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A Window to the Nation A Welcome to the World

CHINA PICTORIAL

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Building the Belt and Road For Common Development

**Trending Topics at the Two Sessions
Seasonal Senior Migrants**

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IC

China, Australia to Boost Free Trade

February 7, Canberra: Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi shakes hands with his Australian counterpart Julie Bishop before the two countries' 4th round of diplomatic and strategic dialogue.

After his meeting with Bishop, Wang told reporters that the two sides have agreed to boost free trade and make bilateral trade more diversified and sustainable. This year marks the 45th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Australia. Lauding the China-Australia free trade agreement signed a year ago, Wang remarked that China expects joint efforts with Australia to prepare for high-level exchange and vowed to take a "firm stand" against protectionism.

Australia is committed to ensuring that free trade with China continues to expand, Bishop added. "At a time of economic transition and uncertainty around the world, Australia is reassuring China that we are a reliable partner and that we will continue to place strong trade and economic relationships as our highest priorities."



CFP

Hard Goodbyes

February 7, Hefei, Anhui Province: A migrant worker tearfully bids farewell to his wife at the railway station. After a short reunion during the Spring Festival holiday, he must stay in the city to continue working while his wife has to return home to take care of children and seniors left behind there. The farewells after the Spring Festival family reunion are never easy, especially for migrant workers who are away from their families for most of the year.

During this year's post-festival travel rush, some 11.5 million trips were made on China's railways, a year-on-year increase of 11.3 percent. To cope with the increased demand, Chinese rail authorities added additional trains to transport college students and migrant workers heading back to school and work.



IC

Folk Performances for the Lantern Festival

February 11, Wuhan, Hubei Province: Performers present the fire dragon dance, part of the national intangible cultural heritage, to celebrate the Lantern Festival on the 15th day of the first Chinese lunar month. In 2017, that day fell on February 11.

China is a vast country with a long history and diverse cultures, so Lantern Festival customs and activities vary regionally, including lantern shows, appreciation of the bright full moon, fireworks, guessing lantern riddles, eating *tangyuan* (glutinous rice dumplings in sweet soup), lion dances, dragon dances, and walking on stilts.

Traditionally, the Lantern Festival marks the final day of the Spring Festival celebrations. After it, Chinese New Year taboos are no longer in effect and New Year decorations are taken down.



by Yang Min/Xinhua

Rural Reform: A Priority for 2017

February 3, Xinhua, Chongqing Municipality: Farmers walk in the fields on Lichun Day, the first of the 24 solar terms in the Chinese lunar calendar, which marks the official beginning of spring.

Planning for the year traditionally starts with spring. This year, China will be committed to deepening supply-side structural reform in agriculture to cultivate new development engines for the sector, per the “No.1 Central Document” released on February 5. The document calls for improved infrastructure in agriculture, the promotion of “green” production, expanding the sector’s industrial and value chain, boosting innovation, consolidating shared rural development and enhancing rural reform.

This year is the 14th in a row that the “No.1 Central Document” has focused on agriculture, farmers and rural areas. The “No.1 Central Document” is the term traditionally used to refer to the first policy statement released by the central authorities each year and is considered an indicator of policy priorities.

Comment

Stronger Discipline for New Horizons

Text by Hu Zexi

How should a ruling party govern itself in a complicated and volatile international situation? The efforts of the Communist Party of China (CPC) should serve as an example for coping with this problem anywhere in the world.

Every institution that holds power over others risks corruption when restrictions and checks on power fail. The anti-corruption campaign of the CPC has garnered interest around the world, not only because of China's influence, but also because many nations are experiencing similar domestic problems. Recent events in many countries attest to the universality of corruption. Russia's Minister of Economic Development was arrested on suspicion of taking bribes. India launched demonetization of high-denomination banknotes to fight against corruption and the flow of black money. The South Korean presidential scandal involved a friend of the leader being accused of extorting huge sums of money as donations from big businesses. Francis Fukuyama wrote in *Foreign Affairs* that Donald Trump won the American presidency in part because of the public's anger at "the capture of the political system by well-organized interest groups." The resolution and strategies involved in China's latest crackdown on corruption, which are being analyzed globally, have much to offer even for more advanced nations.

After the 18th CPC National Congress, the Party launched an ambitious anti-corruption campaign. The political ecology within the Party has improved remarkably. The world's reaction to the campaign began with quickly running headlines reporting the arrest of high-ranking officials one by one, then turned to complimenting the campaign as "more than a gust of wind,"



January 18, 2017: Officials from Beilun District Commission on Discipline Inspection of Ningbo City check the books of a supermarket for records of purchases made by civil servants. by Huang Zongzhi/Xinhua

and finally formed a widespread consensus that the Party's efforts were a groundbreaking political innovation of the times. The consensus was followed by myriad comparisons and reflections. Joseph Samuel Nye, Jr., the scholar who coined the term "soft power," once posited that anti-corruption efforts would enhance the CPC's soft power. That notion seems to have been proven accurate. After the sixth plenary session of the 18th CPC Central Committee, many observers who previously showed little regard for China's politics made a U-turn, picking apart seemingly simple statements, such as "A permanent cure is achieved by an accumulation of temporary solutions," "Support of the people is the core of politics," and "To forge iron, the hammer must be strong," found in the CPC Central Committee's reports. As the practice of strengthening Party discipline has started being illustrated in terms of theories and systems, China's unique ideas on politics and governance have more frequently attracted international discussion.

No ruling party can afford to turn a blind eye to self-governance, especially as the international political situation is undergoing profound changes. In the Western world, the U.K. voted to leave the European Union, the European continent has seen a sharp right-wing rise, and an anti-establishment candidate won the U.S. election as a longshot underdog. A series of events has shown that an accumulation of problems in those countries is exerting a heavy influence on their politics. Many countries are experiencing political transitions, which makes self-governance of a ruling party even more important. Plentiful empirical research has shown that corruption is almost always the root of social problems including the gap between the rich and the poor. Corruption makes the cost of economic development skyrocket. According to statistics from the World Bank, corruption causes annual losses of 20 to 40 billion U.S. dollars in developing countries. American scholar Samuel P. Huntington wrote in *Political Order in Changing Societies* that corruption peaks in the fiercest phase of modernization, regardless of culture. Most developing nations are in the process of modernization, during which better self-governance of the ruling party is necessary for more comprehensive development.

The success of the CPC's efforts to strengthen Party discipline is even more encouraging internationally considering how desperately high-quality governance is needed around the globe. The political wisdom and power manifested in the campaign is not only the key to the survival of the CPC and prosperity of China, but also to healthy development in a new world.

The author is an editor at the International Department of *People's Daily*.

Buzzwords

适时调控 Well-timed Regulation

Edited by Li Zhuoxi

This term has been included in China's *Report on the Work of the Government*, in the context of implementing directional adjustment and control and well-timed regulation on the basis of the government's range-based regulation to alleviate the mounting downward pressure on the economy. An adapted version of the "Discretionary Choice" policy in economics, the phrase refers to the ability to "make flexible decisions in accordance with different situations and occasions."

"Well-timed regulation" requires the government to be able to flexibly decide and choose policies and measures based on market conditions and the possible results of those policies and measures. Focus is placed on flexible adapta-

tion and timely and appropriate fine-tuning. The government should also formulate different policies for different regions and industries. For example, the government should promulgate different taxation and mortgage policies according to the different development levels of the real estate markets in first-, second-, third-, and fourth-tier cities.

The term was first mentioned on July 10, 2015 by Premier Li Keqiang, as he stressed adjustment and control as well as preset fine-tuning to maintain steady economic growth through promoting reforms and adjusting the economic structure at a conference on economic work. It first appeared in China's government work report during the Two Sessions in 2016.



The fine-tuned macroeconomic regulation method that features range-based regulation, targeted regulation, and well-timed regulation has become a "secret formula" for the Chinese government in the new normal to maintain steady economic growth and make continuous new breakthroughs in structural reform. CFP

生态保护红线 Ecological Red Line

Edited by Li Zhuoxi

This term refers to a crucial barrier to guarantee and maintain China's ecological safety in regions that play an important role ecologically and require strict enforcement of regulations. Many realms are subject to the concept, including water resources protection, biodiversity preservation, water and soil conservation, wind prevention and sand dune fixation, and coastal eco-system stability maintenance, in addition to ecologically sensitive and fragile areas that are vulnerable to water and soil erosion, soil denudation, desertification, and salination.

The "Ecological Red Line" is another crucial limit for China, trailing only the preservation of at least 1.8 billion-*mu* (120 million hectares) of farmland.

On February 7, 2017, the General Office of the CPC Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council jointly issued *Opinions on Drawing and Strictly Safeguarding the Ecological Red Line*, which urged local governments to draw the Red Line around districts in which exploitation is prohibited. This national initiative will be completed before 2020.

Overall goals have been clarified in the Opinions. By the end of 2017, the Ecological Red Line must be drawn in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region as well as all provinces and municipalities along the Yangtze River Economic Belt. By the end of 2018, the Red Line must be drawn in other provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities under the direct



China has set a new world standard by introducing the "red-line" concept for ecological protection. CFP

jurisdiction of the Central Government. By the end of 2020, the whole country will complete the demarcation and calibration of the Ecological Red Line and establish a system for the Red Line. By the

end of 2030, the layout of the Red Line should be further optimized, the Ecological Red Line System will be in full force, and the national eco-safety net will ensure strong safeguards.



Beijing Welcomes The Year of the Rooster

Text by Nick Lanigan

The Spring Festival is a time for food, family and fireworks for people all across China. With more Chinese people than ever before working away from their hometowns, the holiday travel rush has now famously become the largest human migration in history, as millions of people make their way home for a family reunion and a well-deserved break. In the past, I made the most of the Spring Festival holiday to travel and explore other parts of China—so despite the fact that Beijing is the only Chinese city I have ever called home, I had never spent the festival here. This year, I decided to spare myself the stress of taking a train or plane alongside almost the entire Chinese population, and see how the nation’s capital saw in the Year of the Rooster.

In 2017, the eve of the Lunar New Year fell on January 27, meaning that the New Year itself was upon us almost as soon as the holiday had begun. The excitement was palpable as the CCTV New Year Gala began on TV, and a few eager revelers began setting off fireworks before midnight was even close. That, however, was nothing compared to the noise when the clocks actually did strike twelve. I stepped out with my neighbors as they set off endless firecrackers outside our building, and there were so many fireworks going off in every direction that it was almost impossible even to look at them all. Within minutes, all we could smell was smoke; the fireworks continued unabated for hours.

I’m lucky enough to live very close to Ditan Park (or the Temple of Earth), dating back to the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), in the northern part of central Beijing, and I

had heard great things about the traditional temple fairs that were to take place there over the Spring Festival period. I had, however, somewhat underestimated the number of other people that would also be attending. In the run-up to the holiday, whenever my Chinese friends and colleagues discovered that I was staying in Beijing, they responded invariably, “But Beijing will be so empty!” In the days before the Lunar New Year’s Eve, that seemed to be correct. Subway trains were half-empty, roads were quiet, and many shops closed. Then, on the first day of the New Year, when the dust had barely settled from the fireworks the night before, I looked out of my window to see huge crowds of people swarming towards the park, and traffic at a standstill as drivers tried to find a space to park. To me, if anything, it seemed busier than a normal Beijing day!

The park had gone all-out on decorations, with red lanterns on every tree and covered walkways featuring traditional Chinese designs. A stage had been set up in an open area, where different music and dance performances took place throughout the day. Stalls sold snacks and drinks, and families lined up to take their chances at various competitions, hoping to win a stuffed toy. There were also some distinctly less traditional sides to the celebration—one popular attraction was an interactive Virtual Reality (VR) experience, where visitors could pay to spend time in adventurous or even other-worldly surroundings with the help of a set of VR glasses. The park’s celebrations continued in a similar vein for the rest of the Spring Festival week.

Another local attraction is the Yonghe-



Visitors buy decorations and souvenirs from vendors in Ditan Park. by Nick Lanigan

gong, or Lama Temple, a Tibetan Buddhist monastery which is especially popular during the Spring Festival. During this time, people traveled from far and wide to begin the year with prayers and incense offerings to the huge Buddhist statues housed in the monastery’s courtyards and pavilions. Despite the crowds, the majestic temple somehow managed to retain its aura of calm and serenity, and the scent of incense floated beyond the temple walls to fill the street outside with Tibetan flavor.

Elsewhere around Beijing, apart from the fact that a lot of smaller businesses and restaurants were closed, life continued much like normal. Families with children took advantage of the cold, bright weather to go ice skating on the frozen Houhai Lake, whilst tourists flocked to the shops and cafés of Nanluoguxiang like any other time of the year. Beijing’s bus and subway system was as efficient as ever—perhaps even more so, given the reduced traffic—and larger shops and

attractions remained open throughout the week, catering to those who were using the holiday period to visit Beijing from other parts of the country.

All in all, my experience of the Spring Festival in Beijing was one of a city acknowledging the most important cultural celebration in its calendar, whilst also trying to keep things moving as seamlessly as possible. It would be impossible not to notice the festival, even without the fireworks—red lanterns appear on every street

light, and decorations adorn doors and windows on every corner—but it is very possible to live through it with relatively little disruption. As a foreigner in Beijing, it is easy to feel as though the Spring Festival isn’t something that is personally relevant. After all, much like Christmas in the Western world, it is first and foremost a celebration of family. But in my experience, you’d be hard-pressed not to feel at least a little of the excitement that comes along with it.



The lion dance is an ancient tradition held to celebrate the Lunar New Year. CFP



Huge decorations appear across China to celebrate the Year of the Rooster. by Li An/Xinhua



Visitors flock to Ditan Park to enjoy the Spring Festival sunshine. by Chen Xiaogen/Xinhua

Trending Topics At the “Two Sessions”

Text by Qiao Zhenqi

In March 2017, the annual sessions of the National People’s Congress (NPC) and the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), popularly called the “Two Sessions,” will take place in Beijing. As the most important event since the turn of the Lunar New Year, every tiny change to come from the Two Sessions could exert far-reaching influence on Chinese people’s lives and attract worldwide attention. What topics will be most discussed at the Two Sessions and catch the attention of people from home and abroad? We’d like to share a few of our predictions.

13th Five-Year Plan: Embodiment of the Chinese Dream

China has set the goal of completing construction of a moderately prosperous society in all respects by 2020. The 13th Five-Year Plan Period (2016-2020) is the final leg of the mission. The second year of the 13th Five-Year Plan Period, 2017 will see more pragmatic action taken by the country and its people. Solutions for issues such as how to promote the Four-pronged Comprehensive Strategy and actualize the concept of “innovation-driven, coordinated, green, open and shared development” require insightful advice from NPC deputies and CPPCC members.

Professor Wang Yukai from the Chinese Academy of Governance points out that building an all-around moderately prosperous society is an embodiment of the Chinese Dream. Development is the key to solving China’s most pressing problems. To comprehensively deepen reforms and accelerate innovation-driven development, China must focus on balanced and sustainable development while maintaining a certain growth rate. Increasing ordinary people’s standards of living is a crucial piece of the process.

Economic Development: Maintaining Steady Economic Growth

In 2016, China’s economy grew by 6.7 percent, a figure much higher than that of the United States, Japan or the European Union (EU). China remains one of the world’s fastest-growing economies. The same year, China’s GDP surpassed US\$10 trillion. China’s GDP will add another US\$100 billion with every one percent of growth, equal to the amount of every 1.8-percent in GDP growth in 2010. China achieved startling economic growth in 2016 considering the gloomy global economy. In this context, what will serve as the main engines for China’s economic development in 2017, and will China’s economy maintain such impressive growth? The Two Sessions may provide answers to such questions.

People’s Well-being: Sharing the Benefits of Development

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), China has been committed to ensuring that no one is left behind along its road to an all-around moderately prosperous society, pursuant to the principles of “everyone participates, everyone contributes, and everyone enjoys.” Shoring up weak spots in standards of living, improving public services and meeting public expectations on housing, healthcare, education, and senior care will all inspire spirited debate at the Two Sessions. Wu Xiaolin, dean of the Department of Public Administration at Central China University, suggests the government make more effective institutional arrangements to enhance satisfaction among people from all walks of life.

Environmental Protection: Curbing the Smog

For Chinese people, dispelling smog has become an environmental issue of top concern in recent years. People from all walks of life want a “beautiful China” with clean air. Achieving this goal will be a hot topic at the Two Sessions.

Zhang Xiaode, vice chair of the Economics Teaching and Research Division at the Chinese Academy of Governance, stresses that green development requires joint efforts from all levels of society, alongside pragmatic measures and roadmaps for various sectors. The government needs to formulate clearer restrictions and make supervision more effective. The key is to strengthen law enforcement capacity and increase supervision.

Supply-side Structural Reform: Driving Economic Restructuring

This year is an important year for the implementation of the 13th Five-Year Plan, during which time China’s supply-side structural reform will be further promoted. In December 2016, the Central Economic Work Conference confirmed that the government would make substantive progress in cutting overcapacity, destocking, deleveraging, reducing corporate costs and shoring up weak links in the economy. The government will take market-oriented, law-based measures to cut excessive production capacity in industries including steel, coal mining, thermal power, building materials, cement, and flat glass.

Many are speculating about what specific measures the Chinese government will take to integrate its real estate destocking and urbanization efforts, how it will prioritize lowering corporate leverage ratios while controlling overall financial leverage, how it will reduce taxes and fees and cut factor costs, and how it will shore up weak links in both the economy and the institutional system. According to Yang Weimin, vice minister of the Office of the Central Leading Group on Finance and Economic Affairs, it is now time for China to achieve the goal of cutting overcapacity, destocking and deleveraging considering the increasing uncertainties of the world economy, so the first two or three years of the 13th Five-Year Plan Period are a particularly crucial stretch.



This year, China will further deepen its supply-side structural reform to achieve sound, stable economic development. CFP

A bright and sunny day in Beijing on February 19, 2017. The city saw 198 “good air” days in 2016, accounting for 54 percent of the year. CFP

Targeted Poverty Alleviation: Promoting Inclusive Development

No one should be left behind along the road to a moderately prosperous society. The 5th Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee set the goal of lifting all of the country's 70 million impoverished people out of poverty by 2020. What challenges is the targeted poverty alleviation campaign facing? What policies need to be improved? Grass-roots NPC deputies and CPPCC members may provide answers to those questions.

Liu Yongfu, head of the State Council Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development, stresses that although problems such as improper use of poverty relief funds have been alleviated, they have yet to be fundamentally solved. Moreover, some new challenges have emerged, of which the most notable are the practice of going through the motions and the lack of endogenous dynamics among poverty-stricken people. If such problems are not solved, the government's poverty alleviation policies cannot be fully implemented, and the goal of eliminating poverty will not be fulfilled as scheduled.



The local government of Suining City, Sichuan Province, has helped impoverished households construct strawberry plantations as a way of promoting targeted poverty alleviation. CFP

Drafting General Principles of Civil Law: A Step Closer to A Universal Civil Code

This year's NPC session will discuss and review the *General Principle of the Civil Law of the People's Republic of China* (draft). A civil code is a systematic collection of laws covering every aspect of daily life including food, clothing, accommodation, transport, and even funerals and weddings. The draft version of the *General Principles of the Civil Law* has many notable highlights. For instance, it lowers the minimum age of a person with limited capacity for civil conduct from 10 to six, recognizes the legal civil rights of the embryo and fetus, provides clear provisions on issues concerning online virtual assets, data and information, and prolongs the general limitation on legal action from two years to three years.

Chinese people expect the campaign to comprehensively advance the "rule of law," which should produce universal norms from which every citizen can benefit and facilitate justice and fairness that everyone can enjoy.

Regional Integration: A Chinese Solution with Great Potential

Three and a half years have passed since China first launched the Belt and Road Initiative, which has profoundly impacted the internal affairs and diplomatic policies of China and other involved countries and regions. The initiative has been progressing smoothly through cooperation between all countries and regions along the Belt and Road routes. How will the initiative expand cooperation and create more opportunities for as many countries as possible? Questions like this are expected to become hot topics that draw worldwide attention during the Two Sessions.

Along with the initiative, other regional integration plans such as the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei Integrated Development program and the Yangtze River Economic Belt will continue advancing this year. A roadmap for higher-level opening up will become clear at the Two Sessions. Shao Feng, a research fellow at the International Strategy Research Division under the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, believes that given the current international context, China will adopt a comprehensive, active opening-up policy to achieve higher-level development.



January 28, 2017: A cargo container is loaded onto a train heading for Europe in Chengdu, capital of Sichuan Province. The Belt and Road Initiative has facilitated regional integrated development. It is expected that 1,000 trains will run from Chengdu to Europe this year. CFP



September 24, 2016: The world's largest radio telescope begins operation in Pingtang, Guizhou Province. Technological innovation has become a new engine for China's development. CFP

Innovation: A New Engine for China's Development

Innovation is a primary driving force of development. China's 500-meter-aperture spherical radio telescope, nicknamed the Heaven's Eye, has begun operation. Its never-before-seen space-based dark-matter detector, Wukong, has now been orbiting Earth for a year. Quantum communications satellite Micius has also been launched into space. China has completed a manned space mission on the Shenzhou-11 spacecraft to the Tiangong-2 spacelab. Numerous entrepreneurial hotbeds and business incubators have popped up across the country, stirring a wave of mass innovation. Undoubtedly, China's economy and society are undergoing tremendous changes. How to create a better business environment that promotes scientific innovation will be a key concern at the Two Sessions.

Xu Qikun, academician with the Chinese Academy of Sciences, believes that as China's economy enters the "new normal," technological innovation will bolster the country's economic development by adding new momentum during the 13th Five-Year Plan Period. He notes that the need to boost innovation becomes more urgent as its role in economic development becomes larger.

Anti-Corruption: The Next Page

Since the 18th CPC National Congress, China has unwaveringly insisted on cracking down on both "tigers" and "flies"—corrupt high-level officials and local civil servants—to construct a law-based, innovative, honest and service-oriented government. The anti-corruption campaign has helped build a just and fair market environment, enhanced the public's trust in the government and bolstered reform and opening up. In which direction will the anti-graft campaign turn this year? How will the government strengthen its corruption-fighting efforts? Such questions will undoubtedly produce lively discussion at the meetings.

Professor Xu Xing from the Zhou Enlai School of Government at Nankai University points out that the government work reports in recent years have all contained information on the requirements for self-discipline of the government. The public wants to define the government's power boundaries more clearly and further streamline administration and decentralize power, which will eliminate room for kickbacks and corruption. CP

The Belt and Road: New Cooperation and Development

Text by Zhang Yunling

Since the Belt and Road Initiative was proposed by China in 2013, it has continued to attract increasing attention both domestically and internationally for two major reasons: First, the Initiative introduced a new concept for development and cooperation that has been widely accepted. Second, it emphasizes action rather than empty talk and has yielded tangible early results. Today, the Initiative has become far more than just a proposal calling for regional cooperation. In a broader context, it is an innovative cooperation concept and a platform embracing the whole world.



Chinese trucks loaded with cargo at the Gwadar Port, Pakistan. The Gwadar Port formally opened to navigation on November 13, 2016, a landmark for the construction process of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. CFP



On September 7, 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed the construction of the Silk Road Economic Belt during a speech titled "Promote People-to-People Friendship and Create a Better Future" at Kazakhstan's Nazarbayev University. by Wang Ye/Xinhua

Overcoming the Geographical Restrictions of Western China

By promoting the connectivity of the Asian, European and African continents and their adjacent seas, the Initiative of building the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road ("Belt and Road") places special focus on infrastructure, industrial parks, port economic zones, and port logistics networks. It aims to connect several major continents and promote the free flow of investment, commodities, services, capital, technology, and personnel to create new development momentum.

Of course, China has its own strategic considerations in proposing the Initiative. Among them, the most important is the exploration of new development space for China's economic transformation. Since China began to implement the reform and opening-up policy in the late 1970s, its eastern coastal areas have

experienced the majority of the country's economic development due to their geographical advantages. While eastern China has attracted increasing inflow of resources and labor, western China remains in stark contrast, with its vitality dwindling, exacerbating China's regional disparities. In turn, unbalanced regional development has become a key roadblock hindering China's social and economic stability and sustainable development.

The Chinese government has been making major efforts to alleviate this imbalance. The biggest and most influential policy is the Western China Development Strategy, which was launched in the early 21st Century. Covering a total of 12 provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities, the strategy provides substantial support for infrastructure construction including highways, railways, power grids and natural gas projects and encourages resources to flow from eastern to western China through preferential policies. However, years after the strategy went into effect, the western part of the country still hadn't witnessed impressive progress in terms of competitive strength, and unbalanced regional development hadn't seen substantial change. It became clear that a major reason for the slow progress was the geographical restrictions of western China.

Compared with the more domestically-focused Western China Development Strategy, the Belt and Road Initiative emphasizes that participation from both domestic and international players will create an even more open market for the western China region. On land, the Silk Road Economic Belt focuses on linking China, Central Asia, West Asia, Russia and Europe and connects China directly to Southeast and South Asia to construct a new and open development belt. At sea, the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road is designed to stretch from China's coast to Europe through Southeast Asia, the Indian Ocean, and Africa. It also connects China and Oceania to establish cooperation zones across seas and realize mutual development. Connecting China with countries along the Belt and Road will help create new space for economic development, which will benefit not only western China, but also the whole country.

Today, global economic development is undergoing adjustments that call for new ideas and initiatives. The Belt and Road Initiative proposes cooperation and development through innovation, construction of a new environment for comprehensive development and the fostering of new economic growth engines driven by shared experiences, resources, and interests, to realize sustainable, inclusive, and balanced development. The Belt and Road Initiative is one of the most influential programs in the world today.

Birth of an Integrated Market

The Belt and Road Initiative places top priority on coordination. Countries along the Belt and Road are urged to coordinate their economic development strategies and policies and design plans and measures to enhance regional cooperation to provide policy support for implementation. The second priority is achieving connectivity among countries along the Belt and Road through building a wide-reaching infrastructure network that includes both planned infrastructure projects and relevant technical standards. The third priority is improving investment and trade conditions and removing investment and trade barriers to create a sound business environment within the region and in all affected countries. Fourth, the construction of a currency stability system, investment and financing system and credit information system aims to expand the scope and scale of bilateral currency swap and settlement with other countries along the Belt and Road, develop a bond market and found new financial institutions such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), the New Development Bank (NDB), and the Interbank Consortium of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Fifth, the Initiative promotes cultural and academic exchanges, personnel exchanges and cooperation, media cooperation, youth and women exchanges and volunteer services to win public support and deepen bilateral and multilateral cooperation. As a large developing country, China, the designer and key driver of the Initiative, will provide key capital input and technical

support for the aforementioned cooperation and development.

Facility connectivity is a priority area for implementing the Initiative. Connectivity involves infrastructure construction, legal alignment, rules and technical standards, as well as personnel exchanges and flow among countries along the Belt and Road. Focus on infrastructure demands the construction of modern transportation networks. The key aim of enacted policies, rules and technical standards on connectivity is to significantly reduce or eliminate restrictions on transportation, trade, and investment. Focus is placed on personnel flow to facilitate engineering technology exchange, corporate cooperation, educational and cultural personnel exchange, and cross-border tourism. China has accumulated abundant management experience on infrastructure network construction and owns the necessary equipment as well as technical skills, enabling it to play an important role in improving infrastructure in countries along the Belt and Road.

Investment and trade cooperation is a major pillar of the Belt and Road. The Initiative strives to improve investment and trade facilitation and remove investment and trade barriers to create a sound business environment within the region and in all related countries. The Initiative advocates cooperation that will expand trade and investment and upgrade related structures. Via various measures like improving infrastructure, founding industrial parks and port networks, raising funds and increasing capacity, the Initiative aims to create greater space for development.



July 21, 2015: The opening ceremony of the New Development Bank is held in Shanghai. CFP



November 9, 2015: A signing ceremony for the China-Romania Nuclear Power Project is held in Bucharest. by Chen Jin/Xinhua

Financial integration is an important backing for the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative. Financial integration covers a long international financial agenda including monetary stability, project financing, bilateral currency swap and settlement, bond market, and RMB-denominated bonds. Various financial agencies including AIIB, NDB, Silk Road Fund, China-ASEAN Interbank Association and SCO Interbank Consortium should play supportive roles in multilateral financial cooperation. Cooperation on financial regulation and supervision will be strengthened under the Initiative. An efficient regulation coordination mechanism will be established to improve the risk response and crisis management systems. A regional financial risk early-warning system will emerge, and a communication and cooperation mechanism to address cross-border risk will be created. These joint efforts will help promote currency stability, enhance the capability of the credit system and encourage commercial equity investment funds and private funds to participate in the construction of key projects of the Initiative.

People-to-people bonds will facilitate public support for implementation of the Initiative. Building the Belt and Road not only involves economic cooperation, but also features extensive cultural and academic exchanges, personnel exchanges and cooperation, media cooperation, youth and women exchanges and

volunteer services, all of which will help win public support for deepening bilateral and multilateral cooperation. Through various cooperation mechanisms, the Initiative aims to promote personnel, tourism, and sports exchanges, epidemic information sharing, exchanges of prevention and treatment technologies and training of medical professionals. Additionally, the Initiative will integrate existing resources to expand and advance practical cooperation between countries along the Belt and Road on science and technology, youth employment, entrepreneurship training, vocational skill development, social security management, non-governmental exchanges, and city-to-city cooperation.

Considering countries along the Belt and Road feature contrasting development levels, the Belt and Road Initiative would be impossible to implement if it adopted a unified plan. China's construction in various fields should coordinate the development strategies of other countries along the Belt and Road for win-win results that benefit every participating party. The economic development of many countries along the Belt and Road lags behind due to a lack of infrastructure investment. By participating in construction of the Belt and Road, these countries can merge their own development into the bigger regional cooperation network and break through their own limitations on transnational links and logistics networks.



November 22, 2015: Chinese Premier Li Keqiang attends a ceremony held to release a *Joint Statement on the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Negotiations*, in Kuala Lumpur. by Liu Weibing/Xinhua



October 2, 2015: Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban (left) and Bank of China Chairman Tian Guoli attend the opening ceremony of the RMB Clearing Center in Budapest, Hungary. CFP



January 10, 2016: Lu Chun (second from left), chairman of the China Three Gorges Corporation, attends the mobilization ceremony of the construction of the Karot Hydropower Project in Pakistan. Xinhua



January 17, 2016: AIIB inaugural chief Jin Liqun meets with the press and takes questions. Xinhua



July 27, 2016: Three core modules for liquefied natural gas, constructed by Wuchang Shipbuilding Industry Group and with a total weight of 7,000 tons, set off for Russia's Yamal Peninsula from China's Qingdao. by Wan Houde/Xinhua



September 29, 2016: Customers pass the passageway to the Khorgos International Border Cooperation Center at the China-Kazakhstan border. by Li Xiaoguo/Xinhua



December 10, 2016: The construction of a landmark China-Belarus industrial park project, called Great Stone, along the Silk Road Economic Belt in Minsk, Belarus, is progressing smoothly. IC



December 11, 2016: The closing ceremony for the 11th Confucius Institute Conference is held in Kunming, Yunnan Province. CFP



January 18, 2017: The first freight train carrying textiles and consumer goods arrives in Barking, London, after a 12,000-mile journey from Yiwu in the eastern Chinese province of Zhejiang. CFP

In the future, construction of the Belt and Road will gradually improve the connectivity of Asia, Europe and Africa. By constructing an infrastructure network, the Belt and Road will provide a new environment for developing new industrial zones, financial centers, free trade zones, and investment zones as well as some other comprehensive projects such as oil and gas pipelines, power grids, internet infrastructure, power lines, and telecommunication networks. These moves are bound to create a huge market fusing Asia, Europe and Africa.

“Open Regionalism”

In contrast with traditional development aid, construction of the Belt and Road will adopt cooperation requiring joint participation, planning and construction, after which any fruits will be shared by all participants. Every participant is an equal partner. Geopolitically, since the construction of the Belt and Road involves more than 60 countries, it requires active participation and close cooperation from all relevant parties. The Initiative always follows the principle of mutual consultation with all affected parties before any joint construction commences. Great efforts will be made to coordinate the development strategies of all participating countries.

After more than three decades of rapid economic growth, China has reached a “new normal” in terms of economic development.

The country is now experiencing slower but higher quality growth. China’s manufacturing industry needs to find new places with lower costs and improve technology to maintain its competitiveness. The cooperation mechanism proposed by the Initiative will integrate the massive space for development and cost advantages of developing countries in Asia and Africa, but contrast previous practices such as relocating outdated and high-polluting productions to other countries. The Initiative emphasizes that investors need to design and build new industries alongside locals through mutual consultation. From this perspective, it helps expand and upgrade industry.

Most countries and regions along the Belt and Road are developing economies with per capita GDP measuring less than half of the world’s average. No single country can establish a quality infrastructure network on its own. Since infrastructure development requires long-term investment, support and cooperation from public funds and financial institutions are tremendously important. AIIB created a new model for infrastructure development and cooperation financing, which will help break bottlenecks restricting long-term investments. AIIB membership is open to all countries that are willing to contribute to Asian development and global economic development. Operation of the institution strictly follows international rules, and decisions are jointly made by all members.

The global economy is facing great challenges and undergoing painful adjustments. Because of the widening income gap and the exacerbation of unbalanced development, trade and investment growth has slowed, and protectionism is prevailing. Construction of the Belt and Road will foster a new mode of openness, cooperation, and development. With governmental support and the participation of international organizations, the Initiative is sure to attract abundant public and private capital, which will help improve both the internal and external environment for trade and investment, and unleash further potential for economic development.

Of course, because countries along the Belt and Road feature diverse national conditions and interests, pulling them together to build the Belt and Road is not an easy task. Various risks, including political instability, investment barriers and the threat of terrorism, do threaten the process. Avoiding them requires in-depth research, comprehensive understanding of the situation, and a balance of benefits with risks. At the same time, the construction of the Belt and Road aims for long-term development rather than short-term gains. Priorities must be defined when promoting construction, and proceeding too quickly should be avoided. China, as the advocate of the Belt and Road Initiative, must coordinate the interests of various parties, assess the risk of various commercial projects, strengthen bilateral economic and trade agreements and

regulations, promote successful modes of cooperation, establish key entrepreneurial projects and seek aligning interests on economic development, political cooperation, security, and personnel exchanges among the countries. In terms of the priorities in implementing the Initiative, an effective coordination mechanism is necessary to ensure that first things happen first, the interests of different countries are balanced and every participant benefits.

The Belt and Road Initiative will help establish a new, cooperative and win-win regional and international order. In particular, against the backdrop of profound global economic changes, the Initiative provides a new concept and path to improving the comprehensive development environment for developing economies and creates new development momentum by unleashing participation enthusiasm and mobilizing resource input. The Initiative will help the world economy get rid of recession and enter a new phase of development. Today, a variety of answers and solutions should be ready to address development problems. While the Trump administration advocates an “America first” protectionist doctrine, China’s Belt and Road Initiative aims for open cooperation and common development, making it even more important today. A call for cooperation rather than strategic competition, the Initiative promotes awareness of a community of shared destiny and fosters regional and international peace and cooperation. 47

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The "Belt and Road": Three Years of Progress

Designed by Andrey Maleev

An excerpt from *Adhering to the Plan: Orderly and Pragmatic Construction of the "Belt and Road" – The Belt and Road Progress Report*, released by Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies, Renmin University of China (RDCY)

Since it was first announced three years ago, the Belt and Road Initiative has received the backing of over 100 countries and international organizations, and more than 40 countries and international organizations have signed cooperation agreements with China. Chinese investment in the countries along the routes has exceeded US\$50 billion over the past three years, spurring economic development and creating abundant job opportunities in these countries.

The initiative originated in China, but it has delivered benefits far beyond the country's borders. It aims to reduce the gap in regional development, accelerate regional integration, and achieve common growth and shared development between countries across the Eurasian continent and other relevant regions. The means to this end are policy coordination, connectivity of facilities, unimpeded trade, financial integration, and people-to-people communication.

PROPOSING THE INITIATIVE



The Silk Road Economic Belt
was introduced in September 2013

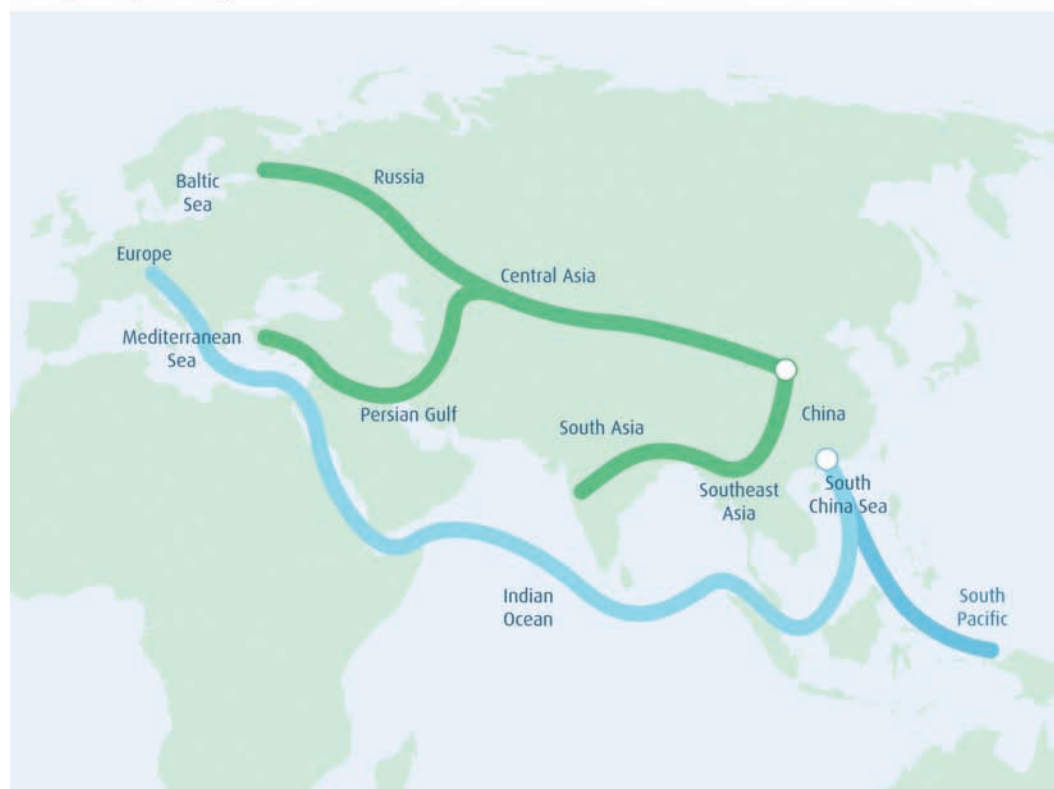
The 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road
was introduced in October 2013



BASIC FRAMEWORK

On land, the Belt and Road Initiative focuses on jointly building a new Eurasian Land Bridge and developing China-Mongolia-Russia, China-Central Asia-West Asia, China-Pakistan, Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) and China-Indochina Peninsula economic corridors by taking advantage of international transport routes, relying on core cities along the Belt and Road routes and using key economic industrial parks as cooperation platforms.

At sea, the Belt and Road Initiative focuses on jointly building smooth, secure and efficient transport routes connecting major sea ports along the Belt and Road routes.



POLICY COORDINATION

Policy coordination helps to bolster mutual political trust, reach consensus on cooperation, coordinate development strategies, facilitate trade and introduce multilateral cooperation mechanisms. China has been working with countries along the Belt and Road routes to push forward programs and projects under the initiative for regional and cross-regional cooperation.

BILATERAL COOPERATION

Agreements signed with the countries
along the Belt and Road routes

Bilateral investment
agreements with
56
countries

Free trade
agreements with
11
countries

MULTILATERAL COOPERATION

Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)



China-CEE Cooperation (16+1)



ASEAN Plus China (10+1)



Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)



Boao Forum for Asia (BFA)



Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM)



Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD)



Conference on Interaction and
Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA)



Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC)



China-Arab States
Cooperation Forum (CASCF)



Greater Mekong Sub-Region (GMS)
Economic Cooperation



Central Asia Regional
Economic Cooperation (CAREC)



Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (LMC)



China-Gulf Cooperation
Council Strategic Dialogue



COORDINATION OF DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES



The Bright Road



Eurasian Economic Union



Prairie Road



Juncker Plan



Northern Powerhouse



Eurasia Initiative



Two Corridors and One Ring



A Vision for Developing North Australia



Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity



The Amber Road

CONNECTIVITY OF FACILITIES

China has been working with countries and regions along the Belt and Road routes to connect infrastructure networks, integrate energy infrastructure and establish an Information Silk Road. An infrastructure network that links Asian sub-regions and extends beyond Asia into Europe and Africa is taking shape.



MAJOR PROJECTS IN PROGRESS:

- Jakarta-Bandung high-speed railway
- China-Laos railway
- China-Thailand railway
- Hungary-Serbia railway
- East-West Turkey high-speed railway
- Gwadar Port



39 freight train lines between China and Europe are in operation

3000 cargo trains are already running

By 2020, the number of cargo trains is expected to rise to **5000**



15 new airport projects and **28** airport expansion projects have been launched in provinces along the Belt and Road routes.

Chinese telecommunication service providers, headed by China Unicom, China Telecom and China Mobile, are speeding up cross-border transmission projects in countries along the Belt and Road routes.



China's state-owned enterprises have participated in the construction of **40** overseas energy projects, including power plants, electricity transmission facilities and oil and gas pipelines, covering **19** countries along the Belt and Road routes.



The China-led TD-LTE standard has become one of the two major 4G standards in the world, as **85** commercial TD-LTE networks deployed in **47** countries account for half of global users.



Chinese nuclear power companies have launched cooperation projects in Romania, the UK, Pakistan and Argentina.



Chinese hydropower companies have worked on cooperation projects in Angola, Brazil, Nepal, Pakistan and Argentina.



UNIMPEDED TRADE

China and the countries along the Belt and Road routes have been working together to facilitate trade and investment activities by negotiating bilateral agreements on investment protection and tax treaties to avoid double taxation. This removes trade and investment barriers and creates a healthy business environment.

TRADE FACILITATION



China has signed **14** free trade agreements (FTAs) involving **22** countries and regions.

China is actively promoting the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), China-Japan-South Korea FTA negotiations and strategic research on an Asia-Pacific FTA.

INVESTMENT FACILITATION



China has signed bilateral investment treaties with **104** countries along the Belt and Road routes.

COOPERATION PLATFORMS

China has set up:

- **17** border economic cooperation zones
- **5** pilot zones for the development and opening-up of border regions
- **1** cross-border economic cooperation zone, with another **11** cross-border economic cooperation areas under construction

By the end of 2016, China had launched **56** overseas trade and economic cooperation zones along the Belt and Road routes.



FINANCIAL INTEGRATION

China is pushing forward cross-border financial cooperation with countries along the Belt and Road routes and international financial institutions, so as to meet the needs of these countries for financing and financial services in infrastructure development. China is also developing RMB trade settlements, currency swaps, investment credit and other financial services between countries along the routes and other economies. Meanwhile, it is seeking to reinforce cooperation with these countries on financial regulation and supervision to build up efficient regulation and supervision mechanisms in the region.

FINANCIAL COOPERATION

INTERNATIONAL AND MULTILATERAL
DEVELOPMENT FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)

Headquarters: Beijing
Founded on December 25, 2015
Authorized capital: **US\$100 billion**

The bank approved loans totaling **US\$509 million** for its first four projects on power, transportation, urban development, etc. in Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan and Tajikistan on June 25, 2016.



The Silk Road Fund

Established in Beijing on December 29, 2014
Registered capital: **61.525 billion yuan**
(around **US\$8.952 billion**)

The Fund signed an MOU with the China Three Gorges Corporation and the Pakistan Private Power and Infrastructure Board to develop Pakistan's Karot hydropower project, its first overseas project, on April 20, 2015.



The New Development Bank

Headquarters: Shanghai
Founded on July 21, 2015
Authorized capital: **US\$100 billion**

The bank announced its first round of loans totaling **US\$811 million** for clean energy projects in China, India, Brazil and South Africa on April 21, 2016.

CHINA'S DOMESTIC POLICY-BASED FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS



China Development Bank

The China Development Bank has set up a "Belt and Road" project pool involving over **900** projects from more than **60** countries in fields like transportation, energy, and resources.



The Export-Import Bank of China

The Export-Import Bank of China has provided funds for over **1,000** projects involving roads, railways, ports, power resources, pipelines, communications and industrial parks in **49** countries along the Belt and Road routes.

CHINA'S DOMESTIC COMMERCIAL BANKS

9

Chinese-funded banks have set up **56** Level A branches in **24** countries along the Belt and Road routes.

56

commercial banks from **20** countries along the routes have set up **7** subsidiaries, **18** branches and **42** representative offices in China.

RMB REGIONALIZATION AND
INTERNATIONALIZATION

CROSS-BORDER USE OF RMB

The cross-border RMB settlements between China and other countries and regions along the Belt and Road routes exceed **2.63 trillion yuan** (around **US\$388.4 billion**).



CURRENCY COOPERATION AMONG CENTRAL BANKS

As of August 15, 2016, the People's Bank of China had signed bilateral currency swap agreements with the central banks or other currency authorities of **35** overseas countries and regions, **21** of which sit along the Belt and Road routes.



CROSS-BORDER RMB PAYMENT, CLEARING AND SETTLEMENT

There are **20** RMB clearing banks in operation, **7** of which are located in countries and regions along the Belt and Road routes.

COOPERATION ON FINANCIAL
REGULATION AND SUPERVISION

As of August 20, 2016, the People's Bank of China had signed MOUs on financial intelligence communication and cooperation with **39** overseas anti-money-laundering organizations.



The China Banking Regulatory Commission has signed MOUs or Exchange of Notes on bilateral regulation and supervision with the financial authorities of **28** countries along the Belt and Road routes.

The China Securities Regulatory Commission has signed **64** MOUs on regulation and supervision with the securities authorities of **59** countries and regions.

PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE COMMUNICATION

With the spirit of friendly cooperation along the Silk Road, China has been developing people-to-people exchanges in the fields of culture and education, tourism, health care and medical services, and science and technology, among others, with countries and regions along the Belt and Road routes.

CULTURE AND EDUCATION

China annually provides **10,000** government scholarships to countries along the Belt and Road routes, **120,000** training opportunities and **150,000** scholarships for citizens of other developing countries to receive education in China,



so as to help train **500,000** professional technicians for other developing countries.



China has worked with countries and regions along the Belt and Road routes through 19 one-year sessions devoted to specific countries, and set up **25** overseas Chinese culture centers, **134** Confucius Institutes and **130** Confucius Classrooms.



Nearly half of the overseas students in China come from the countries along the Belt and Road routes.

HEALTH AND MEDICAL CARE



China has cooperated on medical staff training, public health services and traditional medicine with ministries of health, medical schools and other organizations from central and eastern Europe, ASEAN, the Arab League and other regions and countries, and has signed **23** international agreements with these countries and regions.

TOURISM

China has worked with relevant countries to hold **9** "Tourism Year" events with diversified features, and over **130** promotional events like "Tourism Weeks," "Tourism Promotion Weeks," and "Tourism Months."



From 2016 to 2020, **150 million** Chinese tourists are expected to visit foreign countries along the Belt and Road routes, with a total expenditure of **US\$200 billion**.

China is expected to attract **85 million** visitors from the same area, with a total spending of **US\$110 billion** in China.



SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



China has signed **56** MOUs on scientific and technological cooperation with countries along the Belt and Road routes, covering sectors including space, energy, and ecology.



China has established **38** scientific and technological centers related to the Belt and Road Initiative, ranging from smart industrial parks, joint labs, international technology transfer centers and industrial cooperation centers to business incubation centers.

PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE EXCHANGES

As for youth exchanges, China has jointly held **8** "Youth Exchange Years" with relevant countries and launched **9** youth talent training and development programs.



Concerning cultural and media cooperation, China has engaged in **35** significant events such as the Chinese and Foreign Media Forum for the Belt and Road Initiative.

Concerning public welfare, environmental protection, poverty reduction and opening up, China has worked with countries along the Belt and Road routes to host **26** events such as the "Belt and Road" Joint Action High-level Dialogue, the "Belt and Road" International League for the Peaceful and Friendly Development of Youth, and the China-ASEAN Forum on Social Development and Poverty Reduction.

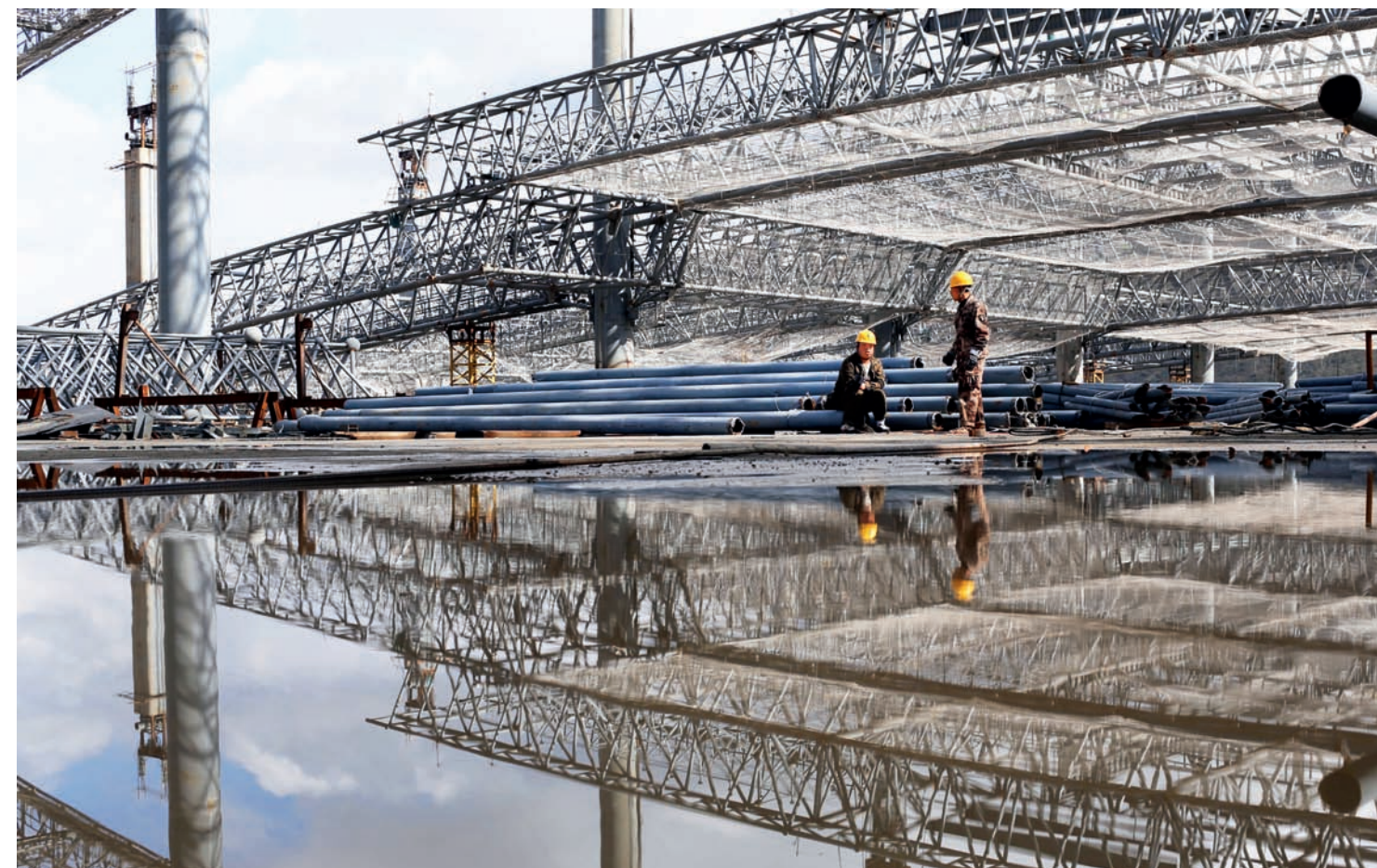
Concerning think tank exchanges, Chinese think tanks have organized as many as **29** relevant events including the China-Iran Think Tank Dialogue, the China-Turkey Think Tank Dialogue, the China-Kazakhstan Think Tank Dialogue, and the U.S.-China Dialogue on the South China Sea between Chinese and U.S. think tanks.



The data shown above was correct as of June 30, 2016, unless otherwise noted. Some data has been updated or expanded.

Pan-Asia Rail Network: Challenges of the Southern Belt and Road Route

Text by Ma Bin



November 3, 2015: Kunming South Railway Station under construction in Kunming, capital of Yunnan Province. Four major rail links, including the Lanzhou-Chengdu-Kunming Line, the Shanghai-Kunming Line, and lines running to coastal areas of southern China and to southwestern China, as well as the Pan-Asia Rail Network, converge at the station. CFP

Railway construction is a priority to enhance connectivity during the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative. Major railways connecting China and other countries along the Belt and Road include both northern and southern routes. The northern route, which starts from Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region and northeastern Chinese provinces, connects China to Eurasian countries such as Russia and Central Asian countries. The southern route connects China to Southeast Asian countries via southwestern Chinese

provinces. The two routes are important underpinnings for constructing overland international economic cooperation corridors of the Belt and Road Initiative. Such infrastructure would facilitate a greater flow of personnel, commodities, and cultural exchanges between China and other countries along the Belt and Road. However, compared with the rapidly-progressing northern route as seen in lines such as China Railway Express to Europe, the southern route, represented by the Pan-Asia Railway Network, lags behind in construction.



November 3, 2015: Kunming South Railway Station under construction in Kunming, capital of Yunnan Province. Kunming South Railway Station, a very important transportation hub in the making, will become the largest fully-functioning international transit junction in southwestern China once it is completed. CFP

With a total length of 15,000 kilometers, the Pan-Asia Railway Network consists of three lines: the China-Vietnam-Cambodia-Thailand-Malaysia-Singapore eastern line, the China-Laos-Thailand-Malaysia-Singapore central line, and the China-Myanmar-Thailand-Malaysia-Singapore western line. Construction of the Pan-Asia Railway Network within China has been going smoothly, but construction of sections outside China, especially foreign sections on the eastern and western lines, will not see substantial improvements in the short term. Only the central line has witnessed some progress over the past two years: Construction of the China-Laos Railway started in December 2016, and is expected to be completed by 2020. The first phase of construction of the China-Thailand Railway is expected to begin in 2017. Generally, various factors have resulted in slow construction of the southern railway corridor. Unsettled political situations in some countries and ballooning costs and cuts in funding, as well as outside influence and intervention from regional and global powers, can all be partially blamed for the situation. The following are the four key factors hindering the construction of the railway network.

The first factor is a turbulent political situation in several countries. Construction of the Pan-Asia Railway Network not only requires abundant resource input from related parties but also a comparatively stable social environment. However, in the past few years, construction of several key stations on the Pan-Asia Railway

Network, including stops in Myanmar, Thailand, and Cambodia, has been delayed by social unrest characterized by either internal armed conflict or social instability triggered by elections. For such reasons, construction of the Pan-Asia Railway Network in these countries has been placed on the backburner. Some agreements and contracts on the construction of the Pan-Asia Railway Network signed by China and related countries have become void and some were not completed by a certain deadline, causing some projects to be suspended indefinitely. Instability would slow the construction process anyway. Since domestic chaos has already jeopardized the safety of the employees and property of the enterprises building and operating the railway network in these countries, respective governments must intervene. However, any simple fix, such as suspending projects until the situation gets better or wasting the entire budget on security, would still hamper construction of the railway network. Policy uncertainty and increased costs brought by instability in some countries along the railway network, as well as changes in some bilateral relationships, have impeded the construction processes of various lines in the railway network.

The second key factor is pressure from cost-benefit analyses. The general precondition for countries to participate in the construction of the Pan-Asia Railway Network is the promise of benefits outweighing costs. Certainly, every Southeast Asian country would welcome a “free ride” on a railway connecting them directly to China to share the fruits of China’s economic development. In fact, such an idea is directly in line with the sharing concept advocated by the Belt and Road Initiative, and is meant to serve as the fundamental motivation to seek rail connectivity with China. For China, the Pan-Asia Railway Network can provide new passageways between China and Southeast Asian countries, which would not only facilitate greater bilateral trade and strengthen bonds, but also consolidate the cooperation framework of the Belt and Road Initiative. However, various parties have produced differing assessments and calculations on construction costs and benefits. While one project or plan is deemed economically reasonable in the eyes of one party, it may not appear so to another. If various parties cannot reach consensus on cost sharing and revenue distribution, it will be difficult for the Pan-Asia Railway Network to become a reality.


The Nong Khai-Nakhon Ratchasima line, the northern section of the China-Thailand Railway, represents a key example of this problem. Economic considerations remain the major cause of Thailand’s inertia in constructing the section. Since areas along the line feature comparatively backward economic development

and small populations, they don’t foresee sufficient volume of passengers or goods to keep trains operating regularly on this route. If most trains are moving passengers and freight from China, the line would only have a limited effect in driving local economic development. And passage via local roads and airways is quite affordable, so cost pressure on introducing a railway has been mounting. For China, the China-Thailand Railway would represent a landmark project and a big step in China’s high-speed rail going abroad. China places high value on such a line as a model for building the Belt and Road, but it still must strike a balance between strategic gains and economic costs.

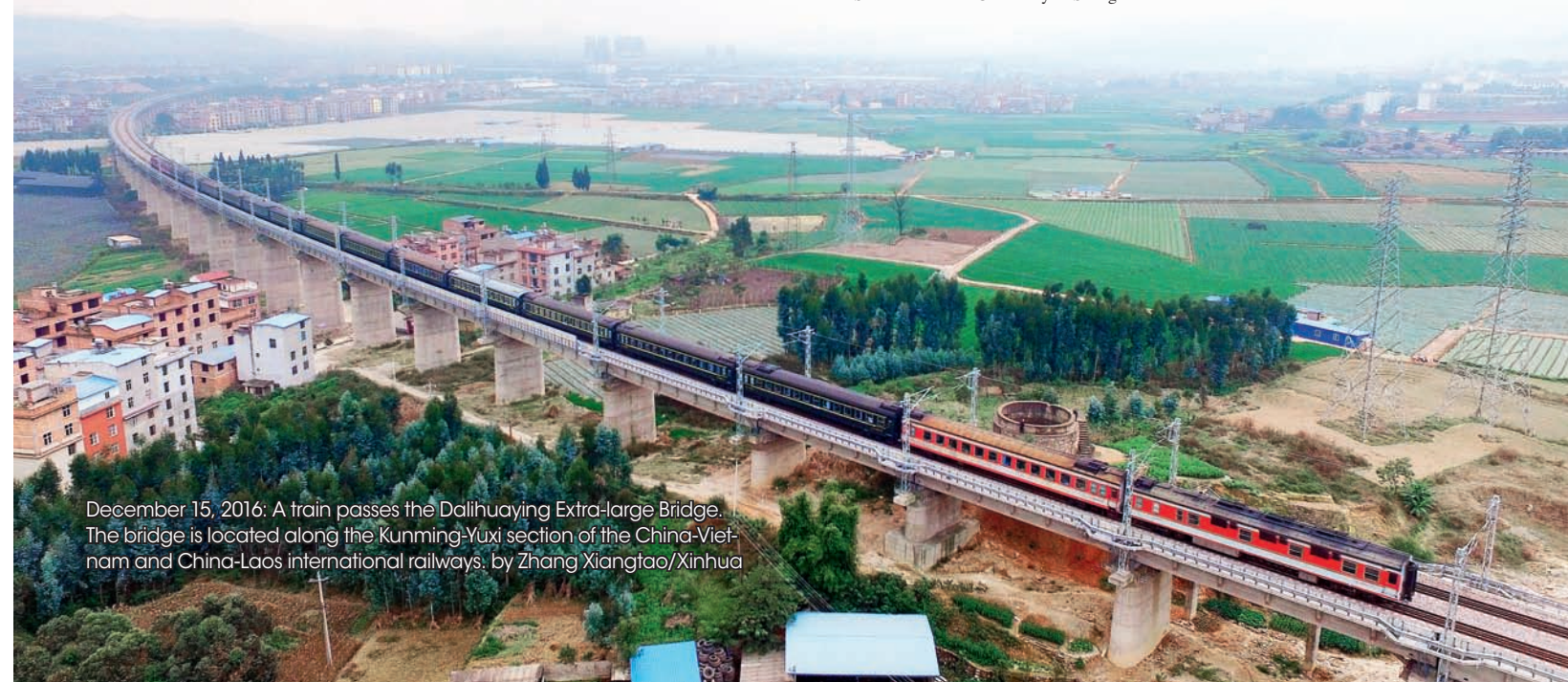
Thirdly, political worries choke momentum. Railway connectivity, like other forms of economic cooperation, will generate an additive effect in the political realm. Sound operation of the Pan-Asia Railway Network will become a positive factor in consolidating and upgrading bilateral relations between China and the respective countries in the network. Although railway connectivity under the Belt and Road Initiative framework aims to promote economic cooperation between involved countries, some have expressed concern about the accompanying political effects. Countries along the Pan-Asia Railway Network are more sensitive towards changes in relative gains. The postponement of

the construction can also be attributed to financing and management problems.

Finally, the impact of fierce geopolitical competition cannot be ignored. The Pan-Asia Railway Network will promote ties between China and Southeast Asian countries, elevate China’s status and enhance its influence in Southeast Asia. During the geo-economic structure remodeling process, countries with major influence in Southeast Asia have been watching closely and have even expressed opposition to railway network construction. In recent years, Japan has increased its investment in the railway infrastructure of Southeast Asia. India has proposed and promoted the Look East Policy. These moves have influenced the expectations of some Southeast Asian countries on the southern railway route along the Belt and Road. Some have consequently become more reluctant to participate and amended their cooperation conditions, impeding the construction process of the Pan-Asia Railway Network.

All these factors—unstable political situations, cost pressures, political maneuvering and geopolitical competition—have been hindering construction of the southern railway route along the Belt and Road. In the future, specific challenges may change along with developments to the situation, and some now minor factors could become more influential. 

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December 15, 2016: A train passes the Dalihuaying Extra-large Bridge. The bridge is located along the Kunming-Yuxi section of the China-Vietnam and China-Laos international railways. by Zhang Xiangtao/Xinhua

Baogang Group in India

Text by Ni Juncheng

Photographs courtesy of Baogang Group

February 5, 2017, the 9th day of the first month of China's lunar calendar, was the first day off for employees of most Chinese companies after the week following the Spring Festival holiday. But Liu Xin was still on duty. He is a steel rolling worker at the rail beam factory of China's Baotou Iron & Steel (Group) Co., Ltd. ("Baogang Group" for short). He manages the No. 2 Universal Steel Rolling Line via several computers in a small control room of about 20 square meters.

This production line was built in 2006 with CCS universal stand and related technology, both provided by SMS Group. The 100-meter heavy rails produced there represent the flagship product of the heavy industry hub in northern China. Although China's steel market has experienced a significant decline in recent years, this production line has orders booked through April.

At the 50th Annual Conference of the World Steel Association in October 2016, data provided by Baogang Group caught the attention of participants from India's Jindal Group: the maximum speed for Beijing-Shanghai bullet trains in experiments reached as high as 486.1 kilometers per hour; the trial run of Electric Multiple Units (China's standard EMU) between Zhengzhou in Henan Province and Xuzhou in Jiangsu Province reached over 420 kilometers per hour when two trains meet, the equivalent of 117 meters a second; the Datong-Qinhuangdao Railway, China's most important route for coal transportation, and the Shanxi-Henan-Shandong Railway were built with 75N Bainitic Steel from Baogang Group. As its newest product, the alloy features high tenacity and abrasive resistance.

China is now home to the world's longest high-speed railway network, with tracks stretching over 20,000 kilometers. About half of the rail tracks were produced by Baogang Group, whose quality is considered top globally. Jindal Group ended up contacting Baogang Group with the help of the World Steel Association, and they reached an agreement in which Baogang Group would subcontract technology and services to a company affiliated to Jindal Group.

Jindal Group's problem was the lack of the technology adopted in the universal steel rolling production line that Liu Xin operated. Jindal Steel & Power Ltd., a subsidiary of Jindal Group, produces rails with equipment similar to Baogang Group's. However, due to a lack of new technology, its output and quality of rails didn't reach design capacity, and even its German partner couldn't bring the product up to par. They hoped to acquire the necessary expertise and instruction from Baogang Group directly.



Baogang Group's 100-meter heavy rails are widely used in China's railway network in recent years.



October 15, 1959: Premier Zhou Enlai dedicates No. 1 blast furnace of Baogang Group.

Baogang Group was established during China's campaign to mass-produce steel during the mid-20th century. Its No. 1 blast furnace was dedicated by late Premier Zhou Enlai. As one of the three earliest major steel producers established after the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Baogang Group has gained plenty of experience and developed considerable technological innovations during its long history. Exporting technology and soft power are concepts to which the group has attached great importance in recent years as it has been committed to industrial upgrade and innovation.

The two steel producers have become perfect partners. The rail beam factory of Baogang Group sent 57-year-old Jing Yinong, deputy director of its technology center, to cooperate with the Indian company. Jing graduated from Baotou University of Iron and Steel Technology (present-day Inner Mongolia University of Science and Technology) with a degree in steel rolling in 1983. He is an experienced expert in this field. Since November of last year, Jing and his team have visited India four times. In Raigarh, Bihar State, Jing helped Jindal correct rail passes and redesign their heater, which raised their monthly output capacity to as high as 50,000 tons. Their technology service will conclude in April.

People from both producers have grown to know a lot more about each other during the exchanges. Personnel from Jindal Group were amazed by Baogang's spotless factory and advanced environmental protection systems, and Jing highly praised Jindal for its

efficiency in building two 4,500-cubic-meter blast furnaces within only one year, as well as its good sense of environmental protection.

Amid the changes in the global economy, China unveiled the Belt and Road Initiative, which has reached the phase of cooperative implementation. From the perspective of many insiders, the unprecedented technology cooperation between Baogang Group and Jindal Group will accumulate specific experience for the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative that aims to foster international cooperation.

Products from Baogang Group have gained a sterling reputation in India, which was another major reason why Jindal chose to cooperate with Baogang Group. Baogang Group began exporting to India in 2010. At first, the majority of its exports were low-level products such as steel round bars, steel billets, and ordinary seamless steel pipes. High-level products have gradually taken a larger proportion, especially since last year. In early 2017, Baogang Group exported nearly 20,000 tons of medium steel plates, a sophisticated product to be used in oil pipeline projects around New Delhi, to India for the first time.

The World Steel Association held its Asian market conference in Mumbai last November. The report from the conference analyzed "whether India will propel global economy growth." The sluggish world economy has caused development of the global steel




February 2017: Jing Yinong (third right) discusses technical problems with Jindal staff in their steel plant.

market to slump, and many now believe that India is the best place to look for growth. Although this report mentioned in particular that "growth in various areas of India differs greatly" and investment's proportion of India's GDP is shrinking, it still maintained that India's economy and steel market had a good momentum.

Even though it is located inland, Baogang Group exports 10 to 15 percent of its total output. Its export volume ranks among the top ten of China's inland steel producers. Liu Yufeng, general manager of the International Trade Company of Baogang Group, oversees the group's overseas marketing. Like Jing Yinong, he has worked in the steel industry for over three decades. Liu agreed emphatically with the assessment that although India's steel consumption in recent years has measured only a tenth of China's, the South Asian country has great potential. Even as India is seeing high-speed growth, its per capita consumption of steel remains relatively low, and the Indian government is enacting many ambitious reforms. Analysis of the fluid market environment inspired Baogang Group to focus on the Indian market even though most of its current overseas customers are from Europe, the United States and Southeast Asia.

"India's development is in a different but complementary phase compared to China," explains Liu. "China has begun to enter the 'Industry 4.0' era and is seeing extensive urbanization, while India's industrialization has just started to gain steam. Just

as China's steel industry is tightening its belt, India is seeing rapidly increasing demand." India surpassed the United States to become the world's third largest steel producer in 2015. It also sees fierce domestic competition. Compared to Indian companies, Baogang Group offers a wide range of products and the precious rare earth elements in the steel are its biggest advantage in the market. Baogang Group is headquartered in the center of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, which has the world's largest rare earth reserves. Steel containing rare earth is noted for its greater tenacity and plasticity. Over 75 percent of the heavy rail tracks on the Qinghai-Tibet Railway were produced by Baogang Group.

Logistics can bottleneck inland companies' exporting power, and even Baogang has not been immune to this. Its products are usually shipped from the port of Tianjin. Typically, shipments take 35 days to reach Dubai, a period in which the market could shift drastically. Liu Yufeng has great expectations for the infrastructure network being promoted by the Belt and Road Initiative, which will connect Asia, Europe and Africa. "If our exports to Central Asia and South Asia could be transported through Inner Mongolia to Kashgar in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region and then to Gwadar port in Pakistan, it would cut our traditional route by half," says Liu. "This would not only avert considerable market risk, but also facilitate exports of many more types of products over land versus sea." 



Baogang Group's rare-earth steel plant. China's rare earth reserves account for 23 percent of the planet's total, and Bayan Obo Mining District in the north of Baotou City contains 80 percent of China's total reserves. It is one of Baogang Group's main raw material bases.



Travis Knight takes the puppet of Kubo to the Palace Museum during his Beijing promotion of the film *Kubo and the Two Strings*. In this film, Knight exhibits his ability to control the overall pace of a production.

Travis Knight: Telling Stories that Matter

Text by Zoe Zhao

Photographs courtesy of Infotainment China Media

K*ubo and the Two Strings* definitely had a good start in 2017. After the film was nominated for the Best Animated Feature Film and Best Visual Effects prizes at the 89th Academy Awards in January, it also won Best Animated Film at the 70th British Academy Film Awards in February. The film revolves around a young boy named Kubo, who has magical powers and whose left eye was stolen. Accompanied by Monkey and Beetle, he must locate a magical suit of armor worn by his late father in order to defeat a vengeful spirit from the past.

The film, with Cindy Lin from Infotainment China Media as its Chinese distributor, hit China's big screens on January 13, and is expected to run until March 12. A 3D stop-motion fantasy action-adventure film produced by LAIKA Entertainment, an American stop-motion animation studio, *Kubo and the Two Strings* marks the directorial debut of Travis Knight. Previously better known as LAIKA's lead animator, Knight has shown his ability to control the overall pace of a production in this film.

Knight was born in 1973 in Hillsboro, Oregon, U.S.A. While many people have suggested that he was born with a silver spoon in his mouth, as the son of Phil Knight, founder and chairman of Nike, Inc., he wanted to take a different road. In 1993, he released his rap album *Get off Mine* as Chilly Tee, as well as a single of the same name. Soon, however, Knight realized that instead of becoming a successful rapper, he was more interested

in stop-motion animation, an animation technique that physically manipulates an object so that it appears to move on its own. Knight went back to university before joining LAIKA in the late 1990s, where he quickly devoted himself to the trade. He later went on to serve as the company's

lead animator, president, and CEO. What does Knight have to say about *Kubo and the Two Strings*? How does he generally view LAIKA's work? What are the special features of LAIKA? With these questions in mind, *China Pictorial* sat down with Knight to find out more.



A poster for *Kubo and the Two Strings*.

China Pictorial (CP): What was the inspiration for *Kubo and the Two Strings*?

Travis Knight (Knight): I had been wanting to do a big epic movie at LAIKA for some time, and this just really contained all those elements. My mother had instilled in me a love of big fantasy stories, things like *The Lord of the Rings* and other fantasy works. And then when I was about eight years old, my father let me tag along on one of his business trips and we trav-

eled throughout Asia, including Beijing and Shanghai, igniting a lifelong admiration for Eastern culture. So you might say that my inspiration came from family, and we made a movie that, at its core, is about family. And then our character designer brought us an original idea that became the basis for *Kubo and the Two Strings*.

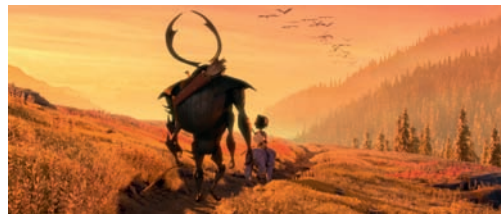
I had been looking for something big, expansive and epic in nature. To make a small-scale movie shot on a gussied-up

slab of wood in a warehouse look and feel like a large-scale epic lensed on an endless majestic vista is a nigh-on impossible task. It's ridiculous. Nobody would do that, which is exactly why I was excited to do it with *Kubo and the Two Strings*. Fundamentally, it's the same process that Willis O'Brien used in *King Kong* in 1933, but we've created technology and techniques that have completely transformed the medium.

Having worked in animation for two decades, during which time he slogged through the mire of artistic creation and development as well as production and management, Knight says that he has devoted himself to the simplest of goals: making movies that matter.



Stills from *Kubo and the Two Strings*.



Stills from *Kubo and the Two Strings*.

Knight and the audience at the Chinese premiere of *Kubo and the Two Strings*. As a director, Knight combines things he has loved deeply about the movies ever since he was a child: epic fantasy, animation, heroic stories, and the transcendent art and philosophy of Asia.



CP: In terms of the plot, *Kubo and the Two Strings* is quite a typical American story, although the movie has incorporated plenty of elements from the East. What made you want to give an American story an "Eastern outfit"?

Knight: We have found that the more intimate you make a story, the more universal it becomes. The idea of a young boy trying to reconnect with his family is a universal theme, so that makes for a story that can cast a wide emotional net. Our crew spent much time researching Eastern culture. As I said, I took my first trip to Asia including Beijing and Shanghai when I was around eight years old. Growing up in America's Pacific Northwest, in many ways Asia felt like home, but in other, very striking ways it was unlike anything I had ever experienced. It was beautiful and breathtaking. My childhood introduction was the beginning of a life-long love affair with Eastern culture. It's no coincidence that my first film as a director combines all these things I've loved deeply since I was a child: epic fantasy, animation, heroic stories on a grand scale, and the beautiful, transcendent art and philosophy of Asia.

CP: Previously, you mainly worked as the lead animator at LAIKA. How do you feel about your directorial debut in *Kubo and the Two Strings*?

Knight: Directing the film has been the most creatively satisfying experience of my life. And there's more of me in *Kubo and the Two Strings* than in anything I've ever done. That can be a slightly terrifying prospect: revealing a part of yourself that you typically keep shrouded and protected. But it's what we need to do if we want to tell stories that have meaning, resonance and real heart.

Being a director took advantage of

every single one of my earlier experiences. This film was technically demanding, but emotionally more so. Life is fuel for art, and my experiences with my family combined with a life working in animation gave me confidence that I could do this story justice. When you're the director, you're the nexus of everything. Every single decision ultimately piles up on the director's shoulders. It can be exhausting. But it's also exhilarating. You're surrounded by so many brilliant and passionate artists. You try to inspire them, but ultimately they're the ones inspiring you. It's a beautiful collaboration.

CP: Chinese millennials and kids today are quite familiar with international animations, such as those from DreamWorks or Disney. What makes LAIKA and its works different from theirs?

Knight: From the beginning, our community at LAIKA has wholeheartedly pursued the simplest of goals: to make movies that matter. Of course, that unadorned statement belies the enormous, back-breaking and mind-numbing complexity of crafting an animated film from scratch and slowly, painstakingly coaxing it to life a frame at a time over the course of many years. But, putting all that aside, stripping everything else away, we're just simple storytellers. We tell stories that move us and that we hope resonate in the same way with audiences of all ages, and families in particular, all over the world.

Kubo and the Two Strings is a public pronouncement of LAIKA's commitment to tell stories that matter. Long after the thing itself is gone, our story of it can endure, thrive, and grow in power and meaning. The abiding power of stories reminds me that art can transcend any given time, place, and culture. And that art can draw us together over shared thoughts, emotions, and experi-

ences and speak to that which makes us who we are. My great hope is that *Kubo and the Two Strings* is that kind of story.

CP: LAIKA has only produced four films — *Coraline*, *ParaNorman*, *The Boxtrolls* and *Kubo and the Two Strings* — in the past 10 years. Is there a particular reason for that?

Knight: We want to make movies that matter, and to do so in a way that truly pushes the medium of animation forward. That takes time. For *Kubo and the Two Strings*, the time from the very start of development to the time we came to theaters was about five years. Any one animator on any given week might produce three to four seconds of footage, so we're having a good week if the entire animation team has produced a minute or two of footage. It's a slow process, but we think it's worth it. We continue to take this medium of stop-motion animation to places it has never been and to expand its storytelling possibilities. For this movie, we took techniques from the theater, from the stage, from woodworkers and machinists, from traditional artists and craftspeople, and futurists and technophiles... and maybe even some technophobes.

LAIKA re-imagined the process to revolutionize facial replacement in stop-motion animation: for decades, the puppet's entire head was swapped out to change the facial expression, but with the breakthrough Rapid Prototyping 3D printers we could create upper and lower portions of faces. This innovation yields trays and trays of facial halves allowing our 'hero' puppets to have millions of potential facial expressions. Besides, people who work at LAIKA have an innate artistic restlessness, quieted only when a story challenge is identified and met. CP



Wang is interviewed by the media after the press conference for *A World Without Thieves* in 2004. CFP

The Country Boy Movie Star

Text by Zhang Xue

Wang Baoqiang stands in stark contrast with his peers in the Chinese movie industry. He never formally studied acting and can hardly be classified as a heartthrob. Since he lacks certain star qualities, “simple,” “unadorned,” and “a little silly” have become the most commonly used adjectives to describe Wang.

In late January, during the Spring Festival holiday—China’s blockbuster movie season—Wang’s directorial debut, the action adventure comedy *Buddies in India*, hit big screens in China. Starring and directed by Wang, the film grossed more than US\$100 million in

just three weeks after its release. Whether acting or directing, Wang consistently brings pleasant surprises to his audience.

A Dream Comes True

In 1984, Wang was born into a poverty-stricken family in Xingtai City, Hebei Province. According to his mother, the family was so poor that young Wang always wore hand-me-downs from his elder brother and sister. As a child, Wang watched *The Shaolin Temple*, a 1982 Hong Kong-Chinese mainland kung fu movie starring Jet Li, countless times, inspiring the boy to dream of studying martial arts and film.

In the hope of realizing this dream, Wang began learning martial arts at the age of six. From age eight to 14, he studied at the Songshan Mountain-based Shaolin Temple in Henan Province as a secular disciple. During his six-year stay at the Buddhist temple, Wang woke at 4:00 a.m. in summer and 5:00 a.m. in winter for a morning jog. And his twice-a-week stamina training required him to run more than 20 kilometers each time. Because of such grueling training, Wang could only return home once a year, for the Spring Festival, during the entire six years — even though the temple is only a few hundred kilometers from his home.



A still from *Buddies in India*. courtesy of the film production team



In 2014, Wang took the lead role in *Monk Comes Down the Mountain*, directed by renowned Chinese director Chen Kaige. He vividly portrayed a naïve and simple young Taoist monk. IC

When interviewed by the media after *Buddies in India* was released, Wang revealed his motivation for making the film: “It was my childhood dream.”

Wang and his younger brother were greatly influenced by actor Liu Xiao Ling Tong, who is best known for his role as the Monkey King in the iconic 1986 Chinese TV adaptation of the 16th-Century novel *Journey to the West*. Both boys fantasized about becoming the Monkey King and having his martial arts skills. However, the family could only afford to send one boy to the Shaolin Temple to study martial arts, so Wang promised to teach his brother after completing his studies. Unfortunately, his younger brother passed away before Wang completed his study at the Shaolin Temple. Wang could never fulfill his promise. He hoped that *Buddies in India* would be a start.

The film follows a humble Wu Kong (Wang Baoqiang) as he accompanies the son of a recently deceased wealthy businessman to India to find his will.

Although Wang has been a revered

actor for years, *Buddies in India* was his directorial debut, so it posed many challenges. The film was mostly shot in India. Under the scorching sun, with temperatures regularly exceeding 40 degrees Celsius, cameras frequently broke down and actors and crew complained endlessly. Wang was injured while shooting one scene and received 10 stitches around his mouth. Another scene featured a chili-eating competition. To make the character’s reaction as authentic as possible, Wang swallowed a whole tray of chilies. “They were so hot that I felt something like a volcanic explosion in my body,” Wang sighs.

Wang even accepts criticisms of the film peacefully; critics consistently cited a clichéd plot and abrupt ending. “Few were born to make films. My directorial debut was certainly a learning process.”

Struggles of Rural Youth

Today, even after more than a decade in the entertainment industry, Wang remains honest and simple, and treats others with sincerity and kindness. His own life

stories are often as fascinating as the characters he has played.

About 14 years ago, country boy Wang arrived in Beijing to pursue his movie dream like so many of his peers. Compared to his childhood idol Jet Li, who also studied martial arts at a young age, Wang was unassuming. Jet Li won his first national martial arts championship as a teen and became famous overnight after the release of *The Shaolin Temple*. Wang was just a poor guy without any experience or connections.

During his first days in Beijing, Wang often waited under a big tree at the entrance of Beijing Film Studio in the hope of being spotted by a casting agent looking for extras. When he was lucky enough to get a chance to play a walk-on character, he was paid only a few dozen yuan a day. When he didn’t have an acting job, he worked at construction sites, transporting bricks and sand. “Sometimes, I even didn’t know where my next meal would come from,” he recalls. But the young man knew that he had to persist. “I told myself to hang in there. I would become a star one day, and I would be recognized by everyone on the street.”

In 2003, Wang was cast in his debut role in the movie *Blind Shaft*, which later won him the Best New Performer prize at the 2003 Taipei Golden Horse Film Festival and Awards. The movie not only admitted Wang into film and television circles, but also helped him build self-confidence. “After that, I knew that I could be a good actor,” he adds.

In 2004, one of the most renowned working Chinese directors, Feng Xiaogang, cast Wang as the lead in his film *A World Without Thieves*. Wang played a naïve village boy working as a construction worker in Tibet and taking his five years of savings, in cash, home with him on a train. The boy declares that he does not believe there are thieves, even as a team of profes-



Working as a director for the first time, Wang watches the monitor with his production staff on location for *Buddies in India*. courtesy of the film production team

sional pickpockets competes to steal his money and two others seek to protect him. In the movie, Wang got the chance to work with A-list Chinese actors and actresses from both the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong, including Ge You, Andy Lau and Rene Liu. Unsurprisingly, the role brought him immense popularity and made one dream come true: “By then, I was recognized when I walked on the street.”


In 2006, Wang starred in the 30-episode TV series *Soldiers Sortie*. He vividly portrayed Xu Sanduo, a young military recruit who is brave, upright, and kind-hearted. The soldier is not highly intelligent,

but invests profound devotion in any task assigned to him. Wang’s natural acting style proved a crowd favorite and tremendously successful, winning him countless fans.

Wang says that when he first saw the screenplay for *Soldiers Sortie*, he felt like it was written specifically for him. “I am already Xu Sanduo,” he laughs. “I didn’t even need to act. The role and myself merged into a single existence.”

The concept of “never giving up” promoted by the TV series moved millions of Chinese spectators. The blunt, persistent, and simple Xu Sanduo is similar to Tom Hanks’ Forrest Gump. He does what he

believes is right and sticks it out to the end, providing food for thought and inspiring viewers to reflect on their own lives.

In his autobiography *Moving Ahead: Struggling Youth* published in 2008, Wang recounted his dreams, struggles, and episodes of growing up. Even now, every time he passes Beijing Film Studio, he is still moved by the sight of extras waiting at the entrance. Wang has never denied that despite all of his efforts, it still took a major serving of good luck to earn his success. It may be hard to replicate, but Wang’s story has already motivated many young people to follow their dreams. 



In 2015, Wang won the Best New Action Actor award at the closing ceremony of the Jackie Chan Action Movie Week Gala Night during the 18th Shanghai International Film Festival. CFP

Monkey Keepers

Text by Zhou Jin

Photographs by Yu Xiangjun



In 1998, Yu Jianhua became a member of a group of forest rangers in the Weixi Division of White Horse Snow Mountain National Nature Reserve in Deqen Prefecture, Yunnan Province. Since then, protecting Yunnan snub-nosed monkeys, a rare, endangered species under first-class state protection, has become his major task.

At age 64, Yu Jianhua is still a forest ranger with the Weixi Division of Baima (White Horse) Snow Mountain National Nature Reserve in Deqen Prefecture, Yunnan Province. A member of the Lisu ethnic group, Yu once subsisted on hunting and farming. Since 1998, when he joined the Weixi Division as a member of its first group of forest rangers, his focus has shifted to the protection of Yunnan snub-nosed monkeys, an endangered species under first-class state protection in China.

A French missionary first discovered the animal in Deqen during the 1880s. In

1897, French zoologist Alphonse Milne-Edwards (1835-1900) wrote the first scientific description and officially named it *Rhinopithecus bieti*. However, so few could be found anywhere that many assumed they were already teetering on the brink of extinction. Chinese zoologists didn't acknowledge them until 1962 and finally began conducting scientific investigations in the late 1970s.

The White Horse Snow Mountain National Nature Reserve was first established in 1983 as the first area for Yunnan snub-nosed monkey conservation in China.

Many joined the efforts to protect the forests in the nature reserve, including Yu Jianhua from Xiangguqing Village, a place where there is a forest ranger in almost every family.

Yunnan snub-nosed monkeys are primates that only inhabit alpine areas between 2,500 and 5,000 meters above sea level. Every day at 5:00 a.m., Yu Jianhua carries 10 to 15 kilograms of foods such as peanuts, pumpkin seeds and lichens up the mountain paths to feed the monkeys. Now, many of the monkeys are familiar with him, and some even take food straight from his hand.



Yu Jianhua was once captain of a local team of forest rangers, which has grown from four to 26 members today.



Peanuts, pumpkin seeds and lichens are favorite foods of Yunnan snub-nosed monkeys.

Yu doesn't return home until near bedtime and considers feeding those monkeys a serious business. Sometimes he has to follow the monkeys through the forests. To reach higher elevations, he must go all the way through the neighboring county. If he takes too long, it gets dark, preventing him from returning home. In that case, he spends the night in a simple cottage erected for forest rangers.

Yu still recalls one particularly snowy winter day. As usual, he prepared food for the day and set off hiking. After he left, however, the snow began falling more and more heavily, eventually blocking every path down the hills. He managed to build a fire in the cottage and spent four days trapped in the hills before he could get down.

Yu was once the captain of the forest ranger team, which has grown from four members to 26. Today, he works at the protection station under the administration of Tacheng Yunnan Snub-nosed Monkey National Park, established in 2009. "Visitors can see more than 50 monkeys there," Yu explains. "The other 400-plus

live somewhere outside the park. I go and check if they are safe twice or three times a month. Before 2004, there were only about 300 monkeys, but today the population has grown to 450 and just keeps growing."

Still, Yu is worried. "The monkeys are extremely sensitive to increases or decreases in every water resource," he explains. Today, the entire reserve is plagued by drought and the watery regions keep shrinking, leaving fewer habitats for the monkeys. What's worse, the beard lichen, a staple food for the monkeys, is becoming harder to collect. A few years ago, it could be found along the hills 2,800 meters above sea level, but today, it can only be found in areas with altitudes above 3,000 meters.

At 28, Yu Jianhua's son, Yu Zhonghua, is taller and stronger than his old man. Eight years ago, he returned home after working in Lijiang to join his father's team. Today, he leads 16 forest rangers protecting animals in regions under his administration. "In 2015, we installed infrared cameras that captured images of black bears, lesser pandas, macaques, and white-chested pheasants,



Yu Jianhua feeds the monkeys twice every day. After getting acquainted with him, some monkeys take food straight from his hand.

creatures we only knew of from the tales of village elders," grins the young man. The younger Yu can hardly hide his excitement when speaking of such surprises.


He is clearly proud of his father's tremendous devotion to protecting the monkeys. "These are nomadic monkeys by nature," he explains. "It's impossible for them to stay in one place. They run all over the mountains. I can never find them. How does my dad do it?"

Yu Zhonghua hopes his dad will retire,

but the latter can't be dissuaded from his trips to feed the monkeys. "My emotions are tied to the monkeys," the elder admits. "I get upset upon seeing any of them injured, I am overjoyed to see newborns, and my heart breaks upon seeing any of them sick or dead."

The father was clearly an inspiration to his son. "I didn't think of being a forest ranger until I started appreciating my father's contributions," the younger Yu says. "Now it doesn't feel like I have any other option."

Changes in his fellow villagers have brought him hope. "People today lead better lives thanks to the government's targeted poverty alleviation policies," he continues. "Every home has been fitted with a solar water heater and fuel-efficient stove, so the villagers are more willing to contribute to the campaigns for ecological protection. In the past, they cut down trees in the nature reserve to build houses and fires. Today, however, they are more aware of forest protection efforts, so they gather fallen wood instead."

The joint efforts have resulted in solid figures. In 2013, statistics from Chinese and French biologists showed that the population of Yunnan snub-nosed monkeys in the White Horse Snow Mountain National Nature Reserve had grown from about 1,000 in 1983 to 1,800, accounting for over 60 percent of the world's total. The younger Yu says the difference is noticeable: "In the past, it could take up to a week to find the monkeys, but today, we frequently come across bigger groups." 

The Power of Chinese Nature Documentaries

Text by Li Wenju

Photographs courtesy of the film crew of *The Power of Nature*

On the final day of 2016, the first episode of *The Power of Nature*, a six-episode documentary like no other China had seen in its history, was broadcast on CCTV. It achieved record ratings on New Year's Eve despite the fact that it was competing with several popular entertainment-variety programs in the same time slot.

The production of the TV documentary took a total of five years to complete. The crew traveled hundreds of thousands of kilometers throughout China from the

Greater Hinggan Mountains in the northernmost province of Heilongjiang to the Xisha Islands in the South China Sea, visiting the most untouched regions of the country. More than 500 days of shooting in the wilderness reaped rewards of visual records of more than 100 rare species of plants and animals, such as Tibetan antelopes, snow leopards, wild yaks, gibbons, and Asian elephants. The documentary recounted touching stories about earth's creatures and showcased the beauty of China in an unprecedented way.



A poster of *The Power of Nature*.

Wang Lu, director of photography, takes photos of wild animals in the untouched district of Qiangtang.



Taking photos underwater in the Xisha Islands of the South China Sea.



The Chinese crested tern, one of the most endangered species of birds on earth.



Under the waters of the South China Sea.



Mute swan.



A roe deer in the Tianshan Mountains in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.



A herdsman on the Sunite Grassland in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region.



The crew of *The Power of Nature* works on the Great Hinggan Mountains in Heilongjiang Province.

The first of its kind in China, CCTV's documentary channel has joined hands with many of the world's top TV documentary producers including the BBC, Discovery Channel, and NHK.

In recent years, China has seen rapid development in documentary production, a boom in the number of production companies and individual producers and a jump in the volume of documentary output. Moreover, many documentaries are getting theatrical releases, attracting great enthusiasm from viewers.

Still, China's capacity to produce nature documentaries is comparatively weak. After watching *The Power of Nature*, Professor Zhang Tongdao, a well-known Chinese documentary researcher, acclaimed it as a "breakthrough for Chinese nature documentaries."

The crew devoted tremendous passion to the subject. Their first full-length documentary, *Forest China*, was released back

in 2007.

Hotbeds of rare species of wild animals were discovered in the country's northwestern quadrant where harsh natural conditions in Tibet Autonomous Region, Qinghai Province, and Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region have deterred human habitation.


The crew endured daunting natural environments to film wild animals in these regions. In 2011, photographers ventured to Qiangtang, one of the four least populated areas in China, where they captured glimpses of Tibetan antelopes, a rare species under first-class state protection that is only found over 5,000 meters above sea level. The first test was adjusting to the altitude. As night fell, the temperature fell to 30 degrees below zero, leaving the photographers frozen in the middle of nowhere.

The photographic team stayed in Qiangtang for two months and recorded the entire life cycle of Tibetan antelopes from mating, pregnancy and birth to the species'

magnificent migration, one of China's most profound natural phenomena. More than 100,000 Tibetan antelopes lead their calves across 100,000 square kilometers of untouched land in Qiangtang.

Director Yuan Yuan was totally stunned by the grand scenes during the great move. "I had read about such scenes in a book written by Sven Hedin, a world-famous Swedish adventurer," she says. "But I never expected to have the chance to witness it with my own eyes!"

The Power of Nature provides a natural profile for a country experiencing rapid development. Every single shot in the film was captured in the wild. It depicts natural China realistically and accurately.

"We could have never made this happen without love and passion for wild animals, plants, mountains and rivers on this land," declared Sun Kun, a photographer in the team. 

The author is a director for CCTV and served as chief director of *The Power of Nature*.

Tropical Sanya in Hainan Province maintains weather as pleasant as spring even in the dead of winter. It is known for sunlight, sandy beaches and coconut trees swaying in the breeze. Every winter, the city, situated at the southernmost tip of Hainan Island, attracts streams of holiday makers from all regions of the country: Some stay for months and don't return home until spring is drawing near.

Such resident-visitors are referred to as "holiday migrants," most of whom are retirees.

Seasonal Senior Migrants

Text by Zhang Xue

Even in winter, Sanya enjoys a gentle breeze from the sea which, along with its swaying coconut trees, attracts tens of thousands of elderly "migrant birds" from afar. They come to escape the chilly, frozen winter in the north and spend their twilight days bathing in the warm sunlight. CPP

Endless Spring

At 6:30 a.m., Wang Fengsheng, wearing a short-sleeved shirt, strolls across the bridge over the Linchun River to begin his morning exercise in Egret Park. At 65, Wang has spent three winters in a row in Sanya. While he enjoys the pleasant morning in the park, his hometown 4,000 kilometers away in northeastern China is frozen solid at minus 20 degrees Celsius.

Many northeasterners who once only dreamt of living on the seashore now enjoy it every winter.

Egret Park, in the old district of Sanya, is one of the most popular gathering places for the “migrant elderly.” As night falls, they dance *yangge* (a folk dance popular in northern China) in the small square on Linchun Road on the other side of the park. Most of the dancers hail from the northeast.

Ms. Yang, a native of Jiamusi, Heilongjiang Province, has spent five winters there. “I’ve been suffering from tracheitis,” she explains. “I coughed a lot during the bitter northeastern winters and spent a lot of money seeing doctors. The cough never happens when I am here.”

The “migrant birds” phenomenon has enhanced the local economy tremendously. Vehicles with plates from all over the country can be found almost everywhere in Sanya. Some drug stores advertise that they accept health insurance from Heilongjiang Province.

Statistics from the Aging Office of the Hainan Provincial Government show that during the peak season in winter, some 450,000 migrant seniors rush to the province to relax, preserve their health and spend their retirement in the warm environment.

Zhang Shuquan just spent his fourth winter in Sanya. “In Changchun (the provincial seat of Jilin), I spend about 4,000 yuan every winter just on heating,” he

illustrates. “The monthly rent here is 1,000 yuan. I simply reallocated my heating money to four months of housing in Sanya. Everything else here is affordable as well. My wife and I only spend about 1,000 yuan a month on food and daily necessities, which is about the same as Changchun.”

Rising Real Estate

Some seniors rent houses or apartments specifically designed for the elderly, and others buy homes.

Mr. Zhao, a 67-year-old retired engineer from Beijing, bought a house in Baoting County, just outside of Sanya, so he and his wife could escape Beijing’s winter haze. He was heading back to Sanya after a quick trip to Beijing. “I went back to pick up my grandson,” Zhao grinned. “I want him to stay with us for the winter.”

Mr. Zhao is not an individual case. The great influx of the “migrant birds” has undoubtedly caused a bump in real estate prices in Sanya and neighboring towns. “During this year’s Spring Festival (China’s biggest holiday), many people from Beijing came to seek affordable housing,” reveals a real estate agent. “I actually sold out of inventory. Over the last few years, Sanya’s neighbors, including Baoting, Lingshui, and Dongfang, have seen thriving real estate markets.”

This Spring Festival, many outsiders made special visits to Hainan to buy houses. Mr. Sun from Beijing, for instance, bought a 2-bedroom condominium with floor space of 90 square meters at Qingshui Bay, adjacent to Sanya. “Real estate is so cheap here compared to Beijing, where the standard price is about 100,000 yuan per square meter,” he sighs. However, Sun, who was born in the 1980s, bought the house for his parents. Over the last few years, Sanya has seen an unending boom in real estate, and Sun expects his investment to only



increase in value.

Miss Chen, a local taxi driver, said that almost half of the houses in her neighborhood of Jinling (Golden Range) were bought by seniors from the north. When winter arrives, the community becomes bustling as many migrant seniors move in. The elderly sit in the sun and play poker or do other activities all winter. But, with the arrival of April, everything quiets down and many shops are closed.

Crowded Paradise

In January 2010, the State Council issued *Opinions on Accelerating the Development of the Construction of Hainan International Tourist Island*, officially lifting the campaign to make Hainan an international tourist hub into a strategy of national importance. According the plan, by 2020, Hainan will have become a world-class holiday resort.

Practicing Tai Chi at the beach early in the morning. CFP



A little band. Egret Park in Sanya is a wonderful place for the elderly “migrant birds” to while away their spare time, singing or playing poker and other games. CFP



Chess is a favorite among the elderly “migrant birds” in Sanya. CFP

The implementation of an offshore duty-free policy has made Sanya a shopping paradise. Every Spring Festival holiday, the international duty free shopping center at Haitang Bay welcomes thousands of shoppers. It is the world’s largest duty free store, with floor space of over 70,000 square meters. Many retail vendors of famous international brands frequently enjoy lines out of their doors.

Winter is the peak season for the influx of seniors, and they place considerable strain on Hainan’s infrastructure. Particularly, during the Spring Festival, traffic becomes worse, hotel rooms are hard to come by and parking is a pain.

Furthermore, medical services and public health resources become expensive in winter due to surging demand. As a whole, Hainan still lags behind other provinces in medical service facilities. Only a few medium-sized medical institutions can be found in Sanya, and the growing winter population tends to require more frequent medical care. Needless to say, it’s more difficult and expensive to see a doctor during winter in Hainan.

In contrast with other popular winter getaway destinations such as Hawaii and Phuket Island, Hainan is plagued by a “squeezed winter” caused by the seasonal migration. Many world-famous five-star hotels sit empty most of the year but cannot meet demand during winter.

A major task for Hainan is constructing the necessary facilities to meet the seasonal housing and medical services demands of the senior demographic, which in turn will help make the island an international holiday destination.



Education Overload

Text by Yu Luyao

Photographs by Wu Jiaxiang

“I’ve seen three-year-olds using microscopes and reading books without pictures,” exclaims Bai Wei anxiously. “My five-year-old son is still counting on his fingers.” Even before his child has started elementary school, Bai already feels he is falling behind.

A timetable for childhood development has been circulating recently in major Chinese cities. According to the guide, a three-year-old should have begun learning the piano or dancing. For children aged four, painting and chess lessons are appropriate. At five, parents can add a second musical instrument to the piano, and at seven, kids can start sports training. It also recommends enrolling first and second graders in

extracurricular classes in Chinese, English and math to prepare for various school entrance exams. The advice may be debatable, but many Chinese parents today are following the timetable strictly.

“Fun and Games”

This January, seven-year-old Duo Mi continued practicing ice skating past 8 p.m. in Tower 3 of the China World Trade Center in Beijing as her team prepared for a figure skating competition in March. Alongside group competitions, Duo Mi will also perform a solo skate with a newly choreographed dance.

Duo Mi is well-rounded, to say the least. Along with figure skating, she plays

the piano and the *zheng* (a 21-stringed ancient Chinese musical instrument), dances, participates in the math Olympics, attends English class and studies sketching. She now studies at a boarding school, where she sleeps from Monday to Thursday. Juggling all these activities requires practice during lunch breaks and after class. Her busiest days start from Friday. After classes are over at 2:20 p.m., she travels home and is then back in an English class by 6:20 p.m. Her sketching tutor drops in from 10 a.m. to noon on Saturdays. After that lesson, she finishes her homework and practices the piano in the afternoon. From 10 to 11:30 p.m., Duo Mi practices skating, and doesn’t get home until after midnight. She gets up at 9 a.m. on Sunday morning to make it to the ice rink for more training at 10 a.m. From 3:20 to 5:20 p.m., she attends the math Olympics class. Her weekend activities are usually over by 9 p.m. on Sunday night, after which she goes straight to bed. Mondays start at 5:30 a.m. because of the long drive back to school. During her busy weekend schedule, Duo Mi only has time to rest for a few minutes while traveling from one class to the next.

If you ask her mother, Duo Mi has a strong will and is somewhat stubborn. The girl is quite demanding of herself and always tries her best. Once, when she couldn’t complete a spin during skating practice, Duo Mi began crying in frustration. When she started the piano at age four, Duo Mi cried while practicing almost every day. “She told me it wasn’t because she didn’t want to play,” stresses her mom. “She was simply frustrated that she couldn’t do it well. She cried because she thought she wasn’t good enough. That’s her personality.” Duo Mi’s family, including her mom, feel she has taken on too many activities, but the girl herself refuses to give any up.

Sweat and Tears

Although Xiao Xiao, also seven, doesn’t take as many classes as Duo Mi, she is consumed by pressure to become the pianist her mother wishes she could have been. When she was a child, Xiao Xiao’s mother Ding Lian had to give up playing the piano because her family couldn’t afford one. The piano became a must for her daughter.

More than two decades ago, Ding fell in love with the piano during her school music class, and her talent was quickly recognized. Ding quickly mastered musical notation and developed the ability to play back a song after hearing it only once or twice. After studying for three years, it became apparent that Ding needed her own piano to get sufficient practice time. At that time, the cheapest piano cost more than 10,000 yuan, an enormous figure for an ordinary Chinese working family with a monthly income of less than 100 yuan. Ding had no choice but to give up playing. “Upon hearing the news, my piano teacher visited my home and begged me to continue, promising my mother admission to the best conservatory in China,” Ding reveals. “My teacher sobbed and pleaded with my parents, a scene I remember clearly to this day.” From the moment Xiao Xiao was born, playing the piano was already her destiny.

But Xiao Xiao has no interest in the piano at all. It’s a constant struggle just to get her to practice. The two fight a lot about the piano. Xiao Xiao tried to write “I don’t like playing piano” on some of her sheet music, but because she hadn’t learned the character for “like” yet, she drew a heart. She also drew crying faces on quite a few pages.

“Whether you like playing piano or not, you can’t give it up,” Ding told Xiao Xiao. “Decades later, when you can communicate with music, you will thank me.”




At the request of her parents, Yuan Yuan practices the accordion every day, although she has never loved the musical instrument. Sometimes, she spends much of her 30-minute practice time crying.

China’s Climbing Middle Class

In recent years, enrollment in supplementary classes has become all the rage in China, especially in large and medium-sized cities. These classes are not confined to academics and cover many different schools of art, kinds of sports and genres of music. According to a 2015 survey by China’s National Institute of Education Sciences in 12 major Chinese cities including Beijing, Shanghai, Chongqing, Guangzhou, and Urumqi, nearly 66 percent of urban kids were enrolled in at least one supplementary class. In more developed cities such as Beijing and Guangzhou, over 90 percent of children take some classes before they even reach formal school age.

Members of China’s middle class attach great importance to educating their children. As defined by Credit Suisse’s Global Wealth Report, in 2016, those who have wealth between US\$28,000 and 280,000 in China are considered “middle class,” a demographic of 109 million. Since the arrival of China’s middle class has been accompanied by rapid economic growth and drastic social change, people in the new middle don’t feel particularly secure there. Their anxiety shows in things like attitudes towards education. They expect children to learn a musical

instrument, understand the arts, have perfect social etiquette, master a couple of sports and get admitted to the best schools. Parents insist that their children continue climbing towards higher social and economic status, or maintain the same social status at the very least. The bill for supplementary classes has become a necessarily large chunk of many families’ budgets. Duo Mi is one example. Tuition for her supplementary classes totaled US\$20,000 in 2016, excluding additional expenses for things like special costumes and travel.

At the end of November of last year, a headline reading “Finnish schools scrap ‘subjects’ in favor of ‘topics’ in a move to reform the country’s education system” went viral on the Chinese internet. It means the country has introduced a program based around education that is broader than the traditional methods of narrow subjects. They want to replace specific subjects like history and psychology with “perspectives on World War II” and economics and cooking with “daily operation of a café.” Topics closer to reality and meant to help students better understand the world are being introduced. Although many Chinese parents expressed support for such practices online, most Chinese middle class parents are still placing their kids in half a dozen different subject classes. 



Seven-year-old Xiao Xiao practices fencing in a stadium. Although fencing is her own choice, Xiao Xiao is already telling her mom she has taken on too many classes. At the moment, Xiao Xiao is taking five different extra-curricular classes at the same time.

China's Gaming Boom

Text by Wang Jiayin

The Gaming Life

As the world began reflecting on the passing of 2016, Chinese gamers began focusing on the Golden Plume Awards, the country's annual "Oscars of the Gaming Industry." 360 Games walked away with the most-sought-after prize, the Most Influential Mobile Game Channel, and its individual games took two more awards.

More than a year has passed since Xu Yiran began leading the 360 Games team. Born in the early 1970s, Xu earned a double bachelor's degree in precision instruments and automation from Tsinghua University and an MBA from the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Since graduation, he has worked in gaming for many Chinese and international companies including Sohu, Giant Interactive Group, Perfect World, and Electronic Arts.

Xu Yiran has wide-ranging interests, including more active hobbies, but as he puts it, "Games have captured most of my time and blend all my hobbies and expertise."

More than two decades have passed since Xu became immersed in the gaming industry, during which time China's role in the sector has ballooned at breakneck speed. In 1999, online games emerged along with the popularization of the internet. Around 2008, a boom of independently produced games was led by titles such as *Dragon Oath* and *Jade Dynasty*. Along with the tireless efforts and creativity of China's game designers, the rapid growth in the number of internet users played the key role in facilitating the boom.

"China's game market started by imitating output from places like South

Korea," explains Xu. "At the time, China's games lagged far behind their foreign counterparts in fine arts and design. The gap has shrunk considerably since the turn of the century when we gradually began shifting to independent production."



After 20 years in the gaming industry, Xu Yiran believes that few products can last very long despite the fact that China's gaming industry has matured significantly. courtesy of Xu Yiran

A Freshly-Paved Road

Since 2010, China's gaming industry and market have developed rapidly. *The Report on China's Game Industry 2016*, jointly compiled by China Audio-video and Digital Publishing Association, Gammadata, and the International Data Corporation, was published at the end of 2016. According to the Report, revenues from gaming reached 165.57 billion yuan in 2016, up by 17.7 percent year-on-year. Online games independently developed by China earned 118.25 billion yuan, increasing by about 20 percent over the previous year, and revenues from overseas markets surpassed 7.2 billion yuan. Moreover, the marketing arm of China's gaming industry has become more defined.

Despite a new, hopeful environment, Xu Yiran maintains that the gaming industry will not grow without new ideas. "The secret formula to win must be revised across various stages," he asserts. "In the early stages, technique prevailed, and the stability of servers was most vital. The next stage was determined by creativity and graphic design. The last stage is about originality and intellectual property. The core elements have continuously changed." Such a philosophy inspired Xu to bring new ideas for business development when he took over the team at the end of 2015.

Eventually, his ideas formed two major plans. The "Heavenly Plan" offers a subscription in exchange for beta testing and big data for developers to reference, capitalizing on the advantages of 360 Games' popular channel. The year-long plan has primarily benefited overseas game suppliers by providing

valuable feedback, which has in turn minimized the risk of distribution in China.

The "Pinpoint Plan," on the other hand, is meant to eliminate roadblocks hindering new developers. "Today in China, many young R&D teams are completing big projects with their combined skills in fine arts and programming," explains Xu. "But they still don't succeed because they lack veteran producers and designers to ensure that all the necessary points have been covered." To help out younger teams, 360 Games recruited industry veterans from around the globe and established a special design center to provide timely counseling on all R&D procedures and increase distribution opportunities. In 2016, *The Tale of Lost City*, a massive multiplayer online role-playing game for mobile devices developed with the help of 360 Games, ranked among the top ten bestsellers on the Chinese mainland and topped bestselling lists in Taiwan, evidencing the effectiveness of the "Pinpoint Plan."

Bright Future

In July 2016, Newzoo, a market research company from the Netherlands, published a report analyzing trends and regional numbers of the gaming industry. Understandably, China is already the most valuable of any gaming market at US\$24.4 billion.

The Chinese government's tremendous support in recent years has accelerated the sustainable development of the gaming industry, enhancing Xu Yiran's confidence in the long-term prospects of the market. "China will become a more mature market for games," he predicts.

"Along with great support from the government, some other factors make me bullish on the market," Xu continues. "First, China has experienced changes in its social environment, which is now far



The office of 360 Games. Xu Yiran introduced new business development ideas such as the Heavenly Plan and the Pinpoint Plan when he took over the team at the end of 2015. by Guo Shasha



July 28, 2016: ChinaJoy, short for China Digital Entertainment Expo & Conference, kicks off in Shanghai. Along with online games, apps for mobile devices also attract considerable attention. IC

more diverse. When I was young, gamers and developers were considered useless. Today, however, young people enjoy more tolerance from the world and older generations. Still, the gaming industry will not advance without support from several different generations. Because today's young practitioners grew up in an era of quick development, they have greater support and guidance from society, the industry, and even their families."

He also expressed concerns such as different producers copying each other.

"Mobile games have become so popular today that every company is probably working on their own."

China has yet to build a game to become as popular globally as titles such as *Civilization* and *Final Fantasy*, despite many stunning original works. "The gaming industry needs quality teams to concentrate on each specific realm, including marketing," Xu concludes. "Young practitioners need more opportunities to become tougher, gain experience, expand their horizons, and broaden their vision." 



Thangka Time

Text by Yin Xing

Photographs courtesy of the Tibetan Federation of Literary and Art Circles

Dargye Sangpo draws a thangka at home. Traditional thangka artists paint without easels.

In one of the halls of the crowded National Art Museum of China sits a young Tibetan painting a thangka. His name is Dargye Sangpo, and he is considered one of the most outstanding working thangka artists in China today. He was invited by organizers of the exhibition “Heavenly Thangka” to work and display the fruits of his labor all in one place.

Painting Pilgrimage

A traditional art of Tibetans, thangka displays Buddha images, legendary stories, history, medicine, life and production

methods of the ethnic group. “For occasions like funerals, weddings and festivals, we usually have thangka painted,” explains Lhaba Tsering, secretary-general of the Tibetan Artists Association. “When someone dies, his family finds an astrologist to decide which Buddha to paint before going to the painter.”

Closely tied to religion, thangka was once mainly painted by monks. They would spend months or even years producing the Buddha images for worship. But there are also some thangka painters like young Dargye Sangpo who come from

poor families, and learn thangka in the hope of making a living. Those studying the craft don’t have to pay tuition, but they do have to feed themselves and help with chores. Learning thangka is a hard and time-consuming process, often lasting several years or even decades.

Actually, seven years had passed until Dargye Sangpo finished his first independent work, which won the gold prize at the first Thangka Art Festival. “A good thangka painter must be a pious disciple of Buddhism and seek great religious and artistic accomplishments,” says Lhaba Tsering.



Bodhisattva with a Thousand Arms and a Thousand Eyes by Wangdu Gyaltzen.



Three Bodhisattvas by Tashi.



Sakyamuni by Dargye Sangpo.



Master Atisha by Pasang.



A thangka of one of the heavenly kings of Buddhism by Penpa Tsering.



Sakyamuni by Konchog.

For Dargye Sangpo, painting thangka is a sacred ritual akin to a pilgrimage. Before he paints, he washes his hands clean. While working, he neither eats nor drinks. Thangka painting has strict guidelines for proportions. “If I fail to follow those rules exactly, not only will the painting be considered bad, but it will also disrespect Buddha and be a sin,” stresses Sangpo.

Evolving Inheritance

The preservation of thangka painting skills primarily relies on the master-apprentice model. “Thangka painters usually retire from painting when they turn 40 to concentrate on teaching students,” explains Lhaba Tsering. “The extreme delicacy of thangka painting requires excellent eyesight, so the artists’ skill tends

to deteriorate with age.” And only Tibetan men could learn it. But today, females and non-Tibetans are also welcome to learn the art. “Originally, people painted thangka to make a living,” says Lhaba Tsering. “But now, more practitioners are drawn to the artistic aura and religious connotations.”

For Dargye Sangpo, painting thangka is also not just about putting food on the

table any more. “I consider great thangka masters my idols and hope to contribute to the conservation of the art.”

“When I discovered Dargye Sangpo, he had just finished studying thangka in Tobgyai Township, Namling County of Shigatse,” recalls Lhaba Tsering. “Despite his young age, his work stunned us. We invited him to join our association and submitted his work

to the thangka contest in which he won the gold prize. Now, he occasionally goes with us to big cities like Beijing and Shanghai to broaden his horizons. Now he knows that he shoulders the responsibility to pass down and develop the art.”

Even though Dargye Sangpo has moved to Lhasa and now has his own studio, his life has not changed much.

Sangpo does not smoke, drink or eat meat, and seldom hangs out with friends. He spends most of his time painting and reading books on Buddhism and art. “He still has room to improve,” says Lhaba Tsering. “We try not to bother him or let worldly things disturb him. We only invite him out for important occasions or educational events.”



Manjusri by Shalu Wangdu.



King Gesar by Lhaba Tsering, Tsering Wangyel and Phuntsog Tashi.



A thangka of one of the guardians of Buddhism by Khedrup Gyatso.



A thangka of one of the masters of Buddhism by Tsering Chodrak.

Many talented thangka painters like Dargye Sangpo are supported by governments at all levels. “From a trade to cultural inheritance and then to fine art, the meaning of thangka has evolved over time,” opines Lhaba Tsering. “We are happy to see that happen.”

Reasonable Commercialization

Thangka has always been popular with both domestic and international art fans, but only a few people can appraise a thangka, leaving the market in disorder. Because of the booming market, some have

proposed that thangka be mass produced to promote development.

“Thangka should not be controlled by commercial forces,” says Lhaba Tsering. “Tradition places great value on complicated techniques, religious devotion and Tibetan aesthetics. Mass production would only produce decorations, not art.”

Thangka boasts lasting bright colors because the paints are created from local minerals or plants. “Even the paints cannot be mass manufactured yet,” continues Tsering. “Additionally, the content is associated with Buddhism. For example,

there are rules laid out in Buddhist classics about which objects can be positioned in front of the Buddha. And individual interpretations of Buddhist scriptures cannot be duplicated.”

Thanks to the ongoing thangka fever, more and more young Tibetans are trying their hands at the art. Some universities have founded thangka departments and masters have opened art studios to teach the skill. Many thangka works sell for lofty prices. “Both good and bad things come along with the flourishing market,” Tsering adds. “The price can indicate that

a thangka is extremely well done, but the market also influences the painters. They should not be motivated by price.”

Shalu Wangdu spent thirteen years on the thangka painting *The Tenth Panchen Lama*. “Every day, I just painted when I felt the urge,” he reveals. “I was honored and happy to paint him.”

“This kind of work is priceless,” says Lhaba Tsering. “Actually, respect for Buddha and devotion to Buddhism are the genuine inspirations for thangka painting. Artists should pursue quality over price.”

Classical Reality

Text by Jing Tu

“What’s the point of reciting tricky ancient poems in language classes?” asked one frustrated Chinese netizen.

“Because they are ideal models for elegance,” replied another. “For instance, two descriptions of the same setting sun could be totally different: Those with ancient verse in mind might say, ‘*The autumn river shares a scenic hue with the vast sky; The evening glow parallels with a lonely duck to fly.*’ Compare that to what someone without education would say: ‘Wow! So many birds! Beautiful! Gorgeous!’”

Such exchanges became common online soon after *Chinese Poetry Conference*, a game show by CCTV, premiered.

Contrasting most reality and variety shows, the program features competitions related to contestants’ understanding and mastery of ancient Chinese poetry. Few expected the show to get such good ratings. Viewers have been awed by the encyclopedic minds of competitors while enjoying the extensiveness and profundity of traditional Chinese culture. The show’s success has inspired an outburst of ancient Chinese poetry recitation across the country.

Ratings King

At 8:00 p.m. on February 7, 2017, the Season 1 finale of *Chinese Poetry Conference* aired on CCTV. After 90 minutes of fierce competition, 16-year-old high-school

student Wu Yishu outlasted the other competitors and took the crown.

The on-screen competition was fierce, and even viewers at home were on the edges of their seats. WeChat users competed simultaneously, and the mobile winner bested over 200,000 rivals.

Statistics testify to the show’s success. Surveys from CoolCloud, a Chinese big data analysis company, show that on February 7, the audience rating of *Chinese Poetry Conference* finale hit 15.9 percent, 5 percentage points higher than the show behind it. Across two months of air time, the show attracted more than a billion viewers.

Not only has champion Wu Yishu become a celebrity, but 5,000-year-old Chinese culture has been rejuvenated online. “As China embraces the so-called ‘snack culture,’ the humor on the internet is worlds away from the profundity of classical poetry,” sighed one netizen. “Readers are too often looking for a quick buck and failing to upgrade and nourish themselves with poetry. *Chinese Poetry Conference*, however, gave me passion and inspired me to pursue information that is much deeper than the day’s trending topics.”

Cultural Excavation

Before *Chinese Poetry Conference*, CCTV had produced a handful of similar cultural variety shows such as *Chinese Riddles*, *Chinese Idioms*, and *Dictation of Chinese Characters*, which were all highly acclaimed.

During the first season of *Chinese Poetry Conference*, *Letters Alive*, another cultural variety show produced by Hei-

longjiang TV, emerged as a competitor. It featured celebrities reciting letters by historical figures instead of singing and dancing. The show featured academics and illustrations of the stories behind the letters, created by honored guests and even the audience.

“One thing is sure: Centuries-old Chinese culture is still relevant and popular, regardless of specific content,” asserts Meng Man, an associate professor from the College of History and Culture under Minzu University of China. “Despite centuries of historical changes, our hearts are still attached to our culture, and all that is needed is a spark. The popularity of cultural variety shows evidences the hidden demand to learn about our traditional culture, and such shows disseminate the culture in an entertaining way rather than expounding it mechanically, minimizing the gap between the disseminator and the audience.”

Maintaining the Fever

The wave of cultural variety shows led by *Chinese Poetry Conference* has caught the attention of Chinese language teachers and scholars, who are debating the ultimate value of TV shows for traditional Chinese culture.

“Those shows effectively inspire middle-school students to become interested in ancient Chinese poetry,” remarks Si Baofeng, a senior Chinese teacher at the High School Affiliated to Fudan University. “Through the TV show *Chinese Poetry Conference*, students get a chance to admire the sublime, benevolent and passionate aesthetics of ancient Chinese




Wu Yishu, born in 2000, took the crown during the season 2 finale of *Chinese Poetry Conference*.

poetry.” However, the teacher, who even teaches “Appreciation of Ancient Poetry” as an elective class, has concerns. “Their heads can just fill up with useless words if teachers or parents don’t understand the true value of ancient poetry. And memorizing and reciting poems is pointless if the student doesn’t understand the verse.”

“We must be cautious,” concurs Hou Tijian, an associate professor from the Department of Chinese Language and Literature at Fudan University. “*Chinese Poetry Conference* has played a positive role in helping the public discover and approach ancient poems. But only time can tell how long the fever will last or what will happen with it. Fairly often, some elements of traditional culture become all the rage in China, but they always fade back into obscurity relatively quickly. The point of learning traditional culture preserved by ancient poetry is to cultivate taste. Don’t

pity those who have no interest in ancient poems; pity those consumed by sadness. We should formulate plans to arouse genuine interest, which is the best way to pass on the essence of our traditional culture.”

The Chinese Ministry of Education is also well aware of the need to pass on classical culture. In September 2016, revised Chinese language textbooks were distributed to primary and middle schools, which devoted 30 percent of their pages to stories of outstanding traditional Chinese culture. The books for grades seven through nine raise the percentage to 40. Each book contains 14 or 15 ancient poems.

Furthermore, Chinese institutions of higher learning are offering elective classes on specific studies of Chinese ancient civilization. The Ministry of Education is working to reform the national college entrance examination to increase the weight of Chinese language and literature. 



Primary-school students chant ancient Chinese poems. CFP



China 1933-1936 Through the Lens of A German Pilot

Written by Graf zu Castell (Germany), translated by Zhao Shengwei, published by Taihai Publishing House, February 2017

Most of the nearly 200 photographs in the book were taken 1,200 to 2,500 meters above sea level by German pilot Graf zu Castell during his missions in China from 1933 to 1936.

During his flights across the country, Zu Castell took pictures of as many cities, villages, rivers, and mountains as he could. These photos were extremely precious in an era when aerial photography was rare. “From the air, I could provide a brand-new angle to showcase China to Westerners who knew much about the country,” he explained. “And for those who knew little about China, these photos may inspire them to learn more about the country.”

The appendix to the book features 12 photos taken by a French military officer from a hot air balloon during the early 1920s, the oldest aerial pictures of China.

Graf zu Castell was a pilot for Lufthansa, Germany’s national airline. Born in 1905 in Berlin, he was appointed to design new flight routes in China between 1933 and 1936. After returning home, Zu Castell joined the team planning a route between Berlin and Kabul, the longest of the time. After retirement, he was awarded the Federal German Grand Cross by the government.

Translator Zhao Shengwei graduated from the History Department of Xiamen University. For many years, Zhao has been engaged in collecting and publishing historical images of China as well as French and German newspapers and books describing China. His most recent compilations include *Chinese History Lost in the West: French Color Pictorial about China 1850-1937* and the *Shadow Magic* series. 



A karst land formation in eastern Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. The hills measure some 200 to 300 meters high and feature lush vegetation.



Meishan (in today's Jingshan Park) and the Forbidden City, also known as the Palace Museum, seen from the north. In Chinese, *mei* means “coal.” The hill was so named because it once hosted a warehouse for coal during construction of the Forbidden City in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644).



The Temple of Heaven building complex viewed from 800 meters in the air. The Temple of Heaven was where emperors of the Ming and Qing dynasties (1368-1911) worshipped Heaven and prayed for a good harvest.



The eastern city gate of Xi'an at dawn. The gate closes at sunset and opens at sunrise.



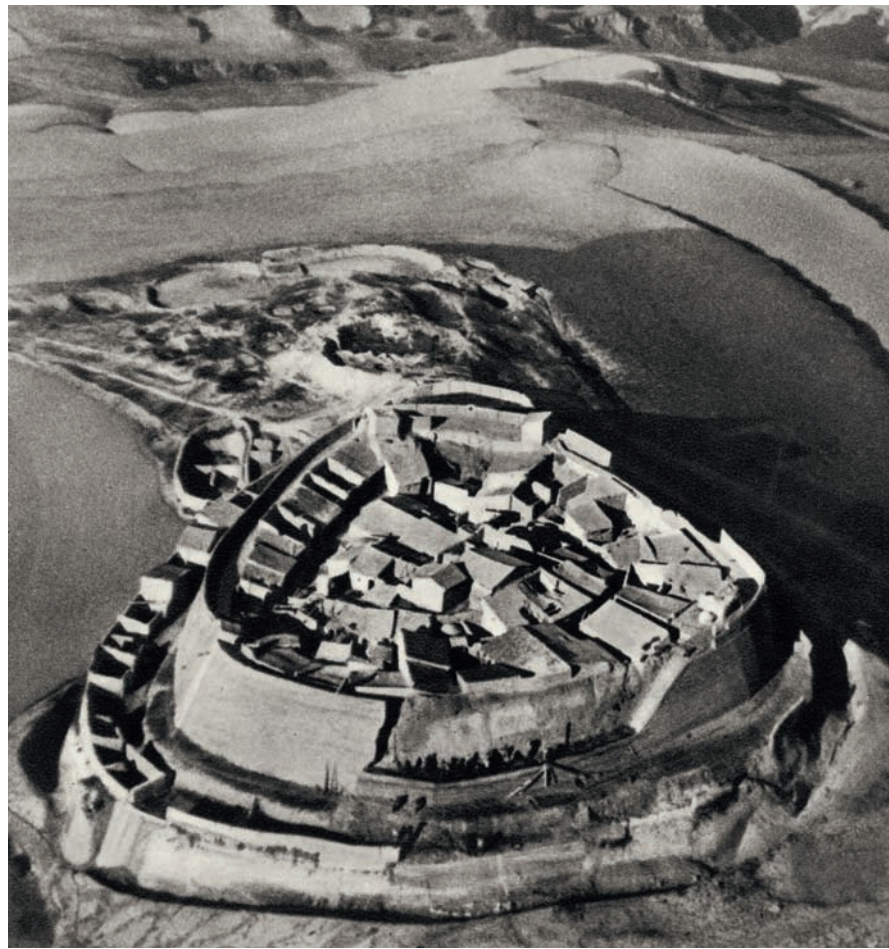
A bird's-eye view of Xi'an from the west.



The western city gate of Xi'an.



Xi'an at dawn.



A fortified village. The village is located some 2,600 meters above sea level in southern Jingning County, Pingliang City, Gansu Province. A defense network was built to fend off attacks by bandits.



An inhabited village.



The famous Tide of the Qiantang River in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province.



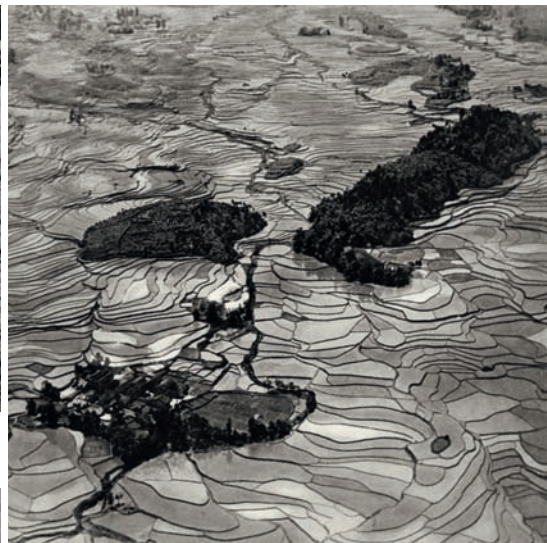
Ruins of a village.



Downtown Lanzhou, Gansu Province, viewed from 600 meters above.



The pulpit of a German church in Liangzhou, Gansu Province. The structure was destroyed by an earthquake on May 23, 1927 and reconstructed between 1928 and 1932.



Paddy fields along the northern slope of a mountain 2,000 meters above sea level, at the juncture of Guangdong and Hunan provinces.



A camel caravan on a pasture in today's western Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region.



A pagoda used to store remains of eminent monks in Ordos, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region.



An 18th-Century oil painting by French artist Jean-Honoré Fragonard.
© RMN-Grand Palais (musée du Louvre)/Gérard Blot

The Invention of Louvre

Text by Yi Mei

Photographs courtesy of Louvre Museum

A cultural icon of France, the Louvre Museum is now very popular with Chinese people. Chinese tourists have become the second largest foreign group to visit the Louvre with 820,000 trips in 2015, trailing only those from the United States. To better satisfy Chinese demand for Louvre art, the Louvre and the National Museum of China are jointly holding the exhibition “L’invention du Louvre” in the National Museum of China in Beijing, which displays 126 treasures that create a timeline of the history of the Louvre.

The exhibition is divided into five

parts: The Royal Palace and Royal Collection, the Louvre and the Enlightenment Movement, the Napoleon Museum, the Royal Palace to the World Museum, and Today’s Louvre.

French “Forbidden City”

“For centuries, just like the Forbidden City in Beijing, the Louvre was the main residence of the royal family,” explains French co-curator Négueine Mathieux. “It was an ostentatious place of power and art. This exhibition recounts the birth of the first universal museum at the end of the French Revolution.”



A landscape copper etching by Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn, produced in 1640.
© Musée du Louvre, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais/Martine Beck-Coppola

The history of the Louvre dates back to the end of the 12th Century when Philip II built the Louvre Tower, a military defense project, on the right bank of the Seine. That project was gradually expanded into a royal palace. During the Valois Dynasty (1328-1589), Francis I was obsessed with art from the Italian Renaissance as well as Northern European realism. In his wake, French kings across the ages tended to buy or commission art to demonstrate their individual taste. Heavily influenced by the Enlightenment Movement, the Louvre officially became a museum and was opened to the public in 1793. The royal collection of the palace naturally became the national collection. Napoleon and his successors contributed greatly to expanding the museum's collection. Since the 19th Century, the Louvre has become a treasure trove of world art. To this day, the Louvre is still expanding its collection with donations from generous collectors.

The 126 treasures exhibited illuminate the history of the Louvre, showing how a private royal palace became a globally-renowned public museum. "Chinese people have become one of the most important and biggest groups visiting the Louvre," stresses another curator, Pascal Torres. "And the Louvre is so special. It holds the greatest collection of precious relics and art from the period before the French Revolution. We hope that this exhibition tracing the history of the Louvre and introducing the categorization of the museum's collection can help Chinese visitors better prepare their visits to the Louvre."



An oil painting by French artist Jacques Louis David, produced in 1771.
© RMN-Grand Palais (musée du Louvre)/Philippe Fuzeau

An ancient Greek horse head dating back to 510 BC.
© Musée du Louvre, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais/Daniel Lebée/Carine Déambrosis



A bronze statue of Louis XIV.
© RMN-Grand Palais (musée du Louvre)/Thierry Ollivier



An agate cup with a lid dating back to the 1640s.
© RMN-Grand Palais (musée du Louvre)/Jean-Gilles Berizzi

A sculpture of famous French fabulist Jean de la Fontaine, produced in 1785.
© Musée du Louvre, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais/Thierry Ollivier



Creative Louvre

"The exhibition is a journey into French history," remarks Néguine Mathieux. "But also, Paris, the royal court and the universal museum were all very important art centers, so this exhibition is just as much a journey into the history of occidental art."

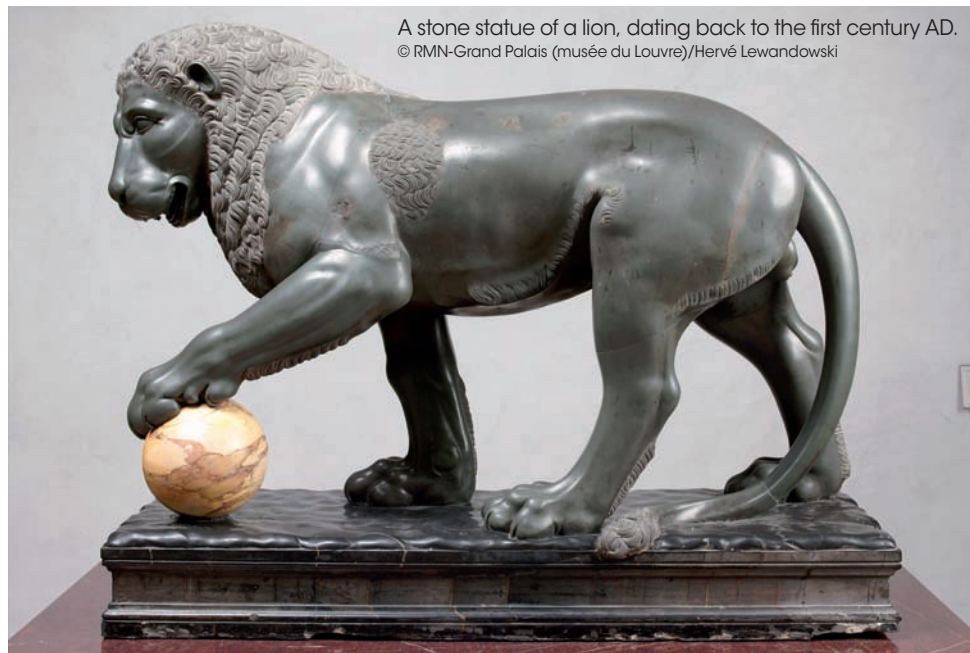
The exhibition's theme, "L'invention du Louvre," was inspired by Denis Diderot, a French philosopher and writer. He proposed the concept of "L'invention du Louvre" in his book *Encyclopédie*, which he coined in honor of the contributions of Étienne La Font de Saint-Yenne, France's earliest critic, to the birth of the Louvre.

In Saint-Yenne's time, Louis XIV moved into the Palace of Versailles. He deserted the Louvre and planned to demolish it. In 1750, Louis XV officially enacted a plan to tear down the palace but failed due to a lack of funds to hire manpower. At that impasse, Étienne La Font de Saint-Yenne suggested that the royal collection at Versailles be moved to the Louvre, which then wouldn't need to be renovated or demolished. He lobbied for the intact part of the Louvre to be opened to the public as a museum. At that time, such a proposition was considered revolutionary.

"The Louvre was actually invented and conceived," explains Pascal Torres. "Open to people from around the world, the museum radiates a spirit that inspired the selection of exhibits. Whether the crown jewel from the private collection of Louis XIV, artworks from the time of Francis I or the statue of Henry II, when we selected items for this exhibition, we tried to convey the idea of 'invent' and 'conceive.'"



A jade statue of Emperor Augustus of Ancient Rome.
© RMN-Grand Palais (musée du Louvre)/Martine Beck-Coppola



A stone statue of a lion, dating back to the first century AD.
© RMN-Grand Palais (musée du Louvre)/Hervé Lewandowski



A Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) vase from about 1640.
© RMN-Grand Palais (musée Guimet, Paris)/Thierry Ollivier

An Egyptian wooden figure, dating from 1295-1069 BC.
© Musée du Louvre, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais/Hervé Lewandowski



Part of a wall decoration dating from about 522-486 BC.
© Musée du Louvre, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais/Thierry Ollivier



An Egyptian papyrus scroll painting, dating from 378-341 BC.
© RMN-Grand Palais (musée du Louvre)/Christian Larrieu

A carpet designed by Francois Debret, dating from 1807-1810.
© RMN-Grand Palais (musée du Louvre)/Droits réservés




Tailored for China

It wasn't easy to select only 126 exhibits from the 38,000 treasures in the Louvre. "The 126 pieces in the exhibition were chosen for the history they tell us about the palace and the museum," says Néguine Mathieux. They chose exhibits based not on school or genre, but on the historical periods of the Louvre they represent.

Curators also selected some exhibits especially for the Chinese audience. "It is a pleasure to bring back to China some Chinese objects that were made in the 17th Century and brought to France during that period, which were recently discovered during the archaeological excavations organized for the construction of the Louvre Pyramid."

In the Islamic art section, curators chose a Mughal Empire piece decorated with jade, which is an iconic material in Chinese culture. And the concise shape of an ancient Greek horse head is reminiscent of its ancient Chinese counterpart.

But the most familiar works to the Chinese audience, like *Mona Lisa* and *Venus de Milo*, didn't make it into the exhibition. French curators affirm that it is rare for the most precious items ever to be moved out of the Louvre. "We are grateful for everything they brought," says Chinese co-curator Yang Guimei. "This exhibition is not just about art treasures but the birth of the Louvre, a world-class art palace. Combining beauty and history is a great way to foster communication between our two national museums." 



An oil painting by Anthony van Dyck, dating from 1617-1619.
© RMN-Grand Palais (musée du Louvre)/Stéphane Maréchal



Poster for Luo Zhongli's exhibition.

Sparkling —Special Exhibition on Luo Zhongli's Art Work

In 1980, Luo Zhongli shot to fame for his oil painting *Father*, which was celebrated as “a mirror image of Chinese society, history, and culture.” He studied in Belgium between 1983 and 1986, which inspired a transition from realism to expressionism as well as a shift in subject matter from Chinese farmers to ideas about humanity and the meaning of life. This exhibition highlights his later expressionist works.

Born in 1948, Luo Zhongli graduated from the Oil Painting Department of Sichuan Fine Arts Institute, and later became president of the school. His works have been exhibited all over the world in cities including New York, Chicago and Sydney.

January 16 – March 24, 2017
111 Art Space on the Bund, Shanghai



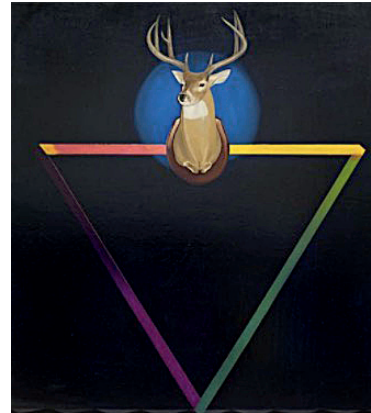
Elysian Fields, oil on canvas, 185x200cm, 2006.



Drinking Water, oil on canvas, 160x200cm, 2005.



Drizzling, oil on canvas, 185x200cm, 2007.



David's Deer by Zhao Yiqian.



Twinkling with Pleasure by Yang Xun.

“Pleasance” Group Exhibition

This exhibition includes works by 10 artists including Chen Ke, He Jie, Li Changlong, Li Xinjian, Liao Man, Ma Ke, Yang Xun, Zhang Hui, Zhang Lin, and Zhao Yiqian, who cumulatively share the inner world and emotions of Chinese artists in the new global environment.

Various forms are scattered across an enclosed venue, leading the audience into different spaces of artistic purity.

January 12 – March 12, 2017
Barn for Contemporary Art, Shenzhen

I Don't Know the Mandate of Heaven —Song Dong Solo Exhibition

The exhibition covers modern pieces featuring several forms such as performing art, video, installation, photography, painting, and “opera.” Both Song's representative work from the 1990s and his newer creations such as *Ignorance of Destiny in My Fifties*, representing Song's retrospection on his artistic life and his ongoing research, have been included.

Born in 1966, Song Dong graduated with a degree in oil painting from the Department of Fine Arts of Capital Normal University in 1989. Since the 1990s, Song has been committed to modern art in a variety of media. Reflecting his concern for and introspection on traditional Chinese culture, his work has been displayed in many major global cities including New York and Groningen.

January 21 – March 26, 2017
Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai



Poster for Song Dong's exhibition.



I Talk to the Wind —Jiang Zhuyun Solo Exhibition

Four divisions of exhibits are displayed in contrasting settings at the exhibition, named Sounds of the Body, Horses of Imagination, Existence in Silence, and Fading Sound, respectively.

Jiang Zhuyun was born in 1984 and graduated from China Academy of Art in 2007, at which time he began teaching there. His work covers a wide range of new media, and his creation and research feature varied forms including installation, painting, performing art, conceptual art, audio art, field recording, and audio-visual on site.

January 14 – March 9, 2017
Hunsand Space, 211 Caochangdi Art District, Beijing

Poster for the solo exhibition of Jiang Zhuyun.



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