

# Scientific Research Aiming for Unity

## Dialogue

By LONG Yun & BI Weizi

British Dr. Norman MacLeod is not only an outstanding paleontologist, but also an educator and an active communicator. He is passionate about balancing these roles simultaneously. In a recent interview with *Science and Technology Daily*, MacLeod expressed that he is very fortunate to be someone who is able to make a living by doing what he loves to do.

**Creativity, the essence of science**  
Currently, MacLeod serves as a professor at Nanjing University (NJU). With a long list of research experiences, MacLeod has dedicated his life to studying animals, both living and extinct. His research has spanned various areas of animal-related projects. This scientist is perhaps best known for his work documenting patterns and understanding the causes of Phanerozoic extinctions, especially the end-Cretaceous mass extinction event where he is a leading proponent of the multiple-cause model.

MacLeod's work in paleontology is driven by his pursuit of new knowledge and innovation. He first went to college with the intention of studying engineering, but soon realized that his true passion was in the field of geology and earth sciences. Eventually, he earned his PhD in paleontology, which focuses on the study of ancient animals.

MacLeod developed a special set of tools and skills in morphometrics, which is the mathematical analysis of animal form. As a leading figure in this discipline he has worked with numerous scientists and researchers who wish to apply mathematical analysis to fossils, artifacts, and modern animals.

MacLeod's research has a significant



Professor Norman MacLeod. (COURTESY PHOTO)

impact on society, despite being removed from everyday concerns. His work on the form of animals is used to study climate change, evolution, ecology and even culture in an archaeological context. Through his mathematical expertise, he can test hypotheses in a more sophisticated and sensitive way than by just looking at objects.

Another important area of MacLeod's research is on extinctions, a topic of great concern due to the modern biodiversity crisis. By bringing his geological and data-analysis skills to the question of whether extinctions happened suddenly or gradually over millions of years, he is able to provide insights into the timeline for preserving biodiversity. His research suggests that extinctions occur over a long period, which means there is still time to correct the negative impact of human culture on the biosphere. However, this window of time is limited, and he believes humanity must act soon to preserve biodiversity.

**Effective communicating with public**

MacLeod's ability to communicate

his findings effectively to the public makes his research more accessible in the sci-tech community.

Through making people aware of the facts of science, he helps them better understand the issues that affect their daily lives. As a teacher, he tries to improve people's ability to test hypotheses and find solutions in the contemporary world. "Scientific research is not an isolated endeavor but one that has real-world implications for all of us," he said.

According to MacLeod, many people began to lose interest in science quickly after school and feel intimidated by it. "I think all scientists have an obligation to demystify science, in terms that people can understand," he explained. Furthermore, he believed that one-to-one contact can have a more significant impact than remote communication through videos or other digital tools.

In addition to bridging the gap between the public and the sci-tech community, MacLeod also attaches great importance to exchanges in his professional circle. He has created and maintained

the Paleonet system of listservers, and a website (<http://paleonet.org/>) designed to enhance electronic communication among palaeontologists.

**Being a bridge of cooperation**

MacLeod has been in China for several years at the invitation of various Chinese researchers. His interest in China began when he was invited to visit and deliver lectures at the Nanjing Institute of Geology and Palaeontology, Chinese Academy of Sciences in 2009. Since then, he had visited China almost every year until 2018, when he was offered a position at NJU to work on a large-scale project involving the collection and dissemination of geological data.

Professor MacLeod believes face-to-face interactions between scientists and colleagues are crucial for advancing science. He hopes to see more Chinese scholars visiting the West and vice versa, not just for short visits but for longer-term collaborations.

Recently, MacLeod and a group of colleagues at NJU, started a collaborative alliance with universities in the UK and Switzerland, aiming to deepen and broaden their interactions and link them more firmly to what they are doing in Nanjing. This alliance aims to enhance more people-to-people exchanges in academic fields between China and the West.

According to MacLeod, the brightest minds are scattered everywhere geographically. "Scientists are very clear about the value of international cooperation within science," he said, adding that science can transcend political, philosophical, social and economic barriers and contribute to broader international cooperation.

*This article is also contributed by ZHANG Rong, JIANG Peiye and LAI Sitong from NJU.*

## Letter to the Editor

## Two Sessions Offer Hope for Better Global Future

By Ershad Shikdar

The Communist Party of China (CPC) has already built China into a moderately prosperous country. It is now all set to continue its journey to a great modern socialist country with Chinese characteristics, combining the human spirit and material aspects.

Against this backdrop, China opened its annual sessions of the National People's Congress (NPC) and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) in early March, which are known as the Two Sessions. This year's Two Sessions hold special importance to the world as they are held for the first time since China's decisive victory over Covid-19.

As a committed and responsible global partner, China has also responded to global expectations and reiterated its pledge to work for world development and peace. In the government work report presented to the NPC, China announced its readiness to work with the international community, to put into action the Global Development Initiative and the Global Security Initiative and promote the shared values of humanity.

"We will stay committed to an independent foreign policy of peace and peaceful development and pursue friendship and cooperation with other countries, based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence," said the government work report.

More importantly, the report mentioned that China will remain firm in pursuing a strategy of opening up for mutual benefits, offering the world hope for a better future.

As China will continue deepening its opening up and reforms, the country will increase and intensify its foreign trade and investments, and further open its domestic market to the world. As a result, I believe, many countries will have easier access to the Chinese market.

China will also continue to serve as a major growth engine for the world economy, as it has reiterated its pledge to provide strategic guidance and policy support for Chinese multinational corporations to grow their footprints outside China.

In line with its commitments to facilitating global development reaffirmed in the Two Sessions, China will bolster the building of its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). As a result, many more developing countries can benefit from more Chinese investments and reap other economic dividends under the BRI framework and win-win cooperation.

China has set its growth target at five percent for 2023. The country will also focus on environmental issues, quality innovation, and technologies. It will, I think, deepen win-win cooperation with developing nations in the respective fields, creating mutual benefits for all.

Economists are of the view that the BRI partners can also study the feasibility of a Free Trade Agreement with China, which can be an effective tool for boosting their trade. They also think that the BRI has given a strong and effective platform to its participants, to negotiate with China over exporting more items to its huge market.

Under the BRI framework, many nations have the prospects to explore and forge ahead with all-out cooperation with China on all fronts. The Two Sessions has re-offered the prospects for win-win cooperation, whereby the world can grow and prosper together.

Finally, as China's growth has long been assisting to fuel the prosperity of many countries, the world sees opportunities through this year's Two Sessions. The decisions and policies made in these important political meetings for China, are similarly significant for the world.

*Ershad Shikdar is a Bangladeshi journalist working in China.*

## Expats Activities

## Gaining Insights into Guangxi's Development



Foreign experts take a photo at China-Singapore Nanning International Logistics Park. (PHOTO: Science and Technology Department of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region)

By DENG Zhuoyuan

Foreign experts had an opportunity to gain greater understanding of local specialty industries development and the high quality implementation of Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership in Guangxi on February 25.

The visit was organized by Science and Technology Department of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region and took place in Nanning. Forty foreign experts from 15 countries, including Australia, Canada, UK and the U.S., traveled to the

Nanning Pilot Free Trade Zone of China (Guangxi) to take a deep dive into the development of science and technology in Guangxi through the work of Guangxi Institute of Industrial Technology, China-Singapore Nanning International Logistics Park, and Guangxi Gesk Industrial Co., Ltd.

The foreign experts also broadened their understanding of China's development in terms of economy, trade, science and technology, which gave them more confidence in working and living in the country.

## China to Ease Visa, Entry Policies

### Service Info

Foreigners with valid visas issued before March 28, 2020 will be allowed to enter China, as the country is adjusting its visa and entry policies to facilitate travel across the border.

Visa-free policies will be resumed for entry to the southern island province of Hainan and cruise tour groups at Shanghai ports, said the National Immigration Administration.

Visa-free entry to the southern province of Guangdong will be restored for tour groups of foreigners from Hong Kong and Macao, and a similar mechanism will be reinstated for tour groups from ASEAN countries to enter Guilin in the southern Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.

The policies will come into force on Wednesday (March 15), according to immigration authorities.

Source: XINHUA

## Traditional Eastern Wisdom

## History of Tea Cultivation

By BI Weizi

Tea is one of the most popular non-alcoholic beverages in the world. China is where tea originated, and the Chinese were the first people in the world to develop the habit of drinking tea.

Tea was domesticated over 3,000 years ago and was one of the earliest varieties of trees in China. Recent excavations of the "Han Yang Tomb" in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, have revealed that the emperors of the Han Dynasty were fond of tea, providing strong evidence that China has a long history of tea cultivation.

Since then, tea has not only become a tribute to the imperial court, but also an important commodity for the exchange of horses from Western Asia. In the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, an official road from Pu'er to Kunming

was built to facilitate trade. This caravan road was known as the ancient Tea Horse Road, and later in the West as the Southern Silk Road.

Although tea production, processing techniques and tea drinking practices were already quite common, the specific methods of tea cultivation were not well documented until the Tang Dynasty, with Lu Yu's *The Classic of Tea*, the first known monograph on tea, honoring the beverage as the harmony and mysterious unity of the universe.

During the Ming and Qing dynasties, the transplanting method of weed control for wet or muddy fields, and the asexual propagation method, including cuttings, layering, division, budding and grafting, was adopted in the cultivation of tea trees, which made a significant contribution to the popularity of tea throughout the world.

## ODCC Launches Far-reaching Maritime Cooperation

From page 1

It will draw on the advantages of the West Coast New Area of Qingdao, whose annual average gross ocean product growth has been around 16.1 percent since its establishment in 2014.

The center is expected to foster collaboration across various fields including marine research, cross-border shipping and finance, and the development of ocean think tanks, as well as ocean industries.

The pilot free trade zones, along with cooperation pacts such as Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, are expected to play roles in leveling up the future growth of Qingdao.

The ocean industries require inno-

vation in science and technology, and such innovations must derive from international cooperation, said Li Tiegang, official from MNR, adding that while accommodating China's national conditions, "We will work to introduce and promote advanced philosophies and business management structures, and give full play to their advantages in the field of marine research."