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College students pose for photos with the national flag in front of a flowerbed in celebration of the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China in Beijing on September 23

Don't Turn Rights Wrong

It is a common practice among some Western politicians to criticize the state of human rights in China. Such politically motivated acts do not help promote human rights since they ignore the actual state of human rights in China and are intended to smear the country. People who have never been to China or mixed with Chinese people may be taken in, but those who have been to China or have knowledge of Chinese affairs will ignore the propaganda.

Commonly, human rights refer to the right to life and survival, as well as the ability to participate in political, economic, social and cultural activities. These basic rights can be further divided into the right to racial and ethnic equality, development, employment, religious belief and so on.

Before the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Chinese people suffered from invasion by imperialist powers as well as exploitation by feudalism and

bureaucratic capitalism that enabled the bureaucracy to plunder the economy. The Communist Party of China (CPC) fought to ensure that the Chinese people become the masters of their own country, with the guarantee of human rights for everyone.

Over the past 70 years, to respect and safeguard human rights has become part of the basic systems in China. It has been written into the country's Constitution, the CPC Constitution and key documents such as the



(Above) Primary school students learn the Tibetan script in Lhasa, southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region, in 1991; A computer class at a primary school in Lhasa in July 2019



National Human Rights Action Plan as a crucial principle guiding the Chinese Government on the governance of the country, and its importance has been recognized nationwide.

China is also a signatory to international social welfare pacts such as the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Convention on the Rights of Persons With Disabilities.

Turning a blind eye to the CPC's efforts to improve the livelihood and rights of the Chinese people and denying China's progress in human rights development will only trigger a backlash.

The right to life is the paramount human

right. If citizens' right to life is not guaranteed and they face, for instance, gun violence that claims lives almost every day, human rights become empty talk. The same thing also holds true when people don't have enough to eat and wear.

The Chinese Government puts the right to survival and development at the center of human rights. Development is the top priority since it is key to solving China's major problems. When people's living conditions improve, overall social welfare will improve too.

Seven decades ago, China was home to the largest impoverished population. From the start of reform and opening up in 1978 to 2016, over 700 million people were lifted out of poverty. The government is committed to eradicating the remnants of extreme poverty in the country by 2020.

China is the first developing country to achieve the UN Millennium Development Goal on poverty reduction, which has been recognized worldwide as the most outstanding achievement in its human rights development.

Today, the average life expectancy in China has risen from 67.8 in 1981 to 77, above the world average of 72. The community-level healthcare system covers both rural and urban areas, and there are Internet-based monitoring systems for infectious diseases and public health emergencies. People's right to a clean environment is better protected.

Some might argue that while economic growth brings better living conditions, the Chinese have no freedom of speech or assembly. This is a misunderstanding. The Chinese people's freedom of speech, assembly and communication, as well as their rights to vote and to be elected, property rights and a lot more are all guaranteed by the Constitution.

Some people criticize China's human rights scenario because they are actually opposed to the CPC. But the fact is that it is the CPC that has been pushing forward the human rights cause in China.

Today, the sense of human rights has taken root in Chinese minds and they are more aware of their own rights than ever before. Without the CPC's efforts, it would have been impossible for the human rights cause to make such progress in China.

Of course, there still remains a lot to be improved. But given time, human rights will make even greater headway. But probably even then, some people will continue to malign China's human rights situation since it is a political exercise for them, no matter what the truth is. **C**



By Lan Xinzhen



President Xi Jinping visits the Babusha Forest Farm in northwest China's Gansu Province on August 21

Passing on the Green Baton

Three generations of farmers in northwest China rally to turn desert into forest By Li Nan

August 21, 2019, will remain a memorable date in Guo Wangang's life. On that day, the 67-year-old farmer received a special guest at his "forest farm," an ecological initiative to prevent desertification. President Xi Jinping came for a visit.

"President Xi plowed the soil and built barriers with us to stabilize the sand," Guo told *Beijing Review*. "He also asked us about the quality of the drinking water and our income."

The Six Old Men

Guo's Babusha Forest Farm lies near the Tengger Desert in northwest China's

Gansu Province, the fourth largest desert in China. "We are ordinary farmers doing an ordinary job," he said.

Guo is modest. He is actually part of an extraordinary group of dedicated green warriors. Three generations of farmers from six families began rallying in the 1980s to green the Tengger. He is from the second generation of these families. Today, the third generation has joined in. In 38 years, the group has grown 40 million trees, pushing the desert back by 15 km.

Gulang, the county where the forest farm lies, is a key area for monitoring desertification. From the 1960s to the

1980s, it suffered severe desertification as the Tengger expanded rapidly, with sand dunes approaching Guo's village at a speed of 7.5 meters per year. Many locals left in the 1960s.

To combat desertification, the Three-North Shelter Forest Program was launched in 1978. Extending from the northeastern to the northwestern tip of the country, it covers more than 40 percent of land area that is prone to erosion and will continue till 2050.

Gulang is in its northwestern part. The locals were given incentives to join the program, which encouraged farmers to be productive in their output while maintaining a unified collective operation.

Subsidies were offered for anti-desertification work.

In 1981, Guo's father and five other villagers took a contract to green 5,000 hectare. Since their collective age was nearly 300 years, they came to be known as the Six Old Men.

What made them volunteer for such backbreaking work? "The desert had a big impact on our farmland and home. If we couldn't control it, our homes would not exist and we would not survive," Zhang Runyuan, one of the Six Old Men, told *Beijing Review*.

It needed enormous effort when they started. The saplings and even the water had to be transported into the desert on the back of donkeys. The only digging tool they had was the old-fashioned spade. None of the six knew anything about fighting desertification and almost 70 percent of the first batch of trees they planted were blown away.

The experience taught them that only the trees planted in grassy areas survived. So they learnt the first lesson: Stabilize the sand first with dry grass; then plant trees. Gradually, more saplings began to survive and there came a time when the once bleak desert was dotted with trees, bushes and grass.

A decade later, by 1991, a 2,800-hectare forest had sprung up. But while the desert turned green, the hair of the Six Old Men had become white. So they agreed that each family would contribute one member to take over the work. In the following years, four of the six passed away.

The turning point

Guo was the first in the second generation to join the green warriors in 1982 after his father fell ill. He had to leave his job in town to work on the farm and it slashed his income by one third.

"In the beginning, I was reluctant to give up my job since I had a family to feed," Guo said. Besides, life in the desert was tedious. He complained a lot and wanted to escape.

But a catastrophic sandstorm on May 5, 1993, changed his mind. On that afternoon, a sandstorm invaded Gulang when Guo was working on the farm. He was buried under sand and escaped death by a hair's breadth. However, 23 locals died in the storm. From that day, he stopped talking about leaving the farm.

From the early 1990s, sons and



Wang Zhiping and Guo Xi, the second and third generation of farmers respectively at the Babusha Forest Farm, inspect their forest from a watch tower on August 7

sons-in-law from the other five families took up their fathers' spades one by one and the second-generation band of six brothers was formed.

They adopted a more efficient way to stabilize the sand. "From the 1990s, we have been building straw barriers to stabilize the sand. The survival rate of trees planted in the barriers is higher," He Zhongqiang, one of the second generation, told *Beijing Review*.

By 2000, all the 5,000 hectare in Babusha had been afforested. The vegetation cover increased to 70 percent from less than 3 percent in the 1980s.

Guo was ambitious. He suggested taking up another desert area near their farm. "The government had rolled out its strategy to develop the western regions and I thought more preferential policies would be issued to fight against desertification," he said.

The western region development strategy was launched in 2000 to develop 12 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions. Gansu was one of them.

In 2009, the eco warriors founded Babusha Afforestation Co. to bid for more greening projects. "Besides managing four desertified areas in Gulang, we also reached out to the border of Gansu and Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region," Shi Yinshan, one of the second generation of green warriors, told *Beijing Review*.

Seven years later, new blood joined the group, starting with Guo Xi, the grand-

son of the Guo family. "When I was young, Babusha was my playground and I have fantastic memories of the place," the 34-year-old said. "I am willing to take over the baton and continue to expand the forest in the desert."

Babusha Afforestation also welcomed its first college graduate, Chen Shujun, as its technician. "I had heard the story of Babusha when I was young. I never thought one day I would be part of the story," Chen said.

The third generation bids for new projects on the Internet and plants trees with new technologies and machines.

Chen advised the company to bid for greening projects under the Ant Forest scheme. In 2016, Ant Forest was initiated by Alipay, the financial arm of Alibaba, China's biggest e-commerce player. Alipay users who act in an environment-friendly manner are rewarded with virtual energy for each such act. When they accumulate a certain amount of energy, Alipay plants a tree for the user in the desert. Usually, the trees are planted by local afforestation companies with funding from Alipay.

At the end of 2018, Babusha Afforestation received 10 million yuan (\$1.4 million) from Alipay to plant an Ant Forest. It amazed the second generation of eco warriors. "The college graduate is indeed a big help in our afforestation efforts," Wang Zhipeng, one of the second generation farmers, told *Beijing Review*.

Guo Xi, who is a motor mechanic, is ►►



Zhang Runyuan (right) and He Zhongqiang work on the Babusha Forest Farm on August 7

good at operating machines. Machines to dig and plant and other mechanized equipment have been introduced in Babusha and are operated by Guo Xi. "In the old days, my grandpa planted about 0.67 hectare per day. With a tree-planting machine, one can plant 3.33 to 4 hectare, 50 to 60 times faster than manual labor," Guo Xi told *Beijing Review*.

He is also making Babusha known to youngsters via social media. He shares videos about the farm on Kuaishou, a leading short video social platform in

China. The most popular videos get more than 200,000 views. "Babusha was a desert. Now it's green. I hope more people know about it," he said.

After nearly four decades of efforts, Gulang's environment has improved. "Today, the desert winds are fewer and less fierce. The annual rainfall has increased from 100 mm in the 1980s to 300 mm this year," Guo Wangang said.

What makes him proud is that those who fled Babusha are now moving back. Today, there are 24 more households.

"In the 1960s, we used to be driven away by the desert. Now the story is quite the reverse," he said.

Oasis against poverty

Planting drought-resistant vegetation in the desert, while it improves the environment, generates little income. How to fight desertification and poverty at the same time has long been a problem for the forest farm.

The biggest crisis erupted in the mid-1990s when the government adjusted its preferential policies and the subsidies to the farm stopped. One of its products, shrub twigs used for building mud houses in northwest China before the 1990s, fell out of favor.

In 1995, the farm was on the brink of bankruptcy. Guo Wangang, who headed the farm, thought of emergency measures like drilling a well and growing cash crops such as wheat, corn, watermelon and tomato. "The biggest hurdle was money. We needed nearly 300,000 yuan (\$41,859), an astronomical sum for farmers at that time," he said.

However, the local bank agreed to give them a loan. The six families contributed either money or labor, and became shareholders of the farm. Two years later, the farm revived.

It also turned to raising poultry. Last year, Guo Xi raised 5,000 chickens, bringing a net income of 200,000 yuan (\$27,922).

The farm is now creating jobs for the impoverished in the neighborhood. This year, it rented land from poor farmers in a nearby community and planted drought-resistant cash crops, including medicinal herbs and dates. The community residents were hired as farmhands during the busy seasons.

"We employed 3,000 people from neighboring communities to plant trees this spring. Everyone earned more than 3,000 yuan (\$418.8) in two months," Guo Wangang said. "We found a new way out of poverty by combining afforestation with agriculture and raising fowls."

"As President Xi says, clear water and lush mountains are invaluable assets," he said. "And we did it. Planting trees in the desert is not an easy task. But as long as we persist, there will be result." **CI**

Wisdom From History

At a special session of the China Development Forum in Beijing on September 7, participants reviewed the history of China-U.S. relations and drew lessons for the two countries to conquer current difficulties and move the relationship forward. Edited excerpts of their views follow:



Henry Kissinger, former U.S. Secretary of State and National Security Advisor:

China and the United States are the two countries with the greatest capacity in terms of their technology, political experience and history to influence the progress and peace of the world. They have a different history and a different culture so that the challenge of cooperating is very great. Having had the opportunity to participate in the Sino-American relationship for 40 years, I believe strongly that both countries have a duty to the peace and progress of the world, to find means of cooperation to solve the important problems they have before them.



Neil Bush, founder and Chairman of the George H.W. Bush Foundation for U.S.-China Relations:

The dynamic of China's impressive rise is clearly fueling American discomfort.

Central to the current low point in Sino-U.S. relations is the American question of whether China is a natural friend or foe of the U.S.

From my understanding of history, China has never used military or economic power to impose its will on another country, and I think it's useful to look at history as a predictor of future behavior.

The U.S. should embrace a George H.W. Bush style of leadership. This is an approach that wants to create and maintain multiple levels of frequent dialogue; seeks to build trust; puts the parties in the other guy's shoes; looks for the best in others; is respectful; and accounts for cultural differences.

The fear of China's growth posing a threat to the U.S., rising nationalism shown in [U.S. President Donald] Trump's "anti-immigrant, anti-Chinese, pro-America-First" rhetoric and the false premise that only a Western-style democracy can be a civilized player on the global stage are the three main contributors to the demonization of China in the U.S. The bottom line is that our system of government, our democracy, doesn't work for China, just as China's system doesn't work for the U.S.



Mark Brzezinski, former U.S. Ambassador to Sweden: The normalization [in relations] was achieved because a balance

was struck between American and Chinese imperatives.

I worry there is in the U.S. an industry around demonizing China, scaring U.S. business people away from a normal business environment.

However, in spite of the current trade dispute, Sino-U.S. relations will not break down in the short term given the growing interdependence between the two countries.

If the two sides embrace this interdependence, both will benefit. A failure to do so, however, will damage both China and the U.S.



Wang Boming, Editor in Chief of *Caijing* magazine: The People's Republic of China (PRC) and the United States made their first contacts during

the Geneva Conference in 1954, when the two countries, along with the Soviet Union, France and the UK, gathered for discussions on issues relating to Viet Nam and the Korean Peninsula. China and the U.S. conceived a mechanism for ambassador-level negotiations, which took place from 1955 to 1969 in Warsaw, Poland.

The 136 rounds of talks focused on just a handful of issues including the repatriation of prisoners of war during the Korean War and the Taiwan Straits.

When the Richard Nixon administration came to power in 1969, Nixon wanted to adjust U.S. policy toward China. During the 135th round, the United States expressed its intention to pursue a relaxation in bilateral relations. In the following round, China sent a formal invitation to the United States, which eventually led to Kissinger's 1971 secret visit and the 1972 signing of the Shanghai Communiqué.

Several observations can be made from this history. It was a great thing that China and the United States held 15 years of negotiations while their relations remained hostile. It is therefore imperative that they keep in touch and not give up communicating. Also, the 1955-69 talks played a key role in ending hostilities. It shows that all issues are open to negotiations.

Talks help avoid misjudgments and clarify each other's intentions. The Warsaw negotiations are an indication that China and the United States can find solutions through talks. I believe the two countries have the wisdom to deal with current problems.



Zhang Baijia, former deputy head of the Party History Research Office of the Communist Party of China Central Committee:

The establishment of diplomatic relations between the PRC and the United States in 1979 was an exciting and world-changing event. Despite twists and turns over the past 40 years, bilateral relations have grown closer than ever.

The China-U.S. relationship has a long history. It has been 235 years since the U.S. merchant ship *Empress of China* arrived in China for direct trade. But for most of the time up to 150 years, the two countries have been estranged. However, they became allies after the outbreak of the Pacific War in 1941. Their relations grew closer and both were highly confident and enthusiastic about the alliance. But the fact was it was plagued by many problems and lasted only five years. Confrontation and isolation ensued, followed by a détente from 1971 to 1978 and then 40 years of development. In fact, a study of the evolution of China-U.S. relations from estrangement to normalization and growth over the years may offer inspiration for us to overcome current difficulties.

Visionaries in China and the United States are willing to make efforts to improve bilateral relations. China for its part advocates continued cooperation with the United States and does not intend to challenge the U.S. status in the world. The decline in China-U.S. relations is to a large extent due to factors such as the U.S.-provoked trade friction. Future developments will convince an increasing number of people in the United States that China is not to blame for the various problems facing the United States and that mounting pressure on China is not conducive to solving U.S. problems but can only make them worse.

When there are major changes in circumstances, and conflicts arise in China-U.S. relations, the two countries should keep calm, exercise restraint and look forward. They should try their best to avoid escalation of tensions and in particular, prevent confrontation. More importantly, they should leave room for a turnaround regardless of the state of their relations. In a sense, the two countries got to know each other better through confrontation and maneuvering. The most crucial thing is to understand the limits of each other's power so that the two can do away with fears and build mutual confidence. Sound China-U.S. relations call for wisdom, creativity and, more importantly, courage to think outside the box. **C**

Violence Condemned

Hong Kong residents call for end of violence



Leung Chun-ying, Vice Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, speaks to reporters in Hong Kong on August 14. Leung urged Hong Kong residents to help bring radicals who blocked the airport and attacked a traveler and a reporter to justice

After protesters storming the Hong Kong International Airport on August 13 assaulted a reporter, scores of Hong Kong residents came to

visit the injured journalist at hospital the next day, voicing their support for his bravery and opposition to the escalating violence in Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR).

Fu Guohao, a journalist from *Global Times*, a Beijing-based newspaper, was seized by a group of masked protesters while covering the situation at the airport on August 13. He was assaulted and detained as protesters flooding the airport refused to let him and first-aid personnel go. He was finally rescued by the police.

During the demonstration, radicals

intensified their sit-in to massive blockades, causing chaos at one of the world's busiest airports. Most outbound flights were canceled as the airport terminal was occupied and travelers were prevented from departing.

A video clip showed Fu was besieged by a large group of protesters and later he was tied with his hands behind his head, slumped down on a luggage trolley and closely surrounded by a black-clad crowd.

"I support Hong Kong police. Now you can beat me," he told the black-clad crowd.

The video clip quickly went viral on the Internet and drew condemnation of the violence.

"He said what Hong Kong people

want to say. We remained silent for more than two months. People in Hong Kong need a peaceful and stable life, a better Hong Kong," Raymond Lam said.

Lam, 35, brought Fu fruits and mooncakes, the signature traditional dessert for the approaching Chinese Mid-autumn Festival which falls on September 13 this year.

He took leave from work and caught a one-and-a-half-hour ride to the Princess Margaret Hospital, a general hospital in south Kwai Chung, along with several friends.

"The gifts carry my wish that he recovers soon. I also want to tell him he has the support of so many Hong Kong people," Lam said. "The protesters crossed the line."



Fu Guohao, a journalist from *Global Times*, a Beijing-based newspaper, leaves Princess Margaret Hospital in Hong Kong on August 14

Lam said what the rioters did to Fu that night has trampled the bottom line of civilization and even showed elements of terrorism.

A citizen surnamed Lee wore a T-shirt printed with Fu's words and held a bouquet for him. "I think he is a hero. I am here to show support and I oppose the violent incidents by some young protesters in the name of freedom and democracy."

Many Hong Kong residents gathered outside the hospital, with some holding banners, calling for measures to punish the attackers, oppose violence and safeguard rule of law.

"I think he is a real man and I want to cheer him on," Dicky Yip said.

"We, all Chinese people, should have a

backbone like him," the 46-year-old said.

Yip, a tourist guide, said the escalating violence by the radical protesters has hurt Hong Kong's tourism industry. He has received no group tourists since July.

"The radical protesters are ignoring our livelihood. I hope the violence ends as soon as possible, giving us back a prosperous and beautiful Hong Kong," he said.

Fu, discharged from hospital on August 14, still looked pale and weak, with bruises on his face.

"I obeyed all the requirements for residents in Hong Kong and did not do anything illegal or disputable," the 28-year-old said during a brief interview at the hospital, with a bunch of flowers, a gift from visitors, in his hands.


"I should not be treated violently," he said.

"When I said I love Hong Kong at the airport, it was a natural response and I meant it," he added.

Like Fu, a traveler was also assaulted by protesters at the airport. The man fell unconscious and was sent to hospital on August 14.

A spokesperson of the HKSAR Government severely condemned these violent acts on August 14, saying they were outrageous and had overstepped the bottom line of a civilized society.

Hong Kong police will take relentless action to bring the perpetrators to justice, the spokesperson added.

This article was first published on the website of Xinhua News Agency 

Silver Lining In the Rust Belt

Fuyao Glass America brings jobs and hope to a U.S. Midwest town By Yu Shujun

Chuck Marr, 63, once the owner of a bar and grill in Dayton, Ohio, catering to General Motors (GM) employees, stopped making good money after GM closed its plant in 2009. But when Chinese company Fuyao Glass Industry Group, led by its Chairman Cao Dewang, bought the abandoned facility in 2014 and opened it for production, Marr applied for a job and began work in 2016 at an entry-level position.

"It (the starting wage) was much less than what we were used to making. But still, we're thankful for the jobs," Marr said.

What he likes about Fuyao Glass America is that wages are all performance-based, unlike at GM where it was based on seniority. "So the harder you work, the quicker you can advance and the more you can earn accordingly," said Marr, who has been promoted several times and is now a supervisor leading a group of 35 workers.

Thus, young workers are also attracted to the factory. "I've seen 21-year-old supervisors," Marr added. "Young people are moving up through the ranks and that's very unusual, especially in the automotive industry."

This part of the story in the recently released documentary *American Factory*, produced by Barack and Michelle Obama and streaming on Netflix, may be a reason why Fuyao, although experiencing cultural clashes, remains attractive to local people.

As for the work environment and safety issues, another cause of clashes between U.S. workers and Chinese managers raised in the film, Marr said, "The work environment has been greatly improving and they (the management) are identifying [safety] issues, and in a relatively short period of time, they've corrected many of them. We're moving in the right direction."

Fuyao's U.S. factory currently employs 2,400 people and with work opportunities created by its supply chains included, the total number of jobs associated with Fuyao in the U.S. amounts to 6,000, according to Jeff Liu, President and CEO of Fuyao Glass America.

In Moraine, a suburb of the Dayton metropolitan area with a population of only 6,400, Fuyao has not only won the trust of the local community but also

become a role model of Chinese investment in the area.

Substantial benefits

Mitch Heaton, Vice President of the Dayton Development Coalition, said Fuyao's contribution has been tremendous in terms of the number of employees it has hired.

"Generally, for every dollar spent [by Fuyao], seven [dollars] go to the community," Heaton said.

Niraj Antani, who represents the 42nd District in the Ohio House of Representatives, agreed that Fuyao's contribution is critical, explaining that not only is it employing local people, it is employing them at a good wage. Fuyao has made one wage increase in the past three years, he said.

"From a community perspective, you're talking about 2,400 families that are being supported. From a governmental perspective, that's also 2,400 new taxpayers," Antani said.

Fuyao invested more than \$600 million in its U.S. factory and started full-scale production in October 2016, with an annual capacity of 4.5 million sets of automotive glass and 4 million pieces of windshield glass, making it the world's single largest manufacturer of auto glass.

Fuyao Glass America turned loss into gain in the late half of 2017, recording a profit of \$754,500 for the year, according to Fuyao's financial report. In 2018, its net profit skyrocketed to 246 million yuan (\$35 million). Its growth momentum has continued this year, with its first half net profit increasing more than 16 percent year on year to 147.6 million yuan (\$21 million), despite its parent company's profit decline during the same period due to a slowdown in the auto industry.

Fuyao is thinking of reinvesting the profit locally. Liu believes its 17-percent market share in the U.S. can still grow by 10 percentage points.

Fostering culture

The documentary paints a bleak picture for manufacturing workers around the world with a final shot of a Fuyao manager telling Cao he's going to replace

four workers with the installation of a mechanical arm. It also states that up to 375 million workers globally will be affected by automation by 2030.

However, Fuyao is actually facing the challenge of losing its employees to turnover. Liu believes it's important for the company to build a great culture to keep its workers. "Turnover is going to kill the company," he said. "To keep employees longer means we will be more competitive."

Team building activities, travel to China rewards and hot meals that are mostly subsidized by the company are among the efforts, according to Liu.

In December 2017, the company established the Fuyao Glass America Hardship Fund, the first relief fund to provide financial assistance grants directly to its employees during times of hardship or disaster.

"I believe we're doing better than our competitors in terms of workload, benefits and bonuses," Liu said. "This could lead to our sustainable growth in the long run."

Marr plans to continue working at Fuyao well over 70 years old as long as he's in good health. "It's a better place to work," he said.

Jamie Hoskins, who formerly worked at a steel plant, joined Fuyao earlier this year because it offered better pay and he had heard great things about the management, training, the work environment and workers. "I feel like a part of the family already," Hoskins said.

Fuyao is also a good citizen in the community, Liu said. On July 20, about 100 of Fuyao's top executives and employees built the entire frame of one of the houses that the company is going to construct this year, which will be for a family of about five. The Heran Foundation, launched by Cao in 2017, committed \$50,000 to the project.

More Fuyaos wanted

Thanks to Fuyao, the Dayton area, the county of Montgomery and the state of Ohio are wooing more Chinese investments, in sharp contrast to the federal government's restrictive investment policies toward China amid an escalating

trade war.

Antani said they want to see more cooperation between Ohio and China. “The example of foreign direct investment, like Fuyao, is very important. It will show both of our national leaders what these relations can do for our countries.”

According to Antani, Ohio hopes to introduce investments in automobile, and general and agricultural manufacturing, which used to be the state’s strong suits. “With our workforce, tax climate, energy climate, etc., Ohio does very well for all businesses. We’re going to encourage Chinese businesses to invest here,” Antani said.

Phillip Parker, President and CEO of the Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce, said his organization really appreciates the investment that Fuyao and its chairman have made in the community, and looks forward to the possibility of future Chinese investments. “There can be a synergy that we’ve seen with other industries with other countries,” Parker said, citing an example of the large number of Japanese member companies in the organization.

Erik Collins, Community and Economic Development Director for Montgomery, said, “We’re excited about fostering and bringing more Chinese businesses to our community, and then of course, working with our local companies to do more work in China.”

Collins explained that the Dayton region has focused on making itself a business-friendly community and that his department will do its utmost as it works with local businesses to connect them with Chinese opportunities.

According to Collins, the county is doing a global report, profiling its connections in different countries, and China is among them. “I’m happy to say we are seeing more and more connections that we’re working on in China,” Collins said.

Heaton said he went to Fuyao’s headquarters in Fuqing, southeast China’s Fujian Province, in July and spent time with 11 companies throughout Fujian. His organization will also host a delegation from central China’s Hubei Province in September. **C**



A worker drives a forklift at the Fuyao Glass America factory in Moraine, Ohio



The Fuyao Glass America factory in Moraine, Ohio

Overcoming Barriers

Oscar-nominated American writer-director duo Steven Bognar and Julia Reichert's East-meets-West documentary *American Factory*, the first film produced by Barack and Michelle Obama's Higher Ground Productions, puts the spotlight on Fuyao Glass America, the auto glass maker that bought General Motors' abandoned plant in Dayton, Ohio, and started its own factory there in 2015. The documentary, which won the directing award for U.S. documentary at the 2019 Sundance Film Festival in February, follows workers' lives in the factory as the Chinese management and American workers struggled to overcome language barriers and cultural differences. At a pre-release screening of the film at Betaworks Studios, New York City, on August 5, the filmmakers talked about why they made the film and the reaction so far. An edited excerpt of the conversation follows:

What inspired you to make the film?

Julia Reichert (Director): We didn't think of any others when we started making this film, our hearts were with the blue-collar workers of Dayton, Ohio, because when the economy crashed, it was extremely frightening in our town. Thousands of workers lost their jobs, it was crushing and devastating. The bottom fell out of people's whole sense of who they were and their future.

So we kept following those people, people who learned to reinvent themselves. Dayton is our hometown. When the tectonic plates of the world were shifting economically, we had a piece of that right in our own hometown. So why did we need to go anywhere else to make a film? And why did we need to find other people? We already knew a lot of other people and we followed their lives.

Steven Bognar (Director): [When Fuyao Glass America arrived,] we pretty quickly realized there's a huge other story going on, and that the folks who came over from China were not going to see their kids for two years, landing in this weird little place called Dayton, Ohio. They have a big story as well.

And even the management folks, the American and Chinese leadership, they're trying to do something colossal on this site and really richly symbolic. And we realized that we don't speak Mandarin and need to build a team to tell the story. Jeff (Jeff Reichert, producer) joined us and then we met two Chinese filmmakers who joined the team. They became full

producers and co-producers and were in Ohio every month with us, spending time with all the Chinese community of this factory because we realized we're going to try to make a film where the points of view shift. You are going through the experience of the assembly line and the leadership and their frustrations and the Chinese experience and the American experience. What we were trying to do was to put everyone in these multiple points of view and stir it around.

How did you get unlimited access to the factory?

Julia Reichert: Imagine an American company, a big company like that, allowing in two independent filmmakers with all their people for three years. Will that happen? Probably not. So I have to give credit to the chairman [of Fuyao Glass, Cao Dewang]. He bought that plant because it was an iconic American plant and he wanted to bring life back to our community. He had good intentions and I think some of the things that happened have to do with cultures not understanding each other. That caused lots of hard feelings and a sense of lack of respect on the part of workers. It's just different management styles, different teaching styles, different work styles.

Jeff Reichert (Producer): Getting the access was not the hardest part, it was the maintenance of the access. Gaining the trust and continually working. Over the three years we met with the chairman every time he was in Dayton and I think

a lot of the interviews were not really always about what's going on at the plant. Julia and the chairman really created a relationship, [they are] about the same age. They've got these great conversations about their lives reflecting back and looking at the past.

I think that led to us being able to get more things inside the plant but also being invited to China. We were really surprised that if you ask people from Beijing or Shanghai what Fuqing (Fuyao Glass's China headquarters) is like, they say it is a really small town. But it's 10 times the size of Dayton and way more urban and way more modern. And that totally threw me for a loop when we arrived there because I thought we were going to go to the village essentially. But it was not.

How has the film been received so far among the Fuyao Glass staff?

Julia Reichert: They were very generous about it. We were surprised. We were kind of shaking in our boots in the office of Jeff Liu, CEO of Fuyao Glass America. But he said, "Wow, we learned so much from your film. In a way we made mistakes and we should correct them. And we want our Chinese management, all of them, to see this film." So it was really amazing.

Steven Bognar: And then the chairman finally saw it just a month ago (July) and he also had a real generosity of spirit about it. He didn't love everything in the film, obviously, but they have been great about it so far. It's hard to imagine an American corporation having that same



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Inside the Fuyao Glass America factory in Dayton, Ohio, on July 27

gratitude. I feel like the chairman is very much a maverick. He's in the latter parts of his career. He trusts his own gut a lot more than he worries about what's proper or not.

How did this film become part of Barack and Michelle Obama's Higher Ground Productions?

Jeff Reichert: They were interested in the kind of the story that was told. Michelle's father used to work in factories, so it was made for her on that level. The former president of the United States, he's obviously interested in workers, the future of work. Even though this is not necessarily an optimistic story, it's a complicated story. I think they were interested in its

complexities and all the different kinds of things that we were able to show in the space of one place.

Julia Reichert: I think our former president saw lots of policy implications as well as personal stories of everyday Americans.

Chinese investment in the U.S. was rising: Chinese entrepreneurs buying shuttered American factories. You guys might not be as aware of it because it's all over the Midwest and the South. If you look up textile in South Carolina where all of our companies left 20 years ago, guess who bought them? Chinese folks. There are 24 or 25 Chinese-owned textile factories in South Carolina. There are factories all over Alabama, Tennessee, Michigan,

which are bought by Chinese. It's a reality.

Steven Bognar: But it also dropped off suddenly after the election.

At the end of the discussion, the panelists agreed that learning how to work with global cultures is the only way to get the work done. But they also reminded the audience that one third of the population is at a high risk of having their jobs greatly disrupted by automation. The ones who would be hurt most in the face of automation, job loss and low wages are people already making the least. And in the U.S., that refers to mostly African Americans. They called for doubling down on efforts to train workers and give them education. **CI**