

President Xi made retirees feel they're 'young again'

Liu Jinwen, a retired primary school teacher now living in Beijing's Sijiqing Nursing Home, never expected she would have a visit from the Chinese president. But she did, and it changed her life.



A nurse at Sijiqing Nursing Home combs the hair of an elder resident at the Beijing facility. President Xi Jinping visited there in December 2013 and residents said they were energized by his presence. [Photo/Xinhua]

"It was the morning of Dec 28, 2013. I was sitting reading a newspaper story for one of my friends intently at the hall, and suddenly I realized others turning their eyes to the direction across my head," said Liu, 74. "I turned back my head and saw President Xi Jinping approaching us."

Xi sat down in a chair and joined their book-reading activity, she said.

"Xi praised us that we are still studying although we have retired, and he encouraged us to take good care of ourselves and enjoy life," Liu said. "He looked so easygoing. All of us were so excited."

Liu said her meeting with the president lasted no more than 10 minutes, after which Xi went to see other elders in the nursing home, but she said it was a great encouragement to them.

"I felt we are not useless people whom nobody pays attention to. I was young again," she said. "Although we are old, why can we not have an equally colorful life?"

Following Xi's visit, managers of the nursing home, which has more than 600 residents, gave more attention to services and encouraged the retirees to have more entertainment activities. A chorus was begun, and Liu set up a fashion modeling team, she said.

The team, with eight members including two men, performs for other retirees in the nursing home every Tuesday morning and during festivals and holidays,

Liu said.

“Many people, when admitted to a nursing home, will think it not necessary to spend money buying new clothes, as they are getting older, awaiting for that final day,” said Zhang Jin, 81, a retiree living in the nursing home and also coach of the team. “But I don’t think so. We need to keep a good spirit and outlook, and first of all we should buy new clothes.”

“We hope giving modeling performances can help relieve the psychological pressure of aging, so we can become old with elegance.”

Liu said she has spent more than 1,000 yuan (\$150) buying new clothes and shoes since the modeling team was set up in early 2014. Among her purchases was a qipao, a traditional Chinese dress.

Liu Zhongli, director of the nursing home, said with the rising elderly population in China, it is important for nursing homes to improve services and management.

“We have taken many measures to improve our living environment and barrier-free facilities in the past several years,” she said. “The goal is to let the elderly to have a comfortable and safe life here.”

[Chinese school offers master degree in yoga](#)

Minzu (Nationalities) University in Yunnan is now offering China’s first master’s degree in Yoga, with applications being accepted starting Tuesday, October 10, reports The China Youth Daily.

The program is being sponsored by the China-India Yoga College at the University and Swami Vivekananda Yoga Anusandhana Samsthana, a renowned Indian Yoga university.

The degree program was officially approved by China’s Ministry of Educational in January, 2017.

A Yoga master’s degree will take three years to complete, including two years studying in China, and the final year in India. Students will receive separate master’s degrees from both China and India once they obtain the required credits.

Classes will include lessons on yoga asanas, yoga physiology, yoga anatomy, yoga therapy as well as meridian theory.

The program will also offer language courses for Chinese students studying in India, including Hindi and Sanscrit, as well as courses related to Indian

culture.

[China to deepen reform with public hospitals](#)

China will carry forward public hospital reform to optimize medical care resources for public health, according to a decision at a State Council executive meeting chaired by Premier Li Keqiang on Monday.

The reform on medical care pricing at public hospitals will continue toward dynamic price adjustment of medical services to make the knowledge expertise and efforts of medical workers better reflected in values.

One or two cities in provincial regions where the comprehensive medical reform are piloted will be chosen for medical insurance payment reform, which covers all medical care institutions and services. The government will also designate over 100 disease categories for an insurance payment by-category reform.

“The medical care reform is not only a major project to better public wellbeing, but also a major economic measure,” Li said.

He said the public hospital reform should be pushed forward across the board, and the reform on medical care partnerships should be piloted in multiple forms to better serve “Healthy China” with better and more convenient healthcare services.

China’s medical care reform should adhere to the principle of guaranteeing basic health care, building up working mechanisms and strengthening community health services, he added.

China started the latest round of healthcare reform in 2009, making offering healthcare services to all people as a public good its core objective.

As of September, all public hospitals in China have joined the comprehensive reform program to end 60-year-old practice of drug price markups, which enables rationalization of medical care cost. As the reform proceeds, the share of drug sales in the total revenues for hospitals dropped from 46.3 percent in 2010 to 38.1 percent in 2016.

Public hospitals, which totaled 12,708 by the end of 2016, provided 2.85 billion diagnosis and treatments last year, accounting for 87.2 percent of cases provided by all hospitals in China, according to the National Health and Family Planning Commission.

The reform on the medication dispensing scheme will also be deepened as

public hospitals will be encouraged to practice category-based pharmaceutical procurement. Hospitals across different regions and different specialized hospitals will be encouraged to conduct procurement together.

The public hospital oversight mechanism will be reformed to better supervise the quality and safety of medical care, medical services and medical expenses. The number of hospital beds, construction standard and procurement of large medical equipment will undergo greater scrutiny.

“The medical care reform is still an ongoing reform, and these are progresses yet to be consolidated. The government should provide due financial support. The reform on the remuneration mechanism of medical workers should get stronger support to provide them with more incentive,” Li said.

The meeting on Monday decided to speed up efforts to establish medical treatment partnerships, which promote effective cooperation and coordination between different types of medical institutions, including major hospitals and grassroots clinics.

All major public hospitals must take part in the development of such partnerships before the end of October. The operating mechanism of medical partnerships will be further improved to ensure better coordination in technical support, staffing, staff salary arrangements, and resources sharing among different medical institutes.

Private medical care facilities, aged care and rehabilitation centers will also be encouraged to join the partnerships to provide integrated services for the public.

More efforts will be made to expand the availability of family doctors, and to enable the doctors to offer more services based on demand and improve the fee collecting and paying mechanisms.

Medical services at grassroots will be further improved, with more emphasis on improving the talent, technology and key departments at county-level hospitals.

“The medical treatment partnerships should be developed in parallel with systematic reform. Openness instead of exclusiveness to private capital is the way to go. A lot can be done to advance China’s medical equipment and pharmaceutical industry, not least the traditional Chinese medicine, including with Internet plus medical care that can help better consolidate our resources,” Li said.

Hungry livestock gobble panda food

Livestock grazing poses one of the greatest dangers to giant pandas, having

damaged more than one-third of the rare animals' habitat in a model nature reserve, a study by Chinese and US scientists has found.

A four-year investigation led by Li Binbin, assistant professor at Duke Kunshan University's Environmental Research Center, found that an increasing number of free-ranging livestock, mostly cattle and horses, inside the Wanglang National Nature Preserve has consumed most of the bamboo in some areas.

"Bamboo constitutes 99 percent of the giant pandas' diet," Li said. "The pandas have no choice but to move to higher areas of the mountains where bamboo can still be found."

"Long-term monitoring shows that pandas are being driven out of the areas heavily used by livestock, especially the park's valleys," Stuart Pimm, a professor of conservation biology at Duke University's Nicholas School of the Environment, was quoted as saying in a report released by Duke Kunshan University on Monday.

"These lower-elevation areas are crucial for giant pandas, especially during winter and spring," he said.

Li said overgrazing has reduced the regeneration of bamboo. Local farmers allow the livestock to roam the reserve at will and only go there twice a month to give the animals salt, she said.

"Over the past 15 years, while the number of livestock has increased by nine times, the panda habitat of the reserve has degraded by one-third," she said.

The Wanglang reserve, located in Sichuan province, is home to the largest population of wild giant pandas in China. The country has established 67 nature reserves to protect the animals.

Li and her team used 20 years of monitoring data to survey changes that have occurred in the geographical distribution of bamboo, pandas and livestock within the park. They modeled where degradation or loss of panda habitat has occurred and tracked livestock movement using GPS collars.

Li Sheng, assistant professor of conservation biology at Peking University, who worked with Li Binbin on the investigation, said that livestock grazing has become a problem at many reserves.

He said the interests of local communities, nature reserves and governments should all be considered to solve the current grazing problem.

"The same problem has been reported in many other reserves," Li Sheng said.

Li Binbin added: "The nature reserves have no enforcement power over the farmers who graze livestock. Those who have enforcement power, such as forestry bureaus, courts and forest public security departments, must work together to efficiently control overgrazing by livestock."

Sea turtles find human friends at Hainan center

Pang Pang, a green sea turtle 71 centimeters long that was washed ashore more than a year ago and sent by fishermen to Haikou, Hainan province, for rehabilitation, will soon leave its human friends behind and return to the sea in sound condition.

“The most exciting thing for us is to see the turtles released into the sea after receiving care at our center,” said Sun Mengli, one of the volunteers at Hainan Normal University’s turtle conservation and research center in Haikou.

People on Hainan, a well-known tropical island resort with abundant natural scenery and wildlife resources, once saw turtles regularly on its beaches, but after years of overhunting, the animals’ numbers have dropped drastically.

The turtles, regarded as living fossils, or flagship sea species, were put under State protection in China in 1989. Measures have been updated since then to crack down on the capture and trade of the turtles and their eggs.

Pang Pang – or “Fatty” in Chinese – a nickname given by the volunteers, was found washed ashore in a mangrove forest in a suburb of Haikou. It was delivered to the center by fishermen last year.

“The turtle was in very poor condition and needed immediate surgery when it arrived. It suffered from severe dehydration and had wounds on its stomach that were festering,” said Sun, a life sciences major at the university. “We found that fresh honey worked well in preventing the turtle from further dehydration.” Honey was spread directly onto the wounds, and rapid improvement was observed.

“Over a month’s time my fellow volunteers gave Pang Pang nutrient injections every day before the turtle could eat by itself,” Sun said. “It is not an easy job. Three volunteers had to work together to do the injection.”

Sun added that she and her classmates have learned a lot about the turtles by caring for them, and now have a stronger sense of responsibility when it comes to protecting ocean ecological systems.

Every two days, the volunteers go to market to buy fresh vegetables, meat and squid for the turtles to provide a balanced diet. On weekends, they refresh the creatures’ seawater.

Pang Pang has gained 8 kilograms since arriving. Before being released, it will be tagged with a serial number and a phone number for scientific

tracking in the future.

Thirteen other green sea turtles and one hawksbill turtle are hospitalized at the center, each occupying a plastic bucket 2.5 meters in diameter.

Over the past three years, more than 50 turtles, most caught by fishermen or found washed ashore by tourists – as well as a few smuggled ones seized by the local police – have returned to sea after receiving lifesaving care at the university center, according to Shi Haitao, professor of turtle research and conservation and vice-president of Hainan Normal University.

Shi said the team of volunteers has attracted about 50 students, teachers and social workers since its establishment in 2014.

Frederick Yeh, a Chinese-American postgraduate student, has been an active volunteer. Yeh found his passion in sea turtle conservation when he returned to his childhood home in Hainan in 2007 and discovered that the turtles were being sold for their meat and shells in local markets. He devoted himself to protecting the threatened animals and established the nonprofit Sea Turtle 911 organization in Hainan in 2008.

“I am gratified that so many volunteers have joined us,” Shi said.

Shi has called for greater public awareness and strict law enforcement against turtle poaching and trading, and has sought financial support for the center’s operation. But the center remains short of funds to buy medicine, medical devices and food for the turtles.

The Hainan Biodiversity Museum, a platform for sea life conservation initiated by Shi at the university, has received more than 700,000 visitors since 2000. His book on turtles has been printed three times to serve as a reference tool for the public and special workers such as customs officers and law enforcers.

Shi and his conservation team are expanding their efforts from Hainan Island to the Xisha Islands in the South China Sea through lectures to fishermen there on turtle protection.

“With more people getting to know the precious value of sea turtles in safeguarding a healthy biological chain and offering them good protection, it won’t be too long before we see the lovely creatures again visiting the beaches in groups in Hainan,” he said.

The Xisha Islands, with their clean, soft, quiet beaches, are thought to be a perfect location for sea turtles to lay eggs. A number of turtle protection stations have been set up on the islands since the establishment of Sansha city in 2012.

In 2014, turtles laid eggs in 52 nests in Sansha; by 2016 the number of nests had grown to 152. A turtle protection center is being set up in Sansha, according to city officials.