



Yunnan Starts International Photography & Writing Contest

BY WANG JING

A world photography and writing contest to highlight the role of Kunming-Bangkok expressway was launched last Thursday in Kunming, capital of China's southwestern Yunnan Province.

The International Photography & Writing Contest themed on "Friendship is longer than the road—Depicting Kunming-Bangkok expressway" is co-hosted by Yunnan Daily Press Group, Yunnan Provincial Photographers Association and Yunnan Provincial Writers Association. He Kan, editor-in-chief of Yunnan Daily Press Group, said in a press release.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the establishment of Sino-Thai diplomatic ties. He Kan said, it is also the seventh year that Kunming-Bangkok Expressway was open to traffic. "This international expressway links Yunnan to the outside world, and it is significant in Yunnan's opening-up and cooperation with the ASEAN countries."

Suchart Liengsaengthong, Consul-General of Royal Thai Consulate General in Kunming, attended the launching ceremony of the Contest, and said that the Contest is a concrete step of responding to Belt and Road Initiative proposed by President Xi Jinping, and it will deepen understanding between the two peoples.

The contest aims to increase awareness of the development and changes made by the Kunming-Bangkok expressway, and draw more attention on it so that it can play an increasingly important role in the economic and trade cooperation and cultural exchanges between China and Thailand, as well as in the construction of the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area.

The contest will last for three months and cash awards are up to 5000 RMB for the winners. The winning photographs and stories will be selected by a panel and the awarding ceremony will be held at the year end.

There are 3 Ways to contribute:

1. Log onto our official English website and upload your works at: <http://english.yunnan.cn/html/special/kmsyds/>
2. Send a letter.
Mail recipient: editorial office of International Communication Center of Yunnan Daily Press Group
Address: No.337, Xinwen Road, Kunming, Yunnan Province, P.R. China
Post code: 650032.
3. Send an e-mail (kunningbangkok@163.com). The subject of email should be: "authorship name + telephone number + title of work(s)".

ONE BELT AND ONE ROAD

China — Thailand railway to be completed within three years



Railway under construction in Yunnan

Photo by Yu Jiangning

BY LI YING

According to Zhu Xijun, general manager of Southeast Asian Branch of the China Railway Construction Corporation, six rounds of talks have been held on planned cooperation concerning the China-Thailand Railway. Both parties expect to sign an intergovernmental framework agreement in early September and start construction in late October.

At the Thai-Chinese Business Forum held on the same day, business people from the two countries discussed how to enhance interconnection and further promote the implementation

of the Belt and Road initiative.

Zhu Xijun said, China and Thailand expect to complete railway construction within three years and the railway co-operation will benefit the socio-economic development of Thailand. When the China-Thailand Railway goes into operation, a round-trip between Kunming and Bangkok will cost about 3,600 baht (about 700 yuan), half or one third of the price of an air ticket. In addition, the freight costs by rail will be one-ninth of that by air. For Thailand, it is projected to increase the number of Chinese tourists by two million each year, facilitate the export of agricultural

products and turn the country into a transport hub for other ASEAN countries.

Wu Zhiwu, Charge d'Affaires ad Interim of the Chinese Embassy in Thailand, said that the cooperation on the China-Thailand Railway will be a good example of the interconnectedness between the Belt and Road initiative and the Prayuth Infrastructure Construction Plan. In the future, China and Thailand will seek further cooperation in the construction of ports, airports and other infrastructure.

According to Wu Zhiwu, apart from cooperation in infrastructure projects, China and Thailand can also tap the poten-

tial for economic and trade investment cooperation in several areas. First, China and Thailand can increase equipment manufacturing cooperation in public works, railway facilities and new bus systems. Second, China and Thailand can strengthen "green development" cooperation in environmental protection, waste power generation, solar energy, remote sensing satellite communications and 4G technology. Third and finally, China can engage in the deep processing of agricultural products in Thailand, which will in turn enhance Thailand's position in the international agricultural products processing industry chain.

Editor's note: On July 7, 1937, Japan launched a full-scale invasion to China. In the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression, Yunnan was one of the three major battlefields as well as the great rear area. Especially in the province's western areas, people made great sacrifices and contributions to the final victory in the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression. In this edition of "Beautiful Yunnan", we will publish a report about Nanyang volunteer Driver and Mechanic. This story will help us remember history and the martyrs, while cherishing peace and building a better future.

YUNNAN MEMORY

Looking for father's history



Weng Jiagui, 102, a surviving Nanyang volunteer

Photo by Xu Yan

BY LUO RONGCHAN
YANG HONGCHUAN

Tang Xiaomei describes herself on her business card as Vice President of the Yunnan Provincial Research Association of History on Returned Nanyang Volunteer Drivers and Mechanics in the War Resistance against Japanese Aggression. However, before she retired in 2002, she was an accountant and had hardly anything to do with historical research.

Now, she runs from one historical archive to another searching for information. She also flies all over the world trying to find and interview still-living volunteer drivers and me-

chanics who returned to China from Nanyang (the geographical region south of China). She collects all the historical data and associated relics she can lay her hands on in an effort to memorialize that stirring piece of history.

"It is through my research of this tragic history that I have got to know my father, Tang Yaorong, she says.

"When I was one year old, father was taken to hospital directly from work. He died on the operating table at the age of 38. Later, my mother rarely mentioned him again. Not until a history researcher interviewed Nanyang Drivers and Mechanics did

I learn father's story for the first time. I have gotten to know a lot of heroes ever since then, and I have made it my career to remember their deeds during the War.

"As I dug deeper in my research, father's image as a Nanyang mechanic began to come together in my mind."

"Father used to live in Penang, Malaysia. Each time when people saw off Nanyang Drivers and Mechanics that were returning to China to join in the war, they passed father's house. The farewell music played by the Penang High School harmonica team would echo down the street to the pier.

"As a 24-year-old man, father had wanted to join the Nanyang Drivers and Mechanics in the War, but my grandfather and grandmother died early, leaving my great-grandmother and father on their own. Father did not have the heart to leave my great-grandmother, so he hesitated. However, like other overseas Chinese, he believed that 'every man is responsible for his country'. Now that he had to choose between great-grandmother and the motherland, his final choice was the latter. On July 14, 1939, he left a letter entrusting the care of my great-grandmother to an apprentice, and then returned to China with the sixth batch of Nanyang Drivers and

Mechanics. At the street corner, father knelt down before his relatives and shed bitter tears.

"Father was an expert mechanic. He could tell whether anything was wrong with a truck simply by its sound. At that time, Tang Yaorong from Penang, and Wang Wensong from Singapore, were famous repairmen on the Yunnan-Myanmar Road. Father witnessed Japanese bombing of the Yunnan-Myanmar region and did various jobs under extremely harsh conditions. After the war, in the 1950s, father, a man of spare frame, continued driving relief supplies, in spite of an illness. Once when he drove to Chuxiong, his health deteriorated further. He arrived in Kunming and had two consecutive operations, but failed to make it through."

"From my studies of the Nanyang Drivers and Mechanics, I have rediscovered my father's life and understood the definition of country in his mind," said Tang Xiaomei while choking back sobs.

As time goes by, many Nanyang Drivers and Mechanics have receded into the shadow of history. Tang Xiaomei said, "As the children of Nanyang Drivers and Mechanics, we should pass on the patriotism of our fathers, and at the same time make more people aware of this indelible historical period."

Yunnan to promote Trans-Himalaya cooperation

BY XIANG LUCAI

The First Trans-Himalaya Development Forum was recently held in Mangshi, Yunnan. The conference was attended by representatives, experts and scholars from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and China.

Built around Trans-Himalaya development and cooperation as well as the 'Belt and Road' initiative, experts and scholars from the eight countries reached consensus on five core principles. According to Hu Shisheng, director and researcher of the Institute of South Asian Studies, China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations, the entire Himalayan region is still the least developed area in Asia. The development of this region is of great significance for the development of Asia, and the rest of the world. Thus, China must act as a major driving force in Trans-Himalaya development and cooperation; while Yunnan province may well develop into the main impetus and leader in future Trans-Himalaya cooperation between the eight countries.

At the conference, it was agreed that the Trans-Himalaya region does not have to start from scratch in its development, but instead can build on the many cooperative mechanisms already in place. Nevertheless, Trans-Himalaya development and cooperation still has some bottlenecks, including the tangible constraints of a complicated natural environment, outmoded infrastructure systems,

non-traditional security threats, the intangible interference of incompatible systems, geopolitical issues and traditional mind-sets. The Trans-Himalaya Development Forum is committed to breaking regional development bottlenecks and proposing new policies to the governments of the eight different countries on meaningful regional cooperation. In the future, the Trans-Himalaya Development Forum will be held on a regular basis either in Dehong, Yunnan, China or in other countries on a rotating basis.

Experts agreed that the theme of "seeking cooperation and development through communication, and promoting regional stability through cooperation and development" is very instructive for the Trans-Himalaya region. Unrest in the region is closely related to the low level of economic development and a lack of communication and understanding between people. More physical interconnection, mechanism docking and people-to-people exchanges will lead to more understanding between different countries in the region. This in turn will reduce geopolitical interference and provide more favourable conditions for the peaceful settlement of various disputes. Therefore, regional stability can not only be expected but also guaranteed. The Trans-Himalaya Development Forum is committed to promoting open and inclusive regional cooperation and development as well as enhancing mutual trust among peoples and countries in the region.

Kunming quickening customs clearance for fresh products



Custom personnel inspect imported prawn

Photo by Liu Jianhua

BY WU PING

"We do customs declarations and tax payment online in advance. When the flight arrives, it takes only 20 minutes to complete cargo inspection and then we are ready to leave the airport," Cheng Hong, a staff member of Yunnan Chineng Import and Export Trading Co., Ltd. said. He did not try to conceal his approval of the customs clearance efficiency at Kunming Airport.

In order to quicken customs clearance for the import and export of fresh and live products, Kunming Customs has set up "green windows" and has taken a series of new measures. These include a 24/7 appointment customs clearance system, a special channel and simultaneous packing and inspection services. Next, Kunming Customs will try out 'batch customs' clearance for imported and exported vegetables, fruits and other

fresh, live and perishable goods at Kunming Airport and Hekou Port. These moves are expected to further facilitate customs clearance for companies importing and exporting fresh and live products.

Chineng is currently the largest seafood importer in Yunnan, and its annual airfreight import of seafood accounts for 50 percent of the Yunnan market. According to Li Changchun, general manager of Chineng, fresh and live products are time-sensitive, and the online tax payment system introduced by Kunming Customs has greatly improved customs clearance efficiency. In addition, other measures taken this year, such as paperless customs clearance, the further networking of ports and border crossings, and cooperation between customs inspection and quarantine departments have also shortened the time needed for customs clearance.