

东西方  
21世纪  
卫生保健  
展望

# HEALTH CARE, EAST AND WEST, MOVING INTO THE 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY

Chief Editor

Zong Shujie, M.D. (China)  
Nelson Y.S. Kiang, M.D. (USA)

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## **INTRODUCTION**





## **Introduction to the Proceedings Volume**

### **“Health Care, East and West: Moving into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”**

From June 24 – 29, 2001 a contingent of almost 700 Chinese health care leaders met with their counterparts in the United States at a conference held in Boston, hosted by Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). In this brief introduction, I have tried to describe the events that led to this historic meeting, the meeting itself, and what was accomplished by the meeting, in the hope that those interested in organizing similar events might learn from our experience.

This volume contains the papers submitted by plenary speakers, who were asked to offer a snapshot of some part of the health care systems of either China or the United States of America at the time of the meeting. Some of the speakers were unable to deliver their full manuscripts, so their contributions are represented by their abstracts. The publication of a Chinese version as well as an English version was subsidized by Xian-Janssen, the first and still the largest Johnson & Johnson Company to do business in China.

### **Origins of the Meeting**

According to modern chaos theory, large-scale phenomena may be triggered by seemingly insignificant events. The historic meeting, “Health Care, East and West, Moving into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” had its origins in a visit I made to China in 1982 (shortly after the Cultural Revolution) at the invitation of the Chinese Academy of Science. My father, son, and wife Barbara went with me, along with Dr. Irving Diamond and his wife Joanne. Entering China from Hong Kong, our first stop was in Guangzhou (Canton) where Irving and I were kept busy giving lectures and meeting with Chinese scholars at the Sun Yat-sen Medical University. The Kiang family and Mrs. Diamond were taken sightseeing by the head of foreign relations for the University, a young man, Mr. Chen Shoubin who spoke very little English, but impressed everyone with his energy, passion, and intelligence, so after our return to the U.S. I kept up a correspondence with him. A few years

later, when Shoubin was sent to Seattle, Washington to learn English, we invited him to spend a few days in Boston renewing our friendship. Many years later, when Shoubin became the Chief Liaison Officer for the Chinese Medical Association (CMA) he remained in touch from his office in Springfield, Illinois.

When the CMA decided that it must seek closer relations with American doctors, it decided to hold its 1996 meeting in the United States as a small exploratory effort. At that meeting, held at the University of Southern Illinois Medical School and Memorial Healthcare Systems, I gave a talk and met the head of the Chinese delegation, Dr. Cao Zeyi, the Executive Vice President of the CMA. At Shoubin's urging Dr. Cao asked me to be the chairman of the North American Branch of the CMA. I demurred on the grounds that I was not a clinician but a Ph.D. scientist and that having left China at the age of five, my Chinese language skills were inadequate. Nevertheless, Dr. Cao persisted so I finally agreed to serve as honorary chairman, available for advice but otherwise not responsible for day-to-day activities, whatever they may be. Dr. Cao suggested that a small academic meeting of Chinese and American scholars might be arranged to note the changing scene of medical care, as we enter the next millenium.

Later that year, on assuming Emeritus status at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Harvard, I suggested to Shoubin that if the CMA wanted to encourage the cooperation of Chinese and American doctors, it should consider holding a large, highly visible event in the year 2000 at which leaders in health care from both countries could exchange information and viewpoints. He agreed, so I brought the idea up with Dr. Harvey Feinberg, then the provost at Harvard, who had been Dean of the Harvard School of Public Health, and Dr. Daniel Tosteson, the Dean of the Harvard Medical School. Both encouraged me to explore the idea further on an informal basis with the thought that the host institution might be Harvard, involving especially the Harvard Medical School, the Harvard School of Dental Medicine, and the Harvard School of Public Health. Dean Bruce Donoff of the Dental School and Acting Dean James Ware of the School of Public Health were also supportive. Dean Tosteson mentioned that he had created a new entity, Harvard Medical International (HMI) which might be

the very organization that could help organize such a meeting. I was aware that Harvard might not have the facilities to accommodate many hundreds of foreign visitors and made some initial inquiries at MIT to see what could be done there I found that meeting rooms and dormitories would be available just after graduation, before most of the summer programs began.

In late September of 1997 I made my first trip to visit the leadership of the CMA in Beijing at the invitation of Dr. Cao. After I met with the Director of the Department of Foreign Relations, Mr. Gu Dezhang and the Vice Director, Ms. Ma Suyun, Dr. Jiang Fan, the Chief Secretary, was assigned to work with me. Fan and I worked all night to prepare both a Chinese and an English written proposal to present to the CMA leaders for a joint CMA – Harvard conference. This was done and there followed considerable general discussion of the proposal at both philosophical and practical levels.

One question was whether Harvard was the appropriate organization with which the CMA should work. After all, the CMA represented doctors and other health care workers for all of China whereas Harvard was only one school, albeit a distinguished one. Some thought the Department of Health and Human Services in the U. S. would be a better match and that Washington, DC or Beijing, being national capitals, should be the host city. I argued that the health care systems of China and the U.S. were so different that perfectly parallel bodies would be impossible to find. The CMA was, in fact, just in the process of changing from being part of the Ministry of Health (MOH) to becoming, at least in theory, a non-governmental organization (NGO) reporting in part to the Chinese Association of Science and Technology, but maintaining a connection with the Ministry. As such, it would no longer be predominantly funded by the MOH but had to seek funding on its own. I suggested that NGOs such as the CMA and Harvard might be better situated to analyze the health care systems of the two countries in a more objective manner than would government entities, which would have many special constraints arising from unpredictable events influencing Sino – U. S. diplomatic relations. The most comparable American organization to the CMA would be the American Medical Association which represents doctors but was probably not ready to undertake

such a project. Neither was the Association of American Medical Colleges, which represents medical schools. In any case, I opined that the geographic center for academic and clinical medicine in the U.S. was probably New England and that the CMA could investigate the matter on their own. In my written proposal, the invited American plenary speakers would come to Boston from the entire country rather than just from Harvard and the meeting would be open to all. Dr. Cao's original idea of a small, technologically oriented meeting could be greatly expanded in a series of breakout sessions that were organized according to specialties. My specific suggestion was that the CMA tentatively approve the idea of working with Harvard to organize a meeting of at least 300 Chinese health care leaders with a like number of American experts to take place in Boston in June of the year 2000 with the title "Health Care, East and West: Moving into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century". With this plan as a focus we could explore ways to organize and fund the meeting recognizing that neither the CMA nor Harvard had any designated means to pay for such an expensive undertaking. This course of action was approved and Chen Shoubin and I were empowered to work out more details. Because the purpose of the meeting would be to foster information exchange between health care workers of both China and the U.S., we all agreed that entry to the meeting should require only a nominal registration fee, with a special rate for students and that the meeting should be advertised as a no – frills, scholarly event.

The Minister of Health, Chen Mingzhang, who was also the President of the CMA, was unable to attend any of the CMA discussions. However, before going to Beijing I was in Shanghai and an old friend, Dr Wang Taian, a retired former Vice Director of the Shanghai Institute of Physiology and later the Institute of Cell Biology, suggested that I contact one of his former students, Dr. Zhang Wenkang, who had become a Vice Minister of Health after rising through the ranks of military medicine. Dr. Cao and Mr. Gu arranged for me to meet Dr. Zhang in his office at the Chinese State Traditional Medicine administration building. Dr. Zhang was very cordial despite being extremely busy, and told me of his research experience at the Institute of Physiology where he studied underwater respiratory physiology. He had visited the Harvard Medical School many years before but had only

seen the outside of the buildings. After I described the plans for the meeting, he assured me that he would support the plan and would help in any way he could. This turned out to be no empty promise.

Upon my return to Boston, I discussed the results of my Beijing trip with Dr. Joseph Martin, whom I had known from his days as head of the Neurology Service at the Massachusetts General Hospital and Acting General Director. He had just been installed as Daniel Tosteson's successor as Dean of the Harvard Medical School. In October, he presented the idea of the meeting to a group of Harvard Medical School leaders, who gave their assent to proceed with negotiations.

### **Planning the Meeting**

In the plan presented to the CMA leaders and the Harvard Medical School, two committees were proposed, a program committee and an organization committee. The former would be responsible for the intellectual content of the meeting, subject to approval by the organization committee. The latter would have overall responsibility for the meeting, including financial and institutional matters. Each committee would have both a Chinese and an American component, coordinated by an overall chairman. I suggested that the overall chairman of the organization committee should be the President of the Chinese Medical Association and volunteered to serve as the overall program chairman. The Dean of the Harvard Medical School would then be the co-chair of the organization committee for the Americans and the Executive Vice President or Secretary General of the CMA would be the co-chair of the program committee for the Chinese. These suggestions were accepted by both the CMA and Harvard.

I had already offered a tentative list of Americans who would be willing to serve on either the program or organization committee if asked. This list demonstrated to the CMA the level of expertise that could be recruited for the American committees. The organization committee members were to be distinguished people who could not commit time to work on the meeting but who supported the objectives and were willing to lend advice if needed. The program committee members, on the other hand, had to devote both time

and effort. On December 26, 1997, Dr. Cao reported the results of the September meeting of CMA leaders and staff to the tenth meeting of the CMA's Standing Council committee, which formally approved the proposal.

Once the CMA gave its formal approval to the idea of a Boston conference, the next step was to present the proposal to the three professional schools at Harvard that were most likely to participate as hosts, the Schools of Medicine, Dental Medicine, and Public Health. The strategy was to obtain informal agreement on general issues without dwelling on details. First, however, we had to clarify the financial issues. In a series of meetings with Dr. Robert Crone, the President of HMI, it was made clear that whatever the historical importance of the meeting, the funding would be both crucial and expensive. Recognizing that neither the CMA nor Harvard could bear the expenses, Chen Shoubin and I began to explore other sources. I presented the CMA - approved plan to a local Boston foundation with which I was very familiar. They were willing to pledge US \$ 250,000 which would cover the travel expenses for the plenary speakers, so we were now assured of having at least a group of 50 or so speakers. Next, we had to find a way to fund the travel of several hundred Chinese delegates. Shoubin had received financial contributions from Johnson & Johnson (J & J) for the 1996 Springfield meeting, so he suggested that we describe the proposed conference to Jerry Norskog, President of China Development for J & J, in order to assess how difficult it might be to interest companies which do business in China. When we met with Jerry at J & J headquarters in New Brunswick, New Jersey, he immediately saw the potential benefits for everyone and suggested that J & J might provide support to bring 300 Chinese delegates to Boston. He would have to present the concept to William Dearstine, Company Group Chairman, and asked if J & J could participate in suggesting some of the attendees. We had no objection to this as it had already been decided that anyone could attend the meeting. Not long afterward, Jerry informed us that he had succeeded in getting the concept approved and needed to discuss details with the eight J & J companies in China. With this encouraging news in hand, Shoubin and I arranged for the CMA leaders to meet with J & J representatives and for J & J to work out the specific financial arrangements with HMI and the CMA.

By June of 1998, planning had arrived at the stage when more formal agreements of intent had to be made by Harvard and the CMA. A small delegation was sent by the CMA to meet with Harvard officials and to inspect the physical facilities. The leader of this delegation was Dr. Wu Jieping, a past President of the CMA and now Honorary President. The other members were Dr. Huang Jiefu, President of the Sun Yat – sen Medical University in Guangzhou, William Chao, the President of the Hong Kong Chinese Medical Association and Chen Shoubin. I was to arrange their schedule in Boston. They first met with President Charles Vest of MIT, who assured them of his willingness to help, after which they attended graduation exercises of the Harvard – MIT Division of Health Sciences and Technology (HST) and gave a presentation at MIT on “High and Low Tech Medicine” jointly sponsored by HST and the MIT International Science and Technology Initiative. The next day they met with Dean Joseph Martin and Dr. Robert Crone. It was agreed that HMI would provide the institutional framework for Harvard’s participation and the CMA would assume responsibility for the Chinese side. After meeting some key members of the Harvard faculty, the delegation had dinner at the Harvard Club with Former Dean Tostesen, an old friend of Dr. Wu’s. The following day, after giving presentations at Surgical Grand Rounds at the Massachusetts General Hospital, chaired by Dr. Andrew Warshaw, and hosting a reception at the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary for Chinese health care workers in the Boston area, the delegation was feted at dinner by Chinese physicians and academics in Boston. The large attendance and enthusiastic interest at all these events assured the delegation that Americans were eager to learn more about the Chinese health care system. Detailed planning for the meeting could now begin in earnest. At this point the target was to hold the meeting in late June of the year 2000.

Following the return of the Wu Jieping delegation to China, I was invited in August, 1998 to Beijing, along with the members of the Wu delegation, to meet with the new Minister of Health, none other than Zhang Wenkang, the former Vice Minister. By this time, the outgoing Minister, Chen Minzhang, who was still the President of the CMA, had become gravely ill. (He was to succumb on March 15, 1999 at the age of 68.)



Earlier in February, 1998, Mr. Gu Dezhang died, so some of the key people in China when the project was initiated were no longer with us. Fortunately, at the Harvard Medical School, the transition from Dean Tosteson's tenure to that of Dean Martin, which took place in July of 1997, did not lessen support for the idea of the conference as evidenced by the warm reception given the Wu delegation.

As Minister of Health, Dr. Zhang had to obtain an exemption from the rule that government officials could not serve as heads of NGOs in order to stand for election to the Presidency of the CMA. Permission was granted and he was duly elected President of the CMA a year after he became the Minister of Health. One of his first moves was to reorganize the CMA so that the post of Executive Vice President was eliminated. He then appointed Dr. Zong Shujie as a Vice President and Secretary General, the newly created number two spot in the CMA. Dr. Cao was asked to remain as a Vice President and to concentrate his efforts on the "Health Care, East and West" meeting. Thus both at the Harvard Medical School and the CMA there was new leadership and considerable reorganization of staff. Fortunately, commitment to the meeting remained intact and once staff members adjusted to their new positions, momentum was reestablished. Dr. Zong promoted Ms. Ma to Director of the Department of Foreign Relations so there was once again a stable complement of staff to work on the conference.

Both sides felt the need for more formal written agreements in order to proceed further. A memorandum of understanding was drafted by the HMI which I presented to Dr. Cao in Anaheim in January of 1999. The memorandum described the general distribution of work and specified the financial agreements. The CMA required more assurance of funding, so the stage was set for a round of meetings during February 4 - 8, 1999 wherein Jerry Norskog discussed a strategic partnership with the MOH as well as support for the CMA meeting with Harvard. Thus all three organizations (the CMA, HMI, and J & J) reached a common consensus about their respective roles. Minister Zhang asked that Professor Wang Taian of the Chinese Academy of Sciences be added to the planning team so that Chinese basic sciences could be represented.

It soon became obvious that the original concept wherein the Chinese