

Spring Festival Reflects Openness, Vitality

Voice of the World

By GONG Qian

The 2025 Chinese New Year is the first new year celebration since the Spring Festival was added to UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list in December 2024. The Spring Festival is not only a window for people worldwide to understand its cultural significance, but also an opportunity to witness China's economy booming.

Grand gala shows cultural openness
The Spring Festival Gala, described as "China's most-watched TV show", aired on January 29. As a key cultural event during the Chinese New Year, it had a record-breaking 496 million livestream views this year, up 18 percent year on year, reaching all of China and across the world, according to *IQ Magazine*.

The annual gala is a melody of performing arts including music, dance, opera, martial arts and comedy. Two things that stood out at this year's gala were the inclusion of the U.S. pop rock band OneRepublic and an American pawn shop owner Evan Kail.

OneRepublic performed their hit song Counting Stars, becoming the first American band to perform in a Spring Festival Gala.

Kail became a well-known name in China by donating a rare photo album that documented wartime atrocities committed by the Japanese, including the 1937 Nanking massacre. He was invited to be a guest at this year's Gala.

"The warmth of the Chinese people has really touched me and everywhere I go, people have shown me such incredible kindness," Kail said. "I was born in



A lion dance performance to celebrate the Chinese New Year is held at the Avenue des Champs-Élysées in Paris, France on February 2. (PHOTO: VCG)

1989, the Year of the Snake. It's been amazing to be part of a national celebration and I'm just honored to be here tonight."

Such inclusion in China's most-watched TV program is officially about sending a message of China's cultural openness, *The Diplomat* said, adding that it is a way for China to promote friendly transcultural connections with the average American.

The cultural openness was also demonstrated by a performance jointly presented by Chinese and Peruvian artists. They combined a traditional Chinese folk song with a well-known Peruvian orchestral composition.

Holiday economy booms

The Spring Festival holiday gave fresh momentum to the consumption

drive of the world's second-largest economy.

The eight-day holiday sparked tourism. Reuters reported that the 40-day travel season will continue until February 22, during which Chinese authorities estimate a record 9 billion domestic trips will be made.

According to box office tracker Denta Data, thanks to the 2025 Spring Festival holiday, the total box office revenue of the Chinese film market had crossed 10 billion RMB (about 1.4 billion USD) as of February 3, surpassing the North American market and ranking first in the world.

"This achievement is not only a milestone in the development of China's film industry, but also marks the growing strength of China's cultural industry,"

the *Tehran Times* said.

It said that films drive the country's cultural tourism industry with film-themed exhibitions, experience zones, and attractions boosting regional economies. Movie derivatives, especially cultural creative products inspired by classic scenes and characters, are a new economic growth point. "The deep integration of film with tourism and cultural industries can form a powerful industrial effect," the *Tehran Times* said.

Globalization of the Spring Festival

With the rising influence of China on the global stage, the Spring Festival has transcended national borders to become a truly global celebration. Spring Festival customs are now celebrated in nearly 200 countries and regions, with almost 20 nations designating it as an official public holiday.

Spring Festival traditions like publicly staged dragon and lion dances, lantern festivals, and fireworks displays are organized in many countries to promote cultural exchanges. These activities also appeal not only to the Chinese communities but also to people of diverse backgrounds.

For example, landmarks such as the Empire State Building in the U.S., Melbourne Town Hall in Australia, and Tokyo Tower in Japan are illuminated in red during the festival.

The Chinese New Year is now a global event that symbolizes prosperity, harmony, and shared humanity, bringing people together regardless of nationality or background, Zamir Ahmed Awan, founding chair of the Global Silk Route Research Alliance, wrote on the Modern Diplomacy website.

"The globalization of the Spring Festival is a testament to the enduring appeal of Chinese culture and its ability to connect people," Awan said.

Opinion

Mutual Visits Enhance Cultural Understanding

By GONG Qian

With more robust policies implemented, "China travel" continues to gain momentum. The number of foreign visitors to China has surged dramatically in recent months. Meanwhile, Chinese tourists are also traveling abroad more. This not only injects a strong impetus into the global economic development, but also enhances cultural exchanges and people-to-people connectivity.

According to a report released by online travel platform Trip.com, the outbound and inbound tourism saw robust growth during the 2025 Spring Festival holiday. Overall orders for cross-border tours increased by 30 percent year on year. The orders for inbound tour tickets surged by 180 percent. Among the top destinations appealing to international tourists are major cities such as Shenzhen, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Beijing.

The 2025 Spring Festival is the first "Intangible Cultural Heritage Spring Festival" following its UNESCO recognition. Foreign tourists will experience the unique charm of the Chinese culture with more folk activities held across the country. Therefore, second and third tier cities, which are rich in intangible cultural heritage activities, like Shijiazhuang and Fuzhou have also gained popularity, the report said.

As more foreign tourists visit China and Chinese tourists explore the world, the mutual desire for cultural exchange and exploration is stronger than ever, according to *Travel and Tour World (TTW)*.



Italian tourists Piero (R) and Margherita pose for a selfie at the Temple of Heaven Park in Beijing on January 30. (PHOTO: XINHUA)

Well-being Supported by Sci-tech Innovation

From page 1

Even people living in remote areas can enjoy modern digital medical services.

Near-zero carbon village

Xingsheng, the first near-zero carbon village in Ningxia Hui autonomous region in northwestern China, has been working on near-zero energy consumption. The villagers no longer burn firewood or coal for cooking or heating. Instead, they use clean electricity generated by photovoltaic panels on their roofs and stored in a storage device.

A villager, Tian Yubing, said their all-electric kitchen costs only over 10 RMB a day, and the heating costs only 2,000 RMB in winter. In the past, when they used coal, it cost them 6,000-7,000 RMB.

"I can even earn money from the clean electricity," Tian said.

The village has a peak-valley price mechanism. At night electricity costs

So far, China has established comprehensive mutual visa exemptions with 25 countries, implemented unilateral visa-free policies for 38 countries, and transit visa-free policies for 54 countries. These policies represent a clear message of openness, inclusivity, and international cooperation, *TTW* said.

According to the data released by the National Immigration Administration of China, 20.1 million foreign travelers gained visa-free entry in 2024, surging by 112.3 percent from the previous year.

At the same time, more countries are introducing measures to attract Chinese visitors. For example, Japan has introduced a new multiple-entry visa valid for 10 years for Chinese nationals visiting individually for tourism.

The thriving inbound and outbound tourism, on the one hand, brings remarkable benefits to tourism industries of various countries and regions by driving the development of related industries such as transportation, accommodation, and catering, thus promoting economic growth.

On the other hand, the deeper significance of tourism lies in building a bridge for people from different countries to interact with each other. Foreign tourists coming to China or Chinese tourists traveling abroad can learn about the local people's lives, customs, values, and ways of behavior during their trips. Through people-to-people exchanges such as tourism, people around the world can enhance their understanding of others and build friendships.

Why TikTok 'Refugees' Are Flocking to RedNote

Comment

By WANG Jing

Chinese social media app RedNote has come into focus after tens of millions of U.S. TikTok users migrated to it, fearing an earlier ban on TikTok in the U.S.

Within 48 hours from January 13, more than 700,000 new users joined RedNote, Reuters reported. Many of them call themselves "TikTok refugees" seeking a new home on the Internet.

On January 13, RedNote was at the head of App Store's list of top free apps, according to market intelligence firm Sensor Tower.

What has caused the sudden surge in traffic to RedNote?

Charlotte Silverstein, a 32-year-old publicist in Los Angeles, downloaded

RedNote after seeing videos on TikTok about migrating to it. She described the move as a "last act of defiance" in her frustration about the potential TikTok ban, according to *The Wall Street Journal*.

The media intelligence platform Truescope reported that many U.S. users called the switch to RedNote a symbolic act of protest and resistance to the perceived "restrictions on digital freedom."

There is a primal need for emotional exchange between people. The sudden migration of U.S. users to RedNote has created a new platform for veteran Chinese users and American counterparts to interact with each other.

Chinese users have warmly welcomed the newcomers, with some even sharing video tutorials to help the "TikTok refugees" navigate the app.

"I like that two countries are coming together," said Sarah Grathwohl, a 32-year-old marketing manager in Seattle. "We're bonding over this experience."

Ivy Yang, a China tech analyst, said users are finding creative ways to transcend language barriers, navigate cultural differences, and co-exist in fascinating ways. This community building happening in real time could have a lasting impact.

One thing that can't be ignored is that the Chinese platform provides high-quality services based on a deep understanding of user needs. *The New York Post* said that RedNote's rise suggests that users prioritize engaging content and community over geopolitical considerations.

U.S. users who have come to RedNote paid "cat tax" and "dog tax", that is, sharing photos of their pets, establishing a friendly and harmonious interactive atmosphere.

Another engaging content was someone posting a photo of questions from a textbook used in China for learning English, with the caption, "American

AI Transforming Drug Discovery

From page 1

Lowering drug testing costs

The exorbitant costs of drug testing have long hindered innovation. AI is shifting this paradigm through the introduction of virtual cells and silicon-based "patients." In a recently published study, researchers simulated 1,635 virtual breast cancer patients to identify biomarkers that optimize clinical treatments. These simulations produced highly accurate results, closely mirroring real-world data.

By using advanced imaging technologies and molecular biology, virtual cells allow for high-fidelity simulations of cellular behavior under various drug conditions. This approach minimizes the need

for physical trials and enables researchers to conduct high-throughput, accurate experiments in silico.

For rare diseases, where patient populations are small and clinical trials are difficult to conduct, virtual models provide an effective solution. GeneT, an AI model for rare diseases developed by BGI Genomics and Peking Union Medical College Hospital, for example, has cut diagnosis times from years to weeks by identifying genetic mutations with 20 times the efficiency of traditional methods. This technological advancement is fundamentally reshaping the way pharmaceutical companies approach rare disease treatments and clinical trials.

Cross-disciplinary collaboration fuels AI innovation

The success of AI in pharmaceuticals depends heavily on collaboration across various disciplines. At recent conferences, joint research efforts by algorithm engineers, geneticists, and pharmacologists have led to significant breakthroughs. One notable example of AI's potential to uncover unexpected connections is the discovery that antiviral drugs might also help lower blood pressure. This demonstrates AI's ability to transcend traditional boundaries and find relationships across different fields of medicine.

The growing integration of AI in pharmaceutical research is also driving

structural changes in how data is handled. Eliminating "data silos" has become a priority, and government policies emphasize the need for accessible, interoperable data. These policies, combined with AI models that can process billions of parameters, are laying the foundation for organized research that can address complex global health challenges.

Despite the challenges posed by interdisciplinary communication, the rewards of AI-driven collaboration are undeniable. With AI set to play a central role in tasks from molecular optimization to automatic data analysis, the future of drug development is unmistakably AI-powered.