



The 105th Anniversary of the Founding of the Communist Party of China

China's Transformative Progress Acclaimed by Foreign Experts

Sci-tech Innovation, People's Gains: Evident, Accessible



Francesco Faiola

For Francesco Faiola, an Italian researcher at the Research Center for Eco-Environmental Sciences of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, scientific and technological progress is measured not in laboratory data alone, but in the air people breathe and the healthcare they can afford. Over 12 years of living and working in China, he has seen how innovation, when grounded in human needs, can quietly reshape everyday life.

When asked how Chinese technology has improved ordinary people's lives, Faiola began with a personal example. "I need to take cholesterol-lowering medication year-round," he said. "Every two or three months, I visit the hospital to pick up my prescription, I swipe my medical insurance card, and the settlement is instant. It is incredibly convenient."

Beyond his own experience, Faiola has watched the broader healthcare system become more accessible. He noted that under the new National Reimbursement Drug List that took effect in January, the price of newly negotiated drugs, including many oncology and rare-disease medications, was reduced by over 60 percent on average. "This has significantly eased the medical financial burden for many of my Chinese colleagues and friends," he said.

Another change Faiola has witnessed firsthand is the transformation of China's air quality. Around 2014, heavy pollution was a common topic of concern, particularly in northern cities. Today, the situation is strikingly different.

According to data released by the Ministry of Ecology and Environment in January, the national average PM2.5 concentration in 2025 fell to 28.0 micrograms per cubic meter, with the proportion of days with good air quality reaching 89.3 percent. Public satisfaction with the ecological environment has exceeded 90 percent for four consecutive years.

"I believe if you mention the word smog nowadays to a newly arrived foreigner, they simply would not know what you are talking about," Faiola said.

Behind this transformation are concrete technological applications:

ultra-low-emission power plants, clean energy, new energy vehicles, and smart environmental monitoring networks. "It is precisely these real, reliable technological applications that have turned smog into a concept that is hard to imagine today, allowing every resident to enjoy outdoor activities more freely and breathe fresh air."

Faiola also noted how Chinese technical solutions have served communities beyond its borders. He recalled the 2014 Ebola outbreak in West Africa, when Sierra Leone faced severe shortages in testing and prevention capabilities. China sent a mobile biosafety laboratory and built a high-level biosafety laboratory there within three months. Chinese experts also provided training to local personnel, helping the facility gradually achieve independent operation.

"As a researcher in the biological sciences, I deeply understand that testing and diagnostic capacity is like a pair of eyes for a country's infectious disease prevention and control system," Faiola said. "Through this complete technical package, China helped forge a permanent public health testing capability that can be sustained locally."

Looking back on more than a decade in China, Faiola said the most encouraging change he has seen is the shift in scientific research culture. "The colleagues around me have shifted from chasing publications to immersing themselves in tackling tough research problems," he said.

This outcome-driven approach has accelerated the translation of laboratory discoveries into real-world treatments. Faiola cited the example of a regenerative islet injection independently developed by Chinese institutions for treating severe type 1 diabetes. The product received clinical trial approval from China's National Medical Products Administration in 2025, and in 2026, it further received approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, becoming the first regenerative islet product to receive clearance simultaneously in both China and the U.S.

"Cutting-edge technology is no longer a set of paper-based metrics in the lab, but is truly translated into societal well-being that extends lives and alleviates suffering," he said.

Reflecting on his years in China, Faiola said the most positive impact of China's science and technology landscape is that through institutional innovation, it has reshaped the value orientation of scientific research, enabling cutting-edge achievements to be efficiently converted into accessible and affordable public goods.

"It has made me, as a European researcher, truly feel that when a country's research system genuinely takes solving real-world problems as its mission, the positive momentum it can unleash is immeasurable," he said.



China's Five-hundred-meter Aperture Spherical Radio Telescope under maintenance in Guizhou province. (PHOTO: XINHUA)

Editor's Note

As the Communist Party of China (CPC) approaches the 105th anniversary of its founding on July 1, *Science and Technology Daily* presents a special edition of in-depth reporting. This edition showcases how people-centered development, driven by technological innovation and enriched by cultural openness, carries global significance through the eyes of three international observers, each offering a distinct, multi-dimensional lens to understand China's growth and progress.

Lives Improved, Futures Built: Clear, Concrete

For Michael Crook, British co-founder of Beijing Western Academy, an international school in the capital, Xizang autonomous region in southwest China is a place his family has known for nearly a century.

In the 1930s, his grandparents traveled to Tibetan-inhabited areas in what is now Sichuan province. They witnessed not only the natural beauty of the landscape but also the profound suffering of the people under the feudal serfdom system that then prevailed there. Education was a privilege reserved for a tiny elite.

His mother Isabel Crook, a legendary educator who received the Friendship Medal of the People's Republic of China, conducted anthropological fieldwork in a Tibetan village in the 1940s, living there for several months and helping the locals use the spinning wheel to improve their livelihoods.

Crook shared his observations of the region's transformation, drawing on memories passed down through three generations. These family memories, he said, form the backdrop against which he understands the region's history.

In the 1970s, the family returned to the same village his mother had visited three decades earlier. By then, it had electricity, and roads had been built as well as a primary school, which enrolled both boys and girls. Since the 1980s, Crook has made frequent visits to Xizang, each trip refreshing his understanding of the region. "What my grandparents saw was suffering with no cure. What I see now are modern hospitals, community health centers, and professionally trained doctors covering every county and township," Crook said.

Life expectancy in this region before 1959 was around 35 years, whereas today the average exceeds 72, a figure that reflects fundamental improvements in healthcare access and living conditions. During his many visits to farming and pastoral areas, Crook observed a profound shift in the horizons open to local children.

In the past, children in pastoral communities were bound to a life of herding. Today, they are becoming engineers, teachers, and other professionals. Education, Crook said, has broken the



Michael Crook

cycle of intergenerational poverty and given the people in Xizang the ability to shape their own future. Crook also highlighted the region's approach to infrastructure development. Highway and railway construction has been carried out with careful attention to environmental protection. Bridges and elevated sections ensure grasslands are undisturbed with the roads and railways passing above them. Specially designed wildlife corridors beneath these structures allow wild animals to cross freely.

"You can see yaks and Tibetan antelopes roaming underneath, crossing through specially designed passages," he said. "This approach minimizes environmental disruption while improving people's livelihoods." Tibetan antelopes, wild asses, and other wildlife continue to migrate along their ancient routes.

On cultural preservation, Crook found Xizang's schools teach the Tibetan language and standard Chinese. "Today, most people in Xizang are fluent in both languages, switching naturally between Tibetan and standard Chinese," he said. "They have not lost their identity; rather, they have gained a voice in a wider world."

Crook summed up the changes he has witnessed in three areas: longer life expectancy and better health, universal access to education, and infrastructure that respects the natural environment. Together with the preservation of Tibetan language and culture, these represent a fundamental improvement in the lives of ordinary people on the plateau.



A highway connecting Lhasa and Zetang in Xizang autonomous region. (PHOTO: XINHUA)

China's Openness, Inclusiveness: Visible, Tangible



Abubaker Hayaty

For Abubaker Hayaty, a Sudanese doctoral candidate at Zhejiang University in east China, the journey to understanding China began in 2016, in Lanzhou, the capital of Gansu province in northwest China.

From there, he traveled to Dunhuang, home to the Mogao Caves, a UNESCO World Heritage Site that preserves centuries of Buddhist art and cultural exchange along the ancient Silk Road. The caves left a deep impression on him.

"Standing in front of those murals, I saw more than art," Hayaty recalled. "I saw the flow of ideas, religions and artistic traditions among China, India, Central Asia and beyond. It was a living record of mutual learning among civilizations."

That experience marked the beginning of his academic inquiry into what he describes as China's long tradition of cross-cultural dialogue. Now majoring in journalism and communication, with a focus on international communication, Hayaty has since explored many parts of the country, seeking to understand how China's past informs its present.

His path took him to rural Guizhou province in southwest China, where he taught English and participated in field research on rural revitalization. In Meitan, a county in Guizhou, what he saw challenged his prior assumptions.

"The condition of the countryside here is completely different from what we usually imagine," Hayaty said. "Before I came, I had a certain image of rural China. What I found was well-built roads, modern facilities, and communities full of energy. It was a real shock, in the most positive sense." He noted that local development went beyond infrastructure, with visible improvements in education, living standards, and economic opportunities.

In Sanmen, a county of Zhejiang province, he observed how modern agriculture is being integrated with local development. Across these different regions, a pattern impressed him. "What I have seen in these places is a consistent focus on people's needs," he said. "The goal is not abstract growth. It is [a] tangible improvement in daily life."

Hayaty often reflects on traditional Chinese thought to frame his observations. He cites Confucian ideas of harmony and education, as well as the concept of "harmony in diversity," which he believes continues to shape approaches to both domestic governance and international relations. For him, this tradition is not about abstract

doctrine. It expresses itself in a way of engaging with others that is built on respect, mutual understanding and genuine dialogue with win-win cooperation.

As his academic work deepens, Hayaty has become increasingly interested in how traditional Chinese concepts can contribute to contemporary global communication. He is involved in academic exchanges on topics such as public diplomacy, global communication and AI, and he has participated in events including the 2025 World Chinese Language Conference.

He sees his role as a young sinologist as both a scholarly and a cultural one. "To study China is to engage with a civilization that has always valued dialogue," he said. "I hope to contribute to that dialogue in my own way."

Looking back on nearly a decade in China, Hayaty describes his experience as one of continuous learning. "I am proud to witness China's development," he said. "But what I value most is the chance to understand the ideas behind it, the long arc of thinking about people, peace and coexistence. That is a story worth telling."

When asked how he would convey to others the China he has come to know, Hayaty offered a suggestion both simple and personal. He spoke of Yiwu, the city in Zhejiang known for its international trade, but he did not focus on its market scale or export volumes. "Come to Yiwu and walk into a small restaurant run by a Syrian family, or taste a cup of Turkish coffee made by someone who has been here for years. You will find flavors that remind you of home. That is what openness feels like to me. It is not abstract."

His favorite Chinese song is *Mo Li Hua*, or "Jasmine Flower." He describes it as gentle, sincere, and inviting, qualities he associates with the China he has experienced. "It is a simple song, but it carries a message of friendship," he said.



An aerial view of the wild release site of the ibises at Xiaozhu Lake, Deqing county, Zhejiang province. (PHOTO: XINHUA)

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