

LIFE IN CHINA

The Future to be in China

By BI Weizi and LONG Yun

William N. Brown, the first American to receive a Chinese Green Card in Fujian province and one of the earliest foreign teachers of the MBA program in Chinese universities, has been teaching in Xiamen University since 1988, where he is a professor at the university's School of Management. He was awarded the Chinese Government Friendship Award in 1993 for his contributions to training international trade professionals, and was voted honorary "Person of the Year" at the "Touching China" 2019 Award Ceremony aired on CCTV-1.

Fate leads me to Xiamen

Driven by the curiosity to learn more about Chinese language, history and culture, he moved with his family to Xiamen in 1988, where for three decades he has witnessed China's process of modernization.

"Before coming to Xiamen, I read a lot about China, especially through *China Today* and *Beijing Review*. China was talking about how they were going to end poverty and improve people's lives. I have been wanting to do that even in high school. I thought if China achieves even a small part of its goals, it will achieve more than any other country. I decided I want to go to China, study Chinese and learn more about China. Maybe there's something I could do to help," said Brown.

As the only university providing accommodation for foreign students with families back then, Xiamen University was his number one choice. He set out on the long journey from the U.S. with his two young sons, one who was two years old and the other six months, despite his parents not being in favor of



Professor William N. Brown. (COURTESY PHOTO)

his decision.

While having registered as a student at Xiamen University, he had a little trouble getting coupons, which were the only way to buy necessities in shop and to get food at the cafeteria in 1988. "For the first two weeks, Chinese teachers heard about this and shared their coupons with me. It was months later that I learned that actually they didn't even have enough [for] themselves. I was so moved by that. We were not happy about the living conditions, but we loved the people," said Brown, adding that he was confident that China would get better because of its people.

Reporting on real China

After moving to Xiamen, Brown sent letters home about his life in China. He then started to write magazine articles about China's progress, which

didn't go down well with foreign readers. They were skeptical since Brown had never been to the west of China.

So, to write more authoritatively about China, Brown wanted to see the real China for himself. In 1994, he decided to take a three-month, 40,000 kilometer trip all the way around China in a 15-passenger high-ceiling van. What he saw made him believe that China was really delivering on its commitments, by building roads and helping develop even the most remote areas.

With the well-equipped infrastructure, farmers in rural China were given the same opportunity as those in cities and were able to improve their livelihoods, in line with the old Chinese saying, "Don't just give them fish, teach them how to fish."

Based on his China experience at

the end of 2018, Brown published a book titled *Off the Wall: How We Fell for China*, sharing from a unique global perspective the changes in China and its development driven by rapid reform and opening up.

In 2019, in order to see China's ongoing development, he drove around China again, traveling 20,000 kilometers in 32 days this time. "In 1994, the roads were like snakes in design. But by 2019, [there were] so many tunnels and so many bridges cutting through the mountains and over valleys, they cut [our travel] time in half," said Brown, adding that another thing that amazed him is that the remotest places, like Ningxia and Xizang, have Internet.

Receiving permanent residence

After a semester of studying Chinese at Xiamen University, Brown, who already had a PhD in management, received a job offer to teach business and help build one of the best MBA programs in China.

Then in 1992, motivated by his students, he decided to apply for permanent residence in China. "In the early 1990s, most of my students wanted to go abroad. I told them that the future will be in China, not overseas," he said. But the students did not believe him. To demonstrate that he was fully committed and to encourage his students to help build China with what they'd learned, he applied for permanent residence. "Over the years, more and more students stayed here. By 2000, few [of my] students went overseas," said Brown.

Encouraged by Chinese President Xi Jinping, Brown said he would continue to write about China and introduce this great eastern civilization to more people.

20th CPC National Congress Raises Global Hopes

Letter to the Editor

By Ershad Shikar

The much anticipated 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) recently ended on a high note. The congress elected Xi Jinping as general secretary of the CPC Central Committee while also bringing fresh blood to the party leadership.

This congress is important for not only electing new leaders, but also for raising the hopes of the Chinese people and the world alike, after the leadership reiterated that China will continue promoting broader and deeper reform and opening up across the board.

Under the leadership of President Xi Jinping, China is now more connected to the world than ever before. The country has deeper bilateral ties with more than 180 countries and is the largest trading partner of over 140 nations. The ruling CPC also has good ties with more than 600 political parties and organizations globally.

With China's GDP of around 17.7 trillion USD in 2021, accounting for 18.5 percent of the global economy, it has remained the second-largest economy in the world for a decade. It also ranks first in the world in terms of grain output, while its manufacturing sector is the largest on earth.

Given such a background, the Chinese leadership has reaffirmed their pledge to forge ahead with the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The trillion-dollar initiative has already walked a long way to making positive contributions to many countries since it was proposed in 2013.

The BRI has so far gained ground across Southeast Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, West Asia, North Africa, and Central and Eastern Europe. The combined land territories of those regions account for more than one-third of the world's total, as well as a population of around 60 percent, and a GDP of 32 percent, which speaks volumes of its importance.

The BRI also boosts international

cooperation on education. China had signed agreements with many other BRI countries on mutual recognition of academic certificates and degrees in higher education, and over 60 Chinese universities have launched academic programs in partnership with local institutions in BRI countries.

Therefore, if China continues its implementation of the BRI, the world will gain more as the large projects under the BRI will continue boosting connectivity, eradicating poverty, and improving local people's livelihoods in many countries.

The BRI projects will also contribute to the overall economic growth of many nations, paving the way for the establishment of their basic human rights.

Additionally, if China deepens its reform and opening up, as reaffirmed at the congress, the country will increase and intensify its foreign trade and investments, further open its domestic market to the world, and benefit many countries.

The benefits can be explained by using Bangladesh, a strategic partner of China, as an example. If Bangladesh can achieve a one percent share of the Chinese market, its export earnings from China alone could be in the range of 20 to 25 billion USD. The trade balance would therefore tilt toward Bangladesh, which is now heavily in favor of China. Bangladesh could also attract more Chinese investments as an important member of BRI.

Just like Bangladesh, many other countries can boost their infrastructure development with more Chinese investments and further increase bilateral and multilateral trade. The countries can also benefit from cultivating their students in China.

Finally, I think various countries in the world have prospects on all fronts to explore and forge ahead with all-out cooperation with China. As the congress has decided to stick to the existing policies of deepening its reform and opening up, the world can benefit massively from this decision.

Ershad Shikar is a Bangladeshi journalist now based in Beijing.

My China Story

China, A Land of Opportunity and Diversity

By Staff Reporters

Mohammad Saiyedul Islam, a Doctoral Fellow at the School of International Trade and Economics at Jiangxi University of Finance and Economics, came to China for further study in 2018 from Bangladesh. Recently, Islam shared his thoughts on his China story with *S&T Daily*.

S&T Daily: What are your impressions of China?

Mohammad Saiyedul Islam: My first impression of this country is that life is very convenient, flexible and safe because of the infrastructure development, advanced technology, and sound governance system. Furthermore, China is a land of opportunity and has created opportunities for itself and people worldwide. Over the past decades, China has seen remarkable changes nationwide in economic growth, environmental protection, and social development.

Recently, I visited Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region at the invitation of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, where I saw something miraculous.

They have changed a big desert into a green area and changed people's lives by cultivating grapes in the desert. Millions of impoverished rural residents living under the current poverty line in China have all been lifted out of poverty. Looking at the past and present, and China and foreign countries, it is only China that has achieved such excellent development achievement in such a short time.

S&T Daily: What do local people and culture in China attract you most?

China is a huge country with a vast and profound culture of more than 5000 years. In my opinion, China is a land of diversity and freedom. Including Han nationality, there are 56 ethnic groups in China and minority groups in China enjoy equal rights.

I have visited many homes of ethnic minorities to learn about their lifestyles. I saw with my own eyes how free they are and what the Chinese government has done for them, encouraging them to expand their distinct culture around the world. People are living here very peacefully. There are no conflicts with each other. This is the beauty of China.

S&T Daily: What factors persuaded you to study in China and how do you think about China's academic environment?

Going abroad for further study helps students discover more of themselves and gives them opportunities to broaden their horizons. China is becoming a fast-rising star in the global educational field.

More importantly, Chinese universities offer high-quality education to students at a very affordable tuition fee. The Chinese government, universities, and other institutions offer different kinds of scholarships to support international students, which is necessary, especially for developing or underdeveloped countries. In recent years, China and relevant countries along the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) have developed close educational cooperation and cultural exchanges, such as setting up projects to train high-skilled talent from countries along the BRI.

S&T Daily: What changes have impressed you most during your stay in China, especially regarding the progress China has made in sci-tech?

Although the U.S. is still in a lead-

ing position in some fields, if you look at science and technology, China's development is impressive. For example, mobile payments are the norm in China and everything is cashless. I never need a wallet as long as I have got my phone. Almost anything can be paid for using apps like Alipay and Wechat.

At the same time, I have visited some rural areas to learn and experience how China revitalized these. I saw that farmers are using advanced technology to [assist with] agricultural production. They are using drones to spread pesticides on agricultural land. Villagers are selling their products through live streaming, using 5G Internet, and e-commerce is thriving.

Even during the pandemic, by using advanced technology, we can get updated information on how to prevent the virus.

I think China can share its advanced technology and experiences with other countries, such as in the field of agricultural technology, share experiences on how to eradicate absolute poverty in an all-around way and revitalize rural areas with the help of technology.

FAST Advances Universe Exploration

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By July, 2022, over 660 new pulsars had been identified through FAST, exceeding the number of discoveries made by all other telescopes in the same period combined worldwide. Over 100 high-quality observation results using FAST have been published by this date.

"The development of FAST has entered into a golden period. Its stable op-

eration of observation equipment made a great contribution to this," said Jiang Peng, chief engineer of FAST, adding that adequate observation time and outstanding signal capture ability allowed FAST to perform better than other radio telescopes.

Mission overview

Since FAST completed its testing period and entered into full operation in

2020, the telescope's operation time has reached 6,200 hours per year by 2022.

Approved by the National Development and Reform Commission in July 2007, the construction of FAST among the jagged rocks and peaks in southwestern China in 2014 cost 1.2 billion RMB.

Several goals have been set out for FAST, including probing the universe using radio wavelengths, hunting for faint

pulsars, mapping neutral hydrogen in distant galaxies, and searching for signs of extraterrestrial communications and intelligence.

The telescope also joined the Breakthrough Listen project in October 2016, to search for intelligent extraterrestrial communications in the universe. Scientists announced the first observation with the telescope in February, 2020.



This photo is presented with the Grand Award of the contest. It integrates Tianjin at different times in a day into one photo. (PHOTO: Samu from Tianjin Normal University)