

The Broadcaster with a Yen for Telling China's Story

Dialogue

By XU Qingqun

When Soeda Shuhei and his wife Hiroko Utsumi were passing through Beijing on their way to the Soviet Union in 1963, little did they know that the stopover would become their destination and they would dedicate themselves to broadcasting China's stories to Japan and to promoting Sino-Japanese friendship.

Shuhei, then 34 years old, was passionate about Russian literature and intended to work in the Soviet Union. However, due to the complexity of the application process, he had to abandon his plan and stayed in Beijing. Eventually, both he and Utsumi were offered jobs at Radio Beijing, which later became China Radio International (CRI).

They were in the Japanese language department, first working as Japanese newscasters, hosting news and current affairs programs.

They were among the first Japanese to work in Japanese language broadcasting in China. Shuhei's attractive voice made a deep impression on his Japanese listeners. Through his news broadcasts, the Japanese people's understanding of China improved.

Shuhei also hosted many special programs such as "History and Characters", which became a star program. It was structured as a radio play based on Chinese historical figures and events in Chinese history, and was regarded as both intellectual and interesting by Japanese listeners. It served as a bridge between the two



Soeda Shuhei (Left) and his son, Soeda Takehito. (COURTESY PHOTO)

countries, sharing the wisdom of the ancient Chinese.

Shuhei was known for his dedication to his work. During his more than 30 years at the station, he and Utsumi always came to work an hour earlier.

On July 28, 1976, a massive earthquake struck Tangshan, a city 200 kilometers from Beijing. There were strong tremors in Beijing as well. The CRI team set up 24-hour broadcasts by relay teams so that if there were any casualties, it would be reported immediately. Shuhei and Utsumi stayed with their Chinese colleagues. "Since the Chinese stayed and continued their work, how could we rush to our own safety," Shuhei said.

As Japan is an earthquake-prone country, he said he understood the importance of broadcasting during such a difficult time when people's only source of information was the radio. He felt a strong sense of responsibility that made it impossible for him to leave the station.

In addition to his work, Shuhei also devoted a lot of time to training young Chinese broadcasters. Many of his students became the backbone of Japanese broadcasting in China and said they owed their professional success to him.

Shuhei was named as one of the "Most Influential Overseas Experts in China Over the Past Six Decades" in 2009 and was once received by Premier Zhou Enlai. Looking back, he said it was

Premier Zhou who inspired him to stay in China.

"Broadcasting to Japan is very important, if China stops broadcasting to the outside world, it will affect China's image in the world, and it will be very unfavourable for China's diplomacy. I hope you can stay, China needs you," Zhou told him.

So no matter how the world and China changed, Shuhei remained deeply involved in China's international broadcasting. Now in his 90s, he is still keen to know about the latest developments in China and is keeping a diary.

This article was translated and edited by BI Weizi based on the Chinese version.

Traditional Eastern Wisdom

Wanning Bridge: Exemplar of Ancient Water Conservancy

By Staff Reporters

The Wanning Bridge, the oldest bridge along Beijing's Central Axis, is the only surviving Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) bridge in the capital that is still used for transportation. It stands as a testament to ancient water conservancy technology, with its unique design embodying the achievements of ancient craftsmen in flood prevention and navigation.

Constructed in 1285, the Wanning Bridge was originally a wooden structure before being transformed into a single-arch stone bridge. It boasts dual functionality: it is both a bridge and regulates water flow as a sluice.

As a vital water conservancy hub during the Yuan Dynasty, the Wanning Bridge witnessed the transformation and utilization of the Grand Canal, the world's longest man-made canal. Under the meticulous planning of ancient hydraulic experts like Guo Shoujing, the Grand Canal was seamlessly connected to Tongzhou in Beijing and southern China. The Chengqing Upper Watergate beneath the Wanning Bridge was the final sluice for boats entering the Jishuitan Dock, the

canal's northern terminus. It was the first bridge the boats crossed when departing from the dock.

Besides the Chengqing Upper Watergate, the bridge has two other watergates. The middle watergate closed and the lower watergate opened as boats approached, so that the water level would rise and propel the boats upstream. Then the middle watergate would shut, and the upper watergate open, enabling the boats to ascend to the Jishuitan Dock like climbing stairs.

The bridge is flanked by exquisitely carved beast-shaped structures — water control beasts — on its eastern and western sides. These mythical creatures embody ancient people's aspirations to prevent floods and their prayers for good fortune.

With the change of dynasties, the Wanning Bridge gradually lost its function as a passage for ships. It underwent repair and renovation during the Ming and Qing dynasties, followed by renovation to the bridge deck to meet modern transportation needs.

After restoration, this stone sentinel of the city continues to play a pivotal role in the bustling transportation system.



Wanning Bridge in summer. (PHOTO: XINHUA)

Pros and Cons of Ginger in Summer

Science Outreach

By Staff Reporters



PHOTO: VCG

As the Chinese saying goes, "Radish in winter and ginger in summer keep the doctor away." This demonstrates the wisdom of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) and emphasizes the important role of ginger for staying healthy during summer.

According to TCM, ginger has three primary benefits: it promotes sweating to relieve fever, warms the stomach to stop nausea, and detoxifies the body.

Summer means sweltering heat, frequent rain, and humidity, leading to external heat and internal cold in the human body. Since in summer

people tend to excessively use air-conditioning, eat cold foods and drink cold beverages, coldness accumulates in the body. Ginger, with its pungent warmth, can dispel cold, strengthen the spleen and stomach, and eliminate dampness.

If you get caught in the rain in summer, drink a bowl of hot ginger soup and it will lessen the chill. However, for patients catching a cold with the wind-heat syndrome, consuming ginger is like adding fuel to the fire. Ginger should not be used to treat influenza, as TCM believes that influenza requires the use of bitter and cold herbs to clear

the heat and toxins, properties ginger lacks.

From a TCM perspective, taking ginger in the morning helps generate yang energy, aligning with natural rhythms. Conversely, yang energy wanes and yin energy prevails at night. Having ginger at night can disrupt the convergence of yang energy, hindering the body's natural balance.

The gingerol in ginger stimulates intestinal motility, enhancing spleen and stomach functions during the day. However, at night when the body is in a dormant state, such stimulation can disrupt sleep.

Chinese Hydro Project Powers Uganda Development

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Moreover, as the power plant is close to the Murchison Falls National Park, which is rich in animal and plant resources, environmental protection was fully considered throughout the project.

The design of special nature friendly fishways ensures the growth and reproduction of fish and reduces the barrier impact of the dam on migratory fish, which effectively protected the local ecological environment, according to Uganda Electricity Generation Company Limited (UEGCL).

Benefiting local livelihoods

Uganda has one of the lowest per capita electricity consumption levels in the world, with only around 15 percent of the population connected to the national grid. However, after the plant commenced commercial operations on June 12, the electricity price in the country was reduced by 17.5 percent, making electricity more affordable, according to

the Ugandan government.

Pre- and post-construction of Karuma, a large number of migrant workers flocked to the area, either to find work at the hydropower plant, or to set up shops and restaurants in nearby towns to serve workers.

"People's lives are getting better and the town is getting busier. With the help of the Chinese, the town has become more and more complete with all kinds of facilities. We have access to clean water and timely transportation of household garbage," said the mayor of Kurama town.

At the same time, Uganda's tourism sector is set to promote the plant as a tourism site to benefit the lives and incomes of locals. The Uganda Tourism Board (UTB), Uganda Electricity Generation Company Ltd., and manager of the power plant have signed a partnership to package and market the superstructure and related tourist products.

Lilly Ajarova, UTB Executive Director described the new venture as the beginning of an important journey, saying the venture will diversify tourism.

More development opportunities

Andrew Kamagara, a local engineer of the plant, said the construction project has exposed him to employment fields he had never considered previously. Although originally a water engineer, the Chinese have exposed him to structural engineering, a skill he now enjoys.

Since the plant began construction, local employees have accounted for more than 85 percent of the staff, and nearly 6,000 additional local workers were contracted at the peak period. In total, more than 15,000 Ugandan employees have been employed at Karuma. Through professional training and skills transfer, many local employees have become the backbone of the project's construction.

Another gain is the increase in

Uganda's excess electricity, which South Sudan is soon to benefit from. In June 2023, South Sudan and Uganda signed a power sales agreement to allow Uganda to sell some of the electricity produced at Karuma dam to South Sudan.

"The project will help to reduce energy poverty in South Sudan, which is currently experiencing an energy crisis," said Henry Lukudu, a Sudanese electrician based at Elegu Trading Centre on the Uganda border, according to *ChinaAfrica* magazine.

The Karuma hydropower project is one of Uganda's leading mega development projects and a key project for the country's 2040 development plan. Also, it's a flagship project of cooperation between Uganda and China under the Belt and Road Initiative. The close cooperation between the two countries has brought win-win results to Uganda and tangible benefits to the Ugandan people.

Low-altitude Economy Set to Take Off

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According to financial institution Morgan Stanley, by 2040, as a pivotal development model of low-altitude economy, the market scale of urban air mobility (UAM) can reach one trillion USD. UAM will become a new economic growth pole for the world, especially for China.

This trend has prompted the upgrade of low-altitude aircraft manufacturing from helicopters, fixed-wing aircrafts to manned electric vertical take-off and landing vehicles (eVTOL), thus promoting the continued evolution of the low-altitude industry.

In the first half of 2024, China registered more than 600,000 new drones, an increase of 48 percent over the end of last year. Now, more than 14,000 UAV companies hold the current valid civil certificate of unmanned aircraft operation, and more than 225,000 people hold a drone pilot's license.

Lv Renli, director of Civil Aviation Management Institute of China, said, "Compared with land and sea, the sky has a wider area. If the airspace resources below 3,000 meters, or even below 1,000 meters, are fully tapped, the dividend is huge."

Low-altitude economy continues improving

Being a key field to enhance the new quality productive forces, the completion of LAE's industrial chain in China has brought agglomeration effects, and more and more world-renowned enterprises have chosen to settle in Shenzhen, the drone capital. By the end of 2023, Shen-

zhen had gathered more than 1,700 drone companies, with an annual output value of 96 billion RMB.

In general urban application scenarios, the daily delivery volume of ordinary couriers is about 150, while a drone operator can fly 60 missions a day with a distribution volume of about 500. For people who have business travel needs between the cities in the Greater Bay Area, they can now reach Zhuhai in 15 minutes from the central city of Shenzhen by helicopter.

As for the non-urban application scenarios, China's western regions have begun to use drones to transport fresh matsutake mushrooms. It takes a person one to two hours to go down a mountain after collection, while it only takes 15 - 30 minutes by drone.

Experts have analyzed that the future of LAE contains unlimited possibilities, including building transportation and industrial systems. The emergence of more and more application scenarios will also extend to a new industrial chain. Digital and intelligent technology, digital twin technology and other technologies can fully unleash potential in the low-altitude industry.

Meanwhile, industry regulation to accompany the booming development of the low-altitude economy has also been put on the agenda. Established in August, China Low Altitude Economic Alliance, initiated by over 100 upstream and downstream enterprises, will focus on business models, air safety, and regulatory rules.