

PEKING UNIVERSITY NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2014 | Issue 29

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A Titan of
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Positive Attitude and Humor
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China and
the New Order of the World





《“天佑二区”子承心》-中国 临床及转化
China Clinical & Translational Medicine Forum



全球华商



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Peking University Newsletter is a publication for alumni and friends of Peking University and is produced by the Office of International Relations (OIR). Please feel free to send us suggestions or ideas so that we can improve this publication.

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The Newsletter can be read online at:

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APEC in Beijing

Zheng Zihui

November 2014 was not only a merry season for Beijing, with the successful hosting of APEC 2014, it was also a fulfilling one. It made the holiday season more than just a celebration of the end of a good year — it also marked the start of a new era where the world looks forward to a promising future for the Asia-Pacific region. Even more so, it was a joyful season of giving and receiving, especially for the young and vibrant APEC volunteers from Peking University.

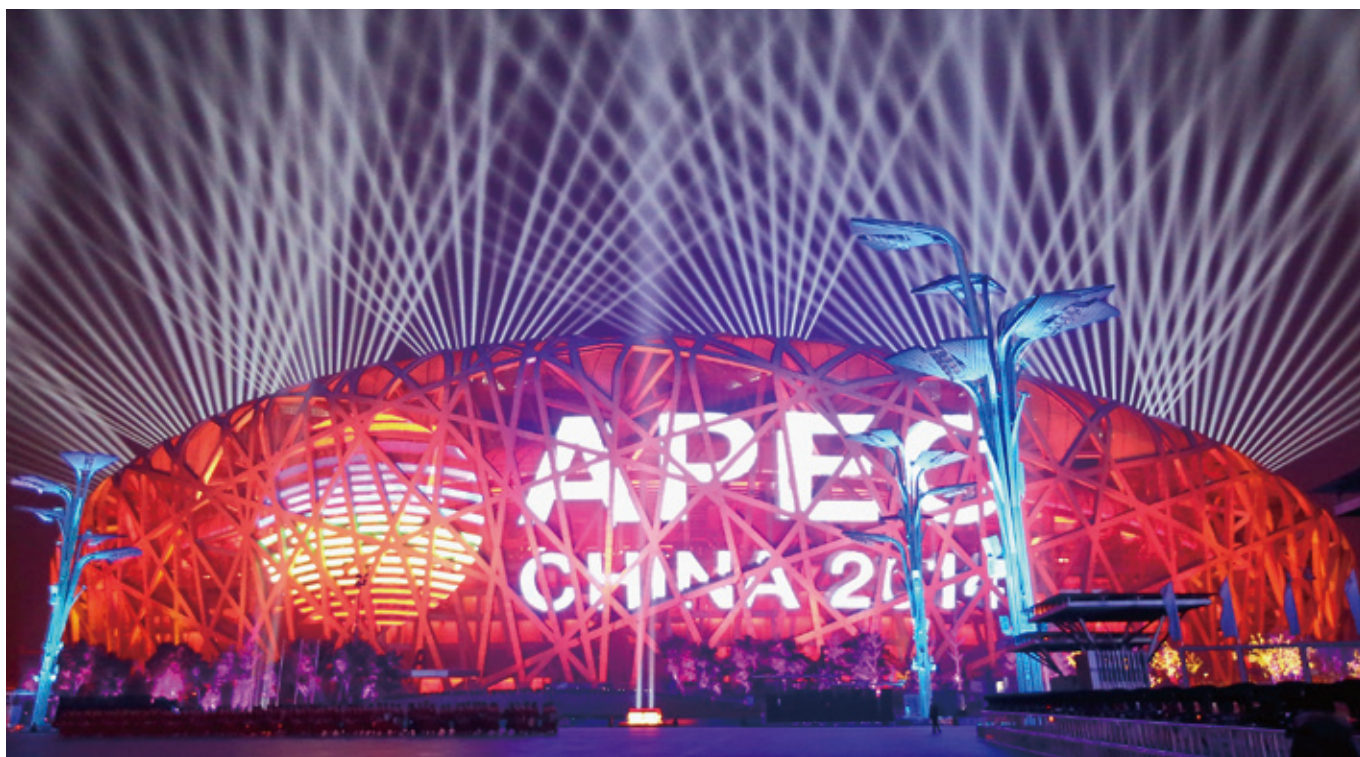
Other than the azure skies of Beijing, there was another shade of blue that was just as memorable: our APEC volunteers in their blue uniform jackets. Their volunteer services covered venues from the Water Cube (the National Swimming Centre) and

the China National Convention Centre (CNCC) to the Beijing International Convention Centre, spreading love and warmth as they passed.

In response to the call for volunteers for the seven-day conference, more than 400 PKU students submitted their applications. After rounds of selections, 123 of them were given the opportunity to serve as conference volunteers. They attended intensive training sessions that lasted throughout October. Even though they had to cope with the upcoming midterm examinations, our volunteers never failed to pay their fullest attention to every single instruction and detail. The training provided was highly professional and demanding. Volunteers had to take the TOEIC tests (Test of English for International

Communication). Many of them were also able to speak fluent Japanese, French, Russian, German, Spanish, Portuguese, and other languages. Volunteers were trained by professionals in the areas of appearance, etiquette, posture, and hand gestures. This included how to sit, stand, walk, how to smile, and make eye contact. The volunteers were earnest and displayed their wholehearted dedication to the matter at hand. While there were many difficulties and unfavourable situations, with some tasks being tedious and some even unbearable, our volunteers remained dedicated to their tasks.

Zhang Suqin from the Guanghua School of Management was the only PKU liaison officer at the venue of the meeting of the finance ministers. Her





work had begun in late September, more than a month before the official meeting commenced. There was no clearly stated work schedule, and there were times when they would need to work day and night. However, even under such pressure, she didn't regret serving as a volunteer.

Li Junyi, a group leader in the logistics team, is a student at the College of Chemistry and Molecular Engineering. Together with his team, he had worked in the storehouse for seven or eight hours without break. They assembled about 4,000 media packets and delivered them to all the journalists who covered the event. Although the logistics group had the heaviest workload and the least media exposure, he said with pride that no one had ever uttered a word of complaint.

Wang Rui from the Department of Chinese Language and Literature worked as a receptionist at the Yanqi Lake conference hotel, helping to register journalists, provide translation services, and deliver bus service information. Once, she worked for over ten consecutive hours until three in the morning.

The PKU volunteers were not only efficient in their tasks, they were also proactive. For instance, Zhou Shiyu from the School of Foreign Languages wrote a bilingual handbook for volunteers. Shortly after, it was designated as the official manual for all volunteers.

PKU has always sent volunteers to various national events, including the Olympics in 2008, the National Day Parade in 2009, the Garden Expo in 2013, and now APEC in 2014. Throughout

these events, PKU students accomplished their tasks diligently and efficiently, and they played a big part in the success of these mega events. Let us not forget that behind all the glitz and glamor of APEC, volunteers from PKU were toiling away behind the scenes. PKU takes great pride in our new generation of PKU students who are dedicated to presenting the best side of their country. ▽



▽ APEC

APEC is a premier Asia-Pacific economic forum founded in 1989 with the primary goal of supporting sustainable economic growth and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region. It is comprised of 21 Pacific Rim (the lands around the rim of the Pacific Ocean) member economies, and it promotes free trade throughout the Asia-Pacific region. Its establishment was a response to the growing interdependence of Asia-Pacific economies and the advent of regional trade blocs in other parts of the world.

APEC holds annual Economic Leaders' Meeting, which are attended by the heads of government of all APEC members. The location of the annual meetings rotates among the member economies, and one famous tradition, followed for most (but not all) summits, involves the attending leaders dressing in a national wardrobe of the host country. The most recent APEC summit was held in November 2014 in Beijing, China.



PKU in the War Against Ebola

Ou Kun

The Ebola virus has been spreading across the world since March 2014, with the situation being the most severe in Africa. As of March 8, 2015, this outbreak has 24,282 reported cases resulting in 9,976 deaths. Peking University (PKU) is one of the institutions at the forefront against the disease, actively participating in the prevention and management of the epidemic and providing aid to the people of Africa.

Preparing for the Battle

Ever since the outbreak of Ebola, PKU's affiliated hospitals have been preparing for the battle against it.

On August 14, 2014, an emergency exercise was held in the PKU People's Hospital to test its readiness and capacity for emergency management in the event of an infection disease outbreak. The hospital's Emergency Department, Infection Department, and its Department

of Pediatrics participated in the exercise, which put to the test the hospital's ability to spot the Ebola disease and coordinate its different departments.

Meanwhile, the hospital also sought to increase publicity and training on the Ebola virus. Training classes were provided to doctors and nurses in the hospitals. The hospital's website also provided the public with access to information on the disease.

In addition, the PKU People's Hospital and the PKU Third Hospital assembled medical teams to send to Africa. The teams from both hospitals comprised of experienced doctors and nurses who were well-prepared and ready to mobilize at any moment.

"The Blade is out of its Sheath"

To help the African people fight the disease, Dr. Cao Baoping from PKU People's Hospital, along with two other

medical experts from You'an Hospital and the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, was sent to Guinea by the National Health and Family Planning Commission and the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

Dr. Cao Baoping is a doctor at the Emergency Department of Peking University People's Hospital. After knowing that the hospital was establishing a medical team bound for Africa, he offered to join despite knowing the risks involved. Learning about his decision, one colleague jokingly asked him, "How are you going to tell your family about this? How are you able to make such a big decision?" Dr. Cao replied with a smile, "It's alright that I can't decide on all matters, but in this case, I must be the one who calls the shots."

On the morning of October 17, 2014, Dr. Cao left Beijing for Africa. His colleagues and family came to the airport to see him off. They had prepared banners, on which they wrote their well wishes for Dr. Cao, including "The blade is out of its sheath. Wishing Uncle Cao every success." Just as Dr. Cao was about to board, his wife and daughter, who could no



longer suppress their anguish, burst into tears. Hugging tightly the two ladies, Dr. Cao promised that he would do his best to come back safe and sound.

The fight against Ebola was full of challenges. After the journey of about twenty hours, Dr. Cao arrived at the medical team base in Guinea. Soon, the base received an unconscious patient running a high fever. Dr. Cao, without any rest after such a long and tiring trip, started working with the other experts. The patient recovered eventually.

On October 23, 2014, the base received a patient. As conventional drugs proved ineffective, the experts decided to adjust the treatment plan. The patient's disease went into a temporary remission after the treatment. However, two days later, the fever and severe abdominal pain returned. Hearing the news, the experts, at the risk of infection, immediately came into the patient's clinic to check on the patient condition and to comfort the patient and his relatives. A consultation was held again which resulted in a new treatment plan. Thanks to the experts' unremitting efforts, the patient's condition improved. Dr. Cao's one

month's work in Guinea had greatly benefited the African people. "I have gained valuable experience in disease control and prevention from the battle against Ebola in Guinea. I will try to apply them in my future work," said Dr. Cao.

Dr. Cao was not the only PKU medical volunteer to Africa. Five days before he boarded his plane to Guinea, Dr. Yao Gaiqi from PKU Third Hospital had just returned from her one-month stint there. Besides the routine work of the medical team, she contributed to the training of the staff there by working on the compilation of disease control and prevention handbooks.

For the African Children and Their Families

While the medical workers were at war against Ebola, the other members of the PKU family were also trying their best to help. In October 2014, PKU participated in World Food Program China Office's "For the African Children and Their Families" campaign, which called on people to donate towards the African areas affected by the epidemic.

In the epidemic areas in Africa, farms were deserted in order to avoid infection and they became wastelands. "Some people are sick; some are dead, some isolated. All these have made farming impossible for several months. Our markets have closed down, food is unavailable and supplies are blocked," said a local tribal chief. The agriculture in many re-

gions of Western Africa has been severely affected by Ebola. The prices of rice and potatoes were soaring. Many families could not get enough to eat. With the spread of Ebola, over 3700 children lost one parent or became orphans.

In order to help these children, the program was initiated. Every three hundred Yuan donated could buy fifty kilograms of rice, nine kilograms of watercress, and four liters of cooking oil and salt — all of which would be able to support an African family for 90 days. Thanks to the program, thousands of lives were saved.

Since the outbreak of Ebola, PKU has rose up to the challenge and launched a determined war against the epidemic. As long as the disease continues to pervade, PKU will not cease in her efforts.

(Pictures from Peking University People's Hospital)



Team Discovers Biocompatible Click Chemistry for PH Measurement In E.coli

Wang Runjian

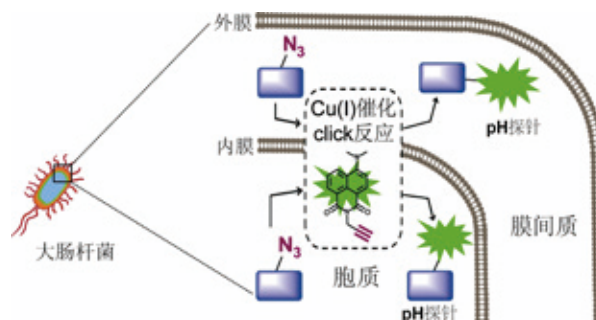
The Cu(I)-catalysed azide-alkyne cycloaddition has revolutionized our ability to label biomolecules under living conditions. However, the cytotoxicity of Cu(I) ions remains a major barrier in applying this method to delve into the internal space of living cells.

Recently, the research team led by Professor Chen Peng, College of Chemistry and Molecular Engineering, Peking University, has discovered that proteins within the cytoplasm of E.coli could be labeled by using Cu(I)-catalysed click chemistry reaction. The findings were published in *Nature-Communications* on September 19, 2014.

By systematically surveying a panel of Cu(I)-stabilizing ligands in promoting protein labeling within the cytoplasm of E.coli, the team identified

a highly efficient and biocompatible catalyst (BTTP). With the combination of the Cu(I)-catalysed click reaction and non-natural amino inserted technology, they successfully conjugated an environment-sensitive fluorophore site onto HdeA, an acid-stress chaperone and acquire fluoro-

phore hybrid pH indicators, which enabled them to measure the pH gradient across the E.coli cytoplasmic membrane under the acid-stress conditions. Furthermore, this positive result allows the measurement of E.coli transmembrane potential and the determination of the Protein Motive Force across the inner membrane. It can also help us better understand the molecular mech-



anism, such as how enteric pathogenic bacteria resist gastric acid.

This experimental study was conducted by Professor Wu Peng from Yeshiva University and Professor Zhao Jing from Nanjing University. Ph.D. candidate Yang Maiyun is the first author of this article. The research was funded by the National Natural Science Foundation of China and the Center for Life Science.

PKU Hosts 2nd China-ROK Dialogue

Yu So-jin

On October 17, 2014, China and the Republic of Korea (ROK) held their second dialogue at Peking University (PKU) — which follows last year's groundbreaking dia-

logue. It was facilitated by PKU's Center for International Political Economy and ROK's East Asia Foundation. The dialogue was attended by over 170 participants including officials, experts, and journalists from the two countries.

The dialogue was divided over three sessions that focused on the following topics: diplomatic security, economic trade, and culture and society.

In his opening speech, PKU Vice-President Li Yansong noted that PKU has

been maintaining a good collaborative relationship with more than 30 universities in the ROK and has scored numerous achievements in research and personnel exchanges.

Chairman of East Asian Foundation and former ROK Foreign Minister noted that the meeting between the two countries' leaders, whom he dubbed as 'old friends', in July had successfully promoted political and security cooperation between the two countries. However, former ROK Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Yu Myung-hwan highlighted that the South Korean people have far less faith in China compared to the United States, particularly in terms of the ROK's security assur-



ance. Thus, to reverse this trend, they believed that it was necessary for both countries to work together to dispel the people's misconceptions of China. Yu declared his support for the Chinese government to continue its efforts in pushing for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and the resumption of the Six-Party Talks.

Ding Yifan, Professor and former

Deputy Director, World Development Institute, State Council Development Research Center, noted that economic globalization had increased international monetary and financial risks within East Asia. China and the ROK have the potential of driving international monetary cooperation within East Asia should they take the lead in internationalizing the Chinese Yuan.

Towards the end of the dialogue, Professor Wang Yong from the PKU School of International Studies noted that the dialogue reflected the increasing social and academic diversity in both countries. There was consensus on a number of issues discussed, especially on the importance of rediscovering the common cultural foundation of the people in both countries. 🍷

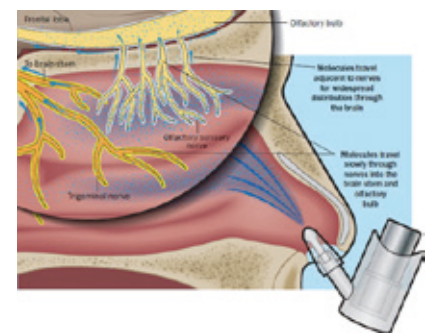
New Findings on Nasal Insulin for Type 2 Diabetes Patients

Won Cheng Yi Lewis

Diabetes mellitus (DM) is becoming a commonly occurring disease worldwide. DM is also the primary cause of cognitive impairment, vascular dementia, and Alzheimer's disease (AD). Patients of type II diabetes will experience increased rate of aging and degenerative cognitive abilities, as well as be exposed to risks of sugar poisoning, neurotoxicity and insulin resistance, thereby altering brain functions and manifesting as brain atrophy. Clinical trials carried out in recent years have shown that intranasal insulin (the administration of insulin through the nasal passageway) is emerging as a promising intervention for treatment of cognitive impairment. Such treatments have shown to be able to improve the health of elderly patients, improve cognitive abilities and memory in younger adults, and have therapeutic effects on sufferers of mild AD and type II diabetes. However, there has been limited literature thus far on how insulin affects

the hippocampal regions of the brain.

Professor Zhang Jue from the College of Engineering, Peking University, and Professor Vera Novak from the Harvard Medical School have, through the combined research of both teams, evaluated the acute effects of intranasal insulin on resting-state brain functional connectivity in older adults with type II diabetes mellitus (T2DM). Through the usage of the resting-state functional brain imaging (r-fMRI), they observed changes in the hippocampal regions of the brain after administering intranasal insulin. Research findings showed that intranasal insulin of diabetes sufferers resulted in the strengthening of connections between the hippocampal regions and the default mode network (DMN). This proves that intranasal insulin has significant effects on the hippocampal regions. Intranasal insulin administration may modify functional connectivity among brain regions regulating memory and complex cognitive behaviors.



The findings of this research are published in the magazine *Diabetes*, and is titled "Intranasal Insulin Enhanced Resting-State Functional Connectivity of Hippocampal Regions of in Type 2 Diabetes", *Diabetes*, 2014 (doi:10.2337/db14-1000). Zhang Hui from the Academy for Advanced Interdisciplinary Studies, Peking University also participated in this research. This research received funding from National Natural Science Foundation of China (11372013) and the U.S. NIH-National Institute on Aging (NIA) (1R01-AG-0287601-A2). 🍷

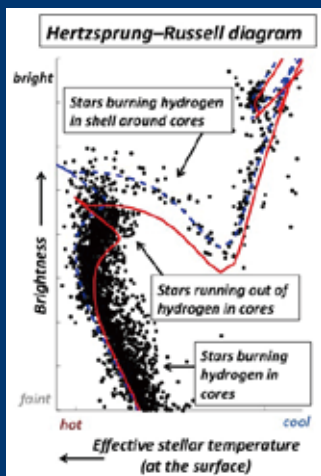
PKU Researchers Challenge Traditional Belief of Stars' Age

Yu So-jin

Using data from the Hubble Space Telescope, a team of researchers from the Kavli Institute for

Astronomy and Astrophysics (KIAA) at PKU and the Chinese Academy of Science's National Astronomical Obser-

vatories in Beijing have discovered that stars appear to be of almost the same age especially in large middle-aged



clusters. This research, which has overturned the previous belief that stars in a single group have formed at different times over a period of more than 300 million years, was published online last December in the journal *Nature*, entitled “The exclusion of a significant range of ages in a massive star cluster”.

Stars begin their lives as billowing clouds of dust and gas. Pulled together

by gravity, these clouds slowly coalesce into dense spheres. If they grow large enough, they heat up and start to convert hydrogen into helium in their cores. This process releases energy and makes them shine. After billions of years, when they reach the end of their core hydrogen supply, the stars begin to burn hydrogen in a shell around their cores and change temperatures. Previous observations of massive star clusters revealed a relatively large amount of variation in temperature from stars reaching the end of their core hydrogen supply, which shows that the stars within the clusters may vary in age by more than 300 million years.

The research team conducted observations on a two billion-year-old star cluster located in the Large Magellanic Cloud called NGC 1651 in order to find out both the change in temperature that occurs when stars reach the end of their hydrogen supply and the change in temperature that occurs as the stars burn hydrogen in a shell

around their core. Contrary to the researchers’ expectations, they found that the brightness of stars of similar temperatures shows very little variation while burning hydrogen in the shell outside their core.

In accordance with the results, the researchers put forward the hypothesis that, for middle-aged clusters such as NGC 1651, the conventional theory might be wrong. Instead, it might be more common for all stars in a single cluster to be of approximately the same age.

Mr. Deng Licai, one of the authors of the paper and principal scientist at the National Astronomical Observatories commented that this work has resolved nearly a decade of debate among scientists and was highly welcomed by the peer-reviewers.

Other researchers who contributed to the work include: Ph.D. candidate Cheng Yuan Li and Professor Richard de Grijs from Department of Astronomy, Peking University. Cheng is the corresponding author of the article. 📖

Prof. Zong Chuanming Receives American Mathematical Society Prize

Yu So-jin

Zong Chuanming of Peking University and Jeffrey Lagarias of the University of Michigan received the 2015 American Mathematical Society (AMS) Levi L. Conant Prize at the Joint Mathematics Meetings on January 11 in San Antonio, Texas, for their article “Mysteries in Packing Regular Tetrahedra” (Notices of the AMS, December 2012). Professor Zong is the first China-based mathematician to be awarded the AMS prize.

Professor Zong’s work focused on finding the most efficient packing arrangements for various objects, which is an ancient math problem that has long attracted the attention of mathematicians. About 2000 years ago, Aristotle conjectured that one example of a space-filling figure is the regular tetra-

hedron, a four-sided object in which each side is an equilateral triangle. After 1800 years, people began to realize that Aristotle had been wrong, and since then, mathematicians have been searching for the most efficient ways to pack the tetrahedra. According to his article, despite all the advances that have since been made, no one knows how to construct the most efficient packing or how efficient it would be.

The Levi L. Conant Prize is a mathematics prize of the American Math-



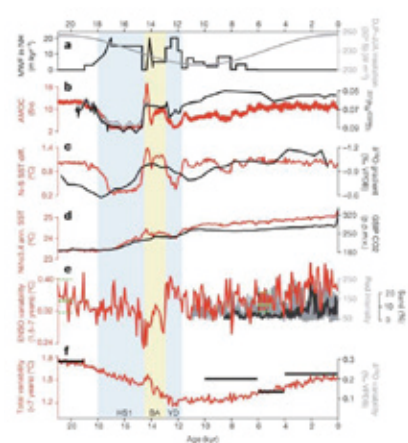
ematical Society, and has been awarded since 2000 for outstanding expository papers published in the *Bulletin* of the AMS or the *Notices* of the AMS in the past five years. 📖

Team Analyzes the Evolution, Mechanisms of El Niño Over Past 21,000 Years

Wang Runjian

The El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) is Earth's dominant source of inter-annual climate variability, but its response to external climate forcing, like changes in greenhouse gases, orbital forcing, and meltwater discharge, remains highly uncertain. Taking advantage of a series of transient Coupled General Circulation Model simulations, the research team led by Liu Zhengyu, Lu Zhengyao, and Wen Xinyu from the School of Physics, Peking University, has discovered the mechanisms of El Niño over the past 21,000 years. The findings were published online in *Science* on November 26, 2014, under the title of "Evolution and forcing mechanisms of El Niño over the past 21,000 years".

By systematically analyzing ENSO's past behavior using paleoclimate data and model simulations, Liu Zhengyu revealed that orbital forcing and melt-



water discharge had a fundamental influence on El Niño over the past 21,000 years. Consistent with most paleo-ENSO reconstruction, their model simulates an orbitally induced strengthening of ENSO during the Holocene epoch, which is caused by increasing positive ocean-atmosphere feedbacks. ENSO

characteristics also changed drastically in response to meltwater discharges and the resulting changes in the Atlantic Meridional overturning Circulation and equatorial annual cycle. The study also revealed that increasing atmospheric CO₂ concentration and retreating glacial ice sheets had a great impact on El Niño.

The findings of the paper promote the understanding of the mechanisms of El Niño and provide a wider scientific perspective of the changing trend of El Niño under the effects of global warming. In addition, the new method is expected to be widely used in the studies of paleo-ENSO. However, the complex evolution of forcings and ENSO feedbacks and the uncertainties in the reconstruction mean that we are facing as many challenges as opportunities for constraining future ENSO responses. ▽

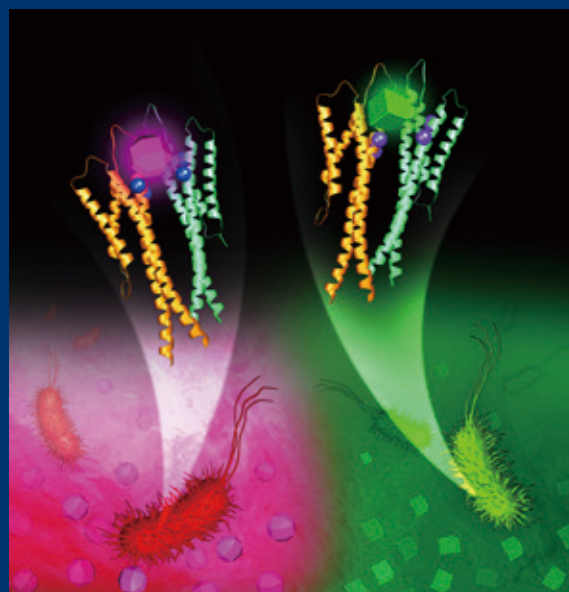
Team Helps with New Approaches for Drug Discovery

Zhao Jiayin

A research team from the Center for Quantitative Biology (CQB), Peking University, was invited by the chief editor of American Chemical Society to pen a review that focused on new, systems-centric views of structure-based drug design (SBDD) that the team believed will impact future drug discovery research and development. In the review, the team that consists of Professor Lai Luhua and associate Professor Pei Jianfeng amongst others, discussed new ways to identify drug targets based on systems intervention analysis, and introduced emerging SBDD methods driven by advancements in systems biology.

This will help provide new approaches for drug discovery, which is significant for treatment of complex and critical diseases.

The review was supported by the National Natural Science Foundation of China, the Chinese Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Science and Technology, Peking University, as well as the Peking University-Tsinghua University Joint Center for Life Sciences.



CQB was established on September 17, 2001, as a result of the collective efforts of faculty members and the visionary support from Prof. TD

Lee and the PKU leadership. CQB is dedicated to promoting research, education, international exchange, and collaboration in physical and

biological sciences, and to becoming an international center for the emerging interdisciplinary field of systems biology. ▶

Joel Migdal: Authority Is Important, but Hard to Establish

Wei Wei

On November 11, 2014, Joel Migdal, Robert F. Philip Professor of International Studies at the University of Washington gave a lecture at Peking University (PKU). Invited by the Co-innovation Center for State Governance (CICSG) and the PKU School of Government, he gave a lecture on the topic of authority and governance. The lecture was hosted by Professor Wang Puqu, Dean of CICSG. More than 150 teachers and students, including Professor Xu Xianglin, Vice Dean of the PKU School of Government were present.

Professor Wang introduced Professor Migdal to the audience after extending a warm welcome to him. Migdal had earned a Ph.D. in 1972 from the Department of Government at Harvard University. He served as an associate professor of Government at Harvard University (1975-80) and a lecturer and senior lecturer at Tel-Aviv University (1972-75). He joined the University of Washington in 1982 and chaired its International Studies Program. Migdal is also world-renowned for his publications, three of which have been translated into Chinese — “Peasants, Politics, and Revolution: Pressures towards Political and Social Change in the Third World”, “Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World”, and “State-in-Society: Studying How States and Societies Transform and Constitute One Another”. As a leading contributor to the influential state-society relations theory, he proposed the concepts of mutual empowerment and mutual transformation between state and society. His



“State in Society” approach is considered to transcend the traditional boundaries between state and society.

In his lecture, Professor Migdal noted that authority was vital to state governance, but hard to establish. He explained that there are five main problems in policy implementation: First, there may be different voices from others, such as superiors and colleagues, who attempt to establish their own authority and enforce their own ideas. This results in conflicting commands and increases the difficulty of policy implementation. Second, the capricious and distorted nature of information in a bureaucratic system can be hard to deal with, especially with the advent of the Internet. Third, a certain degree of operational

discretion is required when implementing policies -- however, because of implementers’ multiple, possibly conflicting identities, the exercise of discretion can lead to distorted policies. Fourth, policy formulation is a tough and complex process that is full of compromises and conflicts of interest. Fifth, policy implementers may also encounter difficulty in ensuring that the public complies with their policies.

Professor Migdal also interpreted these difficulties in the context of developing countries. He believed that even if the state has abundant resources, it is not an easy task to establish effective regulations that are readily complied with. In an environment full of conflicts and compro-

mises, the initial motivations behind a policy and the actual results that ensue may end up to be completely different.

After the lecture, Professor Migdal interacted with the audience and ex-

changed with them ideas on topics such as the development of the “State in Society” approach, governance in developing countries, and the effect of the Internet on authority.

In his closing remarks, Professor

Wang noted that Professor Migdal’s understanding of the concept of authority is profound and has great significance to our own research on the governance of China and other countries. ▾

Nobel Prize Laureate Sir Paul Nurse Receives PKU Honorary Professorship, Global Fellowship

Wei Wei

On December 15, 2014, Sir Paul Nurse, Nobel Prize laureate in Physiology or Medicine, visited Peking University (PKU). He was received by PKU Vice President Li Yansong, Vice Provost Li Chenjian, Director of Institute of Molecular Medicine Xiao Ruiping and Deputy Director of Office of International Relations Zheng Ruqing. After being awarded the PKU Honorary Professorship and Global Fellowship, Sir Paul Nurse gave a lecture.

Mr. Li extended a warm welcome to Sir Nurse and gave an introduction of PKU. Sir Nurse expressed his gratitude for the reception and the honor to visit PKU. He also talked about the Royal Society of London and his experience in college.

During the award ceremony, Mr. Li handed the certificate of Honorary Professorship and Global Fellowship to Sir Nurse amidst loud applause. In his acceptance speech, Sir Paul Nurse highly praised PKU students, saying, “You should feel proud that you are one of the remarkable students in this university. There are students from more than one hundred countries studying here, and you should make the most of the available academic and professional resources.” He also suggested that students should always keep a good sense of humor and possess a positive and persistent mind in order to be innovative in the course of doing scientific re-

search.

Sir Nurse then gave a lecture at the 2014 Nobel Prize Inspiration Initiative Academic Lecture held at Sunshine Hall, the Yingjie Overseas Exchange Center. Sir Nurse, whose speech was titled “Understanding Cell Proliferation”, sought to unveil the secrets of cell proliferation and the roles it plays in the emergence of cancers. At the end of his lecture, he encouraged young students to devote themselves to the exploration of life’s secrets.

Sir Paul Maxime Nurse, PRS, HonFREng, PhD, (born 25 January 1949), is an English geneticist, President of the Royal Society and Chief Executive and Director of the Francis Crick Institute. He was awarded

the 2001 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine along with Leland Hartwell and Tim Hunt for their discoveries of protein molecules that control the division (duplication) of cells in the cell cycle.

The Nobel Prize Inspiration Initiative is a global program designed to help Nobel Laureates share their inspirational stories and insights. By taking Nobel Laureates on visits to universities and research centers around the world, and by capturing their thoughts on video, the Initiative seeks to bring the Laureates into closer contact with the worldwide scientific community, and especially with an audience of young scientists. ▾





Yu Shicun: I Never Stopped Writing

Zhang Zuyue

In 1969, Yu Shicun was born in Suizhou, Hubei province. None of his fellow villagers would ever imagine that this boy would graduate from Peking University (PKU) 21 years later and become one of the most influential authors in China.

After graduating in 1990, Yu tried his hand at many occupations, including teaching at a middle school, editing at a news bureau, and working in the government. He then decided to settle down to write a book, publishing his first one in 1999. The prime of his writing career came shortly after his 2005 best-selling book *Extraordinary Sayings (Feichang Dao)*. His latest book, *Jia Shi*, was awarded “The best book of 2014” by the New Weekly magazine.

Q: Why did you decide to become a writer?

Yu: Entering the writing profession was totally an accident. At first, I didn't think that writing was a decent job, but after my graduation, several events happened in China that affected my belief. Since I had read a lot in university, I decided to devote myself to writing with the hope that I could contribute to society in my own way.

Q: Many PKU students love writing. However they hesitate to take up writing as their living because of the unstable income. What is your advice for these students?

Yu: My suggestion is that they had better set aside five to ten years as a period for them to accumulate experience. They can understand society and their own lives better this way. It is never too late to begin writing. For example, I have a friend who was a journalist, and he wanted to write a book, so he asked for leave and moved to another city. After living in an inn for six months, he finally completed his book. He then resigned and became a professional author. In my opinion, becoming a

writer needs no special effort—it is just a natural process. You will become a writer when you are ready.

Q: Can you briefly talk about your experience and your feelings after your graduation?

Yu: I had a difficult time after I graduated. I didn't know what I want to do. Some of my classmates thought I was not even capable of earning enough money to feed myself, and other classmates thought I would stay and work at the university. In fact, I worked for two years at a middle school immediately after graduating. Then I resigned and explored other walks of life. I even entered the service industry: I worked as a porter, a doorkeeper, and even a woodcutter. That was really a different time. Many people didn't understand why I did so many manual jobs and earned so little. As I attended PKU, I was pretty



In my opinion, becoming a writer needs no special effort—it is just a natural process. You will become a writer when you are ready.

famous in my hometown, but when my friends and relatives knew what I did for a living, they spread rumors of my failure.

As I hustled in society, I wrote down what I saw and what I thought—I observed and reflected on life. I wrote poems and essays, which first spread amongst my friends and eventually became popular amongst the public. My friend advised me to work in a newspaper office, and then my career as a newspaper editor began. Before becoming a writer, I spent nearly 10 years trying different jobs in society, trying new things, and looking for my dream occupation. It was a difficult time, but I never stopped writing. During this time, I wrote essays and letters every day. I even managed to write an autobiography when I was 30. Though most of the essays I wrote during this period were not published, I knew these essays are to me what the first floor is to a building.

Q: What impressed you most when you studied at PKU?

I could spend my time freely. I could immerse myself in books of Russell, Husserl, and Eliot. Sometimes, I spent one day on only one page of around six to seven hundred words, but it was enjoyable to throw myself into those masterpieces.

Q: From your point of view, what is it like to study at PKU?

Yu: At that time, students who could attend PKU were considered extremely

lucky. There is a story that I have told many times: A young person was trying to find the “PKU spirit” since his first day at PKU, and he was disappointed when the students around couldn’t help him find it. However, one day, when he was strolling in the campus listening to radio, he suddenly realized that he was a part of PKU and that this sense of belonging at PKU usually comes from nowhere with no reason but everyone in PKU will experience this self-awakening at some point.

Q: Nowadays, students only care about themselves. Many talented

students go abroad to pursue further education and never return to their motherland. The brain drain is an increasingly severe problem for China. From your point of view, is this a problem of China or a problem of our era?

Yu: As I have said in my books, the contemporary era is like a middle phase for human beings. In this phase, the youth are facing much more competition than their predecessors faced; what they have to learn is a thousand times more than the people of the past. Therefore, most of this generation have given up their ideals and attach more importance to material possessions. As I see it, it is a problem of this era. ▾

Prof. Tian Yuqing: A Titan of History

Zhou Jin, Zhang Chunxiao

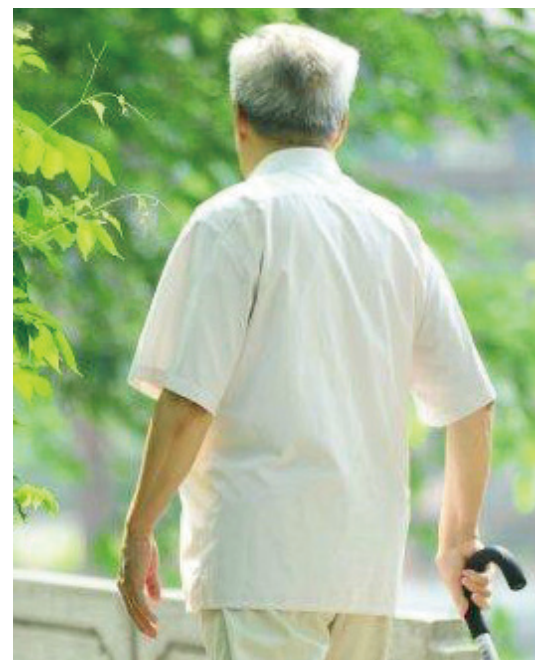
It was Christmas Day. It should have been a day of happiness and celebration but a piece of bad news was spreading across Peking University (PKU). Students and professors alike expressed their sorrow on social media.

“Just before the dawn of 2015, Professor Tian left us quietly. His family, friends, students, and readers are in deep sorrow. Until the last night of his life, this man, who was nearly ninety years old, still kept with him his gentleness and sensitivity. The years could never reduce his enjoyment of life or his personal dignity. His contribution to the history discipline and the way he conducts lessons has always won the admiration and respect from his colleagues and students.”

The above lines were uttered by Yan Buke, also a noted history professor in PKU, who was brimming with emotions as he made his speech.

Tian Yuqing, who was born in Hunan province, passed away on December 25, 2014 at the ripe age of ninety. He graduated from the PKU Department of History in 1950 and stayed on

to teach at the university. In his earlier works, he focused on the history of the Republic of China and modern Chinese history, co-publishing *History Resources of Taiping Kingdom* with Jin Yufu. Later, he directed his attention to



ancient Chinese history, in particular the Qin, Han, Wei Jin, and the South and North Dynasties. From 1985 to 1986, he taught Ancient Chinese History at Stanford University in the United States.

On December 26, Peking University set up a mourning hall for Professor Tian and held a farewell ceremony at the department of history. The next day, his funeral was held in Beijing. Numerous colleagues, academic figures, and students showed up at the funeral to pay their respects to the deceased professor.


Professor Tian was an avid historian, keen on correcting the misinterpretations and abuses of history. He was also a dedicated teacher, "The most important duty for a professor is to teach, and I really enjoy it. I combine teaching with research. The classes help me and remind me of my research, and on the other hand, I share my latest research and opinions with my students."

According to Deng Xiaonan, a professor at the PKU Department of History and previously Professor Tian's student, "The biggest impression he left us with was his calmness under any circumstances and his critical insight in



historical issues. He had lived a tortuous life but lived to survive it. No matter what we talk about, be it the reality of politics or academic issues, he could always touch our hearts. He also had expectations for us. He once visited my home and asked me to contribute

more to our department. I will always remember that."

Although a great light has been extinguished, Prof. Tian's knowledge and passion for history will always be remembered and sustained by his colleagues and students. 

Zhang Qianfan on the Constitution

Yue Xin

"How many of you have been through the University Entrance Examination of Shandong province?" asked Professor Zhang Qianfan in class.

Li Yiming, a freshman from the School of Law at Peking University (PKU), clearly remembered this scene from Zhang Qianfan's constitutional law class. "We talked about equality, and the professor put forward his views on the Gaokao (China's university entrance exam), the 'super high schools' (huge, profit-driven schools that often produce better Gaokao scores), and the independent recruit-

ment scheme," she recalled. "The class went on for half an hour longer than usual."

For Zhu Mengyuan, a former student of Prof. Zhang, she enjoyed his discussions of freedom of expression. In class, Zhang raised various examples of violations of freedom of speech both at home and abroad. "The most important lesson I learned is that we should strive to defend the freedom of speech, which is one of the fundamental rights of citizens and one of the most essential constitutional protections for the country."



After every class, Professor Zhang's desk would be surrounded by students asking questions, and he would rarely refuse a student's earnest request, whether it is discussing their daily lives or the future of the educational system in China. Liang Cangyang, who graduated with a bachelor of law in 2008, recalls seeing Professor Zhang's family photo on the first page of the textbook *Introduction to the Constitution*: "The tan and slender father was holding his one-year-old chubby son and playing with him in the park with a big smile. His love for his students is just the same."

As a constitutional scholar, Zhang Qianfan has studied in the United States for more than fifteen years. At first, he pursued an academic career in physics, but after he got his doctorate degree in 1989, he believed that there was a more urgent need for professionals in social sciences rather than natural sciences in China. He made an astonishing decision to restart his academic journey by studying law in University of Maryland. "Three years later, when my fellow classmates were attending their graduating ceremony, I silently picked up my books and embarked on my next expedition." Eventually, in 1999, he got his doctorate degree in governmental studies at University of Texas at Austin, after which he finally returned to China to teach.

At the last class of the semester, Zhang Qianfan told his students, "Instead of asking what China can do for us, ask what we can do for our country. Instead of asking what constitutionalism can do for us, let us unite and find ways to build our constitutional civilization with courage and wisdom".

In addition to teaching, Zhang has been hosting the Citizen's Constitutional Forum at PKU, which introduces different legal views to the university and the public. Zhang also serves as Director of the Constitutional Society of the China Law Society. 📌

Going off the Beaten Path

A Young Chinese Man Is Ready to Pursue his Entrepreneurial Dream Through an Internship in Tanzania

Wang Yajie



Wang Yajie, a 21-year-old undergraduate at Peking University, made a decision in 2012 that astonished everyone. He decided to take a year off from school to do an internship in Tanzania. He discarded the "iron rice bowl" (a well-paid and secure job) to take a gap year in Africa, and for his peers, they couldn't understand his decision as most of them saw the continent through a prism of war and disease.

Like many Chinese, Wang grew interested in Africa due to Ernest Hemingway's description of Kilimanjaro in his novel *The Snows of Kili-*

manjaro as well as the magnificent East African wilderness scenery in the film *Out Of Africa*. But unlike many, Wang was not resigned to mediocrity. He dreamt of traveling to the continent to see life there firsthand.

Z-turn in Life

In October 2012, Wang started his gap-year internship at the Standard Chartered Bank in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, through AIESEC, a global network providing young people with leadership development experiences.



As a customer service manager at the department of wholesale banking, he had two tasks: One was to handle daily banking services, such as opening accounts and exchanging currency for the nearly 30 local large Chinese companies; the other was to help their offshore financing and credit guarantee pricing while sourcing for new customers.

Wang, who had majored in city planning, was at first flustered as he was not familiar with his responsibilities. "I still remember the first month I worked there, when I had to maintain regular contact with the clients but didn't know how to deal with them. I was pretty upset then," he said.

But by devoting time after work to consult with senior staff from different departments, he was to adapt at his work. "I did not expect too much, but I hope I was able to get something done at work," said Wang.

Gradually, he reaped the benefits of being the only Chinese employee in the bank who could more easily earn the trust of Chinese customers by using a common language and culture. "Chinese companies tended to be less communicative, so it was necessary to build bridges between the two sides—the bank and its local Chinese clients," he said.

Wang worked as a go-between. When he found the bank had failed to resolve compliance issues due to ineffective communication with Chinese enterprises, he took the initiative to explain the importance of compliance to customers. Consequently, customers submitted their identity documents to avoid the risk of accounts closure, and the bank saw significant increase in its business dealings with Chinese clients.

"I always feel I have a limited role in China, which is full of talented people, while in Africa, I had a feeling of being needed. I was regarded as playing an important and irreplaceable role, and this was essential for my growth," Wang told *ChinAfrica*, a magazine based in Beijing.

The cultural difference was another challenge he needed to overcome. There was once when he asked a colleague to handle a particular case as soon as possible. However, his request was refused because the locals were against working during their lunch break. Initially, Wang did not understand his colleague's response: "In China, a colleague would have been cooperative in such a situation," he said. Later, he began to understand that his African colleague was not intentionally making things difficult for him, but that the locals were used to a lifestyle

which was different from the ways of the Chinese. He began to learn how to adapt to and respect the local culture.

Climbing the 'Roof of Africa'

While his peers were busily looking for employment or applying to further their studies abroad, Wang yearned to reach the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro located in Tanzania. On June 25, 2013, he successfully climbed the highest mountain in Africa, also dubbed the "Roof of Africa", in a fitting end to his overseas internship stint.

It took Wang a week to reach the summit, during which he suffered from severe altitude sickness for nearly four days. He fell unconscious several times because of fatigue and lack of oxygen. He suffered from bouts of excessive vomiting and survived on eating chocolate. Fortunately, with the help of a local guide, he never thought of abandoning the climb.


"It means nothing if you don't reach the summit," he said.

Wang likens climbing Mount Kilimanjaro, with its ups and downs, to life: "Like in mountain climbing, there are ups and downs, and twists and turns in our lives," he said.

An Aspiring Entrepreneur

"While living in a country with a different system and environment, I had enough time during the year to deliberate on what I really want," Wang said.

Before he went to Africa he had never thought he would be involved in start-ups. Yet now he plans to have his own business one day. Right now, the time is not ripe due to lack of resources and creativity but sooner or later, he believes he will be an entrepreneur.

After the one-year internship in Africa, Wang has developed a deeper understanding of people with entrepreneurial spirit. He thinks they are determined, unwilling to accept mediocrity and not swayed by doubts -- and he hopes to be amongst their ranks one day. 

Dutch Queen Speaks on Financial Inclusion at PKU

Xu Rui

On November 26, 2014, Her Majesty Queen Máxima of the Netherlands, presented a lecture on “From ‘Flying Money’ to Digital Finance: Innovation and Development through Financial Inclusion in China” at the National School of Development, Peking University (PKU). Speaking in the capacity of the UN Secretary-General’s Special Advocate for Inclusive Finance for Development (UNSGSA), she made the case that “access and usage of quality financial services enable broader social and economic development goals”, and called for China to lead the world in financial inclusion.

Queen Máxima spoke of the rich history of financial innovation in both China and the Netherlands. The first paper money had appeared in China, and ancient China had an efficient monetary system. Amsterdam, on the other hand, was home to the oldest stock exchange in the world, which “provided ordinary people with the opportunity of becoming a shareholder of the Dutch Golden Age.” As “one innovation built on the other”, Queen Máxima noted, “Both Chinese and Dutch inventions have contributed to economic growth and development all around the world. They still shape the world we live in today.”

The speed and scale of which poverty and hunger have been reduced in the past decades have been unparalleled in human history. As part of the United Nation’s Millennium Development Goals, launched in the year 2000, countries have committed themselves to halving poverty before the year 2015. China became the first country to achieve its poverty reduction target ahead of schedule, proving to be successful in substantially reducing poverty.

Queen Máxima spoke highly of China’s financial success, which is part of this incredible progress. In fact, efforts to bring households and businesses into the financial system have contributed

Both Chinese and Dutch inventions have contributed to economic growth and development all around the world. They still shape the world we live in today.

enormously to the rise of China and the well-being of the Chinese people.

Due to government policies aimed at strengthening the banking sector and improving the regulatory framework, Chinese banks now serve sixty-four percent of the adult population. This is high when compared to other emerging countries. China has also improved its financial infrastructure by putting in place a modern collateral registry and a credit reporting system that allows entrepreneurs to obtain credit easier than before.

For any economy, ensuring that households and small business owners have access to basic financial services is of utmost importance. With these financial services, poor households and small entrepreneurs in particular will be able to invest in education, build their businesses, save for retirement, and confront unforeseen risks. This has a positive impact on equitable growth, job creation, and innovation.

In spite of the achievement, more than 2.5 billion people and hundreds of millions of small firms around the world still face significant difficulties accessing the necessary financial services. Among them, it is often the rural poor, migrant workers, and small entrepreneurs who are particularly affected.

Thus, in China, as well as many parts of the world, despite the major successes achieved in financial inclusion,



there is still a great deal left to be done. Furthermore, as the Queen suggested, access must go hand in hand with usage. Increasing the usage by adapting financial services to the actual demand of the consumers is a global priority. Access and usage must also go together with financial education and consumer protection. Consumers will need to have the financial capability to be able to take advantage of improved access to financial services. They will also need to be effectively protected from misconduct. In China, as in other countries, this issue is high on the agenda.

She mentioned the financial inclusion plan which the State Council requested the China Banking Regulatory Commission to develop. The Queen believed that this plan represents a unique and historic opportunity for China to develop a common vision among all public and private stakeholders on how to reach full financial inclusion in the country. This is fully in line with ongoing efforts by the G20 and many other countries which are developing or implementing national financial inclusion strategies.

“As a basis for this plan we need bet-

ter data on under-banked clients, their own behavior, the products available to them, and their capability to adopt technology," said Queen Máxima.

"I believe that technology and innovation can play an even greater role in bringing financial services to China's unbanked and under-banked, especially in rural areas. In fact, the eyes of the world are today on China to see what the future has in store as your country becomes a world leader in digital financial inclusion."

"Financial inclusion doesn't just happen. For it to be successful, a whole range of actors need to work together: Ministries, the Central Bank, supervisors, commercial banks, mobile network operators, the broader private sector, including payment service providers, and knowledge institutions such as your school. No one actor has all the answers and everyone has something to bring to the table."

She concluded that "the financial inclusion plan will provide a great opportunity for all these actors to coordinate efforts. This will strengthen the financial sector and will improve the regulatory framework. In this regard, relatively small steps can make a huge difference."

Finally, the Queen expressed her best wishes for China and its people: "Ladies and gentlemen, dear students, you are the next generation of leaders who will have to deal with all these challenges and lift your country to new heights. In many ways you are in an enviable position. This proud and strong country with its vast reservoir of untapped potential offers so many opportunities! It must be so exciting to be able to help shape China's future."

"I do hope that centers of learning such as this (PKU's National School of Development) support China's efforts to further deepen access to financial services, especially for the poorest and most vulnerable segments of the population. These men and women should also have the opportunity to realize their potential. The development of a balanced society with equitable growth is impossible without financially included and economically empowered people. China has amazed the world with its exceptional achievements so far, and I am confident that you will continue this success story!"

Sir Paul Nurse: Positive Attitude and Humor Are Key to Scientific Research

Han Yihua



You should feel proud that you are one of the remarkable students in this university. There are students from more than one hundred countries studying here and you should make the most of the available academic and professional resources.

On December 15, 2014, Sir Paul Nurse, Nobel Prize laureate in Physiology or Medicine, Adam Smith, Chief Scientific Officer of Nobel Media, and Dr. Beritte Christenson, Global Director of the Nobel Prize Inspiration Initiative (NPII), visited Peking University (PKU) and held a series of activities at the Yingjie Overseas Exchange Center. The activities included the award ceremony of Honorary Professorship and Global Fellowship for Sir Nurse, a round table discussion with students and young teachers from PKU, and an academic lecture hosted by NPII.

Sir Paul Nurse is a British biochemist and was awarded the 2001 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine along with Leland Hartwell and Tim Hunt for their discoveries of protein molecules that control the division (duplication) of cells in the cell cycle.

A Light-hearted Opening

As the lecture was set in the afternoon, some students could not help but feel exhausted after the award ceremony and the round table discussion in the morning. However, the atmosphere was quickly energized when Professor Nurse suggested that students could take a nap when the lecture gets obscure and difficult to understand, and he even promised to "wake the fellows up when the lecture is over". After a bout of laughter from the audience, the lecture began in a positive atmosphere.

Lecture: Understanding Cell Proliferation

"What I would like to do today is tell you some stories of how my laboratories led to or helped to form the un-

derstanding of how the reproduction of cells is controlled. This was the major work that contributed to my Nobel Prize in 2001. I want to explain why this is an important problem, both for biology and for medicine. I also want to explain how problems like this can be investigated even when you hardly know anything when you start. I will like you to get a sense of how scientists work, the importance of teamwork and collaboration, the ups and downs in research, and also the role of luck in research. I will describe the luck that I had in doing this research, but it has also been an exciting adventure for me, so I will like to convey some excitement too."

Sir Paul Nurse first traced the evolution of the research on cells to the discovery of the cell in the 1850s to the identification of the cell cycle. He summarized the three main reasons for the importance of cell reproduction. Sir Nurse then slowly unveiled the secrets of cell proliferation and the

cell cycle and the roles they play in the emergence of cancers. Sir Nurse also briefly discussed the methodology that he used in his research in the United Kingdom.

Encouragement to Young Researchers

At the end of his lecture, he encouraged all young students to devote themselves to the exploration of the secrets in science.

"If you are doing something very difficult, unless you have the passion and the curiosity to know the answer, it will be very difficult to keep going in those circumstances. So the one thing that I want you to identify is your curiosity," Sir Nurse said.

He also expressed his great expectations for PKU students: "You should feel proud that you are one of the remarkable students in this university. There are students from more than one hundred countries studying here

and you should make the most of the available academic and professional resources." Then he offered some advice to the young, saying that students should always keep a positive attitude and a sense of humor when doing any scientific research, as there will be many obstacles along the way. 🍷

➤ NPII

The Nobel Prize Inspiration Initiative (NPII) is a global program designed to help Nobel Laureates share their inspirational stories and insights by taking Nobel Laureates on speaking tours to universities and research centers around the world and by capturing their thoughts on video. The Initiative seeks to bring the Laureates into closer contact with the worldwide scientific community and especially with an audience of young scientists.



Are GM Foods Safe to Eat?

PKU Professors Answer your Questions

Yuan Yating

The lecture "Insights into Transgenic Technology" was held on November 24, 2014. It was hosted by the Peking University Postgraduate Association (PKUPA) and the Postgraduate Student Association of School of Life Sciences. Professor Xu Zhihong, former President of Peking University, Professor Rao Yi, former President of the School of Life Sciences of PKU, and Professor Gu Hongya, former Vice-President of School of Life Sciences of PKU were present as distinguished guests.

The lecture aimed to raise awareness on transgenic technology.

What is transgenic technology? Is it safe?

These days, the majority of crops, which become what we eat, have been artificially selected for breeding, and genetically modified. Hybridization is the earliest successful method to modify crops and it involves large-scale gene transfer in the process of crop breeding. Using this method, American agronomist Dr. Norman Borlaug developed semi-dwarf, high-yield, disease-resistant wheat varieties, and he is credited with saving over a billion people worldwide from starvation. In the 1970s, Chinese agriculturalist Yuan Longping de-

veloped the first hybrid rice varieties. Modern transgenic technology in crop breeding is increasingly dependent on advanced molecular and cellular biological technology, such as protoplast fusion technique and chromosome engineering technology.

"The application of transgenic technology has developed at an amazing speed," Professor Xu Zhihong pointed out: "The total global cultivated area of genetically modified crops in 2012 has increased by 100 times than what it was in 1996. The benefits of biotechnology are being displayed right before our eyes, and they will become new sources of economic growth in emerging countries."

"As for the safety of genetically modified technology," Professor Xu stated, "China has established systems for evaluation

and management based on international conventions. It is widely acknowledged by most food safety agencies, international organizations, and governments that when scientifically evaluated and legally approved, genetically modified crops and products are safe, or at least their risks can be prevented and controlled."

Finally, Professor Xu stressed that we should enrich the public's understanding of transgenic technology instead of demonizing or politicizing the technology. He believed that "it is of great importance for the public to consider transgenic technology and products in a more rational way."

Hot topics: Safety remains top concern

Some commonly asked questions were put forward by the host. Will genetically modified technique break the balance of nature? On this question, Professor Gu Hongya explained, "There is no need to worry about that, because earliest chloroplasts in plants come from bacteria and such gene exchange occurs naturally. Transgenic technology is just to insert one or a few genes purposefully, which results in directional renovation. These practices do not eliminate gene flow between genetically modified plants and its receptor, and thus produces no new species."

When the insect-resistant gene in crops, a toxic protein, kills pests, will it also accelerate the occurrence of a super pest? Professor Xu argued that it was not transgenic technology, but the overuse of herbicides

that was responsible for overgrown weeds in a field of herbicide-resistant crops. "Similarly, long-term use of antibiotics results in bacteria gaining resistance. As is shown in experiments done by scientists in a greenhouse, resistance in pests does grow faster if they feed on genetically modified food for successive generations, but things are different under natural conditions. For example, in America, genetically modified seeds sold by seed companies are required to be mixed with a proportional number of wild-type seeds. Those non-genetically modified crops grown from the latter then functions as a refuge for pests."

A point was raised that some merchants label peanut oil as having no genetically modified ingredients. In response to this issue, Professor Rao Yi argued that the label makes little sense. He believed that introducing a warning to transgenic technology, whose risk is much lower than taking the high-speed rail or riding a bike, would not be helpful. "Even if it (transgenic technology) does have some problems, it is no use to just label it. For the time being, it is difficult to establish a sense of trust between the Chinese authority and the public. At present, merchants mark non-genetically modified food and organic food with the sole intention of jacking up the price."

GMO in the real world: how to choose, how to protect, and how to develop

Towards the end of this lecture, the audience raised several concerns about transgenic technology. Here are some of

the ones we selected:

Audience: How can we tell whether a tomato is genetically modified?

Professor Gu: One will not be able to distinguish with the naked eye. Inserted foreign genes can be tested by PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction). Some special genetically modified foods like the purple tomato are easy to distinguish, though.

Audience: If we find some problems in transgenic technology in the future, how can we revert to non-GMO status? In that way, we may alleviate people's fear about GMO.

Professor Xu: "Chinese scientists have preserved wildlife's genes as early as the 1950s and have built a wildlife gene pool." said Professor Xu, "There was one instance, when some people became allergic to a particular kind of genetically modified soybean that was loaded with altered amino acids. Scientists immediately stopped this particular transgenic technique. In essence, the goal of science is to fight for human welfare."

Audience: What is the current situation of the intellectual property of genetically modified crops in China? How should we look at the National Development and Reform Commission's recent move on releasing foreign investment in research and development of GMO?

Professor Gu: The plantation of transgenic cotton takes a predominant role in China today. The intellectual property of genetically modified rice is limited and not commercialized, though. The Chinese government has invested billions of Yuan in GMO special projects. I expect fewer limits on more intellectual properties.

Professor Xu: Allowing foreign investors to take part in research and development (R&D) does not mean that they can produce and sell seeds in China. We do not have many techniques of our own and thus are facing difficulties in developing a big industry. It will be beneficial if the Chinese government introduces a policy to support R&D. Unfortunately, we still have a long way to go. Many Chinese enterprises have paid little emphasis on their R&D, while American enterprises are doing it better. ▾



Ronnie C. Chan: China and the New Order of the World

Han Yihua



On December 14, 2014, Mr. Ronnie Chichung Chan, Chairman of Hong Kong's Hang Lung Properties Limited, delivered an open lecture at the Sunshine Hall of the Yingjie Overseas Exchange Centre. In the lecture, he talked about Chinese culture, politics, and addressed concerns about the impact of China's rise to the world.

On Chinese Culture

I am a fan of Chinese culture, and I am proud to be Chinese. However, I am also sensitive enough to notice some problems about both our culture and people. Moderation, a central tenet of the Confucian school, is definitely an important value that needs to be inherited and sustained, but we also sometimes need the courage to stand up for our beliefs. Lacking the moral courage to express your own thoughts and choosing to stay silent is not moderation, but rather, it is a deficiency in the sense of public responsibility. As China is a great civilization, I hope we can be men and women of morality and civility and express our opinions confidently and fairly.

On "Vetocracy"

One of the defects of democracy is that it often degenerates into a "vetocracy": As long as you are from the opposition party, regardless of what you say, I

will oppose it, for the sake of opposition. Arbitrary usage of this right often means that the government's operations will come to a deadlock and compromise economic development. Due to this reason, Europe is drifting farther from the center of the world, and it is possible that it will not have any big breakthroughs in the coming twenty years.

On China's Rise

The Great Wall is an example of the Chinese as peace-loving people. I would like to reassure anyone who might worry about China's ambitions. Several years ago, I was invited to Mexico to deliver a speech. I told them, "The only reason you invited me to speak is out of the fear that Chinese manufacturing industries might take away your jobs, so you want to find out something from me to prevent this horrible scenario from becoming a reality; but ladies and gentlemen, you have identified the wrong opponent. You should not worry about China, but you should worry about the recovery of the Americans. Not only should the Mexicans worry, we Chinese must not let our guard down too."

This is because the USA is still the strongest country in the world. In the areas of education, technology, and the economy, they still have a significant lead in the world, and this will not change for a long time. In the near future, the

USA will recover and become the manufacturing tycoon again while keeping its advantages in other fields.

What I worry about most is that the USA is unwilling to see the rise of the other states because it is losing its confidence. Once it lacks confidence, which it should not, it will conjure a virtual rival, which in this case may be China.

To PKU Students

Without a doubt, Peking University is at the forefront of Chinese social sciences and humanities, and there are high expectations for PKU's unique contributions to the world.

In the majority of history, there has been little or no interaction between the two main cultures of East and West, but that is no longer the case in the modern era. Now, the East and West can share a common victory. PKU students should retain both the essence of traditional Eastern culture and that of the West; that is, they should become true elites who are well-versed in both Chinese and Western culture. They should serve as a bridge to boost communication and cooperation among different cultures. ▾

▸ Ronnie C. Chan

Ronnie Chan was invited as part of the "PKU Speech: Hall of Global Chinese Business Figures", a project featuring monthly lectures given to the public by people who are in the business arena. Ronnie Chan is the first Chinese to be invited to the World Economic Forum board, and he served as the co-chair of the Davos annual meeting. He is the chairman of Hang Lung Group and Hang Lung Properties, one of the largest real estate developers in Hong Kong. He is also the Vice-President of the Real Estate Developers Association of Hong Kong, a Co-Chairman of the Asia Society and Chairman of its Hong Kong Center, and an advisor to the China Development Research Foundation of the State Council of the People's Republic of China.

First Sino-ASEAN Conference on TCM Prevention and Treatment of Diabetes

Zhang Wuyan

The first Sino-ASEAN conference on the Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) on the Prevention and Treatment of Diabetes, attended by experts and scholars from China and ASEAN, was held in Beijing on December 13 and 14, 2014.

Diabetes is a disease that affects hundreds of millions around the world. It is also a huge economic and societal burden to China and ASEAN. Hence, it is of vital importance that China and ASEAN undertake joint efforts to combat diabetes.

The experts engaged in in-depth discussions about the various aspects of TCM prevention and treatment of diabetes and explored the potential fruits of increased regional and interdisciplinary cooperation. In recent years, ASEAN has made huge progress in the development

of TCM. The representatives of the ASEAN countries presented their own country's experience in treating diabetes through integrative medicine at the conference.

The conference not only stimulated Sino-ASEAN exchange and cooperation on TCM and the treatment of diabetes, but it also laid a firm foundation for the successful development of TCM in ASEAN countries. More importantly, the conference is one step closer to bringing greater health to the people of China and ASEAN.

The conference was organized by the Chinese Association of Integrative Medicine Incretion Professional Committee, the World Federation of Chinese Medicine Societies, and the Peking University First Hospital, and it had the support of China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



NEJM Signs Cooperation Agreement with PKU

Xin Yuan

Peking University (PKU) and the *New England Journal of Medicine* (NEJM) signed an agreement that called for more in-depth cooperation on November 8, 2014. The agreement focused on in-depth collaboration between the two sides in areas such as clinical medicine, translational medicine, and talent training. Both sides also discussed the possibility of working together to roll out a publication in Mandarin.

PKU owns many resources in the field of biomedical studies, with institutions such as the School of Life Sciences, the Institute of Molecular Medicine, and the Health Science Centre. The newly established Academy for Advanced Interdisciplinary Studies and Center for Life Science further strengthened PKU's leading role in the field.

The collaboration between PKU and NEJM would not only create new impetus for more international collaboration be-



tween China and the world in the field of clinical studies, but it would also provide



a beneficial environment for the entry of innovative drugs researched and developed

by China into the global market.

Apart from the agreement signing ceremony, the two sides also held an inauguration ceremony for the editorial board of *NEJM* China. Professor Xiao Ruiping, Director of Institute of Molecular Medicine at PKU, was appointed the head of the editorial board. It is the first time that *NEJM* has set up an editorial board overseas. Prof. Xiao is also the first Chinese to take up the position of associate editor.

NEJM is one of the most widely read and cited academic journals in medicine. First established in 1812, it is the oldest continuously published medical periodical that has an authoritative international influence today. It is dedicated to bringing physicians the best research and key information at the intersection of biomedical science and clinical practice and to present the information in an understandable and clinically useful format. 📖

PKU–Griffith University Asia Future Fellows Program for Undergraduates

Zhang Rutian

In July 2014, ten Peking University (PKU) undergraduates visited Brisbane as part of the Asia Future Fellows Program for Undergraduates jointly established by Griffith University and PKU. During their one-week stay in Brisbane, they participated in numerous activities including academic seminars as well as government and industry briefings.

In November 2014, the Beijing segment of the program officially opened by Professor Liu Shusen, Secretary-General of Peking University Australian Studies Centre. Students presented their papers, which will be published in the Griffith Asia Institute’s working papers series *Regional Outlook* in January 2015. Their topics include:

- Analysis of the Potential Mutual Benefits from the Proposed Sino-Australian Free Trade Agreement
- Australia-China Relations in Intergovernmental Organizations – Building Bridges or Exacerbating Conflict?
- The Australian Carbon Tax: A Comparison between China

and Australia

- Comparison of High School Dropouts in China and Australia – Causes and Solutions
- Youth Political Participation in Australia and China: A Comparative Analysis

Participants said that this program not only gave them insight into the political, economic, and cultural ties between the two countries, but also helped them gain a more comprehensive understanding of both cultures.

The Griffith students appreciated the opportunity to view China from a different angle and carry out some solid research on topics of both countries’ concern.

“We saw the real China”, said Nicholas Filer, an Asia Futures Fellow, “we got to

talk to the people that really comprise Chinese society.”

The Asia Futures Fellows Program for undergraduates was jointly established by Griffith University and Peking University (PKU) as part of Griffith’s Asian Century Futures Initiative. Twenty Fellows positions are available, with ten each from Griffith and PKU. All fellows will participate in a one-week program each in Brisbane, Australia, and Beijing, China. The program will be held again in 2015. 📖



Science in Dialogue Stirs up Interest in Finland's Achievements

Zhong Xue

The Science in Dialogue event was held at Peking University (PKU) on November 26, 2014. There were exhibitions of Finland's scientific achievements, as well as a forum concerning topics of interest to both countries such as law, the environment, and education. PKU and University of Helsinki (UH) also signed the PKU-UH Cooperative Supplemental Agreement, which called for in-depth cooperation in law, environmental science, and



medicine between both schools.

Science in Dialogue is part of the Pure Finland project, an initiative by the Finnish government and the Embassy of Finland in China. As part of the project, a series of events were kick-started in Beijing in autumn 2014. The aim was to showcase Finland's many strengths: its dynamic consumer brands, attractive options for tourists, investors and students, latest scientific and technological innovations, as well as its unique cultural creations. Pure Finland strives to offer a deeper understanding of Finland in China.

PKU Council Chairman Zhu Shanlu, UH President Jukka Kola, and Finnish Ambassador to China Jari Gustafsson attended the opening ceremony.

After the opening ceremony, professors from PKU and UH delivered their reports and engaged in constructive discussion on the topics presented.



"We have nearly 3000 followers right now, which means one in five students are learning more about campus food through us," said Viola Zhang, an undergraduate student at Peking University (PKU). Viola is one of the creators behind a popular WeChat public account called "Let's Go to the Cafeteria".

WeChat, the most popular mobile text and voice messaging communication service in China allows users to register public accounts, which enable them to push feeds and interact with their subscribers. WeChat public accounts have since become widely used by the government, companies, and traditional media organizations. Many individuals, including students at PKU, have also seized the opportunity to take their voice to the cyber world.

Let's Go to the Cafeteria

According to Viola Zhang, the five administrators behind "Let's Go to the Cafeteria" are just your everyday ordinary students from the School of Journalism and Communication. "The idea of creating a new media platform came from a module we took," she said, "The professor had asked us to apply what we learnt about public communication to our lives." Zhang added, "We can easily find information on Chinese food, but we noticed that there wasn't a platform catered specifically for students. Students are thirsty for information about campus food, and this is why 'Let's Go to the Cafeteria' was born."

According to Lucy Zhang, another administrator behind the public account, it was their originality, high-quality pictures, and attractive style that contributed directly to their success. "We schedule different content on different days," Lucy explained, "For instance, on one day we may introduce new dishes in the cafeterias, and on another day we may share a



PKU's New Media Platforms

Zhang Kexin



heart-warming story behind a particular dish." The creators express that not only do they wish to introduce the food as they are, but they also strive to help people understand the everyday emotions and experiences of a typical student in PKU.

Their efforts have paid off – they have managed to capitalize on powerful emotions and bonds between stu-

dents, both current and former, and PKU. "For instance, we marketed a set of postcards, which proved to be really popular not just among the students but also among those who have graduated," Viola Zhang noted, "Because the postcards feature the best food in our cafeterias, it is a good way for them to reminisce about the beautiful things in university or to use as memorable greeting cards."


ReinDare: An Amateur Radio Station

There are many other platforms created and managed by PKU students. Jiayang Gu has this to say about his platform "ReinDare" (which sounds similar to reindeer), "We want to share our travel and adventure experiences. We want our platform to be a place for people who are not afraid of breaking conventions to forge their unique path." One interesting feature of "ReinDare" is that the hosts share stories through voice messages with their subscribers. As a story-sharing platform, the account has become somewhat like an

amateur radio station that has made it stand out from amongst the many new media platforms on campus.

"The motivation comes easily"

In the past, there were physical billboards on campus for students to share information. The Internet has since replaced the billboard in its role as the main medium for information dissemination on campus.

It's not an easy task to run a new media platform. The students have to constantly come up with new content, while maintaining close connections with their followers. However, most of the students who are creating their media are encouraged and driven by their genuine interests rather than financial motives. As Jiayang tells us, "The motivation comes easily. It is a valuable opportunity to work with your companions on something that you really desire to do. The pleasure that you get is incredible. Moreover, the success of our work not only makes ourselves happy but also brings happiness to our followers." 



With only four minutes to the end of the match, Taiyuan University of Technology (‘Taiyuan’) seemed poised to win with a 9-0 run when Peking University’s (PKU) center, Guo Kai, gained possession of the ball. Facing a tough defense, Guo attempted to maneuver past his opponent but tripped over his opponent’s foot, spraining his ankle. Guo fell to the floor, unable to stand up. The game seems to have taken a turn for the worse. Having suffered from a fierce counterattack by Taiyuan and injuries in PKU’s lineup, the home team might just lose the game despite having led throughout the whole match. All of the people in the spectator stands at PKU’s Khoo Teck Puat Gymnasium were waiting to see what would unfold. With the help of the medics and his teammates, Guo slowly sat up but was quite obviously still in pain. Suddenly, a voice broke the silence of the gym—“MVP (Most Valuable Player)”. Then, more and more insistent voices joined in. As the chants became louder, Guo stood up and rejoined the match. PKU eventually won the game with a score of 102-88, with Guo having scored 22 points and 7 rebounds.

Just like Guo’s performance in the finals on January 12, 2015, the PKU Men’s Basketball Team, as the current champions of CUBS (a professional league) and CUBA (an amateur league), has come out on top of China’s university basketball after being the underdog for several years. Apart from winning trophies domestically, PKU also won the Asian University Men’s Basketball Championship, defeating teams from countries including South Korea and the Philippines. The PKU team will represent China in the 2017 International Universities’ Games.

Founded in the 1980s, the PKU basketball team has always been amongst the leading teams in Beijing. In 1998, the year marking PKU’s 100th anniversary, PKU defeated Renmin University to clinch the first place. In the same year, PKU joined CUBA. Subsequently, PKU won the third place in both 1999 and 2000. However, following the start of the new millennium, the PKU Men’s Basketball Team failed to attain any trophies for years.

However, in recent years, due to the



PKU Basketball: Clawing Their Way to the Top

Chen Xiaojian

consistent efforts by the team, there was a turning point. In 2012, the team was amongst the top eight teams in CUBA. In 2013, it emerged as runner-up, and in 2014, the team finally held the trophy in their hands. Meanwhile, in CUBS, the team was victorious in 2014 — the first year of their participation.

According to head coach Zhang Jian, the players, the coach, as well as team dynamics are some of the many factors that contributed to their success.

A high level of professional skill is a pre-requisite for every player on the team. At the same time, athletes are expected to perform well in school, and meet the same academic demands as any other PKU student. In addition, the players have always displayed strong fighting spirit. For instance, in the match against Tsinghua University, a player suffered from a hairline fracture but continued playing for the team after just a single day’s rest.


The coaching team has also been bolstered in recent years. Zhang, who started his coaching career in 1985, has led the PKU team as head coach for almost a decade. Meanwhile, a new assistant coach Wang Li, who is a former professional athlete, was employed in 2010. More coaches with different specializations, such as fitness coaches, were also gradually brought in to improve the quality of training. The integrated coaching team has facilitated more effective training, resulting in better performance in recent years.

Both the coaches and the players maintain a very harmonious relationship. Everyone tries their best to solve problems together. Players who have since graduated often return to the school every Saturday night to meet up with their former teammates and current juniors. The camaraderie also extends to the relationship between the team and their opponents. When players from the



opposing team get injured on the court, the players will help send them to the hospital.

The team also receives strong external support. On one hand, the school is very supportive of the team, providing medical and academic assistance, as well as sponsorships. Faculty administrators will help players make up for classes that they missed due to matches. The school helps to identify sponsors that allow the team to get not only equipment but also nutrition supplements. Another pertinent factor for the team's success is the sheer amount of encouragement and support that the students get from their professors and peers.

Zhang Jian states that the next goal for the team is to clinch the CUBA trophy again while doing well in the International Universities' Games. We wish them best of luck for their matches ahead! 

Guanghua Ambassador Winter Study Trip


Shen Yueran

I was documenting the 2015 Guanghua Ambassador Winter Study Trip the other day when I came across a group photo taken a year and a half ago. It was my first general meeting at the International Communication Department (ICD), and back then I would not have believed it if someone told me that a year later I would be leading eighty participants to five countries and regions.

I remember the first time we were introduced to the Guanghua Ambassador Study Trip, an annual program organized by ICD since 2010. Frankly speaking, the first two words that came to me were "mission impossible", for I could not imagine such a huge and complex program all taken care of by mere university students. I was proven both right and wrong.

I was right about the difficult part. During my first semester as the leader of the SingaKong Group to Singapore and

Hong Kong, I sent over a hundred emails to universities, companies, and institutions, requesting to be allowed to visit them. I received a dozen rejections before finally finding a company that was willing to accept our request. Not to mention accommodation, transportation, visa and even the weather. Every detail needed extra effort in order to guarantee that the entire trip ran smoothly.

But I was also proved wrong. The program turned out to be very successful. The SingaKong Group received a warm welcome from Business China, a Singapore non-government organization initiated by its former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew and then Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao. Xinhua News Agency even reported on the trip as an example of today's youngsters possessing great international horizons and social responsibilities. And yes, it was all organized and planned by mere university students. 



Because of our past successes, we decided to add Japan to the winter study trip package. This mysterious oriental land, both ancient and modern, greatly attracted the students. We visited GE Japan and met with its CEO, Mr. Kumagachi. We participated in mock trading at the Japan Exchange Group and met Asimo, Honda's adorable human-sized robot. A group of Japanese students from Waseda University, Tokyo University, and Hitotsubashi University took us out for Sukiyaki (Japanese hotpot). We took funny selfies in front of Fushimi Inari Shrine, played Japanese card games on Tatami (traditional Japanese flooring) in Kyoto, and went skiing in Hokkaido.

To me, the trip is all about learning things and having fun. Neglect either of the two and you cannot say that it was a successful trip. This visit to famous companies and institutions helped us to understand how they operate in the real world. These companies are often at the forefront of their industries, and gave us a quick peek at the cutting edge technologies or strategies that they utilize. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. Group sightseeing, shopping and late-night card games allow the group members to bond with one another. Everyone ended up as close friends with common memories together. The fun we had was also thanks to the local people. Should it not be for the Japan tour this winter, I would not have known how friendly these Japanese young people were.

My group and I were invited to give a speech at Hong Kong Kowloon Wah Yan High School. I was surprised at the limited and biased knowledge these kids had about Mainland China. I shared about the advanced education we received at Peking University, the open-mindedness of the professors as well as the diverse perspectives that they introduced to us. The students were curious during the Q&A session and some even emailed me after the session.

This is why this trip is called "Guanghua Ambassador". The moment we stepped off the campus is the moment we were no longer just a simple student of the school—we became representatives of PKU. The study trip participants were not only guests to their host

universities and institutions but also ambassadors of PKU and China. My trip to Hong Kong last year was indeed an enriching opportunity to hear investment bank elites share their secrets to success. But the most unforgettable part was still the visit to Wah Yan High School, where I truly felt my responsibility as a Peking University student as well as the pride of my own culture and ethnicity. Having experienced another lifestyle and mindset,

I gained new perspectives on the differences between cultures, which in turn propels me to think deeper about my own views.

The sixth year of the Guanghua Ambassador Winter Study Trip was in 2015. Having been a participant and an organizer, I am very much anticipating its vitality and future development. Hopefully the trip will continue to influence and inspire students year after year! 🍷

International Students Singing Competition 2014

Anke Muryango



It was not long after I arrived at the Peking University as a language student that I heard about the singing competition. I was pleasantly surprised about the existence of this kind of competition for foreign students at PKU. At first, I was hesitant to participate because it would be my first singing competition, but I ultimately decided it could turn out to be a great experience and therefore signed up.

The first round was an audition round where many students were screened on whether they could actually "sing". Luckily I found out that in the eyes of that particular jury, I could. The second round was a lot

more professional and its contestants were considerably more prepared and nervous to perform. I chose to sing the song "月亮代表我的心" (The Moon Represents my Heart) by 邓丽君 (Teresa Teng), which is a very romantic song that everybody in China has probably heard at least once. This particular song choice was made because it was the first song I was able to sing in Mandarin, which brought back many good memories.

Eventually, it was time for me to perform. I felt a bit nervous at first, which improved a lot while singing as I started to feel more comfortable, and in the end, I was quite satisfied with my performance. Even though I didn't

make the final cut to participate in the last round, I think it was a great experience. I especially learnt how to be confident on stage while performing and also enjoyed the support of the crowd

and my friends who were present. I guess what I mainly would like to give express is that whenever you're presented with an opportunity like this, be it a competition or something new and

challenging, however scary it might be at first, just try to get the most out of it, and you might end up being surprised by the amount of experience it gives you. 🍷

Speech Competition for International Students

Joseph Joo

“That was fun!” is what I thought as I spoke my final line, stepped off the stage, and stumbled back to my seat. A month of preparation, the multiple repetitions, and several dress rehearsals were finally over and the Peking University School of Chinese as a Second Language Speech Competition was a great success!

I never would have imagined studying abroad in China and speaking in front of Peking University's professors, faculty, and other international students. Participating in the speech competition was truly a great honor and a fantastic test to see how much I have learned during the semester. Giving a speech is certainly not an easy task in English, and to give it in a foreign language was nerve-wracking to say the least. The reason it was so challenging was because there were many different aspects that I needed to be proficient in to give the speech: writing, reading, listening, and speaking.

Preparing for the speech competition involved translating my thoughts from English to Chinese on paper, reading and memorizing the entire speech, listening to myself and to our Chinese instructors to understand tones, and finally speaking as fluently as I can. The entire process was a culmination of my entire learning experience—in fact my Chinese improved because of it—and I am so glad that I chose to participate in the event.

Chinese is such a great language to learn; it is extremely challenging, but greatly rewarding, and most importantly,

a lot of fun. I would recommend all students challenge themselves and partake in speech competitions like this because it is a great opportunity to improve one's Chinese level. Thank you Peking Univer-

sity and all of the instructors who helped us make significant advances in our Chinese program! I hope to return to PKU someday and continue furthering my Chinese education! 🍷



An English Country Girl in Beijing

Jessie Benjamin

In August 2014, I packed my bags, said a teary goodbye to friends and family, and embarked on my year of studying abroad. I knew it would be tough, but the culture shock really did live up to its reputation. I come from a sleepy village in the English countryside, where the closest thing to Beijing's hectic traffic is getting stuck behind a tractor! To this day, I'm still getting used to the congestion. My cycle to PKU is almost half an hour and I constantly have to dodge cars, buses, taxis, and frankly, it's a miracle I haven't fallen off yet!

However scary the journey, arriving at PKU is completely worth it. The atmosphere around campus is fantastic. One of my favorite places is Paradiso Café, where you can meet students from all over the world. Since coming to PKU, I have been so lucky to make

new friends from different countries and backgrounds.

One of the main things I love about PKU is its close-knit collective culture. This is most obvious in the mountaineering society, Shan Ying She (Mountain-Eagle Society). Whether we're doing fitness sessions on the track or hiking in the mountains, there's always a focus on team spirit. For example, in training we do synchronised press-ups to make sure everyone is putting in equal effort and to give each other mutual support. On our mountain expeditions, we share everything including food, water, and equipment. This adds to the feeling of togetherness. Shan Ying She has really opened my eyes to the benefits of working as part of a team in everything, and is a part of Chinese culture I really admire.



China never ceases to surprise me. Every day I come across a new strange snack or learn about a new custom from my Chinese flatmates and friends. Little by little, I can feel myself adjusting. Eating stinky tofu is one particular achievement. When I first arrived in China, I would never go within smelling distance of stinky tofu, let alone eat it! It's not only the smell but also the charcoal black colour that makes it nothing like Western food – and far from appetising, in my opinion.

However, I recently managed to bite the bullet. When visiting one of my good friends from PKU in her home province of Hunan, she proudly ordered me some of her hometown's best stinky tofu (also a favourite of Chairman Mao's). Obviously, in Chinese culture it is very rude to refuse a dish that has been especially ordered for you, so I knew there was no escaping stinky tofu this time—and I went for it. Surprisingly, once I'd gotten over the initial smell, it tasted quite nice! Chinese readers might be wondering why I'm making such a big fuss over eating a piece of tofu. Yet from my perspective, eating stinky tofu was akin to crossing a hurdle. It's a dish loved in China but one that foreigners are often too afraid to taste. However small this step may be, I feel that eating stinky tofu has brought me closer to the Chinese way of life. 🍷



“Huang Yicong and Wife Award” Award Ceremony

Zhou Huiying

On November 16, 2014, the “Huang Yicong and Wife Award” ceremony was held at Peking University (PKU). Huang Rongnian, CEO of Indonesia’s Sinar Mas Group, presented the awards to students and delivered a speech. Representatives from Peking University and Sinar Mas also signed the agreement for the establishing of the “Sinar Mas Builds Dreams Foundation”. PKU Student Council chairman Zhu Shanlu attended the ceremony.



Mr. Zhu gave a warm welcome to Mr. Huang Rongnian. He recounted the friendship between the Huang family and Peking University and spoke highly of Mr. Huang Rongnian’s achievements in business and philanthropy. An outstanding philanthropist, Mr. Huang Rongnian shared his personal story and encouraged students to take part in community activities. He hoped that he could spread more love and make the world a better place.

The “Huang Yicong and Wife Award” was established in the name of Mr. Huang’s parents. It has helped 1400 students gain opportunities to higher education. The newly established “Sinar Mas Builds Dreams Foundation” helps support student-initiated programs in impoverished rural areas.

Houston Alumni Association Sets up First Permanent Overseas Alumni Fund

Zhou Huiying

In December 2014, fund-raising activities for the Houston PKU Alumni Association Scholarship concluded with the scholarship becoming PKU’s first permanent overseas



alumni association scholarship.

The Alumni Association in Houston first established the scholarship in North America in June 2009 with the goal of establishing a permanent scholarship fund by 2014. On November 24, 2014, the Alumni Association launched an online auction as part of its efforts to raise funds. With the help of PKU Education Foundation, the auction ended successfully on December 10, 2014. The Alumni Association funds have already fulfilled all of the requirements set by the PKU Education Foundation, and the Houston Alumni Association Scholarship is now officially PKU’s first permanent overseas alumni scholarship.

The Houston Alumni Association Scholarship has helped fifty PKU students since its establishment in 2009.

Hangzhou Jinjiang Group Establishes PKU Strategic Communications Research Fund

Zhou Huiying

On November 19, 2014, an agreement was reached between PKU and Hangzhou Jinjiang Group to set up the “Peking University Strategic



Communications Research Fund” in support of PKU’s bid to set up a world-class think tank in communication research. Dou Zhenggang, Chairman of the Board of Jinjiang Group, was also presented with the PKU Education Contribution Award.

Liu Wei, Vice President of PKU, expressed his gratitude to Jinjiang Group. He stressed that to support China’s bid to become a “cyber power”, PKU has in place plans to establish think tanks and research institutions in areas such as the management of information and public discourse. Liu Wei explained that the newly established foundation will contribute to the development of journalism and communication in China.

How to Give

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Yannan Garden

Yannan Garden is located in the south of Peking University, covering 7.9 acres. It first belonged to Yenching University, which was merged with Peking University in 1952.

Back in the 1920s, John Leighton Stuart, the first President of Yenching University, set out to build Yannan Garden using a combination of Chinese and Western elements. Set among well-tended gardens, the two-story buildings in Yannan Garden served as residence for foreign teachers in Yanjing University and was famed for its beauty and architecture. Even now, Yannan Garden still holds the reputation as a “Garden within a Garden”.

Many renowned Chinese academics, such as Zhu Guangqian, Ma Yinchu and Feng Youlan, once lived in Yannan Garden. Today, when you take a stroll in Yannan Garden, you will still be able to find those wood plates with their white numbers glittering in the morning sunlight. While Yannan Garden is no longer as lively as before, it leaves us with something else – tranquility, and a gentle reminder of Peking University’s rich heritage and eventful past.



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