

FEATURES: CHINA, HONDURAS CHART A NEW COURSE P.30 | FEATURES: GEN Z SEEKS SACRED SOJOURN P.38

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A CULTURAL CLOSE-UP

How preserving the past helps shape the future

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Cover Photo: Headquarters of the China National Archives of Publications and Culture in Beijing in July 2022 (XINHUA)

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EDITOR'S DESK

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Executive Assistant: Zhao Wei
Tel/Fax: 1-201-792-0334
E-mail: yushujun@cicgamericas.com
Latin America Bureau (Mexico City)
Chief: Lin Yeqing
Tel: 52-55-55127271
Fax: 52-55-55332027
E-mail: chinahoymx@gmail.com
Peru Office (Lima)
Chief: Meng Kexin
Tel: 0051-959212702
E-mail: revistachinaperu@gmail.com

General Editorial Office

Tel: 86-10-68996252
Fax: 86-10-68326628
Editorial Desk
Tel: 86-10-68996250
Partnerships
Tel: 86-10-68995807
E-mail: yecong@cicgamericas.com
Distribution
Tel: 86-10-68310644
E-mail: circulation@cicgamericas.com

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Cultural Contemplations

Over the past millennia, the Chinese nation has created an extraordinary civilization marked by intellectual, cultural and material progress. "If one does not learn about China from the continuity of its long history, there is no way for him or her to understand ancient, modern or future China," President Xi Jinping said while attending a recent meeting on cultural inheritance and development. In other words, to understand the present, and beyond, you have to know the past.

Xi elaborated on five prominent features of the Chinese civilization, which he referred to as "the only uninterrupted civilization in the world." Its continuity determines that the Chinese people must follow their own path. Its innovativeness determines the enterprising Chinese spirit. Its unity determines that the different ethnic cultures of the nation share an unbreakable bond. Its inclusiveness determines the harmonious coexistence of different religious beliefs in China, as well as the open-mindedness toward societies worldwide. Its peaceful nature determines that China will continue to pursue exchanges and mutual learning with other civilizations rather than imposing its own values and political system onto others.

The material abundance we, as humanity, enjoy today is well beyond our ancestors' wildest imagination. At the same time, however, we are facing serious global problems, including a widening wealth gap and growing tension between humankind and nature. To solve these problems, we need to apply not only the contemporary knowledge and resources at our disposal, but also those the past has given us.

Traditional culture may contain numerous lessons that can help solve the tough issues of our time. For instance, traditional Chinese wisdom holds that human beings are an integral part of nature and should follow the laws of nature; not the other way around. The state should be governed by virtue, and those who hold positions of power and responsibility should first of all be people of integrity. And to make the world come together, one must always pursue the common good.

Against this backdrop, China reiterated the importance of carrying forward past wisdom and promoting inter-civilizational dialogue. If we take a closer look at how we got to where we are today, we can be more resourceful in paving the way for a brighter future. **BR**



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IGNITING DREAMS

The flame of Hangzhou 2022 Asian Games, or Asiad, is lit at the archaeological ruins of Liangzhu City in Zhejiang Province on June 15, marking the 100-day countdown to the opening of the games.

The Asiad, scheduled to take place from September 23 to October 8, will see an estimated 12,000 athletes from all 45 national and regional Olympic committees in Asia compete in 483 medal events. E-sports and breakdancing will make their debut as official competition events.



A New Pitch

Players from two villages in Rongjiang County, Guizhou Province, compete in the county's Village Super League on June 10. The league is a soccer tournament organized and participated in by local soccer fans on the weekends between early May and late July. The most recent edition attracted 20 teams from nearby villages.

New Publications

The fourth volume of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* has recently been published in French, Russian, Arabic, Spanish, Portuguese, German, Japanese and traditional Chinese characters, according to a publisher statement issued on June 11.

The volume contains a compilation of 109 spoken and written works of Chinese President Xi Jinping, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, from February 3, 2020 to May 10, 2022, along with 45 photographs taken since January 2020. It is divided into 21 sections by topic.

It records the practices of the Party Central Committee with Xi

at its core in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and drastic changes unseen in a century, and in rallying and leading the whole Party and the Chinese people of all ethnic groups in realizing the goal of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects and embarking on a new journey to transform China into a modern socialist country in all respects, the statement said.

The work fully and systematically reflects the latest developments achieved by Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, the statement read.

The simplified Chinese and English editions of the book were published in July 2022.

Medical Insurance

National inspections of China's medical insurance funds last year have retrieved around 720 million yuan (\$100.6 million), Xinhua News Agency quoted the National Healthcare Security Administration as saying on June 14.

The national operation inspected 48 medical institutions in 23 provincial-level regions, imposing fines of more than 145 million yuan (\$20.3 million) on those with malpractices and violations, data from the administration showed.

Main problems include charging extra fees and engaging in excessive treatments, examinations and prescriptions of medication in violation of

standard norms.

China is improving the world's largest network for basic healthcare security, which covers about 95 percent of the country's population of 1.4 billion, by enhancing the supervision of its funds.

During local inspections in 31 provincial-level regions in 2022, authorities penalized 2,413 medical institutions and recovered 1.98 billion yuan (\$276.5 million) in medical insurance funds.

Public Education

China aims to establish a quality and balanced basic public education system by 2027, according to a new set of guidelines jointly released by the general offices of the CPC Central Committee and the State Council, China's cabinet, Xinhua reported on June 13.

By 2035, China aims to become one of the world's leading countries in terms of the quality and equity of compulsory education services, the document said.

In the coming years, the authorities will work to close the education gap between developed and less-developed regions, with a focus on school facilities, and will continue to spend resources on less-developed regions in central and western China, according to the document.

The education gap between urban and rural areas, among different schools and different groups of residents, will also be addressed.

Priority will go to rural schools. The related authorities will work to ensure that all rural children of school age receive compulsory education, while more information technology will be introduced to improve the quality of education in rural schools.

The country will further adopt new policies and measures to help children of migrant workers attend school where their parents work.

The document pledges that the government will continue to increase the budget for education, particularly that for compulsory education.

Removing Toxic Chemicals

To date, China has eliminated 23 types of toxic chemicals listed among the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), according to the Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE), Xinhua reported on June 13.

The international community reached the global treaty in 2001 to reduce, remove and prevent pollution from POPs and to protect human health and the environment from the effects of POPs.

POPs are toxic chemicals that adversely affect human health and the environment around the world. They persist for long periods of time in the environment and can accumulate and pass from one species to the next through the food chain.

In a recently released regulation document, the MEE,

together with other related authorities, detailed the prohibition on the production, use, import and export of five types of POPs, including polychlorinated naphthalene, according to a ministry official.

China attaches great importance to compliance with international conventions, has disposed of more than 100,000 tons of POP wastes and significantly reduced the intensity of dioxin emissions from major industries nationwide, the official said.

Consumption City

Tianjin Municipality in north China has released a five-year action plan to accelerate its efforts in transforming itself into an international consumption center city, Xinhua reported on June 11.

Per the plan, which is composed of 24 key tasks, Tianjin will become a destination for international consumption and domestic tourism in the next five years.

By 2025, Tianjin's annual total retail sales of consumer goods will exceed 500 billion yuan (\$69.8 billion) and the city will record 300 million domestic and overseas tourist visits each year.



Like a Duck to Water

A pair of giant yellow rubber ducks floats around Victoria Harbor in Hong Kong Special Administrative Region on June 9. The iconic yellow rubber duck made its first appearance in Hong Kong 10 years ago when the installation by Dutch artist Florentijn Hofman drew enormous crowds to the famous harbor. For its encore, the yellow ducky brought a friend.

Tianjin will take a series of measures to achieve these goals, including constructing landmark business districts, holding international exhibition events, improving supporting facilities and providing quality services.

Urban Rail Trips

The number of passenger trips handled by China's urban rail transit networks soared 87 percent year on year in May, Xinhua

reported on June 11.

A total of 2.49 billion passenger trips were made via China's urban transit networks in 54 cities last month, according to the Ministry of Transport.

The figure was 25.3 percent higher than the average monthly level in 2019, the data revealed.

By late May, China had 292 urban rail transit lines in operation, with a total length of 9,652.6 km, according to the ministry.



Cheers!

Participants indulge in a little winetasting at the Third China (Ningxia) International Wine Culture and Tourism Expo on June 9 in Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, China's leading wine-producing region.

The expo, along with the International Conference on Grape and Wine Industries, took place on June 9-10 and offered a platform for exploring new growth models for the wine-making industry and sharing new opportunities for international cooperation.

Cost Cutting

Sectors dedicated to technological innovation or key industrial chains will enjoy personalized tax and fee cuts, alongside a further optimization of current favorable tax policies, according to a circular issued on June 13 by four departments, including the National Development and Reform Commission.

By the end of this year, small-scale taxpayers with monthly sales of less than 100,000 yuan (\$13,969) will be exempted from value-added tax, it said.

While seeking to lower loan interest rates, the country will also continue to increase loans to small and micro firms, according to the document.

To alleviate firms' labor burdens, the existing policies of lowering the premium rates for unemployment insurance and work-related injury insurance will be extended to late 2024.

The country will also retain a zero-tariff policy toward coal

imports and make continued efforts to reduce institutional transaction costs and logistics costs, the circular added.

Reverse Repo Rate

The People's Bank of China (PBC), the country's central bank, lowered its seven-day reverse repurchase (known as reverse repo) rate from 2 percent to 1.9 percent on June 13 amid its efforts to step up countercyclical adjustment and shore up market expectations.

For example, in a slow economy, a countercyclical action would be meant to help encourage an upswing. It is a government effort implemented through taxes and different policies. A countercyclical policy can be applied to isolated situations or as an ongoing means of controlling the effect of business on the economy.

The PBC's latest move aims to keep liquidity reasonable and ample in the banking system, according to the bank.

A reverse repo is a process in which the central bank purchases securities from commercial banks through bidding, with an agreement to sell them back in the future.

This is the PBC's first such move since August last year.

It came amid the country's recent efforts to effectively reduce the cost of liabilities of its banks, encourage these institutions to better support the real economy and strengthen countercyclical adjustment, Zhou Maohua, an analyst with China Everbright Bank, said.

Power Battery Capacity

The installed capacity of power batteries in China saw rapid expansion in May amid the sound development of the new-energy vehicle (NEV) market, industry data showed.

During the period, the installed capacity of power batteries totaled 28.2 gigawatt-hours (GWh), up 52.1 percent

year on year, data from the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers revealed.

About 19.2 GWh of lithium iron phosphate batteries were installed in NEVs, surging 87.2 percent from a year earlier, and making up 67.8 percent of the monthly total.

In the first five months of this year, installed capacity of power batteries rose 43.5 percent year on year to 119.2 GWh, according to the association.

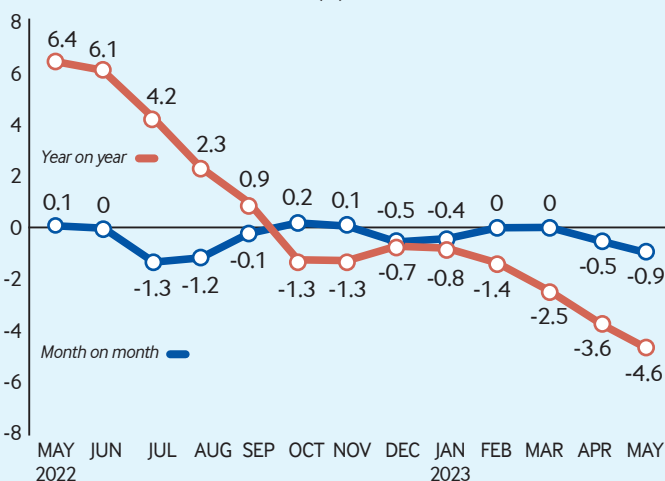
SMEs Development Index

The Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) Development Index, based on a survey of 3,000 SMEs, edged down 0.1 point from the previous month to 88.9 in May, the latest industry data showed. The vitality of a country's SMEs is an important indicator reflecting the country's economic performance.

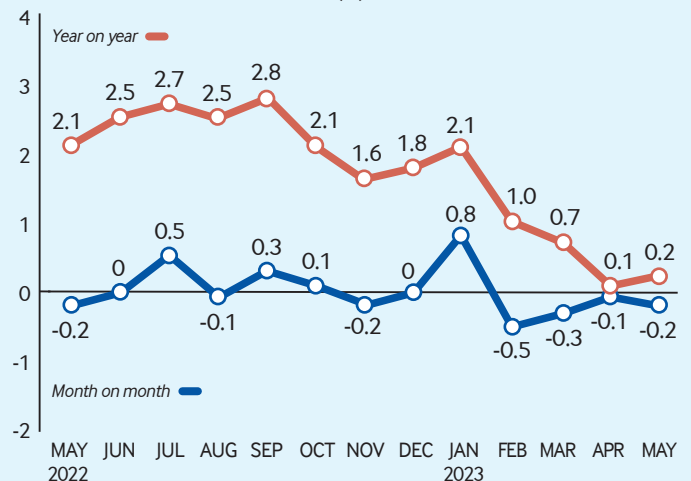
This marked the third consecutive month of declines for

NUMBERS

China's Producer Price Index Growth (%)



China's Consumer Price Index (CPI) Growth (%)



the gauge, but the drop in May was narrower compared with the 0.3-point decrease in April, the China Association of Small and Medium Enterprises said.

The Chinese economy has sustained its recovery momentum, but its foundation remains weak, the association said, cautioning that uncertain and unpredictable factors are on the rise globally.

PV Exports

China's exports of photovoltaic (PV) products rose 18.9 percent year on year to \$19.35 billion in the first four months of this year, according to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology.

From March to April, the PV industry saw a high operating rate, the ministry said.

In the March-April period, output of polysilicon increased 72.1 percent year on year, while that of silicon wafers rose 79.8 percent, according to the ministry.

Reinsurance International Board

An international board for reinsurance trading was launched in Shanghai on June 8, along with the rollout of implementation rules for transforming the city into a global reinsurance center. Reinsurance is a form of insurance purchased by insurance companies in order to mitigate risks.

The rules mark an important step toward the construction of a global reinsurance center in Shanghai.

The rules detail 22 policy measures, focusing on areas such as improving the infrastructure and institutional system of the reinsurance market, enhancing the supply and innovation of products, and promoting the sector's high-level institutional opening up.

Measures will be taken to facilitate the cross-border settlement of domestic reinsurance payments, reduce cross-border transaction costs and shorten the

settlement cycle.

According to the rules, the country will intensify participation in global reinsurance industry cooperation and provide Chinese solutions for global risk protection and financial governance systems.

Green Loans and Bonds

China has established a multi-tiered green finance market system, with outstanding green loans and bonds both ranking among the top globally, according to the country's central bank.

Green finance is any structured financial activity that's been created to ensure a better environmental outcome.

As of the end of the first quarter this year, the country's outstanding green loans in yuan and foreign currencies exceeded 25 trillion yuan (\$3.5 trillion), while its outstanding green bonds surpassed 1.5 trillion yuan (\$209.5 billion), PBC data showed.

Yi Gang, Governor of the PBC, emphasized the important role of green finance, saying the country's carbon peaking and neutrality goals, set to be achieved before 2030 and 2060, respectively, will generate great change, including in energy structure and people's overall lifestyles.

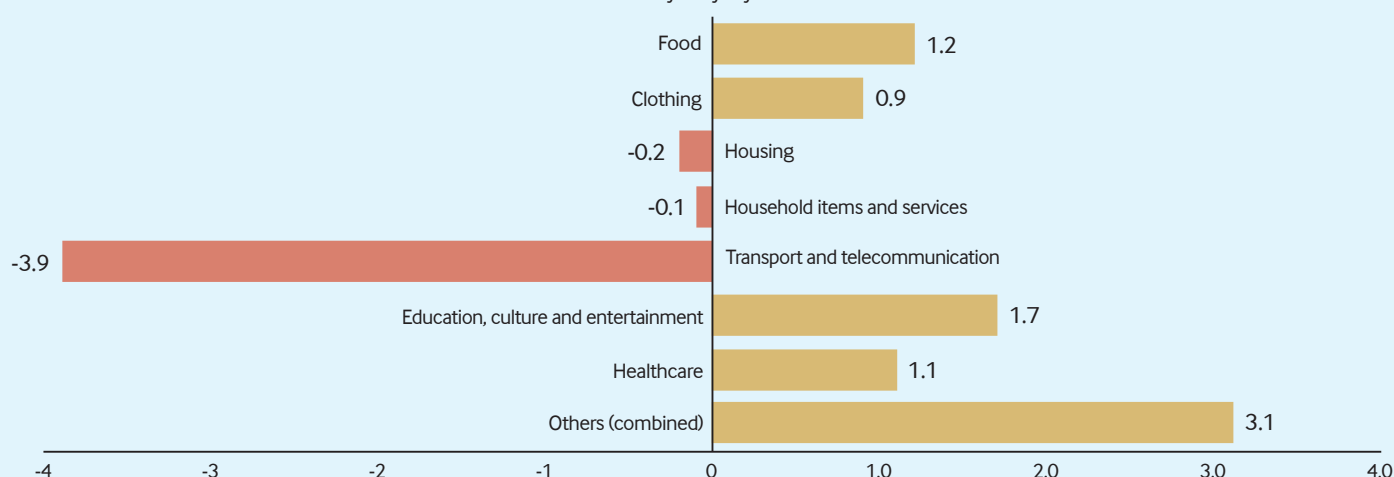
In recent years, the PBC has doubled down on efforts to develop green finance and those measures have produced positive results, Yi added.

The central bank has specified environmental information disclosure requirements for financial institutions, rolled out supporting tools for carbon reduction and the clean and efficient use of coal, and built up the climate risk management capacities of financial institutions, according to Yi.

By late April, China's carbon reduction credit facility had financed more than 150 million tons in carbon emission cuts, PBC data revealed.

China's CPI Growth by Type

May (% y.o.y.)



(Source: National Bureau of Statistics)



REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Thousands of fishermen gather near the parliamentary building in Seoul on June 12 to protest against Japan's planned discharge of radioactive wastewater from its crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant into the Pacific Ocean



LEBANON

A woman eats cherries at the Hammana Cherry Festival in the village of Hammana, Mount Lebanon Governorate on June 11. The village is known for its cherries and hosts an annual cherry festival between the end of May and mid-June



NEW ZEALAND

A man drives a tractor at Fieldsays, the Southern Hemisphere's biggest agricultural event, at Mystery Creek, Hamilton, on June 17



UNITED NATIONS

Secretary General António Guterres speaks at a press conference at the UN headquarters in New York on June 12. He expressed support for establishing an artificial intelligence watchdog body akin to the International Atomic Energy Agency



TANZANIA

A fisherman gets ready for work at Lake Victoria, Mwanza Region, on June 10. Lake Victoria is the largest freshwater lake in Africa and is an essential source of food and income for local residents



TÜRKİYE

The Manchester City team celebrates with the trophy after winning the Champions League Final of the Union of European Football Associations at Istanbul's Ataturk Olympic Stadium on June 10

THIS WEEK PEOPLE & POINTS

↓ TENNIS PLAYERS WIN FRENCH OPEN DOUBLES TITLE

Wang Xinyu and Hsieh Su-wei won the women's doubles final at the French Open in Paris, France, on June 11, defeating the No.10 seed pair of Taylor Townsend of the U.S. and Leylah Fernandez of Canada.

Wang, 22, grew up in an athletic family in Shenzhen, Guangdong Province. Wang Peng, her father, a former coach of Team China, began teaching her how to play tennis when she was 6, after which she gradually transitioned to professional training. In 2018, she began playing professionally.

The doubles title in France makes Wang the seventh player from the Chinese mainland to win a women's title in a Grand Slam tournament. This is Wang's first and Hsieh's fifth Grand Slam title. Hsieh, 37, is from Taiwan, China.



When the Virtual Becomes Reality

Economic Daily
June 9

At an event on June 5, Apple unveiled Apple Vision Pro, a mixed reality headset that promises a blend of digital content with physical reality. With further integrations with Microsoft Office software, it can become a workspace without the need for desks, computers and other physical office facilities. Tim Cook, Apple's CEO, said the device is "years ahead and unlike anything created before."

With artificial intelligence continuing

to make headway, virtual reality is likely to break new ground at a faster pace as artificial intelligence can lower the threshold and improve the efficiency of virtual content creation. Apple's venture into the mixed reality headset business is likely to give it a shot in the arm.

However, nausea, dizziness and a number of other physical discomforts are common with users of virtual reality or mixed reality headsets. Meta, Google and Microsoft have launched similar products before, but none have become popular in the market. Whether Apple's new invention will offer a better user experience remains to be seen.



Everyone Loves a Panda

China Newsweek
June 5

With their black-and-white coat and roly-poly shape, giant pandas have long been considered a national treasure in China and are adored by people from all over the world. In an increasingly digitized age, zoos are no longer the only places where people can closely observe pandas. Now, people can simply pick up their phones and click into panda-themed webcam channels to watch the 24/7 live coverage of the animals' daily activities.

The two earliest and most well-known panda cams are iPanda, a

"We should spare no effort to ensure that the people of the world are the main actor, promoter and beneficiary of the cause of human rights."

Saint Cyr Mazangue, a diplomat from the Central African Republic, during the Forum on Global Human Rights Governance, which took place in Beijing on June 14-15

"Alone we go fast, but together we go further."

Marcelin Sanou, who works for the Great Green Wall, a tree-planting project led by the African Union, calling for international cooperation in combating desertification at the recent Taklimakan Desert Forum in Korla, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region

multimedia platform coestablished by China Network Television and the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding in Sichuan Province in 2013, and Pandapia, a program launched in 2014 that aims to document the birth and growth of every newborn panda at the research base in Chengdu. With no voiceovers, special effects or any other trace of human interference, these live broadcasts have provided panda lovers with a rich vault of raw materials, which can then be edited into fan-made videos and memes.

Part of the reason why these live-streams are so popular is that pandas remind people of themselves. A mother panda's love for her cubs reminds people of their own parents. Videos of baby pandas courageously scaling impressively tall trees and finally making it to the top after countless falls are a great source of strength for those who feel trapped and need a breakthrough.

The animal is such a popular symbol of China that it has served as a prototype for creative logo designs, such as Bing Dwen Dwen, a cuddly mascot of the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022. Renowned for its resilience and non-aggressiveness, the giant panda is an enduring Chinese icon of peace and friendship.

Student Vendors

Eastday.com
June 9

This summer, a new type of street stall has emerged alongside the sidewalk carts selling street food and fresh summer drinks. Run by college students mostly majoring in philosophy and psychology, these stalls offer a wide range of paid social services—anything from counseling, therapy sessions, psychology tests and deep philosophical discussions to casual chats—to anyone who needs someone to talk to.

Many people remain skeptical as to whether these unseasoned youngsters

are qualified to provide counseling. What these people overlook is that college youth can often come up with fresh perspectives and creative interpretations unrestricted by the rules and regulations of a workplace. These stalls also allow college students to engage with all kinds of people and therefore prepare them for an entry into the real world.

Of course, like many other innovative undertakings that have arisen among college students, setting up curbside chat services is no easy task. Challenges abound, failure is constant. So instead of being overly critical of their inadequacy, people should give these students a bit more credit and encouragement.



CELEBRATED ARTIST DIES AT 99

Huang Yongyu, one of the most productive and influential artists in the second half of the 20th century in China, died on June 13 at the age of 99.

Huang was most famous for designing the first Chinese zodiac postal stamp for China, known as the Monkey Stamp, in 1980. In January, he once again showcased his creativity by designing a blue rabbit zodiac stamp. His design is now highly prized by collectors.



Born into a poor family in Changde, Hunan Province, in 1924, Huang started to earn a living at the age of 12 as an apprentice in a porcelain workshop. Swiftly realizing his talent, he began publishing woodblock prints at 14.

Huang was a member of the China National Academy of Painting and a professor at the Central Academy of Fine Arts.

“By reducing tariff barriers among the 15 member states and abiding by unified provisions in the field of investment and trade, the RCEP (Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership) will facilitate regional economic and trade development.”

Masahiro Morinaga, Chief Delegate of the Japan External Trade Organization's Chengdu office, as the RCEP, the world's largest free trade pact, came into effect in all its members on June 2

“I think leaving home and studying in a new place can help us mature as people.”

Tsering Dargye, a high school student from Tibet Autonomous Region studying in Beijing, speaking about his experience in an interview after he became the only one among some 10,000 people who wrote to China's space station crew and received a reply



COVER STORY

FOSTERING CULTURAL PROSPERITY

The importance of building cultural strength and developing a modern Chinese civilization By Ji Jing