

Daqing, My Second Home

Dialogue

By LONG Yun & BI Weizi

Saulebek Kabylbekov, an ophthalmologist from Kazakhstan, has been living in Daqing, northeast China's Heilongjiang province for 25 years. Today, he speaks Chinese with a local accent and has a fondness for sour cabbage dumplings and sweet and sour pork, two typical dishes of northeastern China's cuisine. He blends in seamlessly with the locals, having fully adapted to the rhythm of Daqing life.

In 2024, Kabylbekov won the Friendship Award presented by the Chinese government, the highest honor for a foreign expert in China, for his contribution to international medical exchange.

A chance to grow

In 1998, as a young foreign expert, Kabylbekov arrived at the Heilongjiang Daqing Ophthalmic Hospital to conduct technical exchanges. Little did he know, this would mark the beginning of a two-decade-long journey, establishing himself as a senior foreign expert in the hospital and a highly respected doctor to his many patients.

With nearly 40 years of clinical experience in ophthalmology, Kabylbekov's comprehensive skills and solid expertise have contributed immensely to diagnosing and treating various eye-related diseases.

Recalling the reasons for his extended stay at the Daqing Ophthalmic Hospital, he told *Science and Technology Daily*, "I was deeply intrigued by the job opportunities here. There are opportunities and significant room for



Saulebek Kabylbekov speaking at the Chinese Government Friendship Award ceremony. (COURTESY PHOTO)

professional growth," adding that he enjoyed the working environment at the hospital which was incredibly harmonious.

From his perspective, he has been able to unleash his talents and further develop his abilities with the development of the hospital.

Bringing light to patients

During his work, Kabylbekov's efforts know no bounds. Leading by example, he spearheaded the establishment of a research group focusing on glaucoma (group of eye diseases that can cause vision loss). With a vision to empower patients with knowledge, Kabylbekov's glaucoma research group aimed to popularize knowledge about the disease to the public, encouraging early diagnosis and treatment.

Furthermore, he has been playing a pivotal role in advancing other cutting-edge operation technologies.

As the hospital developed, it provided public information about eye health in villages, communities, factories, pub-

lic institutes, and kindergartens.

For years, his footsteps echoed across the urban and rural areas of Daqing and even ventured into the western regions of Heilongjiang province, bringing light to those in need through surveys and free clinics.

His endeavors have not been in vain. According to this Kazakhstani ophthalmologist, the declining number of glaucoma patients seeking treatment at Daqing Ophthalmic Hospital does, to some degree, show the success of their efforts.

Heartwarming journey

Kabylbekov's passion is infectious. His colleagues commended his meticulous and dedicated work ethic.

Having treated over 200,000 Chinese patients, Kabylbekov's commitment to service runs deep. He has not only healed diseases but also enlightened minds.

One particularly touching moment in his medical career involved treating a pregnant woman with severe eye prob-

lems. Despite her fears of medication affecting her unborn child, Kabylbekov spared no effort to deliver detailed explanations and professional instructions, eventually leading to her full recovery and the birth of a healthy baby.

In addition to providing expert medical care, he goes above and beyond by covering transportation costs for those facing financial difficulties.

Feeling the pulse of China's development

Kabylbekov remains focused on the advancements in the eye care industry. He lauded the rapid development of medical technology not only in China, but globally. He noted China's proactive approach to investing in cutting-edge technology and equipment, contributing to its faster-paced development in the field.

He is both a beneficiary and contributor of international cooperation. Reflecting on China's technological strides, Kabylbekov attributes this to initiatives like the Belt and Road, fostering cooperation and development among nations. He believes in the principles of mutual benefit and win-win cooperation, underscoring the importance of exchange and collaboration in advancing medical science.

"I will try my best to serve China and my patients here," Kabylbekov said about his future plans, adding that he cherishes the deep-rooted friendships and the prosperity he witnesses. For him, China is not just a place of work, but a home, and Daqing, with its warm people, holds a special place in his heart.

This article is also contributed by Heilongjiang Provincial Science and Technology Department.

My China Story

China's Greening March

By LONG Yun & BI Weizi

In China's rapidly developing trajectory, there is an evident change taking place, namely acceleration of the nation's environmental strides.

Michael Crook, a long-time resident of Beijing, and founder of the Western Academy of Beijing and Professor Maria Todorovska, an earthquake engineering expert from Tianjin University, recently spoke to *Science and Technology Daily* to offer their perspectives on the country's environmental journey.

For Crook, it's the harmonious coexistence of modern infrastructure and wildlife conservation that stands out. Last year, he traveled to Xizang and was impressed by the thoughtful implementation of specially designed wildlife corridors.

According to Crook, the high-speed railways and elevated highways built in the Xizang Autonomous Region are there to improve people's livelihoods with minimal environmental disruption. "[From the elevated highways], you can see yaks and Xizang antelopes roam below crossing freely [from one area to another] through corridors [built] for them," he said.

This approach, he emphasizes, has eased the environmental degradation often associated with conventional road development to some degree.

The keywords "green and low-carbon development" have been mentioned frequently by foreign experts living in China. While growing up in China, Crook recalled some barren hills and sandstorms, contrasting them with the current lush greenery, clear water and clean air in China today.

He noted that China has actively increased its forest cover, setting an ex-

ample for global environmental conservation efforts.

Todorovska was also struck by the abundance of greenery in China, especially in her second home, Tianjin city. From her perspective, these green spaces serve a dual purpose of beauty and environmental protection.

She sometimes travels to Yunnan province for field trips. Beyond campus borders, Todorovska finds herself enchanted by Yunnan's rich cultural and ecological diversity. She has seen a harmonious blend of human communities and natural habitats from ancient tea plantations to well-preserved national parks.

At the same time, China has consistently kept its promise to combat climate change. Today, China is home to more than half of the world's electric vehicles, making a significant contribution to global climate governance.

Crook applauds China's efforts in electric vehicles and making full use of cleaner energy sources. Meanwhile, a highlight of Todorovska's experience in China was the prevalence of eco-friendly transportation options.

As discussions turn global, Todorovska underscores the significance of China's efforts in combating climate change. She highlights the country's sheer scale and population, emphasizing how even incremental reductions in emissions make a substantial impact on a global scale. "China is so big, and it has such a large population and so much industry," she said, "even a small fraction in the reduction of the total is a big amount on its own."

Together, Crook and Todorovska's observations paint a clear picture of China's environmental transformation, from wildlife preservation to sustainable transportation and beyond.

Tips for the Southerly Airstream

Science Outreach

By HUA Ling & BI Weizi

Recently, under the influence of warm and humid airflows, many people in southern parts of China woke up to damp buildings and slippery floors amid muggy weather.

What's the southerly airstream?

With the humidity reaching nearly 100% and the visibility only about 1,000 to 2,000 meters, many netizens from southern parts of China com-

plained on social media about the southerly airstream causing sweaty walls and floors.

Data shows that the southerly airstream "visits" southern China every year from February to April, with Guangdong, Guangxi, Hainan and Fujian being the most affected.

Gao Yunchang, chief scientist of the meteorological observation center, China Meteorological Administration, said the southerly airstream results from cold air being quickly enveloped by moist, warm air. In late winter and early spring, after the cold air from the north passes, the warm and humid air from the south returns, and the humidity increases, causing water droplets to

accumulate on the ground and walls.

Ways to deal with the southerly airstream

Cheng Zhengquan, chief forecaster of the Guangdong Provincial Meteorological Observatory, reminded that during the southerly airstream, rain and fog will be frequent and visibility will be reduced, so the public should pay special attention to traffic safety. In addition, residents in the affected areas should also be aware of the cold, respiratory and cardiovascular diseases.

There are usually three ways to reduce the impact of the southerly airstream on people's lives.

One is to close windows. Closing windows can prevent water vapor from

entering your home. If ventilation is needed, windows can be opened for a short time at noon or when the temperature is high.

The second is to use electrical appliances. In addition to manual dehumidification, you can also use various electrical appliances with dehumidification functions, such as air conditioners, heaters, and even dryers.

However, when using electrical appliances, you must take safety precautions to avoid fires and low-temperature burns.

The third is to place desiccant. Place several boxes of desiccant in the corners of closets, TV cabinets to keep clothes and furniture from mold.



Xizang antelopes are seen near Serling Tso Lake in southwest China's Xizang Autonomous Region. (COURTESY PHOTO)

Sipping Green Tea in Spring

Traditional Eastern Wisdom

By ZONG Shihan

For tea enthusiasts, the changing of seasons is a prelude to the much awaited first cup of spring tea. Sipping fresh green tea in early spring seems to physically herald the arrival of the season of blossoms. Among all tea categories, green tea is the first to hit market shelves each year, and the most produced and consumed tea in China, accounting for 50-60 percent of total tea sales.

China boasts the widest variety of green teas in the world. In terms of leaf shape, there is the flattened West Lake Longjing tea, the spiral-shaped Biluochun tea and Bamboo leaf green tea, as well as the strip-shaped Huangshan Maofeng tea and Xinyang Maojian tea.

Green tea is the earliest type of tea

in history. Ancient Chinese collected wild tea leaves, dried and stored them, which can be considered the beginning of green tea processing in a broad sense, dating back at least 3,000 years. However, true green tea processing began in the 8th century with the invention of the steam fixation technique, followed by the stir fixation technique in the 12th century. Since then, green tea processing techniques have continued to improve.

The basic processing steps for green tea are fixation, rolling and drying. Fixation involves using high heat to deactivate enzymes in the fresh leaves, crucial for the formation of green tea's unique character. Rolling tightens the tea leaves and squeezes out their juices, enhancing their flavor when brewed. The final drying step removes moisture from the leaves at high temperatures and further promotes thermo-physical and chemical changes.

As an unfermented tea, green tea

retains a significant amount of natural substances from its fresh leaves. Its content of tea polyphenols and caffeine retains over 85 percent of the fresh leaves, while chlorophyll retains about 50 per-

cent, and vitamin loss is relatively low. This has special effects in anti-aging, anti-cancer, sterilization, and anti-inflammatory properties, surpassing those of fermented teas.



Tea farmers dressed in local costumes pick green tea leaves in Guizhou province, southwest China. (PHOTO: VCG)

Service Info

Guide to Facilitate Mobile Payment for Visitors

By LI Linxu

In its latest efforts to facilitate mobile payment for foreigners, China has issued an e-CNY (digital yuan) user guide on March 18.

Visitors can register and open an e-CNY wallet using mobile phone numbers from more than 210 countries and regions, according to the user guide released by the People's Bank of China (PBOC), the country's central bank.

Mobile phone users can download and install the e-CNY app from their app store and register an account.

Visitors don't need to visit a bank counter, provide a passport, or hold a bank account in mainland China if opening an anonymous wallet, as per

the user guide.

They can use features like "Scan-to-Pay" or "Payment QR Code" to pay merchants and follow the on-page prompts to link a bank card.

Now, "Top-up as You Pay" supports Visa and Mastercard, and more international card schemes will be supported soon, said PBOC.

Earlier, PBOC released a guideline to optimize the payment services of bank cards, promoting cash use and facilitating mobile payment to better meet the diverse payment needs of foreigners.

Currently, Alipay and WeChat Pay, two popular payment apps in the country, allow foreign users to link their international cards, including Visa and Mastercard, to their apps.