

# Language as the Vehicle of Cultrual Exchange

By BI Weizi

Martin Woesler, a German sinologist, cultural expert and translator of Chinese literature, received the Chinese Government Friendship Award in 2021. Professor Woesler translated works from the Chinese authors, such as Lu Xun, Yu Dafu, Zhu Ziqing, Bing Xin and Ba Jin into English and German, as well as



Martin Woesler, a German sinologist, cultural expert and translator of Chinese literature. (COURTESY PHOTO)

of Cao Xueqin into German. He published the first complete translation of the Chinese classic novel *Dream of the Red Chamber* into German. Thanks to Woesler, many Chinese literary works are available to a Western audience for the first time.

### Languages as carriers of culture

As a high school graduate with top grades and scholarships, Woesler decided to major in Chinese Studies because it was considered the hardest subject and he wanted a challenge with a difficult language and a distant culture.

Speaking several languages and having travelled extensively provide Woesler a creative perspective of looking at the relationship between languages and cultures.

He believes that Chinese carries one of the richest cultures in the world and has lived in the country on and off for almost eight years, considering himself to be partly Chinese. To Woesler, languages open new worlds, especially the literary tradition of Qu Yuan, Li Bai, Du Fu and Bai Juyi.

### Dream of the Red Chamber

When he started to study Chinese at Bochum, Germany and Peking University, he was intrigued by *Dream of the Red Chamber*, whose German translation and revisions would become his most significant tasks for decades.

*Dream of the Red Chamber* opens up a Chinese world about 250 years ago to Western readers. The novel is a classic, not only for its huge cast of characters and psychological scope, but also for its precise and detailed observation of the life and social structures typical of 18th-century Chinese society.

According to Woesler, one of the major obstacles

he encountered while translating the epic work was the cultural elements, which cannot be understood if one is not familiar with China's history and traditions. He tried to solve this problem by giving further explanations in the text or in footnotes. In terms of the meanings of names and places, sometimes double meanings, he explained when he could not recreate the complexity in the target text. He hopes that his translation could take the readers back in time and identify themselves as one of the protagonists, therefore evoking similar, if not the same response from target readers.

Woesler developed the appropriateness theory as a new translation strategy -striving not just for the best equivalence, but for the one which is the most appropriate.

### Chinese Government Friendship Award

Woesler regards the friendship award as a great honor and incentive, deepening his feelings with Chinese people and love of Chinese culture. The award has inspired him to continue his dedicated work to advocate communication and exchanges between Chinese and Western cultures.

He plans to spend more time in China and help guide the promising young academic community to reach international standards. There are many talented young scholars in China and he is striving to make as many as he can prepare for the very competitive future globalized job market. Chinese and international scholars should cooperate more in research and teaching, said Woesler.

He believes that the more international cooperation and exchanges there are, the better China can learn useful things from the world and the better the rest of the world can benefit from China.

## Letter to the Editor

# China's Success in the Fight against Poverty

By Mark H. Levine

While the list of China's accomplishments since the founding of the Communist Party of China 100 years ago is long, what impresses me the most is the elevation of approximately 100 million people out of poverty and the eradication of extreme poverty. To understand why this ranks number one on my list of gains, I think it is necessary to understand a little about my life.

I am a sociologist who studied social change, social movements and social stratification (inequality within society). After a few years of university teaching, I left the academic work and became what some of my colleagues later called a "public sociologist." To clarify, I became a full-time volunteer working in organizations of poor workers and their families. So for nearly 30 years before coming to China in 2005, I was both working and living in some of the poor communities across the U.S. struggling against poverty in the richest country in the world.

Whether working or unemployed; whether receiving some minimal governmental assistance or not; whether living in rural or urban areas, day-to-day life was a constant struggle for food, housing, clothing, medical care, legal representation, and everything. Our work was to try to fill these needs through co-operating with everyone we could EXCEPT the government since we had learned through generations of struggle in the U. S. that government aid most often got in the way of finding solutions. We also understood that our efforts, as helpful as they might be, were insufficient and what was truly needed was a serious governmental and social commitment to permanently change these conditions.

Instead, what we saw was that despite "The War on Poverty," "The Poor People's Campaign," and other slogans that were supposed to bring an end to poverty, over the past 40-45 years, poverty has actually increased.

During that same period of time in China, however, the exact opposite has happened. During my 16 years in China, I have been in 29 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions. I have been in big cities, small cities, towns and villages. Driving along country roads, I have seen old, dilapidated farm housing that is no longer occupied as the families are living in new houses or apartment buildings close to the fields where they work.

Ten years ago when I was supervising students who were writing their Bachelor's thesis, when I would tell them that they would have to work over the Spring Festival Holiday, some students would tell me that they have no Internet in their town or village or that they have no computer. No one tells me these things anymore because they are no longer true.

I have read of the work of party cadre across the country who left their homes to work and live in the poorest communities, making the commitment that not only were they there but that they would stay there until the campaign to end poverty succeeded.

As I look at the progress that has been made, it is clear that with the examples of success and the continuing commitment of the Communist Party of China, the future is very bright ahead.

(Dr. Mark Levine is an American sociologist who came to China in 2005. Now, he teaches sociology in Minzu University of China.)

# Educational Experts Gather to Redefine Learning

By Staff Reporters

The online version of the Sixth Annual Conference of Global K-12 Education Research Association, sponsored by the Department of Science and Technology of Hebei Province (Hebei Administration of Foreign Experts Affairs) and undertaken by Shijiazhuang Foreign Language Education Group, came to a successful close on November 3.

About 604,600 people attended the conference (on line), including educational experts and scholars from 14 countries such as the U.S., Canada and Russia. Themed "Redefining Learning," the conference provided a platform for wide exchanges, unity and cooperation, and mutual inspiration in the field of basic education in Hebei Province. At the conference, representatives from 14 countries and 128 schools actively

shared their experiences, exchanged ideas, and achieved fruitful results. The conference contributed valuable insights to help boost the growth of students worldwide. Guo Yuming, deputy director-general of the Department of Science and Technology of Hebei Province, noted that Hebei Province has been committed to grounding its work in promoting high-quality development in recent years. Moreover, the province has played an ac-

tive role in spreading Chinese culture and language learning, while making concerted efforts to attract foreign experts.

At the same time, Hebei is constantly improving its entry mechanisms to improve the services offered to foreign experts in a bid to facilitate communication and cooperation between Hebei and various countries and regions, said Guo.

Source: the Department of Science and Technology of Hebei Province

## Service Info

## Hainan Tropical Rainforest National Park

Aerial photo taken on Sept. 30, 2021 shows the view of the Hainan Tropical Rainforest National Park in south China's Hainan Province. The Hainan Tropical Rainforest National Park boasts one of the most concentrated, best preserved and largest contiguous tropical rainforests in China. The park covers nine cities and counties, with a total area of 4,400 km², or about one-seventh of Hainan Island's land area. It is an important part of the world's tropical rainforest and a key area for biodiversity conservation in China. (PHOTO: XINHUA)



## Traditional Eastern Wisdom

# Youchao: the Father of Building

By BI Weizi

According to Han Feizi, people could avoid harm from animals with the help of buildings made from wood, which was originally taught by Youchao.

In ancient times, there were many wild animals and few human beings, and people nomads were often attacked by animals and lived in constant fear of death. The ancients noticed that some animals lived in caves, so they followed suit as the caves provided protection from the wind, rain and wild animals. However, caves were damp and cold, and humans were still attacked by wild animals from time to time.

Chinese mythology says that Youchao was born in Cangwu, south of Jiuyi Mountain, and had traveled to the immortal mountains where he became enlightened by the immortals, and gained unparalleled wisdom. He noticed that the nests of birds were built in trees, so that they could be sheltered from the wind, rain and the threat of wild animals. Inspired by this, he built a house in the tree using branches and cane. Other people came to realize the advantages of the tree house and followed suit.

From then on, people collected plant seeds and wild fruits during the day, lived in the trees at night, and no longer had to worry about sudden at-

tacks from wild animals. In order to express their gratitude to the inventor of the house, people elected him as the leader of the tribe.

The development from cave dwelling to nesting was a big step forward in the development of human civilization. The change lifestyle led to a change in human relationships. People no longer lived in groups in caves, therefore inter-marriage within the same clan was gradually abolished. Both men and women sought to find life partners from other clans without any close blood ties.

In the history of Chinese civilization, Youchao took this vital step to help distinguish humans from animals.



A tree house. (PHOTO: VCG)



Doctor Mark H. Levine at the Great Wall. (COURTESY PHOTO)

# Zero-Tolerance Policy on COVID-19 Not Expensive

By Staff Reporters

Zhong Nanshan, a leading Chinese respiratory disease expert, told China Global Television Network (CGTN) that the current two percent death rate of the disease globally is not tolerated in China in spite of vaccination against COVID-19.

### A relatively low-cost measure

Zhong said China had to adopt a zero-tolerance and zero-transmission policy, as the current Delta variant of COVID-19 spreads fast and replicates very quickly. While the policy is expensive, Zhong said the cost could be higher if ignored and the virus was allowed to spread. He also said that some countries had lifted restrictions while still reporting some small gatherings, leading to a new series of infections that came at a greater cost. Zhong said that the imported cases of COVID-19, or sporadic outbreaks will certainly be reported if China gradually opens to the world. Therefore, he thought the zero-tolerance policy would be taken for a long time. However, he further explained this is not a rigid zero-transmission policy. The policy duration depends on the basis of anti-virus performance worldwide. "No matter how well

China does in containing the pandemic, the imported cases will not be avoidable when the country opens its doors. In my opinion, China's zero-tolerance strategy doesn't cost too much, [as it is a] relatively low-cost approach," he said.

### Valuable experiences against COVID-19

As to his latest comments on recent sporadic outbreaks in some regions, he is confident on government help and experience gained before. A local outbreak of the COVID-19 in Guangzhou in May and June was controlled in about a month, while another outbreak reported in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, was tamped down within 26 days, said Zhong.

He highlighted four points on China's success in containing the recent sporadic outbreaks. "The first is to find the first patient and trace where he or she came from. The second is to figure out the infection chain," said Zhong, adding that the third is to find close contacts in the infection chain, so that they can be screened in a timely manner. The last point is that all the close contacts are isolated and tested in time to prevent the virus from spreading in local communities.