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Caring about Park City and the price of tea in China Local writer says he was impressed by Asian ingenuity

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Professor Paul Zane Pilzer speaking in Beijing from The Great Hall of the People

Local economist and author Paul Zane Pilzer said he isn't exactly sure why, but his book, "The Wellness Revolution" is a best-seller in China. He recently returned from a big speaking tour there last week and said he was jealous of how much that nation can accomplish economically that the U.S. cannot.

The Chinese people, their government and their businesses voraciously seek to learn about, borrow and improve upon the best ideas in the world. From traffic lights to public service, Pilzer said there's a lot Parkites could learn from China.

"Every business in Park City needs to understand their product and services as it relates to China. Name a store in Park City that half the goods don't come from China from furniture to raw materials," he said in an interview Monday.

From the carpeting on the floor to the computers on the desk, American companies heavily rely on Chinese companies, he said.

Even other manufacturing powerhouses like South Korea, Taiwan and Japan now outsource a large portion of their processes to China.

He said he already knew the Park City-company Skullcandy purchased materials from China, but he was glad to see the product sold there as well.

And why not? Pilzer said. If we're importing from China, why can't Park City companies export to there as well? Skiing is this town's specialty; it's also a fast-growing sport in the Northeast part of China where several resorts are under development, he said.

China has become an economic powerhouse through its exporting, but as the country becomes wealthier and more developed, it is hungry to consume as well. To his delight, they're consuming Pilzer's products. "The Wellness Revolution" is about Pilzer's ideas on how companies promoting wellness are not only becoming a distinct industry, but as an industry will likely gross \$1 trillion by 2013.

Much of his work in America is focused on health care, a \$2.5 trillion industry, he said. But he prefers to call it the "sickness" industry because they do nothing to prevent illness or improve health through good living. The Chinese have believed for centuries that an improved diet, massage, acupuncture and other "wellness" treatments can improve health. Traditional Chinese medicine is practiced alongside Western medicine in hospitals there.

Even though his book is translated into many languages, Pilzer said the country's affinity for wellness made his ideas on the subject especially attractive there. He believes others could likewise be successful there if able to tap into trends and be innovative.

That's exactly what the Chinese do, he said.

For example, their streetlights only have red and green, but the signs count down until the change so drivers aren't speeding through yellow lights with crossed fingers. He was also impressed by their leaders. Politicians have to prove a successful public-service record before gaining office there. Contrast that to people who run for office here, he said.

"I know where Park City should be spending some of its long-term promotion dollars; we should make Park City synonymous with skiing to the Chinese," he said.