

# Yukihiro Ozaki: Doyen of Chemistry Community

## Dialogue

By Staff Reporters

"My wonderful long journey of molecular spectroscopy with Chinese scientists," may sound like an obscure speech title to a layperson, but when delivered back on June 10, 2023 with passion and conviction by Professor Yukihiro Ozaki, former vice president of Kwansai Gakuin University, and honorary professor of Jinlin University (JLU) in China, it resonated deeply among his peers and the chemistry community at large.

Ozaki spoke of his bond with China, particularly with JLU, located in northeast China, and highlighted the significant research achievements in areas such as ordered films, liquid crystals, and biomolecules that resulted from this collaboration. He emphasized that the fruitful cooperation with Chinese scholars over the years is achieved through wisdom, passion, and efforts of scientists from both nations. According to Ozaki, Sino-Japanese academic collaboration is crucial for the development of science in both countries and for the global scientific community.

In 2022, Ozaki was presented with the Chinese Government Friendship Award in recognition of his substantial contributions to the fields of molecular spectroscopy, chemometrics, and polymer chemistry in China.

**A long journey begins with interest**  
Born in Sakai city, Osaka prefecture, Japan, Ozaki was immersed in a home environment that nurtured a deep appreciation for Chinese classical poetry, a passion shared by his father. And this early encounter with Chinese culture kindled in him a profound interest in Chinese history and culture. During the 1970s, while studying chemistry at Osaka University, Ozaki pursued this interest by taking a course in Chinese history, which deepened his understanding



Professor Yukihiro Ozaki. (COURTESY PHOTO)

of the ancient country.

After earning his Ph.D., Ozaki joined the Department of Chemistry at the School of Science and Technology, Kwansai Gakuin University in 1989. Notably, Kwansai Gakuin University has one of the longest and most robust cooperative relationships with JLU, dating back to 1982.

In the early 1980s, at an international conference, Ozaki met Chinese spectroscopists who shared similar research interests and academic views. This meeting paved the way for future exchanges and collaboration.

### The journey begins

In September 1994, Ozaki finally got the opportunity to visit China for an academic exchange. During this visit, he toured JLU, accompanied by Academician Shen Jiacong, a polymer chemist and one of the pioneers of supramolecular chemistry in China. They discussed potential areas of collaboration, joint projects, and future plans. This fulfilling trip allowed him to meet old colleagues, make new friends, and connect with promising young Chinese chemists such as Zhang Xi and Yang Bai. Today, Zhang is the president of JLU.

From his discussions with Shen, Ozaki learned about the strong capabilities of JLU's chemistry department in supramolecular chemistry. They held the same belief that young faculty members should develop both domestic and international research bases. This inspired Ozaki to focus on molecular spectroscopy in his collaborations with JLU, aiming to elevate Chinese chemistry to the global stage.

Ozaki's first visit to China prompted him to return almost every year, often multiple times, for academic exchanges and student mentoring. Each visit was packed with activities, reflecting his deep commitment to fostering Sino-Japanese academic ties.

During these years, young scholars from JLU, such as Academician Zhang Xi, Professor Zhao Bing, and Professor Wu Yuying, also visited Kwansai Gakuin University for academic exchanges, post-doctoral research, or visiting professorships, yielding fruitful research results.

Beyond JLU, Ozaki has forged deep friendships and close collaborations with scholars from other Chinese universities, such as Hunan University and

Tongji University.

### Striving for excellence

Ozaki's decades-long dedication to academic research and his sincere enthusiasm have earned him the respect and admiration of his peers. He has been instrumental in nurturing Chinese scientists, offering support to young scholars. To date, under his guidance, 33 Chinese scholars have become renowned figures in their respective fields.

When discussing his contributions to the field of spectroscopy education and research in China, Ozaki humbly noted that his collaboration with Chinese professors in training young scholars has been a mutually enriching experience.

Reflecting on their experiences with Ozaki, his Chinese students recalled his thoughtful gestures. Every Lunar New Year, Ozaki sends greetings to his Chinese colleagues and former students via email. During his visits to China, he devotes himself entirely to one-on-one mentoring sessions with students. He also takes great care of the Chinese students in his lab, even using his research funds to support them financially.

Professor Wei Song from JLU's School of Chemistry, who served as a special-term associate professor at Kwansai Gakuin University, recalled that near the end of her exchange, Ozaki gave her his latest academic book as a farewell gift. Inside the front cover, he had written, "Top among the top," encouraging young scholars to strive for excellence.

When Ozaki received the Chinese Government Friendship Award in 2022, His old friend Shen Jiacong sent him a heartfelt congratulatory letter. In response, Ozaki expressed his hopes and blessings for the Chinese chemistry community. He believes that it will make even greater contributions to the global field of chemical research in the future.

*This article was edited and translated based on the Chinese version written by ZHU Beibei and ZHAO He from JLU.*

## China Impression

# Discovering the Key to China's City Transformation

By GONG Qian

Tania Georgieva Glouhtcheva quotes a Bulgarian song, which goes like this: If you have given a poor person some bread, you haven't lived in vain.

The head of the International Department of the Bulgarian newspaper *Duma* is reminded of the song when she thinks of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). During the past decade, more and more countries and international organizations have joined the BRI. The result has been the development of roads, railways, ports, airports, hospitals, and schools that have linked people across continents, bringing them a quality of life they once thought impossible.

"China is the best teacher when it comes to giving — not only materially, but also through millennial wisdom and exemplary political practices that improve lives," Glouhtcheva said.

She was among the 100 media representatives from 50 countries and regions who attended the 2024 Belt and Road Journalists Forum (BRJF) in Chongqing, southwest China, on August 31, 2024.

The BRJF is one of the flagship activities of the Belt & Road Journalists Network (BRJN) and has been held six times since its inception in 2017.

This year, it took the guests on field trips across Chongqing, including the Chongqing International Logistics Hub Park. The park is a major hub of the China-Europe Railway Express, which has boosted trade ties between China and Europe.

"The arrival of the China-Europe Railway Express in the Czech Republic has been very beneficial for our country's businesses," said Denisa Petrilakova, founder of the Czech news network Gnews.cz.

The railway has enabled Czech companies to connect with a large number of potential customers, and many have formed partnerships with high-end Chinese liquor manufacturers, designing bottles and packaging for premium products, with a very high volume of orders, Petrilakova added.

After visiting the park, she said she would produce more videos to show her countrymen the significant changes brought by the BRI.

### Dramatic changes in Chongqing

The visitors were also taken to an automobile research center to experience new energy vehicle (NEV) driving. "China's NEVs are developing very rapidly," said Moacyr de Oliveira Filho, director of journalism at the Brazilian Press Association. He was especially impressed by the intelligent self-driving technology.

Moritz Nicolaus Lohmann, co-founder of Hamburg Welcomes You, an organization in Germany facilitating cross-border business and investment,

had visited Chongqing 10 years ago. This time he found the city almost unrecognizable due to its dramatic transformation, marked by towering skyscrapers and expansive bridges.

Lohmann said what was even more encouraging was that the old dilapidated buildings have not been entirely replaced by new high-rises. Instead, they have been rejuvenated through urban renewal. For example, old warehouses have been transformed into public spaces and cafes, abandoned streets into trendy pedestrian zones, and small factories into art galleries.

"New buildings aren't everything and rebuilding is becoming attractive," he said.

Yophiandi Kurniawan, a news producer of International Relations and News Producer at the Indonesian Cyber Media Network (JMSI), praised Chongqing's strong historical and cultural connection to the Yangtze River, noting its importance to the region's ecosystem, food security, and technological progress.

He highlighted Liangping district's efforts to protect and enhance the river's ecosystem using technologies like AI-powered wildlife monitoring. Liangping, located in northern Chongqing, is rich in fertile land and wetlands. The fusion of AI and environmental preservation in Liangping is a model for others to follow, he remarked.

### Unity behind prosperity

The visitors explored a variety of places important for the BRI, from the Chongqing International Logistics Hub Park and the Museum of Ancient Rock Art to the Great Wall Motors Production Factory and a film studio.

"Every time I return to China, it becomes a confirmation that the country is looking far ahead," said Timur Shafir, the head of the International Department of the Russian Union of Journalists. The different places they visited showed how different industries, directions and even eras of China serve the cause of its development.

For Shafir, a striking feature of Chinese development is unity. He said the whole country is united by a common goal: to make China prosperous, he added.

"My renewed impression of China is not just admiration for the high pace of development, but also an understanding that this country sets the vector of the future for the whole world," he said.

China is demonstrating that it is possible to move forward support and respect of the interests of partners. New approaches to development, peaceful interaction and innovation are being born here, which will determine the future not only of this country, but also of the whole world. "The coming decades will prove how successful this path is," Shafir added.

# The Temple of Heaven: Ancient Architectural Masterpiece

## Traditional Eastern Wisdom

By Staff Reporters

The Temple of Heaven is one of the most significant heritage sites

along Beijing's Central Axis. As the main structure of the Temple of Heaven, the Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests stands on a three-tiered pedestal made of pure white marble, making it one of the tallest ancient buildings in Beijing.

The Hall of Prayer for Good Har-

vests employs a large number of bucket arches in its construction, forming a towering triple-eaved conical roof, showcasing the skill of Chinese ancient artisans.

Bucket arches are architectural elements located beneath the eaves or within the beams of ancient Chinese buildings. The transverse and longitudinal pieces of wood cross each other in the form of mortise-and-tenon structure to form bucket arches. From a mechanical perspective, the bucket arches transform single-point support into multi-point support, distributing the force to each fulcrum of the wood, thereby ensuring structural safety.

Located between columns and beams, bucket arches transmit loads from the roof and upper structures to the columns, which then transfer them to the foundation. Thus, they serve as a

vital link, distributing loads.

The Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests utilizes an abundance of bucket arches, working in tandem with beams to support the entire hall's weight. The bucket arches interconnect seamlessly, forming a strong network with the 24 golden pillars inside the hall and the ring beams above the eaves and columns.

This intricate system, akin to a group of strongmen holding everything firmly in place, reinforces the hall's two-tiered circular beam structure. It also addresses the challenges posed by the nearly 24-meter-wide internal span and the mechanical stability of the suspended structure.

In this sense, the Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests can be regarded as both a cultural and a scientific architectural masterpiece.



The Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests. (PHOTO: VCG)

# Cultural Exchange Celebrates China's Intangible Heritage

## Expats Activity

By Staff Reporters

A series of cultural exchange events were recently held in Beijing for international talents to understand China's intangible cultural heritage.

Recently, at a themed event, "Protection and Inheritance of China's Intangible Cultural Heritage", the participants engaged in lively discussions on topics such as "National Experiences in Heritage Protection and International Cooperation," and "My Story with Chinese Intangible Heritage."

ancient books and cultural artifacts. Mamisoa Rakotoarivony from Beijing Foreign Studies University said, "It was a truly enriching experience. The guides provided detailed explanations about the ancient texts, costumes, musical instruments, and wedding customs of various ethnic groups, giving us a real sense of the richness and inclusiveness of Chinese civilization."

Another unique cultural experience event was organized by the Beijing Overseas Talent Center, bringing together foreign professionals and their families from nine countries, including the U.S., Germany, France and Pakistan, to explore the historical charm of Beijing's South Central Axis.

cultural significance of the axis, giving the participants an immersive experience.

They began with a hands-on experience making traditional lacquer fans, learning about the craft's unique charm and cultural significance. They then visited the Tianqiao Impression Museum, where they learned about this region's history as a cradle of folk art and its role in nurturing countless cultural treasures. It was followed by guided tours of landmarks such as the Four-Faced Clock Tower and the Eight Oddities of Tianqiao, which showcases the unique local culture and history.

At the Ancient Architecture Museum and Yongding Gate, the participants marveled at the intricate stargazing ceil-

ings and appreciated the grandeur and elegance of ancient Chinese architecture. Burkhard Risse, a translator from China Foreign Languages Publishing Administration, compared Beijing's South Central Axis with Berlin's central axis, highlighting the similarities and unique features of both cities. Dr. Manan Khan from Xuanwu Hospital admired Beijing's preservation of its historical and cultural heritage and the warmth of its people.

This event, part of the 2024 Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei Foreign Talent Carnival, provided more opportunities for foreign talents to learn about and experience Chinese culture. Further events are planned to continue this cultural exchange and engagement.

## Photo News



At the 37th International Geological Congress recently held in Busan, South Korea, three geological heritage sites from China were included in the second batch of the International Union of Geological Sciences' 100 Geological Heritage Sites, including Permian vegetation of the Wuda Fossil Site in Inner Mongolia autonomous region, Dashanpu Middle Jurassic Dinosaur Fossils Site in Sichuan province and the Guilin Karst in Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region. The picture shows the landscape of Yangshuo county, Guilin city. (PHOTO: XINHUA)