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The new liberal arts need to be developed to dismantle the barriers of traditional disciplines and proceed with integration.

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It is necessary to clarify the classification, significance, timeline, connotation, extension, and disciplinary attribution of Silk Road literature before expanding its study.



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#### Yang Jiang's plays

Yang Jiang's plays feature cynical view of human affairs and satire on the world steeped in obsessive materialism.



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## Reshaping value chain key to dual circulation

By WANG GUANGLU

NANJING—Reshaping China's status in the global value chain is important to facilitating the country's new development pattern of "dual circulation," according to a symposium in early November.

The new development pattern smooths domestic circulation and lets domestic and international circulations reinforce each other.

"The key to unblocking domestic circulation lies in reform of the factor market and improvement of the market economy system. The promotion of dual circulation requires us to actively improve the industrial chain and enhance our position in the value chain," said Chen Shiyi, a professor from the School of Economics at Fudan University. Factor market reform is an important guarantee for the vitality of enterprises, which can boost market confidence and promote economic recovery. In addition, it is necessary to activate the government's role, and develop domestic trade based on the domestic market.

Chen also suggested making use of the advantages of Asian regional trade to promote the construction of an Asian free trade zone, facilitating service trade.

Ma Hong, an associate professor from Tsinghua SEM, said that empirical research demonstrates that comprehensive opening up and consumer goods tariff reduction policies have significantly reduced the prices of imported consumer goods in China, increased the number and types of imported



Aerial photo taken on Nov. 19 shows a view of the Qinzhou Port in south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. The port saw its cargo throughput between January and October rise to 112 million tonnes, a 15.4% year-on-year increase. Photo: Zhang Ailin/XINHUA

consumer goods, and effectively reduced retail prices of similar domestic products through enhanced competition. All this has improved consumption levels and welfare of residents. As such, further opening up is beneficial to boosting domestic demand and domestic circulation.

Huang Jianzhong, a professor from the School of International Economics and Trade at Shanghai University of International Business and Economics, said that on the demand side, China's position in the Asia-Pacific production network must be stabilized, and on the supply side, it is necessary to strengthen the stable support from Belt and Road construction. As the service industry's proportion of the GDP continues to increase, opening up the service industry and service trade liberalization have become the most urgent structural reform needs.

Chinese enterprises should

more actively integrate themselves into the division of labor system within the global value chain and actively participate in international economic and trade governance, suggested Lyu Yue, a professor from the School of International Trade and Economics at the University of International Business and Economics.

"In the construction of dual circulation, it is necessary to embed in the global value chain of developed countries and lead the construction of regional global value chains, so as to better shape China's international competitive advantage," said Zhang Yabin, a professor from the School of Economics and Trade at Hunan University.

The key to reconstructing the global value chain and facilitating the new development pattern is to make use of China's advantages as a major country, deepening the domestic division of labor to partially replace the international

division of labor, and seeking to expand the international division of labor by strengthening the domestic division of labor, Zhang continued. To activate the domestic market not only concerns the final product market, but also the intermediate product market. What is open is not only the commodity market, but also the factor market.

Li Xiaoping, a professor from the Economics School at Zhongnan University of Economics and Law, said that the domestic value-added rate of China's manufacturing exports has a long way to go. Compared with the international circulation, the domestic circulation has a more significant impact on changes in the domestic value-added rate. China's manufacturing industry should fully seize the opportunity brought by the new development pattern, increase the value-added, and enhance competitiveness.

Innovation is an important source of economic growth, said Huang Xinfei, a professor from the International School of Business and Finance at Sun Yat-sen University. Under the background of "stabilizing foreign trade and foreign investment" and building the new development pattern of dual circulation, it is very important to understand the relationship between trade frictions and corporate innovation. Enterprises should pay attention to boosting their own innovation capacity, and form core competitiveness through innovation to resist the risk of de-globalization caused by trade frictions.

## Are humanities facing crisis?

By WANG YOURAN

Student demand for degrees in the humanities has been in decline for some years, both in the US and in the UK. The graduate labor market has been more precarious since the 2008 financial crisis, which caused students to switch to what they consider to be more marketable subjects.

In fact, STEM and social science degrees are not necessarily more marketable than a degree in the humanities, noted Peter Mandler, a professor of Modern Cultural History at the University of Cambridge. The evidence is that employers want highly educated, flexible, and trainable graduates, regardless of the subjects they studied at university. The humani-

ties inform us on the range of human experience, around the world, through the ages, and in many different cultural forms, thus helping improve employability.

The humanities offer a means to ground oneself, in a way that's spiritually nurturing and that fosters solidarity, said Eric Bennett, a professor of English at Providence College.

According to Michael Bérubé, a professor of literature at Pennsylvania State University, the biggest challenge now facing the humanities is that many people don't understand why we need new humanities research. They think of the humanities only as the study of great texts, historical monuments, and artifacts of the past. As such, we need to make the case for an

ongoing need to reinterpret our shared human heritage and to apply the tools of critical thinking to contemporary issues.

Steve Fuller, a professor of sociology at the University of Warwick, observed that people receive information from sources which often contradict one another, so they are forced to decide for themselves what to believe. This is a natural development in the democratization of knowledge. Nevertheless, it poses serious problems for the legitimization of the humanities. An education in the humanities tells people what to believe and desire, but now people are questioning this.

Robert Frodeman, a professor of philosophy at the University of North Texas, said that the

humanities will face a grim funding situation in the aftermath of COVID-19. They need to make a massive shift toward societal relevance and practical effects on the world.

The humanities help explain to us, often in subjective and individual terms, what it meant and what it felt like to live in a certain place and time, Bérubé said. The value of the humanities lies very much in their commitment to theorizing "value" itself: What do we value and why? What are the forms that "valuing" takes? These are enduring questions. We need to keep developing critical thinking skills, discernment and reflection. The advent of social media makes it hard to distinguish reality from disinformation, and truth from lies. The humanities provide the tools which help us discern correctly.

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