

中印对话

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EMBRACING THE WORLD FOR
A SHARED FUTURE

CHINESE WAYS OF CHANGE



Lighting Up the Way Ahead

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半个多世纪，三代人耕耘。
沙地变林海，荒原成绿洲。
寒来暑往，
塞罕坝机械林场的森林覆盖率
已达80%，
栽种树木按二米株距排开，
可绕地球赤道二圈。

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

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Chinese President Xi Jinping Attends 22nd SCO Summit

On September 16, Chinese President Xi Jinping attended the 22nd meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan.

President Shavkat Mirziyoyev of Uzbekistan, the rotating presidency of the SCO, presided over the meeting.

At the meeting, Xi remarked that the world today is undergoing accelerating changes unseen in a century, bringing it into a new phase of uncertainty and transformation. Human society has reached a crossroads and faces unprecedented challenges.

He said that under these new conditions, the SCO, as an important constructive force in international and regional affairs, should keep itself well-positioned in the face of changing international dynamics, ride the trends of the times, strengthen solidarity and cooperation, and build a closer SCO community with a shared future.

Xi emphasized that upholding the peace and development of the Eurasian continent is a common goal of countries both in the region and the world at large, and that the SCO shoulders an important

responsibility in meeting this goal. He expressed the belief that promoting the development and expansion of the SCO and optimizing its positive impact would help the organization create strong momentum and new dynamics to ensure durable peace and common prosperity of the Eurasian continent and the whole world. Xi said that China supports advancing SCO expansion in an active yet prudent manner and urged attendees to seize the opportunity to build consensus, deepen cooperation, and jointly create a bright future for the Eurasian continent.

Chinese Consulate General in Kolkata Holds Discussion with Young Indian Entrepreneurs

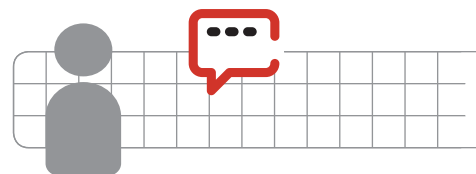
On September 26, Zha Liyou, Chinese Consul General to Kolkata, held a discussion with members of the Kolkata Branch of the Young Indians (YI). The two sides conducted an in-depth exchange on helping young Indian entrepreneurs leverage their advantages in promoting bilateral economic and trade cooperation and enhancing the friendship between the two countries.

Zha recounted the latest development of China's economy and society,

expounded on China's measures to deepen cooperation with South Asia, and answered guests' questions about China. He said that the Chinese Consulate General would help the Kolkata Branch of the Young Indians conduct exchanges and cooperation with China.

The Indian youth representatives said that they were glad to engage in face-to-face communication with the Chinese Consul General. They expressed

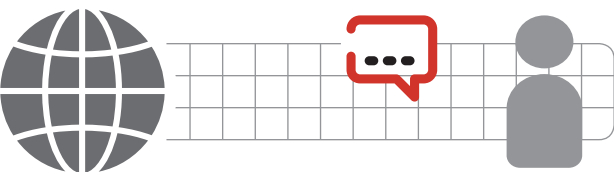
hope to receive support and guidance from the Consulate General when organizing future business delegations to China. They are also looking forward to exchange with Chinese institutions in sectors including education, environmental protection, and women's rights.



China and India Hold 25th WMCC Meeting

On October 14, Director-General of the Department of Boundary and Ocean Affairs of Chinese Foreign Ministry Hong Liang and Joint Secretary of the East Asia Division of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs and the External Affairs Minister's Office Shilpak Ambule co-chaired the 25th meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on China-India Border Affairs (WMCC) via video. Representatives of government agencies covering foreign affairs, national defense, and immigration from the two countries attended the meeting.

The two sides spoke highly of the achievements made in the disengagement of border troops of the two countries, fully affirmed the outcomes of the previous diplomatic and military communication, and expressed readiness to take measures to further ease the border situation and shift from emergency response to regular management. The two sides also conducted an in-depth exchange of views on specific issues of immediate concern to both sides, put forward constructive suggestions, and agreed to hold the 17th round of corps commanders level meeting at an early date. Both sides pledged that they would earnestly implement the important common understanding reached between the leaders of the two countries, strictly abide by the agreements signed and relevant consensus reached by the two sides, and work together to safeguard peace and tranquility in the border areas.



Chinese Ambassador to India Sun Weidong Holds Online Farewell Meeting



On October 19, Chinese Ambassador to India Sun Weidong held a farewell conference via video before leaving office. Representatives of organizations such as the India-China Friendship Association, Friends of China Society (India), and the Dr. Kotnis Memorial Committee participated in the event online.

During the meeting, Sun reviewed his work as the Chinese ambassador to India. He said that in the past more than three years, he put the consensus and outcomes of the Chennai meeting between the leaders of the two countries into practice, promoted practical cooperation, overcame various problems and obstacles, laid a good foundation for public opinion, and worked with everyone available to promote the gradual stabilization of bilateral relations. Sun commended Indian organizations that have been fostering friendship between the two countries by participating in or organizing different activities. He also expressed willingness to continue to promote China-India friendship and make greater efforts and contributions to the bright future of the two countries. 📺

Embracing the World for a Shared Future

By Wang Dong



“Opening up” has boosted China’s political, economic, and cultural practices in the new era.

Lately, China has played a more active role in the global arena. “Opening up” has boosted China’s political, economic, and cultural practices in the new era and will guide the country’s foreign exchange as a fundamental national policy in the years to come. “China is committed to its fundamental national policy of opening

to the outside world and pursues a mutually beneficial strategy of opening up,” said Xi Jinping in his report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China. “It strives to create new opportunities for the world with its own development and to contribute its share to building an open global economy that delivers greater benefits to all peoples.”

China’s outlook on “opening up” calls for further promotion of genuine multilateralism and reforms of the global governance system, adherence to a sound path of economic globalization, and facilitation of people-to-people and cultural exchanges and mutual learning among civilizations in a more in-depth and extensive manner. China has been committed to developing “an

open world” through an open global outlook with Chinese characteristics in the new era.

Over the past decade, China has comprehensively promoted major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics, actively participated in the reforms of the global governance system, promoted the building of a new type of international relations, and led the construction of a human community with a shared future. China actively leverages its advantages as a major country to promote reforms of the international financial system and boost global economic growth in the G20, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Plus Three and other mechanisms. China is also leading relevant countries to develop along a more open, inclusive and cooperative path involving the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, BRICS,



A bird's-eye view of Haikou Fullsling Internet Industrial Park in 2020. As one of the first group of 11 key pilot industrial parks in Hainan Free Trade Port, it primarily develops digital economy industries focused on digital trade, artificial intelligence, financial technology, and international offshore innovation and entrepreneurship services. (Photo by Jiang Jurong)

seek hegemony or engage in expansionism. It has always pursued a path of peaceful development and firmly ensured international relations and the world

massive global network.

Over the past decade, China has continued deepening its opening up, implemented its opening-up strategy more proactively, built a global network of high-standard free trade zones, accelerated the construction of free trade pilot zones and free trade ports, and jointly provided public goods for international cooperation such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) while coordinating the “dual circulation” development pattern to achieve mutually beneficial and win-win results for the global community. As of today, China’s *Free Trade Zone Special Administrative Measures on Access to Foreign Investment* and *Special Administrative Measures on Access to Foreign Investment*

Today, China has established diplomatic relations with 181 countries and partnerships with more than 110 countries and regional organizations.

the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, and more. In the extraordinary decade, China has always adhered to the diplomatic principles of independence, peaceful coexistence, equality, justice, mutual benefits and win-win results. China will never

order move in a fairer and more reasonable direction. Today, China has established diplomatic relations with 181 countries and partnerships with more than 110 countries and regional organizations. Its “circle of friends” is constantly expanding into a



A group of students and teachers from Yunnan Minzu University perform fitness yoga at the 2022 International Yoga Day & China-India Cultural Exchange Event in Kunming, southwestern China's Yunnan Province, June 21, 2022. (Photo courtesy of Yunnan Minzu University)

have been reduced to 27 and 31 items, respectively. China has become the world's second-largest economy with manufacturing scale, foreign exchange reserves, and total trade volume in goods ranking first globally. It has become a key trading partner for more than 140 countries and regions. China actively leads the global economic development pattern and promotes shared interests in the global community. So far, China has inked more than 200 BRI cooperation documents with over 140 countries and 30-plus international organizations. Looking ahead, China will pursue its opening-up pattern in a larger scope, to wider areas, and at deeper levels.

Over the past decade,

China has strengthened its diverse and orderly people-to-people and cultural exchanges featuring governmental leadership as well as non-governmental participation. It has established official, semi-official, and non-governmental cultural exchange systems with the United States, the United Kingdom, Indonesia, South Africa, India, Japan, and other countries. The forms of people-to-people and cultural exchanges continue increasing. Chinese and foreign governments, think tanks, colleges, cities, and non-governmental organizations have continuously enriched the exchange through cultural activities, art festivals,

cultural relics exhibitions, book exhibitions, tourism years, film festivals, and Sino-foreign academic, educational, and business cooperation. The breadth and depth of people-to-people and cultural exchanges continue expanding. Bilateral and multilateral cooperation has been carried out in fields like education, science and technology, culture, sports, youth, health, media, tourism, local cooperation, and women's issues, contributing to a comprehensive layout of "people-to-people diplomacy."

China has embraced and integrated into the world with a more open mind in terms of politics, economics, and culture to pave a Chinese path to modernization. The path not only benefits from the process of globalization, but also promotes its evolution. Other developing countries can use the theory of Chinese modernization as a reference because it breaks through the Western-dominated discourse to define and interpret modernization. We are witnessing major changes unfolding, something unseen in a century, in which crises and opportunities coexist, leaving the global order in unprecedented turmoil. However, China's original aspirations to embrace and integrate into the world stand strong and will last forever. 🇨🇳

The author is a professor of the School of International Studies at Peking University.

Reflection on the Past, Spotlight on the Pathway

By Karori Singh



China will meet expectations and banish suspicions under the leadership of the CPC.

The 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) was held in October this year. The political event convenes every five years as China evolves its governance, strategies, and plans for its people's wellbeing. Amid the turbulent global situation which is polarizing the international community and intensifying domestic

challenges in many countries, the whole world is eyeing on the outcomes of the 20th CPC National Congress. The landmark meeting has the onerous responsibility of steering the Chinese nation through turbulent streams.

It started with a report delivered by Xi Jinping on behalf of the CPC Central Committee on October 16. The report set the tone and

tenor of the Congress by reflecting on the past and underscored the vision of the Chinese nation in the new era. It dwelt on all major domestic and international aspects manifesting Chinese achievements and aspirations. The report also responded to the suspicions frequently raised by Western mainstream media over China's vision, development path and governance pattern.



Construction workers take photos of Shanghai's skyline across the Huangpu River from the Waibaidu Bridge, September 18, 2019. On the eve of the China International Import Expo, builders worked around the clock to renovate and improve the bridge. (Photo by Xu Liang)

SOCIALISM WITH CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS

China is applauded for its people-centric achievements which are reflected in the realization of the First Centenary Goal of “building a moderately prosperous society in all respects.” It has eradicated extreme poverty by lifting hundreds of millions of people out of poverty. Socialism with Chinese characteristics is integral to achieving the Second Centenary Goal; The two-stage strategy from 2020 to 2035, and from 2035 to the mid-21st century has been proposed for building a great modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious and

beautiful.

The neo-liberal market ascendancy proclaims freedom and growth but has resulted in the concentration

Socialism with Chinese characteristics implies enabling everyone in society to have access to opportunities for realization of his or her potentials.

of wealth in a few hands, freedom and rights in pervasive inequality, and poverty with denial of rights in practice. China's development model is projected in a different way. The concept of “common prosperity” elaborated in

Xi's report to the 20th CPC National Congress implies fairer income distribution and equality of opportunity, which means increased income of low-income earners and expansion of the middle-income group, and in turn, expands the domestic market and boosts production. Socialism with Chinese characteristics implies enabling everyone in society to have access to opportunities for realization of his or her potentials.

Apart from common prosperity, the report also highlighted high-quality development, green economy, modernization of the military, and technological advancement as main components of China's developmental model in order to generate national strength and solidarity. Regarding technological advancement, it underlined the need to focus on national strategic needs, gather strength to carry out indigenous and leading

scientific and technological research, and thus achieve breakthroughs in key core technologies.

The CPC leadership understands that the reform and opening up unleashed market forces and ignited China's economy in the past,

and will remain steadfast in deepening reform and expanding opening up. The high-quality development is harmonizing different interests and sectors for achieving common prosperity.

MEETING EXPECTATIONS AND BANISHING SUSPICIONS

Developing countries have high hopes for benefits from China's development. So far, China has remarkably contributed to infrastructure construction, investment and trade in many developing countries, which helps in poverty alleviation, employment generation and many other aspects in these countries.

China's steadfast and peaceful development is embedded with the Asian Century, and therefore becomes a subject of envy for dominant powers. The Western mainstream media and hawkish think tanks often stigmatize China's governance pattern, although the country has made its position explicit in a number of whitepapers elaborating on issues including human rights, democracy, poverty eradication, and so on. China's focus is on "enabling" human rights to all sections of society and all the people. It practices the whole-process people's democracy in which rigorous electoral process is followed and regular consultation mechanisms are clear cases in point.

Moreover, personal initiative, greater innovation



Villagers and tourists watch an opera performance on the ancient stage in Hougou Village. Local artists can still perform repertoire popular in the 1950s if needed. (Photo courtesy of the Party committee of Dongzhao Township)

and further opening up of the economy are well recognized in the Chinese growth model. The country also has abiding commitment to multilateralism and the UN system. Obviously, the Chinese development path and governance pattern are different from the neo-liberal order, so the imposition of uniformity of neo-liberal order is bound to generate conflict. The proponents of the neo-liberal order need to change their outdated mindsets on China's governance system, cultural specificity and socio-economic development which respond to changing circumstances and initiate "dialogue of civilizations."

The 20th CPC National

Congress took cognizance of critical issues and deliberated upon appropriate plans and sound strategies for the next five years and beyond. China will, therefore, meet expectations and banish suspicions under the leadership of the CPC. Just as Sun Yeli, spokesperson for the 20th CPC National Congress, declared, China and its people "have the confidence, resolve and capability to meet new goals and create greater miracles on the way forward." 

The author is former director and emeritus fellow at the South Asia Studies Centre of the University of Rajasthan in Jaipur, India.

Prospects for China's Global Role

By Khalid Taimur Akram

China's development roadmap built at the 20th CPC National Congress will offer other countries more opportunities with a shared forward-looking spirit.

Many key factors have contributed to the Chinese miracle. The reform and opening-up policy, among others, remains important to China's resilience in development. Keeping with the legacy, Chinese President Xi Jinping has provided grand narratives and ideas which are crucial in the 21st century for joint development of China and the rest of the world. The rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is a journey that requires persistence and visionary policies. In both China's domestic and foreign policies, the major attributes of a grand vision have been orchestrated by President Xi.

Every five years, the Communist Party of China (CPC) holds a key congress. Its 20th National Congress

took place in October this year. Over the past century, Chinese people, generation after generation, have dedicated themselves to realizing national rejuvenation. With effective strategies and robust plans, the country is steering the path of national rejuvenation in the new era.

China has eradicated extreme poverty with efficacious plans and policies. With a people-centered approach and sustainable initiatives, the country has enhanced its socioeconomic development and global outreach over the past 10 years. The success story has marked the new era for China on its path to modernization. I believe that China will basically achieve socialist modernization by 2035, and develop into a great modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic,

culturally advanced, harmonious and beautiful by the middle of the 21st century.

VOYAGE OF THE CPC

The world has seldom witnessed such landscape-changing movements in a short time frame. The CPC, founded in 1921, can aptly be considered a true model of excellence. Over the century, the CPC has grown from a small party with just over 50 members into the largest Marxist governing party in the world, with more than 96 million members in a country of more than 1.4 billion people. The past century has seen dramatic changes in China with enormous unleashed productive forces, unprecedented social transformation and huge advances in human civilization. It all was made possible due to

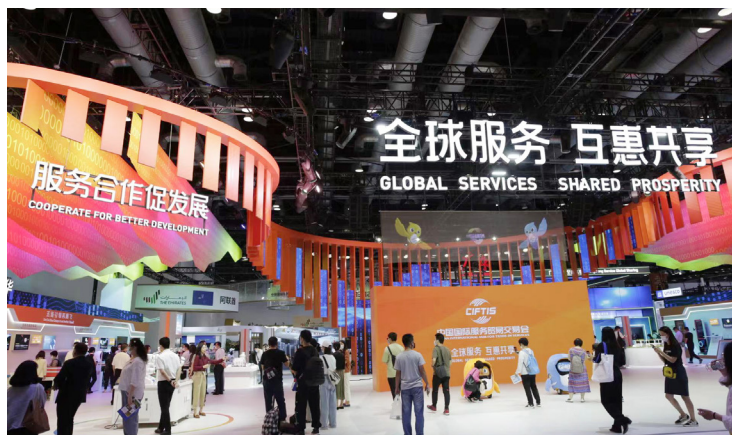
the contribution of the CPC.

All the struggles and efforts made by the Chinese people under the strong leadership of the CPC have been directed to one goal—the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Moreover, to ensure the people's status as masters of the country, and improve the performance of the Party and the state institutions, China has expanded socialist democracy through an integration of advanced electoral democracy and consultative democracy.

JOINT DEVELOPMENT AND SHARED FUTURE

China has proposed enhancing international cooperation and communication across diverse fields. In the new era, major developments have been driven by the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the idea of building a community with a shared future for mankind, the Global Development Initiative (GDI), etc. These grand visions have brought fundamental changes in the discourse of international relations. China's reforms and governance have generated continuous economic growth, offering abundant opportunities to other countries for common development.

The GDI is a classic example of China advancing mutually beneficial cooperation. The initiative caters to the most urgent needs of the world, such as poverty alleviation, food security, fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, and solutions to climate change. President Xi incorporated



The 2022 China International Fair for Trade in Services (CIFTIS), held at the China National Convention Center in Beijing in September this year, attracts many visitors. (Photo by Qin Bin/China Pictorial)

the goals of the GDI with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is a clear manifestation that China is working to assist the global community in achieving the SDGs by 2030 through the initiative. It is anticipated that the GDI will help mitigate inequality and realize the dream of development while adhering to the principles of ecological civilization. China's commitment to SDGs is encouraging for the aspirants of globalization.

CHINA'S CONTRIBUTION TO GLOBAL CONNECTIVITY

In all of its endeavors in revolution, construction and reform, the CPC has always proceeded in reality rather than placing its faith in books. The 20th CPC National Congress rolled out a roadmap for China's development along with major plans to address global challenges and expand

international cooperation. The BRI has provided an important platform for building a global community of shared future. It is imperative to follow the Silk Road spirit characterized by "peace and cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, mutual learning and mutual benefit."

In a nutshell, China will innovate at a faster pace and achieve high-quality growth. New strategies and robust plans will continue to emerge for wider integration at both regional and global levels. This will lead to the creation of a much stronger structure and balanced development with a ripple effect, which will offer other countries more opportunities with a shared forward-looking spirit. 🌐

The author is executive director of the Pakistan Research Center for a Community with Shared Future (PRCCSF) in Islamabad.

Chinese Ways of Change

By Ole Döring

The only way is to embrace change as a way of life.

Living near the banks of the Xiangjiang River in Changsha, capital of central China's Hunan Province, reminds me of the Chinese saying “刻舟求剑,” literally “marking the rail to recover a sword dropped from a boat.” The proverb is about failed judgment in fluid situations where orientation constantly changes the needs. It must be understood that the sword was disconnected from the boat when it fell and instead joined the ever changing current of the running water. Recovering the weapon would require much greater effort than noting where it fell off on the boat's deck. Such a mark has no connection whatsoever to the goal, regardless of where the missing item was last seen relative to the boat. Hanging on to obsolete knowledge is just foolish.

In Germany, when someone failed to comprehend a

perfectly straightforward statement, a saying goes: “Am I talking in Chinese, or are you misunderstanding me on purpose?” There, if someone is “speaking Chinese,” the speaker loses them. More often than not, this lament is heard among quarreling couples. The point is that at least one side in a partnership feels frustrated over unsuccessful efforts to be understood. Language cuts both ways: It enables us to digest meaning and it excludes those who do not own the code.

How to talk about change has continuously puzzled European philosophers since Aristotle (384-322 B.C.). When reviewing a person's biography, why do we assume it is the same person all those years, despite knowing that people change dramatically throughout life? We have good reason to assume that we are responsible and

accountable for the actions of our past and future self. But what are the reasons? We understand something about human nature. We are not like a jigsaw puzzle assembled from tiny pieces of perception over time. We are living beings. Life is defined as change according to a pattern. The languages we use to express this understanding must capture meaning transcending words, such as what follows the last and what precedes the first—the true meaning. We do grasp the content only by understanding the meaning between lines and being able to share it. We actually have the ability to articulate abstractions and partake in a poetic experience.

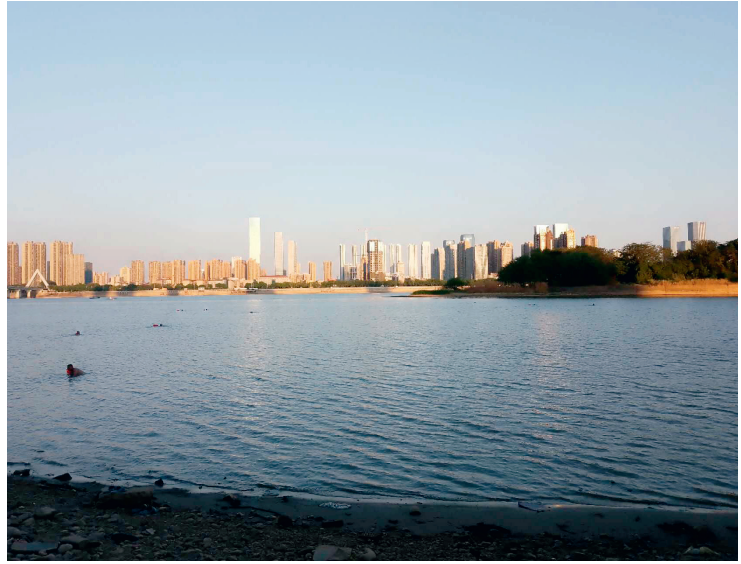
What does it mean to be “on the way”? For many Germans, progress is not an end in itself. They value the steps it takes to get there. Some find it easy to accept that a goal can

justify the means, but others can accept that the means change the goal that they have anticipated. Even on the “glass half full or half empty” choice, some are happy to just drink and then ponder ratios in a refreshed state of mind.

I am currently living in Changsha, where I have been puzzled by the regiment of traffic rules. From personal experience, I can confirm that cars behave in an orderly manner, making me feel as safe as at home. Small motorcycles, however, seem to operate in a world of their own to cater to the needs of countless businesses by delivering all sorts of vendible. Pedestrians are not safe from them, not on sidewalks, or in underpasses, regardless of the direction. Though I never witnessed a physical accident, local friends have told me there have been some, but most people are satisfied with the safety standards that have been achieved and believe the situation is improving.

Germans would see these two interpretations as contradictory, but in China, progress is emphasized and taken as a promise that things are continuing to get better. Germans expect a clear statement on things that have not been accomplished and reasons why. Their focus is on explicit analysis instead of trust in due process.

How can “Chinese” be considered just another language rather than the epitome of ambiguity? Of course, such a quandary should be left to the Germans. Still, it is important for



Pictured is a section of the Xiangjiang River. The author once swam in it while following safety rules learned from locals, such as using a protective air cushion. (Photo courtesy of Ole Döring)

everyone to understand the current state of affairs. Can we change the ways in which we talk about change? As the Xiangjiang River passes the city of Changsha, it splits to create Orange Island. The river bed is so flat and the water so placid that it is often difficult to tell that it runs north or south. To find out, one must consult higher-order knowledge or resort to proper methods such as using a compass and conducting an investigation.

Personally, I have found an answer in this river. Sometimes, the only way to understand is to accept the challenge and welcome experience with an open mind and learning spirit. Swimming in the waters of the Xiangjiang River and

diving its depths hasn't delivered me an ancient sword that was lost due to poor judgment. I have received something of greater value. These waters have become reasonably clean and safe to enjoy swimming in them if only by following the model of the locals. Prudent trust in strange customs is reasonable when they are adaptive and based on reflected experience. The only way is to embrace change as a way of life. 🍵

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A Decade of Glory

By Gong Haiying

Over the past decade, China has widened its embrace for cooperation and interaction with the outside world to explore and share new development opportunities.

Between 2012 and 2022, China made remarkable achievements in terms of economic and social progress. It solidified China's status as the world's second-largest economy, realized its first centenary goal of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects, and embarked on a journey to fully build a modern socialist China. With resolve, it pursued innovative, coordinated, green, open and shared development, and welcomed great improvements in people's livelihood and social equality.

Meanwhile, the country expanded its openness and sought cooperation and interaction with the outside world to explore and share new development opportunities. Measures included shortening the negative list for foreign investment, issuing the Foreign Investment Law to protect the legitimate rights and interests of foreign investors, opening more sectors for foreign capital, and advancing the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to enable more countries to share opportunities brought by China's development.

SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT

"It's hard to put China's development achievements over the past 10 years into words," said Zheng Yongnian, president of the Advanced Institute of Global and Contemporary China Studies at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (Shenzhen). "If I had to choose one word, it would be 'significant.'" He added that since 2012, great changes have taken place in China, especially across the political spectrum, which helped the country find a clear roadmap towards modernization and possibly provided an alternative model



The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Qingdao Summit presents a light and firework show themed “Friends from Afar” to welcome guests from all over the world at the Olympic Sailing Center in Qingdao City, eastern China’s Shandong Province, June 9, 2018. (Photo by Wan Quan/*China Pictorial*)

for countries seeking political independence and economic development.

Across the decade, China has seen a continuous increase in comprehensive national strength, with its GDP growing from 54 trillion yuan (US\$7.99 trillion) in 2012 to 114 trillion yuan (US\$16.87 trillion) in 2021. The average annual growth rate reached 6.5 percent, leading most major economies in the world.

Increasing national strength has resulted in improved living standards for all people. In 2012, 98.99 million rural people were living under the national poverty line. In 2020, all of

them had shaken off poverty. They are now free from worries over food and clothing and have access to compulsory

“It’s hard to put China's development achievements over the past 10 years into words. If I had to choose one word, it would be ‘significant’.”

education, basic medical services and safe housing.

China has resolutely practiced a green development philosophy over the last decade. By 2021, thanks

to the optimizing energy consumption structure, clean energy accounted for 25.5 percent of total energy

consumption, up by 11 percentage points compared to 2012. China also actively facilitated the signing of the Paris Agreement and carried out extensive South-South



A flock of 16 wild Asian elephants rest in the jungle on their way to the north after leaving the Xishuangbanna National Nature Reserve in southwestern China's Yunnan Province, June 13, 2021. The trip of the wandering elephants not only reflected Chinese people's care for wildlife protection, but also triggered greater attention and deeper thinking on ecological protection globally. (Photo courtesy of Yunnan Provincial Forest Fire Brigade)

cooperation in addressing climate change. The country has spared no efforts to realize its goals of peaking carbon dioxide emissions before 2030 and realizing carbon neutrality before 2060.

RECIPROCAL COOPERATION

Despite international uncertainties throughout the decade, China has carried out opening up in a larger

scope, wider areas, and at a deeper level, seeking to share opportunities and pursue common development with other countries in the world.

China continues to expand its scale of foreign trade. From 2012 to 2021, China's total import and export of goods increased from US\$3.87 trillion to US\$6.06 trillion, and the average annual growth of goods imports was 11.9 percent,

2.2 times higher than the world growth rate during the same period, strengthening China's status as the world's largest goods trader. In the decade, 21 pilot free trade zones and the Hainan Free Trade Port were set up as models and experimental fields for further opening to the outside world.

China has upheld the multilateral trading system and promoted the globalization drive. China proposes to build a global community of shared future, calling on countries to share weal and woe and work together to create a bright future for all. Cooperation under the BRI framework expanded from Eurasia and the Asia-Pacific region to Africa and Latin America. As of April 2022, 149 countries and 32 international organizations had signed official documents on BRI cooperation with China.

China supports multilateral mechanisms like the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the G20 in playing constructive roles in the world. It proposed and participated in the establishment of multilateral cooperation platforms such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Boao Forum for Asia, the BRICS cooperation mechanism, and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. By doing so, China has made positive and constructive efforts to build a more innovative, dynamic, interconnected, and inclusive world economic system. 🌐

Embarking on a New Journey

By Sundar Nath Bhattarai

The 20th CPC National Congress is expected to come out with a blueprint and guidelines for national rejuvenation and to embark upon a new journey to build China into a modern socialist country in all respects.

The National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), which takes place every five years, is one of the most important political events of the People's Republic of China (PRC). More than 2,200 delegates attended the 20th CPC National Congress, which began on October 16 this year. They represent over 96 million members of the CPC, the world's largest Marxist governing party, and over 4.9 million primary-level Party organizations. Each CPC National Congress, in its term of five years, holds plenary sessions on various subjects of importance.

Although the CPC National Congress is an internal political affair of China, which reviews the outcomes of the Party's work in the preceding five years and draws the roadmap

for the next five years, its decisions are considered to be greatly affecting global political and socio-economic affairs. It, therefore, tempts the leaders of various countries, big and small, to remain attentive to the influence of the decisions of the CPC National Congress.

The 20th CPC National Congress is being viewed with great interest as it is taking place in the aftermath of major complicated and grave situations adversely affecting global peace and stability and severely dampening the pace of international economic development for long, caused by natural and man-made disasters that severely impacted rule-based global security, supply chain system of energy and food, and resultant inflationary trend in the world economy. Moreover, China was made to bear with confrontational behaviors

pursued by the United States and its Western allies by gearing strategic schemes such as Indo-Pacific, QUAD, and AUKUS, aimed at containing China's rise.

In the midst of these anomalies, it is heartening to see that China's option is primarily aimed at strengthening its resolve to march ahead with its solemn objective of building a modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious and beautiful by the 100th anniversary of the PRC in 2049, on its own, with concerted efforts of its 1.4 billion people of all ethnic groups. One cannot help but appreciate the achievement that China has made in accomplishing the First Centenary Goal of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects, which was also



A bird's-eye view of Pudong New Area in Shanghai, July 22, 2017. Since the first pilot free trade zone (FTZ) was launched in Pudong in 2013, the total number of FTZs in China has grown to 21. In recent years, China has strengthened international cooperation and economic exchange through those FTZs, reflecting its insistence on openness and inclusiveness. (Photo by Wang Zhengkun)

marked by its unprecedented achievement of eliminating absolute poverty by the end of 2020, superseding by 10 years in advance the time limit set by the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Xi Jinping delivered a very comprehensive report to the 20th CPC National Congress. He hailed the great transformation in the first decade of the new era as “a milestone in the history of the CPC, of the People’s Republic of China, of reform and opening up, of the development of socialism, and of the development of the Chinese nation.”

The theme of the Congress is holding high the great banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics, fully implementing the Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, carrying forward the great founding spirit of the

Party, staying confident and building strength, upholding fundamental principles and breaking new ground, forging ahead with enterprise and fortitude, and striving in unity to build a modern socialist country in all respects and advance the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation on all fronts.

“We embraced the centenary of the Communist Party of China; we ushered in a new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics; and we eradicated absolute poverty and finished building a moderately prosperous society in all respects, thus completing the First Centenary Goal,” said Xi at the Congress, calling these three major events as “historic feats.” “From this day forward, the central task of the CPC will be to lead the Chinese people of all ethnic groups in a concerted effort to realize the Second Centenary Goal of building China into

a great modern socialist country in all respects and to advance the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation on all fronts through a Chinese path to modernization,” Xi said as he expounded on the missions and tasks of the CPC on the new journey of the new era.

He pointed out that on the journey ahead, China must firmly adhere to the following major principles: upholding and strengthening the Party’s overall leadership; following the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics; applying a people-centered development philosophy; remaining committed to deepening reform and opening up; and carrying forward the fighting spirit.

Xi also noted that China, with a people-centered philosophy of development, has built the largest education, social security, and health care systems around the globe. Other great achievements highlighted by Xi ranged from the Belt and Road Initiative, which, as a collaborative endeavor, has been welcomed by the international community both as a public good and a cooperative platform; to the Chinese path to modernization, which he reaffirmed is the socialist modernization pursued under the leadership of the CPC, is the modernization of a huge population, of common prosperity for all, of material and cultural-ethical advancement, of harmony between humanity and nature and of peaceful development, adding that it offers humanity “a new choice” for achieving

modernization.

He also stressed tasks and targets in China's ambitious modernization drive, such as building a high-standard socialist market economy, advancing whole-process people's democracy, implementing the employment-first strategy as well as exercising law-based governance on all fronts. "The next five years will be crucial for getting our efforts to build a modern socialist country in all respects off to a good start," Xi said.

While fully affirming the Party's remarkable achievements, Xi urged all CPC members not to lose sight of the shortcomings, difficulties and problems, such as bottlenecks hindering high-quality development and wide gaps in development and income distribution between urban and rural areas and between regions. Xi urged the CPC to be ready to "withstand high winds, choppy waters, and even dangerous storms," and "to always stay alert and bear in mind that self-reform is a journey to which there is no end." Describing corruption as "a cancer to the vitality and ability of the Party," Xi called for the tough and protracted battle against it.

While underscoring that Marxism is the fundamental guiding ideology upon which the CPC and China are founded and thrive, he said, "Our experience has taught us that, at the fundamental level, we owe the success of our Party and socialism with Chinese characteristics to the fact that Marxism works,

particularly when it is adapted to the Chinese context and the needs of our times."

On the foreign policy front, Xi said that China remains firm in pursuing an independent foreign policy of peace. It has always decided its position and policy on issues based on its own merits, and it has strived to uphold the basic norms governing international relations and safeguard international fairness and justice.

He reiterated that China adheres to the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence in pursuing friendship and cooperation with other countries. It is committed to promoting a new type of international relations, deepening and expanding global partnerships based on equality, openness, and cooperation, and broadening the convergence of interests with other countries.

China adheres to the right course of economic globalization and opposes all forms of unilateralism, said the report. Xi pointed out that China stands firmly against all forms of hegemonism and power politics, the Cold War mentality, interference in other countries' internal affairs, and double standards. "No matter what stage of development it reaches, China will never seek hegemony or engage in expansionism," he said.

Guided by the principles of sincerity, real results, affinity, and good faith and with a commitment to the greater good and shared interests, China endeavors to strengthen solidarity and cooperation

with other developing countries and safeguard the common interests of the developing world, Xi said. "China plays an active part in the reform and development of the global governance system. It pursues a vision of global governance featuring shared growth through discussion and collaboration. China upholds true multilateralism, promotes greater democracy in international relations, and works to make global governance fairer and more equitable."

The Chinese people are ready to work hand in hand with people across the world to create an even brighter future for humanity, Xi said.

The 20th CPC National Congress is expected to come out with a blueprint and guidelines for national rejuvenation and to embark upon a new journey to build China into a modern socialist country in all respects. With strong dedication and zeal of the Chinese people of all ethnic groups and their wisdom and resilience, along with the implementation of Xi Jinping Thought of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for the New Era under the overall leadership of the CPC, it can be confidently said that the goals set forth are bound to be achieved. I would like to extend my best wishes to China and its dedicated people for all the success in their great nation-building tasks and their impending endeavors. 🇨🇳

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The author is the officiating chairman of the China Study Center in Nepal.

Continuing China-Armenia Friendship

By Hu Zhentao

Armenian people have recently shown increasing interest in China and are paying close attention to China's modernization and reforms. The traditional friendship of our two ancient civilizations will continue robustly in the new era.

The year 2022 marks the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and Armenia. The two nations have conducted profound exchanges in culture, academia, and other areas throughout history. Armenia is situated along the middle of the ancient Silk Road, which linked the Caucasian country with China some 2,000 years ago.

Over the past three decades, China and Armenia have seen a notable increase in friendly interaction and made remarkable achievements in bilateral cooperation on

trade, economics, agriculture, culture, and other fields. In 2013, inspired by the ancient Silk Road, China proposed the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which kindles new momentum and creates new opportunities for bilateral cooperation.

Armenian Ambassador to China Sergey Manassarian, now 63, once served as Armenia's ambassador to Egypt and vice foreign minister. Since May 2016, he has been the Armenian ambassador to China. A senior diplomat, Manassarian has visited many countries, but the unique culture and vast

territory of China impressed him the most. Over the past seven years since he took office as Armenia's ambassador to China, he has traveled to many provinces and cities across China. The experiences made him fall in love with the country's landscapes, lifestyles, and folk customs while gaining insight into the diversity of Chinese culture.

On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of China-Armenia diplomatic ties, Ambassador Manassarian sat down for an exclusive interview with *China-India Dialogue* (CID) during which he expounded on the achievements in

bilateral relations over the past three decades and shared his views on how to carry forward traditional friendship between China and Armenia in the new era.

CID: 2022 marks the 30th anniversary of the establishment of China-Armenia diplomatic ties. What do you think of current bilateral relations?

Manassarian: Thirty years ago, Armenia and China started diplomatic relations from scratch. Today, the two countries have realized remarkable achievements in cooperation on politics, economics, culture, and other fields. I would define the Armenia-China relationship as one of mutual trust. The two countries have signed a bilateral visa waiver agreement without any additional conditions, which perfectly embodies the high degree of mutual trust

Today, the two countries have realized remarkable achievements in cooperation on politics, economics, culture, and other fields. I would define the Armenia-China relationship as one of mutual trust.

and mutual understanding between the two sides.

Armenia and China enjoy promising cooperation potential in various areas. The Confucius Institute established by China in Armenia provides a space for Armenian people to study Chinese language and culture and plays a crucial

role in promoting Sinology research in Armenia. Today, Yerevan State University offers Chinese translation courses, which has lifted Chinese language studies to a new height in Armenia. Beijing Foreign Studies University in China has also launched research programs on Armenian language and culture. Many Chinese students from those programs can speak the Armenian language fluently and actively study Armenian culture, including folklores and dances. I sincerely hope that the two countries can make steady progress in cultural cooperation and communication.

CID: Across the seven years since you became Armenia's ambassador to China, you have traveled to many places in China. What attracted and impressed you most in China?

Manassarian: Considering the vastness of China, it's hard to choose a place as the most attractive. The boundless grasslands in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, the vast, spectacular deserts in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, and the emerald-like lakes in southern China all stunned me.



Armenian Ambassador to China Sergey Manassarian has insight into the diversity of Chinese culture. (Photo by Duan Wei/China Pictorial)

Perhaps I can only be sure that I'm obsessed with the many towns preserving traditional lifestyles, sated with strong Chinese flavor. Of course, in addition to picturesque landscapes and tranquil neighborhoods, China's economic prosperity and fine traditional values are also impressive.

CID: As we all know, China and Armenia enjoy a lasting friendship. Bilateral exchange can be traced back to the original Silk Road more than 2,000 years ago. Armenia has shown great interest in building the Belt and Road. Could you describe the highlights of China-Armenia cooperation under the framework of the BRI?

Manassarian: Armenia was the first Eastern European country to voice complete support for the BRI. We



An Armenian girl takes a selfie with children from a Peking Opera performance team at a local kindergarten in Xiaopu Town, Zhejiang Province, during a rural folk customs experiencing activity held to celebrate the traditional Mid-Autumn Festival. (Photo by Xu Yu/Xinhua)

believe that the initiative can not only boost economic growth but also facilitate cooperation in other fields and kindle the common development of all mankind. It is a global solution conducive to both bilateral cooperation and regional cooperation.

Under the framework of the BRI, Armenia and China have carried out cooperation in fields like transportation, infrastructure, and energy, and Chinese enterprises are playing an active role in bilateral cooperation in those areas. For instance, the North-South Highway constructed by a Chinese company in Armenia has played an essential role in boosting Armenia's economic development. The transport corridor runs through Iran and Black Sea ports and links

Armenia with Türkiye as a key project of the BRI.

From high-quality construction of highways to continuous expansion of infrastructure projects and deepening cooperation in the field of energy, the BRI has shown tremendous vitality and infinite potential.

CID: Amid severe impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and global changes, both of a scale unseen in a century, on September 21, 2021, Chinese President Xi Jinping announced the Global Development Initiative (GDI) at the General Debate of the 76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, calling for work to steer global development toward a new stage of balanced, coordinated, and inclusive

growth. What do you think of the GDI?

Manassarian: In my view, the GDI is a wider and richer version of the BRI. The BRI is a cooperation initiative involving specific regions and directions, while the GDI is a solution for common development of the world.

Armenia will fully support the GDI just as we do to the BRI. Moreover, Armenia is actively practicing the GDI.

CID: This October, the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) will open in Beijing. What do you expect the congress to bring to China's development and China-Armenia relations in the years to come?

Manassarian: We'll soon witness the convening of the 20th CPC National Congress. The decisions and resolutions made at the congress will be vital to China's development over the next five years. We're expecting the outcomes of the congress, which will determine the direction of the country's development in politics, economics, society, and other areas. I believe that the resolutions reached at the congress will become the strongest voices in this unusual era.

Relations with China are a top priority of Armenia's diplomacy. Armenian people have recently shown increasing interest in China and are paying close attention to China's modernization and reforms. The traditional friendship of our two ancient civilizations will continue robustly in the new era. 📸

BRI Connecting Hearts

By Bian Xiuhong

Connectivity is fundamental to the widening and strengthening of bilateral relations.

“It was a dream come true for me to see what China looks like today,” Nepali Ambassador to China Bishnu Pukar Shrestha said to *China-India Dialogue* (CID) during an exclusive interview on China-Nepal relations and his take on China’s development. The former human rights activist and community teacher views diplomacy from a new perspective and is eager to make practical efforts to promote bilateral relations.

CID: You had been engaged in education and human rights undertakings at the community level in Nepal for a long time before you became devoted to diplomatic work. In your view, how does that experience help with diplomacy?

Shrestha: Diplomacy is about developing relations between people from different countries, and the knowledge and experience I have accumulated from education and human rights undertakings have helped me a lot in that field. I

taught about socioeconomic conditions for nearly three decades. I also worked as a human rights activist for a long time and chaired the Campaign for Human Rights and Social Transformation, a non-government organization in Nepal advocating protection and promotion of human rights. Human rights issues cover a broad scope of economic, social, political, and other aspects and inspire me to drive social transformation and view international relations among and between countries from a different angle. I haven’t done all that much for human rights.

CID: As the new Nepali ambassador to China, what are your priorities during your term here and what is your expectation for the bilateral relationship?

Shrestha: Nepal and China established diplomatic ties in 1955, ushering into a new era for the deep and ancient bonds of friendship between the two countries and the two peoples. But Nepal and China are not only working as diplomatic

partners; they have different layers of relations beyond the common diplomatic ties. The Nepal-China relationship is a unique one with people-to-people and cultural exchange dating back to ancient times and the two peoples enjoying a deep foundation of mutual understanding and trust. No other bilateral relations are as robust and unique as those between Nepal and China.

My work focus, first and foremost, is to strengthen and deepen bilateral relations. I will make more pragmatic efforts to promote bilateral trade and investment and expand people-to-people exchange and tourism cooperation, but at the same time, the two sides have to work together to resume day-to-day activities after the COVID-19 pandemic disturbed transportation between the two countries. Both sides are working to solve the issue. Recently, several loaded trucks arrived in Nepal from China. I hope the Chinese government also encourages Chinese companies to participate more



Nepali Ambassador to China Bishnu Pukar Shrestha speaks to *China-India Dialogue* about China-Nepal relations and China's development at the Embassy of Nepal in China, September 27, 2022.
(Photo by Xu Xun/China Pictorial)

in various areas of investment in Nepal to help bilateral relations move forward in the direction of win-win cooperation.

CID: What impresses you most in China and what do you think of China's development in recent years?

Shrestha: Only 75 days have passed since I assumed office in China, but I have already been impressed by the economic development of the country. I got the opportunity to go on a business trip to Qingdao, eastern China's Shandong Province, the old and modern city famous for its beer brewery, and to Yinchuan, capital of northwestern China's Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region.

The trip to Ningxia was particularly exciting because I realized that the region and even the country's development miracle all boils down to the

important "3Ps," namely policy, people, and programs. Good policy, reliable programs, and committed people can turn deserts into forests, provide development opportunities, and transform the country. I think that's an important reason China has been able to continue injecting momentum in global growth even during a worldwide economic slowdown.

CID: China and Nepal enjoy excellent age-old relations. What do you think of the significance of cultural and people-to-people exchange between the two countries? What is your hope for bilateral relations in this respect?

Shrestha: The Nepal-China relationship has a long-standing history. The friendly relations between the two countries have evolved since the days of the Nepali monk and scholar Buddhahadra (359-429) who translated Indian Buddhist texts into Chinese in the early 5th century, and visits to Nepal by Chinese monks Faxian (334-420) and Xuanzang (602-644). As Buddhism and Hinduism developed and changed over the centuries throughout Asia, both religions prospered in Nepal.

Looking ahead, it's important to promote high-level visits between the two countries that send a message to the community as well as local-level exchange. My diplomatic priority is to enhance people-to-people exchange. The media can play an important role in helping the two peoples learn more about each other. I should admit that this is a dream come true for me to serve as

an ambassador and see what China looks like today. I believe the Nepalese people are all excited to learn more about China. Likewise, I hope more Chinese people visit Nepal and see the beautiful tourist country in person.

CID: China-Nepal cooperation has gained momentum since Nepal joined the China-proposed BRI in 2017. In what areas has China-Nepal cooperation achieved fruitful results over the years?

Shrestha: The focus of the BRI is connectivity. The BRI has a very deep philosophical meaning, like it is waking up the ancient history of the Silk Road. Nepal is glad that it joined the initiative five years ago. Nepal is an underdeveloped country and it cannot construct mega projects on its own, so it needs to work with China. The two countries have carried out fruitful cooperation in infrastructure construction covering roads, airports, electric power generation, and water conservancy.

In an August meeting between Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Nepali Foreign Minister Narayan Khadka, Wang announced China would use aid funds for Nepal to support the feasibility study for the China-Nepal cross-border railway and send experts to Nepal to conduct survey work this year. This is of utmost significance for trade, transport, investment, and people-to-people exchange between the two countries. Such a project will not only connect the two peoples

physically, but also help build heart-to-heart connections.

CID: The cross-border railway project between China and Nepal is an important consensus reached by the heads of state and a project of the century for China-Nepal connectivity. How important is cooperation on such infrastructure projects for Nepal?

Shrestha: Connectivity is fundamental to the widening and strengthening of bilateral relations. The China-Nepal cross-border railway is designed to link Shigatse in southwestern China's Tibet Autonomous Region to Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal. Once the railway is completed, connectivity between the two countries will be enhanced by minimizing the time, cost, and effort while maximizing the output of bilateral trade and investment. The railway will help bring excellent Nepali goods such as cashmere fabrics, wood products, handicrafts, and organic alpine agricultural products to China while transferring China's technological development to Nepal.

The Nepali government and people are looking forward to the construction of the railway. Nepal will definitely benefit from it in trade and people-to-people exchange. At the same time, the railway can also strengthen China's connectivity with South Asia.

CID: When the world is living through accelerating changes unseen in a century and continued spread of



Nepali artists perform during the inauguration ceremony for the Confucius Institute at Tribhuvan University in Kathmandu, August 16, 2022. More than 30,000 learners have been registered with the Confucius institutes at Kathmandu University and Tribhuvan University, contributing manpower to Nepal's tourism, infrastructure, business and trade sectors in particular. (Photo from Xinhua)

the COVID-19 pandemic, Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed the Global Development Initiative (GDI), calling to bolster confidence and jointly address global threats and challenges to build a better world for all. In your opinion, what role will the GDI play?

Shrestha: The GDI is not about the development of any single nation, community, or group of people. It meets the common aspirations of the international community to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, and its implementation will be an important practice for the international community to protect human rights and expand democracy. That is the main theme of the GDI. The initiative has been well received in Nepal, and Nepal

plans to complete two projects under the GDI.

CID: This October, the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) will open in Beijing. What are you looking for at the congress?

Shrestha: The whole world is looking to Beijing, China, for the big political event. Messages about the congress circulating on social media worldwide show that people are highly interested. It is also an exciting moment for me because democracy with Chinese characteristics will develop to a new level at the meeting. My expectations for the congress is that it will lay the foundation for building China into a modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious, and beautiful. 🇳🇵

You Can Rely on Pakistan Through Thick and Thin

By Hu Zhoumeng

Photos courtesy of the Embassy of Pakistan in Beijing unless otherwise credited

China-Pakistan friendship demonstrates how amicable bilateral relations benefit both sides and the wider international community.

Not many countries have developed bilateral relations strong enough to be described as an “iron brotherhood.” After 71 years of development, China-Pakistan diplomatic ties have earned this reputation alongside growing friendship between the two peoples. Mr. Moin ul Haque, Pakistani ambassador to China, has witnessed much of this amicability. Warmly greeted wherever he traveled in China, Ambassador Haque has been impressed by remarkable achievements of China and the improved livelihood of its people.

“Every day in China is a day of

discovery,” Ambassador Haque told *China-India Dialogue* (CID) reporters during an exclusive interview. The ambassador began his work in China two years ago after finishing his tenure as Pakistan’s ambassador to France. After working with his Chinese counterparts closely on international platforms, Ambassador Haque was offered the chance to experience fast-changing China in person. He was particularly struck by the country’s interconnected transport network, strong public awareness about the environment, and poverty alleviation effort. The ambassador realized

that Chinese development experience was worth learning for Pakistan.

Pakistan has also embraced emerging development opportunities over the past decade particularly as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), proceeds steadily. Ambassador Haque spoke highly of the project’s contribution to alleviating energy shortages, boosting employment, and strengthening regional connectivity in Pakistan.

Thanks to “all-weather friendship and all-round cooperation,” Pakistan-China relations keep moving

forward. According to the ambassador, deeply rooted trust and respect from each other in cooperation can help both countries overcome global challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, extremism, poverty, and hunger.

“More importantly, we are working together to help, not only each other, but the wider international community, especially developing countries,” said Ambassador Haque.

CID: You worked in many countries as a diplomat before coming to China. What impressed you most in China? And what do you think of China’s development in recent years?

Haque: I have been in China for two years and have traveled a lot. I’ve been very impressed by the scale and quality of China’s development over the years. Seeing is believing. So many things have impressed me, especially infrastructure. China is a world leader in highway and high-speed trains. It has connected different provinces, different cities, and remote areas, shortening the distance between people, opening new avenues for people, and creating new jobs. It’s remarkable.

And secondly, China’s campaign against poverty is a miracle. It’s amazing that 800 million people have been brought out of poverty over more than 40 years. It’s a model we need to adopt. It is a whole-nation

and whole-government approach. Chinese people, enterprises, and government functionaries have all been involved. Many people have been sent on special assignments to remote areas to help locals escape poverty by training them in agriculture and e-commerce as well as how to market their products.

I have also been impressed by China’s focus on the environment. There is a strong focus not only at the top level but also at the county level. Awareness about the environment, climate change, ecology, rural revitalization, and preserving our surroundings is very important. Many of China’s technologies are leading the world, and China uses them to build smart cities and smart industries. I could go on and on. Every day in China is a day of discovery.

CID: What is the priority of your work in China? What efforts are you making to deepen Chinese people’s understanding of Pakistan?

Haque: The Pakistan-China relationship is very deep and wide, and the two sides are cooperating closely in many areas, so my plate is full. In recent times, Pakistan and China have been focusing on the economic relationship. Half of my time is spent on trade, investment, and agriculture, among other sectors, to promote economic cooperation and bring new business opportunities to increase bilateral trade. China is already our largest



Pakistani Ambassador to China Moin ul Haque gives an exclusive interview to *China-India Dialogue* at the Embassy of Pakistan in Beijing, July 27, 2022.
(Photo by Xu Xun/China Pictorial)

trading partner. Last year, despite COVID-19, we saw a record increase in bilateral trade. There is ongoing effort in both countries.

The second point is improving understanding of Pakistan in China. When I came to China, I established a social media cell at the embassy to focus on Chinese social media. We opened accounts on many platforms, and I also have personal accounts. On a daily basis, we promote not only friendship but also Pakistan’s beautiful landscapes, tourism, and culture, to bring a better understanding of Pakistan to China.

CID: Pakistan and China established diplomatic relations 71 years ago. What is your impression of this all-weather friendship and all-round cooperation

built over so many years?

Haque: It's a very unique relationship. Some expressions to describe this relationship are quite special, like "iron brotherhood." Whenever I tell people in China that I'm from Pakistan, they say "*Ba Tie*" (meaning "ironclad brother"). That's a very unique expression only for Pakistan. In Pakistan, we say that our relationship is higher than the mountains, deeper than the ocean, sweeter than honey, and stronger than steel. This relationship has been nurtured over the years by the successive generations of people and leadership. The relationship is based on "four mutuals"—mutual trust, mutual respect, mutual support, and mutual cooperation, whether at the bilateral level or international level. It is very important

for us to continue this strategic trust and strategic cooperation, not only for the current generation, but also for the future.

culture, and education are important areas for cooperation. Fostering better understanding between our two peoples is also very

We are working together to help, not only each other, but the wider international community, especially developing countries, in meeting challenges such as the pandemic, climate change, extremism, poverty, and hunger. All these areas require cooperation at the global level.

In the current international environment in which we face so many challenges, Pakistan and China's deep-rooted trust and respect for each other in cooperation can help us overcome these challenges together. Bilaterally, trade, technology, industry,

important, so we need more people-to-people exchange. A stronger relationship between Pakistan and China benefits both countries and peoples. Pakistan will always stand with China. In good times and bad times, you can always rely on Pakistan.

CID: What do you think of the progress on the CPEC? What changes has this flagship project of the BRI brought to the Pakistani people?

Haque: It's been a game changer for Pakistan. The CPEC has transformed the economic landscape of Pakistan and upgraded the physical and communication network across the country. Pakistan has been facing an energy shortage for many years, but under the CPEC we have established many new energy projects. We now have clean energy like hydro, solar, and wind, which has helped alleviate the energy shortage in the country. The social and economic



A puppet show co-hosted by the Embassy of Pakistan and the China Puppet Art Theatre, in collaboration with Rafi Peer Theater Workshop, to celebrate Pakistani and Chinese civilization and culture through puppetry and related arts at the China Puppet Art Theatre in Beijing, March 21, 2021.

development of Pakistan has also been greatly improved. In the CPEC phase-II, we are focused on industry and agriculture, which is directly benefiting common people, creating jobs, and upgrading remote areas. The CPEC has not only helped Pakistan, but also promoted regional integration and connectivity.

CID: Cultural exchange and people-to-people bonds are fundamental to lasting friendship between Pakistan and China. What is your hope for bilateral relations in this respect?

Haque: Last year we celebrated the 70th anniversary of Pakistan-China diplomatic ties. We organized more than 140 events, which was unprecedented in the two countries. The majority of them were related to cultural or people-to-people exchange. In the 70 years, we established 20 sister-city and sister-province relationships, and in the last year—just one year—we doubled that number. Another important thing is tourism. China is a beautiful and diverse country, and so is Pakistan. We have a lot to offer Chinese travelers. Last year we signed an MOU on tourism cooperation. The year 2023 has been designated the year of tourism exchanges between our two countries. We hope that Chinese people will travel to Pakistan and that Pakistani travelers will explore China.

CID: What roles do you expect Pakistan and China to play on multilateral



Pakistani Ambassador to China Moin ul Haque visits a cultural stall at the annual International Culture Day of the Pakistan Embassy College Beijing, June 5, 2021. Diplomats, officials, media representatives and students, along with their families, participated in this cultural event where representatives of 27 countries set up cultural stalls to exhibit their handcrafts, cultural products and national cuisine.

platforms to ensure regional peace, stability, and prosperity?

Haque: We are always supporting each other in the UN and other international platforms. I was ambassador to UNESCO before coming to China, so I have worked closely with Chinese colleagues in these international institutions. President Xi has mentioned many times that we must work together to address challenges facing the international community. Pakistan and China are cooperating at the international level because our cooperation and relationship effectively

foster peace and stability in the world. And Pakistan is a strong partner of China and the BRI. We have strongly supported President Xi's Global Development Initiative. We are working together to help, not only each other, but the wider international community, especially developing countries, in meeting challenges such as the pandemic, climate change, extremism, poverty, and hunger. All these areas require cooperation at the global level. Pakistan and China, as responsible members of the international community, will continue to work together to address such challenges. 📌

The Pinnacle of Serbia-China Relations

By Wang Shuya

There has been a special bond between our two peoples. Although our two countries are geographically far apart, our two peoples are close in heart.

On the morning of July 16, 2022, a Chinese Hainan Airlines Airbus A330 carrying 200 passengers landed at Belgrade's Nikola Tesla Airport. It was one of the first intercontinental regular passenger routes from Beijing that the Chinese carrier resumed since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the first nonstop flight from Beijing to Belgrade. Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic welcomed the fruitful tie-up between China and Central and Eastern Europe at the airport.

"Current relations between Serbia and China are at the highest level in history," said Serbian Ambassador to China Maja Stefanovic during a

recent exclusive interview with *China-India Dialogue* (CID) in Beijing. Noting that the direct flights would open new opportunities for bilateral cooperation, she pointed out that they "will undoubtedly help increase cooperation at all levels, especially personnel exchange and tourist flow."

In recent years, Serbia has been at the forefront of China's cooperation with Central and Eastern Europe. Business ties between the two countries have expanded rapidly. Bilateral trade hit 5.3 billion euros in 2021, and the volume of Serbia's exports to China increased 15 times over the past five years, said Serbian Prime Minister Ana Brnabic at the opening ceremony of the Chamber of

Chinese Companies in Serbia in March.

Marveling at the country's development in recent years, Ambassador Stefanovic singled out eradication of absolute poverty in China during the interview. She shared her views on key factors driving the ironclad friendship and outlined her work priorities in consolidating friendly ties and boosting cooperation in the years to come.

CID: We learned that you have more than two decades of experience working on Serbia's relations with China, including serving at the Serbian Embassy in Beijing. What impressed you most about China, and what do you think of China's

development in recent years?

Maja Stefanovic: I've been working in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia for 25 years, all the time covering our bilateral relations with China. The first time I visited China was in 1993 when I went to China's northeastern port city Dalian and spent about 10 months at Liaoning Normal University as a scholarship student. During that time, I was really impressed by the beauty of the city, and I cherish those memories as one of my best periods. I had excellent professors there and also made friends for a lifetime.

The second time I visited China was in 2007, and I was really impressed by the tremendous changes and development of the country. For example, I could barely recognize many places in Beijing. Now, I'm honored to serve as the ambassador

to Belgrade. Under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, our two countries have already engaged in considerable cooperation. This year marks the ninth anniversary of this initiative. What major changes has it brought to Serbia and Serbian people? In what fields do you think our two countries can carry out further cooperation?

Maja Stefanovic: Serbia has conducted numerous projects with China under the Belt and Road Initiative. A majority of them have been carried out in the fields of infrastructure and energy. The flagship project of joint construction is modernization of the Belgrade-Budapest rail link, which is a trilateral project involving Serbia, China, and Hungary. I am really pleased to inform you that part of this railway has recently begun operation.

Since its launch in 2013, we have been supporting and actively participating in the Belt and Road Initiative. We think that our participation in the initiative has helped Serbia become more visible to Chinese business circles. The projects have actually made Serbia more attractive to Chinese investors as well.

to China, especially while relations between Serbia and China are at the highest level in history.

CID: In July, China's Hainan Airlines launched direct flights from Beijing

We are also working on many projects involving construction of highways in Serbia. The most important is construction of Milos the Great, a new section of Serbia's international E-763



Maja Stefanovic, Serbian ambassador to China, gives an exclusive interview to *China-India Dialogue* in Beijing, September 16, 2022. (Photo by Wan Quan/China Pictorial)

highway. We are also working on big reconstruction projects of power plants. The first Chinese-built bridge in Europe was constructed in Belgrade over the Danube River. We are very proud that we are working on so many projects with China. We are also very grateful to Chinese companies because they haven't suspended their work, even during the most severe period of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since its launch in 2013, we have been supporting and actively participating in the Belt and Road Initiative. We think that our participation in the initiative has helped Serbia become more visible to Chinese business circles. The projects have actually made Serbia more attractive to Chinese investors as well. At the moment, we have two, I would say, the biggest Chinese



Serbian President Aleksandar Vuc (right) receives a gift from a Chinese pilot during a welcome ceremony at Nikola Tesla Airport in Belgrade, July 16, 2022. That day, China's Hainan Airlines launched a direct flight between Beijing, the capital of China, and Belgrade, the capital of Serbia. (Photo by Predrag Milosavljevic/Xinhua)

investments in Serbia, by Zijin Company in copper mining and HBIS Group in a steel mill, respectively.

Chinese investment in Serbia is very important because its presence helped preserve tens of thousands of jobs. What's more, the Chinese companies I've mentioned have been among Serbia's top exporters in recent years, so to some extent, they are also contributing to Serbia's economic growth as well. As an initiative of global importance, the Belt and Road Initiative focuses on connectivity. It has helped Serbia a lot in improving connectivity with other parts of the region.

CID: When the world is living through accelerating changes unseen in a century and continued spread of

the COVID-19 pandemic, Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed the Global Development Initiative, calling for bolstering confidence and jointly addressing global threats and challenges to build a better world for all. What role will these initiatives play in the world?

Maja Stefanovic: Since the very beginning, we have supported the Belt and Road Initiative, and attached great importance to all the initiatives coming from China.

During the visit of Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi to Serbia last October, both our President Mr. Alexander Vucic and Foreign Minister Nikola Selakovic extended support to the Global Development Initiative. We consider this initiative

important for implementation of the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals.

CP: Our two countries established diplomatic ties in 1955. Since then, we have forged a strong relationship. What do you think are the most important factors for the bilateral relationship to withstand the test of time? What goals do you hope to achieve as the Serbian ambassador to China?

Maja Stefanovic: Serbia and China are traditional friends, and our peoples are bonded by ironclad friendship. I would say that the basis of bilateral ties is good political relations and specifically excellent personal friendship between our presidents. The relationship between Serbia and China has been based on mutual trust, mutual understanding, and mutual support. Serbia has been strongly supporting the one-China principle, and we are also very grateful for China's support to our safeguarding of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and national dignity.

Being appointed the Serbian ambassador to China at the pinnacle of the relationship's history was a big honor, but also a big responsibility and challenge. First of all, my main goal will be further intensifying our dialogue at high and top political levels. We hope President Xi Jinping will pay another visit to Serbia very soon.

We are also interested in promoting visits and

exchanges at other levels and in other fields. When it comes to the economy, we are interested in further enhancement of our cooperation and welcome big Chinese investment in the fields of agriculture, IT, green energy, and the automotive industry. We believe that the free trade agreement between our two countries will be signed soon, which is of paramount importance to cooperation in these fields.

And we are looking forward to more agreements on exporting Serbian goods and products to the Chinese market. We are confident that by launching direct flights between Serbia and China, Hainan Airlines will soon be joined by our national carrier Air Serbia as we witnessed enhancement of cooperation in tourism after Serbia and China signed an agreement to abolish the visa regime for holders of the passports of the two countries. More great potential awaits to be tapped. In the years to come, we can expand practical cooperation in many fields.

CID: I know you speak Chinese very well. Are there many people learning Chinese in your country? What do you think of the people-to-people and cultural exchanges between our two countries?

Maja Stefanovic: Thank you. My daughter speaks Chinese even better than me. There has been a special bond between our two peoples. Although our two countries are geographically far apart, our two peoples are close in

heart. In recent years, Chinese has become increasingly popular in Serbia. In addition to Chinese departments in universities, many middle schools and primary schools have opened Chinese classes. The opening of direct flights will definitely enhance people-to-people contact between the two countries.

CID: This October, the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) will be held in Beijing. It's highly significant. What are your thoughts about the congress?

Maja Stefanovic: The 20th National Congress of the CPC is an event of utmost importance not only for

China, but also for the globe at large because the decisions and guidelines made by the congress will influence the whole world.

China has succeeded in accomplishing its first centenary goal by eradicating absolute poverty in the country, which exerted a positive impact at the global level. We are fully confident that China will succeed in accomplishing its second centenary goal and will become a prosperous, developed socialist country. We consider China's development tremendously important, so we have great expectations for the forthcoming 20th National Congress of the CPC. 📷



Serbian girls display their Chinese calligraphy at the 59th Belgrade Book Fair in Serbia, October 26, 2014. China participated in the book fair as the guest country of honor. (Photo from Xinhua)

A Blueprint for International Development Cooperation

By Sundar Nath Bhattarai

The GDI is seen as a major initiative for the new era and a practical blueprint for countries of the world to engage in international development cooperation.

Development has been a consistent pursuit of human society. The deep impact and profound changes brought by arrival at a crossroads of development has made the need for development even more urgent and pressing. The prolonged global challenge brought by the abrupt outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent recovery effort coinciding with other profound changes including the fallout of the Ukraine crisis have pushed back deliverance of the

United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which the international community has been seeking to achieve.

At this juncture, Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed the Global Development Initiative (GDI) at the general debate of the 76th session of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly on September 21, 2021, which was also the 50th anniversary of restoration of China's lawful seat in the UN. President Xi

called on the international community to "accelerate implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to build a global community of development with a shared future." His proposal has been seen as a major initiative for the new era that sets a practical blueprint for countries around the world to engage in international development cooperation.

Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi explained that the core concept of this initiative is people-oriented and seeks



Baipeng Town of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region is known as “China’s Home of Jade Lotus Roots.” Scenery around the town’s lotus pond has attracted many tourists. (Photo from IC)

well-rounded development with the ultimate goal of meeting the aspirations of all nations for improved living standards by solving difficult issues and creating more opportunities for development, leaving no countries or individuals behind.

The GDI can serve as an important cooperation platform to facilitate open and inclusive partnerships. It seems to have gained synergy from other initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and support from multilateral cooperation mechanisms such as the

UN, which China regards as the core of the multilateral governance system, BRICS, the G20, and various regional and sub-regional platforms.

While introducing the proposal, President Xi emphasized the need for harmony between man and nature. He pledged to follow China’s previous commitment to striving to peak carbon dioxide emissions before 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality before 2060. He pledged to increase China’s support for other developing countries on developing green and

low-carbon energy and stop building new coal-fired power projects abroad.

The GDI proposed by President Xi has drawn praise from leaders, scholars, and officials on a wider scale. UN Secretary-General António Guterres remarked in a statement that he was “encouraged” by Xi’s announcement regarding the commitment to climate action, and he called for “decisive action” by all countries, especially members of the G20, to effectively contribute to emission reductions.



Located in the Puzhehei Scenic Area, Xianrendong Village in Yunnan Province has risen to prosperity in recent years by harnessing its tourism resources. The area now attracts visitors from around the world with its natural beauty. (Photo by Qin Bin/China Pictorial)

The proposal of the GDI has led to the formation of a Group of Friends at the UN. The High-Level Meeting of the Group of Friends of the GDI was held on May 9, 2022, with participation from Wang Yi and António Guterres alongside representatives from more than 100 UN member countries and 27 prominent international organizations. The group focused on strengthening the prime initiative and developing it into a more elaborate form and scope with clarity on timeline and sectoral themes to make it a more effective instrument of development matching the overall social, economic, and political course evolving in the world today. The group resolved to

carry forward the objectives of the GDI through policy dialogue, experience sharing, and promotion of practical cooperation. It emphasized the primary need to focus on global crises that prevent the implementation of SDGs. It also stressed prioritization of the most pressing concerns of the developing countries in areas like poverty reduction, food security, economic recovery, employment, education, health and green development. Attendees suggested the GDI dovetail with other South-South cooperation initiatives to attract potential resources, which are lacking at the moment.

At a High-level Dialogue on Global Development held in Beijing on June 24, 2022, to

support the implementation of the GDI, President Xi delivered a speech entitled “Forging High-quality Partnerships for a New Era of Global Development.” “We are meeting at a time when the COVID-19 pandemic is eroding decades of gains in global development, the implementation of the UN’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is encountering difficulties, the North-South gap keeps widening, and crises are emerging in food and energy security,” Xi said. He urged countries to jointly create an enabling international environment for development and forge a global development partnership. “Developed countries need to fulfil obligations, developing countries need to deepen their cooperation, and the North and the South need to work in the same direction to forge a united, equal, balanced, and inclusive global development partnership.”

Another important conference was related to the International Civil Society Solidarity Conference, which vowed to promote the GDI in accordance with its guidelines and in a concerted way with other global development partners to create a combined driving force. Such broadening support for the GDI is indicative of the confidence of prominent institutions and people in the viability of Xi’s proposal seeking to attain the universal global objective of promoting the wellbeing

of the people and countries at large.

The Global Security Initiative (GSI) was first publicly proposed by President Xi at the opening ceremony of the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference in April 2022 and immediately aroused worldwide attention. The Western media called it the latest display of China's vision to offer an alternative global governance and security architecture. China's vision of the GSI is

stands out for good reason. Understanding the GDI from a wide angle requires tracing the development of its predecessor from concept to massive output around the world.

Despite numerous confrontational challenges and fallacious charges levelled against the initiative by the U.S. and its allies in particular, China's BRI has been well received and 149 countries and 32 international organizations have signed MOUs with

Malaysia, and Thailand. Most of these projects are completed, and some are still in progress. The BRI has achieved hard-won progress and significant outcomes through the inherent extensive connectivity parameters under its umbrella, both in the intra-regional and intercontinental scale. The BRI has remained, and will continue to remain, an unmatched initiative meeting the acute developmental needs of countries involved, but it will also act as an accelerator of the GDI's objectives in the days ahead.

Nepal, a committed member of the BRI, signed an MOU with China in 2017, and both sides agreed to build the Trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network. Through big infrastructural connectivity projects, Nepal envisions developing into a land-linked state instead of a landlocked one.

Now improved in form with solid internal financing mechanisms of its own, the BRI will certainly remain one of the strongest pillars of Chinese foreign policy, retaining its own unique connectivity-driven global development role for a long time to come as the GDI begins playing its part. ■

based on the principle of indivisible security, meaning no country can pursue its own security at the cost of others' security. It calls for common, comprehensible, cooperative, and sustainable security and contributing to an Asian family of unity and progress together. China's argument is that security and a peaceful environment are inarguable prerequisites for peaceful development of the world and the two complement each other, which has seemed to have gained ground in the international community.

Of all China's global initiatives, the BRI still

China so far. The BRI has been described as the most visionary and largest infrastructure program in human history, with more than half of the world's population and a third of global GDP directly involved. The Central Asian countries, on the mainland-route of the Belt and Road, have been designated for the most BRI projects, followed by the sub-Saharan region of Africa. In the Asian neighbourhood, countries undertaking BRI projects of substantive scale are Indonesia, Laos, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Bangladesh,

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The author is the officiating chairman of the China Study Center in Nepal.

Global Security Initiative: Off to a Promising Start but an Uphill Task

By Swaran Singh

The GSI seeks to address the world's increasingly complex security challenges by providing Chinese solutions rooted in the ancient wisdom of unique Chinese traditions.

After a decade of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Chinese President Xi Jinping launched two spin-offs, the Global Development Initiative (GDI) and the Global Security Initiative (GSI), in September 2021 and April 2022, respectively. The trio of programs has its proponents, partners, fence sitters and detractors, and over time, their ideas have all gained traction and attention worldwide.

As United Nations (UN) Secretary-General António Guterres prepares his ambitious 2023 Summit of the Future in September, which is expected to bring a "New Agenda for Peace," the debate is shifting from specific conflicts to crafting a transformative overarching global security governance architecture for the future that provides interesting space for the GSI to engage in global narratives. The last time the UN Secretary-General issued such a

proposal was in 1992, when Boutros-Boutros Ghali presented "An Agenda for Peace" that resulted in transforming the UN peacekeeping operations.

This makes the GSI a significant turning point and a catalyst for making critical value additions to this evolving discussion around a new global security architecture blueprint. Various commentators have already described the GSI as one potent non-Western alternative that

represents the aspirations of the combined Global South. However, to make a permanent mark on the emerging debate, China needs to convince nations of the Global North as well. They represent the architects and advocates of the existing post-World War II global security architecture.

In August, as the rotating president of the UN Security Council, China convened a special session dedicated to “Promoting Common Security through Dialogue and Cooperation,” wherein China’s permanent representative to the UN Zhang Jun presented details of the GSI and expressed the country’s readiness to work with the international community to evolve consensus around the GSI in building a balanced, effective, and sustainable international security architecture together.

President Xi first proposed the GSI vision to provide security for all in a short keynote address at the opening ceremony of the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference 2022 in April. As outlined in President Xi’s speech, the GSI is underpinned by “six commitments” as its pillar principles. These include:

- Vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable security;
- Respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries;
- Abiding by the purposes and principles



Students in Saint Joseph High School form the word “PEACE” in Hyderabad, India, March 5, 2022. (Photo from VCG)

of the UN Charter;

- Taking the legitimate security concerns of all countries seriously;
- Peacefully resolving differences and disputes between countries through dialogue and consultation; and
- Maintaining security in both traditional and non-traditional domains.

Like the BRI and the GDI, in which various individual projects preexisted before President Xi released official blueprints for transforming global infrastructure, at first glance, the principles of the GSI have also been the mainstay of China’s foreign policy. As a novel approach, President Xi also urged all countries to uphold the principle of indivisible security and build a balanced,

effective, and sustainable security architecture.

The GSI’s recalibration of these principles in the new era changes central connotations, especially in terms of the addition of the principle of indivisibility of global security.

As the saying goes, any system always contains more than the total sum of its parts. Also, parts often preexist before they are recalibrated in a new, innovative design to maximize their collective outcome. Likewise, individual principles of the GSI can be traced back as far as the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, or the *Panchasheel*, originating in talks between China and India in the 1950s. In the same vein, the fact that the GSI now seeks



Ambassador Zhang Jun, Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations (UN), briefs the press on China's work plans for its rotating presidency in August in New York, the United States, August 1, 2022. China was the Rotating President of the UN Security Council for August 2022. (Photo from Visual People)

to connect them with the noble principle of indivisible nature of global security enhances its critical contribution.

The GSI must be read in tandem with the BRI and the GDI, as the trio of programs forms part of China's overarching vision and strategy of creating public goods to build a community with a shared future for humanity. These initiatives aim to eliminate the global deficit in material infrastructure, development, and peace. The central axiom of the GSI is that one nation's security cannot

be built at the cost of other nations.

By proposing the GSI, China aims to emerge as a leading alternative provider of global security. No doubt, Western powers have looked at China's GSI apprehensively and seen it delegitimizing the Cold War mindset of power politics and hegemony, thereby diminishing much of the outdated global governance architecture which no longer reflects the new realities of the 21st century.

Addressing such suspicions will be an uphill task that must be done to earn

credibility. After a decade of similar suspicion of the BRI, experience has paved a path to overcoming challenges, and today participating nations include many allies of the U.S. The progress of China's GDI showcases the speed with which Beijing seeks to operationalize the GSI even more. The announcement of the GDI in September 2021 was followed by President Xi expounding it as he chaired the High-level Dialogue on Global Development held on the margins of the 14th BRICS Summit in June 2022. This meeting was attended by BRICS leaders plus a dozen other invited national leaders from around the world. They agreed to work together and harness China's GDI as an accelerator for realizing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The effort helped identify broad guiding principles for joint efforts while identifying eight areas for cooperation and setting up 32 specific mechanisms for collaboration towards well-defined deliverable outcomes.

Just like the BRI and the GDI, the GSI has been especially agreeable to a number of African countries. Two sessions of the China-Africa Peace and Security Forum involving about 50 African states have been held. By practicing the GSI, China and Africa are expected to move towards a promising vision of jointly building a security community. Alongside

building consensus on broad conceptualizations with these African nations, the GSI more specifically details help from China in areas of strategic communication, equipment and technology cooperation, joint maritime

already received assistance in building highways, ports, power stations, dams, and railways. Now, China is seeking to provide African countries with comprehensive support on matters such as anti-piracy

that has implications for the existing post-World War II architecture that props up U.S. world leadership.

Embroiled in pandemic-driven resource deficit and domestic instability, the Biden administration has increasingly depended on its friends and allies, many of whom now show varying trajectories in their engagement with Beijing. The ongoing Ukraine crisis has made the issue even more public as the U.S. has sought to build consensus for imposing severe economic sanctions on Russia. These issues affecting both the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization also shine light on the urgent need for reformation of global security architecture. However, the U.S. and its allies remain focused on strengthening internally instead of transforming post-World War II institutions that are revealing their fast-diminishing relevance and remit.

Consequently, the GSI has this space to ignite a new debate on the optimal method to address the world's increasingly complex security challenges. It, of course, seeks to do so by providing Chinese solutions rooted in the ancient wisdom of unique Chinese traditions. 🇨🇳

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The author is a professor of diplomacy and disarmament at Jawaharlal Nehru University in India and currently a visiting professor at the University of British Columbia in Canada.

The GSI must be read in tandem with the BRI and the GDI, as the trio of programs forms part of China's overarching vision and strategy of creating public goods to build a community with a shared future for humanity. These initiatives aim to eliminate the global deficit in material infrastructure, development, and peace.

training exercises, exchange in professional fields, and other technical and financial assistance to counter terrorism and other threats in Africa.

Along with serving as a development provider in Africa, China is also emerging as a security defender across many of the African nations. This trend became noticeable when some of Africa's traditional security providers wound down their military engagement with African countries. As part of UN peacekeeping operations, thousands of Chinese peacekeepers have been deployed to some of Africa's most dangerous locations in Congo, Liberia, Mali, and Sudan. Under the BRI, many of these countries have

and counter-terrorism. The drive includes providing technology, equipment, personnel, and strategic advice that form the conflict prevention core of the GSI.

The Gulf of Aden has already seen China emerge as an active player in counter-piracy operations. In addition to its coordinated naval patrols and rescue operations, China has provided naval assets, equipment, and financial assistance to local anti-piracy networks. But like the BRI and the GDI, the GSI is also expected to develop both conceptual and operational outreach far beyond Africa and this will have its challenges.

Most importantly, the GSI presents an alternate vision of global security governance

Hope from the SCO Samarkand Summit

By Wali Zahid

Progress on development and peace is never easy won. However, the SCO is making the path clearer for many countries.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), a Eurasian political, economic and security grouping, was founded in Shanghai on June 15, 2001, by China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The 22nd summit of the SCO member states was held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan in September this year.

With hope to benefit each other and the wider world, SCO countries are seeking progress in development and peace. SCO countries host nearly half of the world's population and contribute

over 30 percent of global GDP. Although they face myriad global, regional, and

President Xi Jinping's first trip abroad since the COVID-19 pandemic hit

Under the SCO framework, all countries have worked to embark on a new path of "pursuing dialogue instead of confrontation and building partnerships instead of alliances." This is good for the polarized world in which we live.

bilateral challenges, they are working earnestly to carve a path out under the SCO framework.

China has sent several messages. This was Chinese

the world. Back in 2013, neighboring Kazakhstan was where President Xi unveiled the vision of the Silk Road Economic Belt, which became known as,

alongside the 21st-century Maritime Silk Road, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). After nine years, the BRI should be credited for visible and tangible achievements in infrastructure, including roads and rails in dozens of countries across Eurasia and Africa. To address global challenges, President Xi introduced the Global Development Initiative (GDI) and Global Security Initiative (GSI) to complement the BRI.

With the signing of a Memorandum of Obligations to become a permanent SCO member, Iran has received a big boost. India will also gain much prestige from the SCO, as the rotating presidency will be with the country this year.

Facing an account deficit and increasing costs of petroleum imports, Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif spoke with Russian President Vladimir Putin, who said Russian pipeline gas was a possibility “with some infrastructure already in place in Russia, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.”

In spite of all this, challenges remain. Climate change, for example. Floods in Pakistan, a country already under pressure because of fiscal deficit, have devastated the people and economy. Forums like the SCO can help rebuild Pakistan’s flood-hit economy.

Pakistan-India bilateral ties are another example. Both countries were admitted as SCO members in 2017. In his speech at the summit, Indian Prime Minister Narendra



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

Modi proposed the idea of free transit rights among SCO member countries, seeking access to Afghanistan via Pakistan, but Pakistan was unwilling to consider the proposal because of its dispute with India on the Kashmir issue.

Afghanistan, which has observer status in the SCO, also faces a series of challenges from security to economics. After the U.S. failure in the region, the SCO has a good chance of guiding Afghanistan towards some semblance of peace and stability.

Under the SCO framework, all countries have worked

to embark on a new path of “pursuing dialogue instead of confrontation and building partnerships instead of alliances.” This is good for the polarized world in which we live. The Shanghai Spirit and the Samarkand Declaration are the way forward. 🇵🇰

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The author is president of the Institute of Media & Communications (IMC) in Pakistan. A longtime China watcher and an award-winning journalist, he writes on issues of significance to Pakistan, CPEC, and BRI.

SCO Initiatives for Common Security and Prosperity

By Karori Singh

The SCO Samarkand Summit sent a clear message to its members and the global community about the need to ensure common security, participative and sustainable development, and recognition of different governance patterns.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit was held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, on September 15 and 16, 2022, with high hopes and expectations to address the multiple aggravated global challenges. The expectations pressured the SCO with the onerous responsibility of formulating methods to overcome such problems and charting a future direction in the interest of comprehensive security, common

development, and world peace and prosperity.

The SCO should already be credited with remarkable achievements in areas of expanding trade, increasing investment, boosting infrastructure, intensifying connectivity, and fostering comprehensive security partnerships. Consensus has been found to expand the SCO to make it even more representative of the Eurasian continent.

Chinese President Xi Jinping arrived in Samarkand,

Uzbekistan, after a stopover in Nur-Sultan, capital of Kazakhstan. The media in both countries published his articles elaborating on the long historical and cultural relations and achievements of deepening cooperation over the last three decades. He urged the Central Asian countries to embrace the “Shanghai Spirit” which had reinforced the main principles of cooperation since the SCO was established two decades ago.

President Xi assured



Chinese President Xi Jinping poses for a group photo with other leaders and guests ahead of the 22nd meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, September 16, 2022. Xi attended the meeting and delivered a speech. (Photo by Li Tao/Xinhua)

attendees that work would continue on the Treaty on Long-term Good Neighbourliness, Friendship, and Cooperation among SCO member states for which he elaborated five points: needs to enhance mutual support, expand security cooperation, deepen practical cooperation, enhance people-to-people and cultural exchange, and uphold multilateralism. He highlighted the complementarity of the Belt and Road Initiative and national development strategies and regional cooperation initiatives, and commented on growth-driven cooperation before announcing preparations for the China-SCO Big Data Cooperation Center and to organize SCO forums on poverty reduction and sustainable development.

SAMARKAND DECLARATION

The Samarkand Declaration of the SCO incorporated concerns of individual countries, priorities of regional cooperation, and global issues concerning humanity. It expressed satisfaction with progress on cooperation in a wide range of sectors. The declaration emphasized the need to realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the importance of strengthening connectivity to attain the objectives of the SCO.

The declaration devoted ample space to the menace of terrorism and denounced it in all its forms. It stressed the importance of consistent implementation of the Program of Cooperation

of the SCO Member States in Countering Terrorism, Separatism, and Extremism for 2022-2024. The corruption and justice systems of respective countries have also been brought into focus of cooperation by talks of inter-judicial cooperation and creating conditions for deepening judicial reforms. The declaration also raised concerns about militarization of the ICT sphere, considering the necessity to ensure the use of technology for peaceful purposes, for which it has emphasized the need “to create a safe, fair, and open information space.”

Sharing of experiences in development and governance has been considered highly significant. MOUs involving the League of Arab States,

UNESCO, and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) have been hailed as major steps in this direction.

GROWING CONCERNS AND NEW INITIATIVES

The SCO has raised concerns about unilateral economic sanctions without the approval of the UN system. The declaration categorically mentioned that “unilateral application of economic sanctions other than those adopted by UNSC is inconsistent with the principles of international law and adversely affects third countries and international economic relations.” Russian President Vladimir Putin made his position very clear that economic sanctions against Russia are more damaging to developing countries for which Russia is ready to restore the supply chain to help meet their food and energy needs.

The declaration was categorical on the Iranian nuclear issue and emphasized “sustained implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on the Iranian nuclear program, in accordance with UNSCR 2231, call upon all participants to rigorously implement their commitments for the full and effective implementation of the document.”

Moreover, the declaration explained that “free movement of goods, capital, services and technology” must be promoted under WTO rules. The SCO should also link its efforts to the BRI

and Eurasian Economic Union (EEU). Deepening cooperation between the SCO and the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures (CICA) was also considered important.

The summit adopted new initiatives to establish a Special Working Group on Start-Ups and Innovation, a Special Working Group on Poverty Reduction, and an Expert Working Group on Traditional Medicine. It also declared 2023 SCO Tourism Year, Varanasi (India) as SCO Tourism and Cultural Capital for 2022-2023, 2025 as International Year for the Preservation of Glaciers, and approved a Statute on the honorary title of the SCO Goodwill Ambassador. These measures are likely to increase awareness about the importance and efficacy of the SCO.

SUMMATION

The Samarkand Declaration has reaffirmed commitment to a more representative, democratic, just and multipolar world order.

Unlike other West-led organizations such as G7 and NATO, which tend to target perceived rival countries and enforce uniformity of development paths, security perception, and governance patterns, the SCO has a “non-bloc character” and is a more constructive organization in addressing intra-regional, regional, and global challenges. It clearly stated that “the member states reaffirm the non-targeting

of the SCO against other states and international organizations and openness to extensive cooperation with them in accordance with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, the SCO Charter and international law based on the consideration of mutual interests and common approaches to solving regional and global problems.”

The SCO Summit sent a clear message to its members and the global community on ensuring common security (including disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation, and nuclear-free Central Asia), participative and sustainable development, and recognition of specificities of different governance patterns. It explicitly expressed a desire to reinvigorate “dialogue of civilizations” to serve humanity and posterity.

President Xi concluded that “the Eurasian continent is home to us all,” and that the increasing number of countries applying to join the SCO demonstrates the strength of the SCO’s vision and the widely shared confidence in its future. The expansion and development of the SCO will lead to the creation of strong momentum and new dynamics ensuring durable peace and common prosperity on the Eurasian continent and throughout the world. 

The author is former director and emeritus fellow at the South Asia Studies Centre of the University of Rajasthan in Jaipur, India.

SCO's Growing Influence in a Multipolar World

By Rama Chandran

The SCO, like BRICS, is a vehicle for India and China to coexist peacefully in the current era dubbed the Asian Century by many. Towards that goal, the Samarkand Summit is a new milestone.

As leaders of China, Russia, and India joined new member Iran to huddle together at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit in Uzbekistan's Samarkand, the West waited on pins and needles to gauge and interpret the outcome.

Chinese President Xi Jinping, Russian President Vladimir Putin, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi were among leaders of the 15 countries to attend the summit.

This was the first in-person summit since the June 2019

SCO summit in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. Last year, the summit was held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, in a hybrid format.

This was Xi's first official trip to a foreign nation since COVID-19 broke out. Xi's trip to Samarkand underlined China's strategic ties with Central Asian states at a time when relations with many Western nations have come under strain due to China's neutral position on the Ukrainian issue.

Xi and Putin met on the sidelines of the summit, for the first time since the Ukraine crisis. Xi said that China and Russia

should expand pragmatic cooperation, while Putin thanked the Chinese leader for his balanced stance on the Ukrainian issue. Putin also expressed Russia's support for the one-China principle, and denounced U.S. provocations in the Taiwan Straits and its attempts to create a "unipolar world."

The Samarkand Summit saw agreements on connectivity and high-efficiency transport corridors as well as a roadmap for local currency settlement among member states. It also deliberated on the geopolitical situation arising from the Ukraine crisis. Additionally, the situation in Afghanistan



Zhang Ming, Secretary-General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), delivers a speech at the Awarding Ceremony and Exhibition of Prize-Winning Works of the Fifth Calligraphy Competition for Participants from SCO Countries in Beijing, July 14, 2022. He said that cultural diversity is an invaluable asset for the SCO and that it is the common aspiration of people from different cultures to communicate and learn from each other. (Photo by Chen Jian/*China Pictorial*)

under the Taliban regime was discussed because many SCO member countries neighbor Afghanistan.

After the signing of the Samarkand Declaration, the heads of the SCO countries declared the inadmissibility of interference in the internal affairs of other states under the pretext of countering terrorism. The SCO countries expressed support for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the continuation of nuclear disarmament.

The Samarkand Declaration also termed unilateral use of economic sanctions, except for those imposed by the United Nations (UN) Security Council, is incompatible with principles of international law. The SCO countries emphasized the importance of the inclusive reform of the

World Trade Organization (WTO) as soon as possible, with emphasis on adaptation to current economic realities. The declaration advocated a “commitment to peaceful settlement of differences and disputes between countries through dialogue and consultation.”

To further promote the rich cultural and historical heritage of the peoples and the tourism potential of SCO member states, it was decided to declare the city of Varanasi as the SCO Tourism and Cultural Capital for 2022-2023, the declaration said.

MISSION OF SCO

Founded in Shanghai in June 2001, the Beijing-headquartered SCO is a nine-member economic

and security organization consisting of China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India, Pakistan, and now Iran. It has three Observer States interested in acceding to full membership (Afghanistan, Belarus, and Mongolia) and nine Dialogue Partners (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Cambodia, Nepal, Türkiye, Sri Lanka, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar).

It is a unique plurilateral grouping that holds two summits a year, one at the level of Heads of State and the other with Heads of Government. The presence of India and China, the world’s most populous countries, makes the SCO the organization with the largest population coverage in the world. The SCO accounts for about one-quarter of the world’s land and exports trillions of dollars annually.

The SCO, which grew from the “Shanghai Five” pact of the mid-1990s, is governed by consensus. It also functions as a venue for discussion and engagement in which high-level dignitaries from across the region can gather to confer, rather than an alliance like the European Union (EU), with members sharing a common currency, or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Since its inception, the SCO has mainly focused on regional security issues, and fighting regional terrorism, ethnic separatism, and religious extremism. The SCO’s priorities also include regional development.

The Dushanbe Declaration on the 20th anniversary of the founding of the SCO last year expressed support for Afghanistan as an independent, neutral, united, democratic, and peaceful state, free of terrorism, wars, and drug trafficking. It is critical for Afghanistan to develop an inclusive government involving representatives from all ethnic, religious, and political groups of Afghan society.

The declaration also condemned terrorism in all forms and manifestations. SCO member states reaffirmed the need to increase efforts to prevent terrorism and its financing including by implementing existing global standards on combating money laundering and the financing of terrorism and by suppressing the spread of terrorist, separatist, and extremist ideologies that feed it.

The declaration emphasized the importance of sharing experiences on design and implementation of national development strategies, formulating digital economic growth plans, and adopting innovative technologies. It stressed the need to increase mutually beneficial cooperation in the energy sector, including wider usage of renewable and alternative energy sources.

INCLUSION OF IRAN

The Samarkand Summit was also significant due to Iran's first attendance as a full member. The decision to admit Iran was made at last

year's Dushanbe Summit, and Belarus submitted a membership application. It was the first expansion of the SCO since India and Pakistan were admitted in 2017.

Iran's entry into the SCO is its first as a full member of a major regional organization since the 1979 revolution. Iran's bid to become a full member of the SCO was approved after almost 15 years. The country had been an "Observer State" since 2005. Full membership meant linking Iran to the economic infrastructure of Asia and its vast resources.

Iran is eyeing political and economic gains, especially with China, with

which it signed a 25-year comprehensive cooperation agreement in March 2021, and Russia, with which Iran is looking to expand a pre-existing cooperation agreement. Iran could gain significant access to the Central Asian region, which is regarded as a prime market for exports of Iranian goods.

U.S. sanctions could prove a roadblock to achieving all its potential should they persist, but will not halt Iran's economic progress. Iran and world powers have conducted several rounds of talks in Vienna to restore the country's 2015 nuclear deal, which, if successful, would see U.S. sanctions lifted.



One of the SCO demonstration bases for agricultural technology exchange and training, Yangling Agricultural High-tech Industries Demonstration Zone has evolved through years of development into a significant platform utilizing achievements in modern technology and practice to promote international exchange and deepen new cooperation, June 8, 2022. (Photo by Zhang Bin/Xinhua)



The fifth meeting of the SCO health ministers is held in a hybrid format in Toshkent, the capital of Uzbekistan. It was chaired by the health minister of Uzbekistan, which holds the rotating presidency, and attended by ministers of health of SCO member countries, June 8, 2022. (Photo from Visual People)

At the Dushanbe Summit last year, Iran signed eight agreements with Tajikistan. The two countries set a target of US\$500 million for annual bilateral trade. During a speech at Dushanbe, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi denounced “unilateralism” by the U.S. and called for a concerted effort to fight sanctions. SCO member states have been reluctant to entangle themselves in Iran’s rivalries, so at Dushanbe, they admitted Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar as “Dialogue Partners” in a balancing act.

The volume of trade with the national currencies of Iran,

Russia, and China has been modest even after decades of discussing de-dollarization, and efforts to launch an alternative financial messaging service to the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT) global financial network are underway.

This round of expansion testifies to the SCO’s rising global influence and the principles of the SCO Charter being widely accepted. The SCO expansion is not akin to that of NATO, which is being expanded in the shadows of the Ukraine crisis. The SCO is a cooperative organization

based on non-alignment, non-confrontation and not targeting a third party, while NATO is based on a Cold War mindset. The SCO believes one should not build its security at the expense of other countries, and NATO is creating new enemies to sustain its existence. SCO members are contemplating ways to adapt to profound global geopolitical changes to make the world order more reasonable.

The process of Belarus’ accession to the SCO has been started at the Samarkand Summit. It has had a Dialogue Partner status since 2010

and Observer State status since 2015. The new decision does not mean an automatic change in the status of the country. According to the provision on SCO accession of June 11, 2010, an applying country should join around 40 international treaties and make respective changes in the national legislation. It took around two years for India and Pakistan to complete these procedures.

At the Samarkand Summit, Bahrain, Maldives, the UAE, Kuwait, and Myanmar were designated as Dialogue Partners in SCO.

SCO FOR INDIA

India assumed the rotational presidency of the SCO at the end of the Samarkand Summit. Delhi will hold the presidency of the grouping for a year until September 2023. So, next

with the Eurasian states. It is a potential platform to advance India's Central Asia policy. SCO member states are all India's extended neighborhood where India has both economic and security interests.

The SCO-Afghanistan Contact Group to stabilize the situation in Afghanistan provides India with a vital counter to some other groupings to which it is a member. The SCO provides the only multilateral platform for India to deal with issues related to Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Acknowledging the strategic importance of the region and the SCO, Modi has articulated the foundational dimension of Eurasia as being "secure." India needs to improve connectivity with Central Asia through the Chabahar port in southeastern Iran, and it seeks to utilize

goods between Central Asia and the Persian Gulf. The agreement came into force in April 2016.

India also seeks to use the SCO's goal of promoting economic cooperation, trade, energy, and regional connectivity to improve its relations with Pakistan and persuade it to ease India's access to Eurasia. The lack of connectivity has dampened the development of energy ties between the hydrocarbon-rich region and India.

Maintaining its independent diplomacy, India had avoided the trade pillar of the U.S.-led Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) meeting in Los Angeles on September 8 and 9. India's Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal cited concerns over possible discrimination against developing economies. India was alone among the 14 IPEF countries, which include Southeast Asian countries, Australia, New Zealand, South Korea and Japan, not to join the declaration on trade.

Hence, the SCO, like BRICS, is a vehicle for India and China to coexist peacefully in the current era dubbed the Asian Century by many. Towards that goal, the Samarkand Summit is a new milestone. 🇮🇳

This round of expansion testifies to the SCO's rising global influence and the principles of the SCO Charter being widely accepted.

year, India will host the SCO summit. Modi said at the Samarkand Summit that he wants to transform India into a manufacturing hub. He pointed out that there are more than 70,000 start-ups and over 100 unicorns in India, and that the country is one of the fastest-growing economies in the world.

The SCO's significance for India is heavily based in economics and geopolitics

the Ashgabat Agreement to create a stronger presence in Eurasia along with focus on the International North-South Corridor (INSTC).

The Ashgabat Agreement is a multimodal transport agreement between the governments of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Iran, India, Pakistan, and Oman to create an international corridor to facilitate transportation of

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The author is a business writer at KrASIA and former chief editor of the Indian daily *Janmabhumi*.

A Decade of Changes

Edited by **Bian Xiuhong**
Designed by **Liu Peiyao**

China's GDP doubled to 114 trillion yuan (about US\$16.03 trillion) in 2021 from over 50 trillion yuan in 2012. Innovative,

coordinated, green, open, and shared development has shaped China's economic, cultural, and social life over the past decade. 🇨🇳

High-Quality Growth

In 2012, China's trade in goods and services totaled

ranking second in the world

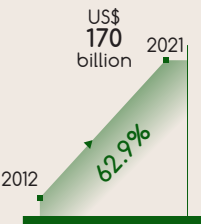


US\$
4.4
trillion

In 2021, China's trade in goods and services amounted to US\$ 6.9 trillion,

leading the world for two consecutive years

China's two-way investment also rank among the top in the world, attracting foreign capital of US\$ 170 billion in 2021, an increase of 62.9 percent over 2012.



Since 2017, China has ranked second in the world in attracting foreign investment for four consecutive years, and its investment flow to foreign countries has ranked among the top three in the world.

urban jobs annually increased

13,000,000



urban
unemployment
rate

5%

Between 2012 and 2022, employment quality has been significantly improved in China, with an average increase of more than 13 million urban jobs annually. According to a national survey, the urban unemployment rate has remained around 5 percent, and the employment structure has been optimized.

Education has been booming, and the working-age population has an average of 10.9 years of education.

basic endowment
insurance

1.03 billion

basic medical
insurance

1.36 billion

Social security has benefited all people, with 1.03 billion people having basic endowment insurance, 1.36 billion people covered by basic medical insurance, and factors most affecting people's livelihood addressed.

Source: Press conference on China's reform and opening up over the past decade

Source: China's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs

Significant Progress in China's Infrastructure Construction (2012-2021)



By the end of 2021, the total length of railways and highways in China increased by 1.1 million kilometers from 2012, equivalent to circling the equator more than 27 times.



1.6
million

In the past decade, the average download rate of broadband networks has increased 40 times over. China's 4G base stations now account for more than half of the world's total, and the number of 5G base stations in the country has surpassed 1.6 million.

Source: Press conference on China's infrastructure development over the past decade

Highlights of China's Rural Development (2012-2021)

China's grain production in 2021 hit a record high of 683 billion kilograms,



683
billion kilograms

The per capita disposable income of rural residents in 2021 was 18,931 yuan (about US\$2,977), more than double the 2012 number of 8,389 yuan (US\$1,244). More innovation and startups emerged in rural areas.



2,200

More than 2,200 rural innovation and entrepreneurship parks and incubation training bases have been built across the country. A total of 11.2 million people have returned to their hometowns to start businesses. On average, each entity has offered six to seven people stable jobs and 15 to 20 people flexible jobs.



11.2
million

with per capita share of grain reaching 483 kilograms.



Source: Press conference on rural revitalization in the past decade

China's installed capacity of renewable energy exceeds

1,000,000,000
kilowatts



The installed capacity of hydropower, wind power, solar power and biomass power generation all ranks **first** in the world.



The proportion of clean energy consumption has increased from 14.5 percent to 25.5 percent, and the clean and efficient utilization of coal has achieved remarkable results.

The scale of coal-powered ultra-low emission generating units exceeds 1 billion kilowatts, leading the world in energy efficiency and emission reduction.

Highlights of China's Sci-tech Development (2012-2021)



China's R&D spending totalled about 2.79 trillion yuan (US\$420 billion) in 2021, up from 1.03 trillion yuan (US\$153 billion) in 2012. The ratio of total national R&D expenditures to GDP also saw a significant increase, jumping from 1.91 percent in 2012 to 2.44 percent last year.

China rose to 12th on the Global Innovation Index 2021, up from 34th in 2012.



The number of hi-tech enterprises in China soared from 49,000 in 2012 to 330,000 in 2021. Taxes paid by such enterprises increased from 800 billion yuan (about US\$ 118 billion) in 2012 to 2.3 trillion yuan (US\$ 341 billion) in 2021.

Source: Press conference on China's green development over the past decade

Source: Press conference on China's sci-tech innovation in the past decade

Ancient Civilization with an Open Mind



A survey showed that from 2012 to 2022, the percentage of Chinese adults practicing habitual reading grew from 76.3 percent to 81.6 percent.



The percentage of readers of printed books increased from 54.9 percent to 59.7 percent.



Habitual readers on digital devices rose from 40.3 percent to 79.6 percent.



Winners of AFC Women's Asian Cup Title by Country/Region



Country/region	Frequency of winning the title	Asian Cup
China	9	1986, 1989, 1991, 1993, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2006, 2022
Chinese Taipei	3	1977, 1979, 1981
DPRK	3	2001, 2003, 2008
Japan	2	2014, 2018
Australia	1	2010
Thailand	1	1983
New Zealand	1	1975



Most Visited Theme Parks in China (Cumulative)



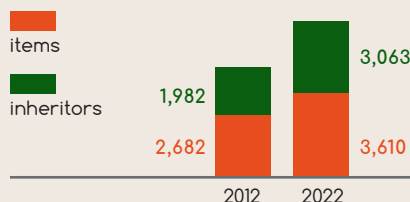
Theme park	Inaugural year	Cumulative number of visitors
Shenzhen Happy Valley	1998	180 million (1998-2018)
Ocean Park Hong Kong	1977	100 million (1977-2022)
Shanghai Disneyland	2016	83 million (2016-2021)
Shenzhen Window of the World	1994	80 million (1994-2022)
Zhuhai Chimelong International Ocean Tourist Resort	2014	74.54 million (2014-2021)
China Dinosaurs Park in Changzhou, Jiangsu	2000	60 million (2000-2021)
Beijing Happy Valley	2006	50 million (2006-2021)

Source: AECOM, official websites of relevant theme parks, news reports, etc.

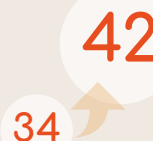
China's state-level intangible cultural heritage items



From 2012 to 2022, China's state-level intangible cultural heritage items increased from 2,682 to 3,610, while representative inheritors of national intangible cultural heritage rose from 1,982 to 3,063.



During the same period, China's items inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity increased from 34 to 42, ranking first in the world.



A Kaleidoscope of Life



44.3
million

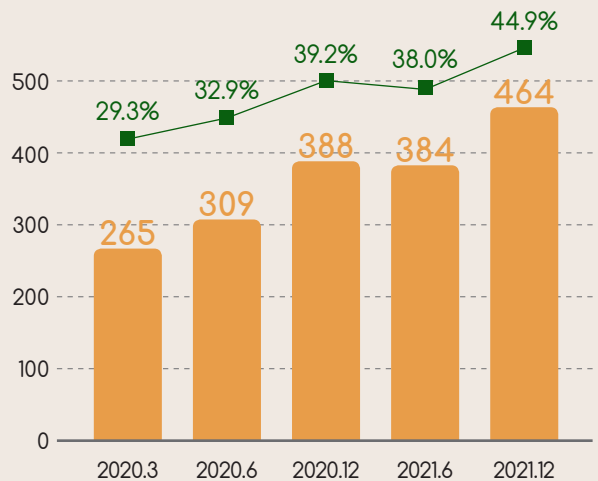
As of May 17, 2022, total students in China's higher education institutions exceeded 44.3 million, and the gross enrollment rate increased from 30 percent in 2012 to 57.8 percent in 2021.



Source: China's Ministry of Education

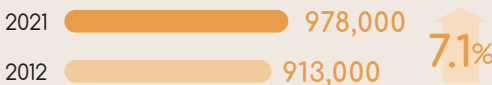
Sales Volume of China's Livestreaming E-commerce and Users' Proportion in Overall Netizens from 2020 to 2021

■ Sales Volume of Livestreaming E-commerce (million yuan)
■ Users' Proportion in Overall Netizens

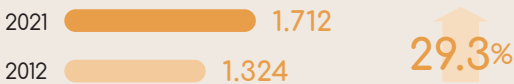


Source: The Insight and Info website

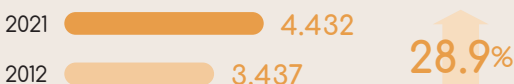
Number of Community-level Medical and Health Institutions in China



Total Beds in Community-level Medical and Health Institutions Nationwide (million)



Health Workers at the Grassroots Level (million)



Source: Official WeChat Account of "Healthy China"



A total of **395** new museums registered in China in 2021,

bringing the total number to **6,183**.

Of them, **5,605** museums offer free admission,

more than **90 percent** of the total.

Source: China's National Cultural Heritage Administration

Stronger Cultural Youth

Concept by *China-India Dialogue*

A Mindset for the Empowerment of Youth

Balaji Balasubramanian

Occupation: Test Design and Automation Engineer at Volkswagen Group China Research and Development

Birth place: Chennai, India

Current residence: Beijing, China



My first ever connection with China began when I was seven or eight years old: my family and I watched martial arts movies from China on television during weekends. All credits went to legendary movie stars such as Jackie Chan, Bruce Lee, and Jet Li. Ever since, the curiosity about China and its culture grew multi-folds and I developed a strong desire to visit China and experience the Chinese lifestyle in person.

In 2015, during my service for a motorcycle OEM (original equipment manufacturer) in Florence, I had the opportunity to work alongside two Chinese colleagues for a project in an international team with members from different parts of the world. The differences in ideas and opinions between each team member were

obviously visible. This in turn led to disagreements, misunderstandings and confusion between the team members. After a confusing period of time, our team leader from China took the initiative and communicated with every individual member of the team, thereby understanding their different approaches to find solutions to the exact same problem. He steered our project in a brilliant way such that it worked wonders for the success of the project. His willingness to accept different ideas and respect others' opinions, as well as his well laid out guidance, inspired me greatly.

China and India are the two major emerging economies in the world. As of 2021, China and India were ranked as the second and fifth largest

economies in the world, respectively, on a nominal basis. On a Purchasing Power Parity basis, China was ranked first, and India third. China and India are the world's most populous countries, together making up to 35 percent of the total world population. The demographics of both countries show a strong percentage of young population in working age, which is critical to realize their development goals.

I decided to study a postgraduate course abroad in 2018 and I applied for engineering programs to several universities around the world. Fortunately, admission letters from the U.S., the Netherlands, France and China arrived to my postbox. Without hesitation I chose China as my postgraduate study destination and this is one of the best decisions I've made in my life. I consider my study and work experience in China to be the most enriching and valuable one.

Currently, I work with the R&D division of Volkswagen Group China, as a test design and automation engineer in Beijing. I am fortunate to be part of this team with members from different parts of the world, diverse backgrounds and skill sets. Every day there is something valuable for me to learn to do the job better and to be a better person. One huge advantage of my team is the "unity in diversity" – even though every member is from a different background, there's a drive to learn together, guide one another and most importantly "work as one."

One of the most important attitudes towards life I

learned by working in China is "flexibility." Before I arrived in China, I never realized the importance of being flexible in life, at work, or the way I think. Without flexibility it's nearly impossible to survive and meet today's demands, be it within an organization or within the family.

Social media in some cases sends wrong messages about countries and their people. We, the young generation, shall not be deceived by any unverified negative hatred spreading on social media about other countries. More participation in activities, such as academic exchange programs and cross-border internships, facilitates more job opportunities. It would help improve the ties between China and India, and as a result, the youth from both nations would benefit.

The youth of China and India, two strong neighboring nations in Asia, have unlimited potential. A strong suggestion is to break all the stereotypes and prejudices we may have about each other. Let's keep our minds and hearts open – so that we can learn, innovate and work together. Several wonders in terms of advancement are possible in science and technology, agriculture, creative arts, and other fields if the youth of China and India establish a stronger connection based on integrity and collaboration. The two nations could establish a friendly relationship that would be respected and recognized by all the other nations. We shall always remember this well-known quote: "United we stand, divided we fall."

Connecting Hearts through Film

Xu Hui

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As an enthusiast and researcher of Indian cinema, I have been rejoicing in the success of Indian films in China over recent years. Featuring depictions of the unique religious beliefs, cultural spirit, and ethnic mentality of India, the films integrate traditional national aesthetics with modern film language to achieve contemporary and international interpretation of Indian culture. Access to Indian movies opens the door for Chinese audiences to see another side of cinema, and Indian filmmakers' interaction with moviegoers during visits to China shortens the distance between Chinese



A still from the Indian movie *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*. The film, starring Salman Khan and Harshaali Malhotra, hit Chinese cinemas in March 2018. (Photo from Douban)

audiences and Indian films.

Indian movies have attracted increasing public attention in China in recent years and amassed a considerable audience. More and more friends of mine have been discussing Indian films. According to my word-of-mouth and internet research, Chinese viewers prefer high-quality realistic films. They consider that works focused on realistic issues such as *3 Idiots*, *Dangal*, *Secret Superstar*, and *Hindi Medium* are both entertaining and thought-provoking. Those films resonated strongly with Chinese viewers, refreshing their perceptions of Indian films.

Many similarities can be found in the philosophical sphere of Chinese and Indian

civilizations. The shared Eastern cultural traditions and religious culture exchange between the two countries have generated a sense of cultural proximity, which makes it easy for Chinese and Indian people to foster affection for each other's culture. An important link of cultural exchange, film has become a vital medium for deepening China-India partnership, bringing the two peoples closer and closer. Co-produced films such as *Kung Fu Yoga*, *Xuanzang*, and the recently released *Ladki: Enter the Girl Dragon* have laid a solid foundation for future film cooperation between the two countries. Building a China-India film community would empower filmmakers from both countries to tap into the

immense cooperation potential hidden in film culture similarities and deepen multi-level film exchange to promote cultural integration and prosperity.

To promote Indian films in China, I regularly organize cultural exchange events such as film salons in addition to attending screenings of Indian movies. I share my knowledge about Indian culture and films to help more Chinese learn about Indian films. Since ancient times, the Indian subcontinent has been nurtured by myths. Those myths have been widely adapted into Indian films. The two epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* are inexhaustible sources of inspiration. For example, the Baahubali duology demonstrates profound Indian cultural heritage, full of metaphors that are well-known in India but challenging for Chinese audiences. Without certain knowledge of Indian history and culture, it would be difficult to fully understand some plots, especially the minute details.

When consuming unfamiliar cultural products, a spectator's passion and comprehension ability can be weakened by cultural differences and barriers. A Chinese viewer without any knowledge of Indian mythology will still appreciate the beautiful music, fantastic dance performances, and thrilling fight scenes but will miss the emotional and spiritual resonance. For this reason, I hope more Chinese audiences will break through cultural barriers and enjoy Indian films more deeply through my contributions to film exchange between the two countries. 🇮🇳

Chinese Cuisine in India

By Srividya Mehendale

Traditional Chinese and Indian cuisines are a favorite for many, and a new fusion of the two has gained popularity in India.

A new show on Amazon Prime Video, *Modern Love Mumbai*, throws light on links between Indian Chinese communities and food. The show exemplifies how emotions and connections are drawn, made and repaired with food. Among all the good things that connect India and China, food is probably the most beloved.

Chinese cuisine is widely appreciated across Indian households. Describing its uniqueness and versatility in India, Chef Sneha of the International Cuisine at the Institute of Hotel Management said, “It is the only international cuisine that is served everywhere across restaurants almost like any other famous Indian staple dish.” The accessibility and affordability of Desi Chinese (Indian Chinese) cuisine make it a consistent go-to option.

ORIGINS OF DESI CHINESE CUISINE

Hidden far from its roots in Chinese culture, Desi Chinese cuisine is not going to remind anyone of eating in China but has a fascinating story.

The most popular version of how Chinese food came to India is set in the 19th century. Newly arrived immigrants, looking for livelihood, strived to find their footing in the new land. Most settled in Calcutta (now Kolkata), the capital of India during British rule. The city, with ties to the British monarchy, attracted numerous business owners and immigrants from surrounding areas. Calcutta, in India’s northeast, was the country’s most accessible metropolitan center by land from China.

That is where the first Chinese settler, a southern Chinese man named Tong Atchew (also referred to as Yang Dazhao or Yang Tai

Chow), arrived. In 1778, Atchew and a group of laborers established a sugar factory 20 miles southwest of Calcutta. Following in Atchew’s footsteps, waves of Chinese immigrants came. Cobblers and tanners were common professions among Hakka Chinese while carpenters and dentists among Chinese immigrants from Guangdong and Hubei provinces. A common practice among all ethnicities, particularly among women to support their husbands, was to open a restaurant.

Chinese communities sprang up throughout the area following their arrivals, and in the neighborhood the immigrants cooked and consumed delicacies from their homeland. Cantonese cuisine, which is known for light and fresh flavors, began to adapt and evolve in the new territory. One reason is that the ingredients and spices



Dumplings served in a bamboo basket at a Chinese restaurant in Mumbai, India. Cantonese dim sum consists of dumplings and other snacks, and is usually enjoyed with tea. (Photo courtesy of the author)

needed were not as readily available as in Guangdong, so the flavors were naturally Indianized. Additionally, to boost sales, Chinese businesses began to cater the food to Indian customers' tastes, using more spices and heavier douses of sauce and oil than their traditional techniques required. The still-standing corner eatery of Eau Chew achieved its fame by combining the stylish attraction of exotic Chinese meals with familiar flavors of chilly, curry, and cornstarch. The Tiretti Bazaar district in Kolkata is the country's only Chinatown and home to several such eateries. With that being said, nearly every city in India has adapted Chinese food, whether found in restaurants or hawked by roadside vendors, as the spicy,

stir-fried snacks have become wildly popular throughout the country. Dishes like Chilli Chicken, Gobi Manchurian, and Chinese Pakoda are loved by all. And Chinese returning from India often brought their new culinary practices and flavors with them, Indianizing the taste of food in Guangdong.

An interesting anecdote explains how the famous Chicken Manchurian was invented in Mumbai, which is a blend of Indian and Chinese ingredients to create a dish loved by all. Nelson Wang, a Mumbai chef and restaurateur, created Chicken Manchurian. In the 1970s, a customer expressed aspirations for something new, causing Wang to experiment with a few ingredients to create the recipe. In India, most Chinese restaurants now serve Chicken Manchurian and its adaptations. A Chicken "Pakora" (boneless chicken pieces coated in cornflour and deep-fried) and a dark brown gravy composed of garlic, ginger, soy sauce, chillies, salt, sugar, and cornflour make up Chicken Manchurian.

CHINESE VS. DESI CHINESE

Although Chicken Manchurian isn't related to Chinese cuisine, just like the Schezwan sauce may not always have the Sichuan peppercorn, it is favored by many. Although cuisines take shape and form in different places, they always find ways to bring eaters back.

Geographical differences and availability of ingredients

have shaped the cuisines. Consumption of Paneer (cottage cheese) can be one such example. Due to rich milk production, Indians tend to substitute tofu with Paneer. Manas Patil, a hotel management school graduate, once worked in Chinese restaurants in Mumbai and now runs a restaurant serving Chinese food. "My mentor was an immigrant from China, and he taught me how to use different ingredients to get a taste as original as possible," he said. "In China, they often use a lot of peppercorns and red chillies, but in India a lot of customers prefer green chillies. Similarly, Chinese cuisine often uses dry ginger while Indians tend to use fresh ginger, but an opposite trend is seen in usage of garlic."

Even in terms of the kitchen workstation where the food is prepared, Chinese cooking is very different from other cuisines. The food is generally cooked at a very high temperature. The wok is a very large container and the burners are a lot thinner than any other cuisine. Owing to the high heat of the burners, a running tap is always kept next to the wok.

"You have to get all the ingredients required to prepare a Chinese recipe ready before making the meal." Sharing his experience at a Chinese restaurant, Patil mentioned the differences in picking ingredients and offered an example of the usage of chicken feet for soup dumplings. Usage of chicken feet is often avoided in India but welcomed in traditional

Chinese cooking. The work style and ethics of Chinese chefs are also different. They believe in avoiding wasting food and have a very disciplined and rigorous work style.

Chinese food has been adapted in different regions of India as well. In places with no access to seafood, like Delhi, the locally available fish Basa is used. While in Mumbai, given that it is tucked beside the Arabian sea, tuna and other varieties are used. Different techniques are used to prepare meat by the chefs with an aim to make food more cost-effective and sustainable. In preparation of a popular street-style Chinese food, a local technique called “master” (a colloquial term) is used to put boneless chicken on top of each other and press the chicken meat into balls which is then used to deep fry. Similarly, the Schezwan sauce used in India is made to be reminiscent of an Indian chutney rather than the original recipe. Fermenting the ingredients from soy sauce as in the original recipe can be difficult and expensive for a lot of local stalls in India, so very often artificial colors are added.

Differences are also seen in plating and serving. Traditionally, the host would serve food to guests, which is still practiced in many high-end restaurants. Nowadays, most Chinese restaurants and guests follow the silver serving procedure. The food is served across different courses and Chinese *baijiu* (rice wine) is passed around. This may not be seen in Desi

Chinese cuisine because of its easy-to-prepare nature since most of the dishes are served as takeout or quick bites.

Unlike traditional Indian or Chinese cuisine with a long-standing history and heritage strongly linked to culture, Desi Chinese adaptations are relatively new and dynamic. Although we haven’t found mentions of it in the past, we will certainly find it in times ahead because it is truly representative of the people, their lives and contributions to both nations alike.

TEACHING CHINESE CUISINE

Many culinary institutes across India strive to provide courses on Chinese cuisine in the most authentic form possible. Chef Sneha shared how she understands the dynamics and complexity of cooking. “We constantly update ourselves with more relevant information and knowledge about the cuisine,” she said. “Buying ingredients used to be a hassle but now a lot of them are available. We have made our own five-spice mix using Sichuan peppercorn, and we try to create authentic Chinese food using local ingredients as much as possible.”

“While teaching, we pass on knowledge about the regions, their specialties and methods and equipment used,” Sneha said. A student explained the famous story of Yangzhou Fried Rice: The dish got its name from the city of Yangzhou in China’s Jiangsu Province where sailors are said to have created the dish by

combining leftover scraps from lunch into fried rice for dinner.

Cooking is a skill demanding methodologies and principles to be followed. “We follow the principle of *yin* and *yang*, *yin* being on the bitter salty side and *yang* being on the sweet side,” explained Sneha. She added that this principle is followed throughout, in the texture, taste and color of the cuisine as well. The balance of all these elements facilitates a balanced mind and body.

The technique of “high-temperature, short-time” cooking is used to prepare Chinese food, which is based on the principle that food has to be prepared quickly to ensure it doesn’t lose its colors, texture, or nutrition. A high-pressure burner, along with a wok, is often used to complete the process successfully.

Proportions and balance play a crucial role in Chinese cooking. The grains and vegetables or meat elements in Chinese cuisine must be equal to ensure a balance of ingredients. The right proportion of carbohydrates like rice and wheat alongside gravies made of vegetables or meat is maintained across teaching institutes and restaurants alike. 🍲

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Strengthening the Nation Through Writing

—An Overview of Wu Wei's *Chinese Dictionary of Calligraphy on Bamboo Slips and Silk*

By Yu Longyu



***Chinese Dictionary of
Calligraphy on Bamboo Slips
and Silk (four volumes)***

By Wu Wei

Tsinghua University Press

June 2013-September 2021

Chinese characters are the most important carrier and expressive medium for Chinese civilization. Thousands of

years before the invention of paper, “bamboo slips and silk served as the major carriers for handwriting” in China. This revelation is meaningful for the research of Chinese civilization. Clearly, Chinese civilization has been uninterrupted for 5,000 years.

However, identifying and studying ancient writings on bamboo slips and silk is far from easy. It requires even greater effort than studying ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs or Babylonian cuneiform on clay tablets because Chinese characters combine glyphs, meaning, and phonetics.

All living beings in the world, including animals, plants, insects, and birds, aspire for immortality. As a higher form of life, human beings know that life cannot last forever, so they pursue immortality in spirit and cause. *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, one of the world’s earliest great works of literature,

argues that “a lofty spirit is the soul of a great cause.” The ancient Chinese also pursued “three immortalities”—virtue, contribution, and words, which have some similarities to *The Epic of Gilgamesh*.

Mr. Wu Wei spent more than three decades completing an “immortal” cultural project: the four-volume *Chinese Dictionary of Calligraphy on Bamboo Slips and Silk*. From the perspectives of history and development, this book has unprecedented implications.

INHERITING AND ENRICHING CHINA’S DICTIONARY CULTURE

Respect for writing is a long-standing tradition in China. Legend goes that when Cang Jie invented Chinese characters, “it rained millet” because Heaven was so moved by his merit. Book writers and compilers have always been venerated, especially those devoted to compilation

of dictionaries. In China, dictionaries are considered sacred as the “constitution of all books.” All dictionary compilers, including Xu Shen (c.58-c.147), the author of China’s first systematic lexicographical work *Analytical Dictionary of Chinese Characters*, and Zhang Yushu (1642-1711), who compiled the *Kangxi Dictionary* upon the emperor’s decree, have their names etched in history.

A cornerstone of Chinese civilization, Chinese characters are known for their innate beauty in both form and spirit, which is the major factor contributing to the charm of Chinese calligraphy. Chinese characters are also noted for their temporal and spatial beauty. When coming upon the inscription reading “Foremost of the Five Great Mountains” carved on a rock in Mount Tai, many are immediately attracted to its irresistible appeal. Ancient handwriting such as oracle bone inscriptions, stone-drum inscriptions, and inscriptions on bamboo slips and stone steles have unparalleled appeal. The unique temporal and spatial beauty of Chinese characters is real.

In fact, Chinese characters and calligraphy are two concepts that function together. In ancient times, all Chinese text, whether written on paper or carved on stone, was handwritten, requiring the writer to seek distinct beauty in manual work. Calligraphers of all dynasties were committed to promoting the aesthetic value of Chinese characters, making calligraphy

a noble profession. This didn’t happen to any other writing system around the world. As famous Chinese scholar and calligrapher Shen Yinmo said, “Calligraphy is widely regarded as a supreme art because it can create a marvelous charm—like splendid paintings without colors and like harmonious songs without sound.”

China’s calligraphers are many but dictionary compilers are few. However, Mr. Wu Wei can claim both. He is a contemporary version of Xu Shen and Zhang Yushu, and at the same time, his achievements in calligraphy make him comparable to renowned calligraphers such as Li Si, Wang Xizhi, Yan Zhenqing, Liu Gongquan, and Mi Fu. Think that list is sensational? Take a close look at *Chinese Dictionary of Calligraphy on Bamboo Slips and Silk*.

I study Indian language and culture, which seems worlds away from Chinese calligraphy. “Distance is the soul of beauty,” goes a proverb. The distance enables me to grasp the ultimate beauty of Chinese characters, calligraphy, and Wu Wei’s *Chinese Dictionary of Calligraphy on Bamboo Slips and Silk*, which has inherited, improved, and enriched China’s dictionary culture.

RELIABLE TEXTUAL REFERENCES FOR STUDYING CHINESE CIVILIZATION

Of the many various kinds of carriers of human civilizations, text is the most important. Any ancient script or text that is unearthed draws intense

scrutiny from archaeologists, academia, and even broader society. In 1972, the tombs of the Han Dynasty (202 B.C.-220 A.D.) at Mawangdui were discovered by accident. The excavation was deemed highly important, as was the study and preservation of the cultural relics unearthed from the tombs because of their centrality to the Chinese “genes” and historical legacy. The numerous cultural relics unearthed at Mawangdui tombs including some bamboo slips and silk with inscriptions provided substantive, reliable references for studying the history of Chinese civilization and Sino-foreign cultural exchange.

Ancient Chinese poet Qu Yuan (c.340-278 B.C.) asked in *Questions to Heaven*: “What lurks in the darkness of moon—perhaps a rabbit roams?” This line implies that the legend about the Moon Rabbit in India’s *Vera* had been introduced to China as early as the Warring States Period (475-221 B.C.). That hypothesis was also supported by a garment unearthed from the Han Dynasty tombs at Mawangdui in 1972. The garment was decorated with a crescent alongside a toad and a rabbit.

China has long been a populous country. One factor in its ability to feed so many people has been the country’s openness to importing crop species. The ancient Chinese worshipped the god of land and grain. Millet, a crop endemic to China, was the staple food in ancient times. However, the crop yield is relatively low, so China introduced wheat from

West Asia. The yield of wheat is much higher than that of millet. After the introduction of wheat, the population in northern China grew rapidly. The traditional Chinese character for “wheat” (麥) means “ears of grain from outside.” Some interpret the lower part (“夕”) of the character as a “foot.” Xu Xuan, a scholar and calligrapher in the early Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127), once said, “Wheat was introduced to China during the Zhou Dynasty (1046-256 B.C.), so the Chinese character for ‘wheat’ contains a part meaning ‘foot,’ implying it walked from elsewhere.” In any case, it verifies that wheat was introduced to China from abroad.

According to Mr. Wu Wei, the character for “wheat” can be found in oracle bone inscriptions as well as inscriptions on ancient bronze objects, bamboo slips, and silk. The third volume of *Chinese Dictionary of Calligraphy on Bamboo Slips and Silk* includes rubbings of the character for “wheat” from bamboo slips of the Qin (221-206 B.C.) and Han dynasties. Indeed, research of Chinese characters can offer reliable and tangible textual references for studying the history of Chinese civilization and Sino-foreign cultural exchange.

RICH MATERIALS FOR COMPILATION OF DICTIONARIES

In addition to dictionaries and other lexicographical works, Chinese people have also compiled many

encyclopedia publications over the ages such as *Classified Anthology of Literary Works*, *Taiping Imperial Encyclopedia*, *Yongle Encyclopedia*, and *Great Collection of Ancient and Modern Books*. In recent decades, many contemporary lexicographical works such as the *Great Chinese Dictionary* have been published. The publication of the *Chinese Encyclopedia*, which has already been dubbed the “Complete Library in the Four Branches of Literature” of the new era, is underway.

The publication of dictionaries and encyclopedias testifies to the prosperity of Chinese culture in the new era. Wu Wei’s *Chinese Dictionary of Calligraphy on Bamboo Slips and Silk* is a part of the endeavor that is sure to provide plentiful food for thought in the new round of lexicographical compilations.

A WORLD-SHAKING CULTURAL PROGRAM

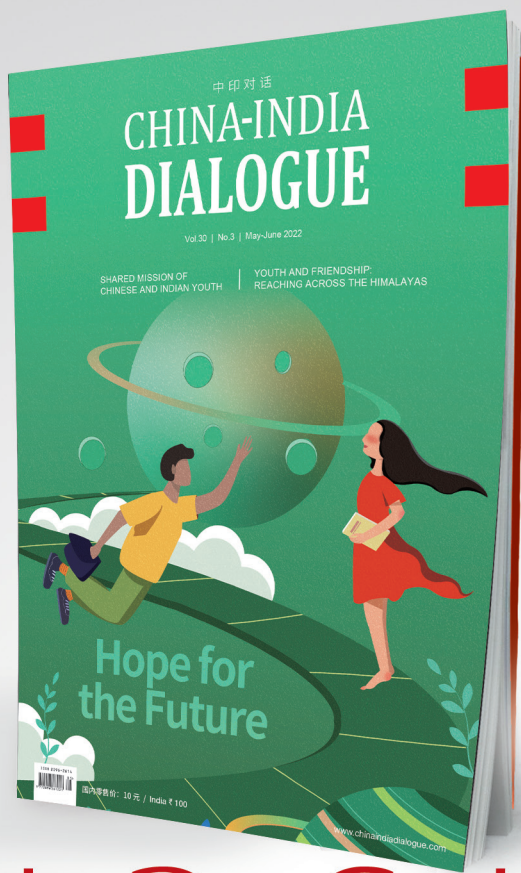
Since the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, the Chinese people have been working hard to invigorate, prosper, and strengthen their country.

Building a strong country requires not only economic development but also superstructural optimization. In 1894, when the First Sino-Japanese War occurred, China’s Army and Navy had already developed to a certain size. However, due to political corruption and ideological chaos, China lost both wars and were forced to sign the *Treaty of Nanjing* and the

Treaty of Shimonoseki. History showed that the strength of a nation hinges on the strength of its culture. A strong nation must nurture first-class literary, philosophical, historical, political, artistic, economic, and legal works or its strength won’t be widely recognized. A strong nation must have world-class museums, libraries, folklore exhibition halls, literature and art facilities, and science and technology museums that display the most representative exhibits of human civilizations including key achievements through its own inventions rather than those stolen and looted from other countries.

The four-volume *Chinese Dictionary of Calligraphy on Bamboo Slips and Silk*, to which Mr. Wu Wei dedicated three decades of efforts, was published by Tsinghua University Press. Its publication heralded the arrival of another spring in China’s cultural development: After more than 70 years of hard work since the founding of the People’s Republic of China, the Chinese people have made remarkable and substantive achievements in invigorating their country to prosperity, especially in the cultural field. 📖

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The author is a professor and director of the Center for Indian Studies at Shenzhen University. He was granted the Distinguished Indologist Award by former Indian President Pranab Mukherjee.



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