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Editorial

According to an old Chinese saying, or a curse, in fact, it is worst to live in interesting times. This curse has come upon us right now in the early twenty-first century. We live in very interesting times. The reason for this is the far-reaching political, social, cultural and civilization changes taking place in the world today. A new international order is being shaped, and systems and solutions developing on the basis of artificial intelligence may give the entire human civilization a completely new, unimaginable dimension. One of the stronger drivers of the changes taking place, and thus also the one who made the present times interesting, is... China. After the period of the nineteenth-century stagnation, or in fact regress, and the twentieth century political, economic and social perturbations, this state regains its former power.

For many centuries, practically until the end of the 18th century, China was the most powerful and the most developed civilization on Earth. This civilization not only had a tremendous influence on the development of East Asian states, but also, from the 17th century, with the cause of the Jesuits, it began to radiate into Europe. Fascinated by China were not only eminent representatives of European science, incl. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz and Wolter, but also European monarchs, including the last king of Poland, Stanisław August Poniatowski. Unfortunately, the industrial revolution taking place in Europe and the imperialist aspirations of the European powers pushed China almost to the brink of collapse. Thanks to the strategic thinking of its leaders as well as the diligence and dedication of multitudes of Chinese, the Chinese state began to systematically rebuild its power from the mid-twentieth century.

Currently, China belongs to the group of economically strongest countries in the world producing, according to IMF data, almost 30% of world GDP. Many of the products manufactured by them and supplied to global markets are based on the latest technologies. Examples include well-known brands such as Lenovo or Xiaomi. The world is also conquered by Chinese solutions in the field of artificial intelligence, such as the Tik Tok

mobile web application (Douyin in China). The „One Belt, One Road” initiative, which has been implemented since 2013, can also prove the strength of the Chinese economy and the growing importance of China. This gigantic logistic undertaking involves the expansion of the transport infrastructure connecting China with Europe, Central Asia and the countries of the Middle East and Africa.

The rise of China’s power, however, is taking place not only in the economic field. Already today, the country is one of the leading players on the international political scene, and by many it is even considered a future world leader. It is interesting that in its foreign policy and fight for world leadership, China does not resort to the use of military force like some other players. The Chinese People’s Liberation Army, currently undergoing a far-reaching modernization, is present in many hot spots on our globe, but not as an aggressor or „gendarme”, but in UN peacekeeping and humanitarian missions. This is in line with the old Chinese Taoist and Confucian traditions of avoiding brute physical force in disputes. Both Taoist and Confucian thinkers believed that more than force can be achieved with nobility and generosity. This truth is recorded not only in the treaties of Lao Tse or Confucius, but also in the flagship work of culture and philosophy of the Chinese Book of Changes (I Ching).

Looking at the economy and political skill of the Chinese state leaders, we do not seem to notice that the interesting and rich culture of this country had a large impact on China’s former and present power. Even the greatest aesthetes with sublime taste will be delighted with traditional Chinese gongbi painting or the nature-inspired architecture of Chinese gardens. But culture is not only painting, architecture, music or... Chinese film which is already gaining recognition in the world. Culture is also delicious Chinese cuisine and traditional martial arts such as wushu. By practicing one of the styles of wushu – taj chi, you can not only improve your condition, but also plunge deeper into Chinese culture and philosophy. Above all, learn one basic principle that the Tao is in constant motion and the world is constantly changing. So, let us not be afraid of the changes and, contrary to the Chinese curse, the „interesting times” they will cause. These have always been a challenge for active and curious people. To those who are bored in interesting times, I recommend reading this publication. They will surely find something interesting in it. First of all, they will learn something interesting about China.