

The hope of the China-U.S. relationship lies in the people, its foundation is in our societies, its future depends on the youth, and its vitality comes from exchanges at subnational levels.

—Excerpt from President Xi Jinping's speech at Welcome Dinner by Friendly Organizations in the United States

## Youths are the future of Sino-US friendship

Chinese President Xi Jinping said on Nov. 15 that China is ready to invite 50,000 young Americans to China on exchange and study programs in the next five years to increase exchanges between the two peoples, especially between the youth.

Xi made the announcement at a welcome dinner by friendly organizations in San

Francisco. It is a coincidence that San Francisco was the first stop of Xi's maiden trip to the United States decades ago. Over the years, he fostered friendships with Americans, especially young people who hold the future of China-U.S. relations.

In 2015, Xi, with his wife Peng Liyuan, visited Lincoln High School in Tacoma of

Washington State during his first state visit to the U.S. as Chinese president.

"President Xi is a strong believer in educational exchanges," said the principal of Lincoln High School, who accompanied Xi on the 2015 school tour.

"It is a life-changing experience, both in terms of the travel itself and the exposure to

the culture, the history and the Chinese people," the principal said. "My students all want to go back to China and study in China."

Youths are the future of Sino-US friendship. At the invitation of the All-China Youth Federation, a delegation from the Schiller Institute visited China from September 17 to 28. The American youths

visited Beijing and Sichuan to explore and experience a diversified China. They hope that in the future, more young people from China and the United States will visit each other's country frequently, experience each other's cultures, and become ambassadors of friendship between the two countries.

(Xinhua News, China Youth Daily)

## From the Hump route to Yunnan rice noodles: Witnesses to the long-standing China-US friendship



### Friendship passed on over four generations of a family

In the 1940s, in order to help the Chinese people fight against the Japanese invaders, a group of young American pilots arrived in Kunming. Mistaking the shark pattern on the noses of their fighter jets for a tiger, Yunnan people affectionately referred to these young Americans as Flying Tigers.

Yunnan people have never forgotten Flying Tigers ever since. In Kunming, where the Flying Tigers headquarters used to be located, many sites are still relating the stories of Flying Tigers, such as the Flying Tigers Building, the Flying Tigers Avenue, the Kunming Flying Tigers Museum, and the Flying Tigers Theme Restaurant. The Flying Tigers spirit has sustained a long-standing development as a model of China-US friendship.

During his spare time in Kunming from 1944 to 1945, a medical officer with the Flying Tigers took more than 100 photos of local people and cityscapes, as well as Flying Tigers' life. As the earliest colorful photographic materials of this city, these photos also recorded many Kunming snacks, including ham, mutton, roast duck, pea jelly, and modern baba (Local pancakes).

One of his photos captured a vendor hawking modern baba in a street in Kunming. This snack is still available in some local restaurants. The pancakes are shaped in coils. When freshly cooked, they present an enticingly golden color and send forth a pleasantly milky scent. They taste sweet but not as greasy as other fried foods. Flying Tigers must have tasted this snack when they were living in Kunming. After eight decades, when you taste a modern baba, will you be able to detect a distinctive flavor in it?

In May 2004, the medical officer's son came to Kunming with these old photos, which were later collectively exhibited with the theme of "Kunming in Colors, 1944" at the Yunnan

Provincial Museum. During the exhibition, a photo of the Yongfangyuan roast duck shop taken on the Jinbi Square struck a chord in the hearts of many elderly Kunming people. The traditional Kunming-style roast duck is roasted in an adobe oven. The duck is first applied with a layer of honey. Once roasted, it will obtain a brown color and a sweet flavor, with a crispy but not burnt skin and tender meat that is easily separated from the bones. When the Yongfangyuan shop owners' descendants recognized their family business in the photo, they excitedly brought the original plaque of the shop as an addition to the exhibition.

In the years following the exhibition, the medical officer's son has visited Kunming six more times. He made friends with many locals, including the famous Chinese explorer Jin Feibao, and caused Schenectady and Kunming to become friendship cities. The book *1945 US veterans' Kunming Impression*, with Jin Feibao acting as editor-in-chief, recorded in detail how this relationship was established. Today, the medical officer's grandson and great-grandson are also living in Kunming, becoming the witnesses to the China-US friendship.

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Two Flying Tigers veterans visited southwest China's Yunnan from November 2 to 4. As Yunnan people usually do, they treated the visiting American friends to a local delicacy known as rice noodles. One popular rice noodle dish is the "cross-bridge rice noodles". The connotations of this food are obvious, because a bridge is what links the world as well as the people in it, and the rice noodles, shaped like long threads, signify a long-standing friendship.

How the Hump air route opened up by the Flying Tigers in 1942 is associated with rice noodles is a beautiful story to tell. More than 80 years ago, Flying Tigers and Yunnan people were combating side by side. The China-US friendship forged over the Himalayas back then has extended till today from the sky to the ground, from diplomacy to local delicacies, and from official to people-to-people exchanges.



### Yunnan cuisine crosses mountains and oceans and links to the future

In recent years, not just Yunnan's local foods associated with Flying Tigers, but many of its other dishes have also been introduced to the US, enabling more Americans to savor the unique Yunnan flavor.

Geng Liheng is a native of Yunnan. In the 1980s, his father came to the U.S. and opened Yunnan Flavour Garden Inc. — a snack bar specializing in rice noodles — in Brooklyn, New York. A few years ago, Liheng also became an ambassador of Yunnan cuisine and opened a restaurant called "South of The Clouds" near the University of New York. Besides "cross-bridge rice noodles", the restaurant also serves other Yunnan dishes such as steamer chicken, tofu pudding and rice, and potatoes and rice in a copper pot. Compared with his father's restaurant, "South of The Clouds" is trendier and more stylish. It also offers some newly developed dishes mainly to attract young consumers.

Yunnan's unique culinary culture has bridged China and the U.S. This winter, when Flying Tiger veterans "came home" to Yunnan, the steaming hot rice noodles brought back to them the old days of their fighting side by side with Chinese people. At the 2023 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Informal Leaders' Meeting in San Francisco, the Chinese and U.S. heads of state once again held hands. China and the U.S. have worked together from the past to the present; they will continue to do so for a better future of the world.

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