

ONLINE SUPPLEMENTAL CONTENT

APPENDIX 2. EXCERPTS FROM INTERVIEWS

This appendix includes key excerpts from the China interviews dealing with topics discussed in the article. To make it easier for readers to locate the relevant quotations, I have organized the material from each interview by topic and included sub-headings to the topic being discussed.

Topic A: ILSI-China Structure, Functioning, and Influence

Topic B: Corporate Involvement: Extent, Benefits, Risks

Topic C: Government Support for Obesity and Chronic Disease Work

The sensitivity of the subject of corporate involvement in Chinese science and policymaking made it important to take every precaution possible to protect informants' identities. This appendix identifies only two individuals, ILSI-China's leaders (founding and current), who alone were able to provide authoritative information on the organization. Excerpts from interviews with these two leaders can be found under (1) and (2). The other informants have been identified only by generic job category (university or government scientist, hospital-based clinical nutritionist, and so forth). They are listed by a number (3 to 14), which links to the citations in the text. Words in brackets are author additions or clarification. Longer explanations are rendered as [au: explanation].

(1) ILSI-CHINA, FOUNDING DIRECTOR (1993-2006) AND SENIOR ADVISOR (2006-2018)

A. ILSI-China Structure, Functioning, and Influence

Q: When and how did ILSI begin?

A: In 1979 [au: 1978] China was contacted by ILSI International's [au: ILSI-Global's] [Dr. Alex] Malaspina, who came to China. During 1979-92, they held 12 training courses, lots of communication with China... I thought it would help to have a branch in China. It was approved by the Ministry of Civil Affairs and the Chinese Academy of Preventive Medicine. At that time, international NGOs were not allowed to establish branches in China. So we set up the Focal Point in China. It was not an international NGO; instead, it was affiliated with the Chinese Academy of Preventive Medicine.

The aim of the larger organization is to bring together or bridge three parties -- industry, government ministries, and the scientific community -- based on science to promote better health. The Chinese branch emphasizes that we do not just hold scientific meetings. Instead, we focus on major public health issues in China, and we put the scientific evidence into policy.

B: Corporate Involvement: Extent, Benefits, Risks

Q: If you look at the ILSI [-Global] website, [you see that] there are lots of member companies that support ILSI.

A: This issue is very important because for ILSI International, there is one major rule, that [corporations] receive no commercial benefit from their association with ILSI. ILSI headquarters has 300 companies that have joined. Companies have conflict of benefits [interests], but if they join ILSI, they cannot do commercial advertising at ILSI meetings. At ILSI events and activities, the companies are not allowed to use their company logo. In 1999, for example, Roche supported the meeting in Beijing, but we were very careful that it should not use its logo. They could have powerpoint [presentations] but they were not

allowed to put their logo on them. The experts could only talk about science, never about the [company's] products. This [policy] is very important for the ILSI organization. The whole organization is like that.

ILSI as an organization is very much company-supported. But ILSI Focal Point in China is not a branch, so we cannot have member companies, but we have supporting companies.

Q: What's the difference?

A: Supporting companies are not officially our membership, just supporting. They can join in and go out. At the very beginning, in 1993, ILSI headquarters introduced five companies as supporting companies for ILSI-China. Every year they gave quite a lot of money. Now there are about 38 supporting companies. ILSI-China sets the standards for support; companies can choose to give [one of two amounts]. Companies can choose the level of support they want to provide. Now the money is used for office work. ILSI China is a small organization, with only five full-time staff. The rest are volunteers.

Every year they support [us] with money, and then have the right to come to our meetings and give many recommendations about our future activities. We contact them twice a year, asking them their ideas about future activities. Then ILSI decides what kind of meeting to hold next.

Because we're an NGO [au: NGO-like organization], we can do everything we like. And the Academy [of Preventive Medicine] has given us so much freedom. We can do whatever we want.

ILSI usually holds five meetings a year on food safety and nutrition. Actually, it's more like eight or nine.

Q: So probably the companies that give more money have more influence [on ILSI's activities]?

A: Yes, yes, yes, the [companies] give regular, routine support money and then if we have [additional] meetings and need further support, we'll contact the companies to ask them if they can support the special meetings. [au: In other words, there are two categories of financial support, routine and special.]

Since 1999, ILSI has held a meeting every other year on obesity. Each has a special theme. December 2013 is the next meeting. ILSI invites international and local experts to participate in presentations and discussions. Our meetings are very special; unlike other societies, we do not just send out a request for abstracts and anyone can come. We have only about 150 participants, with most of them, both presenters and experts, specially invited. [au: In other words, ILSI-China controls who speaks at the meetings.] ILSI normally gets no money from the government.

Q: Which companies are the most important these days, or were at different points in time?

A: Of the 38 supporting companies, most are in the food industry, including some in the flavors industry. There are also some drug companies. The list of members is fairly stable from one year to the next, so you can't say any one corporation is more important than another. They just announce that they will continue their support for ILSI. Some are very small companies; they are still very important.

Q: Are there any that you have worked especially closely with?

A: No, all companies are the same [au: here, espousing the official ILSI view]. Big companies may provide support for some special meetings. [au: In other words, big companies do provide more support.] We will contact them [asking for funding for the extra meetings], but we don't see the 38 companies as having different [degrees of importance].

Q: ILSI has a delicate role to play. You are using money from these [big] companies, but you don't want to be influenced by them. Have there ever been times when the companies have tried to exert influence?

A: No, they don't try to influence us. They are used to it; they know that there won't be any commercial benefit.

Q: Why would a company donate money then?

A: Because they get scientific evidence they can use from ILSI Focal Point [au: for example, to create market plans]. They can report to their boss and say that when we join ILSI-China we can get all these kinds of benefits. But they cannot use the name of ILSI Focal Point [on any of their products or advertising]; that is impossible.

(2) ILSI-CHINA, DEPUTY DIRECTOR (1993-2006) AND DIRECTOR (2006 - PRESENT)

A. ILSI-China Structure, Functioning, and Influence

Q: ILSI-China is a really interesting kind of organization. It's a branch of ILSI-Global and is supported by corporations, but it has an office within China CDC. It's a kind of hybrid organization, and this very mixed nature is what seems to give it its power. Are there any other organizations like this in China, or is ILSI-China unique?

A: ILSI-China is unique. It is part of ILSI-Global. Its nature and functions are the same. It is a branch of ILSI-Global, but its features are different. It is an NGO. It is not based in the CDC, but has close relations with CDC. It uses CDC's physical space and human resources. ILSI-China is also unusual because it maintains close relations with the government.

To understand this you need to understand that the CDC is not part of the government; its members are not civil servants. It is a technical unit (*shiye danwei*), more like a university or a research institute. But it is under the direct control of the Ministry of Health. This explains how there can be an ILSI-China.

The government has never had any problems with any of ILSI-China's activities. It has had no problem with ILSI's corporate support. It trusts that ILSI leaders will use the support well. You know, there is no criticism of research support by companies in China. The government itself, of course, is not supposed to accept corporate support. But CDC can because it is a professional or technical unit.

Often the government, including the health ministry, encourages industry support for specific projects. To do this, government ministries have set up special international cooperation departments.

B: Corporate Involvement: Extent, Benefits, Risks

Q: The field of public health seems to be highly "marketized," with companies supporting conferences, health education activities, and so on. In the early years of obesity research, pharmaceutical companies such as Roche funded some of the research, for example, on BMI cutoff points. Why were they interested in that issue?

A: No, no, we should not use the language of "marketized." It's better to say that we have used resources from all sources, including companies. All ILSI members support all ILSI projects. There is no relation between the support of a particular [ILSI] project and a company's product development or marketing. This is in the ILSI bylaws. [Later he added that] ILSI conferences always use the word "scientific" in the

titles to distinguish them from other conferences [au: those run by commercial firms].

The food and drug companies that support ILSI operate in the same way. The Roche case of support for research on BMI cutoffs is an exceptional case [au: a special contribution, not a regular annual fee].

For the last six years the Ministry of Health has had a national campaign on healthy lifestyles. That was the outcome of one of ILSI's obesity conferences. On the last panel, one member, a vice president of China CDC, suggested that there should be a national campaign on healthy lifestyles. Everyone on the panel and in the room agreed. His suggestion was conveyed to the Ministry of Health, which agreed. That conference was supported by Nestle and Coca-Cola. But no one cared: not the CDC, not the experts, not the university participants, not the government. Scientific conferences such as this have no registration fees – to attract the greatest attendance. (This is unlike most conferences, which charge high fees.) [au: here, pointing out an advantage to corporate funding]

ILSI also coordinates public health projects, for example, those encouraged by UNICEF or WHO. For example, last week WHO asked ILSI to organize a media forum [au: in other words, ILSI doesn't just do company-supported work]. If a company wants [us] to do research [for it], ILSI can coordinate that, too.

C: Government Support for Chronic Disease Work

Q: Has the government paid enough attention to obesity?

A: No, and the Ministry of Health cannot do it alone. It has no support from any of the other ministries, and it is unlikely to get it.

Q: How developed is the field of obesity research in China today?

A: Obesity research is weak. There's virtually nothing going on in the basic science of obesity because there is no funding for it. Where would that come from? There's only the National Natural Science Foundation. China has no National Institutes of Health. Though people are talking about [creating one], it is unlikely to happen for a very long time.

(3) UNIVERSITY OR GOVERNMENT SCIENTIST

A: ILSI Structure, Functioning, and Influence

Q: Can you tell me about the history of obesity science in China?

A: Chen Chunming of ILSI is in charge -- you need to ask her. Before ILSI, Chen was head of the Chinese Academy of Preventive Medicine. She was very powerful and so able to organize big meetings in this field. ILSI doesn't really fund obesity research. We get support [for it] from corporations. The food companies give support to ILSI. Coca-Cola is maybe doing something on nutrition or obesity with ILSI. They have some work [together].

(4) UNIVERSITY OR GOVERNMENT SCIENTIST

A: ILSI Structure, Functioning, and Influence

Q: How much work was being done on obesity before the late 1990s, when ILSI became involved?

A: There were some people working on obesity, but not too many. Most of the work was done on children, though; there was very little on adults. After ILSI started organizing people to work on it, others continued their work; it was not all done under ILSI sponsorship. Actually, Chen Chunming invited many scientists to join the [obesity research] project because they already had done different surveys on diabetes, nutrition, and so forth. She pulled together [the surveys they had done] to do some analysis on whether the risk criteria should be changed. She found the problem was serious so then talked to the Ministry of Health, suggesting that ILSI draft guidelines.

Especially the definition of obesity, there was no one doing that. The MOH asked her to prepare the [obesity control and prevention] guidelines; it was very important work.

Q: ILSI-China is a really interesting kind of organization. It belongs to ILSI-Global, so has company support, but it's also located within the China CDC and works closely with the government. This mixed nature is what seems to make it so effective. Are there any other organizations like this in China?

A: ILSI is a very special model. There was a document from the Ministry of Science & Technology [MOST] that said that the Chinese Academy of Preventive Medicine or a similar institution could have research centers that worked with other countries. ILSI applied to MOST and MOH. That was the early 1990s. There's an important principle when organizing this kind of center: it should not be commercial, it cannot do any advertisement for industry. The companies just donate money, give some financial support, and maybe we can organize symposia on research issues. It is very important to not link the work with any specific products. For example, we can talk about how good it is to drink milk, but not urge people to drink a specific milk product or brand of milk.

ILSI has [close] links to CDC professionals. Because ILSI's leaders were former heads of the Chinese Academy of Preventive Medicine, they had [good working] relations with people working at the Ministry of Health. So it is unique. Not every institute could work like that. ILSI had natural relations, leadership experience, and also professional links to the scientists.

B: Corporate Involvement: Extent, Benefits, Risks

Q: Given that there's little money available for scientific research on health, corporate support [has advantages]. But are there risks as well? [Showing him a health-promotion flyer with a corporate logo printed at the bottom to make the issue more concrete] What about this company logo on this CDC flyer, for example?

A: This is just what we call educational material. Industry paid to print the material. Because the logo is not related to [does not promote] a specific food, it's ok. For me, I look at this [flyer] and say to myself it's written by the CDC, the company just paid for the printing. Companies always give financial support. But ordinary people, I don't know. Maybe they think, oh, this company is good because its logo is on the [CDC] material.

Q: Are there scholars or researchers who are concerned about the influence of companies on research, the possibility that companies might try to distort or bias the science of public health? [au: I asked this question in several different ways]

A: No, no, there is no criticism of company involvement.

(5) UNIVERSITY OR GOVERNMENT SCIENTIST

A. ILSI-China Structure, Functioning, and Influence

Q: When did the notion of obesity epidemic become widespread in China? Who introduced it?

A: From the late 1990s we started paying attention to the problem of obesity. Although the Ministry of Health is leading this project, the key person actually is Professor Chen Chunming; you should interview her. She used to be a high government official. Since she really cared about this issue, she used [her] academic resources and government connections to draw attention to the issue.

Q: She was a high government official?

A: Her position was comparable to that of a department head (*sizhang*, *juzhang*). She used to be a *sizhang* in the Ministry of Health and head (*yuanzhang*) of the Chinese Academy of Preventive Medicine, equivalent to the head of [today's] CDC. So she had a lot of connections and the necessary vision to bring the problem into the spotlight.

Q: We've been studying the Web of Knowledge, the largest academic search engine in China, and discovered a dramatic rise in the number of published papers on obesity in recent years, especially since 2002. How much do you think ILSI contributed to this?

A: At a minimum, on the national level, ILSI was of key importance in policymaking. Of course, there was a lot of research that followed the rise in obesity [in the population], and various kinds of research products. There were also surveys, but ILSI's role there was less substantial. ILSI also directed some [research and intervention] projects.

Q: Did ILSI regularly publish academic papers?

A: They also publish. Because they had Chen Chunming and Chen Junshi, both well-known academics. They also organized projects using ILSI's name, including both international [ones] and [ones from] domestic companies – all sorts.

Q: You said that ILSI's work had to do especially with national policy. Can you say anything more about how ILSI fits into the big picture? Does it do only policy-relevant work?

A: Chen Chunming and Chen Junshi had their own projects, so there were lots of data, including national data. Although they published as scientists, [this work] was supported or organized by ILSI. But you wouldn't find this information on ILSI in their papers, only their names [au: the authors formally belong to another unit]. ILSI-China is special because almost all affiliated people were part-time or [affiliated] in name only. Other papers belonged to other units and were collaborative in nature, such as with the Ministry of Education. ILSI does not support basic research.

Q: Can you estimate what proportion of all published papers [on obesity] have been [written or] supported by ILSI?

A: Not more than 10 percent.

B: Corporate Involvement: Extent, Benefits, Risks

Q: China's public health field also involves lots of cooperation with companies. Could we say that the field is "marketized"?

A: [Interrupting,] This is the first time I heard this term [but it's a fact]. I have participated in meetings for setting national standards, where you can sense that these big companies and multinational companies are here to influence the standards.

Q: Do these companies have any influence on other scholars or CDC officials?

A: Yes, both. Because multinational companies, their work method is to wield influence at every level. It's unavoidable. They won't mention making money, they talk about science and technology. Corporations also invite scholars to investigate (*kaocha*) and to attend academic meetings. This is quite similar to the situation abroad. Their influence is gradual, not direct.

Q: A great deal of research depends on support from companies. Do you think there are risks involved?

A: Definitely. In China, management in this area is not as developed as that abroad. There are no clear demands [i.e., written regulations]. The Chinese way of doing things is rather casual (*suiyi*). I believe that the influence [of the companies] is quite large, affecting one's research results, overall [research] design, data analysis, and so on.

Q: Is there no one concerned about this influence [that is, about the possibility that companies will bias or distort the science]?

A: There are a few, but their voice is very small. It's unlike in the U.S., where there is lots of supervision and it is a very sensitive topic. Very few will complain about company influence on scientific results. People are clearer about [more cognizant of] scholars doing product endorsements; they are not very attentive to possible company influence on researchers.

(6) UNIVERSITY OR GOVERNMENT SCIENTIST

A: *ILSI Structure, Organization, and Influence*

Q: What kind of organization is ILSI?

A: ILSI is a very loose organization. Usually it doesn't spend much money. The money it has is used to support Chen's meetings of experts. There are a few young people working as assistants, including some from the CDC. ILSI is attached to the CDC, which is an administrative and management organization. It has signed contracts with the CDC for using their offices and people, and it pays CDC for those things.

B: *Company Involvement: Extent, Benefits, Risks*

Q: Do you know the relationship between food companies and ILSI?

A: I don't know much about this. Coca-Cola is very active [now] in advertising its food as healthy.

(7) UNIVERSITY OR GOVERNMENT SCIENTIST

A: *ILSI Structure, Functioning, and Influence*

Q: ILSI is an interesting kind of organization. It's supported by various companies but then it's in the CDC. [Can you help me] figure out what kind of organization it is?

A: From my point of view, I feel like I'm not really familiar with how they collaborate with [food] companies. My feeling is that ILSI China has the same system as ILSI [-Global], but in China maybe more experts initially come from the CDC. Experts from outside the system are very few. [That's the reason] ILSI set up its office inside the CDC. As for the specifics, I can't say for sure.

B: Corporate Involvement: Extent, Benefits, Risks

Q: The Coca-Cola Company has [carried out] many projects on health, for example, "balance diet and exercise." [Can you tell us more about them?]

A: Actually, the Ministry of Health has a Healthy Lifestyles for All Action, which I think began in 2007. When I was an expert [with ILSI] I worked for that project so I know it well. This is mainly [the responsibility of] the ministry, [but] Coca-Cola has promoted some projects [as part of the Action] every year.

Q: What about the "walking day" [program]?

A: [Yes] there is propaganda [au: educational materials] [to that effect]. My feeling is that a lot of [the company's] propaganda [au: health promotion materials] and concepts are not bad. I remember there was this [program that if] you walked 10,000 (or some number of) steps, Coke would donate one dollar. Another example is [a project on] walking to meetings: we walk to the meeting in the morning, and in the afternoon, after everyone walks a certain number of steps, Coke would donate money to people with disability or to welfare projects. So in the last five years every year there has been a different theme. This year it is about planning for healthy living or something like that. In any case, every year [Coke promotes] a different theme and participates in some sponsorship activities.

A: Coca-cola has a [Health] Incentive Plan Activity that is part of the official Healthy Lifestyles for All Action of 2007. Coke's materials are good. The company has good ideas and good mottos, such as "walk ten thousand steps, earn a dollar." Then Coke gives the money to disabled people or to social welfare agencies.

Q: Are there any other companies that have supported physical exercise?

A: From our system, no, not that much.

Q: How does Coke's support benefit the company?

A: I don't know. Maybe from the international system, international food companies [are expected to] do some health promotion. Nowadays these food companies have [corporate social] responsibility; this seems to be the international trend. As for the specifics, I'm not very clear.

(8) UNIVERSITY OR GOVERNMENT SCIENTIST

B: Corporate Involvement: Extent, Benefits, Risks

Q: In the last five years or so, food corporations have been really active in supporting work on nutrition and obesity in China. How does this work?

A: Yes, there's lots of cooperation between scientific institutes and food companies. As you know,

[government funding] for scientific research is still not adequate. Corporate funding has substituted for government research funding. Some companies work with scientific bodies, such as the China Nutrition Society. They usually create foundations [au: that scholars can apply to for research support]. The CDC has a collaboration with Nestle in health education, the Healthy Kids program. It's a kind of global health education program. It's developed health educational materials for students, the target population, and provided funds for running the program. Nestle has also supported basic scientific research -- for example, on iron metabolism, absorption rate -- using advanced technologies. Nestle also has an international foundation that Chinese researchers can apply to for support.

Q: Which companies are the most active in supporting this kind of work?

A: Probably Nestle, then Coca-Cola. For example, Coca-Cola has supported the Health Incentive Plan, working with the Department of Disease Control at the MOH. Each year it works in a different area, such as nutrition, physical activity, stroke, or hypertension.

Q: How do companies profit from this kind of activity?

A: There is no profit, but it is good for their reputation; it shows they are responsible companies. You can find [discussion of] that in WHO documents. Actually, each year, companies give a lot of money for public benefit. For example, they've built schools, including the Hope Schools in the rural areas, and provided equipment for school cafeterias. It's a kind of return to society.

Q: In the U.S., large food and drug companies have been influential in shaping things like nutritional standards and cutoff points. Has there been a problem [of this sort] in China? Have you seen corporations trying to influence any of the scientific findings?

A: From my experience, I'd say no, because the research is independent even when supported by the food companies. Researchers don't have direct contact with the companies; instead they apply for funding through the scientific bodies. Companies' comments and suggestions are welcomed in the development of food and nutritional standards, though. Here they have influence.

(9) UNIVERSITY OR GOVERNMENT SCIENTIST

B: Corporate Involvement: Extent, Benefits, Risks

Q: For many years now, the WHO has encouraged multi-stakeholder partnerships in the field of public health. The Chinese government too has encouraged companies to work on public health.

A: That's right [he then elaborates].

Q: Are there any government regulations on how [organizations] can use company money?

A: No, there are no government regulations on any of this. People do what they feel most comfortable with. But if you do not [do it] right, people will criticize and the committee will criticize, so the person [au: leader] must be careful and consult with the whole committee about the decision. It's not a personal decision.

Q: Others have told us that in China there is little criticism of corporate support for scientific research in public health, that this is not an issue. Do you agree with that?

A: Yes, that's right, it's not an issue. The assumption is that they have the rules [au: on no advertising of company products] and the company will do the right thing. The company will support a meeting and the committee will put the company's name on the [display] board, that's all.

Q: My impression is that company influence in China's public health now is extensive, with companies writing papers and paying academics to publish them under their name.

A: Things are different now from in the past. It's impossible to say no [to corporate support]. I believe that [a leader of a research center] must focus all his energy and activities on the science. When one takes money from companies, it sometimes affects the scientific character of the work.

C: Government Support for Chronic Disease Work

Q: What would you say is the state of development of nutritional science today? What is the biggest problem now?

A: On the public health side, China is ok. There's been lots of research and applied work to solve public health problems. But for the basic research, it is still very weak. The government has funds for basic research [from the Natural Science Foundation] but it's not for our field. No one gets money from China's Natural Science Foundation for public health.

(10) SCIENTIST BASED IN MULTINATIONAL FOOD COMPANY

A: ILSI Structure, Functioning, and Influence

Q: You serve on a committee of ILSI-China. What activities does that engage in?

A: Yes, I am a member. ILSI is very scientific and neutral (*zhongli*). It provides scientific evidence to the government. My company supports the [bi-annual] obesity conferences. It supports education and research. ILSI-China's supporting companies are mostly food companies; every year ILSI gets a fee from each one.

Q: How does ILSI keep the companies from influencing the science?

A: [Impatiently] I don't know; ask ILSI! ILSI can only use the company name. No company products can be introduced at ILSI activities.

(11) HOSPITAL-BASED CLINICAL NUTRITIONIST

B: Corporate Involvement: Extent, Benefits, Risks

Q: [This follows a longer conversation about the activities of food companies in China's nutrition and public health field.] Some companies approach doctors and ask them to accept their products and recommend them to patients. Have you been bothered by this kind of thing?

A: Like recently, we've been very aware of a lot of nutritional products (*baojian pin*). I like the big companies because there is a guarantee in [product] quality as well as academic quality. They are careful [with the production] of every product. So, when I let my patients take them, I feel secure, I feel comfortable inside. We're different from salespeople. Salespeople are selling to make money [whereas]

we are using products to achieve results. But what irritates me? Only talking about the positive features. Small companies when they come to sell things, and can't match [our standards], that's very annoying.

Q: So big companies will come to talk [to you]?

A: When we hold big meetings, big companies will have their own exhibitions and displays. You can go learn about [their products]. We absorb a lot of experience and knowledge from them [those displays].

Q: The China Nutrition Society helps create nutrition standards. Do you have an opinion on [the practice of] companies participating in [setting] scientific standards?

A: I think we must support company participation in standards making. Actually, a lot of companies have contributed a good deal of academic knowledge. They've brought standards from abroad and done a good job of communicating. But they haven't dominated the [process], they've just provided some financial support.

Q: Are you familiar with the specifics of their participation in setting standards?

A: Not really.

(12) HOSPITAL-BASED CLINICAL NUTRITIONIST

B: Corporate Involvement: Extent, Benefits, Risks

Q: [You write a popular blog on nutrition. From where you stand, how big a role do the food companies play in providing nutritional information?]

A: A lot of money for public health education [on nutrition, for example] comes from corporations.

Q: Do you worry about that?

A: It is neither good nor bad.

Q: [What about corporate support for research? Is that regulated?]

A: The China Nutrition Society has to rely on corporate support [for research], since government support is lacking. There are few regulations [on the use of corporate money] in the medical field. It's chaotic. There are few regulations about corporate support for [scientific] associations, how they should use the money, where their money should come from, or what they should tell the public. In 2013, the government started to regulate these things [after the GlaxoSmithKline scandal]. There is no regulation on financial support for daily work activities of the association. [Organizations] must decide by themselves.

Q: Some multinational food companies, such as Coke and KFC, participate in the activities of the [government's] Healthy Lifestyles for All Campaign. Why?

A: I've had some encounters with them. I feel that Coca-Cola, say, mainly [talks] about balancing eating with exercise. For example, [it says that although] Coke has a lot of calories, if you exercise, you can burn them off [in other words, eat more and exercise more]. This is just my experience. Also, Coca-Cola has

sponsored many surveys on weight among young people. I saw data showing that among college students there is a large thin female population. This is good news for Coca-Cola. [which says that Coke is fine for thin, underweight girls, who not need to worry about weight.

KFC has more collaborations with the China Nutrition Society, mainly to develop more foods [that fit the national tastebud]. For the KFC items – like its chicken – that satisfy the dietary standards requirements, the company prints the Nutrition Society’s table on their food trays [on the placemat under the plate, where customers don’t necessarily see it]. I have a lot of posts [on my blog] criticizing KFC and McDonalds. But if they really improve, I am willing to write about that. But the standards cannot be too high; they are fast food companies, after all.

(13) BIOETHICS SCHOLAR

B: Corporate Influence: Extent, Benefits, Risks

Q: What are the ethical implications of corporate involvement in public health work in China? Is that problematic?

A: [Hesitates, then replies] Everyone needs [to make] money from the market.

(14) EMPLOYEE OF FOREIGN PUBLIC RELATIONS COMPANY

B: Corporate Influence: Extent, Benefits, Risks

Q: [You worked in a large American PR firm for five years. What did you learn about company efforts to influence official food and dietary standards?]

A: It is normal for [multinational] companies to try to influence [health, dietary, and other] standards. Big companies hire a Public Relations company... The PR companies have government relations departments responsible for communicating with government regulators. They propose suggestions for regulators. The government does not have much experience with regulating the market, and there are so many products. It needs foreign corporations to teach it about regulations: which ones work, and so on. The government welcomes company advice on standards.

Q: How does the government control the influence of corporate bias?

A: Regulators should judge on their own.

Q: What about bribery?

A: I just don’t know of such cases.