



“Achievements and prospects of humanities exchanges between China and Iran since 1979”

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ABSTRACT

China and Iran are both world-class ancient civilizations, and the cultural exchanges between the two countries have a long history, lasting more than 2000 years. Since the Islamic revolution led by Khomeini successfully established the Islamic Republic in 1979, the friendly relations between the two countries have developed continuously, and humanities exchanges have become an important part of the friendly relations between the two countries. Based on a brief review of the tradition of humanities exchanges in the history of the two countries, this paper makes a diachronic review and investigation of the development course, present situation, achievements, characteristics and existing problems of the contemporary humanities exchanges between China and Iran since 1979, and puts forward the prospect of the future planning of humanities exchanges in the “the Belt and Road Initiative” jointly built by the two countries.

I. Introduction

Humanities exchange is an important part of cultural diplomacy between friendly countries in contemporary international relations. Especially in today's globalization, the value of humanities exchange between countries has been highlighted again. Academic circles have a rich interpretation of "humanities communication". The representative views are as follows: humanities exchange is mainly through rich and colorful humanities exchanges between countries, aiming at promoting people-to-people communication, equal exchanges, mutual learning and mutual learning, and sharing beauty and beauty (Liu Hongwu, & Lin Chen, 2020). Humanities exchanges include official and non-governmental cultural exchanges, covering culture, education, science and technology, art, sports, religion, tourism, academic research, press and publication, radio, film and television, non-governmental exchanges and other fields (Ding Jun, & Chen Jin, 2018). Communication is a kind of flexible power and an irreplaceable social practice. It can lay a profound public opinion foundation for the orderly development of relations between countries (Institute of International Studies, Fudan University, 2015). It is an important cornerstone for human beings to build relationships such as value identification and political trust, and it covers education, science and technology, culture, religion, tourism and other dimensions (Liu Baocun, & Fu Chunhua, 2018).

We believe that Humanities exchange between countries mainly refers to all cultural exchange activities that take people as carriers and cross national boundaries at different times. Cultural exchange activities, which cover both official and non-governmental dimensions, including politics, economy, culture, religion, education, sports, art, tourism, film and television, etc., belong to the category of public diplomacy activities and are characterized by various forms and channels. Extensive humanities exchanges between countries are conducive to the realization of "friendship and empathy between people", which is also the cultural project of "empathy among people" advocated in the "the Belt and Road Initiative",

and is conducive to building a common future community of mankind. On the basis of briefly combing the definition of "humanities exchange" in academic circles and reviewing the general situation of humanities exchange between China and Iran in history, this paper probes into the development course, main achievements, existing problems and relevant countermeasures and suggestions of humanities exchange between China and Iran since 1979, so as to serve the healthy development of friendly relations between China and Iran at present and in the future.

II. The General situation of humanities exchanges between China and Iran in ancient times

China and Iran (called "Persia" before 1935) are located at the east and west ends of Asia. There are two ancient civilizations in the world, both with a long history and splendid culture. Because of the ancient Silk Road on land and at sea, they are closely connected with each other. We have all made outstanding contributions to the development and prosperity of world civilization. According to Chinese historical records, as early as the 1st century AD, in the 9th year of the Eastern Han Dynasty and Emperor Yongyuan (AD 97), Gan Ying, as Ban Chao's deputy envoy to Daqin (Roman Empire), transited and visited the country of Anxi (namely Iran), and the rest king ordered 20,000 cavalry to greet him. The reception ceremony was very grand. Gan Ying's trip to the western Regions opened up the Silk Road, which is the communication line between China and Rome via Iran. Since then, through this long-standing international traffic artery, the economic and humanities exchanges between the Chinese and Iranian peoples have enjoyed a favorable time and place, and the ancient civilizations of both countries have been fully exchanged and blended. The people of the two countries appreciate each other's cultures, learn from each other, learn from each other, absorb each other and appreciate each other. Friendly exchanges have become the main axis of the nearly 2,000-year history of relations between the two peoples (Zhang Tiewei, 1981).

“The Silk Road” not only promoted trade between the two countries, but also became an important link of humanities exchanges between China and Iran. The humanities exchanges and inheritance have made the relations between the two countries last for a long time. During the Han and Tang Dynasties, Iranian dances, acrobatics, musical instruments, music, painting, sculpture, pattern design, etc. Were first introduced into China, which had a considerable influence on Chinese arts and crafts (Gao Zhanfu, 2003). Deeply loved by the Chinese people. Since then, many Persian envoys have visited China several times during the Eastern Han Dynasty and the Southern and Northern Dynasties in China. After the 7th century, the communication between China and Iran reached its peak during the Tang and Song dynasties in China. Many Iranians went to China to study, practice medicine and do business, and they have traveled all over Xi-an, Guangzhou and other places. Persian merchants went to China's coastal cities of Guangzhou, Quanzhou, Yangzhou and other places to engage in business and trade, and bring Islam into China (Qi Dongfang, 2003). During the Abbasi Dynasty, the caliphate Islamic missionary group was sent to China to spread religion. Since then, the official and non-governmental exchanges between China and Iran, which took Islam as a link, have existed and developed for a long time (Ding Jun, 2016). During the Yuan Dynasty, Sayyid Shams Din 'Umar (1211-1279) was a Persian politician. He was originally from Bukhara, the capital of Samanid Dynasty (Sulala Samaniyya) in Central Asia. He was the first official (chief executive) of Yunnan Province. During his reign, he united and led the people of all ethnic groups in Yunnan, made outstanding contributions to the development and construction of Yunnan, and was deeply loved and remembered by the people of all ethnic groups.

In the 13th century, the famous Persian poet Sadi (1208-1291) recorded his travels in Kashgar, Xinjiang, China with beautiful poems. His representative works <Orchard> and <Rose Garden> spread in China during the Yuan and Ming Dynasties. Other famous Iranian literary

works include the Complete Works of <Hafez's Lyrics>, <Malawi's Complete Works>, <Bai Ruji>, <Roudaki's Poems>, and <Kings' Complete Works>, which have 18 volumes, and are called “Persian Classic Library” in China. Jia Mi's poetry collection Spring Garden (1414-1492) has also been translated and introduced to China, which was quite popular among the people. According to the historical records, many libraries in China still keep more than 13,000 Persian manuscripts (M.Daftari, 1996). These historical materials have laid a foundation for Chinese scholars to deepen Iran's studies, and at the same time provided convenience for Chinese people to deepen their understanding of Iran.

At the beginning of 15th century, Zheng He, a navigator and diplomat of the Ming Dynasty, led a huge fleet to make seven ocean voyages, three of which arrived at Hulhum (now Hormuz) in southern Persia. During this period, Ming Chengzu and the Sahara Prince of Iran sent a huge delegation of 300 and 500 people to visit each other. In 1516, Seid Ali Akbar Khatai, who is a famous Persian traveler, wrote a book “<Journey to China>”(Khatay nameh) after traveling to many places in China. In the book, he recorded in detail the development of agriculture, economy, currency, schools, academies, religion and other aspects in the early Ming Dynasty in China, which became valuable historical materials and evidence of friendly exchanges between China and Iran. “the combination of silk from China and Iran's superb craftsmanship has made the Persian silk carpet noble; The combination of “Su Ma Li Qing” from Iran and China's superb craftsmanship has made blue and white porcelain elegant (Xi Jinping, 2016). China's lacquerware, pottery, paper making, metallurgy, printing, gunpowder and other technologies have spread to the westernmost part of Asia and even to Europe and other further places through Iran. Good horses, alfalfa, pomegranates, grapes, olives, minerals, as well as glass, gold and silver utensils, were introduced into China from Iran and Europe(Xi Jinping, 2016; Wang Weixing, 2018).” “Camels smell each other, and boats look at each other. Along the land and sea silk

roads stretching for thousands of kilometers, the two civilizations went hand in hand and embraced each other. The two peoples went hand in hand and became good friends (Xi Jinping, 2016).^As an important country of Iran's "Maritime Silk Road", Persians were once the major participants in maritime trade. At that time, as the main port on the Indian Ocean route, Iranian Port of Bandar Abbas played an important role in the development of Sino-Western exchanges (Du Linze, 2016). Maintaining the long-term orderly development of trade and humanities exchanges between China and Iran. It can be seen that for a long time in history, the peaceful development of China and Iran and the harmony and friendship between the people have been the main melody of the relations between the two countries.

Since modern times, the friendly relations between China and Iran have been developing continuously. On June 1, 1920, Chinese Ambassador to Italy Wang Guangqi and Iranian Ambassador to Italy Issa signed <the Sino-Polish friendship treaty> in Rome. This treaty is the first equality treaty signed between China and West Asian countries, and it is the best testimony of Sino-Iranian friendship. According to the treaty, Iran established its first consulate in Shanghai in 1933, and established a legation in Chongqing, the capital of the National Government during the Anti-Japanese War, in 1944. In the same year, it was promoted to an embassy. The former Minister Saeed Ali Narge was promoted to ambassador, and later Jawad Godimi was appointed as the Chargé d'affaires in Nanjing. Since then, the relationship between the two countries have maintained a stable and orderly development, and humanities exchanges have been close. In the early 1930s, Kunming Mingde Middle School in Yunnan successively sent Muslim students such as Ma Jian, Na Zhong and Na Xun to Egypt and other Middle Eastern countries to study abroad. After returning to China, they translated and introduced many classic works of Islamic history and literature to China, such as <The General History of the Arabs>, <An overview of Arabic literature>, <The Arabian Nights> (Tales from the thousand and one nights), the <Qur'an>

translated by Ma Jian, etc (Rudi Matthee, & Nikki Keddie, 2008). These books and materials have greatly enhanced the Chinese people's understanding of the Islamic world in the Middle East and laid a solid foundation for promoting the exchanges and interactions between Chinese and Iranian peoples.

III. The development process and major achievements of humanities exchanges between China and Iran since 1979.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, China and Iran embarked on completely different paths of development. After World War II, the Iranian Pahlavi Dynasty was forced by the domestic and international situation, joined the western countries headed by the United States, maintained diplomatic relations with Taiwan Province, and rejected the new people's power (Chen Junhua, & Yang Xingli, 2009). In 1971, Princess Ashraf, sister of Iranian King Reza Khan, and Fatima, the daughter of Reza Khan, visited China successively, and were received by Premier Zhou Enlai. Sino-Iranian relations ushered in a turning point. China and Iran formally established diplomatic relations on August 16th, 1971. On June 14-17, 1973, Chinese Foreign Minister Ji Pengfei paid a state visit to Iran. In September, 1974, Iranian Minister of Art and Culture visited China, and held an exhibition of Chinese painting, arts and crafts and architecture at Tehran University, Iran. In November, 1977, the Chinese and Iranian mountaineering teams decided to climb Mount Everest in Tehran together. From 29 to 31 August 1978, President Hua Guofeng paid a state visit to Iran. In February 1979, Ayatollah Khomeini led the Iranian people to overthrow the Pahlavi dynasty and establish the regime of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Since then, the humanities exchanges between China and Iran have developed and advancing in an orderly manner for a long time.

(I) humanities exchanges and major achievements between China and Iran in 1979-1999

Non-governmental and humanities exchanges between China and Iran have a long

history, which is rich and diverse (Yao Jide, The chief editor, 2008). China's reform and opening-up in 1978 and Iran's Islamic Revolution in 1979 took place one after another, and the humanities exchanges between China and Iran once again ushered in a new stage, with in-depth cooperation in various fields. After the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979, leaders such as Mustafawi, chairman of the Islamic Cultural Liaison Organization of Iran, and Ali Riza Alafi, chairman of the International Islamic Studies Center of Iran, visited China successively, and had exchanges and talks with relevant leaders of the Chinese Islamic Association (Yang Xingli, & Ji Kaiyun, 2013; Hai Yonglong, & Ma Ruiqiang, 2007). In 1983, China and Iran signed a cultural agreement and an annual cultural cooperation plan, which advocated that the exchanges and cooperation between the two countries in the humanities field should be institutionalized day by day, and international students should be sent to each other's countries to study and exchange. This plan continues to this day. In 1985, a Chinese economic delegation visited Iran. In June of the same year, Iran's Speaker Rafsanjani led a delegation to pay a return visit to China, and was received by Deng Xiaoping (Hua Liming, 2010). In order to offer suggestions for the increasingly frequent exchanges between China and Iran, and tap the potential of cooperation between the two countries, domestic colleges and universities began to set up Iranian research institutes. In 1985, Southwest University set up an Iranian research center, which focused on the research of Sino-Iranian relations, Iranian humanities and history, and regularly published the research results. <The Blue Book of Iran> covers many sections such as politics, history, culture and humanities exchanges, and comprehensively broadens the domestic academic circles' understanding of Iran. On May 5th, 1990, Peking University established the Iranian Culture Research Institute, and held an academic seminar on "The Present Situation and Planning of Chinese Iranian Culture Research" from May 6 to 7 (Lin Zhifei, 1990). The research topics of the institute covered Iranian language, literature,

history, culture, art and sociology, etc (M.Daftari, 1996).

At the same time, the official and non-governmental organizations of China and Iran also gone hand in hand to jointly promote the deepening of humanities exchanges between the two countries. In 1989, Iran's supreme leader Khomeini announced that Isfahan and Xi 'an became "sister cities" during his state visit to China (M.Daftari, 1996). In May, 1989, the cultural departments of the two countries exchanged visits. In addition, the exchanges between the two countries in the fields of books, archaeology, acrobatics, etc. Have shown a blowout trend, and Chinese films have also appeared at Tehran Film Festival and Iran's "Dawning Ten Days" International Film Festival (Ding Jun, & Chen Jin, 2018). In July and October 1991, then Chinese President Yang Shangkun and Premier Li Peng paid a state visit to Iran. In September, 1992, Iranian President Rafsanjani paid a return visit to China, and frequent high-level visits between the two sides created an unprecedented positive atmosphere for humanities exchanges between China and Iran. In June, 1993, China and Iran signed an "exchange program" in the fields of culture, science and education, aiming at promoting the cooperative research and exchange of Persian and Chinese between experts, scholars and people from all walks of life in China and Iran (M.Daftari, 1996). In January, 1994, Chinese Vice Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs Qian Qichen paid a visit to Iran. During the 20 years from the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979 to 1999, there were frequent high-level visits between China and Iran, and the interaction and interactions of folk culture were promoted in an orderly manner.

(II) Humanities exchanges and major achievements between China and Iran from 2000 to 2021.

(1) Public diplomacy has laid a solid foundation for humanities exchanges between China and Iran.

Since the 21st century, high-level exchanges between China and Iran have been frequent, political mutual trust has been

constantly strengthened, and humanities exchanges and cooperation have entered a period of rapid development. In 2000, Iranian President Khatami visited Peking University during his visit to China, and personally awarded the Medal of Honor to Chinese scholars engaged in the teaching and research of Farsi language and literature. In 2002, Chinese President Jiang Zemin visited Iran, and Chinese and Iranian heads of state spoke highly of the “civilized dialogue” between the two sides. President Khatami and President Jiang Zemin successfully exchanged visits, which laid a solid foundation for the development of Sino-Iranian relations in the new century (Gao Fayuan, *The chief editor*, 2004). As an important country along China's “the Belt and Road Initiative”, in recent years, the two countries have actively carried out the exploration and practice of mutual learning between civilizations, and humanities exchanges have developed rapidly. In November 2013, Dong Wei, Vice Minister of Culture of China, led a cultural representative of the Chinese government to visit Iran, and signed <the Memorandum of Understanding on the Establishment of Cultural Centers between China and Iran with the Iranian side>, which aims to build an open platform for the two peoples to get to know each other's cultures.

It's worth mentioning that, Iran is an important fulcrum country along the “the Belt and Road Initiative”. In recent years, the two countries have actively carried out the exploration and practice of mutual learning among civilizations, and humanities exchanges have developed rapidly (Ding Jun, & Chen Jin, 2018), and made a series of remarkable achievements. In January, 2016, Chinese President Xi Jinping paid a state visit to Iran. The establishment of a comprehensive strategic partnership between China and Iran has enhanced political mutual trust and opened a new historical process of humanities exchanges between the two sides. The heads of state of China and Iran have reached important consensus on strengthening exchanges and cooperation in the humanities (Ding Jun, & Chen Jin, 2018). On the occasion of his state visit to Iran, President Xi Jinping published a signed article in Iran's Iranian newspaper, stating: "Different countries, nations

and civilizations should adhere to exchanges and mutual learning and live in harmony. Both Chinese and Iranian cultures have their own strengths. In the long-term friendly exchanges, the Chinese and Iranian people learn from each other and learn from each other. We should strengthen exchanges in the fields of culture, education, journalism, publishing, tourism, etc., encourage exchanges between young people and students, let the spirit of the Silk Road be passed on from generation to generation, and let the hearts of the two peoples join hand (Xi Jinping, 2016). During the visiting, China and Iran issued the Joint Statement of the People's Republic of China and the Islamic Republic of Iran on Establishing a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in Tehran. In the joint statement, it was once again emphasized that the humanities exchanges and cooperation between China and Iran will be deepened. China and Iran share many similarities in history and cooperation, and advocate exchanges in tourism, health, sports and other fields, and increased cooperation in higher education, exchange of international students, and transfer of new technologies.

On June 9-10, 2018, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani attended the 18th meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Qingdao, China, paid a working visit to China, and had cordial talks with President Xi Jinping. During this period, the two heads of state once again stressed that they would continue to deepen humanities exchanges and cooperation between the two countries with the goal of enhancing Sino-Iranian friendship. The exchange of visits and humanities exchanges between the two heads of state has undoubtedly narrowed the distance between the Iranian people and the Chinese people and created a good atmosphere for the development of bilateral relations. On July 15th, 2018, at the invitation of the Culture Committee of the Iranian Parliament, Ye Xiaowen, deputy director of the Culture, History and Learning Committee of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, visited Iran. Mr. Ye Xiaowen met with Mr. Mazani, Chairman of the Culture Committee of the Iranian Parliament, and Mr. Masoodi, Vice Chairman, and had a dialogue with Mr. Haidarian, Deputy Director of the Department of Culture and Islamic Instruction. The two sides expressed the hope to further strengthen the

exchanges and cooperation between China and Iran in the cultural and humanistic fields (Ye Xiaowen, 2018).

(2) Academic exchange have expanded the theoretical consensus of humanities exchange between China and Iran.

At the same time that the Chinese Academy of Higher Research has set up a professional institution specializing in Iranian studies, academic exchange seminars on deepening the understanding between the two countries are frequently held in several university research institutes. In March, 2004, Yunnan University, Teheran University, Ferdowsi University and Razavi University of Iran jointly held the “First International Symposium on the Research of the Sayyid Shams Din’Umar”. More than ten scholars from relevant Iranian universities attended the symposium and discussed with more than 50 experts and scholars from China, Japan and the United States. During the period of 2004-2006, Yunnan University carried out teacher-student exchanges with Iranian Teheran University and Ferdowsi University. In March, 2006, the Iranian Studies Center of Yunnan University, which was jointly established by the Cultural Office of the Iranian Embassy in China and Yunnan University, was established. In August, 2008, the Confucius Institute at Tehran University was officially listed. Hanban and Yunnan University of China appointed Professor Yao Jide, director of the Iranian Studies Center of Yunnan University, as the first Chinese president of the Confucius Institute at Tehran University, and went to Iran to set up the Confucius Institute at Tehran University to start teaching Chinese. The establishment of Confucius Institute in Tehran University has opened a new era of humanities exchanges between China and Iran. Since its establishment, it has been operating well and has become an important institution for all circles in Iran to learn Chinese and Chinese culture.

In 2012, Northwest University set up a specialized research institution-Iran Research Center, which belongs to the Middle East Institute, and is mainly devoted to the research of religion, nationality, history, China-Iran

international relations and so on. Up to now, West Asia and Africa Institute of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Iran Studies Center of Shanghai International Studies University, Iran Studies Center of Yunnan University, Iran Studies Center of School of History and Culture of Southwest University, Iran Studies Center of Beijing Foreign Studies University, Iran Studies Center of Henan Normal University, Iran Research Office of Shanghai Institute of International Studies, and Iran Culture Research Center of Xi-an International Studies University have been set up one after another (Rudi Matthee, & Nikki Keddie, 2008). China's eight academic institutions for Iranian studies have been set up one after another (Yang Xingli, 2010). which not only further promoting academic exchanges between China and Iran, but also deepen mutual understanding between the two countries and form a benign academic interaction.

On October 15-16, 2013, a seminar on “History and Reality of China-Iran Relations” sponsored by West Asia and Africa Institute of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and The Islamic Cultural Liaison Office of Iran Organization was jointly held in Beijing. Chinese and Iranian scholars conducted in-depth exchanges and discussions on history, culture, education, tourism and China-Iran relations. On November 8-9, 2014, the Foreign Liaison Bureau of the Ministry of Culture and Shanghai International Studies University jointly hosted an academic seminar “China and Iran: humanities exchanges on the Silk Road”, and nearly 20 experts and scholars from Iran, China, Germany, Japan and other countries gathered together. Scholars take history as the main axis, and comprehensively reviewed the development of humanities exchanges and commercial cooperation between China and Iran in history (Qiu Yihao, 2016). Summarize the historical experience, and put forward some constructive suggestions for the future cooperation and exchanges between China and Iran in the fields of economy and culture.

On October 30th, 2017, the “International Confucianism Forum-Dialogue between Chinese Civilization and Iranian Civilization”, co-

sponsored by international Confucian Association, Tabatabai University of Iran and Beijing Foreign Studies University, was held in Tehran. The theme of the conference focused on the communication and enlightenment between the ancient Silk Road and Chinese and Iranian civilization, the comparative study between Chinese Confucianism and ancient Iranian ethics, the analysis of Sino-Iranian cultural and technological exchanges mechanism, the development status of Iranian literature and Persian in China, the background and significance of China's "the Belt and Road Initiative", and the discussion of China-Iran cooperation under the background of "the Belt and Road Initiative"(Ding Jun, & Chen Jin, 2018).

On April 20-22, 2018, the 3rd International Academic Conference on Dialogue between Hui (Islamic) and Confucianism, jointly sponsored by Yunnan University and Mustafa International University in Iran and hosted by Iran Research Center of Yunnan University, was held in Kunming. The theme of this conference was "Rationality, Justice and New Order of International Relations in Islamic and Confucian Civilizations", and more than 60 scholars from China and Iran attended the [conference \(Yunnan University Information Network, 2018\)](#). The leaders of both sides highly affirmed the outstanding achievements made by the close cooperation between the two universities in the fields of teaching and scientific research for a long time, and hoped that the two universities would consolidate, inherit, develop and face the future. From November 23 to 24, 2018, an academic seminar on China-Iran relations from the perspective of "the Belt and Road Initiative" was jointly sponsored by China Middle East Institute and National and Regional Research Institute of Anhui University, and jointly sponsored by West Asia and North Africa Research Center of Anhui University and National Iranian Research Group of Institute of World History of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. On April 14th, 2019, the unveiling ceremony of China Research Center jointly established by Shanghai International Studies University and Tabatabai University of Iran was held in Tehran. According to the agreement, Shanghai International Studies

University will also set up an Iranian research center, and the research institutions will devote themselves to introducing the cultures of their respective countries and provide a platform for scholars of the two universities to conduct research, cooperation and exchanges. In March, 2021, Abbas Ali Wafay, Cultural Counselor of the Iranian Ambassador to China, said in an interview with the Iranian National News Agency that with the continuous development of Sino-Iranian relations, the total number of Iranian students studying in China has increased to more than 3,000. Twenty Iranian studies research centers have been set up successively, and 14 Chinese colleges and universities have offered Persian majors.

(3) The mechanism construction enriches the connotation of communication.

To promote the friendship and cooperation between the Chinese and the Iranian people, the China-Iran Friendship Exchange Association was established in December 2008, and is affiliated to the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries. Wang Meng, who is the former minister of culture, served as honorary president, while Chen Haosu, then president of the All-China Friendship Association, also served as president of the China-Iran Friendship Association. Since its establishment, the China-Iran Friendship Association has held several seminars on China - Iran relations and academic achievement promotion conferences, and held a reception to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Iran in 2011. In 2012, the Sino-Iranian Cultural Joint Committee was established to make overall plans for humanities exchanges and cooperation in the fields of culture, education, sports, science and technology between the two countries. On August 12, 2019, President of Iran-China Friendship Association, Achard al-hamdi, visited China again. During the talks with M'Hamdi, Li Xiaolin, president of China-Iran Friendship Association, once again pointed out that he would persist in non-governmental friendly exchanges and look forward to the annual friendly exchange mechanism playing a

greater role and opening up more cooperation projects between the two countries. Hamdi also expressed the hope to continuously strengthen cooperation with the All-China Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries in the fields of culture, youth education and so on, and consolidate and develop the mechanism of the annual meeting (Tu Lili, 2019). On September 16th, 2019, Chinese Ambassador to Iran Chang Hua met with Ntezomi, Deputy Minister of Iranian Culture and Islamic Guidance. Both sides unanimously hoped to further strengthen cooperation in film and television, enhance mutual understanding between the two peoples, broaden the fields of humanities exchanges and cooperation, promote people-to-people communication between the two countries, and constantly build the foundation of China-Iran comprehensive strategic partnership.

(4) Multimedia has promoted the mutual learning of humanistic spirit between the two countries.

In order to increase China's understanding of Iran, experts and scholars engaged in Iran studies in the Cultural Office of the Iranian Embassy in China have organized the translation and publication of a number of literature works, including “<Hormuz in Yuan and Ming Literature>” written by Dr. Ralph Kautz, Department of Sinology, Phillips University, Marburg, Germany, and Dr. Rod Ritchie Ptak, Institute of East Asian Studies, University of Munich. Based on the first-hand documents that recorded the political, economic and cultural relations between China and the “Western Regions” during the Yuan and Ming Dynasties in China, especially the nautical log and nautical charts of Zheng He, a navigator in the early Ming Dynasty, and combined with the research results of western biologists, this book made an incisive textual research and interpretation of this important history of international relations (Ralph Kautz, & Rodrich Ptak, 2007).

At the same time, China cooperated closely with Iranian media, and organized and compiled many books and movies that introduced Chinese history and customs, which increased Iranian people's understanding of China. During the

Iranian New Year's “Nurouz” Festival in March, 2009, the large-scale documentary “The Sun, the Great Wall and the East”, which was filmed in China by China Central Television and Iranian State television from October to November, 2007, was officially broadcast continuously on Iranian State Television 1 every Friday afternoon in prime time. This documentary completely and vividly showed the historical position of humanities exchanges between China and Iran on the Silk Road since ancient times. In 2011, the Confucius Institute at Tehran University in Iran was entrusted by Hanban of China to organize experts from China and Iran to translate and complete three important series, namely, <General Knowledge of Chinese History>, <General Knowledge of Chinese Geography> and <General Knowledge of Chinese Culture>, in which General Knowledge of Chinese Geography and General Knowledge of Chinese Culture have been funded and published by Hanban of China. This series mainly focuses on introducing Chinese history, geography and cultural knowledge.

In 2011, Chinese <Tao Te Ching> was translated into Persian by the researcher of Bai Zhisuo Institute of the Cultural Office of the Iranian Embassy in China and published in Ningxia People's Publishing House, aiming at introducing Chinese traditional culture to the Iranian people. The publication of this book is undoubtedly of great practical significance for enhancing the cognition and communication between the Chinese and Iranian people and deepening the humanities exchanges between the two countries. In addition, the historical materials related to Iran studies include Studies on Contemporary Iranian Human Geography and Studies on Language Policy and Practice in Middle Eastern Countries published by the Iran Studies Center of Southwest University. These books detail the history, geography, religion, language, politics and economy of Iran. Furthermore, there is the “<Blue Book of Iran>” compiled and published by the Iran Studies Center of Southwest University. The Blue Book is a collection of essays with the theme of the latest development trend of Iran's national politics, economy, foreign policy and ethnic

relations. This book is published once a year, focusing on the follow-up study of Iran, and deepening the domestic knowledge and understanding of Iran.

In 2014, programs such as “Pearl of the Orient” and “Return to the Silk Road” jointly produced by China and Iran were broadcast in Iran one after another, which became an important window for people to understand China. In August, 2015, the China Philharmonic Orchestra's “Silk Road” tour was a complete success in Tehran, the capital of Iran. At the same time, cultural, educational, think tank and library groups of the two countries frequently visit each other ([Xinhua News Agency, 2016](#)). The frequency and scale of people-to-people humanities exchanges between China and Iran are also increasing year by year.

On September 18-25, 2017, the Chinese Culture Festival-Chinese Folk Music Evening was held in Tehran Music Museum. The exchange was hosted by the Chinese Embassy in Iran, and organized by China Federation of Literary and Art Circles, China Film Association, Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, Tehran TV Tower Cultural Center, Isfahan University, Iranian Islamic Republic News Agency and other institutions. More than 300 people from all walks of life in China and Iran attended, aiming at promoting mutual reference and blending of traditional folk music between the two countries, and creating humanistic cooperation. In order to implement the consensus of the two heads of state on strengthening humanities exchanges, in August 2016, China held a comprehensive humanities exchanges activity of “Perception of China-China's Western Culture in Iran and Xinjiang” in Tehran. The activity lasted for 7 days, and covered cultural forums, song and dance performances, photo exhibitions, clothing displays and musical instrument performances.

(5) The epidemic crisis has condensed the role of China-Iran humanities exchanges ties.

On February 25th, 2020, the Chinese Embassy in Iran and Chinese-funded enterprises in Iran donated 250,000 COVID-19 epidemic prevention masks to the Iranian Ministry of Health.

Chang Hua, Chinese ambassador to Iran, met with Zabib, who is assistant to the Iranian Foreign Ministry, and discussed the concerns of epidemic prevention and control in China and Iran. In addition, in order to help Iran fight the COVID-19 epidemic, China has provided Iran with anti-epidemic materials, and sent a team of health experts as volunteers. China and Iran joined forces to fight the epidemic. Iran's Tehran Times and other mainstream newspapers have repeatedly published many articles about support and encouragement from Iranian politicians and ordinary people to China. The Chinese and Iranian people are sincere friends who share weal and woe. Ambassador Chang Hua has published signed articles in Iran many times, calling for support for the Chinese and Iranian people to fight the epidemic and build good relations. On April 29th, 2020, China and Iran jointly held a video seminar on “Iran, China and the World under the COVID-19 Epidemic”. A number of experts and scholars from China and Iran attended the seminar and expressed their respective opinions on related issue. During the epidemic period, academic seminars and exchange activities such as online friendship between Chinese and Iranian peoples were held many times, and the results were remarkable.

Looking back at the history of exchanges between China and Iran, we know that since the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Iran, the relations between the two countries have been relatively stable, and many fields, such as politics, economy, diplomacy and humanities exchanges, have made in-depth development, all of which are progressing in an orderly way. The past humanities exchanges between China and Iran have achieved gratifying and fruitful results, and the two peoples will continue to maintain this pure friendship, and further deepening and expanding the depth and breadth of humanities exchanges. At the same time, we must have such a clear understanding. With the deepening of globalization, the development of humanities exchanges between China and Iran in the future will be the coexistence of opportunities and challenges. The two peoples should trust each other, understand each other and help each other, maintain the strategic strength of sustained friendship between the two peoples, further

promote humanities exchanges and further consolidate the friendship foundation between the two peoples.

IV. Characteristics of humanities exchanges between China and Iran

(1) The ancient Maritime Silk Road is an important link for humanities exchanges between China and Iran.

The first is the rise of the Arab Empire. The Umayyad Dynasty and the Abbasi Dynasty initiated by Arabs blocked the land silk road in order to monopolize the land silk road and gain huge trade. Many merchants in Persia, China and Europe have to find new ways to continue the trade between the East and the West, which highlighted the importance of the Maritime Silk Road. Secondly, the development of Chinese economy and shipping. The intensive handicraft industry, the development of agriculture and water conservancy and the diversification of economic models have promoted the growth of China's population and economy. Under the background that the domestic market can not meet the needs of Chinese society, the use of compass in navigation, the progress of shipbuilding technology and the high profits of overseas trade have stimulated the desire of Chinese businessmen for ocean trade. During this period, porcelain gradually replaced silk and became the most popular commodity in the world. Thirdly, it is the expansion of the Mongolian empire. Since Genghis Khan unified the ministries of Mongolia in 1203, the Mongol Empire has continuously conquered East Asia, Middle East and Eastern Europe, blocking the trade in these areas and caused devastating damage to the cities, population and culture in these areas. The Silk Road on land was blocked by the war, and the Yuan government attached great importance to the Maritime Silk Road, which led to the further development of ports of various countries along the way. During this time, several important ports around the Strait of Hormuz in the Middle East were built for ships from all over the world, which laid the foundation for the prosperity of maritime trade. Through the Maritime Silk Road, in addition to trading commodities, Islam, Buddhism,

Confucianism, etc. Were also preached and spread in coastal countries.

(2) The two civilizations have their own systems, each with its own characteristics and common development.

Iran is an important country in the Middle East. The ancient Persian Empire and Sassanian Persian Empire were born in this land, and which was also ravaged and plundered by western colonialists. The industrious Persians created a splendid Persian culture here. After four centuries, Iran gradually completed Islamization in the 11th century, merged its own Persian civilization and Islamic civilization, established the dominant position of Shiites in Islam, and made Iran a unique civilization representative in the Middle East. In Iranian culture, the spirit of advocating peace, tolerance and kindness is everywhere, emphasizing the importance of fairness and justice in the country and the people. The unique geographical location, long history and culture, and the space span of blending east and west give birth to the “moderate” and “inclusive” characteristics of Iranian civilization. The relatively fair Islamic order also emphasizes that Muslims’ have moral responsibility for the poor (Xing Wenhai, 2019). This is highly consistent with the spirit of universal love, mutual non-aggression, benevolence, courtesy, faith in wisdom, universal harmony and harmony without difference advocated by China, which also has a long history of culture. Since ancient times, the values shared by these two different civilizations have always been very rich. This is not only the rich appeal of Chinese and Iranian cultures, but also the powerful appeal of the wisdom of the East. It also enables Chinese civilization to make friends, communicate with each other and make friends with each other. Everywhere, it shows a prosperous scene of mutual learning and mutual learning and harmonious coexistence between the two countries (Ding Jun, & Chen Jin, 2018).

(3) humanities exchanges between China and Iran, mutual respect and hand in hand.

In ancient times, both China and Iran both created their own splendid cultures, but in

modern times, they were inevitably invaded by Western colonialism and imperialism. In 1925, Reza Khan deposed Ahmad Shah Qajar, the last king of the Kazar Dynasty, established Pahlavi Dynasty, changed its name from Persia to the Iranian Empire, and received assistance of the western countries, led by the United States, thus beginning the modernization process of Iran. After the old-democratic revolution and the new-democratic revolution, China established the People's Republic of China in 1949, successfully completed the socialist transformation, joined the Eastern Group during the Cold War, and achieved modernization through twists and turns. At the end of 1970s, China's reform and opening-up and Iran's Islamic revolution opened a brand-new page of humanities exchanges between the two countries. China began to focus on building socialism with Chinese characteristics, and Iran chose the political system of combining politics with religion under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini. Although the two countries took an important turning point at the same time and chose two completely different paths, the humanities exchanges between the two countries adhered to the spirit of "seeking common ground while reserving differences", respected each other's historical development, institutional choice and political model on the premise of mutual appreciation of culture, and did not simply impose their successful experiences on each other.

Even under the impact of the drastic changes in Eastern Europe, the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the "the end of history" and "the theory of clash of civilizations" in the late 1980s, the exchanges between China and Iran have been steadily advancing on the basis of the five principles of peaceful coexistence. In recent years, with the western countries linking terrorism with Islam in order to check and balance China's peaceful rise, concepts of "Islamophobia", China threat theory and China anxiety disorder have been derived, and they have been widely popularized by using the global discourse [power \(Ding Jun, & Chen Jin, 2018\)](#). Under this background, China and Iran have drawn philosophical wisdom from their

respective ancient civilizations, and have been strengthening humanities exchanges, mutual appreciation and mutual reference. Just as Chinese President Xi Jinping stated in his speech at the headquarters of the League of Arab States, "the key to road selection is to conform to the national conditions. Modernization is not a multiple choice question. The diversity of historical conditions determines the diversity of countries' choice of development paths. In the exploration of the development road, there is no way out for copying, and imitation is easy to get lost, and practice leads to true knowledge. The development path of a country can only be decided by its people according to its historical heritage, cultural traditions and economic and social development level ([Xi Jinping, 2016](#))."

(4) China-Iran humanities exchanges are conducted through multiple channels, levels and forms.

Since 1979, the history of China and Iran has turned a brand-new page, and humanities exchanges have become increasingly frequent. Under this background, humanities exchanges between China and Iran show a prosperous scene of government-led, mechanism-building, academic promotion and folk flowering. From the point of view of the central government, after the normalization of relations, the two countries have exchanged visits for many times, creating opportunities for humanities exchanges between the two countries and setting up a platform for exchanges. From the level of parliament and legislative bodies, both China and Iran have exchanged experience and consulted. As far as local governments are concerned, the interaction between cities of the two countries and the holding of cultural activities have promoted the sinking and immersion of the goal of humanities exchange between the two countries. Islam is one of the important ties of humanities exchanges between China and Iran. It has been nearly 1,500 years since Islam was introduced into China. Although Muslims in the two countries have slightly different interpretations of religious teachings, this does not affect the communication between Chinese and Iranian Muslims in the broad

framework of Islam. Various Islamic seminars have been held one after another, and the mutual visits and exchanges between religious figures of the two sides have further consolidated the foundation of humanities exchanges between China and Iran. At the academic level, the splendid culture and long history of the two countries are inexhaustible treasures. Therefore, China and Iran have had conducted many constructive discussions, mainly focusing on literature, art and history. In recent years, various Iranian universities have set up Confucius Institutes, and the number of Iranian students studying in China is increasing day by day, which has played a positive role in promoting the intuitive understanding and feeling of the Iranian people about China.

V. Restrictive factors in humanities exchanges between China and Iran

(1) There is a discrepancy between the two countries in their mutual cognition.

Although the relations between China and Iran have been normalized for decades, the mutual understanding between the two sides, especially the two peoples, is still not comprehensive enough. China and Iran don't know much about each other's national conditions, but more traditional images are stuck in history books, and there are some misunderstandings and blind spots. For the recent news of both sides, there is a lack of intuitive, systematic and authoritative source channels, and they are mostly obtained from western media. The information channels are limited, and there are also mistakes that the western discourse power system is intentionally distorted.

As far as Iran is concerned, some Iranian elites and government officials have a positive or appreciative attitude towards China's development and achievements. They expect China to play a constructive role in Iranian affairs in the international situation, so as to ease the pressure of western hegemonism and power politics on Iran's survival. Some Iranians also believe that China should provide Iran with more economic and technical support, increase aid projects, and ease the domestic economic

crisis caused by sanctions on Iran. All of the above, coupled with the distorted reports of western media, rarely criticize China in local newspapers and books (Zhu Weilie, 2010).

As far as China is concerned, although the humanities exchanges between China and Iran have been going on for decades, the activities at all levels are also diverse. However, the media, academic circles and people's awareness of Iran needs to be further improved, and many people don't know much about the basic knowledge of Iran's national conditions, social conditions and people's sentiments (Zhu Weilie, 2010). When it comes to news, pictures or film and television materials in Iran, most pictures are emotional materials such as demonstrations, Iranian hostage incidents, social conservatism, etc., which can easily mislead the audience's objective perception. Many domestic scholars engaged in Middle East studies or Iran studies get information about Iran, mostly from the "second-hand information" of western media, which is somewhat subjective. To a certain extent, the research perspective and system have also borrowed from western theories.

(2) The geopolitical situation in the Middle East is affecting the humanities exchanges between China and Iran.

China is located in the east of Asia, bordering on the Pacific Ocean to the east, with a land area of about 9.6 million square kilometers and a population of nearly 1.4 billion. There are 14 neighboring countries on land and 6 neighboring countries on sea. It is one of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council. A number of data and indicators are ranked first in the world. With the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 and the reform and opening-up in 1979, the GDP jumped to the second place in the world in the past 40 years, and became a pivotal force in East Asia and even the world. Iran is located in southwest of Asia, bordered by Armenia, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan in the north, Turkey and Iraq in the west, Pakistan and Afghanistan in the east, and the Persian Gulf, the Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf of Oman in the south. Iran is rich in oil, natural gas and coal,

and has the advantage of good geographical connectivity (Jiang Zhen, & Wang Guobing, 2017). After the Islamic Revolution in 1979, Iran implemented a political system of unity of politics and religion. Iran is a big country in the Middle East, and has always dreamed of becoming a powerful country.

The Middle East is the crossroads of Asia and Europe, with a prominent strategic position. It is also the main energy import area of China, which is related to China's economic development and energy security. It is also an important field to promote "the Belt and Road Initiative". From the perspective of Middle East geopolitics, China has long-term cooperation with Israel, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and other countries in the fields of science and technology, education, economy and trade, etc. Some of these countries are Iran's main geo-competitors, and it is difficult to improve their relations in the short term. From the perspective of the world pattern, western countries such as Europe and the United States have strong influence in this region, hoping to keep their political influence and military presence in this region (Tian Wenlin, 2017). Iran's geography determines that the region has been a place of competition for powerful countries since ancient times, and it is also the focus of competition among big countries. Because of its important strategic position, contemporary Iran has attracted the attention of big countries in the region and abroad. Iran's social stability and political trend have a crucial impact on the Middle East and Central Asia (Pan Meng, & Liu Xuelian, 2019). In a word, the geopolitical situation in Iran and even the Middle East is developing rapidly, and all these factors will have an impact on the development of humanities exchanges between China and Iran, which requires us to make timely policy adjustments to better promote the development of humanities exchanges between the two sides.

(3) Cultural differences and different political systems between the two countries.

(a) different cultures and values

As ancient civilizations, both China and Iran have created admirable civilizations in the history of the world, contributed science and

technology to the progress of mankind, and established a famous and powerful empire. More than 5,000 years of history have created the unique culture of the two countries. Chinese traditional culture is based on Chinese Confucian culture. In the process of development, it has made inclusive integration of local Taoist culture and foreign Buddhist thoughts, forming a Chinese traditional culture with "harmony" as an important symbol. "heaven and man are one", "harmony but different" and "harmony but different". Chinese culture embodies the concept of "harmony" in exploring the relationship between man and the universe, man and everything, man and nature. When adjusting the specific interpersonal relationship, the concept of "harmony but difference" is a kind of moral concept with benevolence as the core. Benevolence occupies a special and important position in traditional Chinese culture. Confucius' benevolence was interpreted as a universal moral principle, while Confucianism in Han Dynasty interpreted benevolence as "heavenly heart", and Confucianism in Song and Ming Dynasties built a value system with benevolence as the core. For thousands of years, moral principles such as being kind to others, being friendly to others, establishing ourselves as others, and pushing ourselves and others have been deeply imprinted in the values of the Chinese (Chen Binggong, 2018). In terms of cultural development, China takes the Chinese civilization as the main body, absorbs the characteristics of different neighboring civilizations in thousands of years of foreign exchanges, enriched its own cultural system and style, and formed a unique Chinese civilization.

Because of its geographical location, Iran's history is a history of the exchange and collision of Eastern and Western civilizations. Therefore, Iranian culture is not immutable. It can be said that Iranian civilization is formed, developed and passed down through communication (Xing Wenhai, 2019). The conquest of the Arab Empire is the beginning of Iran's Islamization, and Islamization is the organic unity of the inheritance and transformation of Iranian culture (Hambly Gavin, editor-in-chief, 1994). Persian

Dynasty has existed in Iranian land for more than a thousand years, and the established monarchy and Zoroastrianism(also known as “Suo Luoyaside”, Farsi: زرتشت) have not died out because of the Islamization of the country. There are still traces of ancient Persian and Zoroastrianism traditional religion in contemporary Iran, the most typical symbol of which is Persia. After Islamization, the new Persian language was based on Pahlavi language used in the Sabine Dynasty and Sassanian Dynasty, and it was spelled with Arabic letters. After two centuries of transformation and evolution, it was revived, and Iranians still use it today (Xing Wenhai, 2019).

(b) The channels for getting to know each other through the internet are not smooth.

In October, 2019, data released by the news agency of the Islamic Republic of Iran showed that the Internet penetration rate in Iran reached 90%, higher than the world average of 30%. Whats app, Telegram and Instagram are the three most commonly used mobile phone softwares in Iran, with 50 million, 49 million and 47 million users respectively, followed by Soroush, independently developed by Iran, with 12 million users (Lu Shuwen, 2021). However, due to western countries' sanctions, international mainstream payment systems such as VISA and MasterCard can't be used in Iran, and many functions and applications of Apple and Android smartphone operating systems also restrict Iranian users. Amazon, a major provider of cloud services and big data systems in Iran, is not open to Iran either. Several domestic internet companies are listed in the west. Under the whole, non-Western Internet giants with extensive business are still hesitant to open up the market of providing cloud services and sharing cloud technologies for Iranian Internet companies (Qu Xiangyu, 2019). Under multiple pressures, Iran's technical departments chose to research and develop its own network technology. Although it has begun to take shape and its operation is stable, it is small in scale, backward in technology and weak in risk resistance. It may take a long time for development and upgrading.

Compared with the development and commercialization of China's relatively sound and developed network technology, there are three main problems in Internet cooperation between China and Iran: First, the Iranian network is subject to excessive restrictions internationally. Secondly, Iran has not acceded to <the Berne Convention> and <Global Copyright Convention>, so the domestic copyright legislation needs to be further improved. Thirdly, due to the domestic situation in Iran, the release of mobile phone applications in Iran needs to strictly follow the review of regulatory authorities. For example, the Iranian Entertainment Software Rating Committee has a strict rating mechanism (Qu Xiangyu, 2019).

VI. Path construction of humanities exchanges between China and Iran

Humanities exchange has become one of the three pillars of diplomacy of great powers with Chinese characteristics in the new era (Xing Liju, 2019). Under the impetus of the “the Belt and Road Initiative”, building Community of Shared Future for Mankind and steadily promoting foreign humanities exchanges are major issues facing China's diplomatic and cultural fields in the new period. The humanities exchanges between China and Iran is a systematic and long-term project, with a long period and slow effect. However, effectively promoting the long-term development of friendly relations between the two countries will give the two countries endogenous power to build a comprehensive strategic partnership. In many fields, there is still much room for expansion of humanities exchanges between China and Iran. Instead of being satisfied with the existing achievements, the two countries should face up to the difficulties and obstacles, further increase the emphasis on humanities exchanges and resource input, properly deal with challenges, deal with differences in time, and jointly build harmonious humanities relationship (Liu Chang, 2018). To be specific, it should be promoted from the following four aspects.

(1)Constantly strengthen the construction and development of their own comprehensive capabilities.

After the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the development of socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era, and the Chinese nation has achieved a leap from standing up, getting rich, developing again to becoming stronger. On the road of developing socialism with Chinese characteristics, we should improve and strengthen our own effective practice of governing the country internally, vigorously improve the socialist democracy and legal system with Chinese characteristics, comprehensively improve the country's comprehensive governance capability, and give full play to the superiority of the socialist system with Chinese characteristics (Xing Liju, 2019). Take the road to China well, tell the story about China well, and break the argument of questioning the Chinese model with the achievements of modernization. Persian civilization and Islamic civilization, which have passed down for thousands of years, are the eternal wealth of human society. Persian merchants have enriched and developed their own civilization system while inheriting the Eastern and Western civilizations. Exquisite calligraphy, literature, weaving and smelting are important carriers of Iranian civilization. After the Islamic Revolution, Iran inherited and developed part of Persian culture, and further integrated into Islamic characteristics. In the process of promoting the “the Belt and Road Initiative” in China, organically combining trade and culture and living in China's “the Belt and Road Initiative” is an important opportunity for Iranian culture to move towards China and the world.

(2) Pay attention to strategic planning, develop channels for both the government and the people, and promote humanities exchanges in a multi-pronged manner.

In recent years, China and Iran have made great efforts to promote the leap-forward development of bilateral relations by building multi-level and multi-field communication platform. It can be said that the institutionalization of people-to-people exchanges is an important pillars to promote the

stability of Sino-Iranian relations. In the long run, we should attach great importance to the humanities exchanges between China and Iran, strengthen the construction of high-level consultation mechanism for humanities exchanges between the two countries, and expand the fields involved in humanities exchanges, so as to make the content of humanities exchanges between the two countries more concrete, more timely and more far-reaching. Therefore, a high-level foreign language exchange and consultation mechanism between China and Iran should be established, which will lay a solid foundation for communication and consultation between China and Iran and promote mutual trust. At the same time, we can consider normalizing this mechanism to ensure its effectiveness and prevent cooperation from becoming a mere formality due to external factors. People-to-people exchanges and consultations may involve some issues of mutual concern. With a positive attitude, we should make better use of the consultation mechanism, give full play to its initiative, and strive for greater initiative in foreign exchanges (Yang Yi, 2012).

In January 2016, during President Xi Jinping's visit to Iran, the two countries jointly negotiated and published the “Joint Statement of the People's Republic of China and the Islamic Republic of Iran on Establishing a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership”, which indicated the scope and objectives for the future development of China-Iran people-to-people exchanges. People-to-people exchanges between the two countries cover many fields such as tourism, health, youth and sports. To effectively promote the areas mentioned in the statement, implement the humanities exchange programs between the two countries, truly benefit the Chinese and Iranian peoples, and enhance mutual understanding, it is necessary for the governments at all levels of the two countries to formulate policies adapted to local social conditions, set up colorful publicity forms, and publicize them in ways that people like to see and hear. This may require the governments of the two countries to make reasonable planning, long-term intensive cultivation and in-depth

study of the humanities and artistic customs of the other countries.

(3) Adhere to the combination of wholeness and particularity, and create humanities exchange with Chinese and Iranian characteristics.

People-to-people exchanges between China and Iran are a part of the whole people-to-people exchange in the “the Belt and Road Initiative” , but we should also see the particularity of Iran itself. China and Iran are both world-class ancient civilizations, which were colonized by the West in modern times and sought independence under the baptism of nationalism. However, there are differences in economic development level, culture and political system between the two countries, so we should adhere to the principle of “seeking common ground while reserving differences”. Culturally, China belongs to the core area of the Chinese cultural circle, and is deeply influenced by Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. Although Iran is an Islamic country, compared with Arab countries, Iranian culture has retained the genes of Persian culture. In addition, there are historical barriers between Persians, Arabs, Kurds and other nationalities in history. It is difficult to treat Iran and other Islamic countries as a whole and correctly distinguish “(non-) Arab countries”, “Arab civilization” and “Persian civilization”, which requires special attention in humanities exchanges. In the international pattern, China has three attributes: a developing country, a socialist country and an ancient civilization in the East (Tian Wenlin, 2017). The rapid development of China's reform and opening up has enhanced its political and cultural influence, which makes China flexible and unique in developing its diplomatic relations with Iran. Since the outbreak of the Iranian nuclear issue, China has played an important role as a “mediator” between the United States and Iran, avoiding the escalation of conflicts. Although Trump tore up the Iranian nuclear deal recently, which caused the tension between the two countries and the Iranian nuclear issue heated up again, the positive role played by China during this period can not be ignored. The

humanities exchange between China and Iran can be complemented by the friendly diplomatic relations between the two countries.

(4) Strengthening non-governmental exchanges in various fields.

In humanities exchange, the most effective way to show cultural symbols and characteristics of civilization is non-governmental exchanges. Non-governmental exchanges can consolidate the friendly foundation between the two countries from the bottom so as to achieve the effects of subtle influence, silence, understanding and tolerance. China-Iran exchanges should be based on the present, focus on the future, fully consider the needs of the people from the perspective of sustainable development, listen to their opinions and wishes, and provide stable expectations for the friendly development of bilateral relations and non-governmental exchanges. It can be specifically considered from the following four aspects:

(a) Broaden the tourist channels between the two countries. Tourism is an important way to promote non-governmental humanities exchanges and enhance people's understanding. In 2018, the number of outbound tourists of Chinese citizens was nearly 150 million, and their spending power ranked first in the world (Yue Chuan, 2020). Every Chinese citizen who goes abroad is the best representative of Chinese culture and image, and the role played by every citizen in humanities exchanges can not be ignored. Promoting the people of the two countries to experience and communicate with each other on the spot through tourism will help to enhance the intuitive feelings of the people of the two countries, enrich their multidimensional impressions of each other, and increase foreign exchange for Iran.

(b) Strengthen the communication in the field of sports. China and Iran both have their own strong sports, some of which are the top teams in the world, such as football, weightlifting, wrestling and basketball. The Iran national football team is one of the strongest soccer teams in Asia, which won the Asian Cup and participated in many World cup football match. Sports play an active role in shaping the

soft power of the country and spreading the national spirit.

(c) Promote the communication and cooperation between higher education and think tanks. The direct audience of education is people, especially young people. Therefore, education can directly strengthen the depth and breadth of the development of humanities exchange. At present, on the basis of the establishment of Confucius Institute and the exchange of overseas students, how to effectively enhance the understanding and knowledge of Chinese and Iranian students about each other's countries is a long-term concern of educators and cultural propagandists. In the teaching of Iranian students, we should consider the long-term needs and the culture of our country. "be targeted and long-term, fully mobilize China's own soft power resources, realize the integration of Chinese and foreign cultures, enhance mutual understanding, and finally reach a consensus (Yang Yi, 2012)."

(d) Strengthen the use of the Internet. In the information age, the Internet is undoubtedly an important support for promoting cultural communication and humanities exchanges, thus realizing a good situation of people's exchanges along the "the Belt and Road Initiative". Compared with traditional humanities exchanges, online humanities exchanges have incomparable advantages: firstly, the participation range is wide, and everyone can participate. Secondly, it has the characteristics of fast communication speed, wide communication space, low communication cost, two-way multi-dimensional interaction and so on. Finally, it also has the characteristics of network culture, including openness, equality and interaction. In order to effectively promote the humanities exchanges between China and Iran and deepen the friendly exchanges between the two countries, the first step is to speed up the construction of network basic information, the second step is to create excellent network cultural works, the third step is to combine mobile and digital media, and the last step is to strengthen the management of the network environment.

Just as Chinese President Xi Jinping put forward: "We should transcend the barriers of civilizations, learn from each other, transcend the conflicts of civilizations, transcend the superior coexistence of civilizations, and promote mutual understanding, respect and trust among countries." Friendship between countries lies in the blind date between people, and the blind date between people lies in the heart-to-heart connection. The key to people's communication lies in achieving cultural resonance, and to achieve cultural resonance, there must be sufficient quantity and quality of humanities exchanges and cultural tolerance embodied in humanities exchanges. Therefore, when China and Iran rely on people-to-people exchanges to develop friendly relations between the two countries, we should not only see the unique advantages between the two countries, but also objectively face up to the current situation of shallow achievements and lack of reasonable planning in people-to-people exchanges between China and Iran. A profound understanding, rational planning and scientific layout of Sino-Iranian humanities exchanges have positive and far-reaching practical significance for building Iran into a fulcrum country of "the Belt and Road Initiative", promoting bilateral cooperation between China and Iran, realizing the exchanges in Central Asia, South Asia, Asia and Europe, and promoting the common construction and development of human destiny (Ding Jun, & Chen Jin, 2018).

Objectively speaking, Iran, as a pivotal country in the Middle East, maintaining a stable Sino-Iranian relationship is of great significance to China's expansion of "Opening to the West". In the new era, with the deepening of China's "the Belt and Road Initiative", it can be said that it is undoubtedly of great practical significance to continuously deepen the official and non-governmental humanities exchanges between China and Iran. On the one hand, it can consolidate the bilateral relationship between China and Iran. In addition, Besides, it also helps to strengthen the cognition of the two peoples. In other words, exchanges between the peoples can effectively promote the further

implementation of policies and cooperation. Based on the previous research, it is found that the humanities exchanges and cooperation between China and Iran will have a broad field and a good prospect in the future.

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