

# Shaping a Decade of Collaborative Success

## Dialogue

By LONG Yun & BI Weizi

The opening ceremony of the XJTU-POLIMI Joint School of Design and Innovation in Xi'an on September 7, 2019, marked a significant milestone in the long-standing partnership between Politecnico di Milano (POLIMI), Italy and Xi'an Jiaotong University (XJTU). This joint school was and still is the first overseas campus of POLIMI.

At the forefront of this partnership stands Professor Sergio Amedeo Pignari, the executive associate dean of the XJTU-POLIMI Joint School of Design and Innovation, whose pivotal role has been instrumental in bringing this collaborative vision to reality.

**The beginning of collaboration**  
"This is a long-dated collaboration," Pignari told *Science and Technology Daily*, emphasizing the depth and breadth of the partnership between these two universities. Since its official inception in 2012, the collaboration has evolved significantly, notably with the launch of a Double Degree (DD) Program at the Master's level in Electrical Engineering. Over the years, this program has cultivated over 100 graduates who have seamlessly transitioned into high-level positions in the global job market.

However, the strides of collaboration extend far beyond this point. Pignari has been actively involved in the early discussions on the feasibility of the Joint School, including the formal application procedure and proposal submission to the Ministry of Education (MoE) of China, since 2015.

The academic exchanges have expanded further, including virtually all the other branches of Engineering, Architecture, and Design, and encompassing a DD Program at the Master's level



Professor Sergio Amedeo Pignari in the class. (PHOTO: XJTU)

in architecture oriented towards Heritage, approved by the MoE of China. Also, the collaboration has not been confined to Master's programs. Two innovative Learning Programs at the Bachelor's level have been started in the Joint School, further enhancing the educational landscape.

In the current phase, Pignari is dedicated to managing teaching activities and fostering research collaborations among POLIMI, XJTU, and the industrial world. His efforts have gained positive feedback from national and international companies.

According to Pignari, the Joint School transcends the conventional university school model. It represents a collaborative effort between Italy and China, leveraging their complementary strengths to drive "a new paradigm for innovation development."

Looking ahead, Pignari hopes the Joint School runs a diverse range of innovative Learning Plans covering creative and technological areas, focusing on key technological domains, such as the green and intelligent technologies for carbon neutrality, sustainable cities, and smart manufacturing.

### The man behind the expertise

Pignari's academic journey began as an electronic engineer specializing in EMC (electromagnetic compatibility). His expertise lies in researching interference phenomena, which centers around the aerospace, automotive, energy and other related sectors, showing his dedication to addressing real-world challenges.

Pignari highlighted the unique balance inherent in his research field, "I like [my research field] very much because it's a very balanced subject. It is made of 50 percent of theory and 50 percent of practice." For him, this equilibrium is a crucial aspect of his work, where electromagnetic and circuit theory are seamlessly integrated with experimental tests.

His commitment to international sci-tech cooperation is evident in his active involvement with prestigious organizations such as the Chinese Society for Electrical Engineering and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers. As a fellow member of these organizations, he considered it a great honor and acknowledged the positive impact on his work.

His involvement in these organizations has facilitated personal connections with renowned scientists and research groups globally. Speaking about the importance of international collaboration, Pignari said, "For scientific research, there are no borders. It is very important to be able to interact, discuss, and brainstorm with all the people around the world, because that's the only way to maximize the possibility of providing a concrete contribution to sci-tech advancement."

### The nuances and commonalities between two countries

Pignari's connection with China, especially Xi'an, is not merely academic. "I visited China for the first time in 2008, and on that occasion, I stayed in China for a couple of months to deliver a course at Tongji University in Shanghai," Pignari recalled. The experience left a deep impression on him, and he was captivated by the nuances and commonalities between China and Italy. "I immediately realized that travel would have had a big impact on my future professional and private life," he said.

One aspect that stood out during his time in China was the "cultural connection through food." Pignari said, "Italian and Chinese cuisines share this 'cultural aspect' completely. We don't consider food just energy to live, and the implication of [food] is much more for us."

When asked about interesting stories while working with Chinese counterparts, Pignari shifted the focus to Xi'an, highlighting the city's unique blend of history and modernity. He emphasized Xi'an's role as a city that allows visitors to witness "the roots and the wings" of China, where the past merges with the future in a distinctive blend.

This article is also contributed by XJTU.

## Letter to the Editor

# Mix of Unique Experiences in China

By Alex Tani

In the summer of 2019, I went to China for the first time to attend a summer school program in Beijing. The city's mix of ancient traditions and modern life amazed me. The program covered Chinese culture, history and language, and I loved exploring places like the Forbidden City and Wangfujing markets.

After the program ended, I decided to pursue a master's degree in international politics at a university in London, to help me better understand the history of China. Learning about this country from a classroom filled with great academics was beneficial, but I was more eager to return to China. In my opinion, if you want to study and understand a country, nothing can compare to having real experience living there.

Unfortunately, the pandemic delayed my arrival in China. However, I was determined to make the most of my time waiting to return. I spent my days studying Chinese, reading books about Chinese history and even starting looking for apartments to live in Beijing.

In 2023, I was lucky to win a scholarship to attend another master's program in Beijing. This current course has given me the time needed to explore more hidden spots in the city, finding peaceful parks and calm places amid the urban chaos.

Living in the city full-time wasn't always easy. I had to get used to the fast pace, understand social norms, and pick up the language. But Beijing welcomed me, and I found both challenges and re-

wards in my daily life.

Now, my master's program at Peking University focused on both economics and international relations, helping me further understand China's role in the world. The diverse group of students in my classes made every discussion interesting. Beyond the classrooms, exploring Beijing became a big part of my education.

Food was a major part of my experience too. From street food to fancy restaurants, I loved trying new dishes. Sharing meals with classmates and locals became a way to connect across cultures.

Sometimes, I felt a bit homesick for my hometown and missed the familiar things. But new friendships and exciting discoveries in China quickly replaced those feelings.

Besides my studies, I got involved in community projects, trying to connect international students with the local community. These experiences, whether in class or working on community initiatives, helped me form connections that went beyond cultural differences.

Looking back, my time in China has been a mix of unique experiences. What started as a curiosity in 2019 has turned into a deep connection, making China feel like a second home. The city's energy, the friendliness of its people, and the endless possibilities for exploration have made this part of my life an unforgettable adventure.

Alex Tani is a postgraduate student from UK at Peking University.



Alex Tani (the first one from the left) and his friends. (COURTESY PHOTO)

## Traditional Eastern Wisdom

# King of Bronze Statues

By ZONG Shihan

The grand statue of a human figure in bronze, on display at the new Sanxingdui Museum in Sichuan province, southwest China, is the tallest and most complete standing bronze figure in existence. It is nearly 261 centimeters tall and weighs 180 kilograms.

Known as the king of bronze statues in the world, it has a history of more than 3,000 years and was unearthed at a sacrificial pit at the Sanxingdui archaeological site in 1986.

The statue consists of a figure and a square base. The figure wears a high crown and three layers of tight-sleeved clothes, with an exquisite dragon and bird pattern. The hands are held in front of the chest in an embrace-like posture. The figure also wears anklets and stands barefoot.

The awe-inspiring statue demonstrates the maturity of ancient China's bronze casting technology. Lead and tin added to bronze made the alloy more ductile and easier to cast into ornate vessels in that era. Other civilizations during the same period still used red copper, which could not be cast into complex patterns or hollow objects.

There are two theories about the

identity of the mysterious statue. Some regard it as the statue of a high priest who commanded sacrificial activities while some think it is the statue of a king, the supreme ruler. It is certain that the statue was a sacrificial artifact used for blessing.

It is difficult to determine what the figure held in his hands. It could have been a scepter, or an item of ivory, or even a jade cong, a tube-like object. Experts have not yet reached a conclusion and it could remain a mystery forever.



The grand bronze statue of a human figure at the new Sanxingdui Museum. (PHOTO: VCG)

# China Taking Measures to Address Winter Acute Respiratory Infection

## Service Info

By Staff Reporters

On November 26, the National Health Commission held a press conference to discuss the current situation and preventive measures for winter respiratory diseases in China.

Mi Feng, spokesperson for the National Health Commission, said that respiratory diseases are on the rise with the onset of winter across the country. According to Mi, recent monitoring indicates that the current respiratory infectious diseases are mainly due to the influenza virus, with additional cases

caused by rhinoviruses, mycoplasma pneumonia, respiratory syncytial virus and adenoviruses.

Mi emphasized the importance of coordinated medical resource management, implementing a tiered diagnosis and treatment system, and enhancing general infection diagnosis and treatment capabilities. He also noted the need for timely and continuous updates on medical institutions providing services such as pediatric and fever clinics.

Efforts should be made to increase the opening of relevant consulting rooms and treatment areas and make full use of traditional Chinese medicine, said Mi, highlighting the necessity of effective epidemic prevention and

control in places with high population density, including schools, childcare institutions, and nursing homes. Measures involve minimizing personnel movement and visits.

China has promoted online diagnosis and treatment to meet the needs of patients, leveraging online hospital platforms to set up channels for fever clinics and pediatric treatments.

Wang Huaqing, chief expert of Immunization Planning at the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, said that different age groups are affected by distinct pathogens. For instance, influenza and nasal viruses are prevalent among the 1-4 age group, while the 15-59 age group sees dominance in influenza, nasal viruses, and

the novel coronavirus.

In response to widespread concerns about difficulties in registration and slow medical consultations, Ying Xumin, deputy director of the Hangzhou Municipal Health Commission, emphasized the need to enhance the supply of medical services.

Ying urged all levels of medical institutions to normalize the opening of respiratory and fever clinics. He stressed the importance of extending service hours based on demand and creating conditions for establishing nighttime clinics. In addition, he called for a streamlined service process to ensure a more efficient and patient-friendly experience in accessing medical services.

# What to Know About Cerebral Haemorrhage

## Science Outreach

By Staff Reporters

Recently, with strong cold air impacting many regions throughout China, the number of patients with brain haemorrhages has increased significantly. Many people think that a brain haemorrhage is something that only happens to older people, but this is not the case. Wang Mingyu, an attending physician at the Neurosurgery Department of the First Hospital of Shanxi Medical University, recently pro-

vided information about brain haemorrhage for the general public, to help them seek medical help as soon as possible if any symptoms occur.

### Brain haemorrhage

Brain haemorrhage, also known as an intracranial haemorrhage, is a symptom of bleeding in the brain. It requires immediate treatment. The skull surrounds the brain, and any leaking blood can cause compression and damage to the brain tissues.

A brain haemorrhage can cause a number of different symptoms, including sudden tingling, weakness, numbness or paralysis in the face, arm or leg. Other symptoms include a sudden, severe headache, difficulty in swallowing, problems with vision, loss of balance

or coordination, difficulty in understanding, slurred speech and seizures.

It is important to recognize these symptoms quickly so that treatment can be given as soon as possible.

### Risk factors

There are several risk factors and causes of brain haemorrhage. Irrespective of age, high blood pressure is one of the most important risk factors for brain haemorrhage. Long-term high blood pressure can cause damage to blood vessels and atherosclerosis, which can lead to blood vessel rupture and brain haemorrhage. For young people without a history of hypertension, sudden cerebral haemorrhage is most commonly caused by cerebrovascular disease.

Smoking and alcohol abuse can also affect the health of blood vessels, increasing the risk of atherosclerosis, which can lead to brain haemorrhage. In addition, excessive pressure from studies, work and life can put the body in a state of tension and easily lead to cerebrovascular accidents.

### Preventive measures

Brain haemorrhages are life-threatening, and require urgent treatment and extensive rehabilitation. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle is an effective way of preventing a brain haemorrhage. A sensible diet, moderate exercise, emotional regulation, quitting smoking and limiting alcohol, and avoiding overexertion can all help to keep blood vessels healthy.