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President Xi sends congratulatory letter to China-U.S. Youth Festival

On June 24, Chinese President Xi Jinping sent a congratulatory letter to "Bond with Kuliang: 2024 China-U.S. Youth Festival."

Noting that the century-long Kuliang friendship is a story of friendly exchanges between the Chinese and American peoples, Xi said he was pleased to see young people from all walks of life in China and the United States gather in Fuzhou to relive the story, pass on the love of Kuliang, and help enhance exchanges and understanding between the two peoples.

Young people are energetic and full of dreams, and the future of China-U.S. relations lies in young people, Xi stressed.

Xi said it is hoped that Chinese and US youth would have in-depth exchanges, enhance friendship, know each other well, and work hand in hand to carry forward China-US friendship, contribute to the sound and steady growth of China-US relations, and work with people around the world to build peace, promote progress and create prosperity.

The "Bond with Kuliang: 2024 China-U.S. Youth Festival" opened on Monday, is co-organized by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, the Fujian Provincial People's Government, and the All-China Youth Federation.

U.S. youth exchange camp visits the Stilwell Museum in Chongqing

Standing at No.63 Jialingxin Road, Liziba, Yuzhong District, Chongqing, the Stilwell Museum is named after a foreign military officer - Joseph Stilwell. Recently, 23 young Americans were invited to Chongqing to visit his former residence for an exhibition about his life. The students reflected on the profound

friendship forged between the two nations during their joint resistance against aggression.

General Joseph Stilwell was a four-star general in the U.S. Army. After the outbreak of the Pacific War in 1941, he served as the Chief of Staff in the China Theater for the Allied forces and the Commander-in-Chief of U.S. forces in the China-Burma-India Theater. During the arduous years of the war, General Stilwell and the Chinese Expeditionary Force entered Burma to fight against the Japanese invasion, thus forming a deep bond with the Chinese people.

Listening to stories of General Stilwell fighting side by side with Chinese people, the American youths closely observed the exhibits. The black-and-white photos and old letters seemed to send them back to those war-torn years.

"The museum's exhibits are very comprehensive. We saw the photos of soldiers training, the uniforms of the time, and exhibits like fuel drums from the aircraft that flew the 'Hump Route'," said Peter Cruz from Northern Arizona University, after gaining a thorough understanding of the history of China-U.S. cooperation during World War II.



American students admiring the exhibits at the Stilwell Museum in Chongqing (Source: Stilwell Research Center)

"Thank you for keeping history alive," and "China is developing rapidly." "I hope China-U.S. friendship will be passed on from generation to generation." These are some of the comments left by the veterans of the Flying Tigers and

their descendants, which have left a strong impression on these young Americans.

"I see many people coming here to visit, and this is crucial for building close ties between the two countries," said Yang Xu, a student from the University of California, Berkeley. He believed that the Stilwell Museum in Chongqing served as a bridge, providing opportunities for mutual understanding between the peoples of the two nations. He planned to share this experience with his friends after returning to the U.S.



(Source: Stilwell Research Center)

On June 11, 23 American students watched the documentary "Friendship Transcending Five Generations," which reviewed the story of the Stilwell family's friendship with China over generations. The family was also awarded the "Friendship Commemorative Medal".

Jackson Cole, a descendant of the fifth generation of the Stilwell family, shared his views on General Stilwell, "Stilwell always held respect and admiration for the Chinese people. As a young member of the Stilwell family, I am pleased and honored to continue the friendship between the Chinese and American peoples."



(Source: Stilwell Research Center)

Chinese and American young film practitioners in Taiyuan, Shanxi

On June 11, 15 American young film directors, editors, and creative directors engaged in experiential exchanges and discussions with Chinese peers, cinephiles, and students. The exchange activities included "professional communication" "on-site observation" and "cultural experience", fostering youth friendships and promoting understanding between American and Chinese youths.

During the film industry discussion, young professionals from both China and the U.S. passionately talked about film projects' cooperative routes, staff exchanges, and film ecosystem co-construction.

Wahan Griffith, an American film practitioner who had worked in Hollywood for over a decade, made his first trip to China this time. While visiting the Communication University of Shanxi, he was impressed by the comprehensive camera and lighting equipment, synchronized recording facilities, and the integrated short film production process combining industry, education, and research together. "The rapid development of Chinese film has astonished the American film industry!" Wahan told the reporter. "The Chinese film market is both dynamic and creative. Through warm and in-depth roundtable dialogues, I have gradually built networking with Chinese actors, directors, producers, photographers, and cameramen of my generation. In the future, I look forward to more cooperation opportunities between Chinese and American film industry."

Kennedy Estrella, the marketing director of Tomorrow Dragon Media of the U.S., remarked, "By watching live performances like 'A Dream in Jinyang' and 'Revisiting Pingyao,' I know the profound cultural history and feel the charm of Shanxi. Artistic collaboration is an effective way

to promote friendship and cultural exchange between the U.S. and China. I hope our two countries can carry out more youth cultural exchange activities in the future."

The American youth visited Jiajiazhuang Village of Fenyang City. This village has written a series of new chapters in rural revitalization by building village-run industries on their saline-alkali land, running a writer village, and offsetting up Seed Cinema. Christopher Lee Dennis, a Creative Director of First Phase Creative Space Film Company in California, said, "The villagers told me that this place was once a cement factory and had now become a cinema and cultural arts center. If you visit the village history museum and talk with the villagers, you will realize how challenging it is to develop a rural area into what it is now. If given the chance, I would love to make a film out of Jiajiazhuang Village."

In front of the Yungang Grottoes in Datong, Nicola Burnett, a 22-year-old Parsons student from the School of Design, hoped to systematically learn about China's cultural relic restoration work. At the Yungang Research Institute's Archaeological Restoration Center, she attentively observed the processes of cleaning, gluing, bonding, patching, and polishing, taking notes by heart. Nicola told the reporter, "I plan to write an article about the relic restoration techniques I observed with photos to be published in American magazines. I look forward to more opportunities for American youths to visit China, which will further promote culture and art exchanges between the U.S. and China."

American Minnesota high school students' deep experience of Chinese culture

From June 14 to 27, Tianjin Normal University took a group of students from Minnesota, the

United States, on a cultural journey across ages that combined Eastern and Western cultures. The journey not only enabled the American students to have an in-depth exploration of China's history and culture, but also showed the vitality and development of modern Chinese cities. It promoted a deeper understanding of Chinese culture through their experience, and helped to build up friendships between American and Chinese youth.

In Beijing, the students visited the Forbidden City, where they closely experienced the grandeur of ancient Chinese royalty and the exquisite artistry of the era. They then climbed the Great Wall, standing at this historic site and gazing over China's majestic landscapes, gaining a profound understanding of the spirit of Chinese people.



In Tianjin, the students strolled down the Ancient Culture Street there, walked among the quaint architecture and savored the local snacks. They immersed themselves in the rich folk customs. Their visits to the Yangliuqing Folk Culture Museum, the Courtyard of the Shi Family, and the Yucheng Hao New Year Paintings Studio further deepened their understanding of Tianjin's folk culture. They also learned the traditional New Year painting techniques from skilled artisans there. At the National Maritime Museum of China, they were captivated by the diverse marine life and ocean culture. This visit enriched their maritime knowledge and broadened their horizon.



Their visit to the Huo Yuanjia Martial Arts School allowed them to appreciate the breadth and depth of Chinese martial arts. Many students tried the boxing techniques to feel the charm of Chinese martial arts.



To deepen their understanding of China, the students also traveled to Shanghai, a global metropolis of China. At the Bund, they witnessed the confluence of Eastern and Western cultures and enjoyed the dazzling night views along the Huangpu River.



A highlight of the journey was the Hanfu experience, where students dressed in elegant traditional clothing of Chinese Han Dynasty

style, creating a stunning visual impression as if they came from centuries ago.



American students and teachers from Irvine International Academy and Mark Twain Middle School build friendships in Chengdu

On June 20, a delegation of students and teachers from Irvine International Academy U.S. visited Chengdu University of Technology Experimental Primary School. The children at the school warmly welcomed their American counterparts with beautiful chorus and dance. Together, they learned to play a spear in traditional Sichuan Opera.



The school showcased a variety of unique courses centered on Sichuan culture. American students and teachers participated in calligraphy and traditional Chinese painting,

and made Chinese traditional fans. They also went to the local farm, experiencing the farming work there. In a Sichuan cuisine class, they learned to make tofu and cooked a classic Sichuan dish - Mapo Tofu.

On June 21, a delegation from Mark Twain Middle School in Los Angeles came to the Western District of Chengdu Zongbei Joint Middle School. Guided by the Chinese teachers, the students visited the campus and learned about the school's history and characteristics. The American students joined their Chinese peers. They had history, mathematics, geography, sports, physics, and biology classes together. They also learned to make Tangyuan (Chinese Glutinous Rice Balls) and tasted various authentic Chinese dishes.

In the afternoon, the American students participated in a traditional culture class where red paper was transformed into lifelike artwork through their skillful hands. Then they joined a choir and learned to play traditional Chinese instruments. They used music to convey friendship between China and the U.S. They also had a Chinese painting class. They used their pens to depict their visions of a beautiful future.



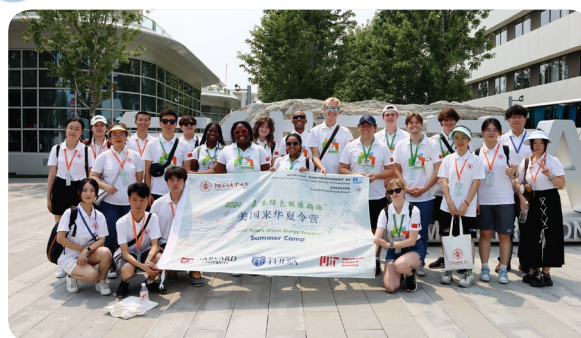
American students' green journey in China

"I see a future full of hope," said Sarah Downs, an electrical engineering student from the University of Tulsa in the U.S. She told the reporter from China News Service while visiting

the Daxing International Hydrogen Energy Demonstration Zone in Beijing, "Seeing the progress made by China in clean energy is truly inspiring".



On June 20, the "Future Green Energy Leaders" Summer Camp for American Youths, organized by China University of Petroleum, Beijing, invited 14 students and teachers from Harvard University and the University of Tulsa to come to Daxing International Hydrogen Energy Demonstration Zone to explore the development of hydrogen energy technology and industry in China.



Sarah, whose father worked in the natural gas industry in America, frequently shared her observations with him during the visit, exchanging views on green energy development in the U.S. and China. "For the U.S., the best option now is to move in new directions alongside countries like China," she believed. She also maintained that green transformation propel global development to a new stage, where international exchange and cooperation were crucial.

"Without open communication between countries, we couldn't have made the significant progress today. Therefore, I will stay in touch with my Chinese friends and share the knowledge gained here with my peers in the U.S.," said Sarah, the blonde girl with the Chinese name "Dai Wenli," who aspired to work in China in the future.



"I believe what we can do is to share such positive interaction between the two countries, eliminating prejudices and barriers."

Wearing VR goggles, Michael Tillman, a graduate student in energy management at the University of Tulsa, "wandered around" the 3D animated space that revealed the hydrogen fuel cell vehicle structures and operational principles. "I see two hydrogen atoms operating inside the engine system. They are combining with an oxygen atom and electrons to produce the energy that drives the car."

The exhibition featured various hydrogen energy products and models, including hydrogen fuel cell vehicles, fuel cell-powered bicycles, fuel cell drones, and hydrogen fuel

Olympic torches. Michael continually took photos and recorded his observations.

"The application of hydrogen energy has a promising future now," said Michael. Although some challenges remained unsolved in hydrogen energy popularization, he believed that moving toward green transformation was undoubtedly the right step for our planet. He emphasized that all the countries should make great effort to spread the knowledge of green energy transition and cooperate more intensively in technological development.

As a mechanical engineering student, Carter Reed was impressed by the cleanliness of hydrogen generation systems and their operation.

"This is something I haven't seen back home; it's quite refreshing," said Carter. This visit gave him a more comprehensive understanding of China's new energy industry development. "It's only by being here, experiencing it firsthand, and seeing it up close that you truly understand how it works and what it means."

"When I return to the U.S. and back to the classroom, I will share my observations with classmates and professors," said Michael, firmly believing in the future of green development and cooperation. "I believe cooperation is the key to achieving a greener planet, just as what Michael Jackson has sung in his song Heal the World: make it a better place for you and for me."



This was the first U.S.-China summer camp organized themed on green energy transformation. It showcased China's high-quality energy development pathway, and

played a significant role in promoting youth exchanges and educational cooperation between China and the U.S., as well as telling the story of China's energy transformation.



Common wish shared by over 500 Chinese and American youth in Kuliang

From June 23 to 28, Bond with Kuliang: 2024 China-U.S. Youth Festival was held in Fuzhou Province, China. This event marked the largest ever and most diverse youth exchange since the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the United States. Themed on "Continuing the Kuliang Connection, Deepening Friendships," this event brought together over 200 American youths and more than 300 Chinese peers. These youths with diverse backgrounds from both countries participated in about 50 exchange activities.

The Kuliang Connection Continues with New Chapters

The young people planted friendship trees in Yixia Village, stamped postmarks at the Kuliang Post Office, and explored the history of Kuliang in the exhibition hall.

On the afternoon of June 24, Chinese and American youths arrived at Kuliang, the place where Kuliang bond formed, to experience the enduring charm of Kuliang's stories. "I didn't expect the well to be this small," "Amazingly, it's still in use," "It's been over a hundred years,

truly remarkable," exclaimed the youths as they gathered around an ancient well inscribed with "Public Well for Foreigners and Locals" near the Kuliang Post Office.

At the opening ceremony of the festival on the morning of June 24, Mu Yanling, a member of "Kuliang Friends" and a researcher of Kuliang culture, gave a special introduction to this ancient well. She explained that Kuliang was an "international community" where Chinese and foreigners cohabitated. The residents and foreigners drank from this well, and their children also played together at that time.



With a passion for treasure hunting in Kuliang, Meng Zifan, a student of the School of International Studies at Peking University, visited the landmarks such as the Kuliang Post Office, the Kuliang Club, and the photography studio. She said, "Walking through these places, I can feel a magical connection between history and the present as if I went from being a listener of Kuliang's stories to a part of the story."

"Amazingly, the ties between our two peoples have lasted for a century," said a young entrepreneur from Houston in the U.S. He learned about the festival a few months ago from a friend studying in China. Knowing the century-long Kuliang bond story behind it, he felt he would come immediately.

Wang Zhiqin, a student from Washington University in the U.S., stated that such exchange activities could help build "bridges" between

China and the United States. He emphasized the importance of engaging the younger generation in these activities, as they represent the future.

On June 28, 12 youth representatives from both countries shared their experiences from this week-long exchange event, and all the youth participants jointly issued the Kuliang Initiative. The Kuliang Initiative declared, "The youth of both nations are not only witnesses and beneficiaries of the past 45 years of China-U.S. relations but should also be the guardians and promoters of a healthy and stable China-U.S. relationship for the next 45 years."



Culture: Our Shared Language

As the first rays of morning sunlight pierced through the mist, coach Jack, with his golden hair and blue eyes, had already begun Tai Chi class with his Chinese and American "disciples". During the exchange event, the morning Tai Chi class was a popular among the youth participants from both countries.

Showing many famous Tai Chi gestures, such as "Part the Wild Horse's Mane", "White Crane Spreads its Wings", "Brush Knee and Twist

Stepe Step", etc. Jack, an American who had lived in China for nearly 15 years, demonstrated the 24 forms of Tai Chi while patiently explaining the underlying Chinese philosophy to these students: "Tai Chi advocates for the balance of yin and yang, and the integration of hardness and softness. Through practicing Tai Chi, we not only experience the natural law of the mutual generation of yin and yang but also gain insight into the philosophical wisdom of unity and transformation of opposites."

"Tai Chi is very challenging and demands a high level of physical coordination", said an American youth, drenched with sweat after his Tai Chi class. He mentioned that he had seen many films and reports about Tai Chi before but had never had the chance to try it, so he greatly valued this opportunity to experience Chinese culture.



The Strait Culture and Art Center, resembling a blooming jasmine flower on the bank of the Min River, hosted a special cultural performance on the evening of June 27.

"The next piece is an attempt to blend Western classical music with Eastern aesthetics. We hope that cultural exchanges between China and the U.S. continue and get better and better." Chinese youth pianist Ruan Yangyang and four other students from the Curtis Institute of Music performed an orchestral quintet "Big Fish" and "Jasmine Flower" to the enthusiastic applause of the audience.

With a background in art education from both

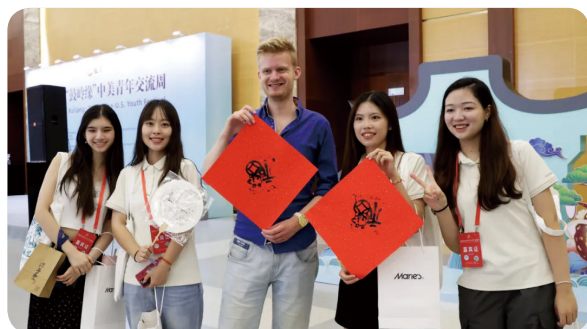
China and the U.S., Ruan Yangyang expressed that this festival would let the world know that there were indeed no "barriers" between China and the U.S., and he also hoped that his efforts could promote more exchanges between Chinese and American youth. "No matter how the world changes, we can always be connected through music."

"For Friendship"

"Bravo!" "Go! Go!" On the afternoon of June 27, a special basketball game took place at the Strait Youth Exchange Camp in Fuzhou. Cheers in both Chinese and English echoed through the heated arena.

A student from San Francisco, key player on one of the teams, said, "When I saw the basketball game on the schedule, I immediately marked it with a star as a must-attend event!" As a sports industry professional, Friedman noted that basketball was one of the best sports for making new friends and bringing people together.

"Even though our team didn't win, I think the focus of the game was to bring people from the U.S. and China together, to rub elbows through basketball and build friendships," Friedman remarked. Listening to his words, his teammates nodded.



On June 26, as part of the Bond with Kuliang: 2024 China-U.S. Youth Festival, the inauguration

ceremony for the intangible cultural heritage exhibition and youth market, was held at the Strait Youth Exchange Camp on Langqi Island, Mawei District, Fuzhou.



"Friends are those with whom you explore and discuss the world, and who share interests, goals, and dreams. I believe this festival is a perfect example of that definition," said a medical student from the University of Michigan, during the closing meeting of the festival on June 28. Her words received enthusiastic applause.

"Initially, we talked about work, then gradually shifted to daily life and even to topics like children's education. Now, we discuss almost everything, which is the true charm of this event," said Feng Bin, a young doctor from Peking Union Medical College. The hospital sent 11 young doctors and invited 12 young doctors from the U.S. medical field to participate in the event. These young doctors formed a deep friendship.

"My WeChat friends have grown from 5 to over 70!" said a young American student visiting China for the first time. She could speak fluent Chinese. She hugged each of her new friends goodbye. They promised to keep in touch and meet again.

Drawing continuous inspiration from the century-old Kuliang story, their shared wish is to carry on the friendship between China and the United States.

Youth summer camp exploring Flying Tigers' history

Hosted by the Center for Language Education and Cooperation (CLEC), the Sino-American Aviation Heritage Foundation, with Yunnan Normal University and Yunnan Media Group as organizers, the Chinese Bridge Flying Tigers Summer Camp was launched on June 26 in Beijing.



In 1941, a group of American pilots formed the "American Volunteer Group" to aid China in resisting the Japanese fascist invasion. This group was affectionally known as the "Flying Tigers" by Chinese people. For over 80 years, this invaluable friendship has been passed down from generation to generation across time and space.

This year, people-to-people exchanges between China and the U.S. have become increasingly active, with a series of youth exchange programs flourishing. In this context, the "Chinese Bridge Flying Tigers Summer Camp for American Students" drew on the "century-spanning stories of the Flying Tigers and the enduring friendship forged by the peoples of China and the U.S.," infusing vibrant youthful energy into the friendly relations between the two nations through a series of colorful activities.

"I had previously learned about the Flying Tigers in school. I heard that they flew planes over mountain ranges like the Hump, which

was crazy! I'm very interested in this history, so I decided to come," said Belen Aguilar, who visited China for the first time and was very excited about the trip.



Teyana Tucker from Texas said, "This is my first visit to China, but I've been studying Chinese for seven years. I enjoy watching Chinese historical documentaries with my mom. Two years ago, I learned about the Flying Tigers' history from a documentary, and their heroic deeds are amazing. I hope to improve my Chinese through this trip and become a China expert in the future!"

Hratch Arezouyan, a teacher leading the group said: "I've long yearned to visit China. When I saw this program, I signed up immediately. Our Chinese friends have provided us with good service. I'm looking forward to seeing China's beautiful countryside and experiencing the authentic local Chinese culture." The teacher and his students made no secret of their love for China.

Carrying the memory of China-U.S. friendship and a deep admiration for China, along with hopes and best wishes for the future of China-U.S. relations, 70 American teachers and students from New York, San Francisco, and Minnesota crossed the Pacific Ocean to come to China.

"China and the U.S. are very different. Chinese culture is more diverse, even with many different schools of Kung Fu and dance. This

journey has helped me appreciate the beauty and diversity of China even more," said Isabella Nichols from Texas, who studied Chinese at an international school in the U.S. She had chosen a beautiful Chinese name for herself - He Xueke.



Observing China with their own eyes, listening to Chinese people's voices with their ears, and exploring China with their own experience, the American youths have deepened their understanding of China through this summer camp. It has helped to eliminate misunderstandings and misjudgment, and dispel the "cognitive bias" between China and the U.S., presenting a credible, likable, and respectable image of China. During the summer camp, the American youths all expressed that this trip to China had brought them many surprises.

"I learned about the history of the Great Wall in school and knew it was built to defend against military invasions. But standing on the Great Wall myself today, it is even more amazing than I expected. It's so cool!"



"I love studying architecture, but I've never seen anything like the Great Wall. I'm very excited to step onto this miracle of human architectural history!"

Although China-U.S. relations have undergone many setbacks, the friendly exchanges between the people of the two countries have never ceased. History tells us that the amity between peoples holds the key to the relationship between countries. The friendship between peoples is the inexhaustible driving force for the sustained development of nation-to-nation relations. The younger generation is a crucial force in fostering friendly relations between the two countries. Promoting more young people to participate in people-to-people exchanges between China and the United States will bring vitality to bilateral relations.

This event, based on the history of the "Flying Tigers" as a symbol of China-U.S. non-government exchanges, focused on young people who bear the future of both countries. It has planted seeds of the "Flying Tigers' Spirit" in their hearts in the new era. It also has further built a bridge of people-to-people exchanges between China and the U.S., and added a vivid, youthful chapter to the healthy and stable development of China-U.S. relations.

Contact Us

- Contact: YES Group
- Phone: 010-66090069-8006
- Email: yes@ceaie.edu.cn
- Website: <https://www.youthlink.cn>



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