

China's Food Safety System Worth Learning from

Dialogue

By FU Han and BI Weizi

Professor Francis Gregory Snyder is an internationally recognized expert on food safety law, WTO law and EU law. He served as dean of the Law Department of the European University Institute and Honorary Professor of the London School of Economics and Political Science, and is now chair professor at School of Transnational Law, Peking University.

For more than 20 years, American/British Snyder has provided expertise to China's reform and modernization development. As a food safety expert of the Foreign Experts Advisory Committee of the State Administration of Foreign Experts Affairs, he has made suggestions on the revision of China's Food Safety Law in 2009, and reform of the food safety supervision system. In 2018, he received the Chinese Government Friendship Award for his dedicated service to food safety.

Looking back on his professional experience in China, Snyder recently shared his insights on China's food safety practices during a recent interview with Chinese media.

How did you learn about China's food safety laws?

Snyder: When I was a law student at Harvard, my tutor asked me to translate Chinese law into English and French. In 1992, when I was a visiting scholar at The University of Hong Kong, I took the opportunity to travel around China, giving lectures on food safety laws. In 1997, I went to Dongguan for an inspection, which gave me a deeper un-



Professor Francis Gregory Snyder and his wife. (PHOTO by International Talent Magazine)

derstanding of international trade. I think that food safety, WTO law, international trade law, etc. are like different streams coming together to form a river.

China is a model for other countries to follow in terms of food quality. China has green, organic, non-polluting food. In Europe and America, organic food is very expensive. I think China's system is something other countries should learn from, but not many people seem to realize this.

Have you noticed any changes in China over the past few decades?

Of course! It's incredible! The first time I came to Shenzhen was in 1997. It was no longer a small fishing village, but it was still not a metropolis. We had to go to the mayor's office to get a pass to visit a factory. The entrance to the mayor's office building was still muddy. Now, Shenzhen is a big city with a large popula-

tion. It is very beautiful, with excellent buildings and roads. It is a really humane city.

China's approach to urban and rural problems is worth learning by other countries. China has always been very modest. Chinese people are excellent and hardworking, which is very important for China's future.

I think China is a country with a vast territory, a large population, an ancient culture, and world-famous food. *The Book of Songs* also dates back to the Western Zhou Dynasty. I often watch Chinese TV shows and movies in France, and I know that China has beautiful scenery and melodious music. I think this should be promoted. A lot of Europeans do not understand China. If they cannot come to China in person, it is especially important to understand China through other channels.

What can the world learn from China?

Many years ago, I did a project in Europe — What Can the World Learn from China? At that time, many students were confused. They didn't understand why they should learn from China. But reality tells us a different story. China has an ancient wisdom that is different from other countries. Europe is made up of many small countries, while China has been a unified country for a long time in history. Especially now that China is using its own ancient civilization to handle international relations, I think it is worthy of learning by many countries. China is a country with a large population, and China's online medical system is also worth learning. Many patients can consult doctors online, which saves patients a lot of time.

This article includes contributions from International Talent Magazine.

Traditional Eastern Wisdom

Hand Warmer: A Convenient Hot Item

By BI Weizi

The hand warmer, a small, often square or round mini portable furnace filled with burning charcoal, with a hollow lid on top, is one of the innovative winter heating devices used in ancient China. Usually made of copper or enamel, the hand warmer could fit in the hand or be placed in the sleeve for heating, similar to the heating pads used today.

Hand warmers have long been used by Chinese. A copper hand warmer from the Warring States Period is on display at the Hunan Provincial Museum. Dur-

ing the Ming and Qing Dynasties, hand warmers were widely used in the palace, made with exquisite craftsmanship and beautiful shapes.

Ancient hand warmers had a variety of designs. Round, square and octagonal shapes are typical, with some shaped like pumpkins, flowers and turtle shells. The charcoal used for heating was also often pressed into flower shapes together with fragments of incense that emitted a pleasant fragrance when burned.

Structurally, the hand warmer consists of four parts: outer layer, inner

compartment, top lid and handle. The outer layer is made of colorful wood. The inner copper compartment stores the burning charcoal. The top lid is a hollow net woven with copper wire, which not only provides ventilation allowing the charcoal to burn, but also prevents sparks from flying out. The heat generated by the hot charcoal is transferred to the copper inner compartment, and then to the wooden outer layer, providing warmth for the user.

The hand warmer's artistic shape and practical functions reflect the aesthetic taste and innovation of an-

cient Chinese, and also embodies the excellent manufacturing skills of the craftsmen.



An ancient hand warmer is displayed at the Palace Museum, November 24, 2023. (PHOTO: VCG)

Ancient Trees Present a Trip Back in Time

Science Outreach

By Staff Reporters

Ancient trees are silent witnesses to the changes that have occurred in the world around them. Having survived for millennia, they are rare, and in China, these ancient giants are primarily found in the harsh environment of the Qinghai-Xizang Plateau.

Surviving in extreme weather

The question of why the Qinghai-Xizang Plateau, with its extreme conditions, is home to many ancient trees has intrigued scientists and the public for a long time. Professor Zhang Qibing from the Institute of Botany, Chinese Academy of Sciences, has shed light on this phenomenon. According to mainstream beliefs, trees living under

certain adverse conditions tend to have longer lifespans. This concept suggests that the extreme conditions of the Qinghai-Xizang Plateau might contribute to the longevity of its trees, says Zhang.

The role of ecological resilience

One key factor in the longevity of these trees is ecological resilience, which is the capacity of trees to actively respond to environmental stresses and disturbances. As trees age, their demand for photosynthetic products, water, and nutrients increases. If the supply of these resources cannot meet the demand, the tree's ecological resilience declines, making it more difficult for the tree to survive natural disasters such as extreme climate events and pests, ultimately affecting its ability to reach old age.

However, the ancient trees of the Qinghai-Xizang Plateau, like the cypress, have adapted to their harsh environment through a strategy of slow

growth, reducing their demand for resources and maintaining their ecological resilience over long periods. This adaptation can be seen in the exceptionally narrow tree rings of millennia-old cypress trees on the plateau, usually less than 1 millimeter wide, indicating their remarkable ability to endure and thrive in adversity.

Ancient trees tell stories of past climates

The tree rings of these ancient giants hold vast amounts of information about past climate conditions. For instance, research on seven millennia-old cypress trees in Qinghai province revealed wider tree rings between 929 and 1031 AD, correlating with increased rainfall from May to June over that period. This suggests favorable moisture conditions during the Medieval Warm Period, highlighting how ancient trees can provide insights into historical climate patterns.

Moreover, the resilience and

"memory" of trees, as observed by Zhang and his team, show that trees can accumulate experiences from past disturbances, enhancing their resilience against future challenges. This ability was evident in ancient cypress trees in Xizang, where narrower growth rings indicated a two-hundred-year period of hardship, followed by a return to normal growth.

Cultural and archaeological significance

According to Zhang, the ancient trees in the Qinghai-Xizang Plateau are not only valuable for their climatic and ecological records, but also because they hold cultural and archaeological significance. In some areas, these trees are revered as sacred, which has helped protect them from human destruction. Additionally, tree ring data from ancient trees has played a crucial role in archaeological studies, such as dating the construction period of ancient tombs in Qinghai province.

My China Story

An American Girl's Chinese Dream

By YIN Wei

"Studying in China has been my dream since I was 16 years old, and after three years of hard work, I finally made it to Tianjin in 2023," said Raina Chareese Luke, who hails from Georgia, U.S., and is currently enrolled in the Chinese Language Program at Tianjin University (TJU).

Luke knew little about China or Chinese until her second year of middle school. She is very grateful to her Chinese teacher and still keeps in touch with her to this day. "She opened up a new world for me," Luke said.

It is often said that interest is the best teacher. "The more I learn about China, the more fascinated I become with Chinese culture. The way people behave and their mindsets are very different from our own, but that's what the world should be like—colorful and inclusive," she said.

Luke's study of Chinese broke off for a while in high school, when it was closed due to the pandemic. "In 2021, soon after school resumed, I picked up [my] Chinese studies again and realized how happy I was to do it," she said. It was at that time that she made up her mind to study in China.

Eventually, Luke applied to TJU and was accepted. "For me, TJU has two very appealing aspects. One is its old-fashioned campus, which fulfills my expectations of the university in China, and the other is the professionalism shown by TJU admission counselors during my application process. They responded [to] my queries very quickly."

A new world that she has long dreamed about unfolded before Luke's eyes the moment she set foot in China in September 2023.

She had a hard time adjusting to an international student's life on campus at first. However, she gradually became accustomed to China's well-established electronic payment system and began to appreciate the convenience it provided. "See my boots? I bought them on Taobao. They are warm and stylish. What a deal!" Luke exclaimed joyfully.

Her life at TJU is busy and fulfilling. "Studying is my first priority. The Chinese language program I'm taking is for only one semester, so every day counts," she said. She also feels inspired by her Chinese friends, from whom she gained a firsthand appreciation for the diligence of Chinese people.

In addition to her studies, Luke actively seeks opportunities for immersive cultural experiences in China. She is particularly fond of traditional Chinese clothing, especially the qipao, also known as cheongsam, and Han-style clothing.

Luke also has a keen interest in Chinese history. "When you think about the 5,000 years of history and all



Raina Chareese Luke. (COURTESY PHOTO)

those dynasties, each distinct from the other, it's very fascinating." She has watched videos and documentaries about Chinese history and has discovered that her favorite Chinese dynasties are the Zhou dynasty and the Song dynasty.

The diverse range of university events adds another layer of colour to Luke's life. "Our university provides us with plenty of opportunities to establish connections with people through various student communities and activities.

As the semester draws to a close, Luke's language study program is also wrapping up. She plans to return to her hometown. "But I will come back to China for my undergraduate studies," said Luke, adding that, "I hope to somehow work in China someday after graduation."

Her faith in her future in China was greatly boosted after she learned about the Chinese government's plan to invite 50,000 American teenagers to come to China for exchange and study in the next five years. "Now the opportunity to build relationships with China is growing for American students. I am so glad to witness this. Education is a very important value that can deepen the relationship between the U.S. and China. I believe that ordinary people on both sides want to see an improved relationship between the two countries."

As the time for leaving China approaches, Luke cherishes her remaining days at TJU even more. She is eager to share her experience as an international student studying in China. Luke is determined to share what she has learned about China with her friends and community back home. "My goal is to promote a better understanding of Chinese education and its unique features," said Luke.

This article is contributed by TJU.

Upcoming 'Two Sessions' Highly Anticipated

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To date, all the provincial-level regions have unveiled their 2024 growth targets. Important hubs like Beijing and Shanghai have already set a growth target of around five percent, consistent with last year's goals. National specific economic stimulus policies will also be discussed during the Two Sessions, and the announcements are sure to attract much attention from the world's media.

In addition, regulations and bills in respect of people's livelihood and policies that aim to promote science

and technology development are also on the agenda.

As for now, the NPC deputies and CPPCC members are preparing for the proposals. How to implement the large-scale equipment upgrading and trade-ins of consumer goods, which was proposed during the just-concluded Central Commission for Financial and Economic Affairs, may be a hot topic during the Two Sessions. It is expected that proposals to increase R&D and to improve the technical level of related industry equipment will be put forward.