

INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING

国际交流

2

Vol. 2, 2024

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LETTING THE WORLD UNDERSTAND CHINA  
AND LETTING CHINA UNDERSTAND THE WORLD



中国国际交流协会  
CHINESE ASSOCIATION FOR INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING

# INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING

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**International Standard Serial  
Number:**

**ISSN1002-8285**

**China Standard Serial Number:**

**CN11-2491/D**

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Letters may be edited for length or content.

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# Speech at the Meeting on Cultural Inheritance and Development

XI JINPING

Today, we convened a meeting on cultural inheritance and development. Preceding this event, I visited the newly built China National Archives of Publications and Culture and the Chinese Archaeological Museum at the Chinese Academy of History and found them exceptionally insightful.

To establish both the Chinese Academy of History and the China National Archives of Publications and Culture was a decision of great significance made by the CPC Central Committee. The Chinese nation boasts a legacy spanning millions of years of humanity, ten millennia of culture, and five thousand years of civilisation. My visit to these two places helped deepen my appreciation for the time-honoured Chinese culture and the profound depth of Chinese civilisation. Only through a comprehensive and deep understanding of the history of Chinese civilisation can we more effectively promote the creative transformation and development of the best of the traditional Chinese culture, vigorously push forward the progress of socialist culture with Chinese characteristics, and cultivate a modern Chinese civilisation.

Culture is fundamental to a nation's foundation and

future. Recently, I have consistently pondered the major issue of promoting China's socialist culture and developing a modern Chinese civilisation. This is precisely the reason that led us to convene this meeting today. Here, I would like to address three key points.

## **I. Developing a Profound Understanding of the Defining Characteristics of Chinese Civilisation**

The traditional Chinese culture encompasses a multitude of significant concepts, including social ideals of pursuing the common good for all and achieving universal peace; governance principles of regarding the people as the foundation of the state and governing by virtue; traditions of striving for great unity in the country and ensuring unity amid diversity; values of dedicating oneself to self-cultivation, family management, state governance, and peace for all and shouldering one's duties to secure the future of the nation; aspirations of embracing the world with virtue and cultivating integrity; economic principles of enriching the people and improving their lives and pursuing the greater good and shared interests; ecological ideas of promoting harmony between humanity and nature and the coexistence of all living things; philosophical thoughts of seeking truth from

facts and combining knowledge with action; the mindset of understanding multiple perspectives and seeking harmony through the middle way; and communication approaches of acting in good faith and being friendly to others. These concepts collectively shape the defining characteristics of Chinese civilisation.

### **Chinese Civilisation Is Distinguished by Its Continuity**

Chinese civilisation is the only great, uninterrupted civilisation that continues to this day in a state form. This unequivocally affirms the cultural identity and robust vitality of Chinese civilisation as it has responded to challenges and broken new ground through self-development. Chinese people's deep-rooted sentiments for the motherland and profound sense of history constitute an ideal for upholding great unity and provide spiritual support for guiding the Chinese nation through countless hardships on the path to national rejuvenation. This continuity inherently dictates that the Chinese nation will follow its own path. If not through the prism of its extensive history of continuity, one would not be able to understand ancient China, contemporary China, let alone China of the future.

### **Chinese Civilisation Is Distinguished by Its Creativity**

Chinese civilisation places stress on discarding the outdated in favour of the new and making progress on a daily basis. It embodies both profound depth and dynamic forward surges. Continuity doesn't mean being stagnant or inflexible; on the contrary, it represents a history marked by creativity-driven progress. The Chinese nation embraces the ethos of self-renewal, as an ancient saying goes "improve oneself in one day, do so from day to day, and there will be daily improvement." This spirit

propels the Chinese nation's sustained material, cultural-ethical, and political advancement, allowing it to stand tall and firm as one of the most prosperous and powerful civilisations throughout a long historical period. The creativity of Chinese civilisation determines that it upholds tradition without clinging to the past and respects ancient wisdom without reverting to archaic thinking. It also determines that the Chinese nation is fearless in facing new challenges and embracing new things.

### **Chinese Civilisation Is Distinguished by Its Unity**

The longtime tradition of great unity underpins its commitment to upholding unity amid diversity and maintaining solidarity through centrality. The internal cohesion of maintaining unity is both a prerequisite and a consequence of Chinese civilisation's continuity. Through bitter experiences, Chinese people have learned that unity and solidarity bring prosperity, whereas national fragmentation and turmoil breed adversity. The unity of Chinese civilisation has seen its various ethnic cultures coming together to create a cohesive whole and remaining tightly knit even in the face of serious setbacks. It shapes a common belief that China's territorial integrity must always be preserved, the country must never be allowed to descend into turmoil, our nation must always remain united, and our civilisation must never be interrupted. It firmly underscores the notion that national unity always remains at the core of national interests and that a robust, unified nation is essential to the future of all our people.

### **Chinese Civilisation Is Distinguished by Its Inclusiveness**

Rather than replacing diverse cultures with a single monoculture, Chinese civilisation endeavours to

integrate various cultures into a shared tapestry, resolving conflicts and forging consensus. By transcending regional disparities, kinship ties, and religious beliefs, the sense of identification with Chinese culture has successfully transformed a vast and diverse nation into one that cherishes unity amid diversity. The more inclusive a civilisation becomes, the more favour and support it garners, and the longer it endures. The inclusiveness of Chinese civilisation determines the Chinese nation's direction toward communication, exchange, and integration, as well as the harmonious coexistence of diverse religious beliefs in the country. It also defines the open-mindedness of Chinese culture to embrace and draw on other cultures.

### **Chinese Civilisation Is Distinguished by Its Peacefulness**

Over the five thousand years, Chinese civilisation has always upheld peace, amity, and harmony. It advocates applying moral principles to create a world where the common good and individual interests harmoniously coexist and prioritising others in self-other relationships. It stands against isolation and in favour of interaction, advocates coexistence and shared progress while opposing coercion, and advocates peace through harmony and rejects the law of the jungle. The intrinsic peacefulness of Chinese civilisation determines that China will always work to safeguard world peace, contribute to global development, and uphold international order. China remains committed to promoting exchanges and mutual learning among diverse civilisations without ever seeking cultural hegemony. China will not impose its values and political institutions upon others. It is committed to cooperation rather than confrontation, and it will never form blocs on a partisan basis.

## **II. Understanding the Significance of Integrating the Basic Tenets of Marxism with China's Specific Realities and the Best of Its Traditional Culture**

Given the profound foundations of our venerable 5,000-year-old civilisation, the only path for pioneering and developing Chinese socialism is to integrate the basic tenets of Marxism with China's specific realities and the best of its traditional culture ("two integrations"). This systematic conclusion has been derived from our extensive explorations of Chinese socialism. We have always emphasised integrating the basic tenets of Marxism with China's specific realities and have now officially brought forward the integration of the basic tenets of Marxism with China's fine traditional culture. As I once stated, without the 5,000-year-old Chinese civilisation, where would the Chinese characteristics come from? If it wasn't for these characteristics, how could we have charted the triumphant path of Chinese socialism? Only within the context of more than 5,000 years of Chinese civilisation can we genuinely comprehend the historical necessity, cultural significance, and unique advantages of the Chinese path.

Both positive and negative historical experience demonstrates that the concept of the "two integrations" is the strongest assurance for our success.

### **First, Mutual Compatibility Is the Fundamental Prerequisite**

The "two integrations" is not a far-fetched proposition. Despite their distinct origins, Marxism and traditional Chinese culture exhibit remarkable congruence. For instance, the social principles of pursuing the common good for all and acting in good faith and being friendly to

others resonate harmoniously with the ideals and convictions of communism and socialism; the governing concepts of regarding the people as the foundation of the state and governing by virtue align seamlessly with the political principle of putting the people first; and the practices of discarding the outdated in favour of the new and ceaselessly pursuing self-improvement correspond faithfully to the revolutionary spirit of Communists. Marxism sees the essence of man from the angle of social relations, while in Chinese culture, people are defined by their relationships with their family, their country, and the world. Both reject the notion of viewing humans as isolated entities. Genuine integration can only be attained through mutual compatibility. It is in this vein that we say that the Communist Party of China is a steadfast proponent and practitioner of Marxism, while it also works to keep China's traditional culture alive and strong.

### **Second, Integration Represents a Mutually Beneficial Process**

Integration extends beyond mere juxtaposition; instead, it creates a new, organically unified cultural entity. On one hand, Marxism entered China with its advanced theories, giving a new lease of life to Chinese civilisation with its truthfulness. It ushered China into the modern era, revitalising and modernising Chinese culture. Traditional concepts such as regarding the people as the foundation of the state, all regions sharing common customs and practices, all things living side by side, and enriching the people have transformed to modern ideas of pursuing democracy, forging a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation, maintaining harmony between humanity and nature, and striving for common prosperity. This ground-breaking transformation has presented a modern form of Chinese civilisation. On the other

hand, China's fine traditional culture has enriched Marxism and facilitated its breakthroughs in adapting to the Chinese context and the needs of the times on an ongoing basis, endowing Marxism with increasingly distinctive Chinese features and style and making it embody the best of Chinese culture and ethos of this era. The integration of the basic tenets of Marxism with China's traditional culture enables Marxism to take root in China, modernises traditional Chinese culture, and facilitates the emergence of a new culture that serves as the cultural embodiment of Chinese modernisation.

### **Third, Integration Has Reinforced the Foundations of Our Path**

What sets our socialism apart? What enables it to thrive with such vitality? The answers lie in its distinct Chinese characteristics, and the essence of these characteristics is encapsulated within the concept of the "two integrations." The path of Chinese socialism is fundamentally socialist, grounded in Marxism. The essential socialist elements in Chinese culture provide an intellectual foundation for the embrace of Marxism in China. The path of Chinese socialism is continually broadening, and our determination to remain on this path is unwavering. In the new era, a significant reason for the historic achievements and transformative progress our Party and country have made is our adherence to the "two integrations." The path of Chinese socialism has been charted under the guidance of Marxism, building upon China's 5,000 years of civilisation. The integration of the basic tenets of Marxism with the best of China's traditional culture has endowed the path of Chinese socialism with greater historical depth and broadened its cultural underpinnings. Chinese modernisation represents a wide avenue leading

to a strong country and national rejuvenation. Just as Chinese modernisation infuses Chinese civilisation with modern vitality, the rich heritage of Chinese civilisation bolsters Chinese modernisation. Chinese modernisation seeks to build upon, rather than erase, China's ancient civilisation; it has developed within China, not imported from any other country; and it has stemmed from the rejuvenation, not the disruption, of Chinese civilisation. Chinese modernisation is a new mission for the Chinese nation, and it will allow Chinese civilisation to shine with renewed radiance.

#### **Fourth, Integration Has Opened up New Space for Innovation**

Integration itself embodies a form of innovation, but it also paves the way for significant theoretical and practical breakthroughs. The integration of the basic tenets of Marxism with the best of China's traditional culture has enabled us to retain both the theoretical and cultural initiative, and exerted a strong influence on the path, theory, and system of Chinese socialism. From this perspective, we can observe that the systems of people's congresses and political consultation established by our Party reflect the Chinese concept of the people being the foundation of the state, the idea of universal participation in governance, the tradition of collaborative and consultative governance, and the political wisdom of being all-inclusive and seeking common ground while setting differences aside. China's implementation of a system of regional ethnic autonomy within a unitary state, rather than a federal system, adapts itself to the underlying development trend of the Chinese nation toward internal cohesion and unity amid diversity. It also carries on the Chinese tradition of striving for great unity in the country to see all regions sharing common customs and practices amid rich diversity

and all people coming together as one family. The integration of the basic tenets of Marxism with the best of China's traditional culture is yet another manifestation of our commitment to freeing the mind. It allows us to fully harness the precious resources of traditional Chinese culture to explore future-oriented theoretical and institutional innovations within a broader cultural framework.

#### **Fifth, Integration Has Reinforced Our Cultural Identity**

Cultural identity is essential for the continued preservation and empowerment of a nation's culture, and for it to unite and inspire the people and to foster creativity and influence. The CPC has consistently emphasised cultural development. In the new era, we have emphasised confidence in our culture alongside confidence in our path, theory, and system. Our cultural confidence is rooted in our cultural identity, established by the Chinese people under the leadership of the CPC in the land of China. It is established on the basis of creative transformation and innovative development of traditional culture, as well as the inheritance of revolutionary culture and the development of advanced socialist culture. While establishing this identity, we have drawn inspiration from the outstanding achievements of human civilisation and integrated Marxism's basic tenets with China's specific realities and the best of its traditional culture. The formulation of the Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era embodies our cultural identity. This identity has given us a firm cultural sense of self and provided fundamental support for our cultural confidence. With this cultural identity, the CPC gains significant cultural strength to steer the trends of our times; the Chinese nation and people have a solid cultural foundation for national identity; and Chinese



culture is endowed with distinctive features that facilitate exchanges and mutual learning with the rest of the world.

### **III. Better Shouldering New Cultural Missions**

Since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, the Central Committee has given paramount importance to cultural progress in leading our Party and people in advancing the nation's governance. Through unwavering dedication over these years, we have witnessed cultural preservation and development adopting a fresh perspective and forging new frontiers. Substantial strides have been taken in developing a strong socialist culture.

We have continually deepened our understanding of the laws governing cultural development through practical experience, proposing a series of new visions, new ideas, and new concepts. These pivotal ideas theoretically summarise our Party's practices in leading cultural development in the new era, providing fundamental principles for enhancing our public communication and promoting cultural progress. It is imperative that we uphold, implement, and further cultivate these ideas over the long term.

Now at a new starting point, we must persist in cultivating a thriving and strong socialist culture as well as a modern Chinese civilisation. These represent our new cultural missions in the new era. Here, I would like to address three points.

#### **1. We Must Keep Firm Confidence in Our Culture**

Only self-confidence leads to self-improvement. Only with cultural confidence can a nation stand firm and tall and traverse great distances. Chinese civilisation has an uninterrupted history spanning thousands of years and enduring vitality amid numerous hardships. This is a miracle of human

civilisation as well as the source of our confidence. Unwavering cultural confidence necessitates charting our own path. To bolster cultural confidence, we must prioritise endeavours to distil insights from our experience and transform these insights into distinct Chinese theories, grounded in our great historical and contemporary practices. We must neither blindly follow dogmas nor indiscriminately adopt foreign theories. Rather, we should strive for intellectual independence. We should make cultural confidence part of the Chinese ethos and cultural characters that are characterised by high-spiritedness, rationality, and peacefulness.

#### **2. We Must Uphold Openness and Inclusiveness**

These principles are not only a source of vitality, but also an outstanding indicator of cultural confidence. Since ancient times, extensive and profound Chinese civilisation has benefited from the openness and inclusiveness of Chinese culture. This attitude necessitates that we proactively learn from all the achievements of human civilisation. Chinese civilisation cannot develop great cohesion and appeal domestically, nor expand its accessibility and influence abroad, without integrating itself with human advancement in other countries, both in the past and present. Through our continuous efforts, we are better positioned than ever to properly address the relations between China and the West, as well as the interplay between ancient and modern civilisations. We are more eager than ever to forge cultural accomplishments that bridge the past and present, and connect China with the West. We must adapt Marxism to the Chinese context and the needs of the times, keep the best of China's traditional culture alive and strong, facilitate the localisation of foreign cultures, and persist in cultivating a socialist culture with Chinese

characteristics in the new era.

### **3. We Must Uphold Fundamental Principles and Break New Ground**

In the cultural sector, we will not lose our way or our political bearings as long as we adhere to these fundamental principles. We can keep up with and lead the times only if we consistently embrace creativity. What we need to uphold is the fundamental system for ensuring the guiding role of Marxism in the ideological domain, the fundamental requirement of integrating the basic tenets of Marxism with China's specific realities and the best of its traditional culture, our Party's leadership over cultural development, and our nation's cultural identity. We must develop new ideas, new discourses, new mechanisms, and new forms. Under the guidance of Marxism, we must

adeptly integrate the past with the present, draw on successful foreign experiences, make informed choices through dialectical reasoning, and develop the new from the old, therefore achieving a seamless fusion of traditional and contemporary cultures. Cultural workers in the new era must be upright and enterprising enough to uphold fundamental principles and break new ground, carry forward our cultural traditions, and write a splendid chapter for contemporary China.

Comrades, the best inheritance of history is the creation of history and the greatest tribute to human civilisation is the creation of a new form of human progress. I hope all of us will shoulder our missions and make enthusiastic and concerted efforts to create a new culture of our times and develop a modern Chinese civilisation.

# Understanding the Historical Significance and Contemporary Value of the Distinctive Features of Chinese Civilisation

CPC Leading Group of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

At a meeting on cultural inheritance and development held in Beijing, June 2, 2023, President Xi Jinping put forward a holistic and systematic explanation of the distinctive features of Chinese civilisation — consistency, originality, unity, inclusiveness, and a peaceful nature. Underpinned by the scientific methodology of dialectical and historical materialism and an overarching strategic perspective on the great undertakings of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era, President Xi’s profound exposition has granted us a deeper understanding of the laws underlying the development of Chinese civilisation by shedding light on its intrinsic characteristics. This understanding bears not just immense historical importance but also significant contemporary value.

## I. A Profound Understanding of the Laws Underlying the Development of Chinese Civilisation

Over the long course of history, the Chinese nation has, with a spirit of tireless self-improvement and unswerving resolve, travelled a path of development different from that of other civilisations. President Xi has pointed out, “Why was

our nation able to survive and develop over the long course of its history? One important reason is our nation’s moral aspiration, ethos, and heritage, which have been carried on for generations.” The five distinctive features fully illustrate the inherent qualities of Chinese civilisation.

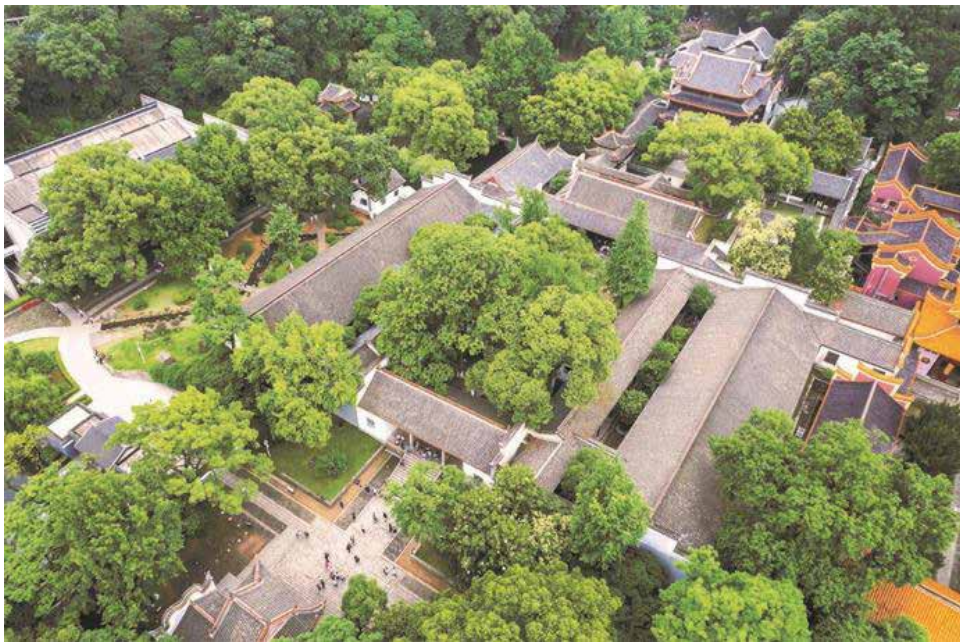
## Chinese Civilisation Is Distinguished by a Remarkable Level of Consistency, Being the Sole Ancient Civilisation to Endure without Interruption and Develop as a Nation down to the Present Day

With history in China encompassing a million years of humanity, ten thousand years of culture, and more than five thousand years of civilisation, the Chinese nation boasts a distinctive, deep, and wide-ranging civilisation and value system. The outstanding elements of traditional Chinese thought and culture, including Confucian thought, have played a crucial role in Chinese civilisation’s formation and uninterrupted continuation over millennia, in the formation and consolidation of a harmonious and united multi-ethnic country, and in the formation and enrichment of the spirit of the Chinese nation. History has proven that Chinese civilisation has the cultural identity

and vitality needed to develop itself, respond to challenges, and open up new horizons. A deep-rooted national sentiment and awareness of our history underpin our people's desire to safeguard the Chinese nation's great unity and serve as pillars of strength enabling us to steadily advance national rejuvenation regardless of the difficulties and challenges. The consistency of Chinese civilisation is by no means the simple consequence of some fortuitous historical phenomena, nor a product of stagnation. Rather, it is the outcome of carrying forward our culture by building on past achievements and signifies the high degree of unity defining Chinese civilisation both as a whole and in every specific stage.

**Chinese Civilisation Is Set Apart by Its Outstanding Originality, Which Is Based on Discarding the Outdated in Favour of the New, Moving in Step with the Times, and Ceaselessly Pursuing Self-improvement**

Originality is the wellspring of a civilisation's progress. In the absence of originality, a civilisation will stagnate. The days of any civilisation will be numbered without a capacity for continuous innovation. Indeed, originality is the fundamental reason why Chinese civilisation has flourished among the civilisations of the world. As a civilisation, we have tended to discard the outdated in favour of the new, move with the times, and



*Yuelu Academy, Changsha City, Hunan Province, June 8, 2023. Since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, President Xi has toured the country to explore our cultural heritage and trace the roots of Chinese civilisation. On this basis, he has put forward a series of new ideas, viewpoints, and conclusions on China's cultural confidence and strength and the sustainable development of Chinese civilisation, thus providing guidance for the creative transformation and development of Chinese culture. On September 17, 2020, while reflecting on a board bearing the words "Seeking Truth from Facts" during a tour of Yuelu Academy, President Xi emphasised the importance of "making sure truth is grounded in the local context." PHOTO BY XINHUA REPORTER CHEN SIHAN*

ceaselessly pursue self-improvement. Moving with the times is in fact a core tenet of our civilisation; dispensing with the outdated enables us to pursue ongoing renewal; and ceaseless self-improvement stands as a defining trait of our civilisation. These three qualities have kept Chinese civilisation moving forward in a material, institutional, and cultural sense, allowing it to reach one height after another.

### **Chinese Civilisation Enjoys Remarkable Unity, Featuring Great Diversity, Internal Cohesion, and Solidarity**

The political, cultural, and emotional identification of a nation are a reflection of its cultural identity. The concept of great unity in the country is an important part of Chinese cultural identity. Over its more than 5,000-year history, Chinese civilisation has gradually developed the concept of great unity based on shared customs and practices among all regions while still maintaining rich diversity. As a concept dating back to pre-Qin times, great unity became a political reality following the Qin and Han dynasties (221 BC-AD 220). This principle of governance and institutional design has been widely acknowledged in the political process for thousands of years. The practices of having a central authority lead all areas of endeavour, prescribing a uniform axle length for all carriages, standardising written characters, and governing conduct with a common set of rules greatly contributed to the stability of China as a unified multi-ethnic country. Time and again, history has shown that national unity is the prerequisite for national prosperity and development, while secession invariably brings disaster to the people and sends the wheels of history into reverse. Naturally, the unity of Chinese civilisation does not imply the eradication of cultural distinctions.

Instead, within a politically unified framework, Chinese culture, as the collective creation of all China's ethnic groups, is manifested in a colourful and wide range of forms.

### **Chinese Civilisation Is Characterised by Exceptional Inclusiveness, Bringing together a Diverse Array of Elements and Maintaining Openness to Exchanges**

Inclusiveness in a civilisation reflects a vast, broad-minded spirit and is the bedrock that ensures the abundant nourishment needed for its ongoing development. Chinese civilisation came to maturity in a historical environment featuring the simultaneous existence of numerous ethnicities. The history of Chinese development is thus defined by the convergence of diverse ethnic cultures. Chinese culture has always united the community of the Chinese nation around a common history and a shared set of cultural classics, rituals, and ethical principles. From an early period, the Chinese people wholeheartedly embraced Confucian thought and native religious beliefs. Yet that did not deter them from welcoming foreign ideas and religions, which enjoyed ample space for development here. After their localisation, these ideas and religious beliefs ultimately enriched the spiritual world of the Chinese people and became an integral part of Chinese civilisation. The openness of Chinese civilisation enabled the establishment of the Silk Road, the introduction of foreign crops into China, the spread of Buddhism in the East, Zheng He's voyages to the West, and the gradual dissemination of Western learning to China. These events illustrate that at every level, the Chinese people readily absorbed the best of what other nations had to offer in both a material and spiritual sense. At the same time, the best of traditional Chinese culture spread to neighbouring

regions and further afield. By embracing the world with virtue, Chinese civilisation has fostered a character of tolerance toward all things.

### **Chinese Civilisation Is Distinguished by a Peaceful Nature, Advocating Concord between Oneself and Others, Advancing Harmony through Dialogue, Promoting Coexistence and Shared Progress, and Upholding Peace**

Chinese civilisation advocates a world of harmony based on a moral order and believes in fostering concord between oneself and others while putting others before oneself, embodying the spirit of collectivism. China is for the promotion of harmony through dialogue and against isolation and seclusion; it advocates coexistence and shared progress and opposes anyone imposing their will on others; it champions the preservation of peace and harmony and stands against the law of the jungle. The Chinese have always been a peace-loving people. Since ancient times, we have believed that harmony should reign between all nations, that all men in the world are brothers, that close neighbours are better than distant relatives, and that a warlike state is destined to perish regardless of its size. China does not subscribe to the notion that a country is bound to seek hegemony when it grows in strength. Aggression and hegemony are simply not in the blood of the Chinese people; rather a love of peace is imprinted on our character. President Xi Jinping has pointed out, "Throughout history, the reason why the Chinese nation has gained status and influence in the world is not militarism or foreign expansion, but the strong appeal and attraction of Chinese culture. Our forebears long recognised a truth: 'Should those from distant lands be unconvinced by us, we must further cultivate our culture and virtue.' Explaining the endowments, characteristics,

and spirit of the Chinese nation and convincing people with our virtue and our culture are essential to this endeavour."

### **II. Understanding the Five Distinctive Features of Chinese Civilisation and the Historical Inevitability of the "Second Integration"**

The five distinctive features of Chinese civilisation demonstrate a profound grasp of the laws underlying our civilisation's development. As a summary, they demonstrate a profound understanding of the essence of Chinese civilisation, reflecting the new heights the CPC has reached in its confidence in our history and culture and in its consciousness of promoting cultural innovation while carrying forward fine traditional Chinese culture. The integration of the basic tenets of Marxism with China's traditional culture (known as the "second integration") is inextricably linked to the distinctive features of traditional Chinese culture. As President Xi has pointed out, "Without the 5,000-year-old Chinese civilisation, where would these Chinese characteristics come from? If it wasn't for these characteristics, how could we have today's successful path of socialism with Chinese characteristics?" These five distinctive features thus hold major significance in several respects.

### **A Full Affirmation of the Historical Status of China's Traditional Culture**

The five distinctive features of Chinese civilisation provide a cogent summary of Chinese history and strongly affirm the contemporary value of China's traditional culture. By facilitating a new understanding of this culture, they will undoubtedly provide a significant boost for the "second integration." While Marxism is a scientific theory, no prepackaged solutions exist to address the issue

of whether and how Marxism can be integrated with traditional Chinese culture. Globally, the issue of navigating the relationship between tradition and modernity has posed difficulties for numerous countries. The tumultuous fate of the Chinese nation in modern times profoundly affected the historical trajectory of Chinese culture. Some attributed the backward and beleaguered state of modern China entirely to its culture, prompting them to dismiss traditional culture outright and call for total Westernisation. Conversely, some others disregarded the evolving times to stubbornly cling to the past. The fundamental problem with these polarised viewpoints was that their analyses and treatment of traditional culture lacked scientific theoretical guidance. Since its founding in 1921,

the CPC has actively guided and promoted China's advanced culture while working to keep the best of China's traditional culture alive and strong. The CPC has always placed great value on traditional Chinese culture and worked continuously to adapt Marxism to the Chinese context and the needs of the times. In doing so, it has applied the truth of Marxism to invigorate ancient Chinese civilisation. Notably, since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, President Xi has elevated our understanding of traditional Chinese culture to an unprecedented level by integrating Chinese socialism with more than 5,000 years of Chinese civilisation. This has seen us following a path of China's socialism that is endowed with greater and more extensive depth and broader cultural underpinnings. As a result,



*Terracotta Warriors in Pit No. 1 at the Mausoleum of the First Emperor of Qin, Shaanxi Province, April 26, 2023. The world was stunned by the discovery of the Terracotta Army in 1974. The underground army, composed of thousands of life-sized, vividly realistic clay soldiers, each with distinct facial features, seemed to rush forth from history, marking the start of archaeological research at the Qin tombs, which still continues today. When a museum opened here in 1979, the terracotta warriors and horses, bronze chariots and horses, and other symbols of Qin civilisation gained worldwide renown. PHOTO BY XINHUA REPORTER LIU XIAO*

traditional Chinese culture is shining with even greater radiance in the new era.

### **A Well-conceived Summary of the Important Elements of Traditional Chinese Culture**

Numerous important elements within China's traditional culture have collectively shaped the distinctive features of Chinese civilisation. These distinctive features have, in turn, established a crucial foundation for the "second integration." Chinese civilisation has evolved by building upon past achievements and discarding outdated elements to welcome innovations. In spite of dynastic changes, the continuity of Chinese culture always prevailed, with its consistency, originality, unity, inclusiveness, and peaceful nature manifesting in diverse ways across various historical periods. After the Opium War of 1840, Chinese civilisation endured unprecedented trauma; the country faced severe humiliation, the people suffered untold misery, and our civilisation was cast into darkness. Yet even this did not spell the end for Chinese civilisation. Modern China has explored numerous paths, but Marxism has proven to be the best fit for China's realities. President Xi has pointed out that "Although Marxism and the best of traditional Chinese culture have different origins, they are highly compatible." Traditional Chinese culture espoused a naive materialism grounded in the physical world, a rudimentary dialectical view based on the opposition and transformation of things, a pragmatic mindset of combining knowledge with action, the grand aspiration of pursuing the common good for all, and a people-centred view that focused on the people's role in history. All these concepts are aligned with the Marxist worldview, dialectic approach, perspective of social development, and view of the people. As such, they offer rich intellectual and cultural

nourishment for the "second integration."

### **A Profound Grasp of the Chinese Governance Wisdom**

The five distinctive features offer a sound understanding of and practical guidance for the "second integration." As President Xi has pointed out, "Given the rich foundations of our more than 5,000-year-old civilisation, only by integrating the basic tenets of Marxism with China's specific realities and with its traditional culture can we pioneer and develop socialism with Chinese characteristics." This systematic conclusion is drawn from our explorations of Chinese socialism. The prerequisite for integration is mutual compatibility, and the result of integration has been advancement for both sides, leading to a new, organically unified cultural entity. Integration has reinforced the foundations of our path, created new space for innovation, and fortified our cultural identity. The "second integration," therefore, is not merely an intellectual exercise but has practical implications. From a very early stage, Chinese civilisation developed its own unique governance concepts and institutional practices, which have been passed down for generations. All this lays bare a unique historical phenomenon: despite its many dynasties, with some even coexisting, China managed to avoid discontinuity and fragmentation in its governance system. Instead, it demonstrated a high degree of homogeneity, endogeneity, and continuity. It is imperative, therefore, to fully grasp the significance of the five distinctive features of Chinese civilisation and to ground all theoretical and institutional innovations for the future in the great historical and contemporary endeavours of the Chinese nation.

### **III. Understanding the Contemporary Value of**



### **the Five Distinctive Features to Better Shoulder the New Cultural Mission in the New Era**

As President Xi has stated, “Only with a full understanding of the history of Chinese civilisation can we spur the creative transformation and innovative development of China’s traditional culture, promote the progress of socialist culture with Chinese characteristics, and build a modern Chinese civilisation.” As a high-level summarisation of Chinese civilisation, the five distinctive features are of great practical value in advancing the development of socialist culture with Chinese characteristics and a modern civilisation.

### **Understanding the Consistency of Chinese Civilisation and Firmly Following the Path of Chinese Socialism**

President Xi has noted, “The consistency of Chinese civilisation determines on a fundamental level that the Chinese people must follow their own path. Should we neglect to see China through the prism of its long and uninterrupted history, we will be unable to understand China’s past and present, much less its future.” The consistency of Chinese civilisation is a feature of China’s national conditions. China today is the product and inheritance of our history. President Xi has stated, “No two political systems are entirely the same, and a political system cannot be evaluated conceptually without consideration given to its specific socio-political context, history, and cultural traditions. No one political system should be regarded as the only choice, nor should we just mechanically copy the political systems of other countries.” He has also pointed out that “In designing and developing the political system of a country, it is imperative to focus on the integration of history and reality, theory and practice, and

form and content. We must take into account our national conditions and realities, carrying on our long-established heritage and remaining mindful of the political experience we have accumulated and political principles we have established over our past course of development, while at the same time responding to current demands and focusing on current issues. We must not break with history and simply replicate another political system out of the blue.” Chinese socialism represents a dialectical unity of the theoretical logic of scientific socialism and the historical logic of China’s social development. As President Xi has stated, “It is inevitable that China, a country with a unique culture, a unique history, and unique fundamental conditions, should choose a development path featuring its own characteristics.” This is the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics. It is the path we must follow in building modern Chinese civilisation.

### **Understanding the Originality of Chinese Civilisation and Adhering to the Enterprising Spirit of Upholding Tradition without Clinging to the Past and Respecting Ancient Wisdom without Reverting to Archaic Thinking**

President Xi has said, “The originality of Chinese civilisation fundamentally determines the Chinese nation’s enterprising spirit of upholding tradition without clinging to the past and respecting ancient wisdom without reverting to archaic thinking as well as its fearless character of facing new challenges head-on and embracing new things.” In Chinese philosophy, the concepts of “constant” and “change” are considered to be dialectically unified and mutually reinforcing. The consistency of Chinese civilisation, therefore, is characterised by constant innovation. It features both still waters of great depth and magnificent surging waves of

advancement. Over thousands of years of history, China has created an unparalleled institutional culture, nurturing a rich store of ideas concerning state systems and governance. Throughout China's history, institutional arrangements have remained stable over long periods, yet within this constancy, a continuous element of innovation has been present, enabling adaption to the changing times. This dynamic has aided in the promotion of both civilisational development and orderly social mobility. The CPC has kept the great innovative spirit of the Chinese nation alive and thriving. Indeed, contemporary China is undergoing the most extensive and profound social transformation in the country's history, as well as the greatest and

most unique process of practical innovation in human history.

**Understanding the Unity of Chinese Civilisation to Resolutely Uphold National Unity, Oppose Separatism, and Forge a Strong Sense of Community for the Chinese Nation**

President Xi has noted, "The unity of Chinese civilisation has seen its various ethnic cultures coming together to create a cohesive whole and remaining tightly knit even in the face of major setbacks. It determines the Chinese people's common belief that China's territorial integrity must always be preserved, the nation must never be allowed to descend into turmoil, our ethnic



*Actors perform "The Light of Liangzhu" prior to the Hangzhou 2022 Asian Games Flame Lighting Ceremony at the Liangzhu Archaeological Site Park, Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, June 15, 2023. In July 2019, the archaeological ruins of Liangzhu City were inscribed onto the UNESCO World Heritage List during the 43rd session of the World Heritage Committee, signalling international recognition for the more than 5,000 years of Chinese civilisation the site has helped reveal. PHOTO BY XINHUA REPORTER JIANG HAN*

groups must always remain united, and our civilisation must never be interrupted. It further determines that national unity will always sit at the heart of China's core interests and that a strong and unified country is vital for the future of all our people." Over China's several thousand years of history, unity has been an underlying historical trend, the direction of development, and the desire of the people. The unity of Chinese civilisation stems from its unified economic and cultural foundations. As a distinctive feature of Chinese civilisation, unity is a precious historical legacy. It has played a positive role in our history. It is also of great practical significance for promoting the development of socialist culture with Chinese characteristics and building a modern Chinese civilisation today.

### **Understanding the Inclusiveness of Chinese Civilisation, Bringing together a Diverse Array of Elements, and Maintaining Openness to Exchanges**

President Xi Jinping has pointed out, "The inclusiveness of Chinese civilisation determines the Chinese nation's historical orientation toward communication, exchange, and integration, as well as the harmonious existence of diverse religious beliefs in China. It also defines the willingness of Chinese culture to embrace and draw on other cultures." Amid this inclusiveness, Chinese civilisation has demonstrated continuity, originality, and unity. Inclusiveness has served to continuously expand the open-mindedness of Chinese civilisation. Inclusiveness is a form of convergence. The Chinese nation has always viewed other civilisations with an open and tolerant attitude and has developed a unique national spirit of exercising restraint toward oneself and engaging in open exchanges with others. Its inclusiveness can thus

also be regarded as a form of coexistence and openness. From a macro-historical perspective spanning thousands of years, opening up has always been an underlying theme and general trend of the Chinese nation. Since ancient times, based on the concepts of "harmony under Heaven" and "harmony between all nations," the Chinese nation has engaged in interactions and cultural exchanges with foreign peoples with confidence and generosity. This resulted in the creation of the vast and enduring Silk Road, characterised by the ringing of camel bells over thousands of miles, and the grandeur of the Tang Dynasty (618-907), marked by the gathering of people from various nations in their traditional national attire in the capital city of Chang'an.

### **Understanding the Peaceful Nature of Chinese Civilisation and Working to Safeguard World Peace, Contribute to Global Development, and Preserve International Order**

President Xi has declared, "The peaceful nature of Chinese civilisation determines that China will always work to safeguard world peace, contribute to global development, and preserve international order. China will continue to promote exchange and mutual learning among civilisations without seeking cultural hegemony. China will never impose its values or political system on others. It is committed to cooperation rather than confrontation, and it will never form small groups on a partisan basis." Chinese culture espouses unity between all things. The maxim that "the benevolent man treats all things as one with himself" embodies a view of the universe that determines the Chinese people's worldview of peace, harmony, and concord. In the relationship between humanity and nature, Chinese culture believes that "harmony generates vitality." In

interpersonal relationships, Chinese culture holds that “harmony is precious.” In people’s relationship with themselves, Chinese culture emphasises “a state of equilibrium and harmony.” Nevertheless, Chinese culture does not advocate harmony without principle. Instead, it calls for harmony in diversity, not only embracing variety but respecting differences. Given the peaceful nature of Chinese civilisation, China is well-equipped to provide Chinese wisdom for advancing world peace, promoting global development, and maintaining international order. Pursuing dialogue rather than clashes, exchanges rather than isolation, cooperation rather than confrontation, negotiation rather than coercion, and construction rather

than destruction—these should be the norms of peace that humanity follows today, as well as the basic laws that guide our efforts to build a global community of a shared future.

Every civilisation is rooted in the soil of its own people. It coalesces the historical wisdom and intellectual and cultural pursuits of its respective nation or nations, possessing its own intrinsic value. Traditional Chinese culture forms the root of the Chinese nation. It is the cultural cornerstone for achieving national rejuvenation and the cultural foundation that keeps us on a firm footing amid global cultural interactions.

# Understanding the Laws Underlying the Development of Chinese Civilisation

Qiu Ping

At a meeting on cultural inheritance and development held in Beijing, June 2, 2023, President Xi Jinping put forward a holistic and systematic explanation of the distinctive features of Chinese civilisation—consistency, originality, unity, inclusiveness, and a peaceful nature. President Xi's profound exposition has granted us a deeper understanding of the laws underlying the development of Chinese civilisation by shedding light on its intrinsic characteristics.

Chinese civilisation is distinguished by a remarkable level of consistency, being the sole ancient civilisation to endure without interruption and develop as a nation down to the present day. With history in China encompassing a million years of humanity, ten thousand years of culture, and more than five thousand years of civilisation, the Chinese nation boasts a distinctive, deep, and wide-ranging civilisation and value system. The consistency of Chinese civilisation is the outcome of carrying forward our culture by building on past achievements and signifies the high degree of unity defining Chinese civilisation both as a whole and in every specific stage.

Chinese civilisation is set apart by its outstanding

originality, which is based on discarding the outdated in favour of the new, moving in step with the times, and ceaselessly pursuing self-improvement. Originality is the fundamental reason why Chinese civilisation has flourished among the civilisations of the world. As a civilisation, we have tended to discard the outdated in favour of the new, move with the times, and ceaselessly pursue self-improvement. Moving with the times is in fact a core tenet of our civilisation. These three qualities have kept Chinese civilisation moving forward in a material, institutional, and cultural sense, allowing it to reach one height after another.

Chinese civilisation enjoys remarkable unity, featuring great diversity, internal cohesion, and solidarity. Over its more than 5,000-year history, Chinese civilisation has gradually developed the concept of great unity. This principle of governance and institutional design has been widely acknowledged in the political process for thousands of years, greatly contributing to the stability of China as a unified multi-ethnic country. Within a politically unified framework, Chinese culture, as the collective creation of all China's ethnic groups, is manifested in a colourful and wide

range of forms.

Chinese civilisation is characterised by exceptional inclusiveness, bringing together a diverse array of elements and maintaining openness to exchanges. Chinese civilisation came to maturity in a historical environment featuring the simultaneous existence of numerous ethnicities. The history of Chinese development is thus defined by the convergence of diverse ethnic cultures. The openness and inclusiveness of Chinese civilisation enabled the Chinese people readily to absorb the best of what other nations had to offer in both a material and cultural sense at every level. At the same time, the best of traditional Chinese culture spread to neighbouring regions and further afield.

Chinese civilisation is distinguished by a peaceful nature, advocating concord between oneself and others, advancing harmony through dialogue, promoting coexistence and shared progress, and upholding peace. Chinese civilisation advocates a world of harmony based on a moral order and believes in fostering concord between oneself and others while putting others before oneself, embodying the spirit of collectivism. The Chinese have always been a peace-loving people. China does not subscribe to the notion that a country is bound to seek hegemony when it grows in strength. Aggression and hegemony are simply not in the blood of the Chinese people; rather a love of peace is imprinted on our character.

# Understanding Chinese Civilisation from the Perspective of Cultural Relics

Li Qun

At a meeting on cultural inheritance and development on June 2, 2023, President Xi Jinping summarised with penetrating insight the distinctive features of Chinese civilisation and elucidated the significance of the “two integrations” (integrating the basic tenets of Marxism with China’s specific realities and the best of its traditional culture), which explain the development laws underlying Chinese civilisation. This reflects the new heights the Communist Party of China (CPC) has attained in its understanding of the path, theory, and system of socialism with Chinese characteristics, in its confidence in Chinese history and culture, and in its consciousness of promoting cultural innovation while carrying forward the traditional Chinese culture.

## **Upholding Consistency and Adhering to the Path of Socialist Cultural Development**

Chinese civilisation is the only great civilisation in the world to have continuously developed to the present day and to have done so as a country. Archaeological discoveries have produced evidence of millions of years of humanity, ten thousand years of culture, and more than five thousand years of civilisation in China.

Important projects such as the Programme to Trace the Origins of Chinese Civilisation and the Chinese Archaeology Project have revealed that Chinese civilisation has undergone various spatial, temporal, dynastic, and social changes and further more it forms an unbroken thread and has increasingly flourished over time.

Elements of Chinese civilisation, including agricultural practices, jade ornaments, and the construction practices of capital cities clearly display inherited cultural attributes.

The earliest discoveries of food cultivation in China date to over 10,000 years ago, including rice cultivation at Xianren Cave in Jiangxi Province, Shangshan in Zhejiang Province, and Yuchanyan in Hunan Province as well as millet cultivation at Donghulin in Beijing, which indicates the pattern of rice cultivation in south China and millet cultivation in the north. Approximately 5,000 years ago, millet and rice cultivation were the dominant economic activities of north and south China, respectively. The Liangzhu culture that flourished around the Taihu Lake in the Yangtze River Delta established an early state and civilised society based around rice farming. The farming traditions

that were developed during the Neolithic Age formed the cornerstone of subsequent agrarian societies and civilisations. The traditional values of agrarian civilisation of respecting nature, focusing on sustainability, emphasising unity, and valuing honesty became the cultural genes of the Chinese nation. Successive dynasties have attached great importance to agricultural production, and cultural relics and heritage such as the Essential Techniques for the Welfare of the People (*Qi Min Yao Shu*), written during the Northern Wei Dynasty, the Honghe Hani Rice Terraces first cultivated during the Tang Dynasty, the Poems and Paintings about Ploughing and Weaving (*Geng Zhi Tu*) from the Southern Song Dynasty, and the Temple of Agriculture used during the Ming and Qing dynasties are all testament to China's agrarian civilisation, and China's dietary habits and solar calendar derived from it still shape the daily lives of Chinese people today.

The earliest surviving jade artifacts in China, dating to approximately 9,000 years ago, were unearthed at Xiaonanshan in Heilongjiang Province. They include various types of jade jewellery, which are the earliest known examples of the mineral's use as a precious object and a symbol of beauty. Approximately 5,500 years ago, society grew more complex, and jade objects in the Hongshan, Shijiahe, and Liangzhu cultures became endowed with transcendental significance. During the Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties, the concept of using jade objects to "venerate heaven and earth" gradually developed, and jade became an important part of ritual traditions. Subsequently, Confucius extolled the virtues of wearing jade: "The quality of jade corresponds to a gentleman's virtue," "A gentleman is never not to wear jade without a proper reason." These views were

perpetuated for generations among scholars and bureaucrats, causing jade to become a symbol of virtue. In the Sui and Tang dynasties, there was a growing trend toward ornamental use of jade, and a secular aesthetic became popular, creating a broad social appeal that perpetuated the use of jade for millennia.

Late Neolithic urban sites such as the ancient cities of Liangzhu, Taosi, and Shimao all consisted of palace areas, inner cities, and outer towns typical of imperial cities. The ancient city of Erlitou developed these traditions between the Xia and Western Zhou dynasties. During the Han and Wei dynasties, the urban layout consisting of an inner and outer city became more pronounced, as planning became more rigorous, and cities with a defined central axis appeared. The Sui city of Daxing, later renamed Chang'an during the Tang Dynasty, was a model ancient capital, with the palace and imperial city sitting along the central axis of Zhuque Street and a symmetrical distribution of streets to the east and west, forming a neat and orderly checkerboard layout. Throughout the Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties, a symmetrical urban layout based around a central axis was a recurring design principle of capital cities. This could be seen during the Ming and Qing dynasties in the design of Beijing, with the central axis running from Yongding Gate in the south to the Bell Tower and Drum Tower in the north and connecting the outer town, inner city, imperial palace, and Forbidden City along a major cultural corridor. The traditional concepts of harmony between humanity and nature, etiquette and order, and balance and congruity embodied in the central axis design continue to influence the development of modern Chinese cities.

These archaeological achievements and cultural





*The photos show several artifacts on display at the Chinese Archaeological Museum: 1. Neolithic pottery portrait of a human face; 2. Neolithic pottery flask with characters in red pigment; 3. Neolithic painted pottery plate decorated with a dragon design; 4. Dragon-shaped turquoise artifact of the Xia Dynasty unearthed at the Erlitou site in Henan Province; 5. Ivory vase of the Shang Dynasty; 6. Bronze wine vessel of the Zhou Dynasty. Each exquisite artifact provides a vivid glimpse into the arduous and pioneering journey undertaken by our nation's ancestors. CHINESE ACADEMY OF HISTORY*

relics reflect the cultural identity and vibrancy that have allowed Chinese civilisation to develop, respond to challenges, and break fresh ground. The deep sentiment of the Chinese people toward their homeland and their profound sense of history have laid a foundation for advocating unity, which has become the ethos underpinning the Chinese nation's rejuvenation following a plethora of trials and tribulations.

The consistency of Chinese civilisation fundamentally dictates that the Chinese people must follow their own path. Its continuous development over several millennia and ability to endure successive difficulties are the basis of China's cultural confidence and strength. China

created a magnificent Chinese civilisation, and it will adhere to the development of a socialist culture with Chinese characteristics and of a modern Chinese civilisation.

### **Encouraging Innovation and Promoting the Creative Transformation and Innovative Development of Traditional Chinese Culture**

Chinese civilisation encourages reform and innovation, with a combination of understated wisdom and unbridled vitality. Based on the spirit of innovation of seeking continuous improvement on a daily and ongoing basis, the Chinese nation has created its own material, cultural, and political civilisation, becoming the most prosperous and

powerful civilisation in the world for an extended period of history. Major archaeological discoveries in China testify to the innovations achieved throughout the history of Chinese civilisation and their role in supporting progress. Agricultural technology, the “four great inventions” (compass, gunpowder, papermaking, and printing), lacquer, silk, porcelain, iron and steel making, the administrative system of prefectures and counties, and the imperial examination system are all unique innovations of ancient Chinese civilisation.

Pottery was humankind’s first great initiative to change the properties of materials, and it opened the door to further inventions. The earliest pottery discovered by Chinese archaeologists, dating to approximately 20,000 years ago, was found at Xianren Cave in Wannian County, Jiangxi Province. The invention of the fast wheel and improvements

in firing techniques approximately 6,000 years ago enabled the creation of thinner yet stronger as well as more beautiful pottery. Pottery of the Yangshao culture, with its imaginative and exquisite designs, marked the zenith of prehistoric painted pottery making, which facilitated exchanges between regions of Chinese civilisation. The Longshan culture used carburisation to produce black “eggshell” pottery that was “black like paint, bright as a mirror, thin as paper, and hard as porcelain,” and it was regarded as the most exquisite product of the world’s various civilisations 4,000 years ago. The Shang Dynasty developed the use of kaolinite for pottery ware and the technique to produce a glazing effect, leading to the emergence of primitive porcelain alongside traditional pottery. Subsequent improvements in kiln structure along with glazing techniques led to the production of



*Painted pottery basin from the Yangshao culture unearthed at the Suyang relics site in Luoyang, Henan Province. In February 2023, new discoveries were made at the Suyang site, including a semi-annular defensive trench dating back to the early Yangshao culture about 6,000 years ago. The manually dug trench is meticulous in design and structure, reflecting the powerful and orderly social organisational capacity and technical expertise of that time. It is a concrete manifestation of increasing social complexity during the Yangshao period. (File photo) XINHUA*

green, white, and “blue and white glazed and painted” porcelain, pushing porcelain making to new heights.

The Song, Yuan, and Ming dynasties were important periods of innovation and change for Chinese civilisation. Yuelu Academy was one of four major ancient Chinese academies. The famous scholar Zhang Shi was a leading teacher at the academy, and the Southern Song Dynasty philosopher Zhu Xi and the Ming Dynasty philosopher Wang Yangming both lectured there, which was known far and wide. Neo-Confucianism developed Confucianism based on the philosophical concepts of “investigating matters to acquire knowledge” and “the unity of knowledge and action.” This period was also a time of innovation in literature and art, with Song poetry and Yuan operas reaching new heights, art works such as *Along the River During the Qingming Festival* and *Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains* pushing the boundaries of painting, and the emergence of the first vernacular novels and operas.

The rectangular sheng (measuring vessel) is physical evidence of Chinese statesman Shang Yang’s famous reform to unify weights and measures in ancient China, reflecting the development of ancient Chinese institutions. This social change, which took place during the Warring States Period unleashed positive social factors that promoted the growth of the Qin state and provided a foundation for the unification of China. The Liye Qin Slips discovered at Longshan in Hunan Province record local administrative operations during the Qin Dynasty. The innovative administrative system of prefectures and counties implemented at the time greatly strengthened the central government’s vertical management over localities, enabling

allocations of important strategic resources and promoting social stability under a unified state. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, the rankings of candidates who sat the imperial examinations were announced at Changjingtou in the city of Taiyuan in Shanxi Province. The development of the civil service examination system during the Sui and Tang dynasties expanded the social foundation for cultivating, selecting, and employing talented individuals and ensured the stable operation of the national and social governance system for many centuries.

The originality of Chinese civilisation determines that the Chinese nation upholds tradition without clinging to the past and respects ancient wisdom without reverting to archaic thinking. It also determines our nation’s fearless character of facing new challenges head-on and embracing new things.

### **Maintaining Unity and Forging a Strong Sense of Community among the Chinese Nation**

The long tradition of striving for great unity in Chinese civilisation has resulted in unity amid diversity as well as unity based on centralism. The pursuit of inward cohesion is both the premise and result of the consistency of Chinese civilisation. Numerous archaeological findings have demonstrated how the Chinese nation and civilisation formed and developed a pattern of unity amidst diversity and integrated the concepts of family and nation.

The prehistoric period laid the foundations for the development of unity amid diversity for the Chinese civilisation, with various regions of China interacting with and influencing each other as early as 8,000 years ago. Cultural interactions between the Yellow River Basin, the Yangtze River Basin,

and the Xiliao River Basin increased around 6,000 years ago with the proliferation of the coloured pottery of the Miaodigou culture, the northward advancement of the Liangzhu culture, and the westward spread of the Dawenkou culture. Approximately 3,800 years ago, Erlitou and other cultures in the Central Plains region developed and eventually merged into a unified multi-ethnic state during the Qin and Han dynasties.

A recent achievement of the Chinese Archaeology Project was an important discovery in sacrificial pits at the Sanxingdui archaeological site located in Guanghan County, Sichuan Province. The unearthed bronze zun (wine vessel), lei (urn-shaped vessel), and bu (jar-shaped vessel) are products from a Bronze Age culture during the Shang Dynasty. The mould casting and welding techniques used to make the artifacts at Sanxingdui were the same as those used at that time in the Central Plains, reflecting the unity amid diversity of Chinese civilisation and the mutual influence between the ancient kingdom of Shu and cultures in the Central Plains. Archaeological findings in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region have centred around the core cities of the Protectorate of the Western Region and the Beiting Protectorate established during the Han and Tang dynasties, respectively. More than 10 city sites and other military and urban facilities have been gradually surveyed and excavated to determine the evolution and layout of the cities of Shichengzi and Beiting. Excavated objects provide evidence that kingdoms in the Central Plains extended their administration to the Western Region and that Xinjiang has been an inseparable territory of China since ancient times. The World Heritage Site of Putuo Zongcheng Temple in Chengde, Hebei Province contains stone tablets titled “Record of

the Order of the Emperor Regarding the Return of the Torghuts” and “Record of Solicitude for the Torghut Tribe” stone tablets, whose inscriptions record the journey of the Mongolian Torghut tribe back to their homeland after more than 140 years of hardship, demonstrating patriotic feelings of indivisible nationhood.

The unity of Chinese civilisation determines that its various ethnic cultures come together to create a cohesive whole and remain tightly knit even in the face of major setbacks. It determines the Chinese people’s common belief that China’s territorial integrity must always be preserved, the nation must never be allowed to descend into turmoil, our ethnic groups must always remain united, and our civilisation must never be interrupted. It further determines that national unity will always sit at the heart of China’s core interests and that a strong and unified country is vital for the future of all our people. The unity of the Chinese nation amid diversity is a valuable legacy of our ancestors and a huge advantage for China’s development.

### **Ensuring Inclusiveness and Creating a New Model of Human Progress**

Chinese civilisation has never attempted to replace multiculturalism with monoculturalism; rather, it has brought together diverse cultures to form a common culture capable of resolving conflicts and forging consensus. Chinese civilisation has benefited from this open and inclusive attitude since ancient times.

Exchanges between, and the mixing of, ethnic groups in China led to the development and growth of a unified multi-ethnic country. The enfeoffment system implemented during the Zhou Dynasty facilitated the integration of ethnic groups including the Haidai, Yanliao, and Jiangnan



*Bronze divinity statue with bird's claws. Housed in the newly inaugurated Sanxingdui Museum in Guanghan City, Sichuan Province, the statue integrates the typical features of the Sanxingdui culture and the Xia and Shang dynasties, while also bearing traces of the Liangzhu, Yangshao, and Shijiahe cultures. As an artistic masterpiece of our Sanxingdui ancestors, it offers a shining example of cross-regional cultural exchanges and integration in China and the Chinese civilisation's unity amid diversity. PHOTO BY XINHUA REPORTER WANG XI*

into the Central Plains civilisation. The Qin and Han dynasties created an integrated, unified multi-ethnic state structure. During the Western Han Dynasty, the Nanyue kingdom in southern China adopted the etiquette, technology, and culture of the Central Plains, integrating the region into the Chinese family. Four tombs of Northern Wei emperors were built at Mangshan in the northern suburbs of Luoyang, and Emperor Xiaowen's relocation of the capital to Luoyang and his policy of sinicisation epitomised the migrations and integration of ethnic groups during the Wei,

Jin, and Northern and Southern dynasties. The layout of the Shangdu (Upper Capital) ruins in Inner Mongolia of the Yuan Dynasty, consisting of a palace, imperial city, and an outer city, is the same as that of ancient cities in the Central Plains. The Qing Dynasty adopted the same system for building capitals and palaces as the preceding Ming Dynasty, and its political system and culture had many inherited and adapted attributes, indicating that the nomadic tribes admired, adopted, and modified the farming culture of the Central Plains. This is evidence that Chinese cultural identity

transcended regions, bloodlines, and religious beliefs, and that it integrated diverse ethnic groups with significant differences into a pluralistic and united Chinese nation.

A Xinjiang-themed exhibition titled “Mixing and Convergence” held at the National Museum in Beijing in June 2023 included a brocade armband with the embroidered message “Five stars rising in the East is a propitious sign for the Middle Kingdom,” a bronze mirror bearing the inscription “Wishing you a successful career,” and an early annotated copy of The Analects of Confucius, which all reflect the diffusion of the culture of the Central Plains to Xinjiang as well as the close connections and cultural similarities between the two regions. Exhibits such as a gold medallion with a tiger motif, a gold mask with ruby inlays, and a pottery drinking vessel in the shape of a

man’s smiling face and an ox’s head all reflect the acceptance and absorption of cultural aspects of various ethnic groups by Chinese civilisation. A long corridor of cultural exchanges running from the Central Plains through Xinjiang to Central and West Asia existed long before the Silk Road. At the end of the Neolithic Age, bronze smelting, crops such as wheat and barley, and livestock such as goats and sheep were all introduced to China, which had a profound impact on future generations. Cultural exchanges between China and the rest of the world reached new heights during the Han and Tang dynasties, with China exporting silk, porcelain, and printing far and wide, while fruit and vegetables such as watermelons, grapes, and carrots as well as gold-and silver-making techniques and religions were imported into China. The Hejia Village hoard in Xi’an, Shaanxi Province amply demonstrates the



*Animal head-shaped agate cup with a gold tip from the Tang Dynasty on display at the Shaanxi History Museum. The cup is similar in design to a type of wine vessel that originated in ancient Greece known as a rhyton. Widely popular in Central and West Asia, rhytons steadily spread eastward along the Silk Road before arriving in China. The cup is evidence of more than 2,000 years of economic and cultural exchanges between China and other countries along the Silk Road.*  
PHOTO BY XINHUA REPORTER LI YIBO

cultural exchanges that were taking place between China and foreign countries. Here, gold and silver artifacts that integrate decorations and designs associated with the Sasanian Empire in Persia and the northern steppe cultures were discovered, indicating that gold and silver art during the Tang Dynasty blended Chinese and foreign cultural elements. The magnificent Mogao Grottoes in Dunhuang on the Silk Road are a treasure trove of Buddhist art that has survived for thousands of years. The grottoes, together with other UNESCO World Heritage Sites, such as Mount Wutai, the Yungang Grottoes, Mount Qingcheng, and the ancient building complex in the Wudang Mountains, reflect China's multi-religious culture.

Quanzhou: Emporium of the World in Song-Yuan China was added to the list of World Heritage Sites in July 2021. Quanzhou was a major centre of global maritime trade and one of the starting points of the Maritime Silk Road, making it a hub of cultural exchange and integration. The Islamic Tombs are the oldest and best-preserved Islamic site, and Qingjing Mosque is one of the earliest surviving Islamic temples, in China. The Manichaeist statue at Cao'an is the only preserved stone statue of the founder of Manichaeism in the world. The Confucian Temple, Zhenwu Temple, Tianhou Palace, Statue of Laozi, and Kaiyuan Temple in Quanzhou are historical relics of Confucianism and Daoism, which were indigenous to China, as well as of the sinicisation of the non-indigenous religion of Buddhism. The serial sites of cultural heritage represent various religions and cultures and have an enduring charm, providing historical evidence of the harmonious coexistence and mixing of multiple cultures in ancient Quanzhou.

The inclusiveness of Chinese civilisation determines

the Chinese nation's historical orientation toward communication, exchange, and integration, as well as the harmonious existence of diverse religious beliefs in China. It also defines the willingness of Chinese culture to embrace and draw on other cultures.

### **Advocating Peace and Promoting the Building of a Global Community with a Shared Future**

Chinese civilisation has perpetuated the concepts of peace, friendship, and harmony for more than 5,000 years as well as advocated the establishment of a world in which the collective and the individual are united in a moral order and others are put before oneself. Work to preserve our cultural heritage must support the building of a global community with a shared future; uphold equality, mutual learning, dialogue, and inclusiveness between civilisations; and promote the common human values enshrined in Chinese culture.

From the political sentiment of "seeking harmony between all nations" in *The Book of Documents* to the idea in *The Analects of Confucius* that a man of virtue should cultivate "harmony without uniformity," the concept that "harmony is to be prized" is deeply rooted in Chinese culture. The Chinese people have always held peace in high esteem, which is closely related to our rich heritage as an agricultural civilisation. It is evident from the archaeological remains of the Yangshao and Liangzhu cultures that agriculture was the mainstay of economic society in early Chinese civilisation. This means that our ancient ancestors did not rely on pillaging; rather, farming and weaving were the primary means of making a living in ancient Chinese society, which cultivated among the Chinese a humble simplicity and inclination for industriousness, harmony, and

coexistence. Despite brief periods of chaos caused by war throughout history, these tended to lead to stable dynasties characterised by great unity, such as the prosperous Sui and Tang dynasties, which arose out of the division and fragmentation of the Northern and Southern Dynasties, and the thriving Northern Song Dynasty, which followed the disorder of the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms Period. Thus, the pursuit of national peace and personal comfort is born of a yearning for peace and stability. Construction of the Great Wall began in the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, and it was extended and reinforced by the Qin, Han, Sui, and Ming dynasties. It was a defensive installation of the kingdoms of the Central Plains, as the Chinese nation does not have a tradition of outward aggression and expansion. Gunpowder, one of China's "four great inventions," was created by alchemists and first used to make fireworks. The overland and maritime routes of the Silk Road were developed to promote trade and cultural exchanges, which is in stark contrast to the colonial plunder and competition for maritime supremacy of Western nations in modern times. The discovered Nanhai No.1 shipwrecks, the No.2 shipwrecks at Yangtze River Estuary, and the No.1 and No.2 shipwrecks of the Nanhai Northwest Continental Slope were all commercial vessels, loaded mainly with porcelain. They stand as

further evidence that the Silk Road was a conduit for economic and cultural exchanges as well as the intermingling of ideas.

The peaceful nature of Chinese civilisation determines that China will always work to safeguard world peace, contribute to global development, and preserve international order. It determines that China will continue to promote exchange and mutual learning among civilisations without seeking cultural hegemony, and it will never impose its values and political system on others. It also determines that China will remain committed to cooperation as opposed to confrontation, and it will never engage in partisanism. China will implement the Global Civilisations Initiative and expand international cooperation on cultural heritage. We will collect and refine the defining symbols and best elements of Chinese culture and display them to the world, extend the reach and appeal of Chinese civilisation, and make unique contributions to deepening exchanges and mutual learning among civilisations and promoting the building of a global community with a shared future.

*(Li Qun is Deputy Minister of Culture and Tourism and Commissioner of the National Cultural Heritage Administration.)*



## The Chinese Association for International Understanding Holds the Civilisation Lecture in Bulgaria

On May 5th, the Civilisation Lecture was held in Sofia, Bulgaria, hosted by the Chinese Association for International Understanding (CAFIU) and *China Today* of Bulgaria, organised by the China Cultural Centre in Sofia and supported by the Embassy of China in Bulgaria. Liu Hongcai, Vice-President of CAFIU and former Vice-Minister of the IDCPC, Wang Min, *Chargé d'affaires* of the Embassy of China in Bulgaria, and more than 50 guests from all walks of life in both countries attended the event. Bulgarian Vice-President Iotova and Deputy Speaker Ganev sent written speeches to the event. Iotova said that in today's world of constant conflicts and intensified division, it is more important than ever to understand other civilisations. Dialogue among civilisations is the cornerstone of the sustainable development of Bulgaria-China relations. This event will continue to write a new chapter for the traditional friendship between Bulgaria and China. Ganev said that this year marks the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Bulgaria and China, and he believes that the traditional friendship between the two countries will lay a more solid foundation for future bilateral exchanges and cooperation. Although the two

countries are thousands of miles apart, they both share aspiration for beauty, peace, dialogue and cooperation. He thanked the organizers for building a bridge for the exchanges of civilisations between the two countries.



Vice-President Liu Hongcai said in his speech that friendly exchanges between China and Bulgaria have existed since ancient times. China is willing to take the opportunity of the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the diplomatic relationship between the two countries to strengthen people-to-people exchanges and dialogue between the two civilisations to promote mutual understanding and friendship between the Chinese and Bulgarian people and jointly promote the implementation of the Global Civilisation Initiative.



Wang Min said that the exchange of civilisations and mutual learning is an important cornerstone of China-Bulgaria relations. In recent years, the two countries have become closer in people-to-people and cultural exchanges. It is hoped that China and Bulgaria will take the opportunity of the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations to further strengthen exchanges and mutual learning among civilisations and provide richer spiritual nourishment for the traditional friendly relations between the two countries.

Sharon Kova, head of Bulgaria's *China Today* newspaper, Vice-Chairman of Bulgaria-China Forum and a university professor, gave a thematic lecture, reviewing the history of exchanges and mutual learning between the two civilisations and making suggestions for strengthening

exchanges and dialogues between Bulgaria and China's civilisations under the new circumstances. The guests at the meeting actively carried out exchanges and discussions on the civilisation exchanges between the two countries.

At the event, young artists from China and Bulgaria gave live performances with national characteristics.



## Written Speech by Vice-President of Bulgaria Iliana Iotova to the Civilisation Lecture

Distinguished organisers and guests of the Civilisation Lecture,

I hereby extend my sincere congratulations to the Civilisation Lecture. In today's world of constant conflicts and intensified division, it is more important than ever to understand other civilisations, because only when we know each other can we deepen our understanding of each other to successfully cooperate. The most direct way to achieve these goals is to carry out civilisation dialogue, which is also the cornerstone of the sustainable development of Bulgaria-China relations.

I would like to thank the Chinese Association for International Understanding and *China Today* for hosting the Civilisation Lecture, the China

Cultural Centre in Sofia and the Embassy of China in Bulgaria for their strong support. Today's activities will continue to add a new chapter on the traditional friendship between Bulgaria and China. This year marks the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relationship between Bulgaria and China. It is of great significance to hold this event in such a special year.

I hope that we can learn from the history and promote exchanges and mutual learning between the two countries' long-standing civilisations in today's event. Let us proudly tell the world about the long history and traditional culture of our two countries!

I wish the event a complete success!

## **Written Speech of Deputy Speaker of the 49th National Assembly of Bulgaria Tsoncho Ganev to the Civilisation Lecture**

Distinguished guests, Dear Chinese friends,

I wish to extend my most sincere greetings and congratulations to the Civilisation Lecture.

The traditional friendship between Bulgaria and China has been upgraded to a strategic partnership. This year marks the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relationship between Bulgaria and China. I believe that the traditional friendship between our civilisations and nations will lay a solid foundation for future

bilateral exchanges and cooperation.

Although we are thousands of kilometres apart and located on different continents, our civilisations and nations share a common aspiration for beautifulness, peace, dialogue and cooperation. Thank you for your persistent efforts to build a bridge for civilisation exchanges, which has made many Bulgarians fall in love with Chinese language and culture.

I wish the Civilisation Lecture a complete success!

## Speech by CAFIU Vice-President Liu Hongcai at the Civilisation Lecture

It's a great pleasure for me to visit Bulgaria, the "land of roses", in the sunny early summer days, and to attend the Civilisation Lecture held in Sofia, the "garden city". First of all, I want to thank the co-host of this event, *China Today*, for your meticulous organisation and thoughtful arrangement. Meanwhile, I wish to extend my warm welcome to all the distinguished guests present today and also my sincere greetings and best wishes to the Bulgarian people.

Bulgaria has a profound cultural heritage and is one of the cradles of the Kirillica language as well as the Slavic culture at large. The historical sites in Thrace, ancient Rome and Byzantium all over the country tell the glorious history of different civilisations in Bulgaria. Today, Bulgaria is making great efforts to protect her cultural heritage, promote the creative transformation and innovative development of culture while facilitate the evolution and growth of fine traditional culture in new and creative ways, adding a beautiful "Bulgarian Rose" to the garden of human civilisation.

Although China and Bulgaria are far apart, friendly exchanges have existed since ancient times. The 12 zodiac animals in Chinese culture are highly similar to the ancient Bulgarian calendar with

12 constellations named after animals, which symbolises the connection and tacit understanding between the two peoples. Bulgaria was among the first countries to recognise the People's Republic of China. Since the establishment of the diplomatic relationship, we have always sympathised and supported each other, and our bilateral relations have continued to develop and the friendship between our peoples continued to be deepened. This year marks the 75th anniversary of both the founding of the People's Republic of China and the establishment of the diplomatic relationship between China and Bulgaria. We are willing to take this opportunity to work with Bulgaria to strengthen people-to-people exchanges and dialogue between civilisations, so as to promote mutual understanding and friendship between our two peoples.

In March last year, General Secretary Xi Jinping proposed the Global Civilisation Initiative, which advocates the respect for the diversity of civilisations, promoting the common values of humanity, the importance of inheritance and innovation of civilisations, and robust international people-to-people exchanges and cooperation. The Global Civilisation Initiative has injected new

impetus into the world's peaceful development, explored new answers for clearing the myth of civilisation, outlined a new vision for the modernisation of human society, and opened up a new path for building a community with a shared future for mankind. In order to implement the Global Civilisation Initiative from the perspective of the civil society, the Chinese Association for International Understanding (CAFIU) has actively carried out friendly exchanges with people all over the world, promoted mutual learning among different civilisations, and created a series of high-end platforms for dialogue among civilisations, such as the Dialogue on Exchanges and Mutual Learning among Civilisations, World Sinology Lecture, and the Civilisation Lecture. The Civilisation Lecture aims to enhance mutual understanding, comprehension and respect between countries and people with different civilisation backgrounds. And let them share ideas in exchanges, draw wisdom from dialogues, build consensus in communication to jointly promote the development of world civilisation, and contribute to building a community with a shared future for mankind. CAFIU is ready to continuously strengthen civilisation exchanges and mutual learning with Bulgaria and other Central and Eastern European countries through such platforms as the Civilisation Lecture and jointly promote the implementation of the Global Civilisation Initiative. To this end, I believe it is imperative that we act in the following ways.

First, we shall promote respect among different civilisations on the premise of respecting the diversity of civilisations. The Global Civilisation Initiative advocates the respect for the diversity of civilisations, upholding equality and respect, and abandoning arrogance and prejudice. Both history

and reality show that arrogance and prejudice are the biggest obstacles to civilisation exchanges and mutual learning. There are no two identical leaves in the world, neither is there identical histories, cultures or social systems. Each country is unique with its own history, culture and social system, and none is superior to others. Bulgaria has profound historical and cultural heritage and rich experience in exploring the path to modernisation. We will firmly support the Bulgarian people to inherit and develop their own civilisation, independently choose a development path that suits their national reality, strengthen civilisations dialogue between Chinese and Bulgarian, and exchange experiences in governing the country.

Second, we shall promote the understanding and integration of different civilisations under the shared values of all mankind. Starting from the common well-being of all mankind, the Global Civilisation Initiative advocates promoting the shared values of humanity. Different civilisations have different understanding of values, but people of all countries have the same aspiration for a better life and the same pursuit of peace, development, fairness, justice, democracy and freedom. There is no single correct form of values for others to worship, and no democracy is superior to others. Different countries have different histories, cultures and national realities, but people are connected with each other and have equal rights to pursue and explore the shared values of all mankind. We will continue to work with Bulgaria to safeguard the international system with the United Nations at its core and the international order underpinned by international law, carry forward the shared values of all mankind, safeguard world peace and promote joint development.

Third, we shall promote mutual learning among different civilisations through people-to-people exchanges and cooperation. The cooperation and integration of different civilisations is an important driving force to promote the evolution of humanity. Only by communicating with other civilisations and learning from each other's strengths can a civilisation maintain its vitality. We shall break the barriers of cultural exchanges with a broad mind, absorb the nutrients of other civilisations with an eclectic attitude, and promote the common progress of different civilisations in exchanges and mutual learning. People is the best carrier of civilisation exchange and mutual learning. In recent years, more and more Chinese and Bulgarian students have learned from each other's languages. Many young Bulgarian sinologists have come to China for study. Many Bulgarian folk dance troupes have been invited to perform in China. The Chinese and Bulgarian teachers and students in Lu Ban Workshops have been actively exchanging ideas, and tourists from China have

come to Bulgaria's Rose Festival. Colourful cultural exchange activities have played an important role in promoting mutual understanding between the two peoples. In the future, we are willing to continue to promote exchanges between China and Bulgaria, deepen people-to-people exchanges and build a bridge of civilisation dialogue between China and Bulgaria.

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relationship between China and Bulgaria. We believe that with the joint efforts of both sides, the people-to-people and cultural exchanges between the two countries will be more active, the relations between the two peoples closer, and the friendship between China and Bulgaria more flourishing and lasting forever!

In conclusion, I wish today's Civilisation Lecture a complete success!

Thank you all.

## **Speech at the Civilisation Lecture by Svetlana Sharenkova, Vice-President of Bulgaria-China Forum (Abstract)**

When we try to talk about civilisation exchanges and mutual learning between China and Bulgaria, it's easy and difficult. China boasts the most ancient civilisation in the world with an ever-lasting history of over 5000 years. With a history of over 1300 years, Bulgaria is one of the oldest civilisations in Europe. There are three major civilisations emerging and thriving on this very land.

It's easy because after development for centuries, our two civilisations naturally have had many interactions. It's difficult because in ancient times, exchanges in verbal, written or in any other form were all constrained by distance and technology.

The civilisation exchanges between Bulgaria and China can be traced back to 1300 years ago when Bulgaria was founded in 681AD, and such exchanges have been maintained until today.

Let's take a look back at the history of 1300 years and search for our dialogues in social and cultural aspects. In the first few centuries right after the founding of Bulgaria, there was no historical evidence of our interactions.

But there is no doubt the ancient Byzantine Empire

already had contacts with China. Therefore, if there was connection between Bulgaria and China in the first few centuries, it was through the connection between the Byzantine Empire and China. From the 7th to 15th century, our social and cultural exchanges gradually increased, leading to more civilisation exchanges.

In this regard, China has far more advanced concept of technology compared with ours. It's well known that historiography was highly valued in China's traditional science. China is not only a country with a long history, but also one with countless precious historical materials. For Chinese people, history is the embodiment of culture and also the treasure house of experience. Historical records kept through generations reflected the reasoning of Chinese people towards all kinds of social practices. Such experience always influences the political behaviours of later generations, or even becomes the main source of legitimacy of political power and policies.

Since its founding, the Communist Party of China has highly valued historical studies. Chairman Mao, one of the first-generation CPC central collective



leaders, emphasised that the Chinese nation had a history of thousands of years, with unique characteristics and valuable qualities.

General Secretary Xi Jinping recently pointed out that today's China reflects the development of ancient China. To insist on and develop socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era, we should study Chinese history and culture more systematically and learn the development rules of human history more profoundly. General Secretary Xi Jinping stressed, "We must draw experience and wisdom from history, so as to march towards a brighter future."

We cannot agree more to these arguments and ideas, especially when the global landscape is going through profound and complex changes and the world is increasingly going towards multi-polarisation.

However, Bulgarian historiography was not that fortunate. After Bulgaria was liberated from the giant Ottoman Empire with the help of the former Soviet Union army, the historiography of Bulgaria went beyond the ideas of objective science several times and became the affiliation of geopolitics and domestic political situation. This 150-year history can be divided into 3 periods. The first and also the longest period is from national liberation to the end of WWII. The second period is from 1944 when the Communist Party of Bulgaria led the country to establish the People's Republic of Bulgaria to the 1990s, which lasted for nearly half a century. The third period is from the Eastern Europe upheaval to today characterised by ambiguous neo-liberal policy led by the United States and Europe.

The reason why I go through these details is that when we look back at the history, we will find the biggest problem facing our historical studies is the

lack of a comprehensive understanding of our own history, the lack of independent research and a fundamental and realistic summary of history.

To a large extent, the problem in Bulgarian historiography has direct impact on the history of social and cultural exchanges between our two civilisations. This also explains why we only find the Bulgaria-China relations in the past 75 years, an extraordinary era starting from the founding of the People's Republic of China and our diplomatic relations.

In this seemingly short period of time, we the Bulgarians have witnessed many moments of successful and impressive civilisation dialogues between our two countries. These dialogues and exchanges cover many aspects of our life and bring the hearts of our people much closer.

What's worth our attention is that Bulgaria-China civilisation dialogue is not only feasible, but also full of potential and has a promising future under the following conditions.

Firstly, Bulgaria is at a crossroad both geographically and historically, a natural bridge connecting the east and the west and a symbiont of value, experience and tradition. We have inherent inclusiveness and curiosity towards different cultures.

Secondly, Bulgaria has been carrying out open cultural diplomacy since 1970s. These unique experiences did not emerge from ideology, but from the basic values of mankind. We have held events such as peace talks in International Writers Conference, "Peace Flag" (Children as future leaders and artists) in International Children Conference, celebrating the 1300th anniversary of the founding of Bulgaria in cooperation with other countries. These events were launched by

Lyudmila Zhivkova, the then Minister of Culture. She was dedicated to cultural diplomacy and establishing connection with distant civilisations. Unfortunately, she died young at 38. Bulgaria thus lost a good opportunity for civilisation exchanges with China. All these efforts serve only one noble cause and the priority of the country, promoting social development through aesthetic education and opening to the world in mind. The concept of cultural openness fits in the state leaders' political strategy of expanding business and technology interactions between the West and the Far East, shares in common with China's political direction and global initiatives such as socialism with Chinese characteristics, reform and opening up and building a community with a shared future for mankind.

Thirdly, Bulgaria and China enjoy traditional bilateral friendship. Bulgaria was the second country in the world that recognised the People's Republic of China in as early as 1949. The fact that our two countries never had any conflict or major disagreement is a valid proof of our solid friendship, which also serves as an important foundation for our civilisation dialogue.

Bulgaria and China have both made fruitful achievements in various fields including culture and economy.

First of all, Confucius Institutes were established in Sofia and ancient capital Veliko Tarnovo successively about 20 years ago. They attracted people of different ages who want to know more about China's great culture and history and its 5000-year-old ancient civilisation. Confucius Institutes have become a symbolic place for hosting cultural events, learn more about Chinese language and characters and carrying out international civilisation exchanges and discussions.

Graduates with honour from Confucius Institutes have the opportunity to apply for Chinese scholarship and visit China in person. The Confucius Institute in Sofia once ranked the first in 500 overseas cultural institutes of China. And it was not a windfall!

Secondly, more and more Chinese students choose Bulgarian universities for further education. For example, Bulgaria National Academy of Music currently has over 150 Chinese students. Hope one of them can become a musician as good as the famous pianist Lang Lang.

Besides, the annual Bulgaria and China- Ancient and Unique Civilisation contest has been held for over 10 years. In 2013, more than 130 students from 16 schools in 8 cities across Bulgaria participated in the contest held by Bulgaria-China Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Confucius Institute of Veliko Tarnovo University. They displayed their work of Chinese and Bulgarian cultures.

It's fair to say that Bulgaria-China dialogue is expanding in scale and enriching in connotation, which conforms to the interests of our people. Therefore, Bulgaria actively responds to the call of China to promote the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.

All these create great potential and bring significant opportunities to the political, economic, cultural and social development of Bulgaria. In the meantime, this is also an important step for China to carry out effective communication with the European Union and to facilitate the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative in Europe.

China has many experiences we can draw upon,

such as combining market economy with the advantages of socialism and lifting hundreds of millions of Chinese people out of poverty.

The development potential is one of our topics today. And another promising goal is to formulate a strategy for Bulgaria-China civilisation dialogue

in political, social, economic and cultural aspects. This concept can be drafted by experts and representatives of both countries and serve as a good example of public diplomacy and people-to-people exchanges!

## CAFIU Hosts Civilisation Lecture in Xiaogan, Hubei Province



On April 18, the Chinese Association for International Understanding (CAFIU) held Civilisation Lecture at Huanglonghu (the Yellow Dragon Lake) Tea Culture Museum in Xiaogan, Hubei Province.

The Civilisation Lecture is a platform for dialogues among civilisations proposed by CAFIU. The lectures have been carried out several times home and abroad. Representatives from governments and NGOs, scholars and cultural

celebrities have been invited to have in-depth discussions on deepening exchanges and dialogue among civilisations, enhancing people-to-people connectivity, promoting the progress of human civilisation. Under the theme of Tea Culture as Intermediary to Promote Dialogue among Civilisations, over 50 attendees were invited including representatives of governments and civil society of Mongolia, Russia and other countries along the Tea Road, representatives of international

organisations and personages in tea industry and cultural fields worldwide.

Wang Shi, President of Chinese Culture Promotion Society (CCPS), Sergey Kalashnikov, President of Russia International Cooperation Association, Sandag Od-erdeni, Chairman of the Citizens' Congress of Dundgobi Province of Mongolia, Ian Gibbs, Chairman of the International Tea Committee delivered speeches on tea culture in Chinese civilisation, differences and similarities in tea culture between the East and the West and exchanges and mutual learning among civilisations along the tea road. In the free discussion

section, representatives from different countries enthusiastically shared their opinions upon the role of tea culture in promoting exchanges and mutual learning among civilisation of different countries.

At the event, the long scroll of calligraphy and painting works about the tea road was displayed. An exhibition of Shanghai-style Chinese cheongsam, an intangible cultural heritage, was also held. Attendees from around the world wrote tea idioms and send their best wishes to the exchanges and mutual learning among civilisations.

## **CNIE Hosts Symposium on China-Malaysia People-to-People Exchanges**

On April 12th, China NGO Network for International Exchanges (CNIE) held a Symposium on China-Malaysia People-to-People Exchanges, on which in-depth discussions were carried out upon China-Malaysia people-to-people exchanges and cooperation for people's livelihood. Li Jun, Vice-President of CNIE, attended the Symposium and delivered a speech. Dato' Dr. Mah Hang Soon, former Deputy Minister of Education of

Malaysia and President of the Malaysia Education Exchange Association, Datuk Eddie Heng Hong Chai, President of the Malaysian Chinese Language Council, Russell Chia Lek Ming, President of Malaysia Organisation for International Exchange as well as over 50 other representatives of Chinese and Malaysian NGOs, business and industries attended the Symposium.



## The First Overseas Cooperation Station of Silk Road People-to-People Connectivity Unveiled in Budapest, Hungary

On May 2nd, the Thematic Forum on China-Hungary Belt and Road Pragmatic Cooperation was held in Budapest, the capital of Hungary, during which, the China-Hungary Cooperation Station of Silk Road People-to-People Connectivity was officially launched. This is the first overseas station under the Action on Silk Road People-to-

People Connectivity. It will surely provide important support to the achievement of more fruitful results in people-to-people exchanges and cooperation between the two countries.

Focusing on people-to-people exchanges and livelihood cooperation, the Action on Silk Road People-to-People Connectivity was launched by



*On May 2nd, CAFIU Vice-President and former Vice-Minister of IDCPC Liu Hongcai together with Victor Vereb, Representative of EU-China Belt and Road Culture, Education, Tourism and Economic Development Committee launched the China-Hungary Cooperation Station of Silk Road People-to-people Connectivity in Budapest, capital of Hungary*

China NGO Network for International Exchanges (CNIE) in October, 2023 and was listed as one of the deliverables in the Chair's Statement of the Third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation. The Action aims to carry out a series of symbolic flagship cooperation projects for people's livelihood and establish diversified pilot cooperation platforms in the next 5 years. CNIE wishes to take the opportunity of launching the cooperation station to attract wide participation of Chinese and Hungarian NGOs and people from all walks of life in the Action on Silk Road People-to-People Connectivity, thus jointly contributing to the great cause of people-to-people connectivity and building a community with a shared future for mankind.

At the Forum, the representative of EU-China Belt and Road Culture, Education, Tourism and Economic Development Committee also gave a briefing on the progress of China-Hungary cooperation on vocational education.

The Thematic Forum on China-Hungary Belt and Road Pragmatic Cooperation was hosted by Xinhua News Agency and ATV Group of Hungary and co-organised by China Economic Information Service and Xinhua Europe Regional Bureau under the guidance of the Information Office of the State Council of China. Around 200 guests including government officials, representatives of business and enterprises and leaders of mainstream media and think tanks of both China and Hungary attended the Forum.



## “Silk Road People-to-People Connectivity” Care for the Future Donation Ceremony Held in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar

On April 10th, “Silk Road People-to-People Connectivity” Care for the Future Activity and a donation ceremony of school sports goods were held at China-Myanmar Friendship School, Basic Education High School (BEHS) No.14, in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

This activity was co-hosted by China Foundation for Peace and Development (CFPD) and Myanmar China Communication and Cooperation Centre. U Myint Soe, Member of Nay Pyi Taw Council, Zhang Zhonghua, Head of Chinese Liaison Office

in Nay Pyi Taw of Chinese Embassy in Myanmar, representatives of Myanmar Ministry of Education and NGOs and teachers and students of several schools attended the event.

Wang Lei, CFPD Myanmar Office Director said in his speech that in cooperation with Myanmar NGOs, CFPD has donated 19 Silk Road Friendship Schools and carried out over 30 small and beautiful projects for people’s livelihood, receiving warm welcome from the Burmese people. Looking forward, CFPD will work with more Chinese and



Burmese NGOs to implement more practical cooperation projects that bring benefits to local people and actively promote China-Myanmar Paukphaw friendship.

Li Bobo, Executive President of Myanmar China Communication and Cooperation Centre, said the youth is the future and hope for Myanmar-China friendship. The Centre stands ready to make

greater contributions to the cause of Myanmar-China friendship.

U Myint Soe, Member of Nay Pyi Taw Council, said the sports goods will be helpful for the healthy growth of Burmese students. The representative of school faculty said they will make good use of these goods and help more teenagers grow into the inheritors of Myanmar-China friendship.

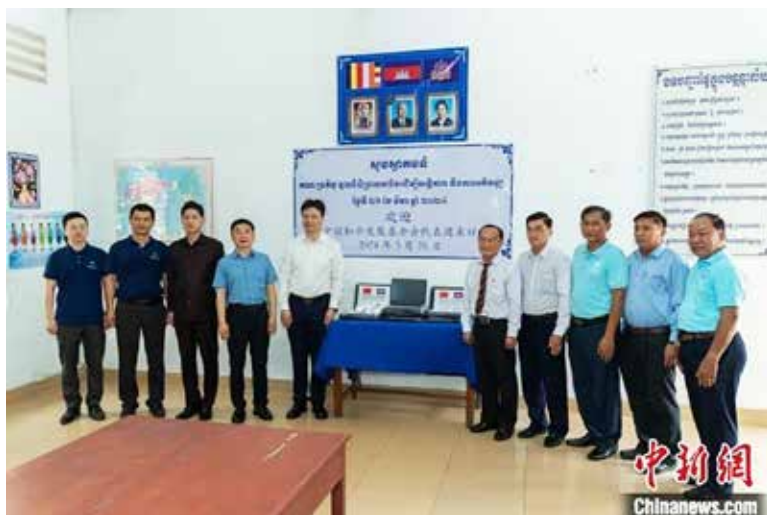
## “Silk Road People-to-People Connectivity” China-Cambodia Donation Activity Held in Phnom Penh

On March 26th, the “Silk Road People-to-People Connectivity” China-Cambodia Donation Activity was held at Indradevi High School in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Lv Xuejun, President and Chief Editor of the *Contemporary World*, Pay Sambo, Secretary General of Cambodia Civil Society Association Forum, Wu Chuanbing, Councilor of Chinese Embassy in Cambodia, Hu Jianguang, Deputy

Director of the Education Committee of Haidian District of Beijing, Liu Zhanguo, Director of China Foundation for Peace and Development (CFPD) Cambodia Office, Soung Houth, President of National Union Alliance Chamber of Cambodia (NACC), Neak Sothea, President of Indradevi High School and other participants attended the event.

Pay Sambo said CFPD made great donation and provided strong support to the development



of Cambodia's education and enriched the connotation of cooperation between Cambodia NGOs and their Chinese counterparts. He wished Chinese NGOs could continue to carry out programmes including donating teaching buildings and digital devices and dispatching Chinese language teachers.

Neak Sothea expressed appreciation to CFPD for its continuous attention and strong support to Indradevi High School. The Silk Road Friendship teaching building that CFPD donated in 2014

greatly improved the teaching and learning environment of the school. The computers and equipment donated this time will further improve the hardware facility of the school and hype up students' motivation for study.

At the event, CFPD donated 8 computers to Indradevi High School and donated money to renovate the Silk Road Friendship teaching building. After the donation ceremony, Chinese and Cambodian participants visited the school and had friendly exchanges with teachers and students.

## The Thematic Forum on China-Hungary Belt and Road Pragmatic Cooperation Held in Budapest

The Thematic Forum on China-Hungary Belt and Road Pragmatic Cooperation was held on May 2nd in Budapest, capital of Hungary. Liu Hongcai, Vice-President of the Chinese Association for International Understanding (CAFIU) said in his speech that all walks of life in China and Hungary should make great efforts to implement the important consensus between the state leaders, promote people-to-people exchanges and mutual learning among civilisation in an in-depth way, create more driving forces aiming at the future

and fully leverage the advantage of multi-level cooperation platforms between the two countries, thus playing a constructive role in tackling global challenges together.

Liu Hongcai pointed out that in recent years, China and Hungary have worked together within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, actively carrying out practical cooperation in infrastructure construction, trade and investment, green development and other areas in the principle



of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits. Symbolic projects such as Hungary-Serbia Railway, new energy vehicles have injected strong impetus into the economic development of both countries and brought benefits to the two peoples.

Liu Hongcai believes that China and Hungary should enhance exchanges and cooperation in all fields, promote people-to-people connectivity so as to lay a solid foundation for the development of bilateral relations and forge wider consensus internationally on building a community with a shared future for mankind. For that, he made such proposals. First, we should uphold the idea of appreciating and respecting each culture's merits, deeply promote people-to-people exchanges as well as exchanges and mutual learning among civilisations. CAFIU stands ready to cooperate with all walks of life in Hungary to promote the development and flourishing of human civilisation.

Second, we should insist on equality and mutual benefits and create more cooperation driving force aiming at the future. We should fully implement the Global Development Initiative, make good use of new opportunities of international cooperation brought by new-quality productivity and break new grounds for practical cooperation in green development, new energy, digital economy and other fields.

Third, we should continue with solidarity and coordination and fully leverage the advantage of multi-level cooperation platforms between the two countries. All walks of life in China and Hungary should continue to work under the framework of

the Belt and Road cooperation and China-Central Eastern Europe cooperation, use advantages to enhance supplementation and experience sharing.

Fourth, we should stay together during trying times and play a constructive role in tackling global challenges. China is dedicated to strive for an equal, orderly multi-polar world and a universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalisation and is ready to work with other countries including Hungary to share opportunities and overcome difficulties. We wish China and Hungary will actively carry out international cooperation to solve global problems, enhance coordination with each other in global governance and provide stronger public support to world peace, stability, development and prosperity.

“It's my sincere wish China and Hungary will continue stay as good friends and partners with mutual trust, extensive cooperation and win-win results. I hope people from different social sectors will echo the main melody of friendship and cooperation and bring our bilateral relations to a new height”, said Liu Hongcai.

The Thematic Forum on China-Hungary Belt and Road Pragmatic Cooperation was hosted by Xinhua News Agency and ATV Group of Hungary and held by China Economic Information Service and Xinhua Europe Regional Bureau under the guidance of The Information Office of the State Council of China. Around 200 guests including government officials, representatives of business and enterprises and leaders of mainstream media and think tanks of China and Hungary attended the Forum.

## The 9th China-Mongolia-Russia Tea Road City Cooperation Conference Held in Hanchuan, Xiaogan City, Hubei Province

The 9th China-Mongolia-Russia Tea Road City Cooperation Conference (the Conference for short) was held from April 17 to 19 at Huanglong Lake International Conference Centre in Hanchuan, Xiaogan City, which is an important stop along the waterway of the tea road in Hubei Province. Themed Civilisation Exchanges and Mutual Learning for Win-Win City Cooperation, the Conference is on the list of the Multilateral Cooperation Deliverables of the Third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation. It is

an important practice to implement the guiding principles of the keynote speech delivered by President Xi Jinping at the opening ceremony of the third BRF, as well as to carry forward the Deliverables of the BRF in a quality way. The Conference was hosted by the People's Government of Hubei Province and China NGO Network for International Exchanges (CNIE), organised by Association for the Promotion of Chinese Culture, Peace and Friendship Organisation of Mongolia, Russian Association for International



*Photo of the Conference*

Cooperation and China Foundation for Culture Heritage Conservation as well as the People's Governments of Xiaogan and Hanchuan. Over 300 delegates from China, Mongolia, Russia, Sri Lanka, Australia, Nepal, Malaysia, Myanmar, Yemen and UK attended the Conference, discussing topics including cross-border tourism, cultural heritage preservation, so as to explore new mechanism, new path and new blueprint on the development of the tea road.

Ivan Melnikov, First Vice-Chairman of Russia's State Duma, First Vice-Chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation and Chairman of Russia-China Friendship Association sent a congratulatory letter to the Conference. In the letter, he spoke highly of the significance of the tea road along China, Mongolia and Russia, and believed that the topics discussed at the Conference such as exchanges and mutual learning among civilisations, cultural heritage preservation and the connection between

economy and development were of new and greater relevance in practice. In his congratulatory letter, Vice-Chairman of Russia's State Duma Boris Chernyshov expressed that the tea road is a unique combination of culture, tradition and history, the bridge for a shared future, and a symbol of mutual understanding, mutual assistance and mutual respect among China, Russia and Mongolia.

Chimed Khurelbaatar, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy and Development of Mongolia said in the congratulatory letter that the Conference would not only boost the trade, cultural exchanges and cultural heritage preservation among the three countries, but also create opportunities for closer cooperation in many areas such as economy, infrastructure connectivity and tourism.

Li Jun, Vice-President of CNIE and Former Vice-Minister of IDCPC said that the China-Mongolia-Russia Tea Road City Cooperation Conference is a



*Li Jun, Vice-President of China NGO Network for International Exchanges and Former Vice-Minister of IDCPC, delivering a speech*



renowned brand for people-to-people exchanges among our three countries. It serves as a significant non-governmental platform for cooperation and has gained worldwide influence. We deeply feel that the tea road is a path to pragmatic cooperation which centred upon the trade of tea. It is the road for mutual learning among civilisations with tea as the carrier and the real passage for people-to-people connectivity. It is our good hope that the cities along the road will carry on their efforts in promoting pragmatic cooperation, facilitating mutual learning among civilisations, enhancing people-to-people connectivity with tea as the medium. By jointly maintaining, developing and building the cooperative relations, the tea road

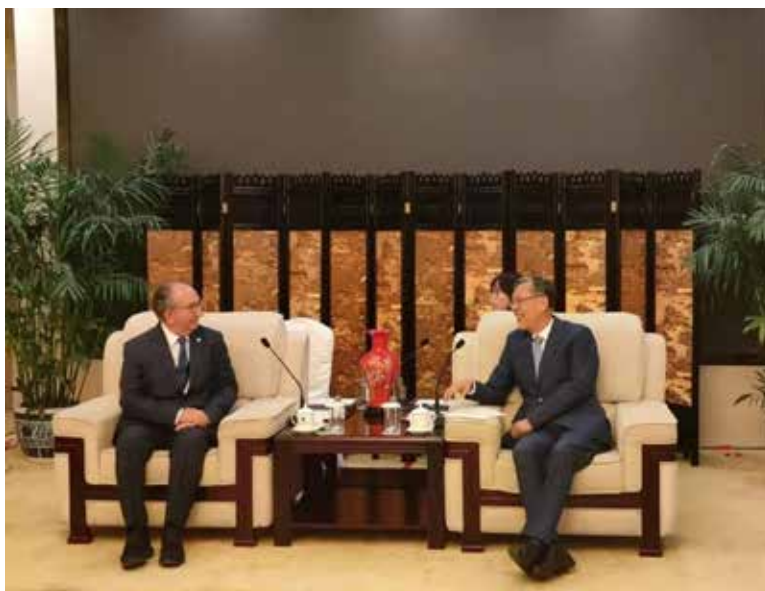
will rejuvenate with fresh vitality in the new era.

After the opening ceremony, a series of high-level events including parallel session on People-to-people Connectivity, Civilisation Lecture Hall, City Cooperation Networking Session, and Cities Roundtable Conference were held. The deliverables within the framework of Silk Road People-to-People Connectivity were also released covering such areas as twin cities, cross-border tourism, cultural and people-to-people exchanges, the coordinated development of tea culture, tea industry and tea technology, tea import and export and universities cooperation. The Conference also released the Huanglong Lake Declaration.

## **CNIE Vice-President Li Jun Meets with FIAP President Riccardo Busi**

On May 11, Li Jun, Vice-President of China NGO Network for International Exchanges (CNIE) met with Riccardo Busi, President of the International Federation of Photographic Arts (FIAP). They shared views on people-to-people exchanges as well as arts and cultural communication among countries. Li said that state-to-state relations thrive when there is friendship between people, and the art of photography is an important channel to enhance mutual understanding and mutual trust

among people of different countries. CNIE is ready to enhance cooperation and exchanges with FIAP, in a bid to contribute our efforts in promoting exchanges and mutual learning among civilisations and the building of a community with a shared future for mankind. Busi said that FIAP is willing to play its unique role by working with CNIE and other Chinese CSOs to actively launch exchanges and cooperation, so as to allow the world to have a better understanding of China.



## Side Event Shaping a Better Future for Our Next Generation Held in UN Nairobi Office

On May 9, the 2024 United Nations Civil Society Conference was held in Nairobi, Kenya. Chinese civil society organisations participating in the Conference held a side event at the United Nations Office at Nairobi with the theme of *Shaping a Better Future for Our Next Generation*.

In her speech, Kristin Bodiford, member of the 2024 United Nations Civil Society Conference Advisory Committee, highly valued the significance of this side event hosted by Chinese CSOs, pointing out that in a world of great changes, traditional family relationships and social structures are changing, which will have a profound impact

on future global governance. Promoting full communication among people of different generations and mutual support in learning traditional crafts and emerging technologies can facilitate social integration and progress, and create a better future for the next generation.

Xiao Ningning, Deputy Secretary General of the Chinese Association for International Understanding (CAFIU) said that China has made great efforts in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and adopted various measures to fully protect the rights of children and teenagers. The Chinese CSOs devoted



not only to the promotion of the protection of domestic children's rights, but also to the launching of international cooperation to advance the global development of children. It is advocated that CSOs pool social strength, integrate resources from various areas, provide professional service, and promote exchanges of ideas and pragmatic cooperation, so as to jointly facilitate the high-quality development of the protection of children's rights.

Ji Wei, Deputy Director of the Department of American and Oceanian Affairs of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, pointed out that young people are the future of the world and shoulder the mission of the times. The more challenging the world is, the more it needs young people from different countries to unite and work together to advance the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and contribute to world peace and development. We

hope that the UN Summit of the Future will take account of today's realities to plan for the future, call on joint actions of various countries, so as to promote unity and cooperation among the youth.

The event was jointly organised by China NGO Network for International Exchanges, the Chinese Association for International Understanding, the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and China Association for NGO Cooperation. CSOs from Asia, Africa, Europe, North America and South America actively participated in the event. Participants from both home and abroad exchanged ideas on protecting the rights of children and teenagers and the important role of CSOs, thus contributing their wisdom to the Summit of the Future. During the conference, Chinese CSOs held a photo exhibition of Youth Power in Addressing Climate Change at the venue.

## Seminar on Exchanges of Global Value Chain of Developing Countries Held at China-Africa Business Council

On April 3, a group of 32 delegates from Global Value Chain Workshop of Developing Countries visited China-Africa Business Council and held discussions with member companies. The workshop is organised by the Academy for International Business Officials, Ministry of Commerce, and its participants come from 10

countries in Asia and Africa, including Ethiopia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Cambodia, and Sri Lanka. The event aims at strengthening the participation and competitiveness of developing countries in global value chain as well as deepening and promoting international cooperation through field visits and dialogues.



## The Peaceland Foundation Visits Cambodia

Recently, a delegation of the Peaceland Foundation, a Chinese CSO based in Beijing, together with representatives from Sany Foundation and corporate partners visited Cambodia for a project inspection. They held friendly talks with

their Cambodian counterparts on such topics as strengthening the mine clearance techniques of officials at the Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC), installing new equipment, and conducting exchanges and training activities on drones.



## The Second China-Singapore Youth Development Forum Held in Singapore

On April 12, the National Youth Council of Singapore and the All-China Youth Federation jointly hosted the Second China-Singapore Youth Development Forum in Singapore. Themed "Youth Leadership and Sustainable Development", this forum was one of the major events of the China-Singapore Youth Leaders Exchange Camp. Ye Cong, Vice-Chairman of the All-China Youth

Federation, and David Chua, Executive President of the National Youth Council of Singapore, attended the forum and delivered a speech respectively. Zhu Jing, Minister Counselor of the Chinese Embassy in Singapore, and nearly 100 Chinese and Singaporean youth representatives from various fields attended the forum.



## Seminar on Global Digital Compact Held in Beijing

Hosted by China Internet Governance Forum (IGF) and organised by the Internet Society of China and Huawei Technologies Co. Ltd., the Seminar on Global Digital Compact was held in Beijing on April 9. At the meeting, Chinese representatives and the co-facilitators of Global Digital Compact, the

permanent representatives of Sweden and Zambia to the United Nations Anna Karin Eneström and Chola Milambo, had in-depth discussions on topics such as the zero draft and negotiation process of the Global Digital Compact.





## Launching Ceremony of the International Living Water Project Held in Nairobi, Kenya

Jointly hosted by Jiangsu People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the Amity Foundation, the launching ceremony of the International Living Water Project was held in Nairobi, Kenya on the afternoon of April 18. Ma Xin, member of the Standing Committee of the CPC Jiangsu Provincial Committee and Executive Vice-Governor, and Pasalis, member of the Kenyan National Assembly, attended the event and delivered speeches. The International Living Water Project is launched by the Amity Foundation under the support of Jiangsu People's Association for

Friendship with Foreign Countries. It was included in the Chair's Statement of the Third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation and the List of Deliverables of the Thematic Forum on People-to-People Connectivity in 2023. The project aims at providing support to villages, communities, and schools in developing countries to obtain convenient drinking water and domestic water facilities, facilitating the establishment of sustainable water management mechanism, and deepening people's understanding of the global water crisis through publicity.



## The Second Forum on International Students from Africa Held in Beijing

On April 15, the second Forum on International Students from Africa was held at the Liangxiang Campus of the University of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. With the theme of “New Youth in the New Era: Grow Together with China”, the Forum was hosted by China Africa Institute and organised by the University of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. Over 30 African students from

16 African countries who are studying in some ten Chinese universities and research institutions in Beijing, Shanghai, Hubei, Hunan, Shaanxi, Sichuan and Liaoning as well as around 100 experts, scholars, teachers and students from Chinese universities and research institutions attended the Forum.





