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XI'S VISION | THE WISDOM OF WATER

Xi taps China's deep wisdom for global good

President's water metaphors highlight how inclusiveness drives prosperity

By ZHAO JIA zhaojia@chinadaily.com.cn

In early winter, the emerald mountains of Dujiangyan in Chengdu, the capital of Southwest China's Sichuan province, are mirrored in the waters coursing through channels built more than two millennia ago.

During a visit to the historic Dujiangyan irrigation system — the world's only ancient irrigation project still in operation today — President Xi Jinping and French President Emmanuel Macron, accompanied by their spouses, strolled along the waterways that stand as enduring symbols of human ingenuity and harmony with nature.

Xi told Macron during the visit earlier this month that Dujiangyan embodies the Chinese spirit of self-reliance, resilience and pioneering courage. "Every time I come to Dujiangyan, I can deeply feel the greatness of our ancestors in adapting to local conditions, following the natural course, achieving harmony between humanity and nature, and harnessing water resources for the benefit of the people," Xi said. "From this, I draw wisdom for state governance."

Scholars have noted that the Dujiangyan irrigation system reflects profound strands of traditional Chinese thinking.

Wang Huiyao, founder and president of the Beijing-based think tank Center for China and Globalization, said the irrigation system embodies principles such as adapting to local conditions and guiding water in accordance with its natural momentum.

"Its techniques, such as deepening the riverbed and lowering the weir, illustrate the value of leveraging natural forces and making decisions in harmony with the environment," Wang said. A weir is a low barrier in a stream or river to control water flow.

"Applied to the contemporary world, these ideas continue to offer meaningful insights: The trend of the world resembles a mighty tide, and recognizing and following the trend is essential for any country seeking long-term success," Wang said.

Wang emphasized that just as Dujiangyan channels water to nourish the Chengdu Plain, China's openness and inclusiveness can energize the world economy,

stabilize the global flow of goods, capital and talent, and allow more countries to share in common prosperity. "In this sense, the world may move closer to becoming a global 'Land of Abundance', highlighting the contemporary relevance of Chinese wisdom," he said.

Profound symbolism

The wisdom of water runs deep in Chinese culture. In 2014, at a welcoming banquet during the 22nd APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in Beijing, held at the National Aquatics Center, known as the Water Cube, Xi noted that water carries profound symbolism in Chinese civilization.

Quoting Lao Tzu, the ancient Chinese philosopher — "The highest good is like water, which benefits all things without contending" — Xi expressed the hope that the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum member economies, linked by the waters of the Pacific Ocean, would work together for peace, development, prosperity and progress in the Asia-Pacific region.

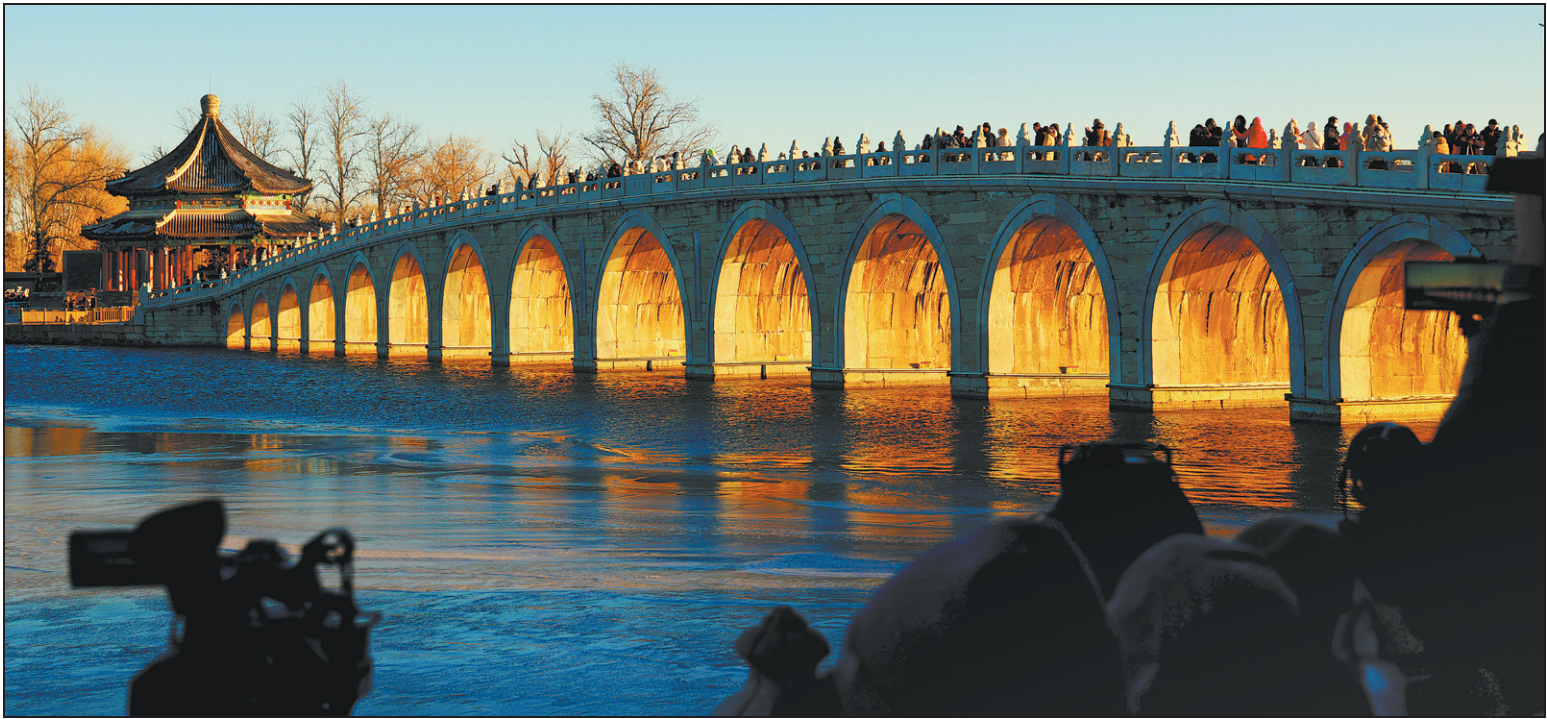
Xi has frequently employed water metaphors on international occasions to articulate China's development philosophy and global vision. These metaphors convey a cooperative approach grounded in openness, inclusiveness, mutual benefit and win-win outcomes.

At the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference in 2015, he cited a Chinese proverb — "When big rivers have water, the small ones are filled; and when small rivers have water, the big ones are filled"— urging the abandonment of zero-sum thinking in favor of common development.

When underscoring inclusiveness in global governance, Xi often quotes sayings such as "the ocean is vast because it admits all rivers", advocating mutual learning among civilizations, democracy in international relations, and universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization.

In a 2014 speech at the Kober Foundation in Germany, Xi cited another saying by Lao Tzu that "a big country should be like the lower reaches of a river," symbolizing that a big country should be as inclusive as the lower reaches of a river that admit numerous tributaries.

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Winter Solstice widely observed

Above: People visit the 17-Arch Bridge, with the sunset's glow shining through its arches, at the Summer Palace in Beijing on Saturday. The annual optical marvel occurs around Winter Solstice, the shortest day of the year, which fell on Sunday this year. Winter Solstice denotes the beginning of deep winter and a break from farming in traditional agricultural society in Chinese culture.

NIU YUNGANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Left: Volunteers prepare dumplings for front-line workers in Rongcheng, Shandong province, on Saturday, ahead of Winter Solstice. Northern China has maintained the tradition of eating dumplings on this day, while people in southern China eat tangyuan (glutinous rice balls).

LI XINJUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Chinese web literature grows overseas

By ZHENG ZHENG in Shanghai zhengzheng@chinadaily.com.cn

China's online literature has achieved unprecedented global reach, with Latin American markets emerging as key growth drivers and young creators reshaping the landscape, according to international writers and industry experts.

The transformation is evidenced by the sector's overseas revenue reaching 4.815 billion yuan (\$683.8 million) in 2024, marking a 10.68 percent year-on-year increase. The industry's total revenue hit 49.55 billion yuan, continuing its third consecutive year of accelerated growth, according to the 2025 China Online Literature Overseas Trend Report, which was released on Thursday during the 4th Shanghai International Online Literature Week.

"Web novels have evolved from a niche interest to a mainstream phenomenon in Western pop culture," said Barisbi Alborov, a Russian writer known professionally as Guiltythree.

Hou Xiaonan, CEO and president of Chinese online publishing company Yuewen Group, noted that online literature has evolved beyond initial global co-creation.

"Three foundational pillars are established: a global user network, a worldwide creative ecosystem and a cross-cultural interactive community," he said. "These elements are transforming online literature from a China-based IP source into a next-generation global IP powerhouse."

The company's international

platform, WebNovel, now connects nearly 400 million readers with 530,000 writers worldwide, yielding over 820,000 original works. More than 538 titles have surpassed 10 million reads each.

Latin America has emerged as a robust growth market, with nine of WebNovel's top 10 countries for monthly active user growth coming from the region.

"Latin American audiences are increasingly embracing Chinese media, with a strong emphasis on quality," said Mexican author Daniel Dominguez, known by the pen name Dago, who highlighted the region's growing appetite for Asian content.

"While incorporating Chinese elements, I focused on making them accessible to Western readers through familiar storytelling conventions," he added. "My aim is to create a bridge for readers new to Chinese fantasy, potentially leading them to explore more common and traditional works."

The platform's demographic data shows that half of WebNovel's contracted authors were born after 2000, with authors born after 2005 showing a 55.9 percent year-on-year increase.

Artificial intelligence-powered translation has enhanced content accessibility, according to the report. WebNovel added more than 10,000 AI-translated works in 2025, and it now offers content in multiple languages, including recent additions in Thai, Korean, Filipino and Turkish.

The industry has also ventured

into tourism partnerships, with The Unruly Immortals becoming the first Chinese web literature property featured at Universal Studios Singapore. A collaboration between The King's Avatar and Switzerland Tourism attracted over 10,000 visitors to the European destination through themed promotions.

The 4th Shanghai International Online Literature Week also featured an award ceremony for the WebNovel Spirit Awards 2025, which saw participation from over 100 countries and regions and recorded a 58 percent increase in submissions.

New award categories included book of the year and comic adaptation, with winning works being considered for diverse adaptations including comics, audiobooks and short dramas.

Over half of the award winners were born after 1995, representing diverse nationalities. Nigerian author Esther Akande, who uses the pen name Lilac Everglade, was born in 2003 and is winner of the WebNovel Spirit highly praised reader favorite award for Hades' Cursed Luna, emphasized the importance of connecting with young readers.

"People of my age demand constant excitement. Every single chapter must resonate with Gen Z readers through compelling narratives and emotional authenticity," she said.



Online

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AI TO PLAY KEY ROLE IN REVVING UP INDUSTRIAL UPGRADES

Application of high tech in various fields to accelerate next year, experts and execs say

By FAN FEIFEI fanfeifei@chinadaily.com.cn

Fast-evolving artificial intelligence is poised to play a pivotal role in bolstering industrial upgrades, helping China build new growth drivers and injecting strong momentum into high-quality economic growth, experts and company executives said.



The technology's application across various fields will accelerate in 2026, the first year of the country's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period, they predicted.

AI serves as an essential tool in nurturing new quality productive forces and is spearheading a new round of scientific and technological revolution, they said. The country's vast market, technological prowess and thriving innovation ecosystem underpin its capacity to move cutting-edge technology from research labs into the industrial arena.

China is at the forefront of the development and application of AI technology, while the multimodal large language models, or LLMs, which possess the ability to process and generate content across multiple modalities, including text, images, audio and video — will lead the further development of the AI industry, they added.

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Migratory birds gather at the Lhalu Wetland National Nature Reserve in Lhasa, the capital of Southwest China's Xizang autonomous region, on Dec 9, with the Potala Palace towering in the background. KUNGA LESANG / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Highest urban wetland a world model

By PALDEN NYIMA and DAQJIONG in Lhasa

As the sun bathed the Potala Palace in golden light on Saturday morning in Lhasa, the capital of Southwest China's Xizang autonomous region, it also set the nearby Lhalu wetland shimmering.

In this typically tranquil realm, wildlife moves in harmony with nature. On open ground near a gate, bar-headed geese gathered with scores of other birds for their accustomed morning ritual: feeding on the highland barley scattered by wildlife conservationists.

Yet on this particular day, the scene was different: The place bustled with activity as crowds gathered — not for barley, but for celebration of the fact that the Lhalu Wetland National Nature Reserve had been officially confirmed on Saturday as the "highest urban natural wetland" by the World Record Certification Agency.

The festive air, featuring music and a Tibetan Opera performance as a highlight, brought together a diverse crowd. Representatives from government ecology departments, wetland guardians, schoolchildren and certifying officials all joined the celebration.

Presided over by the Potala Palace and clearly visible across the water, the Lhalu wetland is nestled in the heart of Lhasa. Often called the "Lungs of Lhasa", the wetland highlights China's achievements in high-altitude environmental protection and serves as a global model of sustainable conservation.

Covering 12.2 square kilometers at an average altitude of 3,649 meters above sea level, the wetland is a rare ecological gem in the heart of the urban area of Lhasa and a vital habitat for diverse wildlife.

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