

**Book Launch cum Seminar – The New Era in Today's China
November 25, 2022**

**Speech by Tan Sri Ong Tee Keat
Chairman, Centre for New Inclusive Asia**

At the outset, in my capacity as the Chairman of CNIA, may I congratulate my colleague King Kee on the launching of his first book titled " The New Era in Today's China ".

The book presents an insightful alternative view of China amid the tumult of Western-centric narratives on China. This is indeed a scarcity within the Anglophone world, not just across the globe but also within the Malaysian social fabric.

King Kee, author of the book, has manifested his academic courage and integrity by penning his thoughts and observation of China on such contemporary issues as the Sino-US relations, poverty reduction and common prosperity, the Chinese aspiration of global governance and the vision of building a community with shared future for humanity.

To understand China as a geopolitical actor on the world stage has never been easy if one were to turn a blind eye to the Chinese history, culture and its philosophy. The model of Chinese governance has been for ages rooted in its rich heritage of history and culture, some of which may totally be beyond easy reach of comprehension in the Western perspective.

Parallel to this, the globally embraced democracy does not only exist in the form of multi-party election. Neither has the people's aspiration been fully embodied in the institution of ballot box democracy. The world stage is big enough to accommodate the full spectrum of diverse models of governance. Any coercive initiative to seek a model of homogeneous governance worldwide, be it labelled as an act to enhance democracy or otherwise, is by itself undemocratic in nature. Ultimately it is the people's choice in a particular country that matters. So is the case of China where the Chinese governance is inseparable from the cultures of its officialdom rooted in the practice of meritocracy and selection. This differs from the multi-party election which is now increasingly plagued by populism and gerrymandering where in many instances, novice-turned-populists are at helm, and the fundamental essence of "one man one vote" is discreetly usurped or trampled upon.

Be that as it may, in engaging with the international community amid a challenging geopolitical environment which remains dominated by the US primacy, China has to be versatile to make itself better understood by others through more effective means of

communication. Mere translation of its narratives is no solution to the conundrum at hand so long as the historical background of certain semantics remains alien to the outside world of diverse cultures. This is a real test to its developing discourse power.

The interpretation of building "A Community with A Shared Future for Humanity" is a classic case in point. While the West generally views it as a Chinese Trojan Horse to propagate its own version of governance and global order, the truth remains that China takes it as an endeavour to promote coordinated multilateral international cooperation in the face of rising global challenges, many of which are our existential threats.

In a bid to bridge such a gap of comprehension, I could see King Kee's sincere intention to share his alternative take on various issues involving China. I believe this book of his is just the inaugural copy of his series of narratives, particularly on topics of geopolitical interests.