



Zha Peixin – Chinese Ambassador to the UK



The Chinese arch, *pailou* or *paifang* in Chinese, is usually made of fine wood or stone and is a unique Chinese architectural form. It used to be erected either in memory of outstanding figures or as the landmark of a community. These structures usually stand in downtown areas, or at the entrances of mausoleums, temples, bridges and parks.

The magnificent Chinese Arch in Liverpool is the largest outside of China. It was an outcome of cooperation between Liverpool and Shanghai and stands as a symbol of friendship between the two cities. Since twinning in 1999 the exchanges and cooperation between Liverpool and Shanghai have become more active. The close links between the two cities epitomise the relations between the UK and China. In recent years, our bilateral ties have witnessed a rapid expansion. Both countries attach great importance to this relationship.

There have been frequent high-level visits. Consultations and discussions on world and regional issues are held on a regular basis. Trade and investment have increased by a big margin. Educational and cultural exchanges are very active. Cooperation in the fields of science and technology is also expanding. Mutual understanding and friendship between the two peoples have been further enhanced.

The establishment of the China-UK Comprehensive Strategic Partnership last year marked the latest major step in the development of a closer relationship between the two countries. There is great potential for further cooperation between the two sides. I am convinced, with joint effort, the Sino-British ties will become even stronger in the future.

The Friendship Arch is an album with beautiful pictures and enlightening articles. Its publication will help further improve the understanding and deepen the friendship between our two peoples. I warmly congratulate the authors for their painstaking work and I sincerely hope readers will find the book interesting and informative.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Zha Peixin' in Chinese characters.

Zha Peixin

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of China to the United Kingdom