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A Window to the Nation A Welcome to the World

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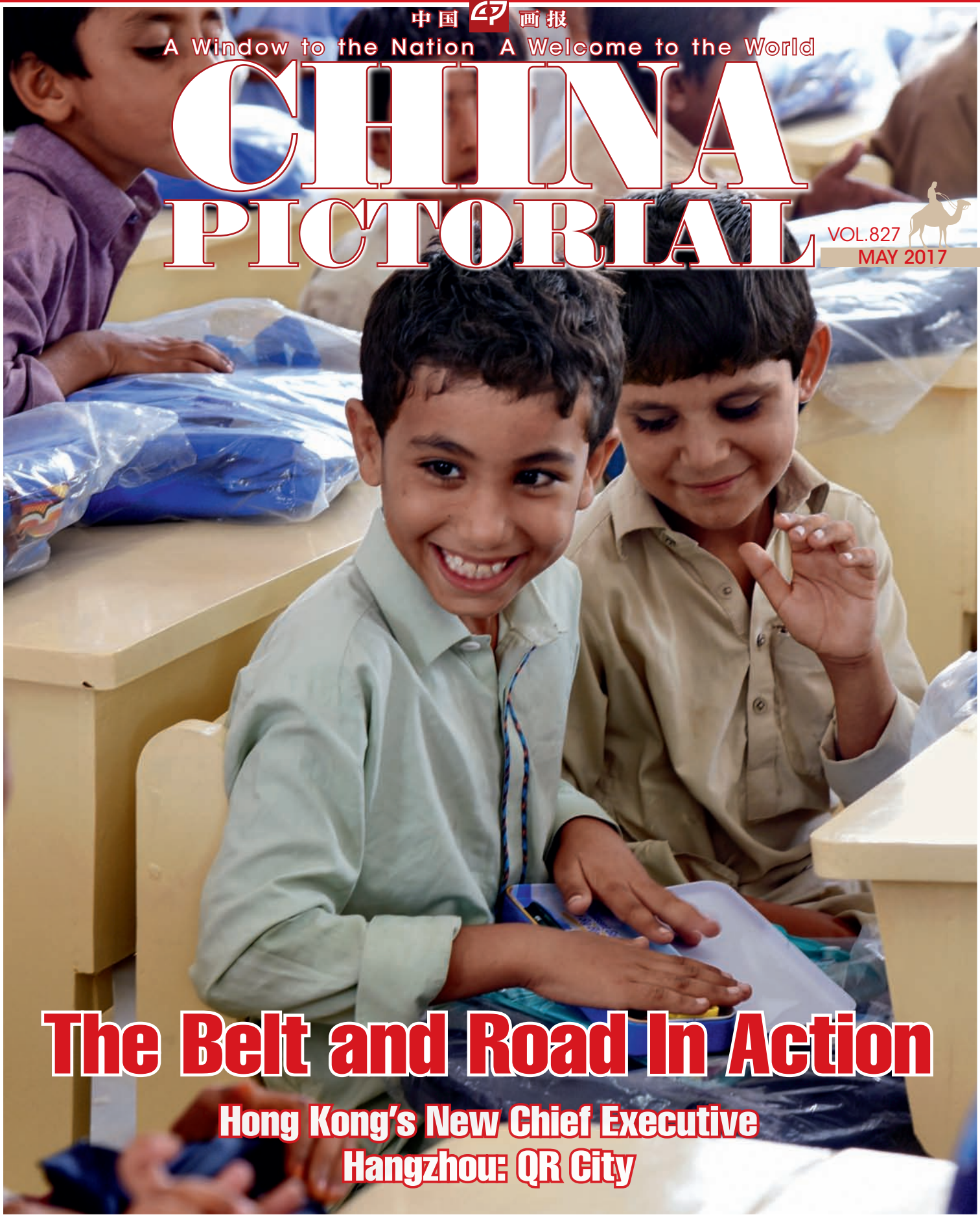

The Belt and Road In Action

Hong Kong's New Chief Executive

Hangzhou: QR City

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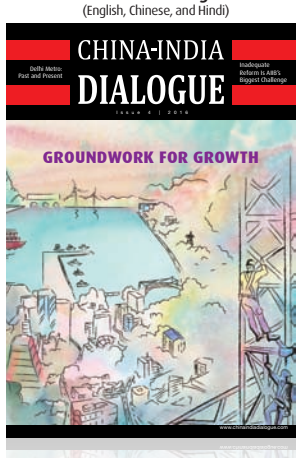

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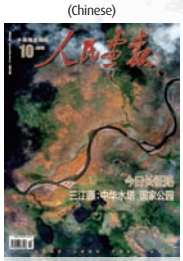

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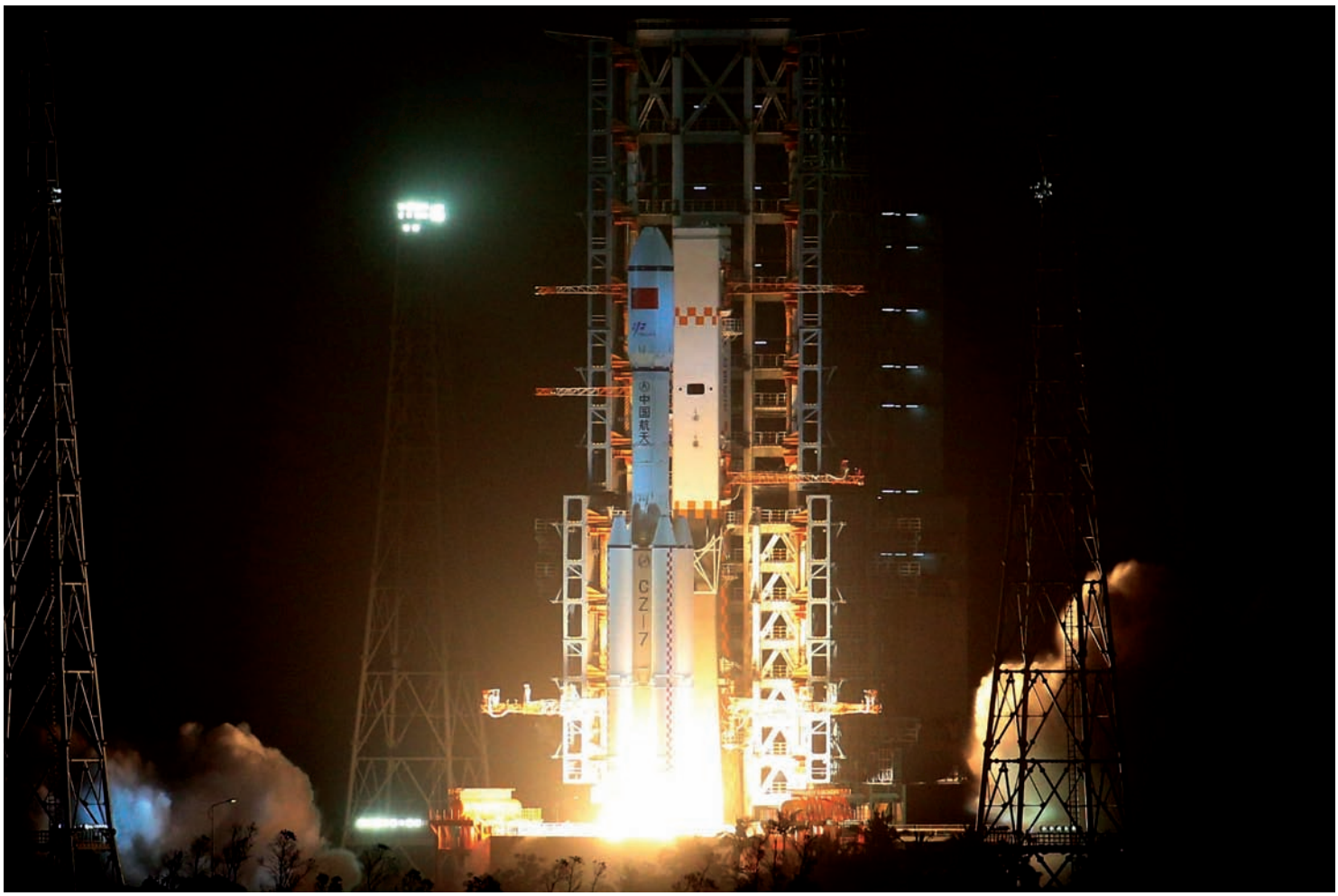
by Rao Aimin/Xinhua

Xi-Trump Talks Lay Foundation for Future

April 6, Palm Beach, Florida, USA: U.S. President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania Trump welcome visiting Chinese President Xi Jinping and First Lady Peng Liyuan to Mar-a-Lago. During Xi's two-day trip, the two leaders compared notes on a wide range of topics for more than seven hours in total, and agreed to expand win-win cooperation and manage differences with mutual respect.

Xi noted that cooperation is the only choice for China and the United States, and that the two countries could become great cooperative partners. Trump said the U.S. side stands ready to work with China to overcome issues impeding stronger bilateral ties and to build a better relationship.

The talks took place at a time of uncertainty marked by rising tension on trade, maritime issues and the Korean Peninsula, sending a strong signal that the two countries are seeking to explore meaningful ways to communicate and bridge differences.



IC

China's First Cargo Spacecraft Launched

April 17, Hainan Province: China's first cargo spacecraft, Tianzhou-1, nicknamed "Space Courier," blasts off from Wenchang Space Launch Center. Tianzhou-1 successfully entered orbit 596 seconds after blasting off on the back of a Long March-7 Y2 carrier rocket.

Measuring 10.6 meters in length and up to 3.35 meters in diameter, the tube-shaped Tianzhou-1 is designed to accommodate up to 6.5 tons of payload. It is China's biggest-ever spacecraft.

So far, it has successfully performed the first docking with the orbiting Tiangong-2 space lab and will conduct two more dockings from different directions. These are key steps in China's plan to establish a permanently-manned space station by 2022. Along with refueling capabilities, Tianzhou-1 can also supply astronauts with food, water and other provisions. Construction of the space station will begin next year.

CFP

Sprinkling Good Fortune

April 15, Jinghong City, Yunnan Province: People sprinkle water on each other to celebrate the water-sprinkling festival. The mid-April festival has a history of over 700 years as the New Year celebration of China's Dai ethnic group.

The traditional folk activity is also practiced by people in Thailand, Cambodia, Myanmar and other places in Southeast Asia. Participants sprinkle water on each other to pray for good fortune and safety.

by Shen Hong/Xinhua

Stars Shine at 7th BIFF

April 23, Beijing: Chinese actress Lin Chi-ling poses in front of a group of movie fans at the closing ceremony of the 7th Beijing International Film Festival (BIFF).

Beginning on April 16, the festival screened 424 films from 59 countries, of which 15 were nominated for the prestigious Tiantan Award. Composed of over 300 activities, the 7th BIFF featured an Opening Ceremony, the Beijing Film Panorama, a Theme Forum, a Film Carnival and Closing and Awards ceremonies as well as a wealth of related activities. Since its launch in 2011, the BIFF has attracted heavy participation from international executives, directors, producers and studio heads.

Comment

Belt and Road Initiative: A New Perspective for Curing the Ailments of Geopolitics

Text by Li Xia

On March 17, 2017, the 15 members of the UN Security Council included the Belt and Road Initiative and the concept of building "a community of shared future for all humankind" into a resolution for the first time, signifying that China's contributions to improving global governance have been widely recognized by the international community.

Looking back at human history, especially Europe's history of geopolitics and international relations, it is easy to see mankind has frequently chosen less-than-ideal paths and implemented many dangerous ideas. Considered by many the "father of the modern nation-state," Cardinal Richelieu, France's prime minister between 1624 and 1642, was the first political figure to introduce the concept of "raison d'état," a political theory that holds that the interests and needs of the state can take precedence over traditional moral and international law. Richelieu aimed to place a check on the dominance of Europe by the House of Habsburg, but the concept kindled French ambition to rule the European continent. After Richelieu, the focus of international politics shifted from morality to power. The concept of "raison d'état" became a guiding principle of European diplomacy after the signing of the Peace of Westphalia at the end of the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648). To prevent major powers from maintaining hegemonic influence over smaller countries, the "equilibrium" theory was invented, but it has never lead to ultimate peace. Later, French Emperor Napoleon III and German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck advocated the "Realpolitik" diplomatic thought featuring the pursuit of power, imposing an even greater threat to peace. After World War II, two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, vied for supremacy, resulting in the Cold War. The United States became the sole superpower when the Cold War ended, but the wars have not ceased.

The economic globalization that began in the 1980s triggered the miracle of the Four Asian Tigers, namely, Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan, as well as the rise of many emerging economies including China as a whole. The 2008 international financial crisis dragged both developed countries and emerging economies into recession. The wealth gap widened, far-rightist forces surged and economic populism gained steam. Turbulence in the Middle East has fueled terrorism, making it a great threat to safety in the 21st Century.

Such factors pose enormous challenges for mankind. How to achieve prosperous growth, safeguard the morality of social systems, promote win-win cooperation between countries and maintain world peace has become the aim of the entire world. In 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping announced the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road, collectively known as the Belt and Road Initiative. The Initiative is a well-conceived response and solution to the new challenges facing all of mankind.

Four years have passed since the inception of the Initiative. From the very start, it received heavy attention and support from the international community, especially countries in Central and Eastern Europe. China has already become one of the largest investors in Eastern and Southeastern Europe. A total of 3,000 freight trains have shuttled along 39 rail lines linking China to Europe, facilitating heavy volumes of bilateral trade. Major infrastructure projects in Asia, such as the Jakarta-Bandung High-speed Railway, the China-Laos Railway, the China-Thailand Railway and the Gwadar Port in Pakistan, are all progressing smoothly and on schedule.

In his recently-published book *On the New Silk Road: Journeying Through China's Artery of Power*, American writer Wade Shepard wrote that phenomena like a country investing huge sums in another country's infrastructure have never previously happened, but today the practice is becoming a routine step to make the world closer. In his eyes, this is precisely what President Xi Jinping means by the phrase "community of shared destiny." Shepard believes that the Belt and Road Initiative creates a mechanism for countries in the center of the Eurasian continent to achieve higher-level development, reap the rewards of globalization and engage in greater political communication.

German Ambassador to China Michael Clauss wrote in an article for the Britain-based *Financial Times*: "Globalization is about more than trade and economic development. It is about a world order where countries can work together as equals, whether big or small, bound by mutually agreed rules... One of China's most inspiring proposals for development and stability is the Belt and Road Initiative... China can become a true global leader. It has the potential to prevent a downward spiral into unilateralism, trade wars and less and less political stability in many countries in China's and Europe's neighborhood."

The Belt and Road Initiative integrates the wisdom of ancient Chinese civilization and the experience the country has accumulated during the course of its rapid economic growth over the past few decades, providing a new philosophy for the promotion of world peace and human development. The concept of building a "community of shared destiny" helps people rethink international relations and find a new perspective, and the principles of "policy coordination, facility connectivity, unimpeded trade, financial integration and people-to-people bonds" foster new solutions for problems that plague human development.

Whether achieving peace through war or maintaining peace with a power struggle, traditional geopolitical practices have constantly involved some countries undermining peace for their own interests. The Belt and Road Initiative offers a new perspective with its inclusive aim to build a community of shared future that can benefit all people, promote common development and create eternal peace.

The author is executive editor-in-chief of *China Pictorial*.

海绵城市
Sponge Cities

Edited by Li Zhuoxi

"Sponge city" is a storm water management concept in city planning that attaches great significance to the design and construction of underground pipe networks. The architecture, roads, watercourses and green spaces designed according to this concept can hold, absorb, and drain water using ecological methods, so that rainwater can be collected and recycled for multiple uses.

In the government work report that he delivered to China's top legislative body on March 5 during its annual session, Premier Li Keqiang called for coordinating urban development above and below the ground by building at least another 2,000 kilometers of underground utility tunnels to promote the construction of sponge cities and solve urban flooding.

At present, most Chinese cities use a model in which water is discharged quickly as rainwater falls to the ground. Yet large areas of hardened concrete prevent water from seeping into the ground, blocking the natural water circulation system. To solve problems plaguing the development of traditional cities, sponge cities will adopt engineering measures to control city rainwater runoff and minimize environmental destruction caused by city development and construction.

China has already formulated a clear timetable for the construction of sponge cities, which are considered important symbols of urban development and the transformation of construction modes. The country has listed more than 130 cities in the sponge city construction program. *The Guiding Opinions of the General Office of the State Council on Advancing the Construction of Sponge Cities* stated that the construction of sponge cities will minimize the impact of city development and construction on the ecological environment. China also set an ambitious goal of making 20 percent of its urban areas meet the standards of "sponge cities" by 2020 and 80 percent by 2030.

Sponge cities can adapt to environmental changes and better cope with disasters caused by rainwater. Through water absorption, storage, seepage, purification and usage, the concept can also help relieve the urban heat island effect. CFP

国家公园体制
National Park System

Edited by Li Zhuoxi

A national park is a natural region designated to protect the integrity of one or more typical ecological systems, and to provide natural land that requires special protection and management for tourism, scientific research and environmental education purposes. Technically, such parks are different to both nature reserves and mainstream tourist attractions.

The government work report delivered by Premier Li Keqiang on March 5, 2017 advanced overall planning of the national park system in an orderly fashion, providing strong support for the construction of an ecological civilization.

The primary focus now is on the establishment of a national park system that classifies land function within a new management system to solve previous management problems. At present, environmental resource protection in China happens in natural reserves, which exist as forest parks, geological parks, wetland parks, scenic spots and other forms. Because most reserves were established only for protection, they are still plagued by many problems such as the lack of systematic and rational design, overlapping management departments and vague responsibility. The construction of national parks is intended to fix such issues at the national level and restructure the functionality of such areas with an eye on safeguarding the protection and sustainability of important ecosystems.

In early 2015, China announced the launch of the national park system pilot program. In June of that year, the three-year pilot program officially went into effect. Nine nature reserves, including Sanjiangyuan, Shennongjia and Wuyi Mountain and protected areas for giant pandas and Siberian tigers, were chosen as pilot national parks.

A pilot national park, the Giant Panda National Park covers a total area of 27,000 square kilometers, stretching across Sichuan, Gansu and Shaanxi provinces, but 74 percent of it is in Sichuan. The pilot national park merges isolated habitats to facilitate the exchange of genes between panda populations that were previously isolated from each other and provides convenient passages for giant pandas and other animals with air corridors and underground tunnels. CFP

Journey to Jiangsu

Text and photographs by Nick Lanigan

Jiangsu Province is located on China's eastern coast, near the municipality of Shanghai. On a recent visit, I toured Nanjing, the provincial capital, and Kunshan, a smaller city further east. The two are very different in character, but each provides a glimpse into modern Jiangsu life.

In the historic water town of Zhouzhuang, local women skilfully pilot small boats down narrow waterways.

Arriving from Beijing, the difference in climate was immediately apparent, and I noticed far more trees and vegetation lining the city streets. The province lies along the lower reaches of the world-famous Yangtze River, a region known for an abundance of water—from the vast Yangcheng Lake at one edge of Kunshan to the streams and ponds found around every turn. Consequently, nature is everywhere: Birds flutter between trees constantly and at night, frogs can be heard croaking from the shadows. I soon realized why so many local specialty dishes seemed to revolve around duck!

Despite the natural environment, the area is far from rural. Jiangsu is a relatively wealthy province thanks in part to its strategic location close to Shanghai, with convenient transport links across the region. Its fertile terrain and excellent irrigation have given the province a strong agricultural tradition and recent rapid development. Agriculture is still a significant industry in the province, but it is also home to many eco-

nomic and technological development zones. Jiangsu is a leading manufacturer of electronics and other exported goods. Business is booming, and Jiangsu's GDP ranks among the highest in the country. Nanjing and Kunshan, among other cities, are now known for ultra-modern buildings and highly developed infrastructure as much as anything else.

The province's future looks bright, but its past has shaped the present. As the national capital of China for six dynasties, Nanjing is a profoundly historic city. Despite its development pace, the city's tradition is still strong thanks to the careful preservation of many historic structures. Much of the 600-year-old city wall is still standing, as a visual reminder of the threats this city once faced from outside invaders. Amongst the largest city walls ever constructed in China, the towering stone structure is still impressive. I visited the famous East Gate, around which a large pedestrian zone has been established that preserves the old architecture, now housing shops and restaurants. Most of them now cater mostly to tourists, but it's easy to imagine the atmosphere of life in the shadow of the city walls in dynasties past. In the nearby Confucian Temple area on the banks of the river, traditional outdoor dance performances with live music take place every evening, illuminated by flickering Chinese lanterns.

Another historic gem located just outside Kunshan is the ancient town of Zhouzhuang, which is considered the top water town in China. Before arriving, I wasn't sure what "water town" actually meant, but once I saw it, the term made perfect sense. The entire town is built around its waterways, and in some places, the narrow canals act like streets. Like Venice to Europeans, Zhouzhuang is known for a steady flow of passenger boats and houses jutting out over the water's edge. Delicate willow trees hug the banks, and their leaves gently fall to float away on the rippling surface below. On land, visitors can dive into the labyrinth of narrow passageways and explore the preserved residences of important figures from the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties—complete with original furniture. However, explorers are warned to keep an eye out for sudden passing streams. Understandably, tourist boats are popular choices for exploring. Each is operated by one of the town's senior women, who display surprising strength as they steer the craft deftly around narrow bends using nothing but a wooden paddle. Many sing haunting, traditional songs as they work, creating a truly captivating atmosphere.

The area around the old East Gate of Nanjing has been developed as a pedestrian tourist street.

The shores of Yangcheng Lake are a popular place to while away a sunny afternoon.

The traditional architecture of the East Gate area has been carefully restored.

The preservation of traditional culture in these cities is intended as celebration, but Nanjing in particular has a darker page of history to be remembered. City authorities have constructed an interactive and thought-provoking memorial to the victims of the Nanjing Massacre, which took place in late 1937 and early 1938, when the city fell to Japanese invaders. Located in the southwest of the city, the museum now draws thousands of domestic and international visitors hoping to learn more about this dark time. Alongside poignant statues and a large wall listing the names of the victims is an informative museum recounting some of the many horrors the city faced at the hands of invaders during the period. The information doesn't make for pleasant reading, but is essential to understanding a crucial event from the city's past, the effects of which are still being felt today.

These are just a few of the factors that make Jiangsu an interesting destination. With ever-increasing connectivity thanks to China's growing network of high-speed railways—many of which happen to be produced there—Jiangsu cities are now more accessible than ever. Numerous landmarks and attractions are very convenient to reach for visitors, and local people reap the benefits as well—many Jiangsu residents firmly maintain that it's a preferable place to live than neighboring Shanghai. It has all the advantages without the crowds, and most importantly without the price tag in terms of real estate. From historical buildings to gleaming skyscrapers, and from quaint villages to modern industries, Jiangsu really is a province for everyone.

Belt and Ro

During Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Kazakhstan in September 2013, he first proposed building the Silk Road Economic Belt. In October of the same year, President Xi proposed constructing the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road during a visit to Indonesia. These two proposals are now known together as the Belt and Road Initiative. The Initiative injects Chinese wisdom into efforts aiming at common prosperity and even global development.

Over the past three years, following the principles of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, the Belt and Road Initiative has been welcomed by countries from around the world. Already, more than 100 countries and international organizations have participated within the framework of the Initiative, and more than 40 countries along the routes have signed cooperative agreements with China. Moreover, China has carried out international production capacity cooperation with nearly 30 countries. Financial cooperation projects, represented by the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the Silk Road Fund, continue to expand, and several flagship projects under the Initiative have already been completed.

The Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation will be held in Beijing from May 14 to 15, 2017. This will be the highest-profile international meeting related to the Initiative since China first proposed it in 2013. The forum is expected to produce cooperative agreements between China and nearly 20 countries as well as more than 20 international organizations.

To welcome the upcoming Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, we have selected 10 stories about relevant bilateral cooperation that has resulted in the implementation of landmark projects under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative. From policy, infrastructure, trade and financial integration to people-to-people bonds, each tale vividly

ad In Action

Concept by *China Pictorial*

illustrates how new opportunities and roads to prosperity have been created by the Belt and Road Initiative. The focus on building a community of shared interests and future is the soul of the Belt and Road Initiative, and also perfectly embodies the core value of "harmony" at the heart of Chinese civilization itself.

The Belt and Road Initiative refers to the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road. The Initiative injects Chinese wisdom into work aiming at common prosperity. This photo shows the Dire Dawa region of the new Ethiopia-Djibouti railway. by Qin Bin

China-Myanmar Oil and Gas Pipelines: Widespread Benefits and Multilateral Wins

Text by Ru Yuan
Photographs courtesy of CNPC Southeast Asia Pipeline Co., Ltd.

On April 10, 2017, two giant loading arms dropped to connect to the oil transport pipelines of a huge tanker, which soon began unloading crude oil at Maday Island oil port off the western coast of Myanmar. The event marked the beginning of formal operation of the China-Myanmar crude oil pipeline project. This project and the China-Myanmar natural gas pipeline, which went into operation in 2013, are together known as the China-Myanmar oil and gas pipelines.

Considered China's fourth energy import conduit following the China-Central Asia oil and gas pipelines, the China-Russia crude oil pipeline, and the maritime passageway transporting oil and natural gas, the China-Myanmar oil and gas pipelines project is a landmark effort resulting in mutual benefits and win-win results under the Belt and Road Initiative. U Nyan Tun, former vice president of Myanmar, said that the China-Myanmar oil and gas pipelines project would not only benefit every participant, but also enhance the development of Myanmar's economy, industrialization and energy sector, playing a significant role in improving the country's long-term development prospects.

Most Difficult Project

Both China-Myanmar pipelines start in Myanmar's Kyaukpyu Special Economic Zone. In June 2010, the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) and Myan-

July 28, 2013: The lighting-up of the venting and flare stack system in Namhkam metering station, at the border of China and Myanmar, shows that natural gas is now being transported to this region.

With giant loading arms dropping to connect to the oil transport lines of a huge tanker, the unloading of crude oil begins at Maday Island oil port in Myanmar.

mar Oil and Gas Enterprise signed a series of agreements. According to them, China would build and manage two pipelines in Myanmar, one for natural gas and the other for crude oil, and hold a 30-year lease.

The designed transmission capacity of the crude oil pipeline is about 22 million tons per year, and that of the natural gas pipeline is 12 billion cubic meters per year. According to the agreements, Myanmar will receive two million tons of crude oil and 20 percent of the natural gas transmitted through the line every year. The pipelines will run through four states in Myanmar before entering China through Ruili City in Yunnan Province, where the pipelines connect to China's domestic oil and gas network. After specifications of the project had been agreed upon, the Southeast Asia Pipeline Co., Ltd., established in 2009 as a subsidiary of CNPC, took charge of the project's field investigations, design, construction and management in Myanmar.

The geography between China and Myanmar didn't make construction easy. Due to the vast area and its complicated terrain, the China-Myanmar oil and gas pipelines were deemed the most difficult they had ever worked on by many of the engineers.

The China-Myanmar oil and gas pipelines project attached great importance to environmental protection. The landform was restored after project construction was completed in this area.

Given that the two pipelines traverse a vast area with complicated landforms, the project was deemed the most difficult ever by many engineers.

As the starting point of the crude oil pipeline, Maday is an island off the coast of Kyaukpyu in Myanmar's Arakan State. When the construction started in October 2009, the 12-square-kilometer island was an isolated and primitive landform.

Without freshwater or a reliable power supply, everything necessary to build on the island, including the most basic building materials such as reinforced bars and cement, had to be imported. "The natural conditions on the island were adverse," comments a staffer from the Maday office of the Southeast Asia Pipeline Co., Ltd. "During the dry season, the temperature often hovers above 40 degrees Celsius. And the rainy season lasts from May to November. We were even on the lookout for poisonous snakes while we worked." Facing such a hostile environment, the company transformed the primitive island into a world-class international oil port in only a few years. Facilities include crude oil tanks with capacity totaling 1.2 million cubic meters, a pumping station for the oil pipeline, valve chests, a workboat wharf, a 650,000-cubic-meter reservoir, a 38-kilometer sea line, and an oil terminal capable of receiving 300,000-ton vessels.

Along with spectacular construction highlights, the project attracted enormous attention due to its unique operational mechanism. Although the pipelines only run through China and Myanmar geographically, the project became a highly-internationalized commercial program. While the crude oil pipeline was constructed by large enterprises from China and Myanmar, the natural gas pipeline was funded by six companies from four countries including China, Myanmar, South Korea and India.

In July 2013, the natural gas pipeline formally began transporting natural gas to China. In September of that year, it started to transmit natural gas to Myanmar. By the end of March 2017, the pipeline had transported more than 13.3 billion cubic meters of gas to China and supplied Myanmar with 1.55 billion cubic meters. The crude oil pipeline began testing in January 2015 and successfully welcomed the first ship carrying oil from the Middle East that month.

Highly Localized

At 6:00 p.m., street lamps in Kyaukpyu light up the sky. In a country like Myanmar that has long suffered from power shortages, such scenes were once scarce. Kyaukpyu's brightness should be credited to the China-Myanmar oil and gas pipelines. Since the natural gas pipeline formally started providing natural gas to Kyaukpyu power plants, the power supply in this region has been strong and steady. According to Jiang Changliang, general manager of the Southeast Asia Pipeline Co., Ltd., all four gas distribution stations in Myanmar constructed for the China-Myanmar natural gas pipeline project had begun operation by the end of April 2015. The four stations guarantee the energy supply for the Kyaukpyu Special Economic Zone and Myanmar's central industrial area, greatly improving the power supply for local residents.

A Myanmar employee with the Southeast Asia Pipeline Co., Ltd. takes an exam after completing a welder training program.

The project greatly benefits locals in Myanmar, bringing them tangible results.

Since the inception of the oil and gas pipelines project, the Southeast Asia Pipeline Co., Ltd. has been attaching great importance to improving the standards of living for locals. "We visited the villages along the pipelines through Myanmar four times, dropping in on nearly 100 villages to hear locals' needs and suggestions," says Jiang. Through a variety of platforms, the company has injected a total of US$24 million in Myanmar to enhance infrastructure along the pipelines including education, medical services, water and power supplies, telecommunications, and road construction. These projects have benefited more than a million locals.

Besides improving locals' livelihoods, the oil and gas pipelines project spared no efforts to promote local employment. At present, the project employs more than 800 Myanmar nationals, who account for 72 percent of its total staff. "During peak construction of the pipelines, we were employing more than 6,000 locals," stresses Jiang. "And in the future, we will continue to recruit more local employees and train them for the international market."

The company has long realized the importance of local professionals to the project's success. Thus, special job training programs were designed for Myanmar employees, which unleashed impressive industrial talent. During the pipelines' construction, the company sent nearly 60 Myanmar university students to Yangon and cities in China to learn both theoretical knowledge and practical skills. These students later returned to Myanmar and joined the company to work at its frontline posts. The company also adopted China's traditional staff training mode: Working with senior experienced Chinese employees, newer Myanmar employees have achieved rapid progress.

Multi-Win Cooperation Model

Upon completion, the China-Myanmar oil and gas pipelines will ease the energy supply plight of neighboring countries as well. And Myanmar's natural gas supply now has a relatively stable market. In terms of regional cooperation, the China-Myanmar oil and gas pipelines will position China's energy demand even closer to the needs of South and Southeast Asian nations, which will facilitate common regional development.

For China, the China-Myanmar oil and gas pipelines serve as a driver of energy structure transformation in southwestern China. Residents in the region, as well as the neighboring Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, will increase their usage of the more environmentally-friendly natural gas in their everyday lives. And after the large-scale increase in global energy supply, the international price for natural gas will be more stable.

For Myanmar, the China-Myanmar oil and gas pipelines, which inject greater demand into local markets with maintenance needs alone and give local enterprises big advantages over international competitors, will directly result in massive economic gains every year. As an investor, Myanmar will also enjoy lucrative dividends for the next 30 years. The project will boost economic development along the pipelines, stimulate Myanmar's overall economy and bring tangible benefits to locals.

Saving the Arniko

Text by Li Yiqi

On April 25, 2015, an 8.1-magnitude earthquake struck Nepal, causing severe damage to the Arniko Highway, a crucial transport link with China. Connecting Lhasa in China's Tibet Autonomous Region to the Kodari port on Nepal's border, and then to its capital city of Kathmandu, the 943-kilometer China-Nepal Highway functions as the only international thoroughfare stretching from Tibet to Nepal and Southeast Asia.

The China-Nepal Highway runs through the slope-deposit areas of the Himalayas, where deep valleys and steep mountains are faced with the risk of frequent earthquakes. Intensive precipitation shakes the ground in the mountains, and natural disasters such as landslides, rock falls and mud-rock flows block the highway at times.

March 3, 2017: Dhana Bahadur Tamang, secretary at the Nepali Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport, and Yu Hong, Chinese ambassador to Nepal, exchange a delivery and acceptance certificate at the official handover ceremony of the Arniko Highway maintenance project, in Kathmandu. by Zhang Jili

Initially, emergency maintenance helped to improve conditions. After another quake hit on July 5, 2016, the flooded upper bank of the Bhote Kosi River tumbled down to the road in a landslide, affecting many sections of the Arniko Highway. Transport was blocked entirely. A miserable scene emerged as the houses along the highway collapsed. Some local residents had to be sheltered in temporary tents pitched higher up the mountain, and aid materials could only be delivered by hand.

At Nepal's request, China performed emergency maintenance on the five sections hit by landslides, paving the road for reconstruction and sustained bilateral trade, after exchanges of diplomatic notes on June 21 and July 29, 2016.

Upon receiving the mission, the overseas operations division of the China Railway 14th Bureau Group began maintenance on August 8, 2016. The rainy season challenged the workers, adding the removal of obstacles to their workload, as the mountainsides along the Arniko Highway are mostly made up of decomposed rocks. No matter how often the roads were cleared, constant aftershocks and rainfall covered them with mud and rocks once again, depositing piles of mess. The construction team had no choice but to repeat their work. Some of the affected areas were filled with expansive soil that turned into sludge once it absorbed water, which made it difficult to compact. The company's technology team decided to clean up the road first before substituting new filling materials for the expansive soil.

The workers were also confronted with huge safety threats. The Arniko Highway winds up along the mountains, an awesome scene, with steep cliffs on one side and a raging river on the other. Recalling the dangerous experience he went through during the maintenance, Dong Guangxian, a project manager with the overseas operations division of the China Railway 14th Bureau Group, said, "The machinery had to reach the top in order to remove the mud-and-rock mess. The challenges were enormous in some sections. It was difficult enough for a person to climb up the piles with both arms and legs free, let alone with large machines. The mountains do not stand on pure rock, but mixed layers of

sand and rock. Once a sand layer shakes, a collapse is hard to avoid. Big rocks fell off quite often during construction, making it hazardous for workers. The excavators narrowly escaped slips several times, and found it extremely hard to reach the top."

With the added burden of a tight schedule, the technology team rented local houses for offices so that they could stay close to where the construction was taking place. Facing tough conditions and a lack of materials, the workers slept in houses with cracks on the walls. Even a hot shower was too much to realistically hope for. All the 35 Chinese workers and over 90 local employees stuck to the construction sites until the entire road resumed operation.

Despite the hardships lasting more than five and a half months, the repair work of the Arniko Highway was completed at the end of January 2017. The construction team fixed the 6.7-kilometer-long road, cleaned up 382,664 cubic meters of mud and rock, and built up eight pipe culverts and 2.5-kilometer-long guard fences. Daily maintenance of the Arniko Highway was handed over to the Nepalese government after an official delivery of the maintenance project from China to Nepal in Kathmandu on March 3.

Although the first phase of road maintenance has been completed, the technicians and machines from the Chinese company are still there for emergency needs. "The rainy seasons come in Nepal around the same time every year, and the risk of road blocks by mud-rock flows is always there. We will spare no efforts to help with cleaning work and road maintenance, to ensure convenient transport for the locals."

Vehicles returned to the Arniko Highway as it was restored to smoothness, with a daily vehicle volume of around 800. The town is bustling again as the local residents return to peace. Coaches on the highway now take them directly from the mountainous areas to Kathmandu. Trucks pass through, packed with materials for post-disaster reconstruction.

Road maintenance underway on the Arniko Highway. courtesy of Dong Guangxian


The Arniko Highway is restored to smoothness after the maintenance project is completed. courtesy of Dong Guangxian

Local residents showed gratitude to the maintenance workers, and the drivers passing by would salute cheerfully to the Chinese workers. "The local residents were a big help to us. They offered us tea every time we walked by. They never hesitated to help us during our geographic inspections, no matter how rough the mountainous lanes were, and regardless of the mud stains splashed on their clothes."

Friendships were built as the way was paved. The locals expressed their thanks to the Chinese workers for their courage and diligence. They presented the construction workers with *hada*, a piece of silk that symbolizes good luck.

November 11, 2015: The CFPD investigative team members pose for a photo with local kids at the groundbreaking ceremony for the primary school in Gwadar.

China-Pakistan Primary School: Bonding People through Education

Text by Wang Shuya
Photographs courtesy of China Foundation for Peace and Development

Located in the Faqeer Colony in the port city of Gwadar, Balochistan, Pakistan, the China-Pakistan Government Primary School is the only educational institution in Faqeer. The school was launched by the China Foundation for Peace and Development (CFPD) with a US$400,000 donation and was inaugurated by Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on September 1, 2016. Covering an area of 752.44 square meters, the school has not only fulfilled local kids' educational aspirations, but also strengthened China-Pakistan friendship.

"The Chinese People Can Help Us"

When asked about the origin of the donation that resulted in the school, Xu Zhensui, secretary general of the CFPD, traced the idea back to something mentioned by Chinese President Xi Jinping during his first state visit to Pakistan from April 20 to 21, 2015. During the visit, China and Pakistan tightened their bond with 51 agreements and memorandums of understanding (MoUs) on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and comprehensive cooperation. To implement the related agreements and strengthen people-to-people connections, the CFPD decided to donate the funds necessary to build a school in Gwadar and dispatched an investigative team to look at potential building sites across the region.

Gwadar's population of 85,000 re-

mains comparatively poor, and its children have few educational resources. "The investigation found that only a couple of primary schools in the whole city have decent conditions," Xu explained. "Faqeer didn't have a single primary school. Some local kids traveled very far to attend school, but most had no place to go at all."

China and Pakistan have enjoyed a longstanding friendship, during which time China has given Pakistan wide-ranging support, but the CFPD is the first Chinese non-governmental organization to carry out charitable activities in Gwadar. "When the investigative team arrived, the locals had already heard that Chinese people were coming to select a site to build a school, so they welcomed us excitedly," Xu said. "Among them was a humble old man named Haji Sher Mohammad. After hearing the news, he came to us saying he had private land he wanted to donate for the school." Soon, the school site was determined.

The national flags of China and Pakistan fly atop the teaching building at the China-Pakistan Government Primary School in Faqeer Colony, Gwadar.

In 2013, when the Pakistani government transferred the operational rights of Gwadar Port to China, a plot of land of 1,000 square yards (836 square meters) cost just 500,000 rupees (US$4,907). Currently, however, it has surged to 7,500,000 rupees (US$73,602), almost 15 times the previous price.

With bright classrooms and well-equipped facilities, the China-Pakistan Government Primary School in Faqeer Colony, Gwadar, provides local kids with a good education.

When we asked whether the old man ever regretted his donation, Xu said they had never heard him say so. "He considers the land granted by Allah and said it is best used to benefit the local people," said Xu. "He also expressed faith in the Chinese to provide the necessary help to fulfill local kids' dreams of going to school."

Ideal School for Local Kids

On November 11, 2015, the groundbreaking ceremony for the primary school was held in Gwadar. Wang Xiaotao, vice minister of China's National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), together with then Chief Minister of Balochistan Abdul Malik Baloch and Pakistani Minister of Planning, Development and Reform Ahsan Iqbal, attended the historic event.

"When construction began, we ran into many difficulties, but the local government and people gave us tremendous support and encouragement," Xu said. "We got green lights all the way."

August 31, 2016: A young girl smiles when she receives a schoolbag and stationery donated by the CFPD at the China-Pakistan Government Primary School in Faqeer Colony, Gwadar.

August 31, 2016: Students receive schoolbags and stationery donated by the CFPD at the China-Pakistan Government Primary School in Faqeer Colony, Gwadar.

Because the site is close to the port, the ground is very sandy. Local construction resources were limited and building conditions poor. To build the perfect school for the local kids, the CFPD commissioned a most capable Chinese company to design and build the school according to local conditions.

First, the school was designed in an Islamic style. Second, the construction team strictly adhered to local standards and rules and selected only building materials acceptable to the locals. Considering the local marine climate, the walls were built to withstand strong sunshine and rain erosion. Final construction was thoroughly supervised and checked by Pakistani administrators.

Strong passion could be felt every day at the construction site. Not only did the Chinese staff work day and night, but Pakistani security forces guaranteed a safe environment. Every day, several villagers could often be found at the site, chatting enthusiastically and watching the school become reality.

From the first site investigation on July 27, 2015 to completion on August 15, 2016 was a stretch of 13 months, but actual construction took only 10 months. The Chinese workers managed to overcome various difficulties to stay on schedule while maintaining quality standards.

On August 26, 2016, the school officially opened. A total of 450 kids from surrounding villages applied for places, far beyond the school's planned capacity.

On September 1, 2016, Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif visited the school. When an official in his entourage asked children welcoming them which school they attended, one child proudly replied: "I'm from the Chinese school!"

Eye on the Prize

With bright classrooms and well-equipped facilities, the China-Pakistan Government Primary School in Gwadar has not only fulfilled local educational needs, but also delivered Chinese care to Pakistan, helping local people quickly enjoy real benefits from the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and the Belt and Road Initiative.

In addition to the primary school, the CFPD disclosed that they have already broken ground on another project in Guetta, the CPEC Center of Excellence (CCE) at Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Management Sciences (BUITEMS), to cultivate local port management talent. Due to less-than-ideal conditions, the CFPD's donations in Pakistan now primarily fund hardware support. They are considering sending teachers and personnel in the future.

According to the CFPD, the primary school in Gwadar sets a pristine example for other Chinese non-governmental organizations to join the state's call for participation in the Belt and Road Initiative. Many other projects in its wake should continue strengthening people-to-people bonds between the two countries, including cooperative programs under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative.

Xu pointed out that as a non-governmental organization, the CFPD's abilities to contribute are quite limited. He hopes that in the future, more Chinese non-governmental organizations will go global and join them in strengthening bonds between China and other countries along the Belt and Road. Through joint efforts, such organizations can play an important role in fueling the Belt and Road Initiative. "The future will bring a lot more to do," added Xu. "We will hold tight to our mission and keep moving forward."

In addition to the necessary teaching facilities, the CFPD has also equipped the school with recreational facilities.

JAC Motors: A Big Deal for Cars

Text by Zhou Hanbo and Xie Yahong

Kostanay, a small border city in northwest Kazakhstan with a population of about 200,000, attracted great attention from the top leadership of both China and Kazakhstan in 2016. In September, President Nazarbayev made a special visit. In November, the city was a major topic of discussion during the third regular meeting of the premiers from both sides. All the interest was over an automobile project, one of the earliest China-Kazakhstan joint ventures under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative proposed in 2013 by Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Smart Layout

Kostanay, Kazakhstan's "motown," produces half of the automobiles in the country. Not long ago, some Chinese journalists visited Salaaka factory under Aruhr Group, an auto production base in Kazakhstan specializing in assembling foreign brands, when it welcomed Anhui Jianghuai Automobile Co., Ltd. (JAC) from China as its newest partner. Photos of JAC products can be found throughout the factory. It is incredibly orderly: Components and finished products are arranged neatly in endless lines as the crew bustle about on the assembly line.

To help implement the government's Belt and Road Initiative, JAC has increased its trajectory towards "going global" with the opportunity to engage in "China-Kazakhstan capacity cooperation" and target the Kazakh market in the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Wang Suihua, sales director of JAC's Russian region for cooperative partner Aruhr Group, provided figures on the great potential of Kazakhstan's market for new vehicles: "There are some 4 million automobiles in the country now. Every year, the number of new vehicles and imported used cars increases by 350,000, leaving huge space for new domestically-assembled vehicles due to growing limitations on imports. Moreover, countries including Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan have established a customs union. According to their agreement, domestic automobiles can enter the other countries without paying tariffs. Opening the door to Kazakhstan means getting access to the markets of other countries such as Russia and Belarus.

"JAC identified the huge business opportunity and immediately contacted local auto makers to strike deals to perform assembly and marketing," notes Wang. By the end of 2015, the first batch of cars rolled off the assembly line and onto the streets of big cities across Kazakhstan, reaching 15th in brand sales volume. In 2016, JAC's S3 type vehicle was cited as a "Brand of the People" by the Kazakh government, the only recipient of such an honor.

Big Deal

Since the moment in March 2015 when the licensing agreement was signed between JAC and Aruhr, the milestone project has drawn great attention from the leaders of both countries.

According to Wu Yunfan, head of Aruhr's marketing and public relations, Kazakh President Nazarbayev heaped praise on the IEV6S full electric vehicle, the first of its kind produced domestically, after driving the vehicle in September 2016. He expressed hope that the company would take full advantage of AutoWorld Astana 2017 to boost the popularity of new-energy automobiles. In 2016, then Kazakh Prime Minister Karim Masimov also inspected the factory and test drove this vehicle.

In November 2016, the inaugural ceremony for the JAC Automobile Factory in Kostanay was attended by the Chinese Premier and Kazakh Prime Minister, who personally congratulated the factory's employees.

Today, JAC is positioned as the only auto foreign partner to qualify for benefits under Kazakhstan's program to revive 32 industries. "The Kazakh government offers preferential policies including tax relief, government procurement, leases, and financial support," Wang illustrates. "I think this project will set an example for the Sino-Kazakh cooperation that could explode the popularity of such agreements."

Market Favor

Ultimately, the market determines the sales of products. As announced by the president of Aruhr Group, in 2016, the sales volume of JAC's automobiles made in Kazakhstan increased by 500 percent year-on-year, a rare feat for a one-year-old brand. "In 2017, JAC will undoubtedly double its sales in our country," the president proclaimed with confidence.

Despite competing with mighty rivals, JAC has become a fan favorite. How did it win over customers so quickly?

We met a couple of owners of JAC S3 vehicles at the franchise store in Alma-Ata.

"It's safe, comfortable and configured sophisticatedly," commented Yuri Ahna. "It's spacious," noted the other buyer, Altur. "I was impressed by its excellent performance in both urban areas and the countryside."

Positive driving experiences are born of the quality of the vehicle. "Both the S3 and S5 enjoy a great word-of-mouth reputation," remarks Ren Qijie, manager of JAC's Eurasian Customer Service Department. "Our company offers the most reliable product. It has been successful because it perfectly caters to local conditions, geographically and climatically."

"We have plans to introduce our most popular products in the future," explains Yu Yang from JAC's international markets department. "The JAC IEV6S was made with six-generation techniques for electric automobiles, the most state-of-the-art technology on the planet. We are working on the seventh generation, which we'll introduce to Kazakhstan immediately once it's tested to make sure that market enjoys the latest technology and top-shelf products."

The motto of the company hangs over the most prominent place at the entrance of the office building of Saller Akko, testifying to the mission of the enterprise: "Standing as a manufacturer of modern automobiles and farm machinery; Serving as an innovation base for domestic automakers; Striving to meet the market demands of both Kazakhstan and the Commonwealth of Independent States with core technologies."

The motto is more explicit than succinct: But the plan is clear on how greater cooperation and input from all sides promotes productivity that can benefit people of both countries.

Chinese employees work at JAC Automobile Factory in Kostanay. courtesy of JAC

A Kazakh employee works at JAC Automobile Factory in Kostanay. courtesy of JAC

Mining with China

China-built Copper Mine in Kazakhstan

Text and photographs by Xie Yahong

As we traverse a vast expanse of grassland in Kazakhstan, the shape of an industrial plant gradually emerges from beyond the horizon. Soon, we can make out massive piles of ore and a conveyor belt stretching some three kilometers. It is our destination: Pachaku Copper Mine Dressing Plant, a project constructed by the China Nonferrous Metal Industry's Foreign Engineering and Construction Co., Ltd., or NFC for short.

Challenges

Pachaku, in the northeastern Kazakh province of Pavlodar, is known around the world for its abundant deposits of copper. The facility under construction is the largest of its kind in the country. Upon completion, it will be able to handle 30 million tons of copper ore annually, which will double the country's copper productivity and offer some 2,000 jobs to locals. The Kazakh government considers the plant a key national project.

However, technical difficulties and time restraints have frequently plagued construction, leading a world-famous engineering company to drop out. The NFC took over the project after thorough investigation and signed a contract with Kazakhstan worth US$486 million in February 2014.

The Chinese enterprise has faced down many challenges in the process, the worst of which has been the extremely cold weather. The temperature was minus 20 degrees Celsius with piercing wind when we arrived at the construction site. Our faces were numb after walking only 200 meters against the wind. "It's not that bad," grinned Liu Jianhui, the project manager who had lived there several years.

According to Liu, it can drop as low as 45 degrees below zero at worst, which can freeze construction work. Plastic sheets and cotton quilts are employed to wrap facilities in addition to hot-air blowers on the construction site. These indigenous methods have kept work moving in even the bitterest of weather.

To make sure the staff remains healthy, Chinese managers provide a gym, other indoor recreational space and quality food. They also organize various sport and cultural events on holidays to improve morale.

It is the duty of outsiders to learn the rules and regulations of the host country.

Chinese and Kazakh managers check the operation of the machines in the workshop.

"Our Kazakh supervisors are very strict with management," notes Qin Junman, deputy general manager of the NFC. "The construction process must be precisely calculated by days, and every task completed as specified. It's the same with safety. When work is done 1.3 meters and higher above the ground, a lift and safety belt must be used, or they will shut us down until a correction is made."

The Chinese team eventually learned how to strictly adhere to every criterion specified by the Kazakh supervisors. "Construction not only exported our technology, but gave us rich working experience, which will ultimately upgrade service quality and prepare an entrance to European and American markets," Qin continued.

To date, about 80 percent of the project has been completed. The plant to process sulphide ores has begun operation. The Chinese team is working hard on the final leg of the project, the dressing plant for the clay pit, which is expected to be fully completed by mid-year.

Honors

The ore grinding facility serves as the heart of the copper dressing plant, and with it the stunning visual impact of three giant pillars roaring up and down. "They are eight to 12 meters in diameter respectively, with the largest weighing 80 tons. They are the largest of their kind in the world," notes Ju Shiyi, construction manager of the Pachaku project. "Never has anyone on earth installed three such machines at the same time. The process was extremely complicated: A few centimeters of deviation during hoisting would have led to total re-installation." Fortunately, they were successfully installed the first time thanks to thorough reconnaissance and calculation on-site.

Managers from both sides were checking the massive machines when we approached them. When asked for his impression of the project, the local supervisor gave a thumbs up. "It's been more than a year since I began collaborating with my Chinese partners," he said. "Now we cooperate seamlessly, without any hitches at all. I'm often touched by their professional dedication highlighted by speed and quality."

The impressive performance of the Chinese team has also earned praise from the Kazakh government. In December 2016, before its National Independence Day, the Kazakh government highlighted several projects of national importance, with the Pachaku Copper Mine Dressing Plant as one of the centerpieces. President Nazarbayev praised it for the vigor and vitality it was bringing to the drowsy copper industry, and granted it the Golden Eagle Quality Award as the best national industrial project.

"The secret of the project's success is the cooperative relationship with mutual benefits between companies as well as the two countries," concluded Wang Hongqian, general manager of the NFC. As the president of Kazakhstan Mining Limited proclaimed, "The NFC is trustworthy. We look up to and appreciate its excellent performance and wish to work together as much as possible in the future."

The conveyor belt in Pachaku Copper Mine Dressing Plant, Kazakhstan, stretches some three kilometers.

China-Belarus Industrial Park: Exemplary Piece of the Belt and Road

Text by Huang He

China's Belt and Road Initiative, composed of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road, has revived the ancient Silk Road by lifting win-win cooperation between China and various Eurasian states to a new level. The China-Belarus Industrial Park (CBIP), which is now under construction in Belarus, is considered an exemplary project under the Initiative.

Tax Free for Ten Years

In 2010, China and Belarus reached a consensus to construct the CBIP. Two years later, the two countries founded a joint venture to begin construction on the industrial park, with a planned area of 91.5 square kilometers. According to Li Haixin, general manager of the joint venture, the CBIP is looking at a promising future thanks to strong support from both the Chinese and Belarusian governments.

Belarus even issued a presidential order to exempt enterprises settling in the industrial park from taxes for their first 10 years and cut the amounts of payable taxes by half for the second 10 years. Tenants of the CBIP are granted the right to use the land for as long as 99 years. These measures create a favorable environment for companies to settle in the industrial park. The Chinese consider the CBIP a key project under the Belt and Road Initiative. The China-Belarus Intergovernmental Cooperation Committee formed a coordination group to aid enterprises settling in the park and facilitate construction.

An important country along the Silk Road Economic Belt, Belarus has strong transportation infrastructure, advanced aviation facilities and vast road networks. It is also a key passage for freight trains from China to Europe. Along with its favorable geographic location, and as a member of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), Belarus is a significant economic link between the EEU and the European Union (EU). Products from enterprises in the CBIP can be sold tariff-free to countries such as Russia and Kazakhstan and markets of more than 170 million people. Belarus' favorable geographic location and huge potential market have increased the industrial park's attractiveness to investors, making it a significant driving force to promote China-Belarus cooperation and accelerate Belarus' economic development.

By the end of 2016, the infrastructure construction of the first phase of the CBIP, with an area of 3.5 square kilometers, was completed. The first 15 enterprises have settled in the industrial park, including eight Chinese companies such as Zoomlion Heavy Industry Science & Technology Co., Ltd. and telecommunication equipment giants Huawei and ZTE. Li Haixin reveals that another 20 Chinese enterprises have expressed an interest in the industrial park. In 2016, the CBIP received 118 visiting groups from various industrial enterprises.

Sun Jiwen, spokesman of the Chinese Ministry of Commerce, remarked at a news conference on April 13, 2017 that both China and Belarus agreed that the CBIP project had shifted from a preparatory stage to a period of both construction and operation.

Demonstrative Effect

During a meeting in May 2015, the Chinese and Belarusian heads of state agreed to make the CBIP a key project for bilateral cooperation, develop it into a shining pearl along the Silk Road Economic Belt and publicize it as a good example of win-win cooperation between the two countries.

Tang Luhao, chief representative of ZTE in Russia and the Baltic states, believes that the CBIP has created a new opportunity for Chinese enterprises to go abroad. "Chinese companies in the industrial park can huddle together to 'keep each other warm' by jointly addressing the challenges they face in the process of going abroad, which will promote common development," he explains. "Moreover, the services provided by the industrial park will help settlers overcome difficulties as quickly as possible and increase the success rate of expanding overseas."

December 10, 2016, Belarus: Workers build a road at the construction site of the China-Belarus Industrial Park, a landmark project along the Silk Road Economic Belt. IC

Construction of the CBIP and the Belt and Road Initiative complement each other. According to Tang, the industrial park will create a strong demonstrative effect for Chinese companies looking to go abroad, and its success will provide valuable experience amid implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative.

The CBIP will greatly benefit Belarus in fields like economics, employment and transportation. When completed, it is expected that over 200 hi-tech companies will settle in the industrial park, creating more than 120,000 jobs. Supplemented by the advanced transport and logistics facilities constructed by China Merchants Group and other companies, the CBIP will become a comprehensive industrial park featuring a practical layout, coordinated development of various hi-tech industries, and tremendous economic and social achievement. Moreover, it will help create a new internationalized airport town with a population of 200,000 through integrating industrial development and urbanization.

During a press conference for Chinese journalists in Minsk, Nikolai Snopkov, deputy director of the Executive Office of the President of Belarus, pointed out that the CBIP is the fruit of a joint proposal by the Chinese and Belarusian heads of state to build a cooperation base for Chinese companies in Belarus and a platform for China's heavy machinery makers to find opportunities in Europe. He added that Belarus welcomes and supports construction of the Eurasian Continental Bridge under the Belt and Road Initiative and is ready to serve as a hub for the entire Eurasian region. Belarus aspires to constantly improve its transportation and logistics connectivity as well as flow of information.

Game-Changing Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway

Text and photographs by Qin Bin

After four years of construction, an inaugural ceremony for the Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway kicked off the rail line's operation on October 5, 2016, in the Ethiopian capital.

The Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway links Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to the Port of Doraleh near Djibouti City, the capital of Djibouti. The first modern electric railway on the African continent, the Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway is also the first on the continent to adopt Chinese standards throughout the industrial chain, including technology, equipment, financing, construction and management.

The railway project marked the entrance into the overseas markets for Chinese machinery equipment and building materials valued at more than US$400 million. "It's not only a quality-of-life project tailored to African countries, but also a landmark achievement under the Belt and Road Initiative," says Meng Fengchao, chairman of the Board of Directors of China Railway Construction Corporation Limited (CRCC)—the contractor of the Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway. "The rail heralded China 'going abroad' with a complete industrial chain for the first time."

The design speed of the 750-kilometer Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway is set at 120 kilometers per hour. With a total budget of US$4 billion, the line has been called the "Tanzania-Zambia Railway of the new era." The Tanzania-Zambia Railway was a large joint project undertaken by the governments of Tanzania, Zambia and China in the 1970s that became a symbol of

October 3, 2016: A local passes the newly-built Dire Dawa section of the railway in Ethiopia.

September 28, 2016: CRCC's Chinese and Ethiopian employees check the facilities of a railway bridge along the Dire Dawa section of the Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway.

China-Africa friendship. The Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway is turning a new page in African rail history, and its construction created around 48,000 local jobs. From the moment of its inception, the railway has been quietly changing local residents' lives.

Local Benefits

Ethiopia and Djibouti were among the first African countries to welcome railways. However, by the late 1990s, the rails had become so worn that the speed of trains shuttling between the two countries dropped to a pathetic 15 kilometers per hour. Some dilapidated stations and stretches were abandoned.

Ethiopia's lack of direct access to oceans has hindered its economic development and its people's wellbeing. It has a strong agricultural sector, but relies heavily on imports and exports. Djibouti, occupying an area of only 23,000 square kilometers, has at times struggled to produce the resources it needs for economic development. However, the country lies on the coast of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, near the Suez Canal, one of the world's busiest shipping routes. It was clear that a fast, high-capacity rail through the two countries would be a game-changer.

As early as the beginning of the 21st Century, Ethiopia's Ministry of Transport signed a contract with the China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC), a subsidiary of CRCC, looking for solutions on railway planning and construction from the engineering enterprise. In a country like Ethiopia with underdeveloped infrastructure and a meager supply of power and construction materials, building an electric railway would be a tremendous challenge. The construction plan was only approved and implemented after several drafts.

Li Wuliang, now general manager of CCECC's Ethiopia office, served as project manager during construction of the railway's Mieso-Dawanle section in Ethiopia. He recalled his shock upon first arriving at Mieso: Local ethnic Somalis were herding sheep and cattle along the railway line, fully armed with automatic rifles, and very alert for strange faces.

"If we want rail construction to happen smoothly, the first thing we must do is to make friends with locals and respect their needs," said Li at the time. He quickly sought meetings with local chiefs and elders and assigned administrators to keep him informed of local concerns.

From the initial site investigation, construction of the Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway has merged with the local communities. When water interruptions occurred,

October 5, 2016: Chinese and local railway staff pose for a picture at the inaugural ceremony for the Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway, which was held in Addis Ababa. The railway went into operation after four years of construction.

Representatives from all walks of life in Ethiopia were invited to take the first trial drive with the Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway.

the project department organized water trucks to serve locals around the clock. In 2015, when Ethiopia was plagued by a great drought, the project department used its construction trucks to transport disaster-relief grain donated by the international community. Thanks to the project department, in just a few years, every major village along the railway was accessible by roads and had wells. Teaching materials were donated to elementary schools, and funds were raised for governmental AIDS prevention training. The project won over the locals, who could see big benefits long before the first train passed.

A 27-year-old Ethiopian employee of CCECC served as a team leader on the railway's Dire Dawa section. Before joining the company, he worked for the local office of an Indian enterprise as a steel bender for seven months. He came to CCECC to learn bridge construction, which not only enhanced his professional skills, but also doubled his salary. Shortly after joining CCECC, his child was born, and the gifts and congratulations from his new co-workers greatly moved him. He has now been working for the company for three years.

A 28-year-old Ethiopian woman worked for CCECC in a senior role. Having studied Chinese language and economics at Beijing-based Capital University of Economics and Business, she joined CCECC in 2013 as an interpreter. At that time, her monthly income already dwarfed that of most of her Ethiopian friends. When the railway was completed, she launched her own car rental business by purchasing six pickup trucks to provide to Chinese enterprises operating in Ethiopia. She also plans to import clothes and tires from China and sell them in Addis Ababa.

Development Opportunities

Using railway construction as a platform, Chinese enterprises have expanded their industrial chain to fields including ports, logistics and real estate. Goods are piled up along the road outside the storage yard of the Djibouti port. Trucks waiting to load or unload queue up for miles. Local businessmen are optimistic about the future. When the Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway opened, the transport time for cargo from Djibouti to Addis Ababa dropped from a week to about 10 hours, greatly enhancing cross-border logistics efficiency.

Near the old Djibouti port, a large multi-functional wharf is under construction. Its completion will double capacity and increase the volume of goods coming to and from Ethiopia significantly. The Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway alone is expected to add another two percent to Ethiopia's economic growth rate. In this sense, it is literally a road to prosperity.

The Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway's completion has enabled the Ethiopian government to see a path to industrialization and towards becoming one of Africa's manufacturing hubs. Its operation has already boosted international investors' confidence in potential industrial projects in Ethiopia. According to Lu Haiqiang, vice general manager of CCECC's Ethiopia office, Dire Dawa used to lack modern enterprises. However, since construction of the railway began in 2012, investors from Ethiopia, as well as other countries such as India and Turkey, quickly spotted the enormous business opportunities. A flurry of projects has been launched, including cement plants, automobile plants, and textile mills.

At the invitations of local governments, Chinese enterprises that had been working on the Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway broke ground on other projects such as industrial parks and property development, highlighting new operational modes for Chinese rail producers going abroad. "The Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway marks Ethiopia's arrival to industrialized society," says Zheng Jun, a manager with CCECC's Ethiopian office. "Djibouti will become a regional logistics center. Understanding the many opportunities that will emerge, Chinese enterprises will use railway construction as a platform to continue expanding industrial chains and exploring regional markets more deeply. If a railway is a thread, its pearls are ports, real estate, logistics, and tourism. In the future, railways will string together more stories of mutual benefits and win-win cooperation, and even more countries including Somalia, South Sudan and Eritrea will benefit from railways."

Empowering India

Text by Zhang Xue

Along the western bank of the Bay of Bengal, 25 kilometers south of Cuddalore in southern Tamil Nadu, India, is a coal-fired power plant built by SEPCOIII Electric Power Construction Corporation (hereinafter referred to as SEPCOIII) from China. Completed on schedule, the project has greatly alleviated power shortages in the states of Andhra and Telangana.

Since entering the Indian market in 2005, SEPCOIII has constructed six large power stations in five states, creating total installed capacity of more than 10,770 megawatts, about 5.7 percent of India's total market. With a contracted value of over US$7.3 billion, these projects have offered more than 40,000 jobs, making it the largest foreign power station contractor in the country.

Powerful Results

Duan Liandou presides over the company's Indian business and manages the coal-fired power plant in Cuddalore.

Duan first visited India in 2006 as project manager of a 1x135MW circulating-fluidized-bed power station in the city of Bikaner, Rajasthan of northwestern India. "I was in the middle of nowhere in a totally new culture," he recalls.

SEPCOIII has contracted India's largest foreign-funded power plant, Jhajjar Power Plant, which began operation in 2012.

Born near the sea, he had never experienced such dry, hot desert weather. "In 2002, our company took its first overseas order from Nigeria, followed by many other places around the world," Duan grins. "We arrived in the Indian market in 2005."

He soon accepted that the only way to secure work overseas was to adapt to the climate. He has worked in India for the past 11 years, in regions ranging from the desert hinterlands in the northwest to the Bay of Bengal in the northeast. The company now considers him an "India hand."

"We have reinforced our firm foothold here with better plans for cost performance and stronger executive force than our rivals," he asserts.

Duan was very proud when the Cuddalore project began operation. "Usually after the design is completed, we'll do a pilot run of the unit to test its reliability," he explains. "We'll shut it down and check for any technical faults. Fortunately, everything ran smoothly during the entire test, which impressed the Indian proprietor tremendously. He said, 'I've witnessed these tests many times, and they always have problems. I've never seen a plant pass on the first try.'"

Such a sharp performance record has won the company a sterling reputation abroad. SEPCOIII signed a contract to build the second phase of the same project, worth US$2.4 billion.

The Indian government amended its environmental protection law at the end of 2015, lowering its emission limit significantly and tightening the standards for power plants' emissions treatments, especially desulfuration, denitration, and dust-extraction.

In 2012, the company built India's Jhajjar Power Plant in compliance with all emissions standards. As the first coal-fired power generation project with desulfurizer in India, its nearly-zero-discharge value makes it the first environmentally-friendly power plant in the country. The project turned out to be a major milestone in overseas thermal power projects by Chinese companies and won numerous honors including a 2012 Outstanding Infrastructure Award, the top honor for infrastructure construction in India, the 2013 Lu Ban Award for Chinese Construction Projects ("Overseas Projects" Category) in 2013, the China Power Excellent Engineering Project Award, and China's National Excellent Welding Project.

The control room at Cuddalore Coal-fired Power Plant in southern Tamil Nadu, India.

Localization

Duan Liandou is only one of many Chinese engineers working overseas. His company's "going global" policy has fostered a wealth of talented personnel with international vision.

However, "going global" cannot succeed without localization, especially in terms of human resources. Not only can localization minimize the company's costs, it also creates plentiful job opportunities for locals.

"Our company's ratio of Indian versus Chinese employees has grown from the original 1:1 to 3:1," illustrates Duan. To help local employees get up to speed more quickly, the company has implemented the "master-apprentice" mode, a traditional Chinese method of training new employees. A Chinese "master" guides three local em-

March 13, 2013: Chinese and Indian employees at the construction site of the Mundra project in India.

Checking the equipment with blueprints.

ployees in a certain task until they are each able to perform it independently.

At construction sites, dual cafeterias frequently deliver both Chinese and Indian food with an eye on respecting local dietary habits and letting the local employees feel equally treated. But the two are far from segregated: "Many Indian employees frequently dine in the Chinese dining hall and vice versa," grins Duan.

"More and more Indian employees have gained a sense of belonging in our company," continues Duan. "We now have many Indian employees who volunteer to work on other projects in diverse locations. Moreover, we promote from within and offer plenty of opportunities to move up: Some Indian employees now work in our headquarters in Qingdao, Shandong Province. Others have been dispatched to the Middle East to help with our projects there."

Promising Prospects

As an emerging economy enjoying high-speed economic development, India has endured severe power shortages. Analysts predict that the Modi administration's "Make in India" program will lead to explosive growth of demand for electricity in the years to come. The possibility of unexpected power cuts severely damages foreign investors' faith in India-based production.

During his tenure as chief minister of Gujarat, Narendra Modi went to great lengths to ensure the state a 24-hour uninterrupted power supply, making it one of the few regions in the country to avert blackouts. His performance in this realm specifically inspired great expectations from the public when he assumed the role of prime minister. India's rapid development in recent years has resulted in high demand for energy.

"I'm going to explore the Indian market more deeply," Duan reveals. "The country has suffered a downturn in power construction over the past few years, ostensibly due to an underdeveloped power grid, incapable of handling current levels of production and still leaving many places without access to power. The country's inefficient delivery system is glaring."

Reports by India's *Economic Times* support Duan's opinion. Per the publication, more than 300 million Indians in rural areas survive without electricity. Surveys completed a year after Prime Minister Modi took office showed that more than 18,000 villages had no access to power.

As estimated by India's Planning Commission, by 2031, India will need three to four times its current supply of energy, and five to six times more if its annual economic growth stays at 8 percent.

In recent years, guided by the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, greater numbers of Chinese enterprises have explored overseas business opportunities, so SEPCOIII can't rest on its laurels. "We just signed a contract to build the second phase of the Cuddalore project," Duan beams. "Along with construction, we have invested in several additional projects in the hope of staying involved in the post-completion operation and administration of power stations to expand our company's business scope."

During his visit to Shanghai on May 16, 2015, Indian Prime Minister Modi held a roundtable meeting with 25 entrepreneurs from Chinese energy companies including TBEA Co., Ltd., Harbin Electric Corporation, Dongfang Electric, Hareon Solar and Trina Solar Limited, outlining his vision for future energy-sector cooperation between China and India.

Gwadar: Fishing a New Future

Text by Hu Zhoumeng

For years, Gwadar locals living in the southwestern tip of Balochistan, Pakistan, made a living fishing on the Arabian Sea, which is now one of the world's busiest shipping routes. Waves from massive cargo ships pushed their small wooden boats back to the beaches, where thatched huts along the coast blended into the barren desert background.

Gwadar is home to a natural deep and warm-water harbor near main shipping lanes, with an anchor-shaped peninsula dispersing the waves. Seizing the city's potential to become a modern metropolis with a major seaport has been a Pakistani dream since the 1960s, but every plan stalled until a construction team from the China Communications Construction Company Ltd. (CCCC) arrived in 2002.

Starting from Scratch

Stricken by poverty and unrest, the 20,000 residents of Gwadar were mostly subsisting on meager incomes from fishing and constructing hand-made boats. Their electricity, delivered from miles away, was rarely stable, and their only source of fresh water, the Akara Kaur dam, frequently failed to meet demand. Lack of an industrial base and supporting infrastructure presented major challenges to the CCCC, despite its status as a veteran infrastructure constructor at over 200 ports in 95 countries.

"I couldn't even find a nail there," remarks Sun Ziyu, vice president of the CCCC. "We simply started from scratch." In the very beginning, cargo carriers arriving with construction materials had to anchor far from the undeveloped harbor and be unloaded with local fishing boats. Sun likened it to 'ants moving their house.'

Despite the less-than-ideal conditions, the port took shape within three years due to unremitting efforts by both Chinese and Pakistani construction workers, whose daily diet was mostly potatoes and onions. Construction cranes popped up one after another, forklifts passed fresh warehouses in a well-paved stockyard and work boats

docked near the shore.

When the first phase of the Gwadar port project was completed in 2005, the coastline of its main dock and three multi-functional berths extended more than 600 meters. Along with sea water desalinators and power generators, the port was also equipped with supporting facilities for water supply and drainage, firefighting and pollution prevention.

A group of Chinese and Pakistani workers with the China Communications Construction Company celebrates Pakistan's Independence Day. courtesy of the CCCC

An aerial view of the Gwadar port. With a natural deep and warm-water harbor near main shipping lanes, the coastline of its main dock and three multi-functional berths extend more than 600 meters. courtesy of the CCCC

Inspired Trade Hub

Every five-rupee Pakistani banknote now features a portrait of Mohammad Ali Jinnah, founder of the country, on one side, and a horizontal view of the Gwadar port on the other. Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif envisions an international port city that drives foreign trade and enables the country to better engage with the global economy.

In 2005, Singapore's PSA International began managing Gwadar Port, but operations failed to live up to local authorities' expectations. The China Overseas Ports Holding Company (COPHC) took over management in 2013. After four years, the port has been revived with refurbished office buildings, stockyards of around 35 acres and heavily-used port facilities. Gwadar can now accommodate two 50,000-ton container ships simultaneously.

The Pakistani government is also cooperating with COPHC to develop a 2,281-acre free trade zone in Gwadar. Peripheral areas are taking on new looks as industrial parks are under construction. Within the next three years, a power plant with 300 MW capacity and more seawater desalinators are scheduled to be completed.

Gwadar's best hotel, the Pearl Continental, is more frequently filled with businessmen from around the world. Environmental protection is being highly prioritized during the development of the Gwadar free trade zone. Commerce and trade companies are preferred, while industrial manufacturers must comply with strict limitations. Domestic companies, such as Jolta Tech, an electric bike producer, and Midtrans, a cooking oil maker, have decided to open shops there. The largest commercial banks in the country, Habib Bank

May 11, 2015: A celebration is held for the commencement of containerized shipments at the Gwadar port. by Huang Zongzhi/Xinhua

Limited and United Bank Limited, as well as the insurance giant EFU General Insurance Ltd., are also expected to move in.

The Gwadar port, constructed as part of the US$46-billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), is expected to connect to landlocked Central Asian countries and western China through highways and rails. In late 2016, a team of over 60 freight trucks arrived after a 15-day trip of over 3,000 kilometers from Kashgar in China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. The first ever trip along the land route between the two cities testified to a reduction in cost and time for transportation compared to sea routes. The goods were then shipped to the Middle East and Africa.

The Gwadar port is the third largest of its kind in Pakistan—it has become a crucial logistics conduit as the city is becoming a trade center. Local authorities also hope to develop tourist attractions, recreational spaces and high-end real estate. Some have looked to China's southern trade hub Shenzhen, only a fishing village just three decades ago, as a model, and others to Dubai.

Local Choice

"Most workers hired for the first phase of the Gwadar port construction were local," notes Peng Dapeng, vice president of the CCCC International, a company with over 2,000 employees in Pakistan.

Local employees worked well with their Chinese colleagues, and they often played soccer together. Religious beliefs were highly respected. The CCCC offered a flexible work schedule during the month of Ramadan, when Muslims don't eat or drink during daytime. To help with the lack of educational facilities, the company also donated computers and printers to schools.

"We placed considerable value on corporate social responsibility," says Peng. "We were devoted to helping the local people."

Cranes stand at the shore of the Gwadar port. The port can now accommodate two 50,000-ton container ships simultaneously. courtesy of the CCCC

Three quarters of Gwadar's 85,000 residents are employed in the fishing industry. However, they lack the necessary refrigeration facilities to meet export standards.

To ensure a booming fishing business better benefits locals, refrigerated boats and operational training are being offered to local fishermen, says Hu Yaozong, a senior manager working on the development of the Gwadar free trade zone.

Illiteracy in Gwadar remains as high as 75 percent, which impedes local workers from getting better jobs requiring more skills. Hu adds that a professional training center is being set up to enable more local people to seize new job opportunities emerging along with Gwadar's development. Many have already been hired by Chinese companies to contribute to projects revitalizing their hometown.

January 19, 2017, Zhejiang Province: A bronze statue highlighting acupuncture, with a height of 172.2 centimeters and a weight of 210 kilograms, attracts many citizens to take a look at the rich and profound TCM culture.

TCM Around the World

Text by Zhang Jinwen

On January 18, 2017, Chinese President Xi Jinping visited the World Health Organization (WHO) and met with Director-General Margaret Chan. President Xi brought with him a statue highlighting acupuncture as a gift to the WHO. As one of the most widely used forms of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), acupuncture is known throughout the world.

The heyday of TCM may just be arriving, as many of its treatment techniques, including acupuncture and massage, are being widely embraced by the world. TCM is finally going global.

Integrating with International Systems

According to the *White Paper on Traditional Chinese Medicines* released by the Information Office of the State Council of China in December 2016, TCM has spread to 183 countries and regions. Based on WHO statistics, 103 member countries have recognized the effectiveness of acupuncture in treating a variety of ailments. TCM has gradually merged into the international medicine system and is an official treatment in Russia, Cuba, Vietnam and the United Arab Emirates, among other countries.

In China, TCM is more popular in less developed areas, while abroad, it tends to get more exposure in more developed areas, according to Li Zhenji, vice president and co-founder of the World Federation of Chinese Medicine Societies and former deputy director of the State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine (SATCM).

"TCM's development in Europe, the U.S.

and Australia has been much stronger than that in South Africa and South American countries," he explained. TCM clinics in Britain, France and Canada number about 3,000 each, and Australia has about 4,000. Europe is home to 209 TCM educational institutions, accounting for a third of the world's total.

Among the diverse forms of TCM, acupuncture is the most popular in Europe. According to *La Stampa*, a daily Italian newspaper, in 1984 many Italian hospitals began adding TCM clinics, and a total of 6 million Italians have received TCM treatment. Acupuncture schools also began opening throughout Italy and developing systematic curriculum standards. It has been reported that in the seven acupuncture schools accredited by the Italian Association of Acupuncture-Moxibustion and TCM (AIAM), students can only receive vocational qualifications by completing 400 hours of theoretical study, 100 hours of interning and 50 hours of clinical practice.

Hurdles to Cross

TCM's global mission has not been all smooth sailing. Western medicine is still dominant worldwide, and TCM only provides complementary treatment options. The first issue is big differences in cultural backgrounds and theoretical systems. Today, the term "Traditional Chinese Medicine" is widely recognized by the international scientific community. But according to Western medical theory, "medicine" should only be used to treat illness. Given the difference in philosophy, many Chinese pharmaceutical companies are frustrated when attempting to promote preventative TCM in foreign countries.

Second, public opinion about TCM also hinders its popularity abroad. Because TCM treatment is usually performed by individual clinics overseas, few international research programs have monitored TCM's performance or provided qualified research data, so TCM is often considered pseudo-science abroad, remarked Liu Baoyan, vice-president of the Chinese Academy of TCM and president of the World Federation of Acupuncture-Moxibustion Societies and the China Association for Acupuncture and Moxibustion.

After years of research, Europe's medical community admits that acupuncture avoids creating drug resistance and lacks the side effects of Western medicine, but many doctors remain quite cautious about TCM treatment. Since the EU introduced "traditional herbal registration program instructions," most TCM products have been sold as health products or food additives because they were not given legal identity as drugs. So, standardization is another problem hurting TCM's global prospects.

Bert Van Duane, chief scientist at Figueras Technology Co., Ltd., spends many of his days standardizing and optimizing the process of massive production of ginseng, under the assumption that establishing solid and uniform TCM production standards to effectively monitor quality will overcome the main bottleneck hindering TCM's acceptance by the European market. The efforts could be made in setting standards for seed selection and industrial production as well as effectively evaluating those standards.

"Belt and Road" Opportunities

Before 2015, the process of internationalizing TCM was akin to crossing the river by feeling the stones, due to a lack of central planning and deployment. However, since the Belt and Road Initiative was proposed and implemented, it has proved a new bridge to TCM opportunities.

On March 28, 2015, the Chinese government issued the *Vision and Actions on Jointly Building the Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road*. The action plan proposed expanding cooperation on traditional medicine, signifying TCM's inclusion in national planning and position as a potential beneficiary of joint development.

TCM's proliferation in countries and regions along the Belt and Road continues to grow. According to *Chinese News of Traditional Chinese Medicine*, China exported US$37.7 billion worth of TCM in 2015. And most countries and regions that acknowledge TCM as part of mainstream medicine are found along the Belt and Road, where demand for TCM has signaled tremendous development potential.

Meanwhile, TCM-related cooperation between overseas educational and medical organizations has also increased heavily. In 2015, the SATCM established 10 TCM centers in the U.S., France, Malaysia and other places thanks to governmental support from those countries. Many of them are now operating smoothly and attracting many local patients, said Wang Guoqiang, director of the SATCM.

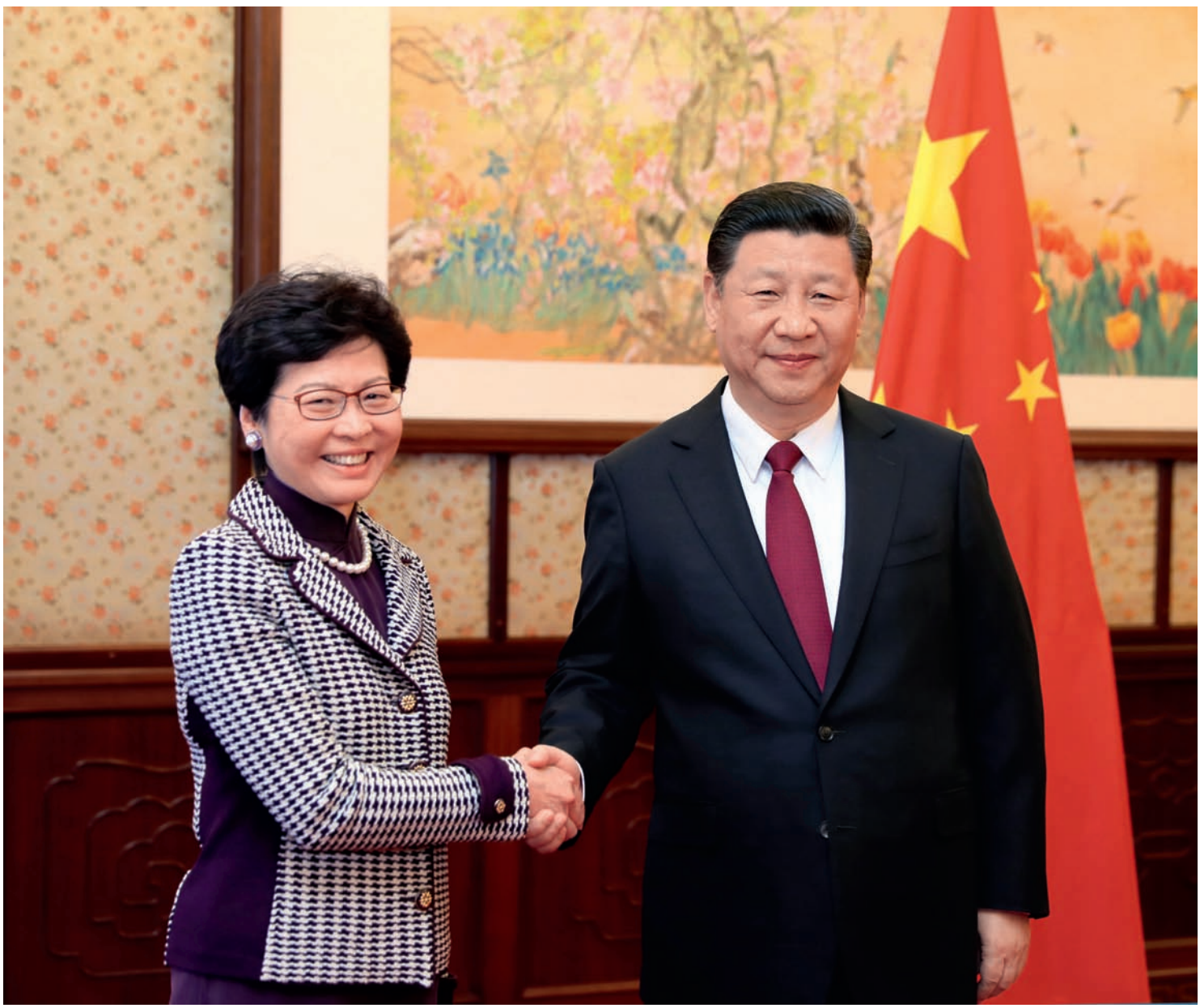
In 2017, TCM benefited from another guiding document on investment for its internationalization. On January 16, the SATCM and the National Development and Reform Commission jointly issued the *Development Plan of Traditional Chinese Medicine in the "Belt and Road Initiative" (2016-2020)*. According to the plan, a new pattern for comprehensive cooperation will form throughout Belt and Road countries and regions by 2020. Wang added that the SATCM has been actively promoting and implementing the plan.

"Thanks to intergovernmental cooperation, we can provide greater support for domestic and foreign TCM organizations and academic institutions at all levels to promote a greater variety of exchange activities," Wang announced. "By helping non-governmental organizations go abroad, we hope to further promote intergovernmental cooperation, remove barriers impeding TCM's internationalization and help TCM spread far and wide."

Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor:

Building a Better Hong Kong

Text by Ru Yuan



April 11, 2017: Chinese President Xi Jinping (right) meets with Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor, the newly-appointed chief executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, in Beijing. by Ju Peng/Xinhua

On March 26, Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor was elected Hong Kong's leader, topping off a 36-year government career with the honor of becoming the first female chief executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. On July 1, the former chief secretary for administration will be sworn in as head of the international financial and shipping hub for the coming five years.

Lam won 777 votes from 1,194 election committee members, beating rivals John Tsang Chun-wah, a former Hong Kong financial secretary who took 365 votes, and Woo Kwok-hing, a retired high court judge who received 21 votes. "I shall do my utmost to uphold 'one country, two systems' and guard our core values," Lam said at a press conference after winning the election. "Through care, listening and action, I will build a better Hong Kong."

March 26, 2017: Lam (center) poses as she declares her victory in the Hong Kong chief executive election, vowing to lead Hong Kong forward in solidarity. IC

Difficult Early Life

Lam was born in 1957 into a poverty-stricken family in Wan Chai, Hong Kong, one of the city's notorious areas of overcrowded tenement buildings. The fourth of the five children in the family, Lam was born in the Year of Rooster. The Chinese believe that people born in this year grow up wise, passionate about the job at hand and full of integrity—virtues ideal for leadership. But she would have to practice the virtue of patience for many years. As a child, Lam showed great enthusiasm for learning from a very young age.

Lam and her husband Lam Siu-por in the 1980s.

Lam's father was a migrant from Shanghai who ran a small business, and her mother was a housewife. Neither had received much education. However, they proved wise and capable parents, especially her mother, who noticed her daughter's passion for reading and studying, and did whatever she could to support her. "My mother is my idol," Lam once declared in an interview. "To help me receive a better education, she devoted all of her resources into getting me admitted to a prestigious primary school."

She studied at a renowned Catholic girls' school in her neighborhood, where she finished both primary and secondary education. She consistently ranked among the top students at the school, and produced the best score on almost every final annual exam. "Once I only got the fourth-best score on the final exam, which got me so frustrated that I sobbed about it after arriving home," Lam recalled. "But even that experience taught me a lesson: You cannot always be the best, and sometimes, you shouldn't care so much about losing face."

After graduation, Lam was admitted to the University of Hong Kong, where she chose to study social work. After her first year at the university, she switched majors to sociology "to better understand society and better participate in social activities." In 1980, Lam graduated with a bachelor 's degree in social sciences and joined Hong Kong Administrative Services the same year, where she began a nearly four-decade career in government.

A Fighter

In 1982, Lam went to England for a one-year course in development studies at Cambridge University, sponsored by the Hong Kong government. Upon returning home, she was gradually promoted through various governmental departments including health, security and finance, and social welfare.

Lam became known as Hong Kong's "Iron Lady" and as a tough fighter who always got her way. Such qualities are exemplified by her various projects. When the SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) epidemic struck the city in 2003, Lam and three other civil servants launched the We Care Fund to raise money to educate children who had lost parents to the disease. Within three months, she had raised about 80 million Hong Kong dollars. Across the next decade, many children affected by the epidemic graduated from college. To this day, the committee overseeing the We Care Fund still meets regularly, and Lam hardly misses a meeting.

The compassionate and grassroots official has a natural affinity for the underprivileged. And Lam always stresses that actions speak louder than words. She immersed herself in practical work instead of networking with perceived bigwigs, which caused some to perceive her as "cold." "She never made empty promises," one colleague declared. "But she will go out of her way to help when problems are brought to her." Once, an advocate for disabled people suggested to her that the government fund a breathing apparatus for the severely disabled. Lam replied with real action only three weeks later. "Thanks to your suggestions, we have launched new projects to address your concerns," she wrote in an email to the advocate.

The fighter has handled many tough cases: During her days in the Social Welfare Department, Lam helped overcome Hong Kong's severe fiscal deficits. In the Development Bureau she was met with demonstrations when she took action against unauthorized construction in the New Territories. As chief secretary for administration, she took the lead in launching the five-step process for Hong Kong's constitutional development.

September 22, 2014: Lam (left), then Hong Kong's chief secretary for administration, gives a souvenir to Shan Jixiang, curator of the Beijing-based Palace Museum, at the opening ceremony of the Cultural and Artistic Talents Summit in Hong Kong. by Li Peng/Xinhua

"Heal the Divide"

In the post-war era, Asia had few free markets other than Japan and Hong Kong. The lack of economic openness in neighboring areas gave Hong Kong tremendous advantages. From the 1950s to the 1990s, the city's economy developed at amazing speed and its residents glowed with pride. However, in the modern era, an increasing number of emerging Asian markets has gradually stripped Hong Kong of its advantages as a free port, and the gap between the rich and the poor has widened. Against this backdrop, Lam is expected to face many challenges during her five-year term, and needs to "heal the divide," the goal towards which she pledged to work in her post-election victory speech.

To succeed, Lam will need a lot more of the pragmatism she exhibited during her campaign. She emphasized the importance of a stable educational environment for young people and the necessity of understanding the needs of teachers, parents and students. She hopes to engage more skilled people to restore a more stable and talent-oriented environment in Hong Kong. She has noted that many low-to-middle-income Hong Kong residents spend their life savings renting or buying a small apartment, and called for the construction of more units affordable for first-time home buyers.

But pragmatism alone will not deliver every promise. "Healing the divide" could take years of efforts. So far, Lam has shown the will and capabilities to excel in the role. "Lam has shown goodwill to all of Hong Kong society, including opposition parties, since her election victory," opined Tian Feilong, a legal expert and associate professor at Beijing University of Aeronau-

August 27, 2016: Lam, then Hong Kong's chief secretary for administration, and Liu Peng, then director of the General Administration of Sport of China, greet people as the Chinese mainland delegation for the Rio 2016 Olympics arrives in Hong Kong for a three-day visit. IC

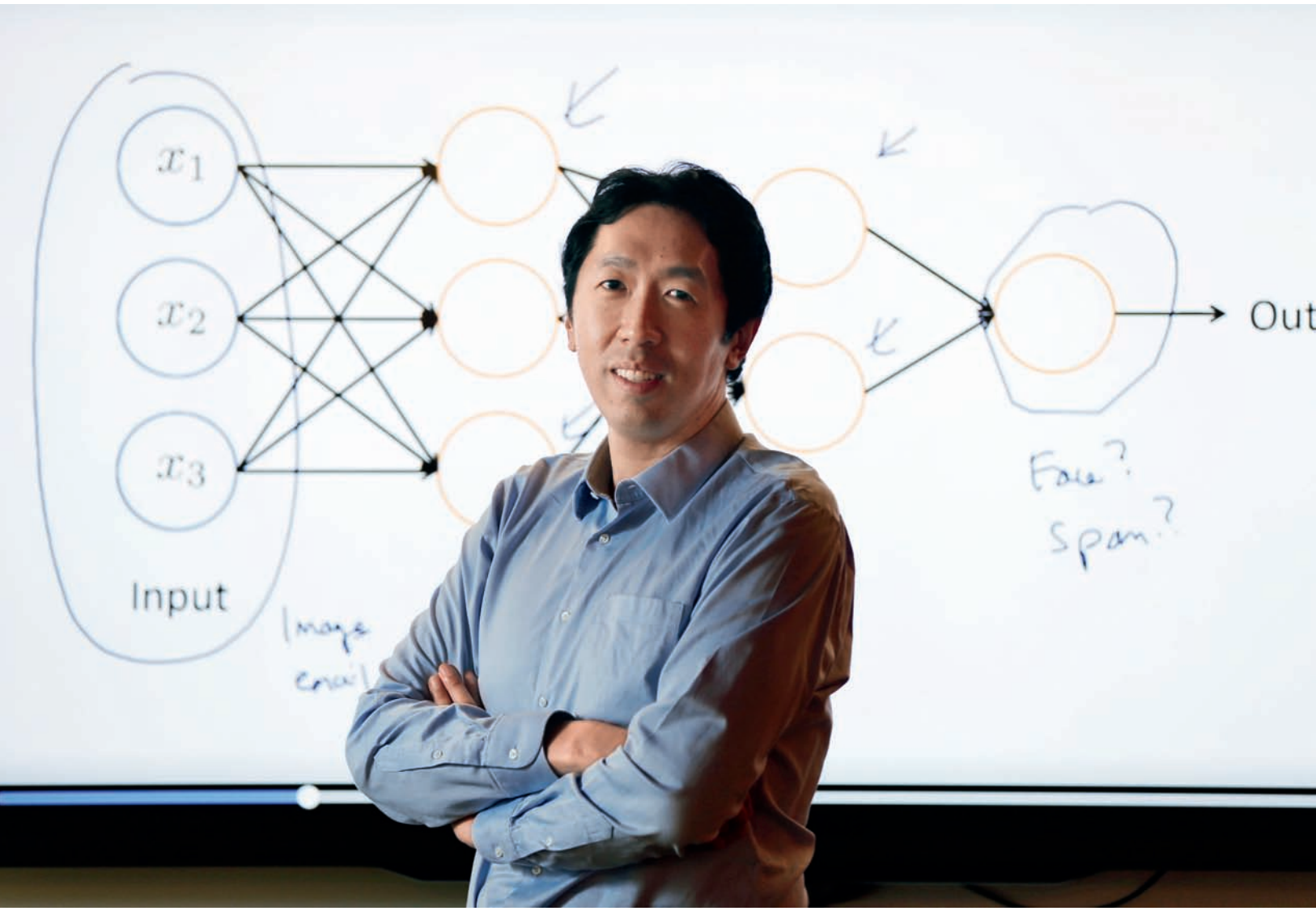
tics & Astronautics in an interview. "It is clear that she is looking for a new management style through which the government becomes more inclusive and addresses the concerns of Hong Kong's young people." Lam's good communication skills and charisma will likely aid reconstruction of Hong Kong society—and some posit her gender may play a positive role.

"In the next five years, there is plenty of work ahead and problems that will not be easy to solve," Lam admitted in her speech. "My heart is the same as it has always been, except more humbled. I am firmly optimistic about the road ahead." She is well-prepared to hold Hong Kong's torch.

February 4, 2017: Lam takes a selfie with members of the Hong Kong Squash Team. IC

Andrew Ng: Lighting Up AI

Text by Ru Yi



Andrew Ng, one of the world's leading AI thinkers, poses for a portrait in front of a diagram he drew on "deep learning." by Nhat V. Meyer/Bay Area News Group/TNS/IC

In late March, Andrew Ng, a renowned Chinese-American artificial intelligence (AI) expert, announced his resignation as chief scientist at Baidu, a Chinese search engine giant and one of the country's largest internet companies.

"After Baidu, I am excited to continue working to make AI transform our society and make life better for everyone," Ng wrote on his blog, announcing his departure after three years with Baidu. Although Ng hasn't announced his next job, his services are in high demand, as he is considered one of the world's leading thinkers on AI.

Building AI Top-to-Bottom

Ng joined Baidu in 2014, when the company was already investing heavily in teaching computers to see and hear. Realizing the huge opportunity for machine intelligence applications in China, the scientist quickly set up an AI-first strategy for the company, with an eye on the future. Understandably, China is home to some of the most visited websites in the world, including Baidu, Taobao, and Weibo, to name just a few. Thus, when any of these enterprises design a new application, they have a keen interest in optimizing access to available consumers.

During his three-year stint at Baidu, Ng oversaw the creation of the company's AI research team and led a force of some 1,300 people in both Beijing and Silicon Valley. That included the 300-member Baidu Research Team, which brought together top global research talent to work on various AI projects such as image and speech recognition, high performance computing, natural language processing and deep learning, in four different labs.

Under Ng, Baidu researchers launched a number of AI projects to improve the company's existing operations including food delivery, search, security, and voice recognition, and created new lines of expansion for the business in the fields of automated driving and Baidu's AI operating system DuerOS. However, the most promising product remains an AI robot which has attracted enormous attention and is expected to eventually influence the lives of millions of ordinary people.

Baidu's AI robot, which was launched a few years ago, attracted enormous public attention in China in late 2016. That year, the popular television show *Super Brain in China* promoted a battle between Baidu-developed AI robots and human competitors. The challenge, featuring facial and voice recognition technologies, invited gifted individuals who had excelled on the show's previous seasons to represent human beings. For example, Wang Yuheng possesses incredible abilities in image identification. During one contest, he picked up the correct glass of water from 520 glasses that looked almost identical. Wang once also used this gift to help police find a hit-and-run suspect from grainy surveillance images.

The results of the duel were interesting. Although the robot beat its human rivals in image recognition, it lost in voice recognition. "Humans have evolved for thousands of years to perform image and voice recognition," notes Ng. "But computers have just learned to do it, and need to receive ample data to succeed. *Super Brain in China* features so many powerful and excellent participants that I was nervous to bring even the most powerful AI to compete against them."

Promising AI Development

Ng also set his sights on the family robot field. In January 2017, Baidu launched "Little Fish," a voice-controlled family robot akin to Amazon's Echo or Google Home. In contrast with the competing "faceless" devices which rely on people asking for information and controlling devices by speaking, "Little Fish" features a touch-screen atop its orb-shaped base. A camera tracks faces, and the screen swivels to continue facing a speaker. "For a person, speaking is the fastest way to communicate with a computer," says Ng. "However, for a machine, a screen is the quickest way to communicate with a person."

August 2016: Andrew Ng (second from left) attends the launch event for Baidu Intelligence Marketing Lab in Beijing, with "Beyond Imagination" as its theme. courtesy of *Science China*

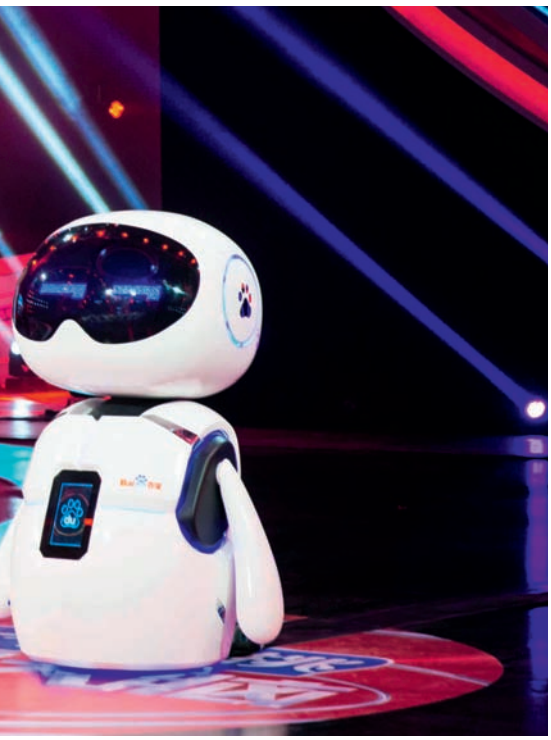
March 9, 2017: A visitor interacts with a refrigerator robot with artificial intelligence during the Appliance & Electronics World Expo 2017 in Shanghai. IC

January 7, 2017: Andrew Ng (left) takes a Baidu-developed AI robot to participate in the popular television show *Super Brain in China*, for a battle between AI robots and human competitors. IC

In recent years, AI has witnessed rapid development in China. According to China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, the industry's market size in China measured about US$3.5 billion in 2016 and will reach US$5.5 billion by 2018. CFP

Ng predicted long ago that 2017 would be the year of conversational computing, and that a "clear path to it changing everything" would emerge. Many scientists and countries have already been involved in AI for a long time. In 2011, when Ng was serving as founder of the Google Brain project, he introduced the Deep Learning project and began investing heavy resources into this field. Almost at the same time, many other big tech companies, including Microsoft and Qualcomm, were either seeking computer scientists with this specific expertise or building labs for that purpose. Japanese engineers were constructing artificial neural nets to control robots, and scientists from South Africa were working with their peers from the EU to create a human "brain" inside a supercomputer using data from numerous experiments.

A tech war has broken out between enterprises and even countries to shape the next



April 9, 2017: Spectators take a picture of an AI robot at the Fifth China Information Technology Expo in Shenzhen. CFP

generation of AI products. In May 2016, the Chinese government launched a three-year plan to develop AI. According to China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, the industry's market size in China measured about US$3.5 billion in 2016 and will reach US$5.5 billion by 2018.

Ng tracks and influences global AI trends. He believes that if AI can achieve a level of storing and recalling information that resembles human memory—which certainly requires a sophisticated level of facial and voice identification—it can greatly enhance people's lives. "We haven't pinpointed the right algorithms yet," he said during an interview. "It's going to take decades, and it's not an easy task, but there's hope."

Born to AI

Ng was born in Britain in 1976 to parents from Hong Kong. When he was one year old, the family moved back to Hong Kong, before relocating to Singapore when the boy was seven. Ng's childhood interest in AI was inspired by his father. The elder Ng worked as a doctor and performed "small experiments" with AI during his spare time. His father collected many books on AI, and even tested an automated diagnosis with a relatively primitive self-developed machine. As a child, the younger Ng began to dream of building machines that could think like people.

At 17, Ng went to study in the United States and received a bachelor's degree in computer science from Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh in 1997, before obtaining a master's degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1998. After receiving his Ph.D. from the University of California in 2002, he started working at Stanford University as a scientist. Before arriving at Baidu, Ng completed pioneering work in machine learning as an associate professor at Stanford, where he launched a program that offered Stanford courses online for free in 2008. This project led to the founding of online education platform Coursera in 2012. He was also the founding leader of the Google Brain project, which developed one of the largest deep learning systems on earth using the company's vast computational resources.

As a scientist, Ng believes AI can free people from the tedium of repetitive work and give humans more time to be engaged in "more meaningful doings." Just as electricity transformed and birthed so many industries a century ago, Ng believes that AI will similarly change nearly every modern industry and enrich lives. "I am more excited than ever about where AI can take us," he beams.

Aerial

Text by Zi Mei

Photographs courtesy of the *Aerial China* Crew

The documentary *Aerial China*, which shows China from a bird's-eye perspective, was aired on CCTV-9 in January 2017. Each episode features some of the most representative and beautiful

China

landscapes in the country. The series consists of a total of 34 episodes, each 50 minutes long, and covers all of China's 23 provinces, five autonomous regions, four municipalities and two special administrative regions.

The first six episodes of *Aerial China* showcase Shanghai, Xinjiang, Heilongjiang, Jiangxi, Shaanxi and Hainan. These photos show some of the sites in the documentary.

The documentary was an immediate hit. Viewers exclaimed that the beauty was tear-jerking. CSM Media Research data shows that when *Aerial China* was on the air, CCTV-9's primetime ratings doubled. Even the notoriously hard-to-please reviewers on the Chinese website Douban scored it a 9.4 out of 10.

Aerial China is about love, according to director Yu Le. "It is a strong affection for the land on which we live. It is an overview of the world in which we live. This affection goes beyond time and space," he explains.

Journey in the Sky

"Previously, my friends thought that the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region only had prairies, yurts, and donkeys, and now they know they were wrong."

"I had to fight back my tears while watching. The richness and beauty of our motherland are perfectly presented in a breathtaking way."

Even Yu was a little surprised by many of the comments. The 33-year-old has been working as a director for 13 years and didn't expect the younger generation to empathize with many details of the documentary. Yu likes that without subtitles, *Aerial China* could still stand as a scenic film.

"Generally, the longest time anyone is willing to watch a purely scenic film is three to five minutes," Yu says. "So how did we keep people's attention for the full 50-minute stretch or even longer? It's because the entire documentary was designed around transmitting multiple sets of information. When people watch the documentary, their brains have to keep working. The information they learn is much more than images depicted on screen."

Yu explains that much of this additional information is transmitted through the narrator, so he placed great focus on the voiceover. "Who is our target audience?" he asked. "We wanted even seven-year-old children and the elderly to understand and remember the content without trouble. That was our aim." Yu points out that to optimally communicate with the audience, the voice should lead viewers deeper into the visual journey rather than simply reading captions. From the first to the final draft, the script for the first season of *Aerial China* was revised at least 10 times. Producers were aged between 20 and 40. Although the final narration script of each episode consists of about 6,000 to 7,000 words, early drafts contained as many as 150,000 words.

Music is another way to transmit information. Yu agreed with the music producer that it should demonstrate compassion for this land. "And love is just an overall theme; music is needed to help the air travel routes be coherent."

Tekes County in Ili, Xinjiang, shot from a helicopter.

A Siberian tiger filmed in Heilongjiang by an unmanned aerial vehicle.

Crop-drying in Jiangxi. As the villagers live in jagged mountains without many flat surfaces, they lay out crops to dry on windowsills and roofs.

An overpass resembling a Chinese knot in Heilongjiang.

A marvelous spectacle where the clear Jinghe River and the muddy Weihe River meet in Shaanxi.

Soprano singers added a soft touch to the background music. Producers wrote high-pitched music, and the female voices only appear at the end of each episode or very briefly elsewhere. Yu was pleasantly surprised by this design: "The sopranos add a finishing touch by expressing loneliness and joy in the sky."

"Unprecedented View of China"

When the shooting of *Aerial China* first began, Yu's idea was to "demonstrate an unprecedented view of China." In his mind, aerial photography breaks through previous shooting limitations. "It is a different view from the air. Different heights can result in different emotions."

It took nearly a year to shoot the first six places, including Shanghai, Xinjiang, Heilongjiang, Jiangxi, Shaanxi and Hainan. The crew dispatched 16 manned helicopters and 57 unmanned aerial vehicles, all equipped with the world's most advanced 4K Ultra HD cameras. In total, they traveled 150,000 kilometers, a length equal to a journey around the earth's equator four times.

"Helicopters can shoot from a good variety of heights and angles," Yu reveals. "They can hover in the air and adjust speed when needed. Drones are more flexible, capture more vivid details and can fly into more dangerous environments." Subjects for which the drones were deployed include coconut collectors from the Li ethnic group in Areca Valley, Hainan Province's Baoting Li and Miao Autonomous County, who can "climb faster than monkeys", and the only existing brown giant panda, named "Qizai," in Shaanxi Foping National Nature Reserve in the Qin Mountains. The magnificent mountains and rivers of Xinjiang were filmed across all four seasons using helicopters.

"Like most viewers, I have limited knowledge about each province," Yu admits. "Especially after we conducted investigation and filming, we realized that we do not know the land of China as well as we thought. Only when I travel the land on foot do I really feel its existence."

Some critics argued that the documentary did not convey deeper philosophies or values. Yu retorted by stating, "My job was not to teach a class on geography or philosophy. To be honest, I just want to express my love for the land with it."

Some viewers pointed out that the documentary highlights only the beautiful side of China, and argued that the less-than-stunning side also needs to get exposure. Yu explains: "We presented one side of China with the hope of exposing truth, goodness and the beauty of human nature, so that people reflect on why beautiful things get destroyed and develop their own values. This is my purpose in filming this documentary."

Glacial Glory

Text by Yin Xing

On April 19, 2017, the Swedish Society of Anthropology and Geography (SSAG) awarded the 2017 Vega Medal to Yao Tandong for his contributions to research on glaciers and the environment on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. Yao serves as director of the Institute of Tibetan Plateau Research and an academician with the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS). He is the first Asian scientist to win the award.

Founded in 1881, the Vega Medal first focused on research in the Arctic, and was expanded to the Antarctic before gradually covering more diverse fields of earth science. Yao's research concentrated on the "third pole," an area spanning over 5 million square kilometers centered on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau at an average altitude of 4,000 meters.

Iceman

In 1974, Yao was admitted to the Department of Glaciers and Frozen Tundra at Lanzhou University. The glaciers in the textbook looked cold and remote, so Yao thought glaciered areas might be barren and deserted.

A field trip, however, helped Yao fall in love with glaciers at first sight. "In 1975, we did field work at the source of the Yangtze River," recalls Yao. "It was summer, and the grass was lush green under the blue sky over the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. When I climbed onto the main peak of the Qilian Mountains, I was shocked by the grand glacier. At that very moment, I knew the mysterious and great glacier would consume my research for the rest of my life. I was very excited."

Yao Tandong is awarded the 2017 Vega Medal.

Four decades have passed, but 63-year-old Yao Tandong's enthusiasm for glaciers has hardly waned. Yao still visits the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau seven or eight times a year. The places he frequents are mostly located in altitudes ranging from 5,000 to 7,000 meters, featuring temperatures as low as 30 to 40 degrees Celsius below zero, less than a third of normal oxygen levels, strong ultraviolet rays and risks including storms, ice cracks and snow slides.

Most would balk at such situations, but Yao hardly sweats. "Every job has its hardship," he shrugs. "Chemists do dangerous lab experiments. Mathematicians easily get stuck and bored. The most important thing is that you maintain your passion and interest. I love the plateau and glacier research, so nothing can stop my work. I would feel incomplete without visiting the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau several times a year."

Yao even jokes that trips to the plateau keep him looking so young. "That environment really stimulates the vitality of my cells."

Yao's optimism is further fueled by seeing the conditions change over the years. "Things actually look better now," he notes. "When I was an intern, it took 20 days to get from Lanzhou to Tibet, and a month if setting out from Beijing. But now I can get to Lhasa in only four and a half hours by plane from Beijing. Our working efficiency has improved by leaps and bounds."

Hi-Fi Ice

Sometimes referred to as "Asia's Water Tower" for good reason, the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau is home to the origins of many rivers, feeding a dozen nations and more than 200 million people, so changes in its conditions affect many. "If the plateau sneezes, faraway places get a cold," Yao explains. And the plateau is highly sensitive to environmental changes.

Yao Tandong checks the tag of an ice core sample.

Yao Tandong (middle) shows his students how to check and analyze an ice core sample.

Yao Tandong, head of the research team, climbs up a mountain.

Yao Tandong (front row, second from left) poses for a picture with his colleagues from China and Nepal.

"The temperature on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau has risen by 1.7 degrees Celsius over the past century due to climate change, two times higher than that on plains," Yao explains. "Human activity greatly affects the ecology of the plateau. No smog particles had been found in the ice cores from the glaciers there until the 1950s, when India started to develop industry and monsoons from the southeast brought the particles to the plateau."

The ice core is the innermost part of the glaciers, making it ideal to most accurately show the evolution of the environment on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. Common consensus is that the best way to study the climate history of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau is to collect ice core samples. Because ice cores are deposited layer by layer, the deepest ones can date back to hundreds of thousands of years. "We call ice cores the 'Hi-Fi' evidence," Yao continues. "Meteorological data only goes back a century, but ice cores can provide data from thousands of years ago." The bulk of Yao's work focuses on studying ice core samples.

"After extensive study and on-site experience, we first pick a couple of research sites from which to extract ice core samples," says Yao. "Then we drill. At first, we do a trial, and if it's successful, we begin the formal drill. Because everything must be done in summer, it takes two to three years to get a single sample."

The procedure is not only lengthy,

Yao Tandong talks to his foreign colleagues about Guliya Glacier.

Yao Tandong delivers a speech at a Third Pole Environment meeting.

but also risky. Ice cracks can be found anywhere. Yao's students reported seeing markers for the deceased every mile or two when climbing the mountain. In such severe conditions, Yao and his team drilled to the ice cores of Dunde, Guliya and Dasuopu glaciers at 5,000 to 7,000 meters above sea level. Their efforts were rewarded with research results: They traced climate change on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau by analyzing ice cores with time intervals of 50 years. They reached high-precision conclusions on the relationship between human activity and pollution of places of high altitude. They correlated the quantity of ice cores in certain years with the precipitation of Indian summers.

Nobility before Knowledge

Yao was a student of academicians Li Jijun and Shi Yafeng, two of China's most renowned glacier researchers. Yao also studied glaciers under Professor Laurence Thomson in France. "Those great scholars influence me a lot," says Yao. "I still remember my teacher Li Jijun instructing me to be a noble man before being a knowledgeable man. This is also my demand for my own students. How can one be noble? You should be honest, steadfast and responsible, and persevere and concentrate at the same time. Only by practicing such traits can one perform excellently in academics."

According to his students, Yao is very considerate of their needs, but in academics, very demanding.

But how can a scientist have more concentration? Yao again mentions "interest": "Interest in science is the most important thing. Exploring unknown things is instinctual and addicting for scientists. For me, climbing a glacier or ending up with rewarding data provides incomparable excitement and satisfaction."

Yao believes that in the basic research of science, China still trails Europe and the United States. "Thanks to their competence in basic research, European nations and the United States enjoy the fruits of technological innovation continuously."

"We cannot deny our own development," Yao declared as he dedicated his Vega Medal to the development of China and the country's science. "Thanks to my country's development, the international academia is more actively paying attention to the work Chinese scientists are doing. Our foreign counterparts want to cooperate with us. The award may have my name on it, but it represents the attention from the international community on China's valuable research on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau."

Post-Poverty in Rural Hebei

Text and photographs by Cecile Zehnacker

Poverty alleviation has always been one of the paramount goals of the Chinese government, and poverty inevitably plagues rural areas the most. In China, as in many other developing countries, growth across various regions of the country has been unbalanced and income gaps have expanded. The massive jump in urbanization and accelerated development in recent years have only made it more difficult for the millions engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry to make a living. Although more and more farmers are moving to cities in the hope of improving their living conditions, they often still don't earn enough money to provide a comfortable life for their families. The left-behind members of these families, mostly seniors and children, suffer the most. Rural areas are unable to provide adequate education and nutrition for growing children. It's no mystery why poverty alleviation has become a monumental challenge for China.

However, since 2001, many dramatic improvements in key rural areas have been credited to the unremitting efforts of the Chinese government. People in a wide range of regions are seeing increased earnings, enjoying better-developed infrastructure and witnessing a significant drop in illiteracy and a rise in school attendance. The emergence of clinics in most villages has afforded wider access to healthcare. As a result of the combined efforts of many agencies, China managed to become the first country to achieve the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals target of reducing the country's poor population by half. The impressive numbers were achieved through the implementation of many different types of initiatives including economic reform, infrastructure building and specifically-targeted policies.

The most specific policies are perhaps the most challenging for local authorities, but they can also be the most empowering. Most governmental projects in rural areas require social participation and aim to make villagers self-reliant. In its 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-2020), the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) preserved targeted poverty alleviation as a central goal, and looked to empower people through 12 key targeted poverty alleviation programs based on local characteristics including tourism poverty-reduction, photovoltaic poverty-reduction and special agriculture poverty reduction. In recent years, projects following these key programs have been implemented in Hebei, a province that neighbors Beijing and Tianjin, yet remains one of the poorest in China. A total of 74 million people inhabit Hebei's 170 counties, of which 62 have acknowledged poor conditions. To get a better idea about how such measures work, we took a closer look at five participating counties in the prefecture-level city of Xingtai in this northern Chinese province.

Innovative Nanhe Agricultural Carnival

Nanhe County is located in the heart of the North China Plain and is a traditional agricultural county that is home to 44 poverty-stricken villages. Nanhe County Agricultural Carnival Project, based in the administrative area of Jiasong Town of Nanhe County in Xingtai, has already helped 8,525 people from 31 of these villages escape poverty. The project was designed by China Agricultural University and features a 27,000-square-meter ensemble of greenhouses in which vegetables, edible fungi, herbs for Chinese medicine and crops for livestock are grown. The structures also serve as a laboratory in which cutting-edge agricultural technologies such as soil-less culture and 3D planting can be honed, and has become the most popular agricultural tourism destination in Hebei Province. At its launch in July 2016, an agreement with local residents was signed that allocated each of them a share of 4,000 yuan in a trust meant to encourage locals to invest in local companies and create stable incomes. The project quickly became profitable, and villagers began receiving an annual 10 percent dividend. The Agricultural Carnival also created 100 permanent jobs for local villagers such as gardeners, food preparers, janitors and tour guides.

Sunny Green Energy in Lincheng County

The development of solar energy has become a powerful weapon for the government to fight poverty, and Lincheng County was selected for one of the first trials back in 2015. So far, three ground centralized solar power stations have been installed in the county, with a total capacity of 170 megawatts. The company overseeing the project, Lincheng Golden Concord Solar Power Co., Ltd., has installed a 28-megawatt solar station on the outskirts of

Cutting-edge soil-less agricultural technologies on display at Nanhe Agricultural Carnival.

Liujiadong Village. The solar station can provide about 34.54 million kilowatt hours of green energy every year. The earnings of eight percent of the 28 megawatts of this station will be distributed across 800 local impoverished households, bringing each of them an annual income of 3,000 yuan. The company has installed solar panels on the roofs of 120 households, which earn each of them an annual income of about 6,000 yuan. Complementing the investments in emerging eco-agriculture, the company has also worked alongside villagers to build 250 solar-panel roofed greenhouses for vegetables. The move has greatly enhanced local agriculture and continues to contribute to the improvement of air quality, which has been another major problem in the Xingtai area.

Cutting-edge Breeding of Hebei Runtao

Hebei Runtao Husbandry Science and Technology Co., Ltd. created the first sheep-breeding base of its kind in northern China. The institution, founded in 2012 and housing about 12,000 sheep, attaches great importance to scientific research and cooperation with universities. Doctoral program work stations for two universities have been established there. The base constantly strives to make breeding and feeding more eco-friendly and shares its expertise with local ranching households. The company plays an active role in targeted poverty alleviation by providing each poor household a financial subsidy of 6,000 yuan and helping them with breeding, disease prevention and treatment for free. In 2016, each household received an 8-percent dividend as a result of the agreement. The company also buys a large volume of crops from neighboring villages, significantly increasing incomes by about 3,000 yuan per year. The company has also filed applications for organic certification.

Eco-tourism in Chenyang

Chenyang, which means "glorious future," is a traditional village at the foot of Tiantai Mountain, sandwiched between two lakes. It is affiliated with Xishu Town of Lincheng County. The remains of its pagoda, temple and watchtower testify to the lengthy history of the village, in which numerous local operas are performed every year. As a tourist destination, the village has much to offer. But Chenyang is also

Sheep breeding at Hebei Runtao Husbandry.

impoverished and has been working hard to improve the living conditions of its people for a long time. In recent years, the village has adopted a model described as "joint construction of the village and the Tiantai Mountain scenic spot," which aims to boost tourism and increase local income. A variety of complementary activities have been developed to accompany this new initiative, such as growing fruit in greenhouses, silkworm farming, farmhouse restaurant development and water pump manufacturing, which have created more than 100 new local jobs. So far, 21 greenhouses have been raised around the village and a cooperative involving sweet potato starch noodle producers was founded. New infrastructure is making life in the village more manageable. Visitors can now enjoy a historic place, real farm life experience and delicious local food without sacrificing basic modern amenities.

Delicious pancakes cooked by the inhabitants of Chenyang Village.

Preserved dates prepared by the inhabitants of Chenyang Village.

Geese are left strolling around the walnut trees with a mission of cleaning the soil during summertime.

Lvling's Nuts

Established in the economic development zone of Lincheng County in 2011, Lvling Manor Co., Ltd. is the only large company in China engaged in the top-to-bottom industrial chain needed to produce and sell high-quality thin-shelled walnuts. The company's walnut orchard covers a total area of 140 square kilometers, and it plays an active role in poverty alleviation in several different ways. It has created permanent and temporary jobs for more than 8,000 people from local and neighboring areas, provides farmers with high-quality seedlings, pays above market prices for nuts and facilitates free on-site technical support. As a result, the company benefits from higher-quality walnut output. This long-term and empowering cooperative arrangement between the company and local residents has resulted in Lvling being certified as a National Poverty Alleviation Leading Enterprise. Annually, the company processes about 30,000 tons of walnuts. Lvling also operates through a variety of sales channels, primarily through major Chinese e-commerce platforms. All these projects not only provide additional income to local families, but also create new hope. Xingtai, which has been recognized as one of the most polluted cities in China due to the high concentration of industry in the area, has gradually marched forward with sustainable green businesses staffed by local residents, empowered people and distributed profits, creating a brighter outlook for future generations.

Hangzhou: QR City

Text by Ma Weihui

Hangzhou, capital of the southeastern Chinese province of Zhejiang, has newly become famous as a "mobile payment city" after a news report that sounded a little funny. On March 27, 2017, two robbers traveled to Hangzhou by plane and bus. After robbing three stores, they had stashed only two thousand yuan, less than the cost of the trip to Hangzhou. Many pointed out that residents of the city, which happens to host the headquarters of Alibaba, mostly pay with Alipay or WeChat. Cash is seldom used. QR codes for mobile payments can be seen everywhere from noodle restaurants to roast sweet potato stands.

To say that mobile payments are popular in the lakeside city would be an understatement. Every stand at the Songmu Farmers' Market features a sign reading "Payment by Alipay Recommended" over a QR code. A QR code is pasted over a Chinese oven rolls shop near Zhejiang University in the city. Most customers pay by scanning the QR code with

their smartphones. Next to the code is a small basin for cash, with just a few coins.

According to data from Ant Financial, citizens of Hangzhou can use smartphone apps to pay for 98 percent of taxis, at 95 percent of supermarkets and in over 50 percent of restaurants. Research conducted by the National School of Development of Peking University ranked Hangzhou first in inclusive finance from 2011 to 2015 among 337 Chinese cities. It tops Chinese cities in mobile payment proliferation, credit investigation, financial management, investment and insurance. Hangzhou has already become one of the most mobile paying cities in the world.

April 14, 2017: Tim, an Australian who married a Chinese girl and has settled in Hangzhou, takes an American friend around Hangzhou without carrying cash. by Huang Zongzhi/Xinhua

Smart Healthcare

If you open the Alipay app and click "Smart Healthcare," you'll see the list of hospitals in Hangzhou. You can make an appointment, check the results of a physical examination, pay the clinic fee, and do many other things with your phone.

"In the past, many people waited all day and night to see a doctor," admits Cai Xiujun, president of Sir Run Run Shaw Hospital. "Now, they can just rest and use their phones to set up appointments. The app will inform them of when and where they can see a doctor, get an ultrasound and buy medicine. They no longer have to rush to the hospital extremely early in the morning."

Cai notes that the outpatient clinic sees about 8,000 visitors daily and is perpetually crowded with patients. To help alleviate the stress of heavy demand, Sir Run Run Shaw Hospital designed China's first smart online hospital platform.

Now, almost every non-medical procedure at the hospital can be performed online. Patients can make appointments, receive notices while waiting at the hospital, pay bills, check test results and receive guidance. Patients can even rate the doctors like purchases on Taobao (known as China's Amazon).

"Patients now spend an average of 1.7 hours in our hospital, much shorter than the former 4 to 5 hours," adds Cai.

Paying Tolls with QR

Recently, drivers on the Shanghai-Hangzhou-Ningbo Expressway have discovered a third option instead of cash or the Electronic Toll Collection (ETC) system: They can scan a QR code with their phones. The expressway introduced Alipay to its exits during the National Day holiday in 2016.

Mobile payments are going mainstream. Over a million shops had accepted payment through Koubei and Alipay by September 2016. CFP

Guo Chaoqun, manager of the Operations Department of the expressway, reveals that the new payment method was introduced due to customer demand—so many customers in Hangzhou are already so accustomed to mobile payment that they don't carry cash. Any driver not carrying enough cash must make some sort of pledge. So many asked to pay with Alipay that the expressway took the initiative to seek cooperation with the payment platform.

"At first, Alipay was only used for emergency situations, but staff found it very convenient and we saw increasing numbers of drivers opting to pay in this way," he continues. "Now, about 5,000 tolls are paid with mobile payments every day, totaling about 200,000 yuan, around 2 percent of our total."

Scanning QR codes has also accelerated payment speed. In the past, the average time for a vehicle to finish the payment process was 13 seconds. Trucks, which usually pay more, typically require more time. However, the amount of the payment doesn't affect the speed of scanning a QR code, which takes less than 10 seconds on average.

Efficient Administration

In January, Che Jun, governor of Zhejiang Province, promised accelerated reform and streamlined administration. His aim was to cut the time taken and slash formalities for individuals or representatives from enterprises dealing with governmental departments.

November 3, 2016: A Chinese oven rolls stand in Nanjing introduces mobile payment. CFP

For instance, individuals in need of value-added tax invoices formerly had to go to the tax authority to apply. Last December, Zhejiang launched a trial run of issuing value-added tax invoices online, and individual taxpayers can even download them.

"People no longer have to visit the tax authority to get the invoice," beams Cui Chengzhang, deputy director of the Zhejiang Provincial Office of the State Admin-

March 1, 2017: Merchants in a farmers' market in Jinan City, capital of Shandong Province, accept payment through scanning a QR code. CFP

istration of Taxation (SAT). "The online platform has been tremendously popular with taxpayers. We want to expand this service across the province."

Zhejiang now operates both an online civil affairs administration platform and an online public payment platform, both the first in China, making Zhejiang the leading province for the "Internet+Government Service" by enabling people to make payments and receive governmental services from home.

Emergence of QR City

Outsiders have long regarded Hangzhou as a city with beautiful scenery and a well-developed private economy. Its inclusive finance has provided new lift for Hangzhou, making it one of the most economically dynamic cities in China. In 2016, the tertiary industry accounted for 61.2 percent of Hangzhou's GDP, of which information technology contributed over 50 percent, with an increase of 268.8 billion yuan.

Hangzhou is among the Chinese cities to witness the fastest development of mobile payments. Mobile payments are now widely used in large and medium-sized cities throughout China and are also reaching smaller cities and villages. In the foreseeable future, China may become a cashless society. Mobile payments have not only brought convenience to daily life but have also become a new economic growth point.

First Millennial Education

Text by Gong Haiying

Centuries of Development

At the foot of Mt. Yuelu in Changsha, Hunan Province, is the site of the ancient Yuelu Academy. The educational institution, a gathering place for renowned Confucian figures and educators including Zhu Xi (1130-1200) and Zhang Shi (1133-1180), has fostered influential Chinese thinkers and statesmen such as Huang Zongxi (1610-1695) and Wang Fuzhi (1619-1692) of the late Ming (1368-1644) and early Qing (1644-1911) dynasties, Zeng Guofan (1811-1872) of the late Qing Dynasty, Yang Changji (1871-1920) from the Republic of China era (1912-1949), and most notably, Mao Zedong, a Marxist and one of the founders of New China, who studied under Yang Changji while there.

The ancient academy, founded in 976 during the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127), is considered one of the most prestigious institutions of learning in Chinese history. In 1167, Zhu Xi and Zhang Shi launched a two-month academic exchange that drew a huge turnout. Their teaching gradually transformed into Huxiang School, a well-known branch of China's Confucian philosophy. The academy reached its zenith during the Qing Dynasty when Confucians advocated the idea of "placing wisdom in state governance," attaching greater importance to practical knowledge and skills in the sectors of politics, economics, science and technology, and military affairs.

What is an "academy" in the traditional Chinese sense? As defined in the *History of Chinese Academies* compiled by modern Chinese scholar Li Guojun, "An 'academy' refers to a special educational organization, mostly privately run or hosted, usually featuring a collection of books and a gathering place for lectures and discussions. They are considered loftier than traditional youth educational institutions."

"As an independent organization for education not run by the state, an academy had to host services such as academic research, lectures, book collecting and publication, and sacrificial ceremonies to fund the operation of its school," illustrates Professor Zhu Hanmin, former president of Yuelu Academy. "Many scholars mention them in the same breath as colleges and universities in Western countries. If they are considered comparable, Yuelu is one of the oldest institutions of higher learning on the planet. Of continuously operating colleges and universities in the world, only Morocco's University of Al Qarawiyyin, founded in 859, is older."

Sculptures depicting the academic debate between Zhu Xi and Zhang Shi, housed in the Memorial Hall to Zhu Xi and Zhang Shi in Yuelu Academy. In 1167, renowned Confucian figures and educators Zhu Xi (1130-1200) and Zhang Shi (1133-1180) carried out a two-month academic exchange, building a centuries-old tradition of free lecturing for traditional Chinese academies. CFP

The first academy of classical learning was established during the Tang Dynasty (618-907). Such academies reached their heyday during the Ming and Qing dynasties, when more than 2,000 could be found across the country. "Established by men of letters, Chinese academies inherited the educational and academic traditions of pre-Qin Confucianism while Western institutions of higher learning adopted traditions of the ancient Greeks, both ancient societies which contributed greatly to the development of the modern world," remarks Zhu Hanmin. "In contrast with Western institutions' sense of a 'right' to autonomy, traditional Chinese academies remained under the administrative power of the imperial authority. Consequently, most academies only trained students for imperial examinations, instead of academic research, during the Qing Dynasty, and almost all of them changed their institution status or shut down in the modern era."

Early in the 20th Century, with the implementation of the "reform" policy in the late Qing Dynasty, China demolished its 1,000-year-old academy system and introduced Western-style institutes of higher learning. In 1903, Yuelu Academy was reshaped into Hunan Higher School under the educational system modeled after the West. It was formally named Hunan University in 1926, marking a transition from a private institution of classical learning to a state-run university.

The 2015 graduation ceremony at Yuelu Academy. Like at other schools under Hunan University, candidates here must complete core classes as well as electives. CFP

Since then, as a school attached to Hunan University, Yuelu Academy has regained its former name and preserved its commitment to personnel training and academic research with fully accredited departments of Chinese history and philosophy, officially sanctioned by the modern higher education system to award bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees.

Transformation Dilemma

The academy experienced a downturn after its change in institutional status. "When the Qing court ordered it to retreat from classical learning, the academy was forced to bear the historic mission of preserving a lifeline to connect ancient and modern education," comments Professor Deng Hongbo of Yuelu Academy.

"It was easy to inherit the physical academy—the buildings, the inscribed horizontal boards, and stele inscriptions," admits Zhu Hanmin, "but it was a monumental task to fuse that cultural tradition into the modern educational system."

"We are preserving the tradition of the ancient academy by combining it with modern education, making it a part of a modern institution of higher learning equipped to cater to the most elite students of today's world," argues Zhu. Like other schools under Hunan University, postgraduate students here must complete compulsory classes as well as electives. The only difference is the key focus, which is the study of ancient Chinese civilization and culture.

It's rare for such a transformation to succeed in a modern educational setting. Today, Yuelu Academy has upgraded its classical Chinese educational resources and is again considered the "Fort Knox" of traditional Chinese culture. During his visit in 2007, Shan Jixiang, then director of the State Administration of Cultural Heritage, dubbed that type of integration the "Yuelu Academy model."

July 6, 2014: International students participating in the 13th Chinese Bridge display their Chinese handwriting at Yuelu Academy. CFP

Yuelu Academy first became famous nationwide thanks to the lectures of Zhu Xi, a Song-dynasty Confucian scholar and the leading figure of the School of Principle—the most influential rationalist genre of Neo-Confucianism in China—and Zhang Shi, a scholar and educator of the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279), who oversaw education at Yuelu. In ancient China, standout academies were so because of their representative figures. "Therefore ancient Chinese academies hit roadblocks during social progress," opines Zhu. "Today, neither the West nor China has the kind of celebrated academic masters that could enable such institutions to stay afloat. Not even in the early period of the Republic of China could someone like Zhu Xi, who founded his own school of thought, maintain an academy. Nevertheless, lectures are continuing without great masters, and only by lecturing can we produce more great masters."

Modern media has been used to disseminate outstanding traditional Chinese culture during its modern transformation. In the late 1990s, Yuelu Academy invited

July 30, 2014: Professor Liu Haifeng, a famous Chinese scholar and specialist in the history of imperial exams, gives a lecture titled "Thousand-Year-Old Imperial Exams and Traditional Chinese Culture" at the First Ceremony of the Global Chinese National Studies jointly launched by Yuelu Academy and Ifeng.com, which kicked off in Yuelu Academy. IC

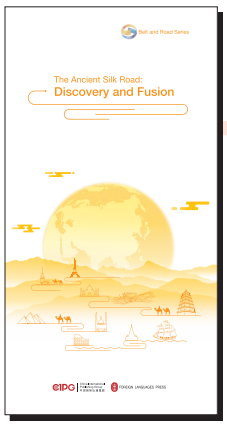
September 28, 2014: The Sacrificial Ceremony for Confucius draws over 400 people from all walks of life from home and abroad, who pay their respect to the statue of Confucius, founder of Confucianism. Sacrificial ceremonies are an important part of moral education at traditional Chinese academies. Yuelu Academy has performed such ceremonies since 2013. CFP

famous scholars such as Li Zehou, a well-known Chinese philosopher, to give lectures on TV. In 2013, it established a center for research and dissemination of classical Chinese learning and launched regular lectures. By 2014, it had spearheaded a new model for spreading traditional Chinese culture with aid of the "internet+" concept.

In the early 21st Century, academies of classical learning saw rapid progress thanks to the renaissance of traditional Chinese culture throughout the country. Scores of new-type academies of various forms emerged, while some 100 traditional ones regained life. However, problems, such as a fragmented curriculum system, persist.

In general, modern Chinese colleges and universities have not inherited many traditions from ancient Chinese academies due to the specific course of history and certain social conditions during the country's modernization. "Education in traditional academies can provide three new perspectives that will be valuable in modern institutions of higher learning," declared Chen Pingyuan, a distinguished scholar in modern China. "Traditional academies inspire greater contributions to the diversification of academic thinking in terms of education systems; they provide more personalized education and more liberal education and break the utilitarianism of education; and they focus on independent thinking, self-learning and communication between teachers and students in terms of teaching methods. Considering such factors, optimal methods of adapting traditional Chinese academies to the modern setting are something every academic and researcher committed to revitalizing traditional cultural heritage should be pondering.

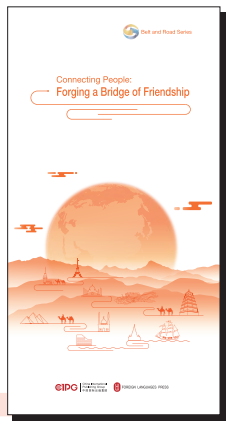
Books



Belt and Road Series

Thoughts on the Belt and Road Initiative in Multiple Languages

Compiled by Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies at Renmin University of China, published by Foreign Languages Press, May 2017



Composed of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road, the Belt and Road Initiative was proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping to the international community in 2013 as a regional development initiative, based on profound changes in the world economy and Asia-Pacific geopolitical relations.

By revitalizing economic, cultural and other links along the ancient land and maritime Silk Roads, the Belt and Road Initiative aims to positively develop regional economic cooperation and partnerships between China and other countries along the Belt and Road. The cooperative framework has designated five priorities: policy coordination, facilities connectivity, unimpeded trade, financial integration and people-to-people bonds. By promoting cooperation in all fields, the Initiative is working to build a community of shared interests, future and responsibility featuring mutual trust, economic integration and cultural inclusiveness.

The *Belt and Road Series* includes a total of seven books which were selected for their concise interpretations of the Belt and Road Initiative.

The first, *The Ancient Silk Road: Discovery and Fusion*, focuses on historical development and cultural exchanges along the ancient land and maritime Silk Roads.

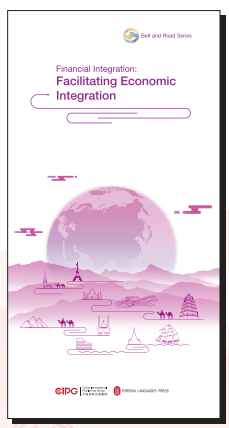
The second, *The Belt and Road Initiative: China's Light Shines Again on the Road West*, focuses on interpretations of the Initiative's connotations and bigger picture.

The third, *Policy Coordination: When West Meets East*, follows President Xi's consecutive overseas visits starting in September 2013, focusing on the common efforts made by China and other countries along the Belt and Road to align and coordinate development strategies with help from the Belt and Road Initiative.

The fourth, *Facilities Connectivity: Building an Interconnected World*, focuses on China's cooperation with various countries on infrastructure such as roads, rails, airports, shipping, energy and information.

The fifth, *Unimpeded Trade: Together on the Road to Wealth*, comprehensively tracks the international trade background as well as new updates and progress of the Belt and Road Initiative.

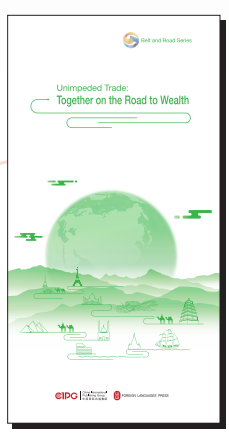
The sixth, *Financial Integration: Facilitating Economic Integration*, focuses on how governments in the region have strengthened financial cooperation.



The seventh, *Connecting People: Forging a Bridge of Friendship*, focuses on stories and achievements in various fields along the Belt and Road such as education, tourism, science and technology, placing great hope in the power of higher-level people-to-people bonds.

The series offers editions in Chinese, English, French, Russian, Arabic and Korean.

The book series was compiled by the Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies at Renmin University of China (RDCY), a Chinese think tank established in January 2013. The institute is composed of nearly 100 former politicians, bankers and preeminent scholars from 10 countries as senior fellows and cooperates with think tanks from over 30 countries. Since 2014, RDCY has been ranked among the "top 150 think tanks in the world" in the internationally-recognized *Global Go To Think Tank Index Report*, published by the University of Pennsylvania, three times. Only seven Chinese think tanks have made the list in the past three years.



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Cutting Out Space In Public Art

Text by Yi Mei

So few Chinese art enthusiasts know anything about Israeli art that David Gerstein, one of Israel's most influential artists, has taken it upon himself to serve as a messenger between the two countries. Over the last few years, Gerstein has visited China many times to install public art projects in various cities across the country. Recently, his first solo exhibition in China was hosted by Today Art Museum in Beijing. The exhibition, themed "Layers," features the artist's multi-layered cut-out sculpture art and traces his artistic exploration process through different stages. Centered around the evolution of his artistic language, the exhibition showcases his most characteristic cut-out art to cut straight into the philosophies of the artist.

"I am very glad to hold such an exhibition in Beijing," says Gerstein. "I really hope my exhibition serves as a window for Chinese spectators to enjoy Israeli art."

David Gerstein, born in Jerusalem in 1944, is a public artist and sculptor in Israel. He has been seeking to push the limits of painting, and cut-out sculptures have come to represent his ground-breaking experiments to add a third dimension to the art form. In 1987, David Gerstein held his first large solo exhibition in an Israeli museum where his cut-out sculptures drew intense scrutiny from international art circles. Three decades later, his works can be found around the globe.

Many can be found in China. One highlights a senior center in Beijing: a tree covered with butterflies. "David's works always embody great aspirations and lust for life," says curator Angela Lu. "When I met him many years ago, I knew I wanted to introduce his art to China. Today, my dream has finally come true."

David Gerstein began exploring various art forms in the 1970s. His early efforts mainly focused on figurative paintings with realistic style. These works were mostly themed on urban landscapes and his experience with dark palettes, and a sense of isolation and reclusion runs throughout this stage of his work.

In the 1980s, his work shifted to a different stage: He switched focus from painting to sculpture and his preferred palette changed from dark to brighter colors. During this time, he began breaking the boundaries of two-dimensional painting by creating three-dimensional sculptures and developing unique "cut-out sculptures."

"Israeli artists are usually weighed down by sad history and national suffering," explains Angela Lu. "But David made a change. His work always embraces life and hope."

City on Wheels.

Euphoria.

Jazz and City—Piano.

Spring in the Air.

Marathon Berlin.

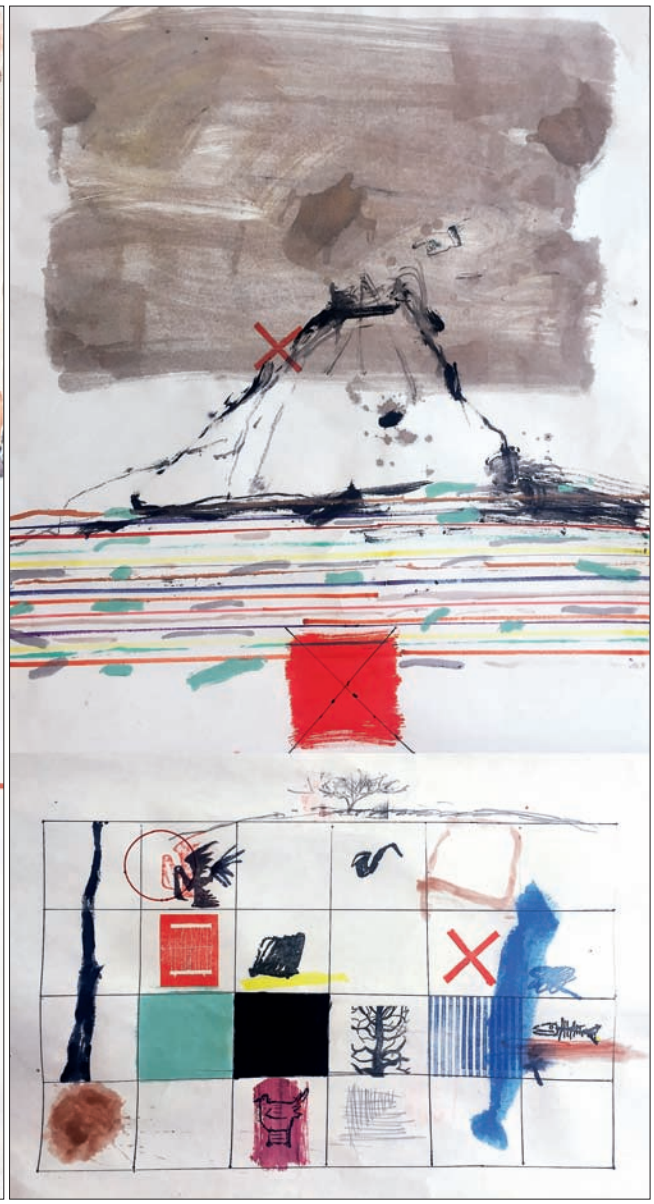
In contrast to traditional sculptures, cut-out sculptures are produced by creating different silhouettes with laser-cutting metal plates, which are then painted with pigment. The art form balances painting and sculpture, not only accommodating a painter's demand for color and texture, but also ensuring depth to impart the features of sculptures. These works emit freedom and the joy of pop art with vibrant colors, bold forms and lively strokes, reflecting the influence of American art on traditional style. However, the artist continually sticks to figurative expression and abstract subject matter gleaned from daily life and natural landscapes: subjects like butterflies, flowers, bicycles, sports and cities.

In his subsequent art, David Gerstein has constantly explored the relationship between art and the general public and between art and popularity via easily understood themes and forms of expression, creating large public sculptures around the world in pursuit of the promotion of public art.

Shanghai is a popular host city for Gerstein's sculptures. David Gerstein had learned of Shanghai's reputation as a Jewish shelter during World War II and was impressed with its history. For these reasons, he chose Shanghai as his first Chinese visit. "Aside from that period of history, Shanghai gave me fresh inspiration that led to future works." During his trips to China, Gerstein spent a considerable amount of time in museums and galleries, which gave him plenty of time to view traditional Chinese paintings and contemporary Chinese art. "I am amazed by the techniques of the watercolor painting," Gerstein says. "I am intensely interested in contemporary Chinese art and recognize the talent and potential of many of the country's artists."

"Actually, China and Israel both endured periods of suffering," Gerstein continues. "Both nations have rich histories and cultures. I hope my efforts promote greater exchange between the two countries."

The Mediterranean—Rome, 2017, mixed media, 143x75cm.



The Mediterranean—Vesuvius, 2017, mixed media, 143x75cm.

Paper Chase—Presents from Rauschenberg

This exhibition features more than 80 paper painting works by Ye Yongqing. Of them, 29 were created with customized paper ordered by well-known American artist Robert Rauschenberg (1925-2008) in China in 1982. At the exhibition, Ye spent more than 10 days constructing a large sheet of paper from scratch to better understand its essence. Many of China's most prized classic works were preserved and distributed on such paper.

Ye Yongqing was born in 1958 in Kunming, Yunnan Province. He graduated from the Painting Department of Sichuan Fine Arts Institute in 1982 with a degree in oil painting and began teaching there. His works have been displayed at solo exhibitions in many cities around the world including Beijing, Shanghai, London, Munich, Augsburg, and Seattle.

April 7 – June 23, 2017
KWM Art Center, Beijing

Cabinet of Curiosities

The "Cabinet of Curiosities" is a prototype museum of modern significance. On display are nearly 100 unique pieces of art provided by collectors and artists, spread throughout five exhibition halls. Hall No.1 is intended to serve as a miniature nature museum and features samples of various species of plants and animals. Hall No.2 features Chinese folk arts including small, vivid sculptures. Hall No.3 is filled with fancy machinery. Hall No.4 has a diverse selection of toys, mobiles and artistic installations themed around astronomy, and Hall No.5 is full of bizarre and futuristic neon installations.

The exhibition is also offering commodities such as toy prototypes, samples, hand-made books, independent publications, and audiovisual products, in addition to independent animation screenings, academic lectures, skill-exchange activities and performance art.

April 7 – June 23, 2017
Duo Yun Xuan Art Center, Shanghai

A poster for "Cabinet of Curiosities."

A poster for "A Circle, But Not Round."

A Circle, But Not Round

This event is a dual exhibition of works by artists Bignia Wehrli and Liao Wenfeng from Berlin, Germany. Along with individual pieces by each artist, the show is highlighted by a collaboration project the two began in Russia in 2015, "Yes/No Egg"—a question-solving "tool" of sorts.

Bignia Wehrli was born in 1979 in Switzerland and graduated from the Dresden Academy of Fine Art. Her artistic practice engages with processes of visualization and methods of capturing fleeting moments.

Liao Wenfeng was born in Jiangxi Province in 1984 and graduated from the China Academy of Art in Hangzhou in 2006, later receiving a master's degree from the Institute for Art in Context, University of the Arts, Berlin. He relocated to Berlin in 2012. Over the last few years, he has worked with video, GIF animation, photography and painting to investigate the construction of the visual spaces between objects, the human body and ideas in the context of everyday life.

March 25 – May 10, 2017
Inna Art Space, Hangzhou

Mottled Light and Shadow: Zhang Meng Solo Exhibition

On display are transboundary experimental works featuring traditional Chinese ink painting coupled with new media such as video art—expressions of the artist's inner world through winter branches, snowy wilderness, waterfalls, mushrooms, apes, fading human shadows and racing tigers.

Zhang Meng serves as an associate professor and director of the Video Art Department of Tianjin Fine Arts Institute. An artist specializing in cross-media creations, his works have been showcased in many artistic institutions of national importance in countries such as China, Germany, Japan and the United States. He has twice been invited to the International Biennial Exhibition in Kobe, Japan.

April 2 – May 8, 2017
Kuiyuan Gallery Café, Guangzhou

A poster for "Mottled Light and Shadow: Zhang Meng Solo Exhibition."

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