised of 154 interconnecting flights of stairs including almost 2,500 individual steps and 80 landings, the honeycomb-shaped landmark on Hudson Yards became a tourist attraction as soon as it opened. Visitors can enjoy new perspectives of the city from different heights, angles and vantage points.



VCG

Mars Simulation Base

March 1, Mangai, Qinghai Province: China opens its first Mars simulation base to the public, with an aim to encourage young people to get involved in space exploration. The red rock area in the Qaidam Basin in western Qinghai has been called the most "Martian" place on Earth thanks to its natural features, landscape and climate all like the red planet. Participants can immerse themselves in the environment and try to solve problems they might face on Mars. China is expected to launch its first Mars probe in 2020, which will orbit, land on and put a rover on the red planet.



VCG

Splashdown in Victoria Harbor

March 22, Hong Kong: The giant inflatable sculpture "Companion," brainchild of American artist and designer Brian Donnelly, also known as KAWS, is exhibited in Victoria Harbor.

Following residencies in Seoul and Taipei, the traveling KAWS: HOLIDAY float began sailing along the waters of Victoria Harbor that day and remained open to the public until March 31.



Honoring Crash Victims

March 14, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: Candle flames burn during a commemoration ceremony for victims at the scene of the Ethiopian Airlines Flight ET 302 plane crash near the town of Bishoftu.

All 149 passengers and eight crew members aboard ET 302 bound for Nairobi, Kenya, were confirmed killed. Eight Chinese nationals including one from Hong Kong were confirmed aboard, according to the Chinese foreign ministry.

The crash was the second such accident in about five months involving the Boeing 737 MAX 8 model. In October last year, a Lion Air flight of the same model crashed in Indonesia, killing all 189 people on board.



Xinhua

Foreign Investment Law for Equality and Convenience

Text by Bian Yongzu

The foreign investment law will enhance the status of foreign businesses in the Chinese economy and provide greater convenience.

China has attracted a great amount of foreign investment in the four decades since the beginning of its reform and opening up in the late 1970s. By the end of 2018, a total of 960,000 foreign-invested enterprises had been set up in China, and the actual use of foreign capital exceeded US\$2.1 trillion. According to statistics released by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), China's actually used foreign capital has ranked first among developing countries for 27 years in a row since 1992.

In the early days of reform and opening up, foreign investors paid more attention to China's low labor costs and cheap natural resources. As China develops, its unified massive market and quality talents have become the most attractive aspects for foreign investors. With a total population of 1.4 billion, China has the largest middle-income group in the world. The importance of the Chinese market to all multinational companies is self-evident. In addition, the fundamental driving force for global economic growth lies in innovation. China can provide foreign companies with rich scientific and technological talents in fields like scientific research and manufacturing, which is rarely available in other countries in the world.

While China remains fairly

attractive to foreign investment, it is constantly striving to improve its business environment.


On January 30, 2019, the 8th meeting of the Standing Committee of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) reviewed a new draft of the *Foreign Investment Law of the People's Republic of China* and decided to submit the draft to the second session of the 13th NPC for deliberation. The foreign investment law that has been approved at this year's two sessions and will take effect since January 2020 will exert positive influence on China's attraction of foreign investment.

China did not have a separate foreign investment law in the past. Instead, according to the actual situation and the economic development at that time, different laws were introduced to regulate different aspects, such as investment, registration, and operation. These laws are the *Law of the People's Republic of China on Chinese-Foreign Equity Joint Ventures*, *Law of the People's Republic of China on Chinese-Foreign Contractual Joint Ventures*, and *Law of the People's Republic of China on Foreign-Capital Enterprises*. In addition to these three laws, there are still many other laws related to foreign investment, but the provisions are usually corresponding measures based on specific situation. These measures



February 9, 2019: Workers on a production line at Tianjin Samsung Electro-Mechanics Co., Ltd. Samsung Group chose to build a production base for multi-layer ceramic chip capacitors in Binhai New Area, Tianjin. IC

are not comprehensive laws. So there are shortcomings, and some parts are not unified but instead, contradictory to each other. This is not a suitable scenario for China's further opening up.

Therefore, it is necessary to regulate foreign investment with a unified basic law. The foreign investment law will enhance the status of foreign enterprises in the Chinese economy and enable them to participate fairly in economic activities. For example, it adheres to the management model of pre-establishment national treatment plus a negative list for foreign investment. And by replacing the approval system with a negative list system, the restrictions in the field of investment are greatly reduced. Foreign-invested enterprises can raise funds in accordance with the law through public issuance of stocks, corporate bonds and other methods, which will play a substantial role in attracting foreign investment. At the same time, after the law is implemented, the registration procedures for foreign businesses will be reduced and the time required will be shortened, improving convenience for foreign investors. 

The author is a research fellow from the Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies at Renmin University of China.

懒人经济 Lazy Economy

Edited by Li Zhuoxi

As the pace of life accelerates, people are spending more time on their social lives and becoming more reluctant to perform housework. The so-called "lazy economy" refers to a new type of consumption demand centered on replacing traditional housework with a series of high-tech commodities and services such as floor mopping robots, automatic window cleaners and electric mops.

Data shows that expenditures of the younger generations on such devices have increased rapidly, shining light on a group willing to spend money on such commodities and services to save time and energy.




According to a recent report released by major Chinese e-commerce platform Taobao on so-called "lazy" consumption, Chinese people spent 16 billion yuan (US\$2.32 billion) purchasing commodities and services online in 2018 to avoid household chores. The amount was 70 percent more than that in 2017, with the millennial generation deemed the "laziest" due to a consumption increase of 82 percent year-on-year. VCG

无废城市 Zero-waste City

Edited by Li Zhuoxi

The Chinese government plans to select about 10 cities with suitable conditions, environment and scale to carry out pilot projects for creating "zero-waste cities."

The project of "zero-waste cities" aims to promote green lifestyles and achieve zero growth in total industrial solid waste storage and disposal, full utilization of primary agricultural wastes, overall improvement in domestic waste reduction and resource utilization, comprehensive safety control of hazardous wastes, zero illegal transfer and dumping of solid wastes and cultivation of several solid waste recycling enterprises in the city. 



March 11, 2019: Recycled cans at Shanghai's solid waste science exhibition hall. China's rapid urbanization has led to an increase in environmental pollution. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, the average industrial solid waste output of China has increased by 10 percent annually, and the total dumped volume has exceeded 60 billion tons. IC



Rising to the Challenge

Concept by China Pictorial

During the 2019 annual sessions of the National People's Congress and the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, popularly known as the "two sessions," China stressed the complicated and challenging problems it faces in the domestic and international environment and the need to address issues in multiple fields to achieve high-quality development.

中华人民共和国第十三届全国人民代表大会第二次会议

March 5, 2019: The second session of the 13th National People's Congress opens at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. Each year, the two sessions attract massive attention from both home and abroad. by Wan Quan



March 9, 2019: A job fair in Huai'an City, Jiangsu Province attracts many visitors. In recent years, the Chinese economy has entered a structural adjustment period from high-speed growth to mid-to-high-speed growth. Despite overall stability, the employment situation in China is under pressure. VCG



This photo shows Chengdu Qingbaijiang International Railway Port of the China (Sichuan) Pilot Free Trade Zone. The 9.68-square-kilometer area, which aims to develop modern services, is a key supporting point for inland regions in China to facilitate international trade with countries and regions involved in the Silk Road Economic Belt. VCG



December 20, 2018: Local impoverished people learn to make bird cages to increase their incomes with the help of a targeted poverty alleviation program in Danzhai County, Guizhou Province. VCG

In pursuing development in 2019, China has faced “a complicated and challenging domestic and international environment of a kind rarely seen in many years,” as Chinese Premier Li Keqiang pointed out in this year’s government work report.

Presently, China’s economy is facing downward pressure. Meanwhile, China is also in the process of transitioning from high-speed to high-quality development. Economic factors are changing from traditional growth modes to a high-quality growth mode. This is an inevitable trend as the country replaces old growth drivers with new ones.

Jia Jinjing, assistant dean of the Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies at Renmin University of China, noted that in the structure of the world economy, China once led in accepting international industrial transfer, but the situation is different today. From the perspective of consumption, the country’s nearly 60 percent urbanization rate will help promote the upgrade of consumption demand and motivate high-quality development. From the perspective of

regional development, the scale effects of economic development of regions such as the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and the Yangtze River Delta are emerging, and China’s urban space and rural outlook are also being optimized and upgraded rapidly. From the perspective of driving forces, the contribution rate of scientific and technological progress to China’s economic growth rose from 50.9 percent in 2010 to 58.5 percent in 2018. China’s industrial development is now taking advantage of its technological innovation and scale effect to create new competitive edges.

But in the process of transitioning from high-speed to high-quality development, China still needs to address many problems. To rise to challenge, the country needs to focus on work in the following fields.

Reform of SOEs Must Accelerate

China’s 2019 government work report mentioned “accelerating reform of state-invested enterprises and state-owned enterprises (SOEs).” Reform of China’s

SOEs began in 1978, but it recently entered a new phase as the country’s economic situation has changed dramatically.

Xu Feibiao, deputy director of the Center for BRICS and G20 Studies at China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations, believes that in the new era, only accelerating reform of SOEs will enable China to grapple with challenges at home and abroad. Based on the fruits of existing reform, it is necessary for China to establish a state-owned asset management system, a modern enterprise system, a market-oriented operational mechanism and a professional manager employment and training mechanism in line with contemporary professional standards to promote the country’s economic transformation and upgrading. China must have global vision and the initiative to meet the challenges of the changing international landscape, the new wave of globalization and the revolution in science and technology.

Employment: A New Priority Target for China’s Macro-Control Policies

For the first time, China has elevated employment-first policy

to the status of macro policy in 2019. This is to increase society-wide attention to employment and enhance support for it, indicating that the focus of China’s macroeconomic regulation policies will shift to employment.

Professor Su Jian with the School of Economics at Peking University asserted that elevating employment to such an important position in this year’s government work report shines a spotlight on China’s current severe employment situation, which is closely related to the transformation of the country’s labor market. Su believes that in the current macroeconomic situation, China could start with the following strategies to increase employment: First, the government should continue to cut taxes and administrative fees for enterprises. Second, China’s industrial structure should be optimized to match the country’s current employment structure and avoid structural unemployment. Third, stabilizing the economy is the foundation for stabilizing employment, and stabilizing expectations should be highly prioritized. Fourth, unemployment benefits and relief should be

universal to ensure social stability.

Opening to the West

“For many years, western China has neglected its geographical advantages in linking to countries and regions surrounding the Indian Ocean as well as landlocked countries across the Eurasian continent,” declared Dai Yonghong, professor at the Institute of South Asian Studies of Sichuan University. The year’s government work report demonstrates that China is determined to promote high-standard opening up. The country will open more sectors and improve the layout of opening up, while adopting new policies and measures to promote the development and opening up of the west part of the country.

Dai noted that western China is adjacent to countries and regions rich in resources in Central Asia, South Asia and Southeast Asia, and transport routes through the Indian Ocean can further connect it with West Asia, the Middle East and Africa. He believes that looking further west offers some ideal solutions for enhancing the opening up of western China.

For western China, further

opening up also requires a shift from “passive” to “active” participation. Compared to coastal regions in the east, local governments in western China tend to act slowly in providing services, and local enterprises are often hesitant to expand business. Local governments should develop closer relationships with business enterprises, better help them understand overseas markets and inquire about their concerns. On the other side, entrepreneurs should actively seek out local governments to express their desires for international business and investment cooperation.

Preventing Pitfalls in Rural Work

As outlined in this year’s government work report, four major tasks presently compose China’s work related to rural areas and agriculture: beating poverty with precision alleviation, improving agriculture (particularly grain production), taking solid steps to upgrade rural infrastructure and deepening comprehensive rural reforms.

Wang Xiaoyi, head of the Center for Rural Environmental Social Studies and a researcher with the

Institute of Sociology at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, believes that the key to prioritizing rural and agricultural development and ensuring that the living standards of rural residents reach moderate prosperity in all respects is establishing long-term and stable mechanisms for development.

The importance of long-term mechanisms was first evidenced by poverty alleviation. Phenomena such as one-and-done projects and big construction without proper management have emerged from time to time. A long-term working mechanism minimizes detrimental engagement, but establishing long-term mechanisms requires supportive policies and measures. During the country's rural revitalization process, new problems need to be addressed and new policies formulated, but even more importance should be placed on maintaining the existing effective policies and positive trends.

Public Support for Private Enterprises

In 2019, China aims to devote greater efforts to optimizing the environment for the development of the private economy and effectively alleviating difficulties faced by the real economy, especially those of private enterprises and small and micro businesses in accessing affordable financing, as highlighted by Chinese Premier Li Keqiang during this year's two sessions.

Since 2008, private enterprises in China have been haunted by a "tide of bankruptcy." Zhang Peili, an associate professor at the Institute of China's Economic Reform and Development and a research fellow with the Research Center of China's Private Enterprises at Renmin University of China, believes that China's economic development in transformation is the fundamental

cause of difficulties faced by Chinese private enterprises.

Zhang predicted that during China's process of economic transformation, private enterprises would inevitably become more diversified. It is necessary to astutely determine which private enterprises should be eliminated from the market or moved to different regions or countries, which need to be reformed and upgraded, and which just need accelerated development. Considering the drastically different needs of private enterprises, targeted support should be used to boost their development and enhance policy effectiveness.

Strengthening Long-range Vision

During this year's two sessions, China stressed that it is not deviating from its chosen path of reform and opening up and is now consciously pursuing the goal of achieving greater qualitative growth as opposed to merely quantitative growth.

Sudheendra Kulkarni, a Mumbai-based political and social commentator who served as an aide to former Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee,

asserted that China's two-pronged approach of ambitious pursuit of success in high-tech industries alongside deepening its commitment to modernizing traditional industries, small and micro enterprises, services sector, agriculture and the rural economy would be well worth studying for India. He also referenced the need for massive expansion and deepening of India-China economic cooperation and more mutually beneficial cooperation and partnership in many other fields. The commentator opined that China could become a force of stability and growth for the entire South Asian region, especially by pursuing some out-of-the-box strategies and measures to bring India and Pakistan closer and promoting peace and development in Afghanistan through an innovative regional cooperation mechanism.

Driving Economic Growth with Consumption

In 2018, consumption contributed 76.2 percent of China's economic growth, marking its fifth straight year as the top driving force. Consumption has become a major force for the country's

economic growth.

At present, China's exports are facing profound changes in the external environment, weaker demand and gloomy prospects for further expansion. In terms of investment, China has already passed the stage of developing heavy and chemical industries. Thus, structural adjustment is now the major task in the short and medium term, rather than promoting investment. This situation positions consumption in a lead role in driving China's economic growth for the long term.

Dong Chao, a research fellow with the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, believes that several methods could be adopted to promote China's consumption and further drive economic growth. First, efforts must be made to increase residents' income. Second, supply-side structural reform should be strengthened. Third, investment


in commodity circulation facilities should be increased. Fourth, the consumption environment should be further improved.

Trade: Going Steadily into the Future

Looking back at 2018, global trade tension, protectionism and unilateralism surged. The international trade and investment landscape and the rules and norms for multilateral trade and investment are shifting radically. Overall, a series of policies and initiatives from the United States have been the primary cause for stunting global economic growth and altering international economic and trade rules.

Nonetheless, China's foreign trade maintains enough flexibility and margin for adjustment. Despite the escalating China-U.S. trade friction in 2018, China's foreign trade still achieved remarkable results. In addition, China's foreign

trade will gain momentum toward high-quality development and trade liberalization. There is also ample room for the adjustment of China's policies of stabilizing foreign trade, which can still be aligned with international economic and trade rules.

Su Qingyi, an associate researcher and deputy head of the International Trade Department of the Institute of World Economics and Politics at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, noted that China's two sessions this year focused on two "improvements" in foreign trade: one is to promote stable and higher-quality growth in foreign trade and the other is to promote trade liberalization and facilitation. Reform of trade rules provides a rare opportunity for China's foreign trade development, but at the same time, presents many challenges. Active participation in the reform of global economic and trade rules is crucial for China to turn challenges into opportunities. 



A worker from Fasten Group makes optical fiber robs at the Modified Chemical Vapor Deposition facilities. by Chen Ye



March 14, 2019: The Appliance & Electronics World Expo 2019 kicks off at Shanghai New International Expo Center. The expo displayed the latest development in many fields such as domestic appliances, consumer electronics and smart homes. VCG

Belt and Road Initiative New Avenues for Global Cooperation

Edited by China Pictorial

Through seizing new ideas, exploring new models and coping with new challenges, China is pursuing mutual benefits and win-win results with an increasing number of countries.

In the industrial park of the Zambia-China Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone, local workers make sneakers at a Chinese-funded company. by Qin Bin



August 23, 2018: The construction site of the China-invested Colombo Port City in Sri Lanka. VCG

Since the international financial crisis in 2008, the world economy has seen a downturn. Major Western countries have deployed various measures to boost their economies, but growth is still weak. At the same time, societal problems have swelled over the years to the point of eruption, and dissatisfaction has spread across the globe. A wave of populism is rising in many countries. Under these circumstances, the Chinese government launched the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), with an aim to promote policy coordination, connectivity of infrastructure, unimpeded trade, financial integration and closer people-to-people ties under the principles of “extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits.” Through seizing new ideas, exploring new models and coping with new challenges, China is pursuing mutual benefits and win-win results with an increasing number of countries.

Contributing a Chinese Solution

Glaring signals have shown that the liberal model of world development has gone wrong. In the process of globalization, the liberal model has gradually gained too much advantage. In order to increase competitiveness, capital gains seek to maximize profits through every possible means. The easing of the conditions for capital output has enabled this model to gradually spread through the world’s major economies and developing countries alike. In the process, a remarkable phenomenon to emerge alongside rapid economic growth has been serious social divisions as well as the intensification of social problems. Today, the ceiling of this model seems to have been reached. In these circumstances, countries and regions around the world are

looking for ways out. The world's major powers are seeking to formulate new rules. Mechanisms like the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) have emerged, but their operation is facing difficulties.

In 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed the BRI, an initiative for international cooperation that consists of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road. The initiative has pioneered a new mode of cooperation, activated various cooperation mechanisms, created numerous records in cooperation and promoted regional economic development. At the same time, amid the changing world situation and the new difficulties and obstacles hindering globalization, the BRI has become the Chinese solution to global governance.

Over the past more than five years since it was proposed, the BRI has not only become an important driver of pragmatic cooperation, but also a significant player in international relations. Promising early results have also been achieved in various fields under the initiative. These achievements are seen not only in China's development, but also in the development of other participating countries and the expansion of international cooperation. So far, China has signed BRI cooperation agreements with 80 countries. From 2013 to 2018, China's trade of goods with countries participating in the BRI exceeded US\$5 trillion, and China's investment in those countries hit US\$60 billion. These achievements have promoted cooperation among countries involved and promoted the social and economic development of participating countries. At the same time, the BRI has promoted the connectivity of



September 28, 2018: The Xinping Tunnel, part of the Chinese section of the China-Laos Railway, is under construction. VCG

development strategies, national interests and investment policies among participating countries. Through such connectivity, the initiative has created tremendous development potential and momentum as well as huge benefits.

Global BRI

After the BRI was first launched, Central Asian countries responded first. Central Asian countries benefited considerably from the ancient Silk Road and have a strong desire to revive the Silk Road. Thus, they are naturally in favor of the BRI. Located in the heart of Eurasia, Central Asia has an advantage of geographical centrality, but the region's remoteness in relation to

the vast continent makes participating in the international division of labor more difficult. Take the development of the global textile industry as an example: Although Central Asia is rich in human resources and cotton, the center of gravity of the global textile industry has bypassed this region as it moved from Europe and America to Japan and South Korea and then to China before reaching Southeast and South Asian countries such as Vietnam and Bangladesh. Obviously, geographical restrictions and traffic inconvenience are important factors hindering the region's development. However, the BRI has repositioned Central Asia's standing in the global economy, bringing the region from

the edge of the world to the center and generating unprecedented historic opportunities for Central Asian countries to participate more deeply in the global division of labor.

Over the past five years, Central Asian countries have gained a clearer view on the BRI, with early goodwill evolving into multi-faceted supportive action. Signing memorandums of understanding (MoUs) and joint statements may have only indicated willingness to cooperate under the framework of the BRI, but a detailed roadmap marks a new phase of cooperation rising from theory to pragmatism. Cooperation between China and some Central Asian countries has already reached this point. Although the construction of

the Belt and Road may encounter various problems, further deepening cooperation has been the general trend, considering the high-degree connectivity of strategic interests of participating countries.

West Asia is home to most of the Arab countries as well as Iran, Turkey and Israel. Since the BRI was proposed, countries in West Asia have paid great attention and responded positively. By the end of 2018, China had established comprehensive strategic partnerships with three West Asian countries, strategic partnerships with five West Asian countries, and signed BRI MoUs with three West Asian countries. In addition, nine West Asian countries are founding members of the Asian

Infrastructure Investment Bank.

At the beginning of this century, cooperation between China and West Asian countries focused on the field of energy. At the 2014 ministerial meeting of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum in Beijing, President Xi Jinping proposed the "1+2+3" cooperation framework with "energy cooperation as the main axis, infrastructure construction and trade and investment facilitation as the two wings, and three high-tech fields of nuclear energy, space satellite and new energy as the breakthroughs." Through further promotion of the BRI, cooperation between China and Western Asian countries has expanded to myriad fields including



August 8, 2018: A passenger pays subway fare with her mobile phone. Many shops in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia now receive payment made by Touch'n Go Digital (TnGD). As one of the nine local e-wallet apps set up by Chinese online payment platform Alipay in countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative, TnGD makes Malaysia the second country following China where subway stations receive payment by scanning a QR-code. IC



September 25, 2018: Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, King of Saudi Arabia, attends the opening ceremony of the Mecca-Medina high-speed railway in the coastal city of Jeddah City. VCG



May 16, 2017: A Panamanian ship loaded with oil from Saudi Arabia, a country participating in the Belt and Road Initiative, anchors at the port of Ningbo, Zhejiang Province. VCG



Children enjoy "free lunch" at a primary school in Nairobi, Kenya. This is a Chinese charitable project conducted under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative. courtesy of the Red Cross Society of China

security, healthcare and culture. A comprehensive framework of cooperation has taken shape.

South Asia is located at the intersection of the sea and land routes under the BRI, making it an important area and its countries important partners for the construction of the Belt and Road. The BRI has been widely welcomed by South Asian countries, and most of them have signed bilateral agreements with China to cooperate under the framework of the initiative. A flagship project for the Belt and Road, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is progressing smoothly, and the China-Nepal Economic Corridor and the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor are also advancing.

Africa was an important foothold of the ancient Maritime Silk Road. China and Africa are working hand in hand to promote the construction of the Belt and Road, becoming a highlight of international cooperation under the framework of the BRI. Over time, Africa has evolved



A stitched photo shows a Thai lady in Bangkok, Thailand "receiving" a flower handed over by a flower farmer in Yunnan Province, China. Southeast Asia is a traditional export destination for Yunnan flowers. With the completion of the Kunming-Bangkok transport route, it takes only 40 hours for fresh flowers to be delivered from Yunnan to Bangkok. Xinhua

into a key partner and an important participant of the BRI. Represented by construction of the African road network, achievements made by China and Africa in building the Belt and Road have been regarded as a highlight of international cooperation, and the African leg of Belt and

Road has been outstanding. Already, China has helped more than 2,000 African villages install satellite TV equipment. The project will eventually benefit 10,112 villages in 25 African countries. The spirit of people-to-people exchange has been well implemented in China-Africa

cooperation.

Although the Nordic countries are far from China, they are also actively exploring how to promote their own development through the BRI. The five Nordic countries are among the founding members of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, and three-dimensional transportation between China and the Nordic countries has taken shape. A freight rail line between Xi'an and Kouvola was launched, China's freighters regularly stop at the Finnish port, and Finnair started offering six different direct flights to China. The Nordic countries, which are facing various development problems, hope to gain momentum through the BRI as they look for new kinetic energy for their own economic development.

Diversified Cooperation

Over the past more than

“The promising outcomes of the BRI over the past five years have encouraged enterprises and other entities that have actively participated.”

five years since the BRI was launched, China has cooperated with other participating countries in various ways to ensure that trade cooperation, production capacity cooperation, and cooperation in industrial parks gradually



September 2017: Belmax Center in Serbia. As a cooperation zone under the Belt and Road Initiative, Belmax Center is a trade and logistics center jointly established by a company from China's Zhejiang Province and a local enterprise. VCG

improved. From the perspective of trade volume, China's exports to countries participating in the BRI have accounted for a rising proportion of its total exports. Imports from those countries were affected by fluctuations in commodity prices. From the perspective of trade structure, inter-industry trade is the main structural feature of China's trade with countries participating in the BRI, but intra-industry trade dominates China's trade with Southeast Asian countries, manifesting that the level of intra-industry division of labor is relatively high. Relatively speaking, despite the high level of industrialization in Central and Eastern European countries, the characteristics of those countries' inter-industry trade with China indicate that there is still a lack of intra-industry division of labor between China and those countries.

At the same time, China has made positive progress in production capacity cooperation with countries participating in the BRI: The scale of production capacity cooperation has continued to expand, and several major landmark projects have been launched. Overseas economic and trade cooperation zones have developed rapidly, fields of cooperation have continued to expand, and participating entities have become increasingly diversified. Domestic enterprises in the eastern part of China are the main force to "go global," and potential in the country's central and western regions is also relatively large. Production capacity cooperation under the BRI and China-Central and Eastern European countries (16+1) and China-Africa production capacity cooperation form a coordinated pattern of development. The development of economic and trade cooperation zones provides an important platform to promote the



August 15, 2017: Foreign craftsmen learn the production techniques of Huacao Paper, a kind of traditional Chinese handmade paper, in Wanda Village of Danzhai County in Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture, southwestern China's Guizhou Province. That day, the Second Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summer Camp, featuring cultural exchange on the basis of Chinese and other nations' traditional crafts, was held in the village. by Huang Xiaohai/Xinhua

construction of the Belt and Road and international industrial capacity cooperation. By the end of 2017, China had established 75 overseas cooperation zones with countries participating in the BRI. Most of them are located in Southeast

Asia, Russia, and Central and Eastern Europe.

Among those overseas cooperation zones, 20 have been built at certain scale. In 2017, the total investment of Chinese-funded enterprises in those 20 cooperation

zones exceeded US\$5.8 billion, with a total output worth more than US\$11 billion, providing jobs for more than 110,000 local people. Construction of those cooperation zones has created a new method of overseas investment cooperation,

explored and established a relatively mature model and become an important platform of international cooperation in production capacity and equipment manufacturing. Moreover, it has played an important role in promoting the development




September 4, 2018: The liquefied natural gas terminal in Rudong County, Jiangsu Province. Statistics shows that by August 2018, the terminal had received a total of 20.8 million tons of liquefied natural gas from 22 countries including Russia, Qatar, Australia and the United States since May 2011 when it was put into operation, 70 percent of which came from countries involved in the Belt and Road Initiative. IC

of bilateral relations.

The promising outcomes of the BRI over the past more than five years have encouraged enterprises and other entities that have actively participated. Like all major processes and programs, more than five years of practice have also highlighted the complexities and challenges involved in building the Belt and Road. Some countries still harbor misunderstandings about the BRI and worry that China has geopolitical aims. Those who have participated in the initiative are mostly developing countries with complex social environments and limited economic scales. The economic policies and business environments in different countries also vary sharply. Non-traditional security issues such as political turmoil, terrorism, separatism and transnational crimes have also threatened the construction of the Belt and Road.

Under these circumstances, a

wide array of countries and regions jointly responding to the challenges is the only way out. The construction of the Belt and Road is not only about pragmatic cooperation, but also about security cooperation. It will not only produce mutual benefits and win-win results economically, but also solidify regional stability. 

This article is an excerpt from *Blue Book of "The Belt and Road" (2019)* published by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. The Blue Book includes *General Report, The Belt and Road Construction and the Cooperation with Central Asia, The Belt and Road Construction and the Cooperation with West Asia, The Belt and Road Construction and the Cooperation with South Asia, The Belt and Road Construction and the Cooperation with Africa, The Belt and Road Construction and the Cooperation with North Europe, Trade Cooperation between China and the Countries along the Belt and Road, Capacity Cooperation between China and the Countries along the Belt and Road, Industrial Park Cooperation between China and the Countries along the Belt and Road, etc.*

ACROSS THE GLOBE

The Belt and Road in Action

Since it was proposed in 2013, the Belt and Road Initiative has won support in regions across the globe including Central Asia, South Asia, the Middle East, Central and Eastern Europe, and Africa. To date, China has signed cooperation documents on jointly building the Belt and Road with **123** countries and **29** international organizations. Over the past five years, China has traded goods worth more than **US\$6 trillion** with countries involved in the Belt and Road Initiative and invested over **US\$70 billion** in those countries. Increasingly connected infrastructure has boosted the momentum of international cooperation, and increased cultural exchange has given people in different countries more to have in common with each other.

1 South Asia

Logistics and Transportation



The port of Gwadar is the core of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, including the Gwadar Port, the Gwadar Free Trade Zone and the new international airport in Gwadar.



The China-Pakistan cross-border optical cable project was launched in May 2016 and completed in July 2018. The cable line extends **820** kilometers from Rawalpindi near Islamabad in the south to the Khunjerab Pass on the border between China and Pakistan, where it is connected to the optical cable network in China.

The Padma Bridge is China's largest contracted project in Bangladesh and it is an important nexus on the Trans-Asian Railway that connects China and South Asia.

In May 2015, a cargo aircraft made its first flight from Kunming, the capital of southwestern China's Yunnan Province, to Dhaka, the capital and largest city of Bangladesh, marking the opening of Yunnan Province's airway to the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor.



In February 2016, Bangladesh and the Asian Development Bank struck a **US\$1.5 billion** loan deal to build a railway from Cox's Bazar to the border between Bangladesh and Myanmar, expanding the connecting area of the Trans-Asian Railway.

The Colombo Port City and the Port of Hambantota are the best-known projects involving the cooperation between China and Sri Lanka under the Belt and Road Initiative.

Trade and Investment



In 2017, the total trade volume between China and South Asian countries exceeded **US\$120 billion**, an increase of **14.6** percent from the previous year. In the same year, China's investment in South Asian countries surpassed **US\$1.76 billion**. China has become a major source of foreign capital for South Asian countries.

2 Central Asia

Logistics and Transportation

Since May 2014 when the China-Kazakhstan Lianyungang Logistics Cooperation Base first went into operation, **800,000** TEUs with **12.14 million** tons of goods have been transported through the base.

The Qamchiq Tunnel, jointly constructed by China and Uzbekistan, opened in February 2016. The tunnel links the Fergana Valley in eastern Uzbekistan with other regions in the country, laying the basis for a national railway network.

The Vakhdat-Yovon Railway, jointly constructed by China and Tajikistan, is the first railway completed since Tajikistan's independence.

China and Kyrgyzstan cooperated to build the "North-South Highway" in Kyrgyzstan, of which the first portion of **154** kilometers was financed and constructed by China and the financing deal for the second portion of **96** kilometers was signed in June 2015.



Energy Pipelines

As of September 2018, over **110 million** tons of crude oil had flowed through the China-Kazakhstan pipeline. In 2017 alone, the figure surpassed **10 million** tons.

As of September 2018, over **235.89 billion** cubic meters of natural gas had traveled through the China-Central Asia gas pipeline. From January to September 2018, the figure was **35.7 billion** cubic meters.



Financial Cooperation

As of August 2018, China had invested a total of **US\$7.8 billion** in Uzbekistan.

From 2013 to 2017, Kyrgyzstan attracted foreign direct investment of nearly **US\$3.69 billion**, and China's investment of nearly **US\$1.35 billion** accounted for **36.5** percent.

As of June 2017, China had provided **US\$1.2 billion** for Tajikistan, making up more than **50** percent of external financing in the country.



People-to-people Exchange

Currently, there are **13** Confucius Institutes and **22** Confucius Classrooms in Central Asian countries.

There are **14,000** Kazakhstani students in China and **1,400** Chinese students in Kazakhstan. About **2,000** Kyrgyzstani students and **2,000** Tajikistani students are in China. About **900** students from Uzbekistan come to China for education every year.

In China, the number of universities teaching Kazakh has gone up from two to four and universities teaching Uzbek up from two to three.

In Tajikistan, Xinjiang TBEA Group built four China-Tajikistan "friendship schools" that enroll more than **4,000** students. China National Petroleum Corporation sponsored the construction of the National Dance Academy of Kazakhstan.



3 West Asia

Trade and Investment



In 2017, the total trade volume between China and West Asian countries surged by **14.3** percent year-on-year, and the export volume grew by **2.6** percent year-on-year. That year, China's top five export destinations in West Asia were the United Arab Emirates, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Israel, and its top five import sources in the region were Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Oman and the United Arab Emirates.

In 2015, China absorbed Saudi Arabia's net foreign direct investment of **US\$277 million**, reaching a five-year peak.

China, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates have set up a joint investment fund to bolster industrialization in the Middle East and provide financing support for cooperation projects between enterprises of China and the Middle East.

The ICBC Doha Branch is China's first RMB clearing bank in Arab countries, and the second RMB clearing center in West Asia is the Dubai Branch of the Agricultural Bank of China.

Scientific and Technological Innovation



China is steadily advancing its cooperation in lunar and Mars explorations with Saudi Arabia, and has made rapid progress in cooperation with Arab countries in fields like the BeiDou satellite navigation system, digital economy and information technology.

People-to-people Exchange



Through the launch of "friendship years," art festivals, symposiums on dialogue between civilizations, joint universities, Confucius Institutes, student exchange programs, the translation of **100** Sino-Arab classics along the Silk Road, and the communication and collaboration of think tanks, cultural and people-to-people exchanges between China and West Asian countries have improved.

4 Africa

Trade and Investment

China has been Africa's largest trading partner for nine consecutive years. In 2017, the trade volume between China and Africa reached **US\$170 billion**, a year-on-year increase of **14** percent. From January to June 2018, their trade volume reached **US\$98.8 billion**, a year-on-year increase of **16** percent.

In 2017, China's direct investment in Africa was **US\$3.1 billion**. By the end of 2017, China's investment stock in Africa exceeded **US\$100 billion**.

In the first half of 2018, China and Africa handled more than **38.11 billion** yuan (around **US\$5.68 billion**) in cross-border RMB receipts and signed **73 billion** yuan (about **US\$10.88 billion**) in bilateral currency swaps. A total of **28** African banks became indirect participants in the Cross-border Interbank Payment System (CIPS). The proportion of RMB settlement in China-Africa trade has risen from **5** percent in 2015 to **11** percent in 2017.

People-to-people Exchange



At the Johannesburg Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation held in December 2015, China promised to implement projects concerning academic education, youth training, talent cultivation, and construction of schools in Africa during the period from 2016 to 2018.

So far, China has established **54** Confucius Institutes and **27** Confucius Classrooms in **41** African countries, there have been more than **130** pairs of sister cities between China and African countries, and more than one million Chinese tourists visit Africa every year.

5 South Caucasus

Logistics and Transportation

On February 10, 2015, the first Xinjiang-Georgia international freight train arrived in Tbilisi from Kuitun, northwestern China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, after a trip of nine days. The total length of the line is about **5,500** kilometers. This direct railway link takes **36** days less than the maritime route.

In August 2015, the first Chinese freight train traveling through the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route, carrying **82** containers, arrived in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan.



Production Capacity Cooperation

In Georgia, the Hualing industrial park, built by China, opened in October 2015, covering an area of **1,000 mu (666,667 square meters)**.

In July 2016, China XD Group successfully signed an EPC project for the renovation of Armenia's power plants, with a total contract value of around **US\$15 million**.

Trade and Investment

In the four years from 2014 to 2017, Georgia's exports to China grew steadily, with annual export volume reaching **US\$90 million**, **US\$125 million**, **US\$168 million** and **US\$202 million**, respectively.

China was the ninth largest trading partner of Azerbaijan in 2015, and rose to its fourth largest trading partner in 2017, with bilateral trade volume reaching nearly **US\$1.3 billion** that year.

In the four years from 2014 to 2017, the annual trade volume between China and Armenia was **US\$292 million**, **US\$332 million**, **US\$387 million**, and **US\$435 million**, respectively. China has retained the status as Armenia's second largest trading partner.

6 Northern Europe

In 2014, the trade volume between China and Denmark exceeded **US\$10 billion**. Denmark is the European country with the largest amount of per capita trade and investment in China, and China is Denmark's largest trading partner in Asia.

In 2016, the trade volume between China and Iceland reached **US\$229 million**, a year-on-year increase of **19.6** percent. In the same year, the number of Chinese tourists to Iceland reached **66,718**, a year-on-year increase of **40** percent.

In April 2017, the largest business delegation in Norway's history visited China. The two countries signed **13** cooperation agreements on seafood, education, shipping, energy, and maritime issues, with a total value of **16 billion** yuan (around **US\$2.38 billion**).

In 2017, the trade volume between China and Sweden reached **US\$15 billion**, a year-on-year increase of **35** percent, and the number of Chinese students studying in Sweden exceeded **8,000**.

In 2017, the trade volume between China and Finland reached **US\$7.1 billion**, a year-on-year increase of **12.1** percent. Since 2010, Finland has hosted activities such as "Chinese Spring Festival Temple Fair" and "Chinese Culture Festival."



Source: Blue Book of "The Belt and Road" (2019) released by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.
Edited by Hu Zhoumeng and designed by Andrey Maleev



A girl, who had moved to Kathmandu with her parents from mountainous areas, enjoys an activity organized by Rainbow volunteers for children of brick factory workers. courtesy of Rainbow Volunteer Club

Over the Rainbow

Text by Ru Yuan

Through various projects in Nepal such as helping needy children and building community schools, Rainbow Volunteer Club hopes to help local children and families and promote people-to-people exchange between China and Nepal.

The story of Rainbow Volunteer Club in Nepal started on April 25, 2015, when a massive 8.1-magnitude earthquake struck the country. That day, Rainbow Volunteer Club, a non-governmental organization (NGO) founded by a group of young Chinese people devoted to charitable endeavors, left for Nepal to help with rescue efforts. From humanitarian relief after the quake to helping children and bolstering education, Rainbow has now been providing services in Nepal for nearly four years.

Originally founded in 2011 in China's Gansu Province, Rainbow Volunteer Club was officially registered as a non-governmental and nonprofit organization in China in 2014, only a year before the massive earthquake hit Nepal.

In September 2017, Rainbow's Nepal office was officially registered and established in Kathmandu and soon began to recruit local volunteers to provide long-term and full-time services. With it, Rainbow became an NGO with branches in foreign lands, which remains quite rare for an NGO from Gansu Province or anywhere else in China.

From Temporary Earthquake Relief to Long-term Service

On April 25, 2015, the massive earthquake shook Nepal. Ren Zhihao, head of Rainbow Volunteer Club, flew to Lhasa that afternoon

with some colleagues, where they boarded a Chinese civil aircraft heading for Nepal to perform overseas evacuation operations. When they arrived in Kathmandu, the local airport was already closed, and Rainbow volunteers attracted a great deal of attention. Even local police officers who were maintaining order at the airport were surprised. "You guys are coming in now?"

Rainbow volunteers quickly began to assess the disaster, recruit local volunteers and assign them tasks as they established

resettlement sites. Over the following two months, Rainbow worked with other institutions to build temporary shelters for earthquake victims and provide them food. Later, it began to set up temporary resettlement sites for kids from local orphanages, shifting the focus of its relief efforts to post-disaster settlement of orphans. Also because of such kids, Rainbow workers decided to stay in Nepal to provide child-centered public services.

"Children's Home" is an orphanage that Rainbow Volunteer Club began to serve shortly after the



Volunteer Qing Qing (front) teaches Nepalese children traditional Chinese opera at a local orphanage. courtesy of Rainbow Volunteer Club



A Rainbow volunteer (right) talks with children at an orphanage. In recent years, Rainbow volunteers have focused on helping orphans attend school and receive education as well as organizing development activities. by Jia Qi

earthquake. “This orphanage drew our attention while we were conducting post-quake assistance and research,” recalled Rainbow volunteer Chen Mi. “Its buildings were cracked due to the earthquake. The kids there had no place to live and no food to eat.” Upon seeing this scene, Rainbow workers gave one of their three tents to the orphanage and started brainstorming more “practical” help. In the following years, Rainbow volunteers have shifted from providing temporary shelters for Nepalese kids to helping them attend school and receive education, supplying basic living amenities, organizing development activities, playing with children and regularly visiting them.

Providing educational programs for kids is one of the relief missions

to which Rainbow Volunteer Club attached the greatest importance in China and beyond. The organization has been drawn to child education in poverty-stricken mountainous areas because the educational resources in Nepal’s mountainous regions are so scarce. “We hope to help local children grow sustainably through exploring different methods,” Chen said.

Public Welfare Cooperation under Belt and Road

In September 2017, the branch of Rainbow Volunteer Club in Nepal registered with the Social Welfare Council Nepal. Thanks to policies of the Belt and Road Initiative, Rainbow Volunteer Club has been considering extending its cooperation and exchange with Nepalese

NGOs under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative. Currently, they focus on projects involving helping children in need, enhancing child development, promoting youth exchange and building community schools in Nepal to help local children and families as they promote people-to-people exchange between the two countries.

In terms of helping children in need, Rainbow Volunteer Club focuses most tightly on Nepalese orphans and local kids from poverty-stricken families. The NGO has also carried out child development programs such as “Rainbow Sense.” Aimed at young dropouts, “Rainbow Sense” provides them with basic living necessities and learning opportunities.

Rainbow volunteers have worked

with local schools and teachers in Nepal to develop child-centered activities and encourage local young volunteers to participate. The organization has already helped 50 Nepalese kids return to school and hosted training programs for teachers from local schools. It provided education support services for 10 schools in Sindhupalchok District including establishing mobile theaters, providing basic materials such as rugs, conducting disaster alleviation and prevention classes in primary schools, setting up libraries and sending school supplies to kids in mountainous areas.

The youth exchange program is the pride of Rainbow Volunteer Club in terms of promoting people-to-people exchange. Aiming to strengthen exchange and collaboration among young volunteers from both China and Nepal, young volunteers from both countries have jointly worked on the program. Through providing systematic training for Nepalese university students, Rainbow hopes to transform young Nepalese volunteers into social workers. By doing so, these Nepalese young people can land a job while providing services for public welfare undertakings.

Rainbow has even bigger goals. From December to May, people from the mountainous areas across Nepal often go to work in brick factories around Kathmandu. Earning meager incomes and living in areas with scarce educational resources, many of these migrant workers don’t have the opportunity to send their kids to school during this time. “At first, our plan was to provide learning opportunities only for the children of these brick factory workers,” said Ren Zhihao. “But during the process of implementation, our ideas evolved, and now we want to provide free schooling opportunities for homeless



Nepalese youngsters from Sindhupalchok District participate in a training program launched by Rainbow Volunteer Club. Many of these young people will become teachers in the near future. by Jia Qi



Rainbow volunteers with students from a primary school in mountainous areas of Sindhupalchok District, Nepal. Each year, they bring school supplies and clothing to these kids. courtesy of Rainbow Volunteer Club

and migrant children around Kathmandu.” Rainbow Yingxin Community School is one fruit of this idea. The school, which is expected to open by the summer of 2019, aims to raise awareness about education for both parents and kids by providing supplementary courses and skills classes for migrant children living in surrounding areas.

“Nepal is a land of abundant

festivals and activities,” noted Chen Mi. “One of the country’s most important non-religious festivals is Children’s Day. You can tell from their observation of the holiday that they attach great importance to kids. We hope that through the efforts of volunteers from both China and Nepal, more children will enjoy equal access to education and embrace a bigger world.”

Help Beyond Borders

Text by Hu Zhoumeng Photographs courtesy of the CFPA unless otherwise credited

“We have settled there, become immersed in the community and maintained contact with locals every day. They know us, and we know them. This is how people-to-people bonds really begin to build.”

Lin Yuan first visited Myanmar in July 2014. After being a member of the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation (CFPA) for only a year, she was selected to participate in a 12-day overseas survey. In an interview with local college students, she met a girl who revealed that her father had passed away and her mother, who lost an arm, provided for the family and the girl’s education all by herself. The girl couldn’t hold back tears while talking about her family. Lin was touched by the family’s resilience. “I should do something in Myanmar,” she thought.

In March 2015, Lin went to Myanmar again for an internship with Mercy Corps and stayed to help set up the CFPA’s Myanmar office. When she visited local governments and possible partner agencies, she found that Myanmar’s people were familiar with public welfare non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with the United Nations and from developed countries, but had seldom heard of Chinese NGOs. Lin was once asked how NGOs could operate in a country in which the government plays a

dominant role in public affairs. She replied, “Although the Chinese government has a strong capacity, it also welcomes supplements from non-governmental forces. Now that the Chinese society is developing more comprehensively, you will see more Chinese NGOs working overseas.”

China-Myanmar Friendship

In the 2014 survey, Lin and her colleagues realized that education is one of the most urgent needs in Myanmar. Poor college students there need both financial support and capacity building. Therefore, the CFPA’s Myanmar office launched its first public welfare project—the Paukphaw Scholarship Project—in July 2015, after it became the first Chinese international NGO registered in Myanmar. The project is a Myanmar version of the New Great Wall Self-Improvement Project that has been implemented in China for more than 10 years.

To investigate the background of scholarship candidates, Lin visited more than 40 villages and became the first foreign face to venture into many rural townships in Myanmar. “Because of a lack of electricity,

many places had only dim light from solar lanterns at night and very little access to information.” But when she saw graduation photos of the students hanging on the walls at their homes, the parents always looked proud. “This is exactly the same as in China.”

In 2016, Lin and her colleagues decided to provide scholarships for 1,300 students from 12 universities in three states in Myanmar. They planned to support 700 of them for four consecutive years and the other 600 for one year, covering 70 to 80 percent of their living expenses. To achieve this goal, the CFPA would invest about 10 million yuan (US\$1.5 million) in the four-year period starting from 2016. At the

same time, Lin’s team also organized activities for the students, such as volunteer work, computer training and visits to Chinese enterprises. In 2017, the CFPA offered 10 Myanmar students a tour of Shanghai including visits to museums and pharmaceutical factories employing advanced technology. “We hope these students will pay the favor forward to others after receiving our help and also enhance their comprehensive competitiveness to get ready for graduation,” said Lin.

In 2018, the CFPA’s Myanmar office launched the Panda Pack Project. To date, 40,000 school supplies packs have been distributed to pupils in poor and remote regions of Myanmar. When Lin and

her colleagues visited Myanmar’s Minister of Education Myo Thein Gyi in Naypyidaw last September, he opened the pack and checked every object inside. Lin recalled that Myo Thein Gyi was particularly fond of the paint pens and lunch box. “He declared that the Panda Pack was exactly what the local students needed and urged us to promote the project with full force.”

The CFPA’s Myanmar office now employs 10 staffers, including three from China and seven from Myanmar. When distributing the panda packs, they go to the schools and check every pupil’s signature to ensure the packs are delivered to the people who really need them. At first, Lin and her

colleagues disagreed on the situation. “Local schools and Myanmar colleagues found it troublesome to hold pack donating ceremonies and conform to relevant procedures,” Lin explained. “But I didn’t want to leave immediately after making the donation as some enterprises and organizations do. I wanted more interaction with the students. Every step helps us know them better and vice versa.”

Cultural differences have occasionally triggered friction within the CFPA’s Myanmar office. In Lin’s view, mutual understanding and respect is key to their work. “I listen when my Myanmar colleagues ask for conformity with local customs,” Lin stressed. “But



May 11, 2018: Students in Phnom Penh, Cambodia receive school supplies packs delivered by the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation (CFPA).



Ma Aye (second left), a beneficiary of the Paukphaw Scholarship Project, with her younger brother, grandmother, uncle and aunt. Aye lost her parents when she was young and was raised by her grandmother.



Lin Yuan, director of the CFPA’s Myanmar office, has worked with the NGO for six years. by Chen Jian

the CFPA has its own standard processes, and we also need to consider our donors' wishes. So, we keep communicating. They take a step back, and so do I, and then we come to solutions. It's crucial that we all keep moving toward a common goal."

Thanks to the efforts of Lin's team, the Myanmar office has become a flagship model for the CFPA's overseas development. In the future, they will continue projects in education and launch new projects promoting healthy drinking water. In their spare time, Lin and her colleagues like to play guitar and chat by the river bank. After talking with Lin, her Myanmar colleagues found a new understanding of China. "In the past, they looked to Singapore as the model for Myanmar to follow, but after learning about high-speed rails and mobile payment in China, they realized China was amazing," Lin grinned.

"People's minds become connected through real mutual understanding," Lin opined. "We have settled there, become immersed in the community and maintained contact with locals every day. They know us, and we know them. This is how people-to-people bonds really begin to build. NGOs should play such a role and engage in heartfelt exchange."

Reaching Out to Help around the Globe

Chen Hongtao, executive deputy secretary-general of the CFPA, oversees the organization's international affairs. He recalls Chinese people once questioning why domestic NGOs would go overseas to engage in public welfare undertakings while there were still so many poor people in China. Today, however, the Chinese public has become the major source of funding



May 11, 2018: Chen Hongtao (right), executive deputy secretary-general of the CFPA, gives a school supplies pack to a student in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

for the CFPA's overseas projects. For instance, after Nepal was hit by a major earthquake in 2015, the CFPA raised more than 10 million yuan (US\$1.5 million) in China for disaster relief. Most of the funds came in the form of small donations from ordinary people.

"China still has poor people, but the concept of 'poverty' is not the same as before," Chen illustrated. "By 2020 China will achieve a moderately prosperous society in all respects. In the future, Chinese people will pursue better education, health and development. But now more than 800 million people around the world are still plagued by hunger, and more than two billion people are not guaranteed clean drinking water. China received much aid from the international community when it was lagging behind. Now that we have some ability, we should help others as much as we can."

Since 2005, the CFPA has carried out many international emergency rescue missions. It donated medicine to tsunami-stricken areas of Indonesia, assisted Chile with earthquake relief and supported

West Africa in fighting the Ebola epidemic. After establishing the Department for International Development in 2009, the CFPA launched long-term development projects in countries like Myanmar, Nepal, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Sudan and Uganda. By the end of 2018, it had helped about 450,000 people in 20-plus countries and regions through investment of about 160 million yuan (US\$23.8 million) in projects involving emergency



On November 1, 2018, the CFPA launched a school meals program called "Smiling Children" at Metebaber Primary School in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This photo shows Liu Fengwei (third right), director of the CFPA's Ethiopia office, dining with students at the school.


relief, equipment assistance, NGO capacity-building, hospital construction, school meals, university student funding and comprehensive community development.

According to Chen, the CFPA currently focuses on six key parts of the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals: no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, quality education, clean water and sanitation, decent work and economic

growth. "What people in less developed countries need most is to improve their living conditions, so we aim at meeting the urgent demand for better livelihood and focus on one or two key strategies that fit the local situation."

In recent years, the CFPA has recruited more and more employees with overseas education background or work experience with international organizations. "As Chinese people go overseas and

communicate with foreigners more often, their international vision and concern for international affairs are growing."

Since joining the CFPA in 2002, Chen has been engaged in public welfare for 17 years. "We work with the poorest and also the rich," he explained. "It has dawned on me that ultimately the worth people pursue is achieved by helping others. And that's exactly what we're doing now." 

Connecting China with the World

Text by Gong Haiying Photographs courtesy of the Department of International Cooperation of China's Ministry of Science and Technology

"We have become close friends and established deep connections with many foreign students taking training classes."

"I'm so excited to finally visit the birthplace of hybrid rice where Academician Yuan Longping, the father of hybrid rice, works and lives," exclaimed Amir Anchalee Prasertsak, a senior expert of the Rice Department at Thailand's Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives. In June 2009, she arrived at the Hunan Rice Research Institute (HRRI) for a training class for developing countries on hybrid rice technology, and her sentiments mirrored those of every arriving trainee.

Huang Zhicai, deputy director of the HRRI, noted that the training classes have not only promoted the globalization of hybrid rice technology and contributed Chinese efforts in maintaining world food security, but also greatly enhanced the friendship between China and other developing countries and laid a solid foundation for enhancing people-to-people connectivity through the Belt and Road Initiative. "We have become close friends and established deep connections with many foreign students taking training classes," he said.

Nation Training

Hybrid rice originated in central China's Hunan Province. Since its



Experts from the Hunan Rice Research Institute work with their Brazilian counterparts, 2008. From 2000 to 2012, the institute developed in-depth cooperation with some organizations in Brazil. Within those three years, the institute and its Brazilian partners jointly studied mechanized seedling production technology and developed two new rice varieties suitable for local plantation.

establishment in 1975, the HRRI has cultivated many new varieties of rice of high quality and made significant breakthroughs in planting techniques.

In 2009, the institute began to hold training classes to teach hybrid rice cultivation technology with independent intellectual property rights to students from developing countries.

Since the launch of the Belt and Road Initiative, the institute has established cooperation with an increasing number of developing countries along the Belt and

Road routes and trained more than 150 hybrid rice technicians for nearly 20 countries. To guarantee the effectiveness of the training classes, instructors developed targeted courses for trainees from various regions such as instruction on unique application of hybrid rice technology in tropical areas for African students, mechanized seedling production and cultivation courses for South American students, and rice quality improvement courses for Southeast Asian students.

Thanks to the help from two



September 2015: Academician Yuan Longping, the father of hybrid rice, shows the trainees the research results of super hybrid rice in an experimental field.

Brazilian trainees in the first training classes, the HRRI conducted in-depth cooperation with some organizations in Brazil from 2010 to 2012. Within those three years, the institute and its Brazilian partners jointly studied mechanized seedling production technology and developed two new rice varieties suitable for plantation in Brazil. Compared to traditional varieties, the hybrid rice invented by the cooperation program has improved its yield by about 50 percent, which is widely welcomed by local farmers.

Since the introduction of the Belt and Road Initiative, the institute has strengthened its ties with involved

developing countries. In recent years, it has been placing particular emphasis on cooperation with partners in Thailand and Laos.

From 2013 to 2018, China and Thailand sent 24 and 21 experts respectively to visit each other for exchange studies. From 2013 to 2016, the institute undertook two major technical cooperation projects on hybrid rice with the Rice Department of Thailand's Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives.

In 2018, the institute began to send experts to conduct technical cooperation with organizations in Laos on rice breeding. Huang revealed that more cooperation

would be conducted with the country in the years to come.

Huang recalled that at first many students from developing countries knew little about hybrid rice technology. Over the past 10 years, however, many former trainees have effectively solved many technical problems in rice breeding in their own countries with the technology they learned at these training classes. Such success has inspired them to strongly recommend the classes to their colleagues and friends from home and abroad alike. Now, an increasing number of people are applying for the training program.

Academician Yuan Longping is



1. The then-Minister of Water Resources and Environment of Uganda (third left) during a field survey in northwestern China's Gansu Province in 2012. From 2011 to 2014, the Gansu Hydraulic Research Institute cooperated with related organizations in 11 African countries to carry out research on water resources of African countries and regions, which played an important role in the sustainable development and management of water resources in Africa.
2. China Railway Eryuan Engineering Group Co., Ltd. continually held the annual International Training Class on Railway Construction Technology from 2015 to 2018, during which time it provided training courses for nearly 100 trainees from 15 countries and regions. The photo shows trainees visiting a workshop in 2018.

the brightest star of the program. "Almost every trainee expects to meet him whenever they sign up for training," Huang grinned. As honorary director of the institute, Yuan insists on providing training lessons in person no matter how busy he is and sometimes takes students into the field to show them the new research results on super hybrid rice.

Boosting Belt and Road Cooperation

To date, the technical training classes for developing countries sponsored by China's Ministry of Science and Technology have been

carried out for 30 consecutive years.

Training courses cover many fields such as science and technology policy and management, agricultural technology, information and manufacturing, healthcare, resources and environmental protection. They aim to help developing countries train technical personnel, develop advanced and applicable technologies and promote the technological, economic and social development in those countries.

For example, the International Training Class on Railway Construction Technology sponsored by China Railway

Eryuan Engineering Group Co., Ltd., the only technical training class in the field of transportation, has been held for four straight years since 2015, during which time it has provided railway technology training courses for nearly 100 trainees from 15 countries and regions. Training courses are delivered in various forms including theoretical teaching, technical exchange, field surveys and cultural visits to comprehensively share the achievements and experiences of China's railway development.

Some training courses have



3. From 2012 to 2018, Chongqing Medical University organized six technical training classes for more than 100 trainees from developing countries. The photo shows trainees participating in the training of clinical application of ultrasound therapy technology in 2013.
4. Trainees make traditional Chinese food in a class. By the end of 2018, the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Mechanization Sciences had organized nearly 30 technical training classes sponsored by the Ministry of Science and Technology, among which Agricultural Products Processing and Food Engineering is one of the most popular courses.

even gone global. After holding five training classes in Chongqing, a municipality in southwestern China, Chongqing Medical University opened classes in Cairo, Egypt in 2018.

How can people-to-people connectivity be strengthened more effectively through such training classes? In the International Training Workshop on Southeast and South Asian Science Parks sponsored by the Ministry of Science and Technology in 2018, a one-to-one mentoring system was innovatively adopted. Chinese experts

provided individualized tutoring for each trainee according to the actual conditions of his or her country and discussed the feasibility of construction of science parks and international cooperation in the country, which was widely acclaimed.

With the implementation of China's Belt and Road Science, Technology and Innovation Cooperation Action Plan, we can see that technical training classes are playing an increasingly important role in deepening scientific and technological exchange.

According to Minister Wang

Zhigang, the Ministry of Science and Technology organized more than 500 young scientists from countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative to carry out short-term scientific research in China in 2018, and technical training classes for developing nations recruited more than 1,200 students from relevant countries.

International students from developing countries have played the role of "innovation messengers" while promoting people-to-people connectivity, connecting China with the world and jointly progressing toward a better future for mankind. 

Current International Partnership Model

—Connection of the Eurasian Economic Union and the Belt and Road Initiative

Text by Sergey Yu. Glaziev

China-Russia relations can be defined as an example of cooperation based on joint responsibility for peaceful and harmonious global development.

At present, Russia and other member states of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) as well as China and the participants in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) are forming a harmonious system of international economic cooperation based on

strict enforcement of international law, respect for national sovereignty and non-interference in other states' internal affairs. They are building a partnership grounded in trust and mutual benefits for all participating countries, voluntary combination of their comparative advantages,

production and technological cooperation, elimination of trade and investment barriers to create favorable conditions for social and economic development, prosperity of their peoples and achievement of synergetic cooperation.

China-Russia relations can be defined as an example of cooperation between countries based on joint responsibility for peaceful and harmonious global development.

The joint initiative of Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping regarding the interconnection of the EEU and the BRI is clear evidence of the willingness to overcome obstacles to maximize harmonization in all spheres of China-Russia relations, increase trade, economic and investment turnovers and establish long-term intercultural dialogue.

China and Russia have made significant progress in bilateral trade in recent years. China-Russia cross-border infrastructure cooperation is constantly developing. Transport channels are expanding, exchange of specialists and technologies is becoming more intensive and bilateral multidisciplinary interaction is increasing.

Both countries are working together to build transcontinental transport "corridors," modernize existing railways and highways and construct new ones. Flagship projects include the China-Russia-Mongolia economic corridor, the "New Northern Route" high-speed railway and the "Western China-Western Europe" highway which passes directly through Russia to connect China and Central Asia to Europe. The integration of rail, road, and aviation infrastructure in Eurasia is a key area of joint work on connecting the EEU and the BRI. To implement cooperation, practical work is happening in the following areas:



The Fourth China-Russia Economic Dialogue was held in July 2018, co-hosted by Chinese think tank Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies under Renmin University of China and the Russian presidential consultant team. courtesy of Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies



January 19, 2019: Young athletes compete in a game on the surface of a frozen river on the Russia side during the 2019 China-Russia Boundary River Ice Hockey Friendly. VCG

First, eliminating bilateral trade barriers. This process has already yielded results after being set up by presidents of both countries. The goal to bring China-Russia trade volume to US\$100 billion was achieved last year. To ensure further growth in this area, both countries need additional efforts to standardize technical regulation, sanitary and veterinary control and expand production cooperation between enterprises.

Second, transitioning to settlements and payments in national currencies and aligning each other's payment systems. China and Russia have their own payment systems provided for foreign participation. Commercial banks of the EEU and China can actively use these systems to make payments on mutual trade and joint investment operations. Companies and households could make more active use of mobile payment systems available in both countries.


Third, establishing specialized banks and other financial development institutions in national currencies for the purpose of mutual trade and joint investment lending. Russian businesses were enthusiastic about the announcement made by President Xi Jinping last year at the

Eastern Economic Forum regarding the creation of Russia-China Investment Fund for Regional Development with 100 billion yuan (about US\$15 billion). Such bilateral development institutions can become a supporting network for rapid expansion of investment cooperation in all sectors of the economy including capital-intensive and high-tech projects. The most significant investment projects in terms of the conjugative effect for the EEU and the BRI should be financed jointly with the involvement of international development institutions including the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, the New Development Bank and the Eurasian Development Bank, just to name a few.

Fourth, conducting cultural and humanitarian cooperation in multiple fields. Sharing a common historical destiny, the two countries must strengthen mutual understanding and trust and open the treasures of national spiritual culture to each other.

For example, China and Russia have already carried out in-depth think tank cooperation. In July 2018, a report jointly written by Chinese and Russian think tanks was released. The

report, *Sino-Russian Economic Cooperation Assessment and Prospect: Shared Opinions*, was co-produced by the Russian presidential consultant team consisting of professionals in economics, finance, politics, regional geography, and culture, led by myself, and experts from the Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies at Renmin University of China, one of China's first domestic think tanks studying the Belt and Road Initiative. We proposed the two countries continuously optimize the business environment and create better conditions for bilateral economic cooperation.

Moreover, the deep philosophical and theological foundations of Chinese and Russian cultures are the basis for building a harmonious world. We need a deep civilizational China-Russia dialogue. It is necessary to bring together intellectuals of China and Russia who understand that the foundation of the long-term China-Russia relationship is the valuable interconnection of our civilizations and cultures. 

The author is a counselor to the president of the Russian Federation and an academician with the Russian Academy of Sciences.



October 13, 2018: The main body of the Chinese section of the first cross-river railway bridge connecting to Russia is completed. The bridge across the Heilongjiang River connects the city of Tongjiang in northeastern China's Heilongjiang Province to Nizhneleninskoye in Russia. by Ma Zhiyao/Xinhua

China-Bangladesh Cultural Exchange

A “Belt and Road” Success Story

Text by Kishore Biswas Photographs courtesy of Kishore Biswas

“All these years I have remained devoted to learning, teaching and sharing cultural and human values with others. The Belt and Road Initiative has created a new window to seize my dreams in an even broader way.”

In the seventh grade, I became enchanted with a new art teacher who opened a window for me to learn about Chinese art, culture and history. Interestingly, the very Chinese characters engraved on my art pencil and ruler, as on most Chinese products exported to this day, caught my curious eyes. I even managed to write those alien versions of mighty hieroglyphics—“中国制造” (Made in China), when I was 11.

Who could have guessed that

such a mundane Chinese window in high school would expand into a stable doorway later in my life? Nearly two decades have passed since I first visited China at the dawn of the millennium. I was fascinated by the big ceramic flower vases and the large portrait of the Great Wall at the Chinese Embassy in Bangladesh. And soon after my first step on Chinese soil, I took the Chinese government scholarship exam.

I was lucky enough to be offered

a scholarship to study in the top two universities in China: I earned my bachelor’s degree at Tsinghua University and a master’s degree and Ph.D. at Peking University. Such a journey was not easy at first. Learning a new language, adapting to a new environment and understanding a whole new education system knocked me way down to earth from my sky-high dreams. I spent most of my college life with Chinese classmates. They were friendly and talented. They

helped me with my studies, language barriers and day-to-day problems in the foreign land. My major and field of research throughout undergraduate and graduate schools mostly stayed in the Computer Science realm, but I tried to learn a little more than just academic knowledge alongside my classroom and lab work. I decided to utilize every opportunity to learn about the people around me—about their culture, their thought processes and their perspective on the world. Gradually I was able to participate in several TV shows and media programs including the famous “Chinese Bridge” competition for foreign students in China. I made it through the finals and won the gold medal in 2009. I discovered that the more I learned about Chinese culture and history, the more I fell in love with China.

But occasionally, cultural differences, and even misunderstandings, between my home country and China have worried me. Most of my friends and relatives in Bangladesh still have a limited impression of China. The same is true of my Chinese friends toward Bangladesh. I try to tell my fellow nationals: China is a more diverse and colorful country than just flying kung fu heroes and unusual food. I try to introduce them to modern China and its advanced technology and lifestyles. I have also encouraged my Chinese friends to visit Bangladesh and enjoy its unique cultural taste, natural beauty and hospitality. I realized more action is needed than just words.

I felt the urge to clear up misinformation and rumors from both sides, so I started writing a book on China-Bangladesh cultural differences, part of which was published in the art pages of a leading Bangladeshi newspaper, *BDNews24*. I received positive feedback from readers, and that encouraged my writing.

I love poetry. Ancient Chinese



Kishore Biswas (second right) works with professional Chinese and Bengali translators at China Radio International to translate the book *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*.

poems, especially those from the Tang Dynasty (618-907), are attractive to me. In hopes of sharing that literary treasure with Bangladeshi readers, I started translating Chinese verses into Bengali poems, which were also published in Bangladeshi newspapers and magazines. I enjoyed my role as a bridge between Chinese and Bangladeshi cultures.


During my work at Peking University, I was encouraged to translate some Chinese books into Bengali with government sponsorship. I worked with a group at China Radio International to translate the renowned book *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*, and its Bengali version was published in Bangladesh last year.

After that project, a group of South Asian publishers were invited to China for a training and exchange program. I represented one of my country’s promising publishing companies, Poribar Publications Ltd., as part of the Bangladeshi team. After successful visits, trainings, and discussions, we signed a bilateral publishing contract with two Chinese publications. Under that contract, I am now translating more than 20 different Chinese books including *The Luoyang Silk Road in the Picture*. These are in line

for publication at the end of this year. Furthermore, my students and I are writing a Chinese-language book on learning Bengali. All these activities seem to add literary meaning to the phrase “cultural exchange.”

Both sides of the Himalayas have been enriched by two of the world’s earliest civilizations—China and the Indian subcontinent. The two cultures have a long history of bilateral exchange. Although most people living today in South Asia and China know comparatively little about each other’s language and culture, the past decade has seen the wind starting to change direction. Cooperation in politics, economics, culture and education between China and South Asian countries is on a dramatic rise today after the proposal of the Belt and Road Initiative by President Xi Jinping.

This change inspires the need for better understanding among the three billion people of both sides. They need to overcome miscommunication brought by cultural differences and language barriers to achieve better cooperation. The Belt and Road Initiative is facilitating cultural exchange to connect more people around the globe.

Having spent half of my life in China, I have fallen deeply in love with the country and its people. I created a family here, and I’m proud to raise my next generation in China. All these years, I have remained devoted to learning, teaching and sharing cultural and human values with others. The Belt and Road Initiative has provided a window to expand my dreams. Harkening back to those Chinese characters engraved on my school pencils, I love to tag myself: “Born in Bangladesh, made in China.” 

The author is a Bangladeshi publisher and former foreign expert at the Foreign Studies Department of Peking University.



September 9, 2017: Participants of the China-Bangladesh Dialogue of Literature pose for a group photo in a former residence of late Chinese literary giant Lu Xun and his brother in Beijing. The event was jointly organized by China Radio International and China Publication Association.

Dream Chasing in China

Text by Bolabola Joëlle Zita

Having studied and worked in China makes me a force for promoting people-to-people connections between China and African countries.

I came from Gabon to study in China in 2008 through a cultural cooperation project to help African high-school graduates acquire further education.

At the time, the financial crisis was sweeping the world, while China calmly dealt with it and maintained stable economic growth. It was also that year that China drew global attention by hosting the Olympic Games and attracting people from around the world to come and discover more about the country and its culture. Since then, more and more African students have come to study in China every year. Those years laid a solid foundation for the people-to-people connections we are seeing in the Belt and Road Initiative.

In 2017, I became a host and voice actress in StarTimes' Beijing headquarters after earning a master's degree in China. The Chinese firm offering direct-to-home subscription TV services has become one of the biggest media companies in Africa.

StarTimes is dedicated to providing quality TV programs to African

viewers. Today, it is striving to promote its digital TV services in Africa's rural areas as part of a drive to provide "Access to Satellite TV for 10,000 African Villages" launched by China in 2015, which is a resolution of the Johannesburg Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation. It is a challenging job, but for many African people, it is an amazing gift and a gateway to the outside world. It goes a long way in delivering the China-Africa connectivity goal, especially people-to-people communication.

It warms my heart that the project provides not only people living in the big cities of Africa but also people with little or no income with access to knowledge and information. We all know that a well-educated population will expedite a country's development process.

By September 2018, StarTimes had registered and set up subsidiaries to provide digital TV services for nearly 20 million viewers in over 30 African countries. The scene of a family enjoying time together

in front of the television in their sitting room is now more and more common in African countries.

Today, my make-up show *S-Belle* is broadcast to millions of Africans on StarTimes channels, and even those in remote and small villages can watch my show. I never get bored or tired because I am doing what I love. Working on TV shows has given me a better understanding of different cultures in Africa and the world. I feel grateful to be able to do something for China-Africa cultural exchange in an international media group.

I feel incredibly lucky to have


been selected to play a lead role in a sketch called "Happy Together" that was performed live on the stage of the 2018 Spring Festival Gala, China's most-watched annual television show that airs on Chinese New Year's Eve. The play was written to celebrate cooperation between China and African countries and the completion of major projects under the Belt and Road Initiative such as the Mombasa-Nairobi Standard Gauge Railway in Kenya.

People often say that if someone who is struggling in his own life still helps you, it means that the

person cares about you. China is still trying to reach international standards of development, but it has never stopped helping African countries across many decades. For me, the Belt and Road Initiative acknowledges the goal of common development and prosperity.

My parents are very proud to see me doing what I love here. But I think a more important issue is that my experience in China can show more women that they can achieve their career goals and that politics is not the only way to success if they get a better education. I'm trying my

best today to use my meager fame to help my young viewers because each of us has a way of thinking and goals. Having studied and now working in China makes me a force for strengthening mutual understanding between our cultures and promoting people-to-people connectivity between China and African countries.

As someone at the heart of the bridge connecting China with Africa, I hope to promote a better education system that benefits more young African women as part of the Belt and Road Initiative. 



01 At present, Bolabola is a full-time host of the French Channel of StarTimes. In her shows on cosmetics and entertainment, she introduces makeup skills to African women. by Guo Shasha

02 Employees of StarTimes' Tanzanian branch install antennas for customers. Now, StarTimes has become one of Africa's fastest-growing and most influential digital television operators. courtesy of StarTimes



03 Foreign employees dub a TV series in the Translation and Dubbing Center of StarTimes' Beijing headquarters. Today, the center provides related services for 10 languages, including Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Swahili, Hausa, Yoruba and Luganda. by Guo Shasha

04 StarTimes has registered and set up subsidiaries in over 30 African countries, and among its more than 4,000 employees, 80 percent are Africans. courtesy of StarTimes

Zhao Qizheng

Stories about Pudong and China

Text by Yu Jia and Zhang Xue

Zhao Qizheng hopes to help the world understand China by telling Chinese stories.

Zhao Qizheng enjoys many dazzling titles: nuclear physics expert taught by renowned physicists, Pudong miracle creator nicknamed “Pudong Zhao,” China’s top information officer who has never been stumped by journalists, and even “China’s ambassador to the world.” Even at the age of 79, Zhao is still active in major events like important conferences and international forums. Following the development of China, Zhao has constantly changed roles and enjoyed a wonderful life.

Demonstrating Pudong to the World

Learning science to serve his country was Zhao’s original dream. In 1958, Zhao’s test scores helped him get admitted to the modern physics department of China University of Science and Technology to learn nuclear physics under famous physicists Zhao Zhongyao and Qian Sanqiang. After graduation in 1963, he was sent to work in the Second Ministry of Machinery and Industry. During his 21 years of scientific work, Zhao was once the youngest senior engineer in China’s aerospace sector and won



December 18, 2018: Zhao Qizheng tells his story about Pudong New Area at a gathering in celebration of the 40th anniversary of China’s reform and opening up in Shanghai. by Wan Quan



Shanghai’s Lujiazui Financial District at sunset. In the 1990s, Zhao Qizheng, then director of the Pudong New Area Administrative Committee, put forward the idea of “thinking over the development of Pudong while standing beside a terrestrial globe,” aiming to develop Pudong into an international metropolis. VCG

honors like Shanghai’s “Excellent Worker” and “Model Worker.”

In 1978, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) determined to introduce the reform and opening-up policy, a decision which totally changed Zhao’s life. In 1984, Zhao assumed the position as Vice Party Secretary of Shanghai Industrial Working Committee. Since then, he successively served as deputy director and director of the Organization Department of the CPC Shanghai Municipal Committee, standing member of the CPC Shanghai Municipal Committee, Shanghai’s vice mayor and head of the Administrative Committee of Pudong New Area, evolving from scientist into urban manager.

On April 18, 1990, the CPC Central Committee and China’s State Council formally announced

a decision to develop and open Shanghai’s Pudong. According to Deng Xiaoping, chief architect of China’s reform and opening up, the construction of Pudong, should, from the start, look to international metropolises as the benchmark. Zhao, then head of the Administrative Committee of Pudong New Area, proposed a slogan translated as “Think over the development of Pudong while standing beside a terrestrial globe.” “I hoped to remind all Pudong officials of global vision, ideas and strategic view,” explains Zhao.

“When Pudong New Area had just been officially established in 1993, I talked about it with people both in China and abroad,” recalls Zhao. “I realized that few people knew of Pudong or even knew where it was.” He then decided that a key task was helping more people

learn about the area. From that point on, he made himself a “salesman” of Pudong, frequently welcoming delegations from around China and the world and introducing the development plan and prospect of the new area.

With the further openness of Pudong, more and more Western politicians, entrepreneurs and scholars began to pay attention to it. In 1994 when former U.S. President George H.W. Bush visited Pudong, he said he would invest in Pudong if he were young enough after hearing Zhao’s introduction. Former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger visited Pudong several times. “While several skyscrapers and high-tech factories were built in Pudong through cooperation with foreign countries, this was not the most important achievement,” he declared. “The most important



Zhao Qizheng (first right) accompanies former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger (second left, front) on a 1993 visit to Pudong, Shanghai. courtesy of Zhao Qizheng

achievement was the public relations success which established trust with foreign investors—that was precious and worth consolidating.”

Narrating China for the World

Pudong New Area has prospered. In August 1998, the 88-story Jin Mao Tower in Pudong’s Lujiazui Financial and Trade Zone placed its capstone, becoming the highest building in Shanghai. The same year, Zhao became minister of the Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee and the State Council Information Office, and his role shifted from introducing Pudong to the world to narrating China for the world. By then, thanks to its rapid economic growth, China had already entered the global spotlight. The international community was hungry for information about the country, which was often mixed with misinterpretations. Soon after he arrived at his new post,

“He hopes true stories about China help the world understand the country and believes that a good story must be true first.”

Zhao encountered a considerable challenge.

On May 25, 1999, the Report of the Select Committee on U.S. National Security and Military/Commercial Concerns with the People’s Republic of China (commonly known as the Cox Report) accused China of “stealing” U.S.’ military technologies involving missiles, nuclear bombs

and satellites, posing a threat to the country’s security, which caused a great uproar all over the world. Over the following two months, Zhao held two press conferences and factually refuted the report. The global media reported Zhao’s speeches and his answers to questions from journalists. Consequently, worldwide public opinion was reversed as evidenced by *The Times* listing the Cox Report as one of that year’s “top 10 scandals in the world.”

The Cox Report incident forced Zhao to be aware that many countries held misunderstandings about China largely because the country didn’t release information in a timely manner. In 2003, he launched the first spokesperson training class which attracted more than 100 related personnel from 66 ministries and commissions. Over the following more than a dozen years, Zhao continuously promoted



January 8, 1994: Zhao Qizheng (first left) introduces Pudong’s development plan to former U.S. President George H. W. Bush (first right). courtesy of Zhao Qizheng

the establishment and improvement of China’s official spokesperson system.


After serving as a spokesman for the Chinese government for over a decade, Zhao was dubbed “China’s No.1 spokesperson.” Hong Kong-based *Ta Kung Pao* called him a “prudent spokesman,” “friendly public relations expert,” “challenge-loving information officer,” “tireless teacher” and “caring senior.”

In 2005, Zhao left the State Council Information Office to

serve as dean of the School of Journalism and Communication at Renmin University of China. And in 2008, he began to serve as director and spokesperson of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), the country’s top advisory body. In the new position, Zhao still endeavored to “narrate China for the world.”

“Stories are closer to life and truth than theory,” notes Zhao. He likes telling stories. He hopes true

stories about China help the world understand the country and believes that a good story must be true first. “A true story can move you, and then you can move others,” stresses Zhao. He believes that if the narration avoids all the problems China is facing, it will lose important plot arcs, leaving the story less attractive.

Since his retirement, Zhao frequently strolls around Pudong, a place to which he devoted so much painstaking effort and a landmark of China’s development story. And the story continues. 

Fanshan's New Goldmine

Text and photographs by Su Qiaojang and Weng Qinglun

Fanshan Town has successfully transformed by shutting down alum production and renovating factories and mining sites into scenic spots, which has revived the town.

Abundant in alunite, a source mineral used to produce alum, Fanshan (literally, “Alum Mountain”) Town in Cangnan County, Wenzhou City, Zhejiang Province has fostered alum mining for more than 600 years. The town holds a proven alunite reserve of 240 million tons, accounting for 80 percent of the total in China and 60 percent of the world’s. So, it is referred to as the “world’s

alum capital.”

Since the 1990s, China’s market transformation and industrial upgrade has rendered traditional heavy-polluting industries such as alum mining obsolete. After years of exploration, Fanshan has successfully completed an industrial transformation by halting alum production and renovating factories and mining sites into scenic spots, which has revived the town.

A bird's-eye view of a mountain in Fanshan Town, which has regrown its green coverage from previously being barren due to industrial pollution.



Fanshan Town was once shrouded by smoke and soot from alum factories.

Mining Destination

Founded in 1956, the Wenzhou Alum Mine in Fanshan was once a key state-class chemical mine and covered two square kilometers. In its prime, over 200 mining groups worked in 76 mining pits and five workshops processed ore from four mining zones. Potassium alum, the mine's flagship product, was once sold all over the world. Naturally, mining became the pillar industry of the region and contributed more than a third of Wenzhou's total industrial output value. Many Fanshan residents amassed fortunes through developing the alum industry. But thanks to social and economic development, alum has been replaced by newer materials. Moreover, alum mining was incredibly destructive to the local environment. So, it gradually faded away in Fanshan.

In 2012, Fanshan committed to shifting its development mode from heavy industry to a tourism-based economy and applied for listing as a world industrial heritage site. The ecological environment at the mining sites and their surrounding areas have been restored, and rivers once polluted by alum waste water have become clear again. Previously bald mountains smoked by alum emissions have become green once again after air seeding

to promote afforestation. Thanks to years of effort, green mountains, clear waters and blue skies have reemerged in the town.

Fudewan Village is an epitome of the town's drastic transformation. A few years ago when the alum industry was enduring a steep decline, local young people were all leaving the village to make a living elsewhere. But in recent years, surging tourism has attracted many of them to return home to open family hotels and tea houses, which has further promoted native tourism. Today, visitors can be seen wandering through the village's bustling streets filled with snack stalls, tea houses and souvenir stands. A dozen ancient houses and old factory buildings have been refurbished into mid-level and high-end family hotels. Sponsored by the local government, a tourist center is under construction in the No. 5 workshop, and another boutique hotel is expected to open in 2019.

Renewal and Prosperity

The municipal government of Wenzhou played an important role in promoting Fudewan's transformation from an industrial village into a tourist destination. In 2013, the local government invested 7.35 million yuan (US\$1.1 million) to build an alum mining museum and

an alunite exhibition hall in addition to finishing the first and second phases of the renovation project to protect and develop ancient villages in Fanshan Town.

Because of unremitting effort, Fudewan was dubbed a "Chinese historical and cultural village." It was recognized by the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation. In 2017, all the alum mines were shut down, and tourist visits exceeded 900,000, up 20 percent from the previous year.

The same year, Fanshan spent 36 million yuan (US\$5.37 million) to renovate and upgrade streets with mining culture, transform industrial sites into cultural landmarks



A footrill has turned into an exhibition hall with abandoned mining caves and railways, allowing visitors from across the world to have a glimpse of China's modern industrial history.



Taiwanese visitors make crafts with alum.




An exhibition hall displays various ores.



The three abandoned workshops have been renovated into a center for visitors to experience alum industry culture.

with alum sculptures, re-appropriate mining cars and make pits into featured parks. Many tourists visit to experience alum production-related items like tram tracks, furnaces, crystallizing ponds and underground water ponds purified by alums in crisscrossing mine caves.

"In the future, we plan to build it into an educational base for primary and high school students nationwide," reveals Chen Peibiao, Party Secretary of Fanshan Town. "By combining mine workshop light shows and tram tours, we hope to integrate entertainment, culture and creativity. The transformation of Fanshan is a road to revival, and we see the road getting broader and broader." 

1960 ►► 1969

Exploration amid Challenges

Concept by China Pictorial

Edited by Li Zhuoxi Photographs courtesy of CFB

Information sourced from *History of the Communist Party of China*

In June 1960, on the last day of an expanded meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in Shanghai, Mao Zedong wrote an article entitled “Ten Years in Retrospect.” In the article, Mao summarized and shared his thoughts on the early stage of China’s socialist construction. He pointed out that people must seek truth from facts to master the law of socialist construction. He urged the nation to research and study the innate laws of socialist revolution and review the achievements realized since the founding of the People’s Republic of China.

After entering the historical stage of building socialism in all respects, China began to engage in difficult explorations of a development path suited to its national conditions. During this process, it encountered a number of major challenges and difficulties and took quite a few detours. During this period, although China faced international blockades and isolation, and suffered from natural disasters, economic difficulties and the disastrous “cultural revolution” (1966-1976), the Chinese people remained self-reliant and hard-working. The country’s fundamental system never wavered, and the Chinese people gained abundant valuable experience and reaped major achievements.

APR • 2019



1960: Conquering Mount Qomolangma

Climbing onto Mount Qomolangma (known as Mount Everest in the West), the highest peak on Earth, from the northern slope had been a dream for humans since the early 20th century. Starting in the 1920s, climbers from Western countries made seven attempts to reach the top of the mountain from the northern slope, but all ended in failure. On May 24, 1960, Chinese mountaineers completed the first trip to the mountain from the northern slope, making the decades-long dream a reality.

1961: World Table Tennis Championships in Beijing

In 1961, Beijing hosted the 26th World Table Tennis Championships. This event marked a milestone for the development of China’s table tennis and a turning point for world table tennis. Some Western media outlets asserted that China ended Japan’s dominant position in table tennis which lasted throughout the 1950s, becoming a new global leader in this sport.



1962: The Seven Thousand Cadres Conference

To learn from the lessons of the "Great Leap Forward" that began in 1958 and implement adjustments on policy more resolutely, the CPC Central Committee held an enlarged central working conference on January 11, 1962. Participants of the meeting included central and local leaders, heads of factories and mines and army chiefs, totaling 7,118 persons. Thus, the meeting became known as the Seven Thousand Cadres Conference. This meeting played an important role in promoting the overall adjustments of China's economy.

1963: Learning from Lei Feng

Lei Feng (1940-1962) was a soldier in the Chinese People's Liberation Army. "I want to devote my limited life to unlimited service to the people," he once wrote in his diary. Because of the many good deeds he did for others, Lei Feng became a household name in China. In 1963, Mao Zedong and other Chinese top leaders wrote inscriptions for him, calling on the public to follow the example of Lei Feng.



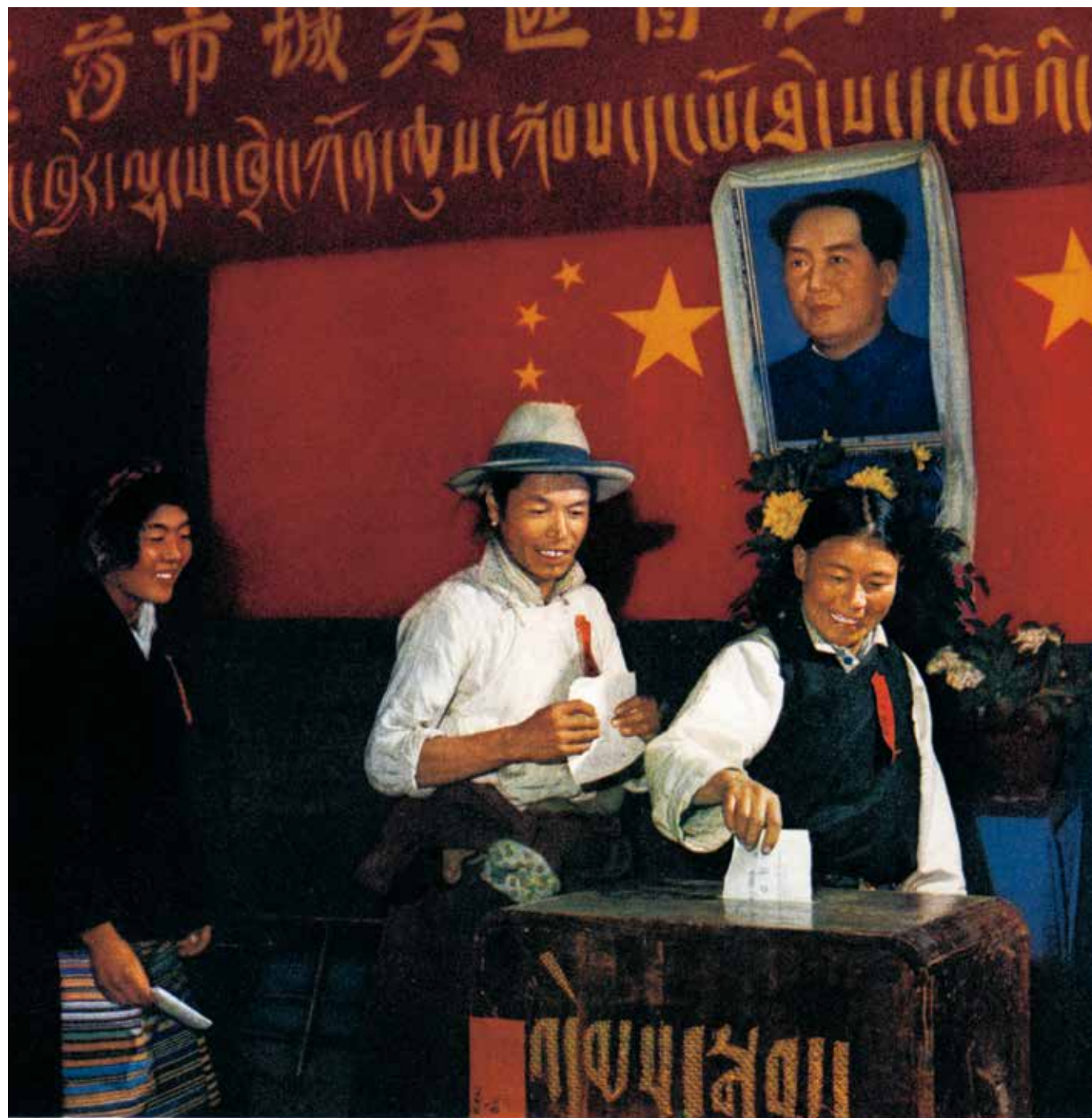
1964: Successful Atomic Bomb Test

At 3:00 p.m. of October 16, 1964, China successfully detonated its first atomic bomb in the western part of the country, becoming the fifth country with nuclear weapons after the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain and France.



1965: Establishment of Tibet Autonomous Region

In September 1965, the first session of the First People's Congress of Tibet convened in Lhasa. During this session, the Tibet Autonomous Region was established, and the People's Committee and leaders of the autonomous region were elected. It marked the establishment of the local people's government and the full practice of regional ethnic autonomy in Tibet.



1966: Model Cadre Jiao Yulu

Jiao Yulu (1922-1964) served as Party secretary of Lankao County, Henan Province. Plagued by natural disasters for many years, Lankao's economic development was lagging. Jiao arrived in Lankao to work just as the county was grappling with severe natural disasters. He led locals to fight natural hazards and continued working even when he suffered from advanced liver cancer. On February 7, 1966, newspapers across China including *People's Daily* published the article "Jiao Yulu: An Example of a County Party Secretary" to rally the people to learn from him and work harder to overcome difficulties.

1967: Model Opera

Model operas were produced during China's "cultural revolution" (1966-1976), depicting and celebrating Chinese people's armed struggles against enemies and their efforts to promote economic development. These operas were loaded with profound and extensive political connotations. On May 31, 1967, *People's Daily* published a commentary article entitled "Excellent Models of Revolutionary Literature and Art," which listed eight works as revolutionary model plays, including *Legend of the Red Lantern*, *Shajiabang* and *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy*. From then on, the term "model opera" became commonplace.




1968: Up to the Mountains and Down to the Countryside

To solve employment problems affecting more than 4 million high-school graduates, on December 22, 1968, *People's Daily* quoted Chairman Mao Zedong saying it was necessary for young graduates to go to the countryside and be re-educated by living and working in rural poverty. Then, a campaign called "Up to the Mountains and Down to the Countryside" was launched for "educated youth" nationwide.



1969: Red Flag Canal

In the 1960s, great changes were taking place almost every day in China's rural areas as part of local people's efforts to prevent natural disasters and improve severe living conditions. On July 8, 1969, the construction of the Red Flag Canal, an irrigation canal with a total length of 1,500 kilometers, was completed after 10 years of hard work by local people in Linxian County, Henan Province. To complete the canal, 211 tunnels were excavated and 151 aqueducts were constructed. 



The Wandering Earth A New Day for Chinese Sci-Fi

Text by Gong Haiying Photographs courtesy of the Crew of *The Wandering Earth* unless otherwise credited

The importance of The Wandering Earth for the development of China's film industry will become increasingly prominent over time.

A poster featuring a gigantic thruster designed to drive Earth to a new home in *The Wandering Earth*. A total of 3,000 concept drawings were created to depict details of the imaginative scenes in the movie.

On February 5, 2019, this year's Chinese New Year, *The Wandering Earth*, a movie adapted from eminent Chinese sci-fi writer Liu Cixin's novel of the same name, hit cinemas in China. With an imaginative plot, impressive visual effects and strong traditional Chinese sentiment for home and nation, the film created a sci-fi fantasy with a unique Chinese style that proved successful with critics and moviegoers alike.

By March 21, 2019, it had grossed 4.6 billion yuan (US\$685 million) in China and nearly 45 million yuan (US\$6.7 million) overseas.

Dubbed "the dawn of Chinese sci-fi movies," the film has not only triggered a sensation among Chinese sci-fi lovers, filmmakers and moviegoers, but has also drawn global attention. *The New York Times* published an article entitled "China's Film Industry Finally Joins the Space Race," which pointed out that

the special effects of *The Wandering Earth* are certain to be measured against Hollywood's, and that the movie represents the "dawning of a new era in Chinese filmmaking."

Although director Guo Fan insisted that it remains too early to acknowledge the dawn of Chinese sci-fi films, *The Wandering Earth* is still widely praised for its pioneering role in China's sci-fi production and even the history of Chinese filmmaking. In the eyes of Chinese

sci-fi lovers, the movie's importance rivals even that of its source author Liu Cixin, who "elevated China's sci-fi literature to the world class alone." According to Rao Shuguang, head of China Film Critics Association, *The Wandering Earth* turned a new page for Chinese sci-fi films, and its important role in promoting the high-quality development of China's film industry will become increasingly prominent over time.

Chinese-style Sci-Fi Fantasy

The Wandering Earth is set in the year 2075: The sun is about to self-destruct, and humankind must race against time to bring Earth out of the solar system by installing 12,000 giant thrusters to attempt to flee to a new home 4.2 light years away.

Turning the entire planet into a massive spaceship is different from any Hollywood sci-fi disaster movies, in which scientists would usually use a sort of "Noah's ark" to carry



Guo Fan, director of *The Wandering Earth*, at work. Based on experience learned in Hollywood, he constructed his own industrialized filmmaking system. IC



Stills from *The Wandering Earth*. Accented by spacecraft and transport trucks designed based on the heavy-duty industrial style of the former Soviet Union, the movie depicts emotional connections between father and son, individual and collective, homeland and remote destinations. It also extends Chinese feelings for home and nation to all of mankind and even the entire universe.

survivors to another livable planet. This uniquely devised plan shows the Chinese people's sentiment for their homeland, bestowing on the film a spirit different from that of Hollywood sci-fi blockbusters.

In 2015, Guo Fan was invited to participate in filming *The Wandering Earth*. When writing its script, he chose a particular episode from the original novel. The main plot is that as Earth approaches Jupiter, the gas giant's huge gravitational force captures the planet and threatens to tear Earth apart within days. The film has two parallel storylines: one follows Liu Qi, his adopted sister and a rescue team transporting an ignition-core to re-start an engine; the other features his father, Liu Peiqiang, who from a space station tries his utmost to save the planet. Eventually, the father reconciles with his long-estranged son, and works together with rescue teams on the surface to evade Jupiter and save Earth, at the cost of his life.

The impressive scenes described in the novel, such as helium flashes of the sun, plasma beams of the thousands of thrusters driving Earth, underground megacities with millions of residents, and Jupiter rising like a monster from the horizon as Earth approaches it, are visualized in the movie through the use of VFX shots. *The Wandering Earth* is the first Chinese movie to depict frozen landmarks in Beijing and Shanghai in the context of a post-apocalyptic world. Moreover, the spacecraft and transport trucks with the heavy-duty industrial style of the former Soviet Union in the movie and "powered exoskeletons" created by New Zealand's world-famous visual effects company Weta Digital inspire nostalgia in a Chinese audience.

Unlike American super-hero

sci-fi movies, *The Wandering Earth* depicts a massive global rescue effort that involves 1.5 million people from different countries, including Liu Peiqiang, who sacrifices himself in the effort. Rescuers work hand in hand to cope with the crisis and escape a tragic fate, demonstrating the Chinese vision of building a "community with a shared future for humanity." Against the backdrop of a doomed world, the film tries to build emotional connections between father and son, individual and collective, the homeland and the remote destination. Therefore, it manages to extend Chinese feelings for home and nation to all of mankind and even the entire universe and creates a sci-fi world imbued with elements of traditional Chinese culture.

Dawn of Chinese Sci-Fi Films

The Wandering Earth has achieved a balance between Chinese indigenous culture and sci-fi movies, a cultural genre originating in the West. It can be largely attributed to Director Guo's effort to learn from his Hollywood counterparts and build an industrialized filmmaking capacity in the process of making this film.

In 2014, Guo spent a short time studying at Paramount Pictures. Hollywood's rigid but powerful filmmaking system impressed him deeply. Based on the experience he gained in the United States, he introduced a standardized script writing system that enabled several screenwriters to work simultaneously, and integrated post-production, directing and photography software into a unified system. He input 3,000 concept drawings into the system to help screenwriters bring about new ideas and further improve details of the story.

According to Guo, due to

financing and technological limitations, he mainly used Hollywood's 1990s filmmaking workflow as his reference point. Consequently, his film adopted extensive physical special effects and relatively few digital visual effects. Alongside the 3,000 concept drawings, the crew created 8,000 storyboard images, 10,000 props, 100,000 square meters of real-life reconstruction, and 2,500 VFX shots. Completing so many laborious tasks required constructing an industrialized filmmaking system. The system eventually helped the film reach a new height in the history of China's film industry.

Since 1994 when China opened its market to American films, Hollywood productions featuring avant-garde concepts, high technology and big budgets have continued setting new records in terms of box office revenues in China, and to a large extent, have changed Chinese moviegoers' taste and demands. Inspired by foreign hits, a number of homemade blockbusters have emerged with impressive ticket sales in China such as *Hero* (2002) and *House of Flying Daggers* (2004).

In 2014, China Film Group Corporation launched a project to produce three sci-fi movies including *The Wandering Earth*, each with budgets of at least US\$40 million. Five years later, *The Wandering Earth*, with an investment of nearly US\$80 million, finally hit theaters, heralding the dawn of China's sci-fi films. Inspired by its success, China is accelerating the production of several sci-fi movies. However, many challenges await, and creating China's unique sci-fi culture will require more people to contribute their energy and wisdom. But, one thing is certain: With the continuous modernization and industrialization of China, many great Chinese sci-fi films are soon to be made. 



108 Hands: Chinese Crafters, a book by Luo Yicheng, published by SDX Joint Publishing Company in October 2018.

Industrious Hands of Chinese Crafters

We should treat traditional handicrafts and craftsmen as we treat the Olympic flame. Their mere existence should ignite yearning for happiness.

Across China's history of several thousand years, countless people have mastered a wide variety of exquisite handicraft techniques. They have used these techniques to produce state-of-the-art works with high aesthetic and collectible value. At the same time, they also churn out the necessities for everyday life.

As time rolls forward, traditional craftsmen and their crafts have gradually become marginalized. Luo Yicheng, author of the book *108 Hands: Chinese Crafters*, organized a team that spent two years visiting more than 100 traditional craftsmen across the country starting in 2016. From various embroidery styles in China such as Hunan embroidery, Miao embroidery, Xinjiang embroidery, Suzhou embroidery and Shanxi embroidery to carvings on materials such as wood, brick, jade and stone, from weavings with bamboo, rattan and linen to paper cutting, dough modelling and batik, traditional Chinese handicrafts deeply touched Luo and his team with their

impressive beauty and strength.

Through more than 300 images, this book recounts the stories of the craftsmen Luo met and records how those craftsmen created exquisite pieces: from beveling, cutting, casting, tempering, polishing, inlaying, printing, dyeing and framing to finally completing works made with exquisite technique.

After visiting more than 100 traditional craftsmen, Luo discovered the meaning of preserving traditional handicrafts. "Traditional handicrafts represent the heart of a person, an ethnic group and even a nation," he wrote in the preface of the book. "To be more specific, they



Lu Qunshan, an intangible cultural heritage inheritor of colored pottery.



Brick carving, an intangible cultural heritage in Anhui Province.

carry a poetic quality and nostalgia of a nation. We should treat traditional handicrafts and craftsmen as we treat the Olympic flame. Their mere existence should ignite yearnings for happiness."

Li Xiaoke, a national first-grade artist, director of Li Keran Art Foundation and head of Huangshan Painting and Calligraphy Institute, spoke highly of the book. "Luo Yicheng has been engaged in advertising communications for quite a long time," opined Li. "In this book, readers can feel his efforts to explore and spread traditional Chinese crafts and culture from a very untraditional perspective."

Li Yongjun, president of the Asia-Pacific branch of the Global Hope Coalition and deputy president of China Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection Association, also has a lot to say about this book. "In the context of the new era, it is our responsibility and obligation to protect traditional culture, be confident in our own culture and promote cultural revitalization," he declared. "We should support ambitious young people like Luo who are devoted to protecting and



Zhao Cuilian, an intangible cultural heritage inheritor of shadow puppets in Houma City, Shanxi Province.



Zheng Yueba, an intangible cultural heritage inheritor of calabash art of Quwo County, Shanxi Province.



Walnut engraving, an intangible cultural heritage in Weifang City, Shandong Province.



Long Yumen, an intangible cultural heritage inheritor of colored belts of the Miao ethnic group.



Wang Fei, a carpenter specializing in traditional Chinese products in Suzhou City, Jiangsu Province.

revitalizing traditional culture.”

Luo Yicheng is member of the Academic Committee of China Advertising Association and a finals judge for the Academy Award of Advertising Festival of Chinese College Students. He was born in a remote mountainous village in Hengyang City, Hunan Province. After graduation, he went to Beijing to work for an advertising company. In 2015, he quit his job to tour around China. In August 2016, he was commissioned by Tencent, one of China's biggest internet service providers, to film and produce a documentary series on traditional craftsmen. After that, he launched the “108 Hands: Chinese Crafters” project. At his own expense, Luo led his team to focus on discovering, recording and spreading traditional crafts and craftsmen from all over the country. 

Zhou Haiying Flashes of Memory

Text by Yi Mei Photographs courtesy of the National Art Museum of China

"I find pleasure in my photography. Unconsciously, I've frozen moments of time for my family and others."

Zhou Haiying (1929-2011) was the only son of eminent Chinese writer Zhou Shuren (1881-1936), who is better known by his penname Lu Xun. He had been obsessed with photography since childhood and snapped a wide range of subjects that cover every aspect of Chinese society over nearly 70 years. His photography documented not only his own family and contemporary public life, but also details of some important political incidents.

To celebrate Zhou Haiying's 90th birthday, the National Art Museum of China and the Lu Xun Culture Foundation jointly presented "The Moments of Memory—Photo Exhibition to Commemorate Zhou Haiying's 90th Birthday." Zhou's family donated some works to the National Art Museum of China's permanent collection to mark the event.

The exhibition featured more than 100 photos that showcase Zhou Haiying's aesthetic philosophy as a photographer and document some unforgettable moments of history.

History over Novelty

As son of one of the greatest writers of 20th-century China, Zhou Haiying grappled with his father's shadow throughout his life. His father left instructions for Zhou Haiying in his will, warning him not to become "an artist or literati with a false title."

"I grew up in the public eye, and the profound influence of my father has always encouraged me while exerting pressure," Zhou Haiying once said.

In 1960, Zhou Haiying graduated from the Department of Physics at Peking University and became a researcher in radio science. Meanwhile, he had continued practicing photography since the age of 14 and over his lifetime amassed tens of thousands of negatives. A witness of both old and new China, he was sensitive to subjects related to the lives of common people. He captured not only the metropolitan lives of middle-class residents in traditional neighborhoods of Shanghai but also the lifestyles of common laborers. For instance,

A 1948 photo shows democratic personages discussing the establishment of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference in Shenyang.

his *Refugees* series documented the living conditions of the under-class. His photos depicted a wide spectrum of society: lifestyles of rural people, wedding and funeral customs and farmers working in fields. Unconsciously, he captured the vivid moments of the times with the images he took, such as *Food Hawker*, *Shoe Repairer* and

Street Peddler.

“My father influenced me a lot,” Zhou Haiying insisted. “His care for those at the bottom of society, especially a scene of him helping an injured rickshaw boy dress his wound, remains fresh in my memories. Such education by example deeply influenced me. My father taught me how to take photos

and how to observe society and care about common people from their perspective.”

Zhou Haiying’s photos may not have utilized any intricate photographic techniques, but they continually bring historical figures and moments back to life. “My father opposed taking staged photos,” commented Zhou Lingfei,

the eldest son of Zhou Haiying. “He wanted real things. He never photographed people sitting there and waiting for a photo to be taken. Rather, he would wait until people moved, then capture them going about their business. He liked that feeling.”

His oeuvre of snapshots, mostly in black and white, provides



01



02



03



04

- 01. A 1949 photo shows the Suzhou River in Shanghai.
- 02. A 1949 photo shows flooded Huaihai Road in Shanghai.
- 03. A 1949 photo shows a crosstalk performance in Qiming Teahouse in Shichahai, Beijing.
- 04. A 1950 photo shows male models on a float in a parade celebrating the first anniversary of the liberation of Shanghai.



A 1953 photo shows people making coal briquettes in Beijing.



A 1975 photo shows children playing Chinese chess in Beijing.



A 1982 photo shows the Forbidden City under renovation in Beijing.

historical details from both an individual and a collective perspective. Zhou Haiying once said, “I do not photograph as part of a ‘hunt for novelty.’ I only want my snapshots to bear witness to our times.”

“Perhaps for this reason, Zhou Haiying’s photographic works pierce the depths of history that we have never seen before, which is helpful for us to understand people from the historical period of Lu Xun,” remarked Liu Tiesheng, a renowned Chinese photography critic.

Memories of the Times

Zhou Haiying’s photos mainly fall into one of the three categories: images of Shanghai life in the 1940s, photos of democratic personages who moved from Hong Kong to the liberated area of northeastern China, and photos depicting Beijing life in the 1950s, including Fu Jen Catholic University and Peking University.

Because his mother Xu Guangping was a democratic icon of the time, Zhou Haiying was able to take photos of this group of people. Starting in August 1948, inspired by the promising prospects of the Chinese revolution, leaders of democratic parties as well as democratic patriots without party affiliation in Hong Kong embarked on a journey to liberated areas to prepare for the establishment of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference and the founding of the People’s Republic of China. Zhou Haiying and his mother were among them. “I was 19 years old back then and came to liberated areas with hopes to help save the nation with science,” Zhou recalled.

Due to secrecy needs, those democratic personages didn’t take photographers on their trips to the northern liberated areas. Zhou Haiying’s photos become the only existing photographic “evidence”



A 1982 photo shows Xianheng Tavern in Shaoxing, Zhejiang Province, which was mentioned in several works by Lu Xun.

“

The exhibition featured more than 100 photos that showcase Zhou Haiying’s aesthetic philosophy as a photographer and document some unforgettable moments of history. ”

of this episode of history in modern China.

After 1949, Zhou Haiying settled in Beijing with his mother. Aside from studying, he spent much of his time photographing the lives of commoners in Beijing and scenes at his university during the 1950s. According to Li Shufeng, director of the Institute of Photography under the Chinese National Academy of Arts, Zhou Haiying’s unique photographic style is inspiring: He wasn’t a photojournalist who used a lot of staged or post-processed photos to attract attention. He also didn’t consider himself an artist, so he never intentionally placed excessive attention on composition or lighting in his photos. However, the images

present a visual feast and record the memories of the photographer and the nation.

“I find pleasure in my photography. Unconsciously, I’ve frozen moments of time for my family and others,” Zhou Haiying said.

The exhibition space is particularly impressive thanks to design under the theme “Warm Memories,” featuring visual elements of book designs from Lu Xun’s heydays during the 1920s and 1930s, such as bold lines and thin black borders. Through combining modern design techniques, those elements created a cultured and modern atmosphere. The entire exhibition opens like a book recording the life of Zhou Haiying as an amateur photographer. 47

Talking Movies in China

Text by John Berra

It's refreshing to live in a country where Marvel doesn't dominate, and the new Star Wars installments are greeted with a collective shrug.

The first time I saw China on screen was in *The Last Emperor*, Bernardo Bertolucci's sweeping account of the life of Pu Yi of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). As a 10-year-old, it was impossible for me to comprehend the history on display, but the scenes of a lonely boy riding his bike around the grounds of the Forbidden City certainly left an impression.

Fast forward to the early 2000s, and I was studying film at postgraduate level. Although my research was focused on U.S. cinema, I couldn't ignore the increasing number of titles from China arriving in the UK such as *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress*, *Beijing Bicycle*, *Hero* and *Unknown Pleasures*. These varied films presented fascinating images of China's past and present while also sometimes speculating on its future.

I first visited China in 2005 and, after a few more trips, relocated in 2010 to teach film studies at Nanjing University. I only visited the cinema a few times while there, perhaps because the main multiplex was a dingy void located near Walmart. However, contacts and friendships were made not only through film-related activities at the university but also through hanging around New Wave, a DVD shop near the campus run by a cheerful cinephile known as "Little Mao." Our interactions constituted a cultural exchange of sorts: he would recommend back catalog titles by notable Chinese directors, and I would answer his questions about British action star Jason Statham. Movies make for great small talk.

In 2013, I moved to Beijing. It's a truly cinematic city.

Whether being dwarfed by the skyscrapers of Chaoyang District, navigating a labyrinthine subway station or wandering down a *hutong* (narrow lane), it's a wide-screen metropolis to be experienced with suitable in-ear musical accompaniment. It also now has hundreds of cinemas, mostly found in interchangeable shopping malls. Although it took a while to find a regular haunt, the well-designed Jackie Chan Cinema at Wukesong has become my favorite multiplex. Coincidentally, it was Jackie Chan who marked the start of my current sideline as a freelance correspondent for the industry publication *Screen Daily* as the first title I reviewed for the outlet was *The Foreigner*, which cast the affable star in an atypically serious role.

In an academic capacity, I've found opportunities to write analytical or historical pieces about Chinese cinema for books and journals. I also co-edit the enthusiast website VCinema which covers movies from all over Asia. However, film criticism as a profession has always represented a road not taken. It's often described as a dying art and occasionally seems redundant in the social media era when everyone has a hot take. Yet having access to the latest releases in a booming local market through being based in Beijing enables one to carve out a niche. Since 2017, I've professionally reviewed crime thrillers such as *A Better Tomorrow 2018*, historical extravaganzas including *Legend of the Demon Cat* and socially conscious true stories like *Dying to Survive*.

China's popular cinema evidences a hectic turnover of trends while its output often receives criticism for its



variable quality. Still, it's refreshing to live in a country where Marvel doesn't dominate, and the new *Star Wars* entries are greeted with a collective shrug. Even when you visit the cinema by yourself, it's a communal experience. Over the 2018 Lunar New Year period, I sat with a crowd in Anshan, Liaoning Province, which lapped up the family values of *Monster Hunt 2*. That evening, I sat in the middle of a group of spectators that cheered throughout Dante Lam's patriotic action spectacle *Operation Red Sea*. Sometimes, it can be a challenge to keep a clear critical head. When watching the sci-fi comedy *Crazy Alien*, I was torn between the nagging sense that it didn't really have a third act and an awareness that the audience didn't remotely care because the jokes were right on target.


Articles concerning Chinese cinema frequently make comparisons with Hollywood blockbusters and fail to recognize China's unique movie-going culture. Commercial filmmakers are becoming increasingly savvy with their use of genre narratives to illustrate a range of experiences in accessible fashion. Much like other aspects of contemporary China, just when you think you have its cinematic sensibility pegged, everything changes.

Foreigners often complain about the lack of cinema-going etiquette in China but I've come to grudgingly accept distractions that occur in the multiplex, which many talkative audience members see as an extension of their living room. Throughout a showing of the unabashedly sentimental romance *Us & Them*, I was admittedly annoyed by the glow from the cellphone of a woman down the row, but maybe she was dealing with a

Camera Stylo is a filmhouse and bar located in central Beijing, where people can watch, discuss, and enjoy films. by Sun Yao

heartbreak of her own via WeChat. Life in China can be hectic and busy citizens rarely have the luxury of tuning the world out completely, even for a couple of hours.

When not reviewing the latest local releases, I like to visit Camera Stylo, located in Dongcheng District, Beijing. Offering an eclectic line-up of new titles and cult favorites, it's a truly communal movie house. After moving to Beijing, I was disappointed to find the film club scene once found among various research studies fading away, but Camera Stylo has proven to be an enduring fixture. Q&A sessions with filmmakers often follow screenings, and the bar boasts a well-stocked selection that gets open-minded discussions flowing.

As much as they stimulate conversation, cinemas inform our experiences of places. When I had the pleasure of hosting a distinguished film professor from the United States during his first trip to Beijing, I suggested a tour of the Forbidden City. Wandering around the magnificent grounds, we discussed a variety of topics but, inevitably, kept coming back to movies. As usual, the sprawling imperial palace was packed with tourists yet twinges of the painful loneliness so exquisitely conveyed in *The Last Emperor* cut right through the throng as a sense of awe was imbued with poignant cinematic memory. 

The author is a lecturer in film and language studies at Renmin University of China. He is a co-editor of *World Film Locations: Beijing* (Intellect, 2012) and *World Film Locations: Shanghai* (Intellect, 2014). He also contributed to *Electric Shadows: A Century of Chinese Cinema* (BFI, 2014).

Civilization: The Way We Live Now

March 9 – May 19, 2019
Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing

This is a monumental photography exhibition featuring over 250 works by more than 120 photographers from Asia, Australia, Europe, Africa and the Americas. The exhibition offers viewers a journey through key aspects of organized life in the 21st century and explores the intricate urban networks that have emerged in today's world, movement of goods, the massive changes that human development has caused to the environment, and the ascent of recreational culture. Photographers record and interpret the ways in which we work and play, exchange our goods and our ideas, collaborate and compete with each other, and how we enter alliances and conflict.



Ergol #1, SIB Clean Room, Arianespace, Guiana Space Center (CGS), Kourou, French Guiana by Vincent Fournier, from the series Space Project, 2011.



Shipping Containers, Portsmouth, VA by Alex MacLean, 2011.

New Art History: 2000-2018 Chinese Contemporary Art

March 10 – May 22, 2019
MOCA Yinchuan

From perspectives of “game/entertainment/consumption,” “ethics/technology/art,” and “post-tradition/history,” this show exhibits 107 representative works from 46 contemporary Chinese artists to record the process and development of Chinese contemporary art with their creations and thoughts since 2000.



Poster for the exhibition “New Art History: 2000-2018 Chinese Contemporary Art.”

Yu Hong: The World of Saha

March 9 – May 5, 2019
Long Museum West Bund, Shanghai

The exhibition's title, “The World of Saha,” derives from a Buddhist expression meaning “a world to be endured.” The exhibition endeavors to impress visitors from the perspective of Yu Hong, a contemporary Chinese female artist, and explores the alterations of women's everyday lives in China's changing social, political and cultural contexts.

Born in Xi'an in 1966, Yu now teaches at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing. Her works have been featured at many exhibitions around the world.



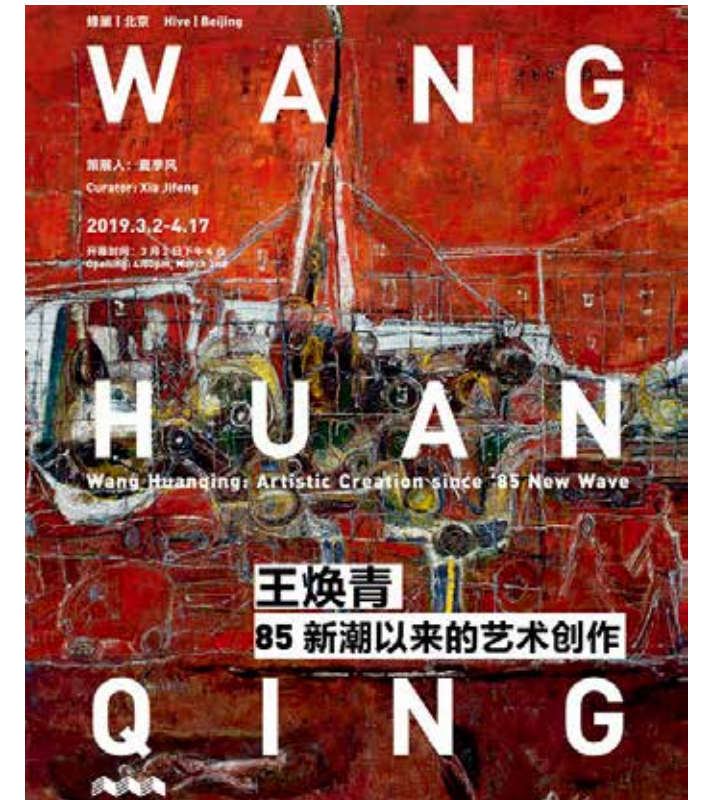
Poster for the exhibition “Yu Hong: The World of Saha.”

Wang Huanqing: Artistic Creation since '85 New Wave

March 2 – April 17, 2019
Hive Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing

The '85 New Wave Movement of the mid-1980s marked an important transitional period in the history of Chinese art in which young Chinese artists influenced by Western modernism sought new artistic expressions. This exhibition consists of six modules involving a number of media such as oil paintings, installations, video and paper works. The exhibition features important works by Chinese artist Wang Huanqing since 1982 not only to trace the development of his art and the aesthetics underneath but also to provide a case study on how the spirit of the '85 New Wave Movement continues to be interpreted and practiced in Chinese contemporary art.

Wang was born in 1958 in northern China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, and graduated with a degree in fine arts from Hebei Normal University. He now teaches at the Beijing Institute of Fashion Technology.



Poster for the exhibition “Wang Huanqing: Artistic Creation since '85 New Wave.”

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