**Three bridges linking China and Serbia**

Chinese newspaper for the young reporter Xu Hui 18.6.2016.

"Between China and the Republic of Serbia there are three bridges," this conclusion is made by Katarina, the director of the China Center of John Naisbitt University when interviewed by our reporter. Katarina was actually thinking of the bridge in the old Yugoslav film, the "Chinese Bridge" which was built in Belgrade by a Chinese company, as well as the competition "Chinese Bridge" which is very popular in Serbia.

**The film "Bridge" a symbol of the traditional friendship between China and Serbia**

When you mention Serbia, all Chinese people immediately think of the old Yugoslav film from the70s last century called "The Bridge". This film and its theme song "Bella Ciao"[[1]](#footnote-1) represent to several generations of Chinese a communist classic.

In Serbia everyone knows Velimir Bata Zivojivic called "Bata". Bata in the film Bridge successfully played the role of a partisan leader named Tiger, and the role of Walter in the film about Sarajevo, as well as many other roles and characters. On 22nd May this year, Bata died in Belgrade, which re-awakened the memories of our two countries.

Dr Natasa who now works as a professor of Chinese at the Chinese University Center of John Naisbitt University, in the past did the studies in China for 7 years. Although only once in her life she met Bata, at that meeting she realized how Bata lived China. Natasa told told the reporter that Bata visited China more than 10 times, each time he was very happy to have the opportunity to stay in China, he felt at home. He proudly told Natasha that during the previous visit of Chinese President Li Xiannian in 1984, as soon as he landed in Belgrade the first question to the president of Yugoslavia was: "Where is Walter," and was immediately taken to the interior of Serbia where Bata was filming to meet Bata.

Even today, when Chinese tourists arrive to Belgrade, they first visit the restaurant in the center called "Walter" and there try to find on the posters the scenes from the movie of a great hero. John Naisbitt University where Natasa works each year enrolls more than 10 Chinese students who learn the Serbian language. "Oh, my friend, goodbye," is a song which have to be performed during the ceremony of awarding diploma, while Chinese and Serbian students do the program together, while the chorus and the audience cry.

**"Chinese Bridge": the example of practical cooperation between China and Serbia**

On 18.12.2014 the construction of the bridge "Zemun-Borca" over the Danube was successfully completed. It has been the largest bridge built across the Danube in the last 70 years. Many locals called it "Chinese Bridge".

The director of the China Center of John Naisbitt University for our newspaper stated that a large bridge "Zemun-Borca" is the result of friendship and cooperation between the two countries. This is the first project of building a large bridge on the soil of Europe by a Chinese company. During the construction Chinese equipment was used, but it also largely caused an increase in employment at the local level, so that this project encouraged the development of Serbian economy. This bridge has become one of the key roads of Belgrade traffic, it made transportation easier between the two banks of the Danube. This bridge is not just a project that has provided mutual benefit to China and Serbia, but is beneficial for the whole of Central Europe and symbolizes the bridge of friendship and spiritual communication between Chinese and Serbian peoples.

Katarina emphasizes that the "Chinese Bridge" is a positive example of practical cooperation between Serbia and China. At present, China and Serbia co-operate in the fields of infrastructure, energy, industry, telecommunications, and a lot more important new projects are expected in the future which will further expand cooperation in trade and investment. There will be more such "bridges" that connect the economies of two countries in the future.

**Chinese Bridge: the link of the cultural exchange between China and Serbia**

Although Serbia is 10,000 li away from China, sympathy of Serbian people towards the Chinese traditionally exist. Natasa who has long been engaged in the study of Chinese language and lecture told the reporter that how she decided to start learning Chinese. Natasa's grandfather was once a member of the Communist Party, so in her childhood he often talked about Japanese resistance to aggressors and the building of the country. Unfortunately, her grandfather died, and he never had the opportunity to visit China. When Natasa wanted to enroll a college, she was sure she wanted to choose the Chinese language and literature, and this is in some way a gesture of remembrance and gratitude to her grandfather. After graduating from the Chinese Department of the University of Belgrade, Natasa went to Beijing Pedagogical University to continue her training in order to finally do there PhD in ancient Chinese philosophy. Natasa says that along with the expanding her knowledge, more and more she admires the richness of the Chinese language, traditional culture and philosophical thought, and increasingly enjoys the challenges of Chinese language studies.

The director of the Chinese Center of John Naisbitt University told the reporter that in recent years, with the development of the deepening of Chinese-Serbian strategic partnership more and more young people in Serbia has a growing interest in the study of Chinese language and culture. Katarina explains that the Chinese center of the biggest and oldest private university in Central and Eastern Europe - John Naisbitt University, was founded in 2012 with the aim of teaching Chinese and by rich cultural events get Chinese language and culture closer and deepen exchanges and cooperation between the two countries in the academic, cultural and politico economic field. So far, over 400 students and citizens have attended online courses of Chinese language, and over 10 students got the chance to go to China. This university each year educates more than 10 Chinese students.

Natasa that cares of Chinese and Serbian students said that Serbian and Chinese students learn from each other useful things, help each other, and quickly become inseparable friends. In this way these young people become ambassadors of Serbia-China friendship and promoters of cultural exchanges between the two countries.

1. in Chinese translated as "Oh, my friend, goodbye." [↑](#footnote-ref-1)