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ON THE LONG MARCH

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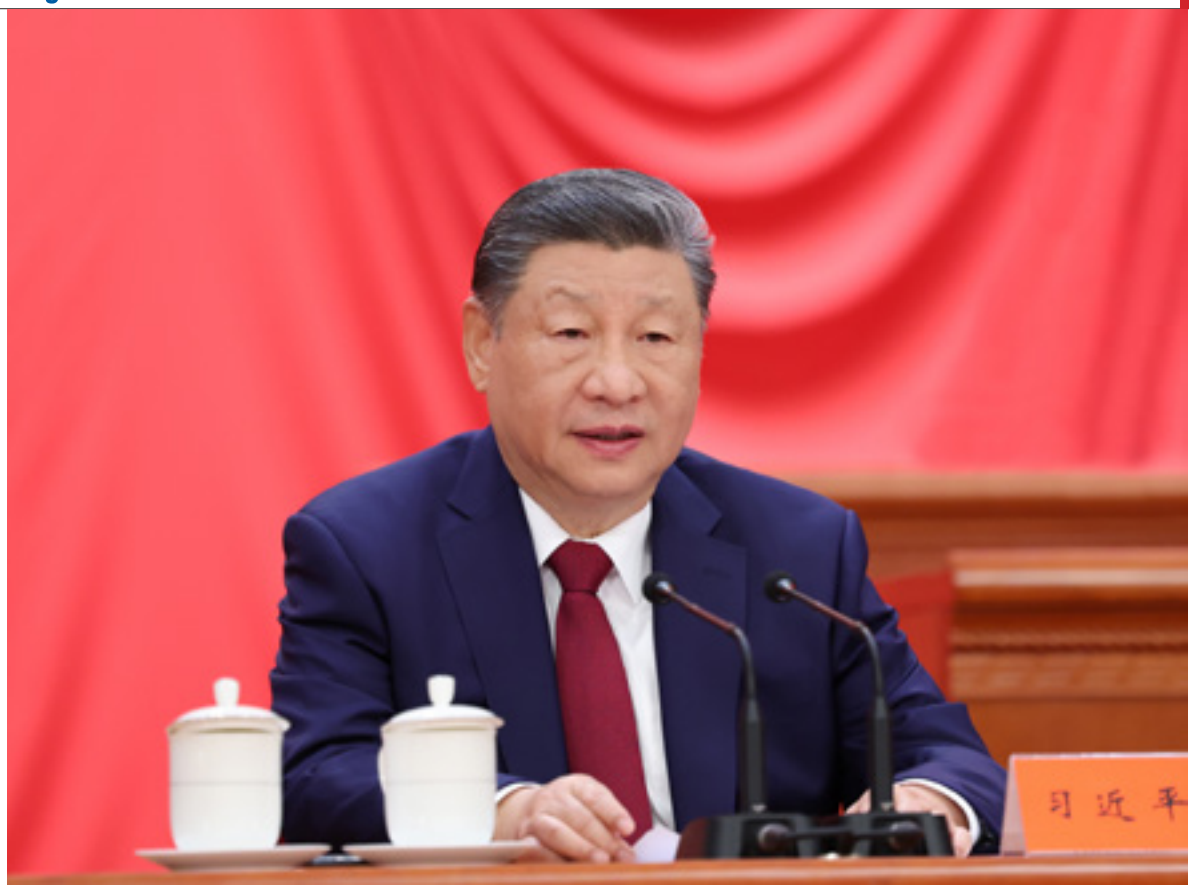


President Xi Jinping, who is also General Secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and Chairman of the Central Military Commission, delivers an important speech at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on October 22 during a gathering commemorating the 90th anniversary of the victory of the Red Army's Long March (XINHUA)

Xi Urges Drawing on Long March Spirit

Xi Jinping, General Secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, called on October 22 for drawing strength from the Long March spirit to overcome difficulties, tackle risks and meet challenges, and to ensure that the giant ship of China's national rejuvenation cuts through the waves and sails steadily forward, as the country marked the 90th anniversary of the victory of the Red Army's Long March.

Addressing a gathering at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, Xi linked the revolutionary journey nine decades ago to China's current pursuit of national rejuvenation, describing the drive to build China into a great modern socialist country in all respects, and to advance national rejuvenation on all fronts through Chinese

A gathering commemorating the 90th anniversary of the victory of the Red Army's Long March is held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, on October 22, 2026 (XINHUA)

A memorial park marking the victory of the Central Red Army's Long March in Wuqi County of Yan'an City, northwest China's Shaanxi Province, on September 26, 2026 (XINHUA)

modernization, as a new Long March for the Party and the people.

Xi, who is also Chinese president and Chairman of the Central Military Commission, said that revisiting history is about drawing wisdom and strength from it to forge ahead.

He described the Long March, a strategic military maneuver carried out by the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army of the CPC from 1934 to 1936, as an earthshaking revolutionary feat of great significance in the history of the Party, the country and the military, with a profound impact on the path toward the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

"This stirring heroic epic will forever be engraved on the monument of the Chinese revolution and remembered in the hearts of hundreds of millions of people," he said.

The Red Army traversed more than 10 provinces on a 12,500-kilometer journey and broke through encirclement and pursuit by more than a million enemy troops, opening up a new chapter in the Chinese revolution, Xi said.

At his proposal, participants stood up and observed a moment of silence for the revolutionary heroes who gave their lives during the Long March and in revolutionary struggles across China.

Reflecting on the path to the Long March victory, Xi highlighted the Party's correct leadership, firm revolutionary conviction, independence and a commitment to seeking truth from facts, as well as the support of the people.

He emphasized the need to integrate the basic tenets of Marxism into China's specific realities, and to remain deeply rooted in the people, whom he described as the enduring source of strength and a strong support for the Party and the people's armed forces.

The great spirit of the Long March, demonstrating the power of loyalty, truth, justice and unity, will always be a precious

treasure and a powerful source of inspiration for overcoming difficulties and forging ahead, Xi said.

Over the past 90 years, the Party has united and led the people through one great Long March after another during revolution, construction and reform, achieving one great victory after another, he said.

Xi said the road of the Long March continues to extend. "On our new journey, we are now committed to realizing the second centenary goal of building China into a great modern socialist country in all respects and advancing the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation on all fronts through a Chinese path to modernization," he said.

Setting out the tasks ahead, Xi called for upholding the Party's ideals, convictions and fundamental purpose, remaining true to its original aspiration and founding mission, and relying closely on the people to make further historic achievements.

He stressed the need to pursue high-quality development, better meet people's growing aspirations for a better life, and promote common prosperity for all. Economic development must deliver both improvements in quality and reasonable growth in quantity, he said.

Xi also called for better coordination between development and security, and for taking the initiative to overcome difficulties, address risks and meet challenges.

On national defense, he urged faster progress toward building world-class armed forces, upholding the Party's absolute leadership over the military, achieving the military's centenary goals on schedule, and advancing high-quality modernization of national defense and the armed forces.

He further emphasized upholding Party leadership and strengthening Party building, with sustained efforts to exercise full and rigorous Party self-governance and enhance the Party's capacity to purify, improve and renew itself and excel. CI

(Source: *China Daily*)

Luding Bridge in Luding, Sichuan Province, where a battle for the survival of the Red Army took place in May 1935 during the Long March, on May 19 (XINHUA)

90 Years On, Long March Spirit Endures in China

As a great feat in human history, the Long March has left us with a rich heritage. However, its most valuable gem was the spirit of the Long March, which was forged with the lives and blood of Chinese Communists and Red Army soldiers.

The spirit of the Long March was about putting the fundamental interests of the Chinese people and nation above all else, about upholding firm revolutionary ideals and beliefs, and about the belief that a just cause would surely succeed.

It was about a willingness to sacrifice everything to save the country and people, no matter what difficulties and obstacles lay ahead. It was about remaining committed to independence and autonomy, to seeking truth from fact, and to proceeding from reality in all endeavors. It was about seeing the bigger picture, maintaining strict discipline, and uniting closely. And it was about relying closely on the people, sharing the same fate as the people, and fighting bitterly alongside the people.

The spirit of the Long March was a vivid reflection of the demeanor of Chinese Communists and the people's army under their leadership; it was a demonstration of the Chinese people's spirit of constant self-improvement; and it was the highest embodiment of a national spirit based on patriotism.

—President Xi Jinping's speech at a ceremony commemorating the 80th Anniversary of the Victory of the Long March on October 21, 2016

The Long March is an earthshaking revolutionary feat of great significance in the history of the Party, the country and the military, with a profound impact on the path toward the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

This stirring heroic epic will forever be engraved on the monument of the Chinese revolution and remembered in the hearts of hundreds of millions of people.

Revisiting history is about drawing wisdom and strength from it to forge ahead.

The great spirit of the Long March, demonstrating the power of loyalty, truth, justice and unity, will always be a precious treasure and a powerful source of inspiration for overcoming difficulties and forging ahead.

—President Xi Jinping's speech at a gathering commemorating the 90th anniversary of the victory of the Red Army's Long March on October 22, 2026

(Source: *China Daily*)

The Long March: A Living Belief That Shapes Modern China

Why CPC Leadership's 1935 Meeting in Zunyi Holds Significance Today

In October 1934, the Red Army, led by the Communist Party of China (CPC), began the famous Long March but soon suffered heavy losses after breaking through the enemy's blockade and crossing the Xiangjiang River. From January 15 to 17, 1935, the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, the supreme decision-making body of the Party, held an extended meeting at Zunyi, a small town located in Guizhou Province in southwest China, which marked a turning point in the history of the CPC.

At the meeting, two important questions in particular were thoroughly discussed: on the one hand, how should the Party view and tackle military setbacks; on the other hand, how should the Party resolve its own organizational and leadership issues?

The meeting criticized the mistakes of the military leadership of the then-central leaders and reaffirmed Mao Zedong's military proposition. It was then unanimously decided that the CPC Central Committee would authorize Mao, Zhou Enlai and Wang Jiaxiang to form a small group to be in charge of the military operations of the entire Red Army.

After the meeting, Mao's de facto leading position in the Party and the Red Army was gradually established. It also led to the formation of the correct sinified Marxist line with Mao as the main representative in the Central Committee. Moreover, the first generation of the CPC leadership with Mao as the core was established.

By saving the Party, the Red Army and eventually the Chinese revolution at the most critical moment, the Zunyi meeting actually changed the situation of the Chinese revolution from a passive one to an active one. Furthermore, the Party entered a new phase following the meeting, enabling the CPC to really explore its own path by combining Marxist-Leninist principles with China's unique realities.

The reason why the Zunyi meeting is commemorated today is that significant lessons can be drawn from it. The event was a life-and-death turning point in the history of the CPC, marking the beginning of the Party's incremental achievement of the capability to independently comprehend and tackle the key issues of the Chinese revolution.

After the meeting, the Party and the Red Army moved from a point of danger to one of security, and the trajectory of the Chinese revolution continued to shift from smaller victories to greater ones. By commemorating the Zunyi meeting, Chinese people can also draw spiritual strength from it and give a strong spiritual impetus to the realization of the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

The Zunyi meeting embodied the firm belief in Marxism. In contemporary China, this firm faith can inspire people to always strive persistently for ideals and convictions in the face of difficulties and severe challenges. The meeting insisted on seeking the truth from the facts and corrected the Party's own error based on the real needs of the Chinese revolution.

Nowadays, seeking truth from facts requires that we adhere to the truth in our daily work and make scientific decisions in accordance with the various and ever-changing reality. The Zunyi meeting was the beginning of the period when the CPC started to solve the problems of the Chinese revolution and Chinese socialist construction in the aftermath on its own. In modern society, the spirit of independence demands that China shall adhere to an independent foreign policy in international affairs and follow the path of socialist modernization with Chinese characteristics.

The meeting also emphasized the unity and integration of the Party through the principle of democratic centralism. In today's China, the spirit of unity and integration requires that the country needs to strengthen the centralized and unified leadership of the Party and jointly promote national development with the support of the whole society. **CI**

(Source: *CGTN*)

People visit the museum of the Zunyi Conference in Zunyi City, southwest China's Guizhou Province, on August 17, 2026 (XINHUA)

The Four Crossings of the Chishui River: A Model of Unexpected Victory

At the beginning of 1935, Chiang Kai-shek mobilized hundreds of thousands of troops from the Kuomintang Central Army and warlord forces from Hunan, Guangxi, Sichuan, Guizhou, Yunnan, and other provinces in an attempt to annihilate the more than 30,000 soldiers of the Red Army in a single campaign. According to the decision of the Zunyi Conference, Comrade Mao Zedong and other revolutionaries of the older generation planned to lead the Red Army from the Zunyi area and cross the Yangtze River northward between Luzhou and Yibin. Beginning on January 19, the Red Army advanced toward Tucheng along three routes, and a remarkable chapter in the history of warfare quietly began. This was the Battle of the Four Crossings of the Chishui River, which Comrade Mao Zedong later praised as a "masterpiece." In this campaign, the Red Army overcame a far stronger enemy and achieved victory through surprise, leaving behind an invaluable military legacy.

The First Crossing of the Chishui River: Seizing Opportunity

Before dawn on January 29, 1935, the main force of the Red Army advanced toward the Gulin and Xuyong areas, planning to cross the Yangtze River northward. In response, the Sichuan Army dispatched eight brigades in pursuit and stationed four brigades along the Yangtze River to block the Red Army's advance. Meanwhile, the Kuomintang Central Army under Xue Yue pursued from Guizhou into southern Sichuan, while three Yunnan Army brigades moved toward Bijie and Zhenxiong in an attempt to encircle the Red Army. Enemy fortifications blocked the front, while pursuing forces pressed from behind.

Facing this critical situation, Comrade Mao Zedong decisively ordered the Red Army to cross the Chishui River and move toward the relatively open border region of Sichuan, Guizhou, and Yunnan, temporarily abandoning the plan to cross the Yangtze River. The purpose was to preserve the army's strength and seek opportunities either to destroy enemy forces or to maneuver strategically.

The Second Crossing of the Chishui River: The Use of Reverse Thinking

After the Red Army regrouped at Tashi, the Kuomintang forces concluded that its objective remained the northward crossing of the Yangtze River to join the Red Fourth Front Army. Consequently, the enemy concentrated its main forces south of the Yangtze River, west of Xuyong, and east of Hengjiang in an attempt to encircle and destroy the Red Army.

After carefully analyzing the situation, Comrade Mao Zedong determined that the weakest point in the enemy encirclement was the force of the Guizhou warlord Wang Jialie in northern Guizhou. He therefore decided to exploit the enemy's mistaken assumptions by moving in the opposite direction, advancing eastward and returning to Guizhou through the enemy's weakly defended positions.

On February 11, faced with enemy pressure advancing toward Tashi, Comrade Mao Zedong unexpectedly ordered the Red Army to move eastward and reenter Guizhou. Upon receiving this news, Wang Jialie hurriedly redeployed troops to the Chishui River in an attempt to block the Red Army's crossing. On February 18, Red Army vanguard forces reached the east bank of the Chishui River and defeated the enemy at Erlangtan. Between February 18 and 21, the Red Army crossed the Chishui River at Taipingdu and Erlangtan, successfully shaking off the pursuing Sichuan Army and other enemy forces, thereby defeating their attempts at blockade and encirclement.

A view of Loushan Pass in Huichuan District of Zunyi, Southwest China's Guizhou Province, on September 26, 2026 (XINHUA)

A drone photo shows people visiting the revolutionary site of the Battle of Qinggangpo in Xishui County, southwest China's Guizhou Province, on September 11, 2026. (XINHUA)

After crossing the Chishui River, the Red Army advanced rapidly and launched the Battle of Zunyi while enemy defenses in the Tongzi and Zunyi regions remained weak. Tongzi was occupied on February 24, the strategically important Loushan Pass was captured on February 25, and Zunyi was occupied on February 28.

The Third Crossing of the Chishui River: Creating a Favorable Situation

After the Red Army's major victory in Zunyi, Chiang Kai-shek hurried to Chongqing to personally "supervise the war." He implemented the blockhouse strategy previously used against the Central Red Army base area, attempting to combine fortified positions with concentrated attacks in order to trap the Red Army within the narrow region between Zunyi and Yaxi. Chiang also ordered that the Sichuan and Guizhou armies were not to advance or retreat without authorization.

Comrade Mao Zedong accurately assessed the situation and deliberately maneuvered around the Zunyi region in search of opportunities, while creating the appearance of offensive operations in order to attract additional enemy forces and prepare the conditions for breaking through the encirclement.

Beginning on March 5, the Red Army used the favorable terrain along the Tongzi and Zunyi routes to draw the Sichuan Army eastward, while the main force moved westward from the Zunyi area toward Bailakan, Changgan Mountain, and other regions in search of opportunities to destroy enemy units. As enemy forces once again approached, Comrade Mao Zedong ordered the Red Army to cross the Chishui River for the third time at Maotai on March 16, advancing toward Gulin and Xuyong and once again creating the impression of a northward crossing of the Yangtze River.

Believing that the Red Army intended to cross northward, Chiang Kai-shek urgently ordered warlord forces from Sichuan, Guizhou, and Hunan, along with the Central Army, to pursue the Red Army, while transferring Yunnan forces to intercept it from Bijie in an attempt to form another encirclement.

Throughout the campaign, the threat posed by the Kuomintang forces remained constant. The Red Army, with just over 30,000 troops, faced an enemy force exceeding 400,000. One side suffered from shortages of supplies, while the other was well equipped. Despite this enormous disparity in strength, Comrade Mao Zedong actively sought to create favorable conditions by skillfully maneuvering among concentrated enemy forces through continuous movement. The Red Army struck in one direction while appearing to move in another, created false impressions, and used feigned operations to confuse the enemy. At the same time, it relied on radio communications to monitor enemy movements and accurately assess changing conditions. In this way, the Red Army understood both itself and the enemy, while preventing the enemy from discovering its true intentions and once again gaining the initiative.

The Fourth Crossing of the Chishui River: Maneuvering the Enemy

After the third crossing of the Chishui River, the Red Army reentered southern Sichuan. The enemy continued to believe that the Red Army intended to cross the Yangtze River northward, and enemy forces once again converged on southern Sichuan. At this critical moment, Comrade Mao Zedong made another decisive decision. Taking advantage of the enemy's lack of preparation, he ordered the Red Army to turn eastward, while a regiment disguised itself as the main force and conducted feigned operations around Gulin to lure enemy forces westward.

As Kuomintang troops hurried to concentrate around Gulin in preparation for encircling the Red Army, the main force had already moved secretly and rapidly eastward. On the evening of March 21, the Red Army crossed the Chishui River for the fourth time at Erlangtan, Jiuxikou, and Taipingdu. It then turned southward, moving directly against the enemy's expectations. On March 28, the Red Army broke through the enemy blockade line between Yaxi and Bailakan. On March 31, it crossed south over the Wujiang River, advanced toward Guiyang, and left the enemy far behind.

Comrade Mao Zedong and other revolutionaries of the older generation accurately grasped the changing situation of both enemy and friendly forces, as well as the realities of the battlefield environment in Sichuan, Guizhou, and Yunnan. They neither risked a forced crossing of the Yangtze River nor retreated passively. Instead, they adapted to circumstances and maneuvered the enemy into positions favorable to the Red Army. In this way, they found the most suitable path out of an extremely difficult situation. CI

(Source: *Liberation Army Daily*)

Story of the Halved Quilt Carries Long March Spirit

The "half quilt" statue at Shazhou village in Rucheng county, Hunan Province, on July 1, 2026 (XINHUA)

During the recent National Day holiday, visitors lined up outside an exhibition hall in Shazhou, a village in Rucheng County, Hunan province. Inside, docent Zhu Shuhua stood before the hall's most treasured item: a quilt sent in 1991 by Red Army veterans to a local woman named Xu Jiexiu.

Xu's great-granddaughter, 38-year-old Zhu, retells the story of the quilt to visitors every day, and more importantly, about another half a quilt dating back more than 90 years.

In November 1934, as the Central Red Army embarked on the Long March, they passed through Rucheng, with the army's medical department stationed in Shazhou village. During the cold and rainy weather, three female Red Army soldiers stayed at Xu's home overnight.

Xu, then 34, let them crowd with her and her baby on one bed, covered by her old quilted coat, a straw rain cape, and tattered cotton wadding — everything she had to keep them warm. The soldiers offered their thin quilt and helped Xu mend clothes, fetch water, cook, and care for the baby. Upon departure, the soldiers cut their only quilt in half and gave one half to Xu. "Take it, sister," one of them said. "When the revolution succeeds, we will come back and bring you a new, warm quilt."

According to her family, it was then that Xu came to a profound realization: that a force whose soldiers would sacrifice their only quilt for civilians was a force genuinely fighting for the people. For the next 50 years, she often stood at the entrance of her village, hoping to see the three women again, but they never returned.

After learning about her story from a newspaper, some Red Army veterans, including Deng Yingchao (1904-1992), a revolutionary and politician who was the wife of the late premier Zhou Enlai, sent a new quilt to Xu in 1991. Sadly, it arrived shortly after she died.

The story, however, has been passed down through Xu's family and the village for generations. "I grew up hearing the story from my parents and grandparents,"

Zhu said.

Born in 1988, Zhu has no personal memory of her great-grandmother. "In my father's and uncles' descriptions, she was an ordinary rural woman with a strong will," Zhu said. "She often told the family: 'What are members of the Communist Party of China? They are the ones who, even if they have only one quilt, would offer half of it to the people'."

Zhu worked as a kindergarten teacher until the summer of 2018. When she returned home for the holidays, she found her uncle telling the "half a quilt" story to visitors through a portable loudspeaker.

"He had been doing it for years," Zhu said. "I was deeply touched and realized that we younger ones have an even greater responsibility to share this story with more people."

Now, as a docent at the "Warmth of Half a Quilt" Exhibition Hall in Shazhou, she has given thousands of tours to visitors, ranging from primary school students to seniors in their 70s and 80s. Since its opening in 2017, the exhibition hall has welcomed over 5.7 million visitors, becoming a key site for Red history education and study programs in the region.

In September 2020, Xi Jinping, General Secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, paid a visit to the exhibition hall during an inspection tour in Hunan.

Lacking food and clothing, even facing life-or-death situations, the Red Army still kept the people's wellbeing in mind, Xi said, noting that the story shows the CPC's original aspiration and character.

Nearly 90 years after the victory of the Long March, its spirit endures, and the impact of the "half a quilt" story extends far beyond its retelling.

Inspired by the story, five members of Xu's family have joined the military. Among them is Zhu Xiangqun, Xu's great-grandson, who now serves as the Party secretary of Shazhou village. Nearly every day, he works to address the concerns of each household and manage village affairs.

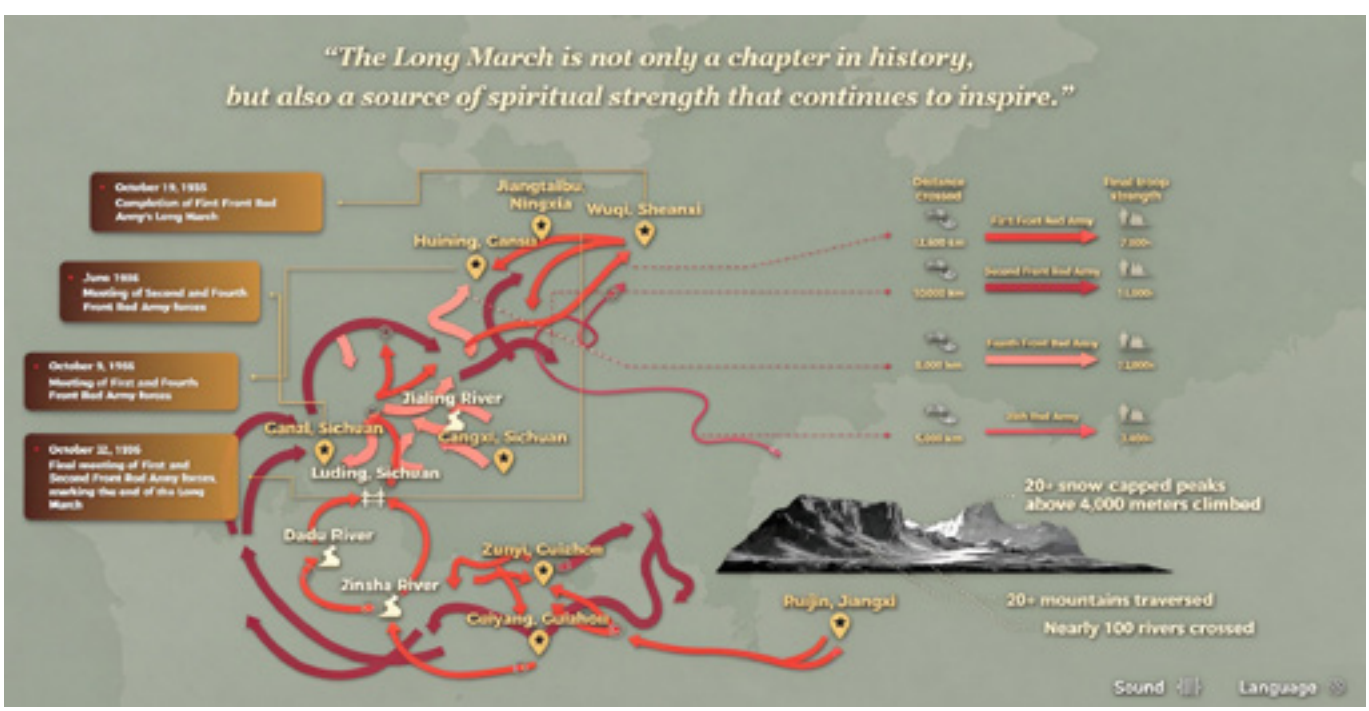
One of Xu's final wishes was to see the village road revamped, Zhu Xiangqun said. In 2017, a new tourism highway was completed through the mountains. Now, tourist buses park at the village entrance almost daily, and boxes of local produce, sold through livestreaming e-commerce, are transported along this road to destinations across the country.

With the exhibition hall and other Red tourism attractions drawing increasing numbers of visitors, many villagers have opened homestays, restaurants, and specialty shops. In 2025, the village welcomed 1.42 million visitors, and the per capita income for residents exceeded 26,000 yuan ($3,740). "Our village has transformed thanks to the boom in Red tourism, and life continues to improve," Zhu Xiangqun said.

Zhu Shuhua, the exhibition hall docent, now often shares the "half a quilt" story with her children.

"Every generation has its own Long March," she said. "I hope the kids, as well as other children, can resonate with the old story and continue to pass on this warmth." CI

(Source: *China Daily*)



Between 1930 and 1934, the Kuomintang launched five encirclement campaigns against communist base areas.
The Red Army beat back the first four attacks, but the fifth was devastating. It forced the first, second and fourth front armies, along with the 25th Army, to abandon their bases and set out on the Long March. The First Front Army left from Jiangxi and Fujian provinces. The other units began their retreats from bases in Sichuan, Hunan and Henan provinces.
In October 1936, the first, second and fourth front armies joined forces in northwest China, successfully completing this grueling strategic maneuver.

(Source: *CGTN*)

Through the Eyes of International Friends: What Long March Means Today

The Long March at 90: A Chinese Epic That Speaks to All Humanity

A towering sculpture of a bugler stands outside the Red Army's western expedition memorial hall in Tongxin County, northwest China's Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region. Head tilted skyward, horn raised, he stands ready to sound the call.

The monument is modeled on the cover of Red Star Over China, American journalist Edgar Snow's landmark book—the first to bring the full story of the Long March to a global audience.

As Snow wrote, many of the soldiers he photographed during his 1936 field visit—like this bugler—endured the rigors of that trek. These young fighters, he said, embodied the living spirit of Red China.

A strategic retreat from 1934 to 1936, the Long March was far more than a narrow escape from desperate odds. It paved the way for the Communist Party of China's (CPC) victory over the Kuomintang (KMT) and the founding of the People's Republic in 1949.

Strikingly, it was also a movement with global resonance, drawing foreign revolutionaries, observers and sympathizers like Snow, from the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, Vietnam and beyond.

This year marks the 90th anniversary of the Red Army's victory in the Long March. Nine decades on, it has transcended national borders to stand as a monument to human resilience and moral fortitude.

The Chinese version of Red Star Over China (XINHUA)

'An odyssey unequalled'

In the 1930s, China was engulfed in its war of resistance against Japanese aggression. As cooperation between the KMT and the CPC collapsed, the KMT unleashed a bloody purge targeting the CPC, forcing the Red Army onto the Long March.

Despite encirclement and an information blackout, countless farmers, workers, students and soldiers still risked death to enlist in the Red Army. What carried them through blockades, salt shortages and epidemics?

For Snow, then a journalism lecturer at Yenching University, these questions were a mystery. He concluded the only way to understand Red China was to go there himself. According to Sun Hua, director of the China Center for Edgar Snow Studies at Peking University, Snow reached Yuwangpu, present-day Yuwang Town in Tongxin, in August 1936 and stayed nearly a month, one of his longest stops while traveling across the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia border region.

There, Snow interviewed commanders, rank-and-file soldiers and local villagers. His writings depicted the Red Army as a disciplined fighting force. "What discipline they had seemed almost entirely self-imposed," he wrote. "When we passed private orchards, nobody touched the fruit in them, and the grain and vegetables we consumed in the villages were paid for in full."

Snow described a route that crossed some of the planet's harshest terrain, footpaths no wheel could follow, over Asia's snow-capped mountains and across great rivers.

Many dropped out, yet thousands more—farmers, apprentices, the enslaved, Kuomintang deserters, workers, the dispossessed—joined to fill the thinning ranks.

To Snow, it ranked among the great exploits of military history. "Adventure, exploration, discovery, human courage and cowardice, ecstasy and triumph, suffering, sacrifice, and loyalty, and then through it all, like a flame, an undimmed ardor and undying hope and amazing revolutionary optimism of those thousands of youths – all this and more seemed embodied in the history of an odyssey unequalled in modern times," he wrote. CI

(Source: *CGTN*)

Long March: A Journey of Determination

By Bernard Momanyi

More than 90 years after the Long March, the epic journey continues in the national consciousness of the Chinese people. The enduring legacy of resilience and transformation was palpable during my recent travels through Jiangxi and Guizhou provinces as part of an international delegation exploring key sites associated with the Long March.

The mountains, memorials and preserved revolutionary sites transformed historical accounts into something tangible and deeply human.

This year marks the 90th anniversary of the victory of the Long March. The journey, from 1934 to 1936, helped preserve the revolutionary movement and laid the foundation for the eventual success of the Chinese revolution.

Our journey of rediscovery began in Yeping, Jiangxi province, one of the birthplaces of the Chinese revolution.

We visited preserved revolutionary sites and the Red Well, a symbol of the relationship between the revolutionary movement and ordinary communities.

In Yudu county, the significance of the Long March became even more vivid. It was here, in October 1934, that the Central Red Army embarked on its historic journey along the Yudu River. The memorial park in Yudu commemorates that departure, while The First Crossing of the Long March, a stage production at the Long March Grand Theater, vividly portrays the sacrifice and determination of the journey.

In Guizhou, we visited the Zunyi Conference Site, Loushan Pass and the Gouba Conference Site, locations tied to crucial moments and decisions during the Long March.

Yet, it was the landscape that made the greatest impression. Even with modern roads and comfortable transport, the mountains and valleys remain formidable. Imagining what it was like for soldiers with limited supplies, facing hostile forces and crossing rivers and mountains, transformed the Long March from an abstract historical event into a deeply human story of endurance.

An aerial view of the Tantou Village in Yudu County, east China's Jiangxi Province, on October 2, 2026. Yudu is one of the landmarks in the Long March, the historic military maneuver in modern Chinese history (XINHUA)

In China, the Long March is remembered as a symbol of faith, perseverance, sacrifice and collective spirit. Its broader significance, however, extends beyond China's history and political experience.

For Kenya and much of the Global South, the journey offers an opportunity for reflection.

Our histories differ, but many developing societies share experiences of liberation struggles, political upheaval, poverty and the difficult task of nation building after colonial rule and conflict.

Kenya's own history, including the Mau Mau struggle, reminds us that nation building is rarely achieved without sacrifice.

Walking through the sites associated with the Long March prompted reflection not only on China's history but also on how Kenya remembers those who sacrificed for its independence.

One of the most striking lessons was China's effort to preserve historical memory and tell its stories to successive generations. At the carefully maintained historical sites, the experiences of those who participated in the Long March were preserved through memorials, museums, exhibitions and cultural productions.

This shows that preserving history and telling stories are closely connected.

A country can have a remarkable his-

A sculpture in tribute to Red Army soldiers participating in the Long March in Guilin, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, on September 21, 2026 (XINHUA)

tory, but if its stories are not preserved, documented and communicated effectively, they can gradually disappear from the national consciousness.

This is an area where Kenya and other African countries have much to reflect on. We have powerful stories of liberation, sacrifice and nation building, yet many remain insufficiently known among younger generations.

The lesson from China is not that Kenya should replicate China's approach. Rather, nations need to take ownership of their historical narratives.

We need to preserve important sites, document the experiences of those who lived through defining moments and find creative ways of telling these stories to younger generations.

Museums and memorials play an important role, but so do journalism, documentaries, books, theater, film, podcasts and digital platforms. Better storytelling can make history accessible without diminishing its complexity.

Preserving history is not about remaining trapped in the past. It is about giving future generations the context to understand the present and imagine the future.

The Long March was marked by several setbacks, yet it continued.

For developing countries confronting poverty, unemployment, inequality, climate change and technological disruption, the broader lesson of perseverance is very relevant. Development rarely happens overnight. It requires institutions, investment, patience and the ability to remain focused on long-term objectives even when immediate challenges appear overwhelming.

For Africa, the lesson is not that development must follow China's exact path. Rather, it is that difficult development challenges require persistence and a willingness to think beyond immediate political and economic cycles.

The Long March also offers a lesson about collective purpose. Its history is inseparable from the people who endured the journey together. For societies facing complex challenges today, collective effort remains essential.

Tracing the Long March route transformed a historical account into something tangible. At Yudu, I could imagine the beginning of the journey. At Zunyi, I could appreciate the significance of decisions taken under pressure. At Loushan Pass, the mountains reminded me of the scale of the challenge.

Ninety years later, the Long March belongs firmly to China's history. Yet some of its broader lessons belong to humanity. For Kenya and the Global South, the enduring message is that transformation requires resilience, collective effort, long-term thinking and, importantly, the determination to preserve and tell the stories of those who made earlier progress possible.

The Long March ended nine decades ago, but its journey continues in the questions it raises about how nations confront adversity, remember their past and build their future. **CI**

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