Dialogue with Foreign Expert

China: Democracy that Works Well

Editor's note:

The Two Sessions, the annual gathering of the nation's top legislature and political advisory body, will begin on March 4 this year. The events will provide an excellent opportunity for outsiders to witness democracy and the rule of law at work in China's political system. Several thoughtful foreign experts were invited to discuss what they saw and their connection with China. Their views highlighted a more open and inclusive China as well as the accomplishments China has made in recent years.

Mark Levine is receiving an interview with S&T Daily. (PHOTO: S&T DAILY)

Mark Levine is an American sociologist who moved to China in 2005 following nearly three decades in the United States as a volunteer labor/community organizer. Currently, he is a professor at Minzu University of China. As a long-standing friend of China and sociology scholar, Levine shared his perspectives on the Two Sessions, China's poverty alleviation efforts and the Winter Olympic Games Beijing 2022.

Based on his recent involvement in an activity related to the National People's Congress (NPC) , he told a story about three female NPC deputies to exemplify ordinary people's participation in the decision-making process, emphasizing that China's quality democracy depends on people getting involved, making themselves heard, and-more importantly, having their demands met.

He emphasized that, in contrast to legislators in the West who make a career out of politics, China's NPC deputies, like the examples he cited previously, work part-time and are made up of ordinary citizens from all walks of life, including film projectors, farmers, and bus drivers. He added that China is doing a much better job of taking care of the entire society, listening to the people, and unleashing their potential rather than serve a specific group from a distance. "It is wonderful to see deputies living and working in the communities they serve. However, what they have done has a direct effect on people's day-to-day lives," Levine explained.

Levine has conducted a fairly comprehensive study of China's poverty alleviation work. He outlined several of China's accomplishments and emphasized that the Communist Party of China's strategy is to stand with people and make their voices heard, ensuring that the gains from campaigns are sustained. At the same time, it fully demonstrates that People-centered philosophy is the fundamental driving force behind China's cause of poverty reduction.

Levine joked that he is not a fan of winter sports in reference to Beijing 2022. He was, however, fascinated by the television programs and clips that circulated on the internet. Throughout the process, science and technology innovation has been a defining feature of Beijing 2022. Levine lauded the sci-tech elements incorporated into Beijing 2022, saying, "I do not have any reason to say Beijing 2022 was not a success." What impresses him is China's ability to strike the ideal balance between hosting such a grand event and successfully containing the COVID-19. Additionally, he noted that "the event served as a platform to demonstrate mutual respect between Chinese people and foreign athletes."

Dailylife Myth Buster

Myth: Walk faster, live about 15 years longer?

Fact: Walking speed does not determine human lifespan.

Recently, many online articles have called on everyone to walk faster for the purpose of "longevity." The source of these voices comes from a study published in the Mayo Clinic Proceedings, a scientific publication for physicians published in the United States. An extensive study by British researchers has also revealed people who walk briskly are expected to live longer than those with who walk steadily.

The subjects of the study were 474,919 middle-aged and elderly people in the United Kingdom, with an average age of 58.2 years and an average body mass index (BMI) of 26.7 kg/㎡.

"Participants reporting a brisk walking pace had longer life expectancy across all levels of BMIs, ranging from 86.7 to 87.8 years in women and 85.2 to 86.8 years in men," the study shows "Subjects reporting a slow walking pace had shorter life expectancy, with the lowest being observed in slow walkers with a BMI less than 20 kg/㎡ (women: 72.4 years; men: 64.8 years)." It is worthy of noting that there was a less noticeable difference in life expectancy between brisk walkers and average-speed, or steady walkers.

The age difference has been used by some myth-creators. "The statement circulating on the Internet that 'those faster walkers live 15 to 20 years longer than those who have slow steps' is too exaggerated. The effect of pace on lifespan has been magnified,"Xu Kai, associate professor at the Nanjing Sport Institute, told the *Science and Technology Daily*, adding that this study can show that there is a certain relationship between walking speed and life expectancy, but walking fast may not necessarily lead to longevity. As the researchers stated in the study, as an observational study, no causal relationship can be inferred.

"A person's physical health is an important factor affecting longevity," said Xu, but there are many factors that influence physical health, including diet, mood and interpersonal relationships, and daily exercise is only one of the factors, he said.

Traditional Eastern Wisdom

Zhang Zhongjing: the Sage of Chinese Medicine

By BI Weizi

Eminent Chinese pharmacologist and physician, Zhang Zhongjing (150 – 219), was born in Nanyang, Henan province in the late Eastern Han Dynasty. He was hailed as the sage of Chinese medicine by later generations for his unsurpassed contributions to traditional Chinese medicine (TCM).

Zhang Zhongjing. (PHOTO:VCG)

Using previous medicinal literature such as *Huangdi Neijing* or *Yellow Emperor's Inner Classic*, collecting a wide range of medical prescriptions, and drawing on his own practical experience, Zhang wrote the legendary masterpiece *Shanghan Zabing Lun* or *Treatise on Cold Pathogenic and Miscellaneous Diseases*. It established the principle of "evidence-based treatment", which is the basic clinical principle and soul of TCM.

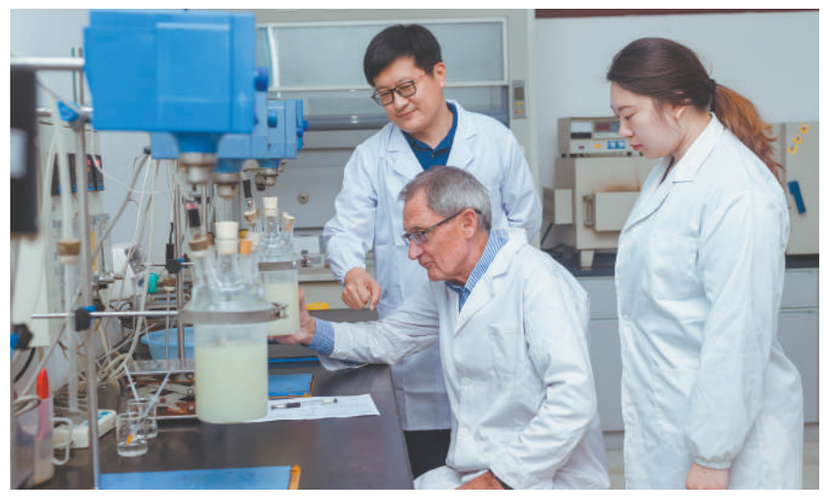
Evidence-based treatment is the process of applying theory, method, prescription and medicine to clinical practice. It includes two processes: the method of diagnosis and the determination of treatment based on the differentiation of symptoms and signs. Diagnosis is identifying a disease by physicians through the four diagnostic methods (inspection, auscultation and olfaction, inquiry and palpation) and eight principles (yin and yang, exterior and interior, cold and heat, deficiency and excess). This theory of treatment is to determine the corresponding treatment method according to the results of the identification.

However, shortly after the book was published, it was lost in the wars of the time. The version that people see today was collated by later physicians into two books, namely, *Shang Han Lun (On Cold Damage)* and *Jingui Yaolue (Essential Prescriptions of the Golden Coffer)*. The former mainly focused on a discourse on how to treat epidemic infectious diseases causing fevers prevalent during his era, and the latter was devoted to treatments on internal diseases.

The book spread overseas and was also highly respected in foreign medical circles, becoming an important textbook for study. Statistically, from the Jin Dynasty (266-420) to the present, more than a thousand Chinese and foreign scholars have compiled, annotated and studied *Shanghan Zabing Lun*. In addition, the development of medicine in Korea, Vietnam, Indonesia, Singapore, Mongolia and other countries have also been promoted to varying degrees.

International Cooperation the Way to Go

By BI Weizi



Professor Krister Holmberg. (COURTESY PHOTO)

Krister Holmberg is a Swedish chemist and professor of surface chemistry at Chalmers University of Technology, focuses on the behavior of surface active compounds in solution and at interfaces. For the active role he has played in the industrial applications of surface and colloid chemistry, Holmberg was bestowed with the Quancheng Friendship Award by the city of Jinan, Shandong province in 2019 and the Chinese Government Friendship Award in 2021. He spoke to *S&T Daily* recently about his work in China.

S&T Daily: Congratulations on your Chinese Government Friendship Award. What does this award mean to you and how does it motivate you to deepen your cooperation with China?

Holmberg: I'm very proud of the Friendship Award from the Chinese Government. I know it is a prestigious award and I'm not sure that I fully deserve it. I have interacted a lot with Chinese people during the last 10 years, initially with a well-known chemistry professor at the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing and with a younger professor in Chengdu. The professor in Chengdu introduced me to the CEO of Shandong GiNZRE New Materials Company and during the last five years I have had a lot of interactions with that company. I have enjoyed that very much and the award stimulates me to interact even more with GiNZRE. I hope my experience from my career in Europe can be beneficial to the company.

S&T Daily: There is normally a lot to be done to put experiment results into real applications and improve production efficiency. What is the biggest challenge you've encountered during this process and how do you resolve it?

Holmberg: I totally agree that taking results from university research into industrially useful processes or products is not easy. I think that one must consider the possible industrial applications already when starting a university project. If one carries out a chemical reaction, for example, it is important that the starting materials are environmentally benign and not too expensive. The process should also not be too complicated. Environmental considerations are becoming more and more important, and one must not start a project in small scale that cannot be scaled up at a later stage because of environmental concerns.

S&T Daily: Now that the international community has been paying more attention to environmental protection and carbon emission cut, how would you help China achieve its dual carbon goals through your research?

Holmberg: I totally agree that environmental concerns are very important and will be even more important in the future. Energy is closely related to the environment. The world is heading for green energy sources such as solar cells, windmills and hydroelectric power. I know China is in the forefront of all three. But it will be a long way until we are there and energy from fossil sources will continue to play a big role for a long time, probably the whole century. It is then important to cut down on coal and to use more oil and gas instead. Oil and gas are much more environmentally benign than coal. My role at the company GiNZRE is to help develop chemical solutions that will improve the yield of oil from oil fields. China has many large oil fields. Some of these are relatively old and annual production is declining. By injecting small amounts of specific chemicals into the oil reservoir, the yield can be improved. The improved oil production is good for the environment because it makes it possible to replace coal by oil.

S&T Daily: What suggestions do you have for China to increase its involvement in international cooperation?

Holmberg: I have interacted with Chinese scientists over several decades. During this period, I have seen how Chinese science has developed and grown in importance on the international scene. China is nowadays a very big player when looking at both the number of scientific publications and impact of publications. However, China is still lagging behind Europe and the U.S. when it comes to Nobel prizes. I'm involved in the selection of the Nobel prize in Chemistry and I can see that China still has some way to go. Judging from my many visits to the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) in Beijing and also from visits to other CAS facilities, as well as to universities around the country, I would say that Chinese science would benefit from a stronger influx of young scientists, such as PhD students, postdocs and assistant professors, from abroad. A constant influx of young, talented people with a different background is essential in today's highly competitive academic world. I once had the pleasure to sit next to Liu He, the vice premier of China, at a banquet in Beijing and we discussed this matter. Liu, who had himself been a student at Harvard, said he totally agreed with my views that Chinese universities should find ways to accomplish this.

Together for the Future

Letter to the Editor

By Irina Andreeva

The success of the Winter Olympic Games Beijing 2022 amidst the severe challenges of the global COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrates the power of the Olympic Games to unite the world in overcoming difficulties and building a better future for humanity, shows the power of collective solidarity and the core values and vision of leading international sporting events. The slogan of Beijing 2022, "Together for the Future", also reflects the world's common desire to work together for a better tomorrow.

The opening ceremony of Beijing 2022 was a celebration of sport, peace, and uniting people of the world. Beijing 2022 was held during extremely tough times. Facing the global pandemic, Winter Olympic personnel from all participating countries and regions were tested for COVID-19 many times, along with various preventive measures against the virus being taken. China created excellent conditions for the Winter Olympic athletes and staff, and the safety and convenience of the sports venues have received wide acclaim.

Despite the strict anti-pandemic measures, China showed the highest level of welcome, warmly receiving Winter Olympic guests from all over the world. Athletes were impressed with the smart technologies applied at the Games, such as the high-tech service robots, the Chinese New Year's atmosphere in the rooms and the wide variety of delicious food. The Games were also blessed with pleasant weather every day, and the athletes joked that perhaps Chinese had used high technology to dispel all the dark clouds.

Professor Irina Andreeva. (COURTESY PHOTO)

China has been incredibly successful in the fight against the pandemic. Despite having a large population, incidents of coronavirus cases are lower than the rest of the world, thanks to the measures taken by the Chinese Government to prevent the pandemic and the active cooperation of Chinese people. As a foreigner living in China, I witnessed first-hand the top-down efforts of the Chinese people to fight the coronavirus and felt the warmth, kindness and optimism of the Chinese people. I believe China is a very safe country to live in.

As a Russian, I am overjoyed that Russian experts who were involved in the organization of the Sochi Winter Olympics also participated in the construction of Beijing 2022 venues, such as the design and building of the freestyle ski and snowboarding tracks. Although I could not support the Russian and Chinese athletes from the stands, I was glad to see that Russian President Vladimir Putin was able to be present at Beijing 2022, calling it "an important event of world significance".

The pandemic has caused many changes in China, but it has not prevented the hard-working and brave Chinese people from pursuing the Olympic spirit. Beijing 2022 continues the tradition of the Olympics as an event of sport, peace and unity, showing that spirit of unity and solidarity between the Chinese people and the people of the world in their efforts to build a community with a shared future for mankind.

Irina Andreeva is a Russian professor at the School of European Studies in Tianjin Foreign Studies University.