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Common prosperity

To achieve common prosperity for everyone by 2035, alleviating relative poverty is an important component.

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Low-carbon living

Practice-oriented carbon reduction strategies have broad application prospects in reducing carbon emissions in daily lives and mitigating global climate change.



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Youth spirit

How literature and art should depict the youth of today and how they can learn from past experience is worthy of further reflection and discussion.



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Silk Road

The Han Empire was in direct contact with Central Asia, West Asia, and the South Asian subcontinent, which maintained the smooth flow of the western section of the Silk Road.



Contacts
Tel: 0086-10-85886198
Fax: 0086-10-85886198
Email: csst@cass.org.cn

Address: 11-12 Floor, Tower 1
No. 15 Guanghua Road
Beijing 100026
P. R. China

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B&R advances over past eight years

By GAO YING

On Sept. 7, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) hosted an international seminar to commemorate the 8th anniversary of the Belt and Road (B&R) initiative in Beijing. At the seminar, *Handbook of the Belt and Road (2020)* was launched.

Development over eight years

During his visits to Central and South Asian countries on Sept. 7 and Oct. 3, 2013, respectively, Chinese President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, proposed to jointly build the "Silk Road Economic Belt" and "21st Century Maritime Silk Road," said CASS President Xie Fuzhan. This has started a new journey for China to open up at a higher level and promote common prosperity and development in the world. After eight years of hard work, the foundation has been laid for jointly building the B&R. It has now entered a stage of high-quality development of implementation and fulfillment.

Xie pointed out that B&R construction focuses on the common development and prosperity of all countries. It is a visible and substantive measure that has brought tangible benefits to countries and regions along the route.

The practical results of the past eight years have fully demonstrated that the B&R initiative conforms to the trend of the times, the law of development, and the interests of



On Sept. 7, CASS hosts an international seminar to commemorate the 8th anniversary of the Belt and Road initiative. Photo: Zhu Gaolei/CSST

the people of all countries, and has broad prospects, Xie noted.

At the same time, the high-quality development of the B&R still faces many new situations, problems, and challenges, Xie continued. "It requires us to firm up direction and confidence, and constantly transform difficulties and challenges into opportunities and motivation for greater development."

The B&R initiative not only involves economic cooperation, but is also an important method for improving the global development model and global governance, and promote the healthy development of economic globalization, said CASS Vice President Wang Lingui. It conforms to the inherent requirements of reforming the global governance system, and reflects the desire of all countries, especially developing countries, to promote peace and seek development.

Today's world is increasingly closely connected, and mankind is increasingly becoming a community with a shared future. Just as any country or region must seek its own

economic and social development, no country or region can develop independently in a state of being separated from each other. Globalization is thus indispensable for them, said CASS Member Cai Fang.

"Connectivity is both the core of globalization and the shortcoming of the global value chain," Cai continued. Connectivity needs to be improved through the construction of cross-regional infrastructure. The reason why B&R construction has received a positive and widespread response is that the initiative itself and its implementation have responded to the actual needs of globalization and the development of related countries.

Updated B&R handbook

Published by China Social Sciences Press, *Handbook of the Belt and Road* shares the perspective of the theory and practice of the Belt and Road. It showcases the B&R's original intentions and principles, history and current situation, and also basic knowledge and latest studies.

Since its first edition in 2018,

Handbook of the Belt and Road has been updated and has been translated into more than ten languages, including English, German, Hungarian, and Arabic. *Handbook of the Belt and Road (2020)* has a total of 155 entries, 38 more entries than the 2018 edition, reflecting the latest progress of B&R theory development, practical exploration, and experience summary.

The handbook not only provides an important reference and research basis for Chinese scholars to study the B&R, but more importantly, it interprets China's development concepts and policy ideas and other issues contained in the B&R initiative, concluded Gong Xiaosheng, former special envoy of the Chinese Government on the Middle East issue.

At the seminar, China Social Sciences Press and Routledge officially signed a contract for the publication and distribution of the handbook's 2020 edition.

Jeremy North, managing director for books publishing at Taylor & Francis, said in his video speech that the international situation of late has increasingly highlighted the need for international cooperation, and the need for infrastructure for the supply and transportation of goods. The modern world needs interconnection, and in particular, sustained investment, to meet ever evolving challenges. *Handbook of the Belt and Road* provides authoritative guidance on solving these problems, and will help us jointly deal with the new challenges facing the world today.

Int'l scholars discuss ecoaesthetics

By ZHANG QINGLI

At a webinar on August 28 and 29, international experts shed light on research paradigms of ecoaesthetics, which studies the aesthetic relationship between man and nature, society, and art from the ecological perspective.

The webinar, organized by Shandong University, was themed "Development of Ecoaesthetics in the Post-Pandemic Era."

Since its birth in the 1980s, Chinese ecoaesthetics has become one of the most promising branches of aesthetics in the country. Zeng Fanren, one of the founders of contemporary Chinese ecoaesthetics, and a professor from the Center for Literary Theory and Aesthetics of Shandong University, said that ecoaesthetics is a new type of aesthetics in the era of ecological civilization. China's ecological progress has propelled

and supported ecological civilization theory and Chinese ecoaesthetics.

"The ecological wisdom contained in China's classical philosophy is a unique advantage for the country to develop ecoaesthetics, and it provides abundant theoretical resources for the current construction of the Chinese discourse system of ecoaesthetics," noted Hu Youfeng, also a professor from the Center for Literary Theory and Aesthetics of Shandong University. To construct ecoaesthetics, it is also necessary to continuously enhance international exchanges, and enhance the communication and mutual interpretation between Chinese and Western ecoaesthetics.

Cheng Xiangzhan, deputy dean of the School of Literature at Shandong University, said that Chinese ecoaesthetics clearly proposes that human existence is a kind of "ecological existence," and "ecoaesthet-

ics" is regarded as a key word.

At present, the field of ecoaesthetics sees three pillars: Chinese ecoaesthetics, European phenomenological aesthetics, and British and American analytical aesthetics.

Most Western scholars advocate "environmental aesthetics" more. Arnold Berleant, an emeritus professor from Long Island University in the United States, explained that the dualistic approach to inquiry in Western cultural traditions creates the inclination to study the environment objectively. However, the fact is that the environment is not the object of our exclusion, and human beings themselves constitute an active part of the environment.

The study of Chinese ecoaesthetics has received more attention from Western scholars in recent years. In *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, the entry "Environmental Aesthetics," first published

in 2007 and substantively revised in 2019, quoted several Chinese scholars' research. This shows that contemporary Chinese ecoaesthetics research has emerged in the international academic community.

We should be wary of falling into Western "ecocentrism" after rejecting "anthropocentrism." Chen Maolin, a professor at the School of International Studies at Hangzhou Normal University, argued that with the deepening ecological crisis, the shortcomings of ecocriticism in the West have been increasingly exposed. Its ideological foundation, ecocentrism, cuts off the relationship between man and nature and neglects the social nature of man. The cultural critique of anthropocentrism cuts off the relationship between nature and society and weakens the realistic concerns of ecological issues. In addition, the scope of the text is narrow and formal research is weak, undermining the explanatory power of the theory.

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