

Leitartikel

United to Advance Chemical Sciences

» Since 1978 China has been actively eager to learn from the developed world through dispatching students and encouraging scientific collaborations. For the past 40 years now, the China story is a big success: not only for becoming a world economy power, but also for great advancements in chemical sciences. I made a simple “Web of Science” search for “China” appearing in “Address” on the yearly publications in the International Edition of *Angewandte Chemie*. For the year 2000, I found 22 hits representing about 2% of the total, and for 2019, I got 1283 hits, or 39%. Most of Chinese chemists have oversea trainings including many in Germany. For myself, I spent eleven years in Belgium and my fluent French often surprised my colleagues.

In 2004 GDCh sent a delegation to Beijing. This was the first official visit of a national chemical society from a developed country to China. Prof. Chunli Bai, the President of the Chinese Chemical Society (CCS), had received the delegation with enthusiasm, and the first bilateral memorandum of understanding has been signed by the two Presidents. Then CCS and GDCh have co-organized bilateral symposia for young chemists on “Frontiers of Chemistry” held every two years alternating in both countries. Based on fruitful discussions, the funding agencies of both sides have supported a mega research collaborative project on supramolecular chemistry in two consecutive phases.

For the celebration of the International Year of Chemistry 2011 GDCh and *Angewandte Chemie* organized a joint symposium taking place in Tsinghua University with great success. In 2008 CCS received an invitation from GDCh for the initiative of the Chemical Science and Society Summit (CS3), a consortium of Germany, UK, US, Japan, and China, to discuss chemical solutions for the world challenging issues. We have issued whitepapers for each symposium with topics covering energy, sustain-

ability, water, materials and health issues. As an active member in the global village, CCS is eager to share international responsibility. Last year CS3 took place in London on “sustainable plastics” with strong social impact even though the US has withdrawn from the consortium.

We need to caution the recent political tide of extreme right and anti-intellectualism in some countries. The situation is worsened by the recent Covid-19 outbreak. China has been under attack by trade embargos, e.g. over Huawei, TikTok and many others, arising from abuse of conspiracy theories and slanders. An essay by Tomas Hudlicky in *Angewandte Chemie* in June [withdrawn, see *Nachr. Chem.* 2020, 68(9), 100] represents the tide against diversity, equality, and inclusiveness. GDCh has made swift actions, including a letter from GDCh president Peter R. Schreiner to CCS to apologize to the Chinese chemists.

I believe a strong China is important for the world, not only for China as an economic locomotive which seems unstoppable, but also in terms of cultural diversity, social stability, and ethnic equality. And I hope that Confucius’ tradition of education and academia as our core value will ultimately help China to

overcome the present difficulties.

It is intriguing to watch the movement of the European Union after the second world war with Germany moving up to become the true leader of democracy allied with France. In fact, the first computer connection with China was made possible first by German and then by American scientists, fighting fiercely with the coldwar-minded Whitehouse in 1987. Thus, I am confident that human intellect will defeat anti-intellectualism. And I am equally confident that the global challenges can be tackled by the international collaboration through advancing chemical sciences. «



Zhigang Shuai, Tsinghua University
Vice President, Chinese Chemical
Society, zgshuai@tsinghua.edu.cn

Global
challenges
can be
tackled