

From Ancient Wisdom to Modern Marvels

75

Dialogue with Foreign Experts

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC). Over the past 75 years, China has attached great importance to innovative development, while accelerating the scale and speed of opening up to the world. In that time, it has gradually moved to become a significant scientific and technological innovation power in the world. Innovation remains at the heart of China's modernization drive, while green is the primary color of the modernization drive. China has unswervingly taken a green and low-carbon sustainable development path, synergistically promoting high-quality socio-economic development and ecological environment protection. Chinese confidence in their culture has been boosted and is now being shared with a global audience so that Chinese wisdom can be an option to deal with the common challenges facing humanity. In celebration of the 75th anniversary of the founding of PRC, Science and Technology Daily interviewed a number of foreign experts working in China to share their stories of China's innovation, openness, culture and beauty with the world.

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Open China

Acclaiming 75 Years of Cooperation

For well-known physical geologist Michael Meadows, Professor in the School of Geography and Ocean Science, Nanjing University (NJU), China's openness has made a significant difference in his research journey. After years of commuting to a university in Shanghai, joining NJU felt like finding a new home. "I feel privileged to be part of [advancing science with my co-workers]," Meadows said. His story shows China's open policies have created a nurturing environment for international researchers.

For decades, China's commitment to welcoming talent from around the globe has transformed it into a hub for innovation and cooperation, inviting scholars, professionals, and thinkers to contribute to its progress narrative.

Inclusive academic ecosystem

"I think China is the best place for promoting research, motivating young people, and gaining governmental support in research," said German engineer Omer Sahin Ganiyusufoglu, an industrial development consultant at Qingdao International Academician Park.

"China's long-term strategic vision and its commitment to advancing research and development should be valued," he added.

Russian Professor Igor Alexandrov, a prominent figure in the field of nanomaterials from Changzhou University in Jiangsu province, cannot agree more. "The academic environment is perfect, especially when you get access to well-equipped institutions," he said, adding that China provides great opportunities for scientists, especially young researchers from different countries, to come and achieve significant results.

Land of opportunity

Italian chemical engineer Enrico Marsili, at the University of Nottingham Ningbo China (UNNC), lauded China's commitment to quality research. "China's investment in quality research and researchers is a wise move," Marsili said.

His colleague at UNNC, Dr. Alain Chong, Vice Provost in Global Engagement and Partnerships, pointed out that China's inclusiveness extends to funding and grants for researchers regardless of nationality. "These little things that the government does make a big difference," he said, emphasizing how international talent is recognized and valued in China.

Breaking barriers and fostering collaboration

In China, the idea that "women hold up half the sky" is not just a well-known saying. It is a guiding principle that drives significant advancements in supporting the career growth of female researchers.

After working in China for almost 12 years, American Uromi Manage Goodale, Professor of Plant Ecology at Xi'an Jiaotong Liverpool University, applauded the country's supportive policies and environment for young female scientists. "There are no extra barriers for a female scientist," she said, pointing to the inclusive environment that welcomes women in science.

Resonating with this view, Italian scientist Sara Plato's

story is particularly inspiring. The professor of animal behavior and welfare at Jiangnan University is the first female foreign scientist to work on animal welfare in China. She has pioneered projects and educational programs in a then-emerging field. "I have seized the opportunity to initiate projects with the government's support," Plato said.

In recent years, new policies have been gradually introduced, such as setting up female scientist-led projects in major national sci-tech plans and projects and extending the eligibility for early career awards. The National Natural Science Foundation of China now allows female researchers to apply for early career awards up to the age of 48, three years later than before.

"That way, the decision-makers recognize that women spend more time raising kids and taking care of their families. So that's quite a nice gesture," said Marie-Luce Chevalier, a French/Belgian research professor at the Institute of Geology of the Chinese Academy of Geological Sciences.

Fostering global collaboration and mutual benefit

China's commitment to openness goes beyond academia and research, reaching into international cooperation initiatives, such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

The year 2023 marked the 10th anniversary of the launch of BRI. With joint efforts of all parties, this important initiative has progressed with vitality and benefited the world.

Dr. Saulebek Kabybekov, an ophthalmologist from Kazakhstan who has been at the Daqing Ophthalmology Hospital, Heilongjiang province, for 25 years, believes the BRI fosters collaboration and development among nations. "It's all about mutual benefit and win-win cooperation," he said, underscoring the importance of exchange in advancing medical science and facilitating educational cooperation and mutual understanding.

In terms of the educational field, the Luban Workshops, named after Lu Ban, an ancient Chinese engineer, inventor, and carpenter, and symbol of Chinese craftsmanship, serve as international platforms for vocational education.

According to Jarun Youbrum, director of Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Technical College in Thailand, China attached great importance to international education cooperation through the construction of 27 Luban Workshops in 19 BRI partner countries. "The Luban Workshop is a 'future center' for modern technology learning, keeping up with changes in the industrial world and meeting the needs of entrepreneurs," Youbrum said.

Muhammad Kashif, a Pakistani Professor at the School of Electrical and Information Engineering of Tianjin University, specifically mentioned the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a flagship project under the initiative. According to him, the CPEC is regarded as a "game changer" for Pakistan's economy, and the BRI shares this transformative potential on a global scale.

Cultural China

Appreciating 75 Years of Diversity

Seventy-five years might seem like a blip on the great wheel of time, but for a civilization with over 5,000 years of history, it tells a story of resilience, renewal and perseverance. As the People's Republic of China celebrates the 75th anniversary of its founding, its deep commitment to unity, peace, harmony and development continues to guide the nation, and add modern aspirations to its ancient wisdom.

"I believe China, as a great civilization, deserves recognition and understanding," said Australian sinologist Colin Mackerras. This sentiment was echoed by many voices around the world who appreciate the country's rich cultural heritage, its diverse communities, and its remarkable journey of development.

Feeling the pulse of China

For those visitors who have experienced China's vast and varied landscapes, it is often the Chinese people who leave the deepest impression and make their China story more memorable.

Spanish language expert Francisco Javier Ayllón Piquero has traveled extensively throughout the country. "From the grasslands in the north to the mountains and rivers in the south, China is a country of vast natural beauty. But it's the warmth, kindness, and resilience of the people I've met that have made the biggest impact on me," he said.

German engineer Omer Sahin Ganiyusufoglu moved to China in 2006. In 2008, he saw the nation come together in solidarity and harmony during the Wenchuan earthquake. "At that time, the Chinese government and its people united as one body and worked for one aim to get through difficulties," he recalled, highlighting that, "China is an unbeatable country."

China's cultural expressions and traditions continue to reach people from different countries. Kung fu is a good example. Laurence J. Brahm, an American documentary filmmaker, understands the cultural essence behind kung fu. "Kung fu is not just about fighting. The philosophy behind kung fu is about striving, perseverance and harmony with nature. At its core, it is about non-violence," he said. Those values are cultural treasures that define the Chinese identity and foster connections with the world.

Embracing diversity

China's vast territory is home to 56 ethnic groups, each contributing to the rich mosaic of the nation's culture.

British educator Michael Crook, who has lived in Beijing for over 50 years, shares a personal story that demonstrates China's efforts in preserving its diversity. Last year, he attended a language class conducted in Xizang Autonomous Region. "China is a multi-ethnic country," Crook said. He marvels at how well traditional cultures are being pre-

served, and how students also have a good command of Mandarin. He attributes this achievement to the effective policies of the Communist Party of China, which has encouraged various cultures to flourish within the broader framework of national unity.

"As a Western scholar, I believe China's policies towards ethnic minorities hold valuable references for other countries," Mackerras said.

Brazilian international law scholar Evandro Menezes de Carvalho finds this diversity fascinating to understand China better. "China, with its vast territory and diverse population, presents me with an intriguing, multifaceted perception," he said.

This diversity is also a key to understanding the nation's adaptability and innovation. Japanese scientist Katsumi Tanigaki also emphasized the importance of diverse perspectives in fostering innovation and progress. "In China, there is more room for diverse ideas to flourish, which can foster innovation and progress," he said. This openness to different ways of thinking is crucial for the country's continued development.

A global perspective on China's growth

For William N. Brown, who has called China home for over 30 years, the country's transformation has been extraordinary. Brown has seen firsthand how China's strategic policies and long-term planning have driven rapid development and social progress. "The Chinese saying, 'To get rich, build a road first' is not just about improving people's financial condition, but also about enriching their minds, ideas, and attitudes," he said. From his perspective, the approach has been instrumental in lifting millions out of poverty and creating a more connected, open society.

China's development philosophy is exerting a far-reaching influence on the Chinese people and reshaping its role on the global stage.

As the country gains economic strength and a more prominent international voice, many international experts like Crook view this as a step toward global harmony. "China emphasizes peace, harmony, cooperation, and win-win," Crook said, attributing much of this success to the country's socialist system, which he believes effectively balances collective progress with social stability and harmony.

Some people may still be watching China with interest, while others might be curious about its development. Italian sinologist Michele Ferrero has a simple suggestion: see it for yourself. "I urge people to come and see China with their own eyes, and I am excited to share my feelings for China with the rest of the world because of the Chinese love for peace and stability," he said.

Beautiful China

Applauding 75 years of Sustainable Development

The past decades have seen a concerted effort by China to coordinate economic development and ecological environmental protection. As part of this drive, the Beautiful China Initiative was established in 2012 and the principle that lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets has been upheld ever since. Thousands of foreign experts working and living in China have gained first-hand experience of China's major achievements in implementing the Beautiful China Initiative.

Efforts made for ecological diversity

Marie-Luce Chevalier, a Belgian-French geologist, has been working as a research professor at the Chinese Academy of Geological Sciences in Beijing since 2010. For the past 12 years, she has been studying active faults in the Qinghai-Xizang Plateau and how they move. She is amazed at how the local government has prioritized ecological protection and how an eco-culture is taking shape to showcase the Plateau's exemplary role in ecological development.

Michael Crook, founder of the Western Academy of Beijing, and Professor Maria Todorovska, an earthquake engineering expert from Tianjin University, share Chevalier's sentiments. They traveled to Xizang Autonomous Region in 2023 and found the harmonious coexistence of modern infrastructure and wildlife conservation there to be a great example for global environmental conservation efforts.

According to Crook, the high-speed railways and elevated highways there have been built to improve people's livelihoods with minimal environmental disruption.

Todorovska was also struck by the abundance of greenery in China, especially on her field trips to Yunnan province, home to more than 2,000 species of vertebrates, accounting for 51.4 percent of the country's total, and over 19,000 species of already known higher plants. She found herself enchanted by Yunnan's rich cultural and ecological diversity.

Kyle Warwick Tomlinson, principal investigator of the Community Ecology and Conservation Group at the Xishuangbanna Tropical Botanical Garden (XTBG) in Yunnan province, is in a better position to evaluate the tangible benefits that the construction of a beautiful China has brought

both for humanity and nature. "Yunnan is doing a good job in terms of ecological conservation, which is consistent with what is happening all over China," Tomlinson said.

To restore the habitat of rare species, Yunnan has set aside over 14 percent of its territory as nature reserves and approved the establishment of more than 300 nature reserves.

China's leading role in eco-protection

Environmental protection can't be achieved by a single country. "China plays an active role internationally. Through the Belt and Road Initiative, China is helping develop infrastructure in other countries, which could be used not only for development but also for conservation," Ahimsa Campos-Arceiz, an elephant researcher also working at XTBG, said, adding that Xishuangbanna is developing collaborations with Myanmar and Laos for joint monitoring and protecting elephants.

The 60-year-old American Brian Linden, with many titles under his belt: traveler, entrepreneur, author and founder of the Linden Center in Yunnan, is another witness not only to the improvement of people's living standards, but also to China's ecological development.

"China has made so many positive changes since the 2000s and has transitioned into more of a quality of life," Linden said. Even in a small town like Xizhou, where he is living, wastewater is now treated in more advanced ways, demonstrating the government's commitment to improving the environment.

Focusing on economic development at any cost is not difficult, and what is difficult is to strike a balance between economic progress and environmental protection. "But China has done it," Linden said. "We should look at this and say that China has improved dramatically per capita."

"As we think about development, the only way we can develop in a sustainable way is by keeping the ecology in mind. Thanks to green development policies, we will be able to protect more habitats and achieve the dual objective of having more development and more conservation," Campos-Arceiz said.

Innovative China

Celebrating 75 Years of Progress

From the successful launch of the Dongfanghong-1 satellite to the inspiring voyages of Chinese astronauts into the cosmos, China has demonstrated its commitment to innovation and progress. Notably, groundbreaking achievements like the discovery of artemisinin and the development of hybrid rice have saved countless lives and alleviated hunger around the globe.

"In just 75 years, China has swiftly emerged as a global powerhouse on the global stage, particularly in the sci-tech and educational sphere, which is remarkable," said Italian stem cell expert Francesco Faioa.

National focus on innovation

"After reading this book, I hope you can now understand why your father keeps running to China, a marvelous country," Denis Simon, distinguished fellow at the Institute for China-American Studies, wrote to his children in his first book, *Technological Innovation in China: The Case of Shanghai Semiconductor Industry*, published three decades ago.

Simon, who served as executive vice president at Duke Kunshan University in China, has witnessed firsthand the nation's transformation into a global innovation hub. From a nation-led emphasis on technological advancements to grassroots entrepreneurship, the country has made impressive strides in creating a robust and dynamic ecosystem for research and development.

"China is now an important part of the global knowledge system in terms of publications, cited academic papers, and patents registered," he said, highlighting the shift from quantity to quality in research outputs.

Simon attributes this remarkable growth to the willingness of Chinese leaders to engage in fundamental changes and adopt strategic thinking. This commitment to reform has driven China onto a path of rapid modernization. According to this American scholar, China has managed to bridge gaps between urban and rural areas, ensuring that the benefits of progress reach all corners of the nation by focusing on balanced and coordinated development.

Show Kuan Yeow, a Malaysian scientist specializing in wastewater treatment, is also captivated by China's innovative spirit. "China today has an R&D resource that no other country has. Its innovation ecosystem, encompassing a vast population that has lived through extraordinary transformation, can adopt innovations at a scale and pace unrivaled anywhere else globally," he said.

Show praised the nation's dedication to sustainable

development, noting China's impressive achievements in balancing economic growth with environmental protection.

A vibrant innovation culture

China's vibrant research environment has made it an attractive destination for scientists and experts from around the world. Tudor Ratiu, a prominent mathematician from Switzerland found a welcoming and supportive environment for his research endeavors in China. Now, as a chair professor of Mathematics at Shanghai Jiao Tong University, Ratiu believes that China is well on its way to becoming a global center of innovation.

"It is astounding how well Chinese universities have done over the years," he said, attributing this progress to the country's supportive, vibrant academic environment and government-backed programs. "These programs are undeniably successful, and their success can be quantified. For example, my university has risen in leaps and bounds in global university rankings," he said.

According to an Indonesian expert, Yoslan Nur, an officer of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, China's contribution to global innovation is not confined to its technological capacity alone. He lauded China's strategic deployment of high-tech zones, sci-tech incubators in universities, and support for small and medium enterprises in fostering a knowledge-driven economy.

Achievements in vocational education

In addition to its advancements in innovation culture, higher education and research, China has also made significant progress in vocational education. Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the country has built the world's most extensive vocational education system, offering a model uniquely suited to its development needs.

Someone who played a key role in the Australia-China Vocational Education Project in Chongqing from 2004 to 2007 is Antoine Barnaart, director of the Confucius Institute at Queensland University of Technology. "It was one of the best times in my professional life," he recalled, noting how motivated and eager his Chinese colleagues were to learn. He was particularly impressed by the substantial financial and policy support provided by the Chinese government, both at the central and municipal levels.

"Now, in many areas of China, I believe vocational education is world-class," Barnaart said. He pointed to the balance between practical and theoretical training in China's vocational education system as a key factor in its success.