Mainland Chinese Students in the U.K:

An Investigation into the Cultural, Linguistic and Financial Barriers in Academic and Social Life

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Thesis submitted in fulfilment of requirements for the degree of M. Litt in Educational Studies

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ABSTRACT

As the title suggests, this was an investigation into the cultural and linguistic barriers inhibiting students from mainland China in the U.K.. It was aimed to find out what problems existed, why they existed and how they affected the daily life of Chinese students. This research was based on certain assumptions. It was assumed that Chinese students in the U.K. would experience language difficulties as well as cultural conflicts. After a literature review on language and culture, and educational evaluation, and a pilot study in Glasgow, the main survey throughout the U.K. involved a representative sample of Chinese students studying in a cross-section of British universities. Findings were analysed by computer and under strict confidentiality, and enabled the researcher to build up a picture of the daily and academic life of Chinese students, interpreted by personal knowledge and experience.

The main findings were: although a number of Chinese students did have language difficulties, most could cope well with their academic studies or research with the help of their British supervisors. The biggest barrier in every day life proved to be the cultural difference which manifested itself in such ways as social structure, values, living standards, food and eating habits, and ways of communication. The social life of the Chinese students was very limited and their interaction with people from Britain and other cultures was further inhibited because of the general shortage of financial support. There was evidence that age and sex made some difference in their life in Britain. Younger Chinese and female students tended to be more competent in using English and more adaptable to the new environment, even though their partners or dependants experienced various difficulties.

A number of recommendations were put forward to the Chinese and British relevant parties, including: more linguistic and cultural education in China; more open and flexible policies regarding to overseas study; joint supervision programmes between China and Britain; more informed help and support from the host country and instititions. From the individual perspective, the researcher advocates cultural communication between cultures and people. It is hoped that this research could be seen as useful to governments and academic institutions, and help them towards better understanding of the needs of Chinese and other overseas students.

"To be sent abroad to study in the West is to be given the most coveted of opportunities, but it is hardly the easier for that. For some students, the rudest culture shock is to find that, in sharp contrast to China, where everything is decided for you, no one tells you what to do. For others, the obvious descrepancy between what their ideological conditioning tells them and what they discover for themselves can be deeply unsettling."

- L. Pan (1987)

CHAPTER 1.

INTRODUCTION

In the past decade, China has experienced greater changes than ever before, and development in every way has been seen as both desirable and inevitable. Due to the open policy and economic reform, there has been more contact with the developed countries, and an increasing influence has come from the West. One of the greatest advances is the quick revival of learning English as an international language, and a large number of people have begun to learn English with different motivation and purposes. The dominant purpose is to obtain a sufficient command of English in order to study or do research in English-speaking countries.

The Chinese government has been sending more and more students and scholars abroad every year. One statistic (taken from 'Statistics of Students from abroad in the United Kingdom 1986/87') by the British Council can tell us the rapidly increasing number of Chinese students arriving in the U.K. In the year 1981-82 there were only 204 Chinese students arriving in the U.K.; the number doubled in 1984-85 to 410. During 1986-87 the total number had reached 837, in 1990 there were about 3,500, and in 1992 the non-official figure is about 8,000 to 10,000 mainland Chinese throughout Great Britain (source: CASS estimation).

1.1. Focus of Research

There are many significant cultural differences between China and Britain. These differences manifest themselves in many aspects: politically, economically and socially. The generally poor command of English among the Chinese also adds to their difficulties in coping with study and life in a foreign country. Therefore, my aim was to look into some of the cultural, linguistic and financial barriers Chinese students had to face, through the direct testimony of those students. Interpretation of that testimony would be helped by my own direct experience as a Chinese student in the U.K. It is to be noted that such an investigation has been carried out by a researcher who has shared the experience and who can communicate with the students in their own language.

For purposes of this study, "Chinese students" are defined as including the students from the People's Republic of China. They are more often referred to as Mainland Chinese, exclusive of the Chinese from Taiwan, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore and other countries. My research was to focus on the Chinese postgraduates in British universities and polytechnics. It should be noted that when I make a comment or discuss some general Chinese characteristics, I use "WE" to identify myself as one of the Chinese students; "THEY" refers more specifically to those Chinese students whom I have interviewed, or those respondents to the questionnaire. It should also be noted that when I mention the Chinese students I also include the scholars and visitors for other academic purposes, unless otherwise stated.

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1.2. Underlying Assumptions

The research was based on certain hypothesis. I assumed that Chinese students would confront language problems after they arrived in the U.K. Some Chinese from rural areas or small towns might have a greater 'culture shock', if there were any, than those from big cities. There is evidence that female and younger students tended to be more adaptable to the new environment and I wish to explore this further in my dissertation. (Statistics show that there are fewer than 1:5 female to male Chinese students in the U.K.). My investigation started by looking at **what** problems existed and **why** they existed, and **how** they inhibited students in the way of living and studying.

1.3 Significance of the Investigation

Evaluation is gaining more and more attention and emphasis in Education. Some evaluations aim at measuring the effectiveness of curriculum or course development, others try to assess the achievement of individual teachers or learners. It is also important to find out the success of a programme for the sake of accountability. Evaluation has been carried out on a wide scale in the U.K. and other countries, but has so far been greatly ignored in China. Apart from this, Chinese students are one of the largest groups of overseas students in the U.K., so it is worthwhile trying to investigate their views and experiences with the prospects of future improvement for British institutions and other related organisations. There are possibilities, and a desirability, that these institutions and organisations in the U.K. can help Chinese students as well as other overseas students more effectively if their problems are known and well treated.

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1.4.   Procedures

The research design involved 3 stages:

    a. library research through the existing literature about language and culture, evaluation and relevant topics.

    b. a pilot study by selecting a sample of 30 Chinese students in the Glasgow area with difference in sex, age, background, speciality and institutions and interviews were to be conducted with them.

    c. a wider survey, based on the results of the Glasgow pilot study, covering 150 Chinese students, among whom follow-up interviews were to be carried out to obtain a truer picture of their daily and academic life in the U.K.

1.5.   Expected Outcomes

It is hoped that this research will contribute to the theory of culture shock relating to the Chniese students. It is also hoped that the findings from this study can be used to make recommendations both for Chinese and British institutions. The information and recommendations should assist the Chinese Educational Committee or other institutions to take measures to improve the present situation, such as a more detailed needs analysis and provision of sufficient finance, as well as providing some background knowledge about British culture. On the other hand, the British Council and the British institutions should be helped to provide the Chinese students with more informed help and support. It is also possible that the results of the research may give rise to a new orientation in some ways, and that the presentation will provide guidance for future and current Chinese students and scholars, encouraging them to make the very best out of their stay in Britain.

CHAPTER 2

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

2.1   Introduction

There has been much discussion about language and culture, and it is generally agreed that there is an interrelationship between the two. Landar (1965) once commented that "Learning a language means learning social conventions. Language, having cognitive, expressive and value aspects, qualifies as an institution, a cultural institution". He also regarded language as 'a set of habits' making up one important part of culture which 'is the total set of habits which man learns' (1965). His ideas reflected the Behaviourists' view about language, which has been severely criticised by some modern linguists. Nevertheless, it is widely believed that language is essentially related to culture. Serpell (1976) proposed the role of language as "a very obvious candidate for emphasis as a mediator between culture and behaviour".

According to Serpell (1976), language is man's most distinctive characteristic which differentiates human beings from other animals. Much earlier, however, Jespersen(1922) elaborated such ideas in his book "Language", which focused on the nature, development and origin of language. According to Jespersen, when we talk about the "life" of languages, the "birth" of new languages and "death" of old languages, "the implication, though not always realized, is that language is a living thing, something analogous to an animal or a plant. Yet a language evidently has no separate existence in the same way as a dog or a beech has, but is nothing but a function of certain human beings". He also believed that language is a

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"purposeful activity" through which an individual expresses certain purposes, such as "evoking some idea in the mind of another individual". Jesperson concluded: "The act is individual, but the interpretation presupposes that the individual forms part of a community with analogous habit, and a language thus is seen to be one particular set of human customs of a well-defined social character".

Few people can argue that it is most helpful to have a command of a foreign language in order to understand the related culture. Especially for people like students or scholars living in a foreign country, their survival and adaptation to the new culture is closely linked to their mastery of the target language. As Hoskins put forward: "Control of language is basic, not only to furnish a means of communication, but to supply one of the best means of understanding of the total culture of the people, because language is the culture system through which all the activities and beliefs of the society are reflected and transmitted" (Hoskins, 1959, quoted Larson & Smalley 1972).

Since language and culture are so closely related, it is important for us to understand their implications and to explore ways for better understanding. As the world becomes smaller but more complex each day, it is worthwhile to discover more about our own culture. It is also useful to learn other people's cultures as well as their languages.

2.2.   Definitions of Culture

What do people mean when they talk about 'culture'?   Anthropologists, sociologists and other researchers have tried to define the term, while ordinary

people have their own perceptions. According to Lawton (1975), there are two main ways of defining culture. Popularly, culture comprises "certain kinds of interests, activities such as 'highbrow' music, literature and arts"; as a technical term used by researchers, culture is seen as "everything that exists in the society". That is to say, technology, skills, attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviours and so on, all represent cultural characteristics.

In his book 'Culture', Raymond Williams (1981) defines culture as follows: firstly, culture indicates "a developed state of mind", as when we refer to someone as a 'cultured person'; he then directs his attention towards another dimension of culture, when he examines "the process of this development", which we often manifest in our interests or activities; finally, he discusses "the means of these processes". These means refer to the Arts and other "humane intellectual works". Williams, with his emphasis on process, is more interested in the deeper meaning of culture.

To be more specific, when we comment on somebody as 'a person of culture', what we usually mean is that they speak and behave properly, dress in a refined or elegant way, have good taste in art or music, occupy a respectable status in society and so on. To many people, a cultured person has one or more of the qualities listed above which qualify him/her as representative of a particular culture. In a sense everyone is cultured, since they usually behave more or less according to the particular culture system with which they are brought up, or at least are expected to follow.

What image comes into our mind when people talk about cultural activities or interests? Can we think of table-tennis without connecting it with the Chinese, since Chinese people are generally believed to be good at it? The same is true when we recognise cricket as a part of English culture. After spending a number of years in Scotland, a foreigner is often expected to have heard about a Ceilidh or a Burn's Supper, even if he/she has never had the chance to go to one.

The 'humane intellectual works' probably refer to the most basic meaning when people talk about culture. The way of life in one society is very much different from any other society and each society contributes her own to the world. Not only do Chinese people look different from Italians, further distinctions will be manifest. For example, one would rarely, if ever, ask for spaghetti when he/she goes to a Chinese restaurant. Do westerners find it easy to comprehend and grasp the subtle meanings of a piece of traditional Chinese music or a Japanese painting? They would, at best, find this difficult without any knowledge of Oriental culture.

Culture is "more than a collection of more isolated bits of behaviour. It is the integrated sum total of learned behaviour traits which are manifest and shared by the members of the society " (Hoebel, 1960, quoted Williams 1981). These behaviour traits include knowledge, art, morals, law, customs and any other capacities and habits which men acquire in a particular social context.

A culture "always refers to some 'property' of a community, especially those which might distinguish it from other communities" (Hudson, 1980). This indicates that societies and their cultures differ from one another in many ways. A Chinese person who is born and brought up with Chinese traditions and beliefs has

attitudes and values dramatically different from a typical British person.

Goodenough (1959) took culture as socially acquired knowledge. According to him, there are three kinds of knowledge. One is the 'cultural knowledge' which we learn from other people, either through direct instruction or by watching other people's behaviour. Children may develop this kind of knowledge when they observe their parents, family members or other people around them. Time and again, especially when very young, children are told what to say or do in various situations. Another kind of knowledge is "shared non-cultural knowledge which is shared by people within the same community or the world over, but is not learnt from each other". This is probably what we usually call instinct. The third kind of knowledge is what he calls 'non-shared non-culture knowledge', which is unique to each individual. It is this kind of knowledge that makes one individual different from another.

However, it is the cultural knowledge which determines our national identity and gives us a sense of belonging. As cultural knowledge can be learnt from others, it is "the discovery of our neighbour, his modes of expression and the way of living, respect for his wisdom and his wishes and self-enrichment by accepting another's identity" (Girard, 1972). As a result, cultural knowledge can be developed, the process of which indicates the "self-discovery and growth and mastery of one's fate" (ibid). In other words, by watching other people's actions, we may begin to formulate behaviour which is considered appropriate and acceptable in a certain context; we are then able to adjust ourselves to whatever society or circumstances we happen to be in. This is why Girard concludes that culture is "something re-rooted in the universal nature of man and in his spiritual heritage".

In essence, culture determines one's personal identity. One may feel unhappy or even become critical of some elements of one's culture, but one cannot help being attached to one's particular culture, as Lewis stated, "the one thing he cannot afford to do is to isolate himself from that tradition, or if he does he is not merely rootless, he is defenceless against anarchy" (Lewis, 1981). Once somebody refuses to identify himself with his own group of people or the society to which he belongs, he becomes an outcast. It is essential for anyone to assimilate some of the core parts of the culture in order to achieve his identity and maturity. Only by doing so, can he possibly cope with various situations and live in peace and conformity with his society.

2.3. Culture Shock and Culture Constraints

As the previous discussion has demonstrated, the personal and national identity of the individual is achieved through his/her own culture. It is significantly important to recognise that societies and their cultures differ considerably from one another. One group of people may share the same kind of activities or interests, which may appear bizarre and absolutely unacceptable to the members of another group. In such cases, a certain cultural shock or cultural constraint will inevitably arise and cause problems for people involved.

What is the so called 'Culture Shock'? Many scholars have done research and written about it. Furnham & Bochner devoted a whole book to describe culture shock in 1986. According to them, culture shock is the experience of a new culture which gives rise to "an unpleasant surprise or shock, partly because unexpected,

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partly it may lead to a negative evaluation of one's own culture".

However, it was Oberg, the anthropologist, who first used this term in 1960. He clarified culture shock in six aspects. The first is what he called 'strain', which is the effort one makes to adapt oneself psychologically on encountering a new culture. Guthrie (1975) called this "culture fatigue" (quoted Taft, 1977). Secondly, there is a 'sense of loss and feeling of deprivation'. We can imagine this feeling when we leave our own culture - we also leave behind our family, friends, status or other possessions at home, such as 'edible' food, recreation or cultural stimulation. Thirdly, in the new and unfamiliar cultural environment, we may find ourselves 'being rejected or rejecting members of the new culture', racism may come into this category when a newcomer is a racist himself or he feels prejudiced against in the new culture. Fourthly, he may have a sense of 'confusion' when he has to face a new role or is confronted with different values or expectations; he may even feel confused about his own identity in the foreign culture. Then, feelings of 'surprise, anxiety, even disgust or indignation' may arise, especially when there are constant conflicts between the two cultures. Finally, he is likely to undergo the 'feeling of impotence' when he is unable to cope with the new culture. In this case, he often loses his confidence and it eventually affects his self-esteem.

Culture shock is usually the result of anxieties created by the new cultural environment. Who, then, is likely to suffer from culture shock? Most people living overseas for the first time cannot possibly be free from such anxieties. Let us take the example of an adult who has been brought up in India and has been used to the way of living in that Asian country. When he arrives in a foreign country like the U.K., as is quite common, he will surely experience a lot of cultural differences

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which in due course cause him anxiety in many ways. He has brought with him some of his traditional habits and whatever religion he practises, but there will be some psychological or more practical problems still to face.

For some people, the very expectation of culture shock may arouse anxieties. The word 'alien' is sometimes used to refer to people who live in another culture rather than their own. 'Alien' is not simply a synonym for foreigner. A 'foreigner' means somebody visiting or staying for a short while in a foreign country who is not of the nationality of that country. 'Alien' has more implications than simply being a foreigner in the new culture. An alien usually finds himself unprepared or ill-prepared for the new environment, and feels lost and unable to cope with some situations. Even those who seemed to be capable of tackling problems at home may appear completely helpless with what they have to face in the new community. Their experience at home does not always seem to apply here and now and therefore they feel worried and alienated.

In order to make the discussion more clear and relevant, a few specifications need to be put forward. There are roughly three kinds of people whose problems have been or are going to be mentioned.

Firstly, there are short-term visitors to another country, such as tourists on holiday or a delegation. Those who stay in a foreign country for less than six months are classified as short-term visitors. For such people, culture shock can sometimes be a great problem while abroad, since they are usually not well prepared for such a change. Those especially who have no knowledge of the target language and little experience of that culture may put themselves into a

rather helpless and unpleasant situation. Some of them may find the foreign food inedible or certain phenomena totally unacceptable. However, since their visit is temporary, with no pressure to adjust to the new environment, their suffering is not endless. On returning home, such 'tourist shock' may be thought of as a good laugh and a happy memory. People learn from both their bad experiences as well as good ones. One might therefore assume that a short-term visitor may suffer some culture shock at the time, but that the consequences may not always be harmful and are less likely to be life-transforming.

Secondly, people such as immigrants are long-term sojourners because they choose to spend the rest of their life in another culture. Among the immigrants, there are adults as well as children. They will all suffer from culture shock, although they may go through it at different levels and in different aspects. For instance, an immigrant adult may find it difficult to adjust his way of life because he has a set of values and ideas very much attached to his original culture. For some immigrant children, when they are suddenly thrown into a new culture at the deep end and have to face an abrupt change of environment, they may feel curious and fascinated about the new discoveries on the one hand, they may also feel puzzled or at a complete loss. Some may even panic at the loss of familiar signs and simply not be ready for it. But as time goes by, especially if they manage to pick up the language fairly quickly, life may be easier at a later stage. For those immigrant children who are born in the new culture, it is a different story altogether. Culture shock may not have a significant impact since they are brought up within the new culture and are already part of it when they are born.

Thirdly, there is a category between 'long-term' and 'short-term', which I refer to as 'medium' aliens. These include students or scholars who stay overseas for more than a year. Most of them would go back to their country after spending a number of years abroad, though some may try to stay on and become long-term immigrants. It will be those 'medium' overseas students and scholars who will be our main focus of discussion, unless otherwise stated.

For overseas students studying in a foreign country, life can be more complex, and they are likely to experience greater culture shock than they had expected. For one thing, an alien has been brought up with his own culture and its related beliefs, values and ideologies. He already has embedded in his mind what is right or wrong, or how he should react under certain circumstances. That is to say, his ideas or actions reflect the influences of his culture. After coming into a new country, whatever the reason may be, he will definitely encounter many problems which he does not have to face in his own.

Apart from the major barriers in language which we shall discuss later, other problems will soon emerge. Larson & Smalley state that "Culture helps us to know how far we can go as individuals and what our responsibility is to the group" (1972). One might be very familiar with one's responsibilities in one's own culture, and have done very well; due to the fact that one's behaviour has been consciously or unconsciously governed by cultural expectations, and hardly aware of any other alternatives. When one becomes an alien, one is no longer sensitive to others' expectations and in a certain situations may not have a clue as to what these expectations might be.

How much does an alien know about the new culture? What is his attitude towards the new culture or the people? Does he really want to adjust to the new environment? How much effort does he put into adjustment? These are important issues to be taken into account as we think about cultural problems.

It might be fair to claim that the more an alien knows about the new culture, the less culture shock he has to experience, since culture shock often comes from unknown or unexpected events. It may also be true to say that someone who has a positive attitude towards the new culture is less likely, or likely to suffer to a smaller degree, from culture shock than someone who bears a negative attitude. At least, the former is more ready to accept the new culture and this helps him to make adjustments. In a large survey of foreign students studying in various countries, Klineberg and Hull (1979) discovered that those students who had made satisfactory social contact with the local community reported higher academic acheivement. An alien's personality and motivations also matter a great deal in coping with the new culture.

However, no matter how flexible or adjustable one might be, or how familiar one might be with the new culture, it is a common phenomenon for people from overseas to experience culture shock, especially for the newcomers. Some people may cope better and get used to the new way of life easily, while others may find it difficult to get over the shock. In essense, nobody can be totally free from the shock which the new culture will bring.

Culture includes a wide range of aspects, both spiritual and material. The underlying structure of each culture may be fundamentally different in many ways.

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One society differs from another in such ways as the social system, values, living standards, even the kind of food and eating habits, and so on.

Each culture has its own history and traditions, and this difference in experience has made tremendous contributions to the development of each culture. Some countries, like China and Egypt, have longer written histories than others. Some countries are more heterogeneous, such as the U.S.A., so mixed with different races and cultures, while others, like Japan and Korea, are relatively more homogeneous.

We sometimes hear people talk about 'Western culture' or 'Oriental culture'. There are further classifications like European culture, breaking down to the culture of each individual country. There are regional cultures within the nation as well. For instance, Scottish culture is different from that of the English. Evidence tells us that someone who has been prepared for 'British' culture, seen largely as English because of imperial dominance, will certainly get a few surprises if s/he comes to Scotland or Wales (where very often people speak Welsh not English!).

Scottish people are seen as different from English people in some ways. Scottish people have their own traditional customs and their own distinctive dialects. An English girl once complained to her friends that she had had language problems when she visited Glasgow, and she could understand less than 50% of the local Scottish. But in an alien's eye, Scottish people are not so different from the English; at least they speak the same language and have a lot in common, although a Scottish person would definitely disagree.

Language alone does not explain everything about culture, although it does allow some similarities and influence ways of life to a certain extent. It was reported that a British person experienced culture shock during her short stay in the United States. On the other hand, many Chinese adapt well to the American way of life.

Culture shock is one of the many constraints an alien has to face living in a new culture. There are other shocks, such as economic shock and so on, but our focus is on the culture shock. Bock (1970) regarded culture shock as "an emotional reaction that follows from not being able to understand, control or predict". We can imagine the dilemma we might be in when we suddenly " lose all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse" (Furnham & Bochner, 1986). In various circumstances, we might feel at a loss in what to say or what to do. Misunderstanding can arise when we fail to react in the way required by the new culture. Depression may take hold of us when we are unable to deal with daily problems. In short, life can be very difficult and frustrating for an alien with all the unfamiliar faces and surroundings, or unpredictable constraints in store.

When Singh (1963) interviewed 300 overseas students in Britain, he found that many students had experienced difficulties in three categories: emotional, academic, and personal adjustment. Their emotional problems were mostly loneliness, homesickness, food dificulties and worries about domestic problems back home; their academic problems mainly involved language difficulties, particularly oral communication; problems of adjustment were related to place of residence, social class, duration of stay and social skills.It was found that younger students - under 26 - were better adjusted than older students. As Singh argues:

"their problems of adjustment to different spheres of life - social, personal and academic - depended on various factors such as social class, age, personality traits, levels of study, type of university and duration of stay in this country" (Singh 1963; quoted Farnham & Bochner 1986). Our later discussion about Chinese students in the UK reveals similar problems.

People from different cultures will react differently towards the new situation. Some may be grief-stricken and find it extremely difficult to get used to life in the new culture; some may mourn over the past and feel bewildered at the present situation. However, people show their grief in different ways, and those from certain cultures may display their grief more openly than others. For example, Chinese people may be more affected living abroad than peoples from some other countries. One of the Chinese students in Warwick often cried because she missed her daughter and family in China. Another elderly Chinese man in her class had to leave the course earlier because he was so sad and worried. He was unable to eat much, and slept less and less, so had to go back to China before the end of the course.

Bourne (1975) carried out a study on Chinese students in the USA; he found that parental, personal and other demands for academic excellence meant that Chinese students worked harder and for longer hours than most other students. He also found that male students tended to be unassertive, shy and have few friends, while female students tended to be less isolated, but felt guilty about dating non-orientals (Bourne 1975; quoted Furnham & Bochmer 1986). My discussion in 5.3.6 will pay special attention to the sex difference in terms of adaptability in the new culture.

More research has been done recently to explain culture shock. Furnham & Bochner (1986) approached the topic through the following areas: negative life events and illnesses, social support networks and value difference. It is assumed that certain life events may lead to migration which usually causes culture shock and demands for adjustment. Some studies have shown that migration involves great potential for culture stress which in due course gives rise to psychological and physical illnesses. When someone migrates to a new culture, especially when one has problems in acquiring the new language or coping with certain stress resulting from the geographical movement, he is more likely to suffer depression or serious mental illness.

It has been suggested that social support from the new culture is directly related to increased psychological well-being and lessens the chance of mental or physical breakdown (Furnham & Bochner, 1986). Since a migrant usually leaves behind his family, friends and other familiar features, it can be very difficult for him to adapt to the new culture without these supportive relationships which he may have taken for granted in his own land as available when necessary. Therefore, social support from the new community is most desirable and can help the migrant reduce the culture shock. Cobb (1976) has seen social support as information which informs the migrants that they are cared for, respected and hold membership within the new culture. In essence, social support is needed by migrants and if their needs are not met greater stress may be experienced.

Some researchers regarded social support as foreign student friendship networks (Duck & Craig 1978; Klineberg and Hull 1979; Bochner et al 1977, 1979, 1982).

Bochner (1977) suggested a functional model for overseas students' friendship patterns. These social networks from which overseas students could benefit included mono, bi-cultural and multicultural networks. The mono-cultural network enables students to form close relationships with their compatriots, which functions as a channel for the sharing of ethnic and cultural values; the bi-cultural network consists of overseas students and significant host nationals such as supervisors or advisors, which helps to further the prefessional achievements of overseas students; the multicultural network of friends and acquaintances provides companionship and other social activities. These social networks are vital in shaping overseas student life in a foreign land.

Value differences between cultures add to the difficulty for sojourners. Societies vary so much, from social structure to personal beliefs. Hoftstede has done an extensive study concerning different values in different countries. According to him, "Culture is to a human collectivity what personality is to individual" (1984). As personality varies so much and distinguishes one individual from another, it is also the case with cultures and their attached values. A sojourner often confronts conflicts in culture values. The greater the difference between his own culture and the new one, the more stress and pressure he is likely to suffer and the more demanding and difficult it will become for him to adjust to the new culture. When a group of Asians, who have been used to living and sharing a lot of things together with others of the community, come to live in a Western country, where privacy is pursued and highly valued, what would they do in such a situation? Would they stay together and stick to their own values and customs? Or would they try to adapt to the western way of life and relative isolation from other fellows? Some people may choose to keep their own way of life as much as they can in the new

context. In such cases, they may never feel quite at home in the new land and feel, not surprisingly, rejected by the new culture they have rejected. Some may even form a smaller community of their own within the major community, as is the case in many countries when we think about multicultural society. There are also some people who would try to assimilate in the majority culture and identify themselves with the new culture. This is true for many Americans from other origins.

Whatever the reasons for culture shock may turn out to be, it may not always be a negative experience. Some investigations have shown that migration can also lead to positive changes as well. One may become better off in many ways such as financial, physical or mental conditions. The new culture may also provide better living and working standards, more freedom and opportunities, better education and health facilities and so on and so forth. Living in a new culture may make one more aware of one's own culture, whose characteristics have so often been neglected or unnoticed before. Culture shock, can also teach a sojourner something about himself. By comparing his own culture with others, he may develop more cultural understanding which will eventually influence his world view to a certain extent.

2. 4. Language and Culture

As culture has been defined as shared knowledge, "the shared kind is related to language . . . Language always relates to concepts which are shared (or believed to be shared)" (Goodenough, 1957, quoted Hudson 1980). Goodenough laid emphasis on the fact that most of language is contained within culture and that "a society's language is an aspect of its culture. . . The relation of language to

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culture is that of part to whole" (ibid).

Culture is the shared knowledge which a group of people acquire from one another and which has been imparted from generation to generation. The same is true of language which a baby learns from his parents or other people, and which has been constantly modified and developed. As a part of culture, we pick up our mother tongue, and build our cultural knowledge bit by bit at the same time. Language and culture are so interrelated that it is impossible to know the language without some knowledge of the related culture.

Apart from this, "culture is communication and communication is culture" (Claydon, Knight & Rado, 1977). What role does language play in human communication? Larson & Smalley stated that "at the heart and core of culture is the system of interaction and communication we call language" (1972). In other words language is a vital and most crucial channel for communication. Although communication can take place without language, when it is achieved through other subtle means, language nevertheless plays an important role in imparting new information or mood and so on. Good communication is essential in the modern society and it is hard to imagine that we can communicate effectively without the shared knowledge of language and culture.

Furthermore, "language is not only a means of expression and communication, it is also a symbol of one's cultural and ethnic affiliation" (Lewis, 1981). It is believed that language gives us a sense of identity which no other means can provide us for. For instance, some people may argue that an American Chinese cannot claim

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to be a typical Chinese if he is brought up in the American culture and can hardly speak any Chinese, even though he is 100% Chinese by blood.   He is probably regarded as more American than Chinese, although he may regard himself as wholly Chinese. There is no doubt that cultural knowledge can be acquired from our parents or through education, but to belong to a particular culture, we need more than mere knowledge of it, we need the actual experience and active participation in that culture.   As Herder claimed, "language shapes the national characters and in turn is shaped by it" (cited Claydon, Knight & Rado, 1977).

However, to be able to use the language does not guarantee successful access to the relevant culture.   There is no wonder that a British citizen suffers from culture shock in the United States, although both British people and Americans share basically the same language.   Even a native speaker of a certain language may fail to grasp the very essence of his own culture, as someone may feel alienated in his homeland if he is unable to behave in the way he is supposed to, or if he holds on his own peculiar values rather than following the values of his community.

Culture can be very complex, in the way that "culture hides more than it reveals, and strangely enough what it hides, it hides most effectively from its own participants. . . . The real job is not to understand foreign culture but to understand our own" (Hall, 1959, quoted Claydon, Knight & Rado 1977). It is true that we are brought up with our culture and it becomes part of us while we acquire our languages and behaviours from others.   But culture is more than the unconscious knowledge which we acquire naturally or something we become used to.   Culture has a certain hidden system which some people name 'the silent language'.   The implication here is that we may find it relatively easy to learn a

language, but to reveal what the 'silent language' hides is a more demanding task which will require conscious effort and constant exploration. One not only needs to master one's language, one must also understand one's own culture in order to survive and contribute to one's society.

Language, according to Larson & Smalley, "is one of the linkage systems of culture. When spoken or heard, language is a manifestation of culture in behaviour" (1972). How do we express ourselves under normal circumstances? It is often through language. Language can convey so much more than we can ever imagine. It is through language that we can express our beliefs, our emotions or opinions. It is through language that our cultural system of the society can be explained, understood or introduced to other societies and peoples. Let me give an example: an English person can acquire some knowledge of another culture, say Chinese culture, through many sources, either through the media, or reading literature, or even by meeting some Chinese people or visiting China. Most of these means are connected with language, spoken or written. Can we assume that he will know more about the Chinese culture if he sets out to study Chinese language and in due course is able to use it? Can we claim that the Chinese language is one of the most outstanding characteristics of Chinese culture? Does it reveal some of the ideas and traditions of Chinese people? Could we expect an English person to appreciate the Chinese calligraphy fully if he knows nothing about the Chinese characters? We will look at the relationship between language and culture from different perspectives in the following section.

2. 5. Developing Cultural Awareness and Understanding

Previous sections have discussed the kinds of problems an alien might face living in a new culture, either for a short time or long term. Culture shock is seen as common and unavoidable in many cases. No matter how the problem is addressed, whether it is caused by psychological reactions to the new environment, loss of familiar symbols, or it is regarded as arising from lack of support from the new social setting and changes of values; whether it is negative, as being condemned by many, or it has some positive orientation (Furnham & Bochner, 1986), the fundamental shock is always there and affects almost all sojourners. Is there anything which can be done to reduce such shock, or at least to help sojourners to cope with it better and more effectively?

Doubtless to say, there are ways of improving our abilities to deal with problems in the new culture. The key is to develop our linguistic and communicative competence, as well as to develop our social skills and cultural awareness. Furnham & Bochner have suggested a model of social learning approach for intervention and remedial action against cultural stress. Many other researchers have also written about means of coping with culture shock or other cultural difficulties. We will look into some of the relevant issues in greater details.

2. 5. 1. Becoming Bilingual

In their book bearing the same name as the title of this section, Larson & Smalley made the statement that an alien's "primary problem in living abroad is cultural alienation, and that the learning the local language is a major factor in adjustment

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to the new surroundings. Language learning is part of what membership in a new community entails, and entering into the life of the new community begins with the development of a surrogate family" (Larson & Smalley, 1972). In other words, learning the target language is the first step an alien needs to take in order to make effective contact with the new culture. "Becoming bilingual marks the beginning of new acquaintances and friendships, new roles, the loss of strangeness" (ibid). Being able to master the target language enables an alien not only to adjust to the new community, even enables them to make contributions to it. There is little doubt that bilingualism helps to solve many problems for aliens living in a foerign country.

Becoming bilingual has been encouraged by specialists in linguistics, education, sociology and anthropology. For many people, bilingualism does not provide the only key of entering the new community, but it nevertheless functions as one of the most effective means through which an alien can achieve 'dealienation'. In other words, being able to use the target language will make an alien somehow feel less foreign and more at home.

The process from feeling a total stranger to making oneself at home in the new land is 'dealienation'. At least, his mastery of the target language will enable him to say the right words in certain circumstances so that he can avoid being misunderstood or failing to get his meaning across.

It is claimed that there are some advantages for people who are competent in more than one languages, provided that other variables such as social-economic class are controlled(e.g. Peal and Lambert, 1962; Carringer, 1974; quoted Taft,

1977). Taft (1977) commented: " It is impressive that a bi-lingual person is able to keep apart the two language systems with a minimum of interference between them, almost as if at any one time the speaker is 'switched on' mentally to a plug which allows only one language to operate". From my personal experience and contact with some highly bilingual Chinese students, I can confirm this point of view. Being bilingual has expanded one's verbal strategies as well as one's imagination. Although my interviews were mostly conducted in Chinese, there was also a rich combination of English ingredients. This was inevitable as English and Chinese are so different that some of the verbal meanings or ideas are not exactly transferable and it appeared only appropriate to engage different language skills at different occasions. As will be shown by many Chinese students in the U.K, the very process of becoming bilingual has been a wonderful learning process and it has brought about a whole new set of experiences and personal development.

How can one become bilingual? First of all, the subjective attitudes of an alien are crucial to his success in language learning. There is little doubt that motivation plays an important role in any kinds of learning and it applies especially to foreign or second language learning (FL/SL). When a learner is highly motivated, learning is enhanced so he is more likely to learn effectively. "His willingness to submit to change, his ability to be sensitive to the way in which domestics behave provide the necessary conditions for becoming bilingual" (ibid). There is evidence that those Chinese students who are highly motivated to learn English try harder to improve their language skills, and that their efforts are eventually rewarded. The same may be true for other foreign language learners.

Secondly, although motivation largely determines the ultimate proficiency of the second or foreign language, it is not a sufficient basis on its own for anyone to become bilingual. An alien will have to work hard and becoming bilingual may take years of painstaking observation and imitation of the native speakers. Successful learners may even experience humiliation or other physical, psychological or financial costs. My investigation has shown that for many Chinese students learning English had been very difficult and demanding when they were in China. There were problems with time, material, tutors and so on and so forth. Even after they arrived in Britain and took a course in a British university, English did not come naturally. They have to work very hard and try various means to improve their English. The discussion in 5.2.5. will support this view.

What is the context when we talk about learning a second or foreign language? Because we refer SL/FL learners specifically to adults who live or study in a new culture, it would be ideal to expect that the learner has had some knowledge or better still, that he has a fairly good command of the target language before he comes to live in the new culture. I believe that learning a foreign language is in the national curriculum of most countries. This is essential, as learning a foreign language can not only enrich one's learning experience, it also widen one's horizons and increase one's knowledge of other cultures. Besides, learning a foreign language prepares the way for any educated adults, who for whatever the reason, may come in touch with another culture sooner or later. Therefore, a good exposure to the target language at home is more than desirable. As to how we can best learn a foreign language, we have had some discussion above and a more thorough proposal will come into being in the later chapters.

Apart from subjective motivation and active participation from the learner and sufficient preparation at home, becoming bilingual needs great support from the new setting once an alien decides to settle down in the new culture. I tend to agree with the statement that "conscious adjustment is not the sole responsibility of the second language speaker; his partner, native language speaker, must also have a conscious appreciation of the extra linguistic signs accompanying speech" (Claydon, Knight & Rado, 1977). It is rather evident that in most cases, the new community or its representative members appear quite tolerant with second language learners. The relative tolerance is either shown through positive encouragement or enthusiastic help from some native speakers, both being greatly desired by second language learners. On the other hand, this tolerance can also lead to negative reactions from the learners who may feel humiliated or being excluded. In the latter case, it is expected that the host culture will offer a helping hand for such aliens. In order to do so, the new culture is required to provide universal support from the general public, not only from those who are in direct contact with aliens. To make this point more specific, an overseas student in a foreign country will not only expect help from his supervisor or landlord, he needs necessary and practical support from the community itself. A welcoming, friendly, hospitable environment and people will help to ease his homesickness or to accelerate the process of 'dealienation' if he wishes.

2. 5. 2. Becoming Bicultural

As we examine the role a language plays within a particular culture, we realise that becoming bilingual in a narrow sense (i.e. useful, functional command of two

languages, Fishman, 1966) does not equip us fully to cope with all problems in the new culture. Culture includes far more aspects than language alone. Culture, in Kluckhohn's words, "consists in patterned ways of thinking, feeling and reacting, acquired and transmitted mainly by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (historically derived or selected) ideas and especially their attached values" (cited Hofstede, 1984).

Learning a language will be far easier than learning the whole lot of which a culture is made up. For some people, it may take sometime, either a few years, or a lifetime to become proficient in another language, but it may take some of us more than a lifetime to accept, let alone become used to, some aspects of another culture. Can we expect a typical Chinese person, even after living in a western country for years, to spend his evenings in a pub night by night? He will condemn this kind of life for various reasons: crazy, silly, luxurious and a waste of time. What does this tell us? The answer is as simple as this: it reveals the difference in our values. This also reflects more than value for money. Pubs may be essential in the western culture, where lovers date, friends meet or drunkards seek temporary consolation. To a Chinese, life goes on with or without pubs. However, it is too biased to believe that all Chinese are gamblers, which has been the western stereotype of the Chinese people.

Another example may shed light on the problem from an different angle: After teaching English for a few years in China, I have found myself fairly competent with the language. Even when I first arrived in the U.K., my first visit abroad, I had some difficult in communicating with local people but it did not put me off from

further communication. Generally speaking, I have felt quite at home here in Britain and my experience in such a distant as well as very different country has been a pleasant and enjoyable one. But there are times when I do feel alienated to a certain extent. Some times when I watched TV, I found myself failing to laugh at certain jokes, which I either classified as silly or not funny at all, or missed the point altogether, even though I understood the literal meaning.

These were personal experiences which may not tell the whole story, but which may be shared by some Chinese folks. Some Chinese students may have adapted very well and become used to typical British ways of living, such as eating habits and many others, with great help and patient 'training' from their British friends. But still it could take some of us a long time, maybe twenty years, maybe a lifetime, before we can share our hearty laughter with our British hosts at the local comedians.

However, culture is not an unintelligible or incomprehensible barrier which we cannot overcome in our communication. Communication can improve our cultural knowledge through various means. Apart from equipping ourselves with such second language skills, necessary social skills and cultural learning provide us with wider and more successful perspectives.

Furham & Bochner (1986) have put forward a cultural-learning / social-skill training model which provides some guidelines for anyone who is involved in cultural learning or training. Other researchers also contribute a great deal to the theory and practice of cross-cultural studies. But we will focus our attention on Furnham and Bochner's model, which can be summarised as follows:

In the first place, they reviewed some approaches which have been influential and in use for culture training. With the traditional 'pseudo-medical' model, it intends to explain what culture shock is about, and tries to help the sojourners adjust to the new cultural surroundings.

Secondly, Bochner (1972, 1981, 1982) has developed his own cultural-learning model, trying to improve the earlier approaches. This model has suggested that sojourners should engage themselves in a learning process which will allow them to acquire appropriate social skills for communicative purposes. The model emphasises the importance of building up a bridge between sojourners and the host country, and provides some useful insights into cultural learning.

Thirdly, Furnham and Bochner put forward a social-skill training (SST) model which gives us some guidance for cross-culture learning programmes. The SST model presents a list of very useful techniques for cross-culture communication, such as information giving, culture sensitisation, attribution training, learning by doing and general social-skill training based on developing culture awareness and understanding.

With the help of these models, an alien can make the most of their stay in a foreign country. It is very frustrating for anyone to be dangling between the two cultures. The only way out will be to develop an awareness of one's own culture as well as the target culture, as well as making an effort to adapt to the new culture. To achieve this, an alien will need constant and conscious effort for successful language and culture learning and the acquisition of necessary social skills.

Becoming bilingual and bicutural will certainly lead to enrichment of resources for coping with various situations and problems. It will also enhance communicatiion, especially with linguistically and culturally diversed peoples. As Taft put forward: " Like the bi-lingual, a true bi-cultural has the skills to perform competently the roles required by each cultural context and he is able to avoid gaffes that could result from inappropriate switching between cultures" (Taft, 1977). Therefore becoming bicultural is seen as very useful and worthwhile.

2. 6.   Cultural Studies in Foreign Language Teaching

In Byram's book 'Cultural Studies In Foreign Language Education' (1989), he quoted the following statements from H.M.I. (1985): 'foreign language study expands the linguistic area of experience by affording interesting linguistic comparisons. It also offers insight into another culture and as such is concerned with the human and social area of experience'. As we have mentioned earlier, FLT (Foreign Language Teaching) has come into the educational curriculum in many countries. But how far has cultural studies entered the curriculum? Until recently, cultural studies has in many cases been greatly ignored. It may not be far from the truth to say that the importance of learning culture in foreign language acquisition has not yet been recognised by many people, and little consideration has been given as to how we might introduce cultural aspects into the framework of language teaching.

Is it possible or desirable to teach a foreign language while at the same time teaching the culture of the native speakers of that language? Many people agree that it is not only possible but most desirable to teach a foreign language

together with its related culture. A few factors will be listed in support of this idea when we take a closer look at the inter-relationship between foreign language teaching and cultural studies within its context.

Firstly, because language is regarded as part of culture, they are so inter-related and inseparable that it is impossible to teach a foreign language without a touch of that culture. For example, in one of the first lessons in English the teacher will introduce ways of greeting like 'Hello' or 'How are you?'. For a Chinese learner of English, these are not merely linguistic forms, but also indicate the difference between English speakers and Chinese users when they greet one another or start a conversation. For Chinese people, the most common greeting would be: "Have you had your meal yet?', usually before or after meal time. When a British visitor in China confronts such a greeting for the first few times, he/she would probably take it as a meal invitation, which actually happened to one of the English teachers who was employed by the British Council to teach in a Chinese university, and she was very much surprised when it turned out not to be the case. If she had learnt some Chinese or known a bit about the culture, she might have been able to avoid such misunderstanding or embarrassment. The so-called 'Culture Shock' is so often caused by ignorance of other cultures.

Secondly, although culture and language are so closely related, far from enough attention has been paid to cultural studies in the teaching of foreign languages. Actually, the very idea of learning a foreign culture is strongly rejected in many countries. Take China as an example, not mentioning the period when China shut off the rest of the world, even with the experiment of open policy, many people still stick to the assumption that foreign influence is undesirable and 'Westernisation'

has been often categorised as 'bourgeois spiritual pollution'. Therefore, learning western cultures is being discouraged, although EFL is very popular and plays an important role in education as well as economic and technological development of the country. With Islamic countries, the situation may be worse.

However, it is not intended to claim that western cultures are more desirable and that one should learn other cultures in order to deny or reject one's own. The point is that it is desirable to learn the relevant cultural aspects when one is learning the language. This would not only widen one's horizons and add to the knowledge of the world, it also offers deeper insights into one's own culture. Understanding other cultures is surely not a bad thing. For both society and individuals, cultural studies embed more positive features than negative ones.

2. 7. Chapter Summary

In this chapter, we have tried to examine language and culture in the light of their close relationship and great importance. We have reviewed some of the research done in this huge area, intending to draw some useful conclusions which will give us some insight and understanding for our findings. Culture shock has been discussed and by looking at some of the theoretical background, we will be able to apply these theories into our practical investigation. We have also looked into some implications existing within language and culture, through which we hope that a world view can be built up and a deeper and better international understanding can be achieved for the future.

Some discussions have been devoted to the development of cultural awareness for individuals. Becoming bilingual and becoming bicultural have been seen as useful ways for this development. It has been suggested that cultural studies should be included in the foreign language teaching and learning. It is believed to be desirable to introduce the relevant culture within the foreign language teaching context. The importance of cultural awareness and understanding is far-reaching and will enhance communication.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3. 1. Theoretical Implications

Evaluation has become more and more important and many people attempt to evaluate education in terms of curriculum, syllabus or course design. The evaluations usually intend to measure the effectiveness of a particular course or programme. As Tyler (1949) defined, evaluation is "essentially the process of determining to what extent the educational objectives are actually being realised by a programme of curriculum and instruction." Besides, evaluation is also expected to influence decision-making and its feedback is usually used to make necessary modifications or to plan a more appropriate course. In an extreme case, it can even lead to the termination of an undesirable project. Accountability is also one of the important reasons for evaluation since programme sponsors will no doubt want to know if their money is well spent.

In most cases, evaluation has been "scientific" and "objective" quantitative research. More recently, there has been some criticism of this traditional way of evaluation which lays emphasis on evaluating the achievements of objectives through experimental research and stresses on the results which are quantitative. Nowadays, some social developments are winning great attention and their evaluation can by no means be totally based on quantitative methods. As we know, social programmes are mainly concerned with processes which are identified

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as qualitative. It is essential to examine these processes and the conventional techniques used if quantitative evaluations prove to be inappropriate for a better understanding of these developments (Peter Oakley 1982).

Parlett and Hamilton (quoted Oakley 1982) have suggested an approach which emphasises description and interpretation, in contrast with the traditional emphasis on measure and prediction. This is sometimes called "illuminative" or descriptive method. It is basically descriptive, trying to interpret "what is" and usually focuses on long-term evaluation but there are enough materials and sufficient evidences to justify an on-going evaluation.

It is found as appropriate to quote Best (1970) to explain the evaluation that this research has involved with. Evaluation looks into the "conditions or relationships that exist; practices that prevail; beliefs, points of view, or attitudes that are held; processes that are going on; effects that are being felt; or trends that are developing. At times, descriptive research is concerned with how what is or what exists is related to some preceding event that has influenced or affected the present condition or event". It was the cultural conditions and Chinese students' attitudes towards the UK and British people which I intended to look into. There would also be explorations of their ideas, feelings, interests and level of adaptability in a new environment. By collecting and analysing the information, I would be able to describe them and give my own interpretations.

The methodology adopted for my evaluation was mostly formative because Chinese students would continue to come into the U.K. and the outcome of my research may influence the future decision-making. Michael Scriven (1967, quoted

Popham, 1975) first distinguished formative from summative evaluation. Formative evaluation intends to 'improve a still-under-development instructional sequence' while summative evaluation assesses already-completed ones (Popham, 1975). The difference between the two types of evaluation also exists in their use of evaluative procedures and data-collecting or analysis. Scriven's distinction of formative and summative evaluation is very influential and has been widely used in educational research.

Stufflebeam (1974, quoted Popham 1975) has done a lot of work on evaluation and is well-known for his CIPP (Context, Input, Process and Product evaluation), in which he tries to relate to Scriven's formative and summative evaluation. He distinguishes the two in such ways as the former representing evaluation for decision-making and the latter accountability. According to his theory, it is proactive when evaluation plays a formative role because it helps the policy-maker to make decisions. On the other hand, when summative evaluation comes into use, it is retroactive and it serves the purpose of accountability which attempts to justify a particular activity.

This evaluation was about what actually happened to the Chinese students while they were attending different courses throughout Great Britain. Part of my evaluation was summative as it involved the problems they already had when they came to Britain. By making use of questionnaires and interviews or other techniques, I have been able to find out how far the expected learning had been affected because of the practical constraints they encounter daily. Some researchers use the term of 'participatory evaluation' to describe this kind of research because the subjects are actively involved in the evaluative process. As

Feuerstein (1982) has put it, participatory evaluation is 'by, with and for the people'. In this case, my evaluation was indeed carried out by the Chinese students, and there could have no evaluation without them. Most of all, the aim of the research was set for their benefit. I have tried at all times to make my aims clear to all my subjects in the first place, in order to win their trust and good co-operation. They have been required to fill in the questionnaires and give their own opinions. I have tried to word the questions without too much bias and to avoid being misleading. I aimed to make sure that all the data and analysis was based on the findings. In a sense, this has been a self-evaluation, which is an important part of most educational studies.

3. 2. Practical Steps - Questionnaires And Interviews

The questionnaire was designed in English in the first place and the first draft was pre-tested with two Chinese students. Although their English proficiency was quite good and they were very co-operative, they could not answer all the questions, especially when they had to think in Chinese and then translate their ideas into English. This was very time-consuming and sometimes could be very annoying. After discussion with Professor Bown, I put my questionnaire into Chinese. This proved to be a very tough job, not only because I had to word more or less differently in Chinese, but mainly because of the difficulty in getting it reproduced in Chinese. Though a lot of trouble and effort, I finally managed to print it out by using a Chinese word-processor. (It is worth pointing out, that being the first piece of work done by the Chinese word-processor in the universities in Glasgow, this was a pioneering job. It was also very successful.)

This evaluation has gone through several stages. First of all, I described the background of the Chinese students before they came to Britain. It was subjective in the way that most of the descriptions were drawn from my own experience as a student as well as a teacher. I had made some hypotheses which I intended to prove or disprove by the end of this research. The first hypothesis was that the existing problems in the Chinese educational systems inhibited students coming to Britain in certain ways. For example, by observing the major constraints in EFL in China, one can easily anticipate what sorts of linguistic problems the Chinese students were likely to meet in the target country. The second hypothesis was that the cultural difference between East and West also added to the difficulties experienced by the Chinese students to cope with life and study in the UK.

The second stage involved looking at some of the specific problems after they arrived in the U.K. Questionnaires, informal and formal interviews provided information about what actually put them off being able to adjust themselves in the new environment. Some problems have turned out to be just what I had expected, and there were some which I had not anticipated or neglected.

At the next stage, the students were required to report back their experience during a period of time since some of them have been here only for a few months while others may have stayed for three or more years. Their backgrounds varied a great deal and there were individual differences. Nevertheless, there were some common problems. Certain generalisations have been made, together with individual case studies. It was expected that after a while, students usually got over some difficulties and became more adaptable. But some are still here and there might be new problems arising as well.

Finally, through exploring all the possible factors affecting the Chinese students in one way or another, some recommendations were to be put forward which may be of use for future improvements. All the proposals were to be justified with convincing evidence and sincere expectations.

After the pretest and the reproduction of the questionnaire in Chinese, a pilot study was undertaken with a small group of Chinese students in the Glasgow area. From this, it was hoped to gain some evidence in support of my hypotheses and to indicate certain problems with the questionnaire itself. As a result, modifications were made, either rewording or cancelling some questions. Some missing aspects were added.

It was thought appropriate to put the pilot study as a chapter prior to the main survey. This was not only because of the time gap between the two; at the time of the pilot study there was little prospect for the main survey due to financial, visa and other difficulties. As a matter of fact, the main survey was designed to confirm the earlier assumptions in a more scientific fashion within a wider context. . The pilot study proved to be a useful first step, which led to more significant explorations in the main survey.

It is also to be noted that there were differences between the pilot study and the main survey chapters. The pilot study was able to identify the key areas for further research while the main survey reported more comprehensive and generalizable findings. Only the bigger and more representitive sample in the main survey could have allowed the researcher to make sensible conclusions.

3.3. Difficulties and Outcomes

Evaluation could never be simple or easy. I was fully aware of the complexity of this particular group of people. Because it had more to do with the non-material process, it was extremely difficult to understand and evaluate the context in which the Chinese students were trying to cope with their experiences. Problems also arose when not much literature was available because little has been done about this sort of evaluation.

All sorts of problems came in the process of this research. Collecting data has proved to be much more difficult and time-consuming than I had expected. As early as June, 1990, I began to send out revised questionnaires to students in some British Institutions. Due to the lack of financial support for this research at that time, I was only able to post a few packets of questionnaires to a list of people, whose names were given by my friends. Through them I was able to distribute 200 questionnaires to a half dozen universities. My hope was to get back 150 completed questionnaires. After a few months' painstaking waiting and chasing for response, only 38 questionnaires came back.

Needless to say, the delay and the lack of response caused a great deal of difficulties for the normal progress of the research. With some consultation and thought, the following conclusions were drawn: firstly, the method of questionnaire distribution was not strictly scientific, i.e. no returning envelope with stamps were attached to each questionnaire; secondly, some of the questions were so sensitive that some cautious Chinese students had found it difficult to answer.

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After these problems were identified, certain remedies were put into action. By then I was able to obtain the names and addresses of the CASS (Chinese Association for Students and Scholars) in the British institutions, among which I had chosen 18 prominent universities. It was intended that these universities would have a fair representation, so they were chosen according to the geographical spread, different environments, and the known number of Chinese students. In other words, the universities represented different parts of the U.K. - England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Some universities were located in big cities like London or Manchester, others were in suburbs or small towns like University of East Anglia. While most universities like Oxford or Cambridge had as many as 300 Chinese students in each, a couple of universities including Warwick and Aberdeen consisted of a smaller number of Chinese students, around 40 - 60.

250 more questionnaires were sent out with stamped and self-addressed envelope. This time, beside the short address of requesting help and "THANK YOU" in the beginning of the questionnaire, I enclosed a full letter in which I explained in some detail about my background and my research, in order to gain their trust and better co-operation; in which I again assured them of the confidentiality of their information. The original and the revised questionnaires can be found in appendix I and appendix II.

The later effort was better rewarded. Within a month or so, I was able to get 92 out of the 250. The success rate was 36.8% which was a fairly good response. Although the total number was 20 less than my original target, I believe that these 130 can indeed represent the mainland Chinese in this country, as the table in

Appendix III reveals the spread of questionnaires and universities. The response had more or less applied to the criteria of the intended distribution of questionnaires.

Not all the questionnaires had been warmly received and fully filled in. As I mentioned earlier, some of the questions were quite personal and sensitive. Though the majority of the students were co-operative and helpful, there were a few who had found it difficult to confide to me their true identity and feelings. There was one extreme case that one unknown person was actually very annoyed by my investigation and he/she condemned me as being too nosey and refused to give some details. I only wondered why he/she had bothered to send the questionnaire back to me at all, if he/she felt so bad about it.

However, I was not put off by this, though it came as a shock. There were a large number of students who gave me tremendous support and encouragement. They had praised the work as excellent and offered some valuable advice for the progress of the research. A couple of people were so interested in my work that they started writing to me. More people offered to be interviewed and further communication.

It took me some time to put all the information into computer for analysis. Provided with the choice of either giving me their names or remaining anonymous, 80 chose the former. With the available names and primary study of the questionnaires, I was able to decide on a list of people I could use for my interviews.

Table 1 in Appendix III will also show the distribution of interviews. Each questionnaire returned was given a number so that the information from all questionnaires could be used even though some respondents didn't answer all the questions. It also protected anonymity and confidentiality.

Of the 130 returned questionnaires, I chose 21 respondents from 9 universities situated in different parts of the U.K., which also had a reasonable return of questionnaires. It was quite disappointing to notice that a big university like Cambridge had little response, but it was delightful to see that a couple of questionnaires came from the University of Stirling and Peterborough Poly where no questionnaires were sent by the researcher. They must have been passed on by some enthusiastic respondents to their friends.

The interviewees were chosen according to certain criteria. Apart from the geographical situation of their universities and percentage of the returning questionnaires, gender, age group and subject matters were all taken into consideration. There were five female students out of 21 in total. Each age group had representatives and their subjects included Arts, Social Science, Engineering, Science and Medicine.

I wrote to all the people I intended for my interviews before I planned the trips. Problems arose because I did not have all the addresses from my questionnaires. Another problem was that some people had returned to China, or had moved to another university by the time of my interviews. For example, one student had transferred to Oxford when I wrote to his Birmingham address. Fortunately, he got my letter in time and was able to let me know about the change. I had to

look for another person to be interviewed and was able to contact him the night before my planned journey.

There were other changes I had to make during the interview process and I realised that one had to be very flexible and ready to cope with any unexpected events. Before I went to Manchester, I had arranged the meetings with my respondents with the help of a friend. I had hoped that my first interviewee would be able to take me to the next one, but it turned out that she did not know where to find him. All I had of him was his name, his subject and a phone number which didn't work. Eventually I had to interview someone else in UMIST. The third person I intended to interview was from the Manchester University and we could not find his address even in an A-Z map of Manchester. As my schedule was fully planned without leaving time or space for surprises, I decided to look for the other persons whose names and questionnaires were with me in case I was stuck. I couldn't have been more unlucky that day. By the time I found someone's address, he was out. In a desperate attempt to try to find someone from the University of Manchester, I spent most afternoon and the evening knocking at different doors. It seemed to be UMIST everywhere I went. In the end, I made up my mind to interview a person from UMIST who had been helping me look for someone from the University of Manchester.

Another unexpected experience during my interviews was when I visited Edinburgh. As Edinburgh is very close to Glasgow, I had planned to finish the two interviews within a day. It was a Saturday. I interviewed Respondent 3 in time, and by the time I intended to meet my next interviewee, he had gone. I was told that he was working in a restaurant. My choice was either to wait for him until midnight,

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staying in Edinburgh overnight, or to interview someone else. I chose the latter and interviewed Respondent 83 instead.

Nevertheless, the actual interviews went smoothly. It was considered that the appropriate setting for interviews was important, and I let my interviewees make such decisions, so they would not feel constrained in any way. Although the interviews took place in various locations, such as a sitting room in the rented flat; university halls of residence, student offices, or laboratory common room, it was to our mutual satisfaction that the setting was pleasant and familiar to the interviewees.

Though the questions were listed in an organized way, including a wide range of issues, I allowed my respondants to talk freely. Only on the extreme and rare occasions when the respondant went too far, I tried to bring in the theme now and again. On the whole, the interviews were inspiring, and reflected the key issues of this research.

The researcher would like to point out that although this research intended to build up a comprehensive picture of the Chinese students' everyday life, it was not likely to include every detail and aspects of their daily living. For instance, it would be very interesting and worthwhile to raise the issue of sex (not gender) when we discuss " Age and Sex" in section 5.3.6. However this was considered to be outside the scope of this research for the following reasons: in the past few decades in the Chinese history, sex has been taboo and it is not a topic which people would discuss openly; most Chinese males were married before they left China and their wives were either with them or would join them in due course;

Chinese female students composed a relatively smaller number and their marital status had been considered an advantage, (i.e. Chinese officials believed that married men, especially women were more likely to return to China after their courses in Britain). Therefore, any discussion about personal relationships would be anecdotal with little statistic significance.

3. 4. Chapter Summary

Despite the fact that all sorts of problems arose in the process of this research, the effort has been worthwhile. By persisting with the survey, an investigation of a group of Chinese students has been made for which a fair degree of objectivity and validity can be claimed. A fairly reasonable percentage of samples had been drawn throughout the country and all the information derived has been put into computers and analysed with great care. The quantitative investigation was followed by certain qualitative procedures, through interviews, and some reference to personal experience. By using both quantitative and qualitative methods a triangulation could also be achieved.

The research had adopted both formative and summative methods, as this kind of evaluation required both. Based on certain assumptions and theoretical implications, the evaluative process had been through various difficulties as well as rich gains. It has been seen as an useful research and it is hoped that it will eventually bring about progress in various ways regarding to the academic and daily lives of the Chinese students in the U.K.

At each stage of the investigation, a great deal of careful study and insights were

required to bring light to the research. Theoretical research had proved very helpful to the later practical work involved during the process. Meanwhile, the actual findings through the investigation had either supported the earlier assumptions or provided evidences as well as challenges towards some theories. Although there had been some unexpected difficulties and barriers, the pilot study as well as the main investigation has proved to be very rewarding and satisfactory. Certain generalisations were made and conclusions were drawn. On the whole, the methodology adopted for this research has been appropriate and successful.

CHAPTER 4.

REPORT ON THE PILOT STUDY

4.1. Introduction

In order to find out what sort of problems the Mainland Chinese students have while they are living and studying in the U.K., I designed a questionnaire which covered a range of aspects such as personal details, financial conditions and their likes or dislikes. It was intended that through the questionnaire, I would get some information which can allow me to draw a picture of how Chinese students cope with their life in this country.

The pilot study has been carried out in the Glasgow area including students from the University of Glasgow and Strathclyde University. It was carried out between December 1989 to February, 1990. I distributed 45 questionnaires and received back 30 of them. I had a more ready response from the students of the University of Glasgow because they are within easier reach.

Among the 30 subjects who responded to my questionnaire, there were 6 female and 24 male students. This meant 5 male to 1 female, which was just the percentage I expected, since it reflected the position among the Chinese students in the U.K. as a whole. The percentage of female students was, however higher in the University of Glasgow as we can see from the table overpage:

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Name of univ	male	female	total	num.of Q distrubution	no. of Q replies
Glasgow	43	18	61	25	19
Strathclyde	77	17	94	20	11

Table 2: students distribution by gender (Q = questionnaires)

In these two universities, the Mainland Chinese students study various subject and their academic status also varies somehow. All of them were graduates from Chinese universities and about half had already had postgraduate qualifications, either Masters or PhD. They came from all parts of China; most of the subjects had had some years of working experience in universities or other areas back home, and only a few came to Britain immediately after graduation. Because of this difference in background and experience, their ages varied as well. The following three tables will give an idea of age difference, subject variation and present academic status. We can see that most of them do science or engineering and only a small number of students major in social science or arts subjects.

Age range				
	<25	26-30	31-40	>40
Male	4	14	5	1
Female	1	3	1	1
Total	5	17	6	2

Table 3

Subject specification			
	Arts	Social Science	Science & Engineering
M	1	2	21
F	1	1	4
T	2	3	25

Table 4

Academic Status			
Candidates for			Visiting Scholars
	PhD	MA	
Male	16	3	5
Female	4	2	0
Total	20	5	5

Table 5

Academic Status of 30 Students in Pilot Study

Out of the total number of 30, one third of the students had ORS awards and university grants; 6 were supported by the British Council and the rest were sponsored either by the Chinese Educational Committee or both, which meant the British Council paid the fee and the Chinese government provided the living expenses.

No information was asked as regards marital status (this was to be included in the revised questionnaire). Quite a few students had their wives or husbands with them, either studying or working. Very few had their children here; and for different reasons they had to leave their youngsters in China.

Generally speaking, students were not very happy about their accommodation because most of them (23 out of 30) lived in private flats or council houses which were usually cheaper and not in very good condition. I visited many of the places in Glasgow where Chinese students live and some of the houses were so out of repair that I wouldn't have expected to find such conditions in Britain. Let me give an example. For nearly 200 Chinese students and scholars in Glasgow, there was a Chinese Association (short form as CSSA), which was situated in a shabby area

not far from the University of Glasgow. Usually there were four regular residents sharing the two small bedrooms. There was a TV set and video in the sitting room where some Chinese would go and watch programmes on Friday evenings. The sitting room also served as temporary accommodation for newly arrivals who were looking for appropriate places to live. I was told that at one time there were about 12 people living there, sharing the small kitchen and available facilities. Quite a number of students lived in such places, where there was little heating, no proper shower or bath, poor furniture and little security facilities. The CSSA had been attacked twice during a short period of time in early 1990, and the only valuable items like video and hi-fi were stolen. Since then, some of the regular visitors there had to spend their weekends on their own.

Accomodation								A: university residence
	A	B	C	D	E	F	
Male	4	9	0	5	6	24	
Female	3	0	1	0	2	6	

A: university residence
B: sharing private flats with other Chinese
C: sharing private flats with overseas
D: council houses
E: living with husband/wife
F: total number

Table 6

Type of Accommodation in Pilot Study

As table 6 shows, only 7 students lived in university flats. Including them, only 8 students shared flats with British or other overseas students. It is natural for the couples to live together, but we can see that the majority of those single students lived with fellow Chinese and tended to form a small Chinese community.

Apart from 5 students who began to learn English at universities, the others started at school. This indicates that all the students have had at least 10 years' learning experience in English, one student claimed that he had studied English for

23 years.   Apart from this, there was usually some preparation in China before they came to Britain.   20 of my subjects attended Intensive Training Courses, ranging from four months to one year and half.   15 took ELTS and the others TIEFL or EPT (English Proficiency Test) before coming out.   On that basis, it might be expected that they would be quite competent in using the language, but this is not the case for most students.

We have listed the problems the Chinese students have to face in their daily life and academic studies.   How have all these problems arisen?   In what ways have the language difficulties hindered their studies, and to what degree?   Where have all the financial burdens come from and how have they affected the students' daily living?   We will look into each of these issues in detail in this section; meanwhile, we will discuss some of my hypotheses and provide some evidence to confirm that they are worthwhile and valid.

4.2.   Language   Background

According to the investigation, all Chinese students here in Glasgow had had at least 10 years' learning experience in English, though generally longer than this. Most students started learning English from middle school.   That is to say, they usually started at the age of 13 or over.   There will be some discussion about how age affects language acquisition in 5.3.6.   Personally, I agree with the view that the younger one starts learning a language, the better chance one has to master the language.   So 13 is not a very good age to start, let alone the fact that many started later than that.   However, this is not the only reason, or not even the important one for the poor command of English among the Chinese students.   The

main accusation will lie upon the educational system with its related policies; teaching methodology; teachers' qualifications; historical inhibitions and students' personalities and motivation. Other constraints will be taken into account as well.

Over 90% students had problems one way or another as soon as they arrived in the new country. 25 students complained that they had difficulty in understanding local people, the main reason being accent. The rest blamed the local people who tended to speak either too fast or use some unknown vocabulary. As a result, about one third of the students can only understand part of the lectures, their self-reported comprehension ranging from 20% to 80%. Some of them can understand the lecture but cannot take any notes because they are not used to the way they are taught and have not had enough training in how to take notes before. One extreme case is that of one student, Respondent 40, who reported that she could hardly follow any of the lectures when she first arrived. I had an interview with her and asked her why this was the case. She gave several reasons: one is that she did not know that she would actually use English while she was studying in the university. She also attended the Intensive training course; but that was two years before she came to Britain. Secondly, she studied Chemical Engineering in China, but studied Biological Engineering in a British university; that is, when she went to lectures, although the lecturers spoke standard English, she could not follow because the subject matter was new to her and she did not know the related vocabulary and terminology.

4.2.1. An Overview of ELT In China

It is quite difficult to describe the educational system in China in brief but I will try to explain the situation as far as ELT (English Language Teaching) is concerned. Usually, we start running English courses from middle school (age 13-16) and go on through high school (age 16-18). English is compulsory in most schools, with exceptions in some small towns and rural areas.

In China education is highly centralised. There is a national syllabus set by the Educational Committee for all the schools to follow. The textbooks are also the same all over the country with no variations. This is to aim at a certain standard which pupils are expected to achieve by the time they graduate from schools. This may be good for trying to provide equal opportunities for pupils and to set a national standard for assessment. By the time pupils graduate from school, there is a nation-wide examination in English (also in other main school subjects), which is also the entrance exam for universities or colleges. In one word, the Chinese educational system is heavily exam-oriented.

This highly centralised system inevitably brings about many problems. Firstly, for a huge country like China, given the scale and diversity in state education, it is extremely difficult, as well as unrealistic, for all the schools to keep the same standards. It may sound theoretically ideal, but is not being practised. Schools in Beijing or Shanghai are definitely better off in many ways: they have better facilities, better teachers and better learning environment, all of which are very important, especially for learning a foreign language. There are what we call keypoint schools in big cities which are better equipped in every way. Contrarily,

schools in remote places will have such problems as shortage of teaching staff, unavailability of teaching materials and poor learning conditions. The sad truth is that some textbooks often arrive months after the term starts and teachers have to teach without proper materials, let alone lesson plan or any sort of organisation.

Relatively speaking, higher education is more flexible in some ways and has seen greater changes in recent years. It is true of this level too that there is a general syllabus and all the institutions, especially the key universities, make great efforts to follow it through. Nevertheless, each university or college can usually make its own choice of textbooks within the available resources and a certain degree of freedom is guaranteed to produce one's own materials.

4. 2. 2. Teaching Methods and Their Characteristics

Methodology for ELT in schools is generally a traditional one: the Grammar - Translation Method, which has dominated ELT for many years and is still very popular in some parts of the world, including China. With this Method, there is a great emphasis on learning the rules of grammar and accuracy is highly prized. The teaching itself is teacher-centred with no or little learner participation. A typical textbook usually consists of a number of units, each of which is made up of a list of vocabulary with their Chinese equivalents. The corresponding texts are often simplified and the exercises are especially designed to reinforce the knowledge of the forms.

The teaching procedure can be explained as follows: the learners read the new words after the teacher, then they are presented with some structures. For example, the teacher may give the model and examples of how to use the 'past tense' with certain rules; the learners are required to bear these rules in mind and practise them in pattern drills; they then read aloud the text which is made up of sentences with past tense; in the end, they are often made to translate from the mother tongue to the target language or vice versa. All the while, the teacher is in control. We call the English lesson 'Intensive Reading' as its focus is on grammatical usage and reading aloud. Little listening, speaking or writing is involved.

Under modern linguistic theories, the traditional teaching method is being challenged, especially in higher education. There is a slow but gradual shift from the traditional to the more recent communicative approach in many Chinese universities. The younger generation of EFL teachers have realised the disadvantages and inefficiencies of the old methodology and it is becoming more and more obvious that the purpose of EFL is communication. It has been proved that active learner participation will enhance learning and all the four skills - listening, speaking, reading and writing must be involved in successful and effective learning.

4. 2. 3.   Teaching Staff and Their Qualifications

When I interviewed some of my respondents about the general inadequacy of English command, they suggested that teachers' qualifications counted a great

deal in their learning. A lot of complaints go directly to the poor qualities of language teachers. There are several reasons for this. Besides the historical factors which I shall put forward later, some faults are with the Chinese society from which education has not won enough recognition of its importance, so the quality of education is relatively poor at the moment. According to my personal observation and knowledge, not all middle or high school teachers are university or college graduates. I do not have the figures about the qualifications of all school teachers in China, but I managed to obtain a few statistics which may help us to see the whole picture. The following table indicates the teaching qualifications of middle and high school teachers in Jiangsu Province and Nanjing is the capital city which inevitably has a better access to more qualified teachers than the average.

type of school year	1991	1992
A	66.37%	68.6%
B	52.81%	54.7%
C		73.68%

Table 7. Teachers' Qualifications in Jiangsu.
A: Jiangsu middle school teachers with college certificate.
B: Jiangsu high school teachers with university degrees.
C: Nanjing high school teachers with university degrees

It is to be noted that Jiangsu Province is one of the top provinces in terms of education and it is estimated that on a national scale approximately 80% of school teachers have obtained some sort of higher education in the best schools,

while about 20% or less middle or high school teachers have had such qualifications in remote areas or worse situations. (Source obtained through official publications and personal contacts as Chinese officials are usually suspicious of any enquires about official statistics.)

A teacher's training college course usually lasts 3 or 4 years, while a university training is often 4 or more years. Considering the poor exposure to English in schools and the teaching method in use in many places, three or four years' learning English, some even less, are barely enough to qualify a good teacher, though not necessarily so. To take respondent 14 as an example, she started learning English at middle school. For a year or two, with irregular lectures and a poorly designed courses, all she learned was to read very simple English sentences like 'What's this? This is a pen.' Then she started again in high school with more or less the same materials. So at university level, she had to start from ABC once again with little knowledge of English. Although she attended a teacher training class and knew that she would become a teacher of English after four years of training, her exposure to the language was very limited, little was taught about methodology and there was no teaching practice until she was thrown into the deep end after graduation. There are many many less lucky would-be-teacher students who have never had any native-speakers as teachers, let alone learning experience in the English-speaking countries. In some cases, graduates have no idea that they are going to teach before the day of their graduation.

In small towns and rural areas, the situation is worse. Teachers of English have either very limited qualifications or no qualifications at all. With very little knowledge of English themselves, how can we expect them to teach the language effectively?

The communicative approach has been introduced in recent years and the younger teachers are trying hard to implement the new approach, but this confronts a lot of objections and obstacles from older teachers. As they have been used to the old way of teaching and are familiar with the same old textbooks, they are not willing to change. With their qualifications and experience, they are not skillful enough and often incompetent to cope with the new approach. In other words, their knowledge of English is limited to the grammatical structures and they can hardly communicate fluently themselves. Besides, the communicative approach also demands more flexibility and less control from teachers. This not only deprives them of their long-sustained authority but also leaves them insecure with the learner-centred situations.

4. 2. 4. Historical Factors Affecting Teaching and Learning

ELT in China was greatly neglected and nearly came to a halt from the 1950's to the 1970's because of constant political movements. Meanwhile, it was experiencing rapid change and development in the other parts of the world.

After 1949, with the establishment of the People' Republic of China, there was a close relationship between China and USSR. Russian was then taught in many schools as the foreign language. But when the relationship came to the end in the late 1950's, Russian was forbidden and all the language teachers had to learn English instead. So many teachers, then at the age of 30 or over, started to learn English half way. The difficulties of learning another language at this stage can be imagined: with little or no knowledge of English; without native speakers to teach

them; without proper materials and learning facilities; and they were expected to teach English throughout the rest of their lives.

During the Cultural Revolution, the situation became worse. Formal examinations were severely criticised and eliminated altogether in the later stage. The so-called open-book exam dominated for a while. Education was greatly discouraged and English, due to its origin from capitalist and imperialist countries, was more disregarded than ever. It was surprising that it had not disappeared from the curriculum completely. This may have been for political reasons, too. What was taught at that time had been propaganda slogans like 'Long live Chairman Mao' or 'I love the Communist Party', which were used daily in Chinese.

Most Chinese students, those over the age of 25, have been more or less affected by these historical factors. As we could have guessed, learning was very irregular and a few years' learning of English may have come to nothing in the end.

4. 2. 5. Motivation and Other Constraints

Motivation is considered to play an important role in effective learning. When a student is not intrinsically or extrinsically motivated, he/she cannot make the best of the learning. There are many factors which can keep students from being motivated. For example, at the time when English was regarded as useless, it was not possible to motivate students to learn or teachers to teach effectively. Teaching materials are also valuable sources to motivate learning, but when they are dull or boring, learning will not be enhanced. With the old teaching method when teachers are in control, students can hardly become motivated for active

learning and passive learning will inevitable result in failure.

Other difficulties also arise in the learning process of English in the Chinese context. Because of the shortage of language teachers, especially in remote areas, we have to have large classes. Class size is usually between 30 to 70, which is really too big for a language class, especially for listening and speaking lessons which involve lots of interaction and activities. As a result, this weakens the motivation and interest of learners as well as that of teachers.

In some schools and institutions, there are difficulties in funding and facilities which are of great help for learning. We need more language labs, tapes, videos and overhead projectors to facilitate learning. In a huge and poor country like China, this will take a long time to achieve.

4. 3. Cultural Barriers

The Chinese culture differs greatly from that of Great Britain, in such ways as social system, educational policies, values, even human behaviour and customs like eating habits and so on. Have all these differences affected the Chinese students in any way? What influence do they have over the students' life and study? These will be discussed in the following categories.

4. 3. 1. Expectations versus Realities

China had been shut off from the rest of the world for nearly three decades, during which people were generally ignorant about what life was like in the West.

Because of the isolation and negative propaganda, developed countries like Britain had a rather distorted picture in Chinese people's minds. The Capitalist system was unavoidably connected with corruption; huge contrast between the rich and the poor; prostitution; drug-taking and so on. During this period, all western literature was banned and even listening to foreign radio programmes was regarded as criminal.

However, things began to change in the late 1970's when China started to open her door to the world and send her scholars abroad. More and more information has become available and there is an increasing influence from the West due to the economic reform and development. A new perception of the developed countries took the place of the old one. The new pictures show the modern skyscrapers, luxurious houses or holidays on beautiful beaches. Going abroad is an irresistible temptation to the younger generation as well as the older ones who missed their chances when they were young. In this case, learning English as a foreign language becomes so fashionable and so many people are extrinsically motivated to master English as a means of a better future - better job or promotion, most of all, better chance to go to the English-speaking countries.

It is a matter of fact that among the foreign influences in the past decade, the most evident impact came from USA, Japan and Hong Kong (Forgive me for using 'foreign' for Hong Kong before 1997 when she will be handed over to China). With the available information and contact with these countries and places, the impressions are basically of high efficiency, perfect working and living conditions and excellent quality of products. To be more specific, people in developed countries work very hard and efficiently, the transport is convenient and reliable,

working conditions are comfortable with air-conditioning and other necessary facilities. Life rhythm, on the whole, is fast and information is rapid. Life seems very exciting and full of vigour for most people.

Furthermore, it is the case in China that the majority of potential candidates for going abroad would instinctively expect to go to USA if he/she had a choice. All sorts of reasons give the States this priority, mainly because of her well-known economic development, democratic freedom, more and better opportunities and economic affluence. There are also many more universities which provide scholarships for foreign students. Consequently many students consider going to Britain as second best or worse, and some of them are not at all happy at being sent to the U.K. in the first place. Those whose stay in Britain has been smooth and successful may have few regrets and make the best of their visit; but those who encounter various problems are bound to be disappointed with the reality, and imagine that they could have done better in countries such as the USA. There are a number of cases in which Chinese students, having either completed a British degree or become dissatisfied with their present research, apply to American universities for jobs, postgraduate scholorships, or transfer of studies. The American Dream is not exclusive to Americans.

Many visiting Chinese students would agree that their ideas about the West, specifically about Britain, are rather misleading if not altogether wrong. For most Chinese students or scholars, their knowledge about the country is mostly from a little textbook of world history and little extra reading. There is some outstanding British literature, mostly classical types, available -- but very limited, so most students picture Great Britain as a country full of Victorian glories, palaces, Gothic

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architectures, huge and spacious mansions for Lords and their Ladies or romantic surroundings as described in Jane Eyre, or Wordsworth poems.

Does the reality fit their expectations? Is there any culture shock? I would not suggest that there is major culture shock for most Chinese students because they are not involuntarily thrown into this country to face all the different situations. On the contrary, they came with the expectation that it would be different and perhaps with some curiosity about the new country, although they did not know exactly what was going to happen to them. Needless to say, Britain is not what one would expect simply because reality is always more or less different from anyone's anticipation. Then it is not surprising that students may have found some of the facts misfit their imaginations. For example, some students initially expected that Britain had an efficient working system. One student from Guangdong wrote that he expected Britain would be 'like Hong Kong, Japan or USA, but this is not the case, at least the appearance is not so'. This explains why the students described the U.K. as 'Falling Empire' and 'Decadent Aristocrats' which implies that Britain has lost her historical and industrial glory. She is declining while other countries like USA and West Germany are developing more quickly.

4. 3. 2.   Comparison and Contrast

To many Chinese students, life here seems to be very easy and relaxed. To take a particular example, people tend to work less, considering that there are only 5 working days instead of 6 as in China. Besides, people start working relatively late, let alone the constant tea-breaks. In China, the usual working hour starts at 8 o'clock and there is no such thing as tea-times. This routine takes students

some time to adapt and gives the impression that British people are quite lazy.

One of my subject complained about the opening hours of shops, a complaint with which most students would agree. With an ordinary Chinese family, both man and wife have to go to work during weekdays. There are almost no housewives in urban areas, except the retired or the unemployed. During the weekends, all the shops are not only open, but for longer hours as well. Some people are busy doing their shopping for the coming week, others just go to the streets or city centres even if they have nothing to buy. If anybody visits China, he/she will surely find more people on the streets on Sundays than any other day. It is a different picture here in the U.K. The newly-arrivals from China often wonder where all the British people are likely to be at weekends since the streets look like being deserted and even the transport is less available.

While there is a general compliment to the convenience of British transport, especially railway and inter-city coaches, some complaints are directed towards the inner city transport, specifically the bus service. There is no sign for each bus stop, only the starting point and the termination. This makes it very difficult to know where to get off if it is somewhere on the way. A newcomer does not even know which bus to get on.

Dogs are disliked by some Chinese students while the British owners treat them as precious pets. One reason for the unfavourable attitudes towards dogs is that they make the streets dirty and the environment unpleasant. There is cultural difference as well because dogs are considered as unclean and dangerous and it is forbidden to rear them in Chinese cities. With the huge population to be fed in

China, who could afford to care for dogs or other animals? People are more concerned about how to feed their families better.

Some of the favourable impressions also need to be interpreted in order to make the discussion more clear and comprehensible to British and other overseas readers. Many Chinese students are mostly impressed by the green grass of the UK, and I share that impression. Whenever I travelled across the country, I marvelled at the vast grasslands, sometimes with a flock of white sheep enjoying their food. This, as many Chinese students would agree, makes some of the most characteristic and picturesque scenery of Great Britain. It is not only the unique natural beauty that fascinates me, there is an underlying implication here. Time and again as I trod lightly through the grass, a somewhat naive thought kept jumping into my mind: "How have the British people managed to get a rich choice of food, without producing crops of their own while keeping a green environment?" My Chinese friends share the same feeling.

When you confront something new and it strikes you, it is because you are comparing it with things familiar to you and making your preference. Compared to Britain, China is much bigger and has many more people. As a developing and agricultural country, China has always been dependent on her own land to feed the outstanding population. Now you can hardly find any space for grass as the fields, some of which are so poor and barren, have been overused for centuries and centuries. The countryside often gives one the impression of backwardness with only seasonal crops and shabby farm houses. In some Chinese cities, small pieces of meadow in parks are so precious that nobody is allowed to tread on them.

There is a sharp contrast between the service here and back in China. Many respondants complained about the service workers, like shop-assistants or receptionists in China. If you go shopping when the shop-assistant happens to have her bad day or otherwise is talking to her fellow assistant, your day will definitely be ruined. Apart from the awful attitude of shop-assistants, poor service also manifests itself in other ways, like the bad quality of the products. Once you buy something, there is almost no way or returning or changing it in most cases. One more point to make this explanation more clear: in most places, there is little self-service like the supermarket here and everything is on the shelf or behind the counter, so the customer needs the shop-assistant to pick up what he/she wants.

There are several reasons for the poor quality of service in China. The fundamental one derives from the socialist system which provides the employed with an 'iron rice bowl' - a job for life. (This situation is changing gradually due to the economic reform, especially in the southern and more developed areas.) That is, once you get a formal job, you are forever engaged until you retire. This is true for all the occupations. You can hardly change it and you cannot give it up even if you want to. Therefore, because the job is guaranteed, it does not matter whether the service is good or not and the shop-assistant will have his/her fixed salary anyway. Besides, due to the shortage of some goods, the salesman/woman is doing the customer a favour by selling something. Maybe you do not have to buy anything from this shop whose service is terrible and try another, then the other shop may not have what you want or treat you the same. Most enterprises are state-run ones (with an increasing number of private

companies in some more open areas), so there is no worry whether the goods can be sold out or not and the service workers are not going to lose a penny or get more whatever. Although some new policies have been practised, such as extra bonus, customers' comments and so on, nothing dramatic has happened and there is no sign of fundamental change as long as the system remains the same. On the contrary, in Britain, especially in Scotland, shop-assistants are very patient and friendly.

4. 3. 3. Social Interaction

As far as their daily life is concerned, some students found the local people very friendly. Only 5 students found it easy to make friends with students from other countries, while about half found it difficult to mix with the overseas students, and only went out with the other Chinese students. Eight of them confessed that they felt like foreigners here. When asked why this was so, 5 believed that it was because of the culture difference, 2 blamed language inefficiencies, 5 students thought that the reason lay in culture as well as language barriers. Some even added that finance counted a great deal. From the information gathered through the investigation, I can confirm that there is generally financial pressure on most students.

It is important to interact with the society one lives in, especially when the society is new and different from one's own. Life would be much easier if one mixed with the local people and understood the local customs. As a member of a particular society, even a temporary one, one should make great efforts to adapt to the new environment, not to expect the existing society to suit one's needs instead.

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Many cases have proved that the Chinese minority in Britain have had great difficulty in mixing with the local culture and native speakers. Instead, they form a Chinese Community and build China Town. A British friend once commented, 'while the other minorities like people from India or Pakistan adapt themselves fairly soon, say, the first generation, it may take Chinese people much longer than this.' A Chinese newspaper once reported that there were some scholars who had been to Britain for two or more years and had never been to any British homes or had any British friends by the time they returned China. Why is this the case?

A). National Characteristics and Personality

A dominant perception about the Chinese is that they tend not to be very outgoing people. From Chinese history, we can see that the Chinese are more defensive than offensive. Our ancestors built the Great Wall in order to guard themselves. In the past three decades or so, we still try hard to resist foreign influence. Because of this tradition, we tend to confine to ourselves by nature. There is also a strong sense of self-reliance and we do not go out to mix with people if we can help it. We have a famous Chinese saying: 'Everybody sweeps the snow in front of their own door and does not bother about the frost on another's roof'. If this is the case among the Chinese, it is worse with the foreigners. Due to historical factors, it has been hard to build trust among the fellow Chinese. With all the difficulties in language and culture, it is even harder for a Chinese to trust a foreigner. For some Chinese, there is a potential feeling against the foreigners which no doubt includes the British.

A traditional Chinese belief is that 'Leaves fall back to the roots of the trees', which means that everybody is going back to where they came from in the end, no matter what experience they might have or wherever they have been to during their lifetime. This feeling of belonging prevents some Chinese from making themselves at home in Britain. As some of my subjects have stated they felt like foreigners here. This is partly due to the long isolation of China from the West and the traditional inheritance, partly due to the fact that they do not make enough effort to make themselves at home. It is argued that there might be an advantage considering that most Chinese students have to go back to China after a period of working or studying. The less they feel at home here, the easier it might be for them to adapt back to the Chinese environment when they return. Evidence has shown that some Chinese find it difficult to readjust themselves after they return home and there is more 'culture shock' going back to the old way of life than coming out to something new. A Chinese proverb goes like this: 'People are going up while the water is going down', which indicates the universal truth that it is often easier to get used to a better life.

However, some people might argue that one should try one's best to adapt to the new society. We are in Britain not only to study whatever our subjects maybe, we are also here to understand her culture and people. As the world is getting smaller and smaller, mutual understanding is too important to be ignored. Living in Britain is not only for the Chinese to get access to British culture, it also provides the chance for the British people to know about China and her people. It is often shocking to notice how ignorant British people are about our culture although they have so often been to Chinese restaurants and seen so many Chinese faces around them.

Personality must be taken into account when we talk about one's adaptability. There are some people who are more outgoing and open-minded than others. Some Chinese students try every way to communicate with the local people and absorb what the new society can offer to them. They visit British homes and make friends with British or other overseas. Some travel around the country to widen their knowledge and perception. On the other hand, quite a number of Chinese students or scholars, particularly the older ones, tend to live a rather routine life. They share flats with other fellow Chinese; they meet their supervisors occasionally; they go shopping from time to time but this does not give them much chance to practice English; some even do not have any lectures to attend as research students. A few Chinese have never been to museum, cinema or church, and most Chinese have never been to a pub or disco, which are an important part of British culture and almost essential to the British lifestyle.

Age, sex and marriage status are also influential to one's personality. From the Glasgow pilot study, it seemed that younger students are more outgoing than older ones; female students have less burdens than male ones; married couples are more confined to family life than others; even those, who are married but for some reasons are on their own in Britain, have a restricted social life. All these factors compose constraints on social interaction.

B). Racism and Other Constraints

There are other practical reasons for the limited social activities among the Chinese. Racism is an important issue which needs attention and is known to all. Racial discrimination here in Britain is not only against the Chinese, it is towards the other minority groups as well. Seemingly, a multi-cultural society like Britain should provide equal chances for people from all nationalities, but this is not the case in many places. For example, as far as competition for employment is concerned, a British citizen will no doubt have priority over a Chinese British. It is extremely hard for a Chinese to get into professions like politics, university lecturing, law or medicine, whereas most local Chinese work in restaurants or supermarkets. As a result, this not only sets a bad image of Chinese people on the whole, it also greatly weakens the confidence which is vital for people living in a culture other than their own. Time and again some Chinese students were faced with such questions as 'Which restaurant are you working in?'. This was sometimes hard to take for some Chinese students.

China has always had very distinguishable class levels and professional degrees. Confucius has been influential through the long history and one of his ideas is that 'all professions are inferior and studying is the best', so there is a great distinction between the manual and mental labour in terms of social status and respectability. In China a university graduate would never expect to do manual labour and being mistaken for a waiter/tress is no doubt a shame and an insult in certain cases. The feeling can be more frustrating and complicated when more and more students do work part-time in restaurants because of financial difficulties.

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Almost all Chinese students and scholars have worked as intellectuals and are highly respected in the Chinese context, at least they had been proud and confident. After arriving in U.K, the self image begins to change. China, as a developing, especially communist country, is not being respected, and Chinese people, if not being obviously despised, are looked down upon or disregarded to a certain extent. A sense of inferiority takes the place of confidence and it inhibits students from mixing with other races.

On the other hand, how does the British host/hostesses regard Chinese or overseas students in general? Not many people would invite Chinese students to their homes unless they know somebody very well or there are special occasions like the New Year when some organisations organise visits for overseas students. It is not common for the British to mix with people from other countries, partly because of racism, partly because of lack of mutual understanding. Besides, if the British people mistake all the Chinese as restaurant workers, it is not possible for them to make friends with us anyway.

There are also constraints from the environment. For the British or people from other countries, it is fairly easy to go out or travel around. For the Chinese students with a limited amount of money to live on and little access to car or other ways of transport, especially when the weather is bad, social interaction becomes a problem. Therefore all sorts of difficulties - weather conditions, transport and location discouraged the students from communicating with the local people and adapting to the new way of life.

4. 3. 4. Food and Eating Habits

Not many Chinese students like British food, so that most students prefer to cook for themselves and seldom eat out. During weekdays, 20 students either go back home to have lunch or bring their own food with them. Only 10 eat at university canteen occasionally. It is not that they really like British food, but because it is relatively quick and more convenient. One or two complained about using fork and knife, since western food in China is not very popular and few had practised using fork and knife before. Most students regard it as luxurious to eat out.

Chinese food is well-known to be very different from the food of other countries. Through the long history with little foreign influence, it has kept many characteristics, some of which are unique. There are various reasons for our dislike of western food.

First of all, lots of Chinese complain that the food here is flavourless despite the wide range of choice. This is borne out by my own observation. For instance, the chicken here is less delicious, whatever the way of cooking. This is because chickens grow more rapidly with modern technology for feeding while in China they are reared in farm houses and grow more naturally.

Secondly, we have many different types of food in China. The main foods we eat in China are rice, meat (mainly pork) and vegetables, whereas in Britain potatoes, bread, cheese and some other dairy stuff are the main items in the diet. The way of cooking also differs.

A little chart may help us to see better how a Chinese student interacts in British society and what are the constraints which inhibit him/her. This chart is drawn for one particular respondant who finds financial pressure as the foremost barrier in his social interaction. Every student may have his/her own chart different from others due to the various aspects listed below. A,B,C,D,E,F, and G indicates the problems that affect students' adaptability and social interaction, while 1,2,3,4, and 5 shows the level of their interaction. In other words, some students may experience more difficulties in language, whilst others may be more inhibited by personalities or cultural differences.

A. language difficulty

B. cultural barrier

C. financial pressure

D. racial discrimination

E. environmental constraints
   (weather, transport, etc.)

F. personality
   (age, sex, marriage status, characteristics)

G. motivation

O. no problem at all

1. very easy to interact

2. easy to interact

3. difficult to interact

4. very difficult to interact

5. impossible to interact
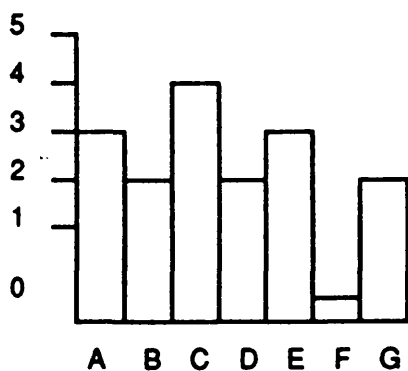
Chart 1: Constraints of Social Interaction

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4.4. Financial Pressures

From the Glasgow evidence and my own observation and experience, almost all Chinese students studying in great Britain carry some sort of financial burdens on their shoulders. Basically the reasons derive from the fact that China is a poor country and the living standard differs a great deal from that of Britain. This difference and other practical constraints give rise to the imbalance for the students trying to enjoy their academic life as well as their social life, both of which are essential parts of their daily living. We will have a closer look at the origins of these pressures in order to have a deeper understanding of Chinese students.

4. 4. 1. The Gap In Living Standards

As a developing country, China has experienced great changes in the past 15 years or so and people's lives are better off in many ways. For example, before 1976, television was hardly known to most Chinese and now most urban families own TV sets, at least black and white ones. Other electrical products, like tape-recorders, refrigerators and washing-machines are also 'invading' the ordinary Chinese families. At one time, there was a slogan in China which was 'high expense'. It was probably put forward for the sake of facilitating economic development. The result turned out to be that everybody tried to equip his/her home with imported electrical products. For the time being, it seemed that some Chinese families have as many facilities as some British homes. After visiting some Chinese homes in Chongqing, a big city in the southwest China, a German friend said: " It won't take long for China to catch up with the developing countries in the

West, at most 20 years". He was surprised to have found that every family he visited had got one big colour TV since he only had one in his home in West Germany.

As a matter of fact, are we really better off when most people are enjoying the benefit of high technical products? To many Chinese people, all these TVs, videos or Hi-fis do not mean that their quality of life has improved dramatically, but only tells part of the story. The general living standard does not improve as much as it seems to. A few simple facts will show us a rough picture about living in China.

First of all, we do not have much choice of food in China. One can actually get more food and wider choice in the Chinese supermarkets in Glasgow than back home in China wherever he/she may come from. In China, we mainly depend on the local produce rather than importing from other places or countries. This no doubt limits the choice of customers. The reasons are obvious: difficulties with transportation and lack of money. The economic reform has seemingly improved the situation as one can buy products from other parts of the country or abroad provided that one can afford them.

Because of the great difference in the amount of money spent for daily living, most Chinese students have found it difficult to adjust when they first arrive. Generally the salary for ordinary Chinese personnel is very low, so relatively the price for food or other goods is cheap compared to that of Britain. If a Chinese student kept comparing the price here with that of China, he/she would not be able to buy anything at all.

A good example can be found in the huge difference in the rent of accommodation. In China, even though conditions might be poor and space limited, the rent consumes a very little amount of one's salary. For university students, living in university dormitories is absolutely free, although it means one has to share a room with a few others. While living in Britain, with the Chinese-sponsored stipends, a student would have to pay about half of the money to the rent in university residences. For instance, the Chinese students in Glasgow received £210 monthly while the postgraduate halls of residence costed £30 per week in the session of 1989-90. This probably explains why some students choose to live in poorer but cheaper areas instead of university flats. It can also be understood why some students tend to live together with fellow Chinese and even share bedrooms because they have been used to sharing accommodation with classmates or colleagues at home.

4. 4. 2. Tradition and Responsibilities

Besides the sharp contrast in the living standards, most Chinese students also bear family burdens. Chinese tradition always expects that one is responsible for one's family, especially the male member of the family who always regards himself as the bread-winner or at least believes that he should contribute most to the family well-being.

Because the Chinese economy is at present in some difficulty, prices of goods keep increasing and inflation is very high. City-dwellers on fixed incomes are being affected the most. Intellectuals, who have always been dependent on their salary, find it more and more difficult to cope with the economic problems. It is hard to

give up one's academic job and transfer to a more profitable profession like business or industry. Therefore the only chance for many intellectuals to become better-off is to go abroad. In the minds of most Chinese people, going abroad is more about making a fortune than about academic improvements.

I have interviewed quite a few Chinese students during the pilot study. When I asked what was the ultimate motivation for coming to Britain, their honest answers were to save some money and to bring back some products and presents for family members and relatives, even colleagues or bosses. One visiting scholar told me, "I came here both for academic reasons and financial reasons. As a father and husband, the only thing I can do here is to buy something for my daughter and wife. Even if they don't ask me for anything, I have my responsibility for my family." The problem is that many people do ask their fellow abroad to bring back such things as television or video, as many people do not know what it is like in a foreign country or they have very misleading ideas about the life abroad. Having seen many people who have visited other countries bring back all those highly technical products, their dreams are that one day they can do the same. So the students or scholars came to Britain with these expectations that they will be able to bring back something for their families or relatives when they return.

If we consider the fact that it will take years and years of saving to buy a good TV and quite often even if you have got enough money to afford one, you cannot buy it anywhere unless you have some connections or what we call 'backdoor', the

situation which most Chinese students are in can be easily understood. This is why many Chinese, especially older ones, are less sociable than younger ones, because they feel more responsible to their families.

The Chinese are also very practical people. They usually spend money on something which they can see. Most Chinese would consider it crazy to spend money in a pub or disco. Because of the value of British pounds, the students try to save as much as they can. It is not only because they want to satisfy the needs of their dependents, it is also because the Chinese have always been thrifty and despise luxurious enjoyment.

4. 5. Conclusions From The Pilot Study

The above discussions allow me to draw some conclusions from the pilot study. According to what I have found with a small group of thirty subjects, I am able to see the worthwhile part of this piece of research as well as some of the problems I did not foresee but which enable me to make some necessary changes or adjustments as I go on to the next stage.

First of all, there is some evidence that female students are better in language competence, so they are probably more adaptable to the new environment than the males. More investigations are needed to test this hypothesis.

Secondly, many interviews and facts seem to suggest that younger students benefit more from their stay in Britain than older ones. Their attitudes, values, perceptions and expectations differ a great deal so it affects their lives in certain

aspects. Their reactions to the same situations indicate their differences in background and experience. It also influences their likes and dislikes. These tentative conclusions also need further testing.

Thirdly, not enough evidence was obtained to show whether there was any difference between students from big cities and those from rural areas. It was assumed that people from small towns or countryside would be poorer in their English proficiency. Considering the inefficient exposure of language, poor quality of teachers, lack of teaching materials and facilities, bad learning environment and so on, this might be true with their language background. But it was not enough to prove that they would have greater inhibitions in adapting in the new country. The fact has been that although some students originally came from more remote areas in China, they had been to universities in big cities and most of them had worked in urban areas for some years before they were sent to Britain. In this case, I have found it meaningless to ask where they come from. I have also found that some of the information in the questionnaire has not been used. For instance, I have asked them what kind of newspapers or journals or novels they read in their spare time, some of them wrote a dozen names while others did not bother to write any. It turned out that I could not draw any sensible conclusions from the diversity and range of their answers for the moment, but I would be able to use the information for the bigger survey. Besides, more information needed to be obtained for relevant aspects such as their social interactions. The questionnaire was to be modified carefully to obtain relevant data.

It was assumed that the Beijing events in June 1989 had had some effects on almost all Chinese students and scholars here in Great Britain. From the pilot

study, not much information had been available for me to make sound comments. I had expected that the further investigation would provide access to such sensitive questions, but meanwhile I was also prepared that partly due to the attitudes of the Chinese government in Beijing, partly due to the cautiousness or background of many students, there would be ambiguous reactions among students when asked such questions.

Much needed to be done to make this research worthwhile. It was hoped that the result of the pilot study could provide useful information and some insights for the main survey, through which a more detailed study was available and could create a more sound basis for valuable proposals.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS OF MAIN FINDINGS (1)

-EDUCATION, COMMUNICATION AND INTERACTION

5. 1.   Introduction

So far, we have looked at some of the problems the Chinese students come across in the United Kingdom. We have also described the methodology and approach used to carry out this research, through which there have been quite a number of practical difficulties. Certain outlines, such as the historical and other factors related to the Chinese education, some cultural barriers in the host country and a great deal of financial pressure on the Chinese students overseas, have been drawn in order to give us some insights, as to what kind of issues will attract our attention in the main investigation.

Building on the pilot study, in this chapter and the following one, the following topics will be exployed in more detail: the educational background of the students; their interaction with the people from other cultures; their academic and social life; and to a certain extent, their joys, sadness, emotions and expectations.

Because the main findings are based on the revised questionnaires, though with a larger sample and in-depth interviews,(i.e. 135 returned questionnaires and 21 interviews) it is inevitable that some of the problems will be readdressed. It is hoped that readers will not find this intolerable, but rather, will take a new look, or from a different angle, at these highlighted aspects. It is expected that some

important issues will be explored in a wider context and with great emphasis, so that they can be well recognised and dealt with effectively in due course.

The findings derived from 48 specefic questions have been analysed under four main headings: educational problems; communication/interaction with British and other cultures; accommodation, leisure and social activities and added some general comments.

5. 2.   Educational Problems

Chinese students and scholars came to Britain for further education and research. Confirming the results of the pilot study, most have already had more than ten years of education in China, which included both secondary and higher education. It is obviously a challenge to come to a western country whose educational system is very different from that of China.   Since education is the purpose of being here for most mainland Chinese nationals, it is of vital importance to look at the differences between the two systems and some problems and conflicts which have been brought about by the differences.   We will examine some aspects of Chinese education and try to look for the implications behind.   We will also evaluate the British higher education to a certain extent and find out how much the Chinese students and scholars have or could have benefited from studying or doing research in these institutions.

5. 2. 1.   Training Courses in China

Usually, if a student is sent by the Chinese government, he or she would be able to attend a training course of English before leaving China.   Of the 130 people surveyed, about two thirds have attended such courses.   36% students who had no training whatsoever.   Among the 21 people with whom in my survey I had my interviews, 10 had had no training courses for various reasons.   Firstly, as a rule, those whose major is English do not need to go for training courses.   It is assumed that their English is good enough to come abroad.   Secondly, those who come to visit their spouses would not have any course available for them.   Two of my interviewees fell in this category.   Thirdly, those who come to work don't have any courses.   Fourthly, if somebody took part in exams, such as EPT or PhD entrance exam, if his/her exam scores had reached a certain point, he/she then would not be required for a training course.   These are the main reasons for not having any training courses in China.

Anyway, let us take a closer look at those who did have such courses.   They have given some interesting comments about these courses and we may be able to draw a picture of what kind of courses they are and how successful they have been so far.

The implementation of training courses of English was fairly recent as we trace back for its origin.   In the late seventies, China started the open policy and to send students overseas.   Inevitably, these people would need enough foreign language to enable them to go to study in these foreign countries.   As a result, some language training centres were set up, initially in the Foreign Language Institutions in Beijing, Shanghai and Canton.   During the past decade, as the needs increased,

more training centres were established in other big cities. Apart from the ones in Beijing, Shanghai and Canton, the British Council organised another one in Chengdu in 1986, providing teaching staff, materials as well as administration. There have been dozens of local ones in some key universities elsewhere.

These training courses, short or long, run throughout the year. Those who wished to go abroad and had permission from their authorities could normally get a place in one of the above training centres. Their fees would mostly be paid for by the government or local universities they were working for, and they would usually receive their normal salary during the training scheme.

Out of the 11 who had been to training courses in China, two students felt satisfied with their training. One had 6 months in Shanghai and he had found the course very helpful for listening and writing. He had native speakers as teachers and he thought it "laid a good foundation" for him. Another one had four months in Guangzhou with which he was quite pleased. He put it this way: "It was very helpful for the exam because my exam result improved a lot after the course.There are some practical help as well, because it gave me some time to sit down and study the language with no work or research. There were more vocabulary built up and more practice available."

One of the senior visiting scholars would certainly agree with this point, that it did give someone time to study English. He had two months training with no teaching nor other responsibilities. He even stayed outside home so as to avoid disturbance. So far, most of the people whom China has been sending abroad, work in universities, either as teaching assistants, or lecturers, or associate

professors. Their routine job would take too much of their time to concentrate on language learning and prepare for the coming exam.

On the whole, however, the reaction to the training courses have not been positive. Most students had found them unsatisfactory. Their criticism mainly lay against the idea that had been behind the training courses in China. Since most candidates would need to pass a certain exam to go abroad, these courses have been designed especially to help students to cope with the exams. There are centres whose courses are simply exam-oriented, either for TOEFL or EPT. This was borne out by some research which I did three years ago evaluating these courses. I sent questionnaires to some training centres, one of which actually put down that the aim of their course had been preparation for exams.

Therefore, these courses aim at helping students to pass the exams, and they are quite successful in doing so in most cases. Usually a candidate would take part in an exam before joining the course. As a matter of fact, he/she has to reach a certain level to be accepted for this training, or to be exempted from training if he has had a very good score. By the end of the course, he/she would have another exam. If he/she passes, it is just a matter of allocating him to a university abroad and preparing for the journey overseas.

Because of the nature of these courses, there has been very little practical help for trainees. In some cases, the teachers would talk too much and give learners little chance to practice. There is also lack of training in listening and in speaking. One has little time to practise in class, while after class nobody uses English. It is hard

to expect that a trainee's communication skills would have improved a lot after a few months' training.

Another problem would be the teaching staff. Generally speaking, there would be some native English speakers to teach. We have mentioned that the British Council has provided its own teaching staff for its training centres. Other centres may have some American teachers and some Chinese teachers. There is no doubt that the success of the course has very much to do with the teacher, whose experience, qualification and teaching methods play an important part in the course. We will look into this aspect in the later discussion.

It is essential that the course should be made relevant and interesting. One student had been to the course in Canton, which was for those who were going to the United States. It must have been an interesting experience that when he listened to the American English, or reading about the American way of life, he knew he was coming to Britain. Anyway, American English is also English, at least he had some information about America. Some training courses had provided no information about the country which the trainees were to visit, or even if there were some, the information may not be realistic.

One student attended the training course in Beijing just before the Tiananmen Event, 1989. He could not have attended any formal English classes during all the demonstrations.

5. 2. 2.   Current Tests in China - ELTS, TOEFL   and EPT

In China at the moment, there are three main tests for those who want to go abroad.   According to my questionnaire survey, 37% had ELTS, 15% had passed EPT. 8.4% had TOEFL, 21% had been to more than one of the above tests and 18.6% had no exams at all.

The reasons why some had had no test before coming to Britain are more or less the same as for those who had had no training courses.   The British Council normally require a ELTS for those they support.   TOEFL is the most popular test in China since everyone wants to go to America.   EPT has been especially designed by Chinese to suit the Chinese participant.   We will evaluate each of them in a comparative way and draw some conclusions.

ELTS is a British test which has been in use for many years in various countries. Nine out of twenty-one had taken ELTS before leaving China and most of them had found it quite reliable.   It does test one's ability in English.   It is also regarded as quite objective.   One girl whose subject is English commented: 'ELTS' listening is more demanding than that of TOEFL and it demands language proficiency.   It is also quite helpful, like reading skills, which is relevant.'   Quite a few people agreed that ELTS is more comprehensive.   The uniqueness of testing spoken language as during the interview has added to its credit, though the scoring system may not be fair.

It may not be fair for those people in Britain to comment on the American test. However, as an international model of tests, it does have some advantages and

disadvantages. TOEFL is more predictable than ELTS or EPT, since you can find models of past exams to follow. It demands a large vocabulary to be able to answer some questions. Although one might find it useful to a certain extent, as it tests skills like guessing, some people criticised that some of the vocabulary turned out to be rather useless. One student commented that some people had reached the score of over 600, but were still unable to speak much English when they were abroad.

The Chinese designed EPT was subjected to most criticism. Respondent 8 from Cardiff told me: "EPT is not predictable nor useful, such as the grammar and synonyms. Even after I've been abroad for a few years, I may not be able to answer these questions". Respondent 9 from Edinburgh added: "EPT does not have a stable level; the questions are not regular, i.e. the question itself may not be 100% reliable, like multiple choices. Some articles sound ridiculous because of their artificial and stupid imitation of native writing, which put a Chinese reader in an awkward situation."

Most students criticised the exams as not helpful in any real life situation. One pointed out that the exams were really designed to find the weak points of the participants. Nevertheless, they suggested that the tests would serve as an evaluative standard for overseas students. After all, exams can be made more relevant and practical if the students' needs were to be clarified.

5. 2. 3. Lectures in British Institutions and Supervisors

The survey through my questionnaires has shown that 51% of the people started

to learn English at school, while about 43% have had some EFL experience only at university level. The rest of the small number of people have had no formal English lessons but pick up some at work. It is found that most students have had around ten to fifteen years' learning English, though their ranges of experience are quite different and varied.

We have looked at the EFL in China in the last chapter and we found that the Chinese students are generally unhappy about the experience due to various reasons, such as the traditional teaching methods; irrelevant textbooks; poor qualifications of teaching staff and so on and so forth. As a result, after some years' learning English as a foreign language as well as attending special training courses, most students still have a great deal of language problems when they arrive in Britain. These problems have manifested in many ways. We will first of all start from their academic life and find out how they understand the lectures and their supervisors.

My investigation has shown that 12.6% of the students had no lectures. The reason for this is that research students in British institutions don't have to have any lectures. Those I interviewed have expressed the view that some lectures would be helpful for their research, especially with their English.

Of those who have done a taught course or attended some sorts of lectures, only about 11.8% students have found no difficulties understanding the lectures, while the bigger population have gone through different levels of difficulties. Approximately 8% could hardly follow the lectures; 28.6% could understand, but could not take any notes; and there were 37.9% who could understand, between

60% and 20% of the lectures. With these figures in mind, I have asked how the students feel about these lectures during my interviews.

The difficulties for understanding is not so much accent, as the lecturers in universities mostly speak good English. For some students it is the problem of limited vocabulary. One elderly visiting scholar told me that he attended university just before the Culture Revolution, so by the time he graduated, he only had about 4,000 English words. Ironically, he was an English major!

Another problem is the subject matter. About 18.5.% have changed their subjects, either because of the government's needs, or because of individual choices, this no doubt would have added to their difficulty in comprehension. Even for those whose subjects are more or less the same, understanding lectures can still be a problem because they are struggling with their foreign language which is far from sufficient, especially when they first arrived, or when the lecturers speak fast.

Respondent 83 from Edinburgh explained that the difficulties for her were the guest speakers and the seminars. The difficulties lay with the new ideas and the vocabulary. She added, "It is also up to the speakers. If they are really good teachers, it is so much easier."

Another student from Liverpool, Respondent 15 made a very interesting statement while he recalled that he could not communicate at all when he went for the interview. He regarded this as due to the lack of practice before and then he said:

"When I was in China, I did not find the English I heard authentic, after I came over, I thought this was not English either." However, he was one of the few who had tried hard to improve English and he had actually been to the English classes offered in his university which he had found very helpful.

One literature postgraduate had found that the difficulty for him was the background knowledge. In China, the teacher tends to go through every detail of an article or a piece of literary work. We still have the Intensive Reading for those who study English or related subjects. Anyway, since this literature student had been used to the style of teaching in China, he would have no doubt confronted some problems here. He told me: "The teachers assume that we have read the material before going to the class, so I found it very difficult to catch up." He has found that the tutorials are more specific and very helpful.

A small number of students had found the lectures in Britain disappointing. The main complaint was that the lectures here are quite simple. Those who had done postgraduate courses in China have found the lectures unsatisfactory, partly because they had not chosen the lectures which were relevant to their research, or the contents of these lectures were something they had learned before. One student told me that he would like to go to some lectures, but his department was very small and only ran undergraduate courses. It is open to question whether the courses in British higher institutions are relevant to the needs of either overseas indivividuals or those overseas countries who send their scholars to Britain. However, the indepth study in this area was beyond this research and it will be put forward as a recommendation for futher research in Chapter 7.

Through my questionnaires, I was able to get some information about the circumstances under which the Chinese students use English most. It turned out that about 20% had suggested that they use English most when discussing with their supervisors; 34% with their colleagues or classmates; 26% had the combination of the two above. With these figures, I asked further about supervisors in my interviews, intending to find out what supervisors can do or have done for Chinese students, what they are expected to do and how best they can help those in need.

Of the 21 people I have interviewed, most meet their supervisors on a regular basis. Though every one is in different situations, the norm is about once a week. The majority have found supervisors very helpful and enjoy a good relationship with them.

When we look at the background of the Chinese students, we will see that they have had no or little training to do independent research in China. The returning of the questionnaires shows that about 28% students hold BA/BSc degree, 13% had got their PhD and came either as visiting scholars or to work, and more than half, namely 52% had done their MA/MSC courses before they came to Britain.

We have already discussed Chinese schooling and higher education in Chapter 4. Though we could not have possibly looked at every detail of Chinese education, the examination of EFL teaching could give us some idea about what kinds of teaching have been practised. At the undergraduate level in China, the learning is focused on textbooks and the courses are exam-oriented. Even at the postgraduate stage, there are still mainly taught courses, when a MA/MSC course could last

about two or three years, during which most of the time is devoted in learning theories. For most courses, little practical work is involved. We can therefore assume that few Chinese students have had experience in doing research.

Because of their lack of experience, also due to little mental preparation of what they would have to do academically, their arrival at the British institutions and beginning their research would look as if they have been thrown in at the deep end. Supervisors, undoubtedly, are expected a lot by these students, who have been used to being told what to do before. As a result, a small number of students have felt disappointed when they realise that supervisors are not what they have expected them to be. This does suggest that to a certain extent the Chinese students have a sense of insecurity and are lacking in self confidence.

In most cases, the Chinese students would go through a process of getting used to the new academic environment and sooner or later they would learn to accept that this is the British way of supervision and get along with it without much complaints. Many students have actually found it congenial.

British supervisors, as one of the respondents commented, usually give some ideas and guidance. They usually do not offer specific instructions, but encourage independent work. One of the greatest achievement here, as one of the interviewees put it, has been developing the ability to do research.

About half of the students found it difficult to understand their supervisors, especially in the beginning. For some students, it is because of the language inefficiency, for others, it is the ideas. Respondent 14 from Birmingham University

told me, "sometimes I don't understand my supervisor's ideas straight away because they are quite new to me. When I think it over later, I begin to see the point."

Some supervisors are regarded to be very understanding and helpful. When they realise that the Chinese students have difficulties in comprehension, they try to speak slowly and make things easier for students, e.g. they correct errors in their essays, recommend that they attend certain courses which might help. It is seen as extremely important for supervisors to know the problems of the overseas students because they are in the unique position to offer students most direct and most valuable help.

There are some lucky students who work side by side with their supervisors every day. However, this only happens with students whose research is scientific or which involves a lot of practical work in labs. In such cases, supervisors can help whenever necessary.

A number of students are very content with the fact that they get on so wonderfully with their supervisors that they can see their supervisors whenever they wish. It is agreed that supervisors are most helpful with language. They are also very good at making arrangements, such as using certain facilities, planning travel schedules, etc. Supervisors can provide tremendous support at the time of publishing papers or attending international conferences.

However, there are a few, if not many, complaints against some supervisors. Getting along well with supervisors does not mean that one can always get what

one wants from supervisors. When you have a very famous person as your supervisor and he/she is extremely busy, arranging to see your supervisor may be very difficult. Most students feel very proud having somebody well-known as their supervisors, but they cannot help complaining that they are sometimes ignored and they would like to have more attention and help.

There are no supervisors for some visiting scholars. This probably cannot be helped until the roles and tasks of visiting scholars are clarified and made more specific. There have been a world of problems with the visiting scholars, some of which will be addressed in later sections, like Section 5.3.5. when we discuss about the roles of age and sex. In Chapter 7, I shall make recommendations and suggestions as to how to solve these problems.

5. 2. 4. Handling Information, Making Use of Library and Research Facilities

There are marked differences between the Chinese and British higher education systems in various ways. We have mentioned a few characteristics, like the traditional practice versus independent research. There is also a gap with the availability of materials and facilities. Taken into account the different background and experience among the students, we will find that the ability of handling information varies a great deal.

For those Chinese students who had only a BA/BSc degree or had just finished their undergraduate courses, they have had little or no experience with some

modern facilities, like computer network and other relevant resources. Those who came from less prestigious institutions in China would also find it difficult to cope with the huge amount of information in the new academic environment. In China, due to the underdeveloped economy as well as the limitations with the choices of resources, some information may be out of date, others may not be available at all.

Even for those who came from good universities, the choices and availability of information and research facilities could not have been within easy reach. The poor management in some Chinese institutions often adds to the difficulty for people to use research facilities.

In the British institutions, the libraries have proved to be excellent. There is so much information with instant access and the nationwide network has worked quite efficiently. The Chinese students have reported that they found the library staff very kind and helpful. The catalogues in the libraries are very good. Most students are pleased with the computer system, which works in an almost perfect fashion.

On the whole, about 75% students have found the research facilities satisfactory. For about 10% out of the 25% who are not very satisfied with the facilities, the complaint has been the unavailability of some facilities.

According to the educational background of most Chinese students, I assume that one has to read a lot more, especially with Arts, Social Science. I therefore asked my interviewees if they had managed to cope with the huge amount of reading

materials and what kind of practical problems there had been in handling these quantities of information.

The questionnaires had also sought to find out about how many books each individual student read during a term. The figures obtained are not very useful since most students would read a lot of papers than books and some just did not bother to count. Furthermore, some scholars and students are involved with more practical work. There are also some whose research are so advanced or unique that very little literature is available.

Chinese students are usually well-known for their hardworking and diligence. The findings have shown that 59% of them spend about 8 hours daily, and over 23% work longer than that. This is partly due to the hardworking nature of Chinese intellectuals, it is also due to the demanding task in reading and writing in British universities.

Using English as a foreign language no doubt added to the difficulty of collecting and selecting existing resources. Respondent 30 confessed that 'Coping with the amount of reading is very difficult, though my reading speed is all right. For example, it may take a local student one hour to finish a technical paper of 10-12 pages, while I have to spend four or five hours.'

Another problem has been to search for the relevant information. Respondent 25 told me that his supervisor did not tell him what books he should read, so he had to look for books on his own and tried to get used to this kind of research. These could really be a headache for someone who had been used to being dependent.

Generally speaking, most students said that they had been coping well with the new way of research. Not only the external factors, such as the easy access of library and facilities, or supervision, have provided great help, the internal motivation to adapt quickly and painstaking effort to achieve academically also make things easier. Some soon realise that they do not have to read everything in every detail. The difficulties in the beginning are usually lessened or disappeared eventually as one learned to handle useful information or getting necessary assistance where available.

5. 2. 5.   Languages Skills - Weaknesses and Difficulties

"Could you please tell me which skills do you think still need to be improved?"

"All skills need to be improved."

"Do you have any idea or suggestions as to how to improve your writing (or speaking, listening)?"

"The way is to use more often and practise more. Supervisors will help, so will the lectures and training courses."

This is part of one interview I recorded. The majority of my respondents, about 54%, feel that all skills need improvement. Speaking and writing come as second and third in this investigation.

There are individual differences in language needs. It is true that all four skills are needed in our academic life and social communication. But each student has had different linguistic background and his/her needs therefore varies. For some,

listening and speaking are very difficult. Even after a couple of years in Britain, the oral communication still remains a great problem for many students. Respondent 30 from Birmingham University said: 'We really need to speak more but we tend to speak very little. I think having more time to play around will help English, e.g. having an English girlfriend will definitely help my English.'

Everyone agrees that talking to native speakers can help spoken English. Simple practice like making phone calls or going to shops can be useful and productive. 'If we want to carry out interesting conversation, we need to go to pubs, or read newspapers to broaden our knowledge as well as our vocabulary', as Respondent 3 from Oxford University commented.

Listening to the radio or watching TV has been suggested as useful means of developing our language skills. Since all skills are related to one another, we can learn to speak from what we read or heard, we can also learn to write by reading other people's writing.

Writing is a very important aspect of our education in this country, especially for those whose research or courses require a lot of written work. Considering the lack of training in writing before, the difficulties that most Chinese students have to face in the new academic situation can be anticipated. I had invited my respondents to do a self evaluation of their writing ability in the questionnaires, and the figures themselves gave us some explanation of the hidden difficulties.

36% students felt OK with their writing skill and 2% recognised that their writing

had improved since they came. 21% found it extremely difficult to find the exact words to express the meaning they intended to convey. For about 26% students, their problem was to write long essays due to lack of practice in their former education. Only about 6% had any problem organising ideas, which probably had more to do with their general competence to do intellectual work.

Being able to express what you know seemed difficult for many Chinese students I came across during my investigation. It applied to both speaking and writing. The underlying barriers are not only obvious ones like limited vocabulary or lack of input before, but also more subtle factors, such as one's observation of the target culture and background knowledge. Motivation, interest and confidence all play a valuable part in the process of communication, either in an oral or written form.

Besides, language competence really demand seemingly endless and lifelong effort. Respondent 25 from the Queen's University of Belfast has been in Northern Ireland for five years and he could cope with everything all right. But he felt that he would still need more even after another ten years.

A literature student from Oxford made such a comment: 'I don't think that we can ever reach the standard of native speakers, nor can our writing have any literary flavour."

Quite a few students had shown the desire that they would like to be able to express their feelings and emotions like native speakers. This seemed to be an impossible goal to achieve. Nevertheless, it did indicate that some students had

taken the target language seriously and were highly motivated to improve their language efficiency. As Respondent 2 from the Imperial College in London explained: 'I don't think that it is enough just to be able to communicate. I could express something all right, but often it may not be very appropriate or lack of variety. I also find that being able to understand lectures does not mean that we can cope with everyday communication.'

However, a large number of students had admitted that they had not tried hard enough to improve their English. There are various reasons and excused for this. The most claimed excuse had been that they were too busy for formal English classes, or other means of developing their language competence. Some also complained that there had not been suitable courses, some of which, are below their needs or not really relevant. The less acceptable excuses were the one which indicated simple laziness or lack of motivation for linguistic practice. A couple of students had minimised the difficulty and taken it easy. Respondent 9 from Edinburgh said that there were so many things distracted him, such as missing home, that he could only improve his English when he returned to China! (His major was Chinese and he was quite upset with the fact that his supervisor tried to practise Chinese with him rather than giving him a chance to speak English. He was also annoyed that his Chinese mates refused to carry out conversation in English).

5. 3. Communication/Interaction with the British and Other Cultures

Communication plays a vital part in our lives. Inevitably it becomes more demanding as well as more difficult if we live in another culture, especially when the

target culture and the language are very different from one's own. In order to communicate effectively, one not only needs to be able to acquire necessary linguistic forms, but also to understand fully the social situations and express oneself in an appropriate way.

Just to remind us briefly of the theoretical implications, the basic assumption for successful communication is that the learner will need a 'linguistic competence' and 'communicative competence.'

According to Hymes, "Communicative competence has a broader context in the sense that it includes our knowledge of linguistic forms as well as that of using forms appropriately." Moreover, we need to acquire the competence "as to when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, and where in what manner", and it is "integral with attitudes, values and motivation concerning language, its features and uses, and integral with competence for, and attitudes towards the interrelation of language with the other code of communicative conduct" (Hymes, 1971).

As communicative competence covers a wide range of abilities for effective communication, we will look at some practical aspects where Chinese students are concerned. We will look at to what extent the Chinese communicate with the British and other peoples. We will evaluate the cultural interaction together with the problems embedded in this process.

5. 3. 1.   Problems After Arriving in the U.K.

As found in the pilot study, over 90% students have had problems in one way or another after they arrived in Great Britain. The biggest problem for many Chinese, my readers can very well imagine so far, has been the language barrier. About 75% have found it difficult to understand native speakers. The main reason has been the strong and different local accent. 20 people complained about the unknown vocabulary used by English speakers, while 16 found that they could not cope with the speed. In other words, native English speakers use words that are far beyond the Chinese students' vocabulary and they also tend to speak too fast.

Respondent 14 was doing a MA in ELT at Birmingham University when I visited her. Her only problem was that there were too many lectures and little time for herself. This is probably true for all taught courses in the British universities.

In the earlier chapters, we have discussed the language background and the general poor command of English among the Chinese students, though they mostly have had years' of language input and training. This problem is practically worsened by the fact, probably out of every Chinese student's expectation, that what they hear in Birmingham, or Glasgow, or Newcastle, is not what they were used or expected to hear. It is amazing how the accent can differ so much from one place to another in Britain, which is relatively so much smaller.

Many of us, indeed, had expected that English people would talk like the BBC world service, or the so-called RP-Received Pronunciation. It is a shock for those who attend the Scottish universities or pursue education in Wales or Northern Ireland

suddenly to realise that this is not the case. All their assumptions or imaginations about the British people and the language are so limited and stereotyped that they are bewildered by a world of differences and varieties within this small nation, with a large number of dialects, even different peoples, different customs and cultural practices.

How long does it take for the Chinese students to get used to the local accent? This question is not easy to answer since everyone has different experiences. On the average, it took students about six months to a year. For those who have had little contact with the English-speaking people, or those who are either too timid, shy or reluctant to communicate more than they have to, getting used to the accent may be a long-suffering struggle. As Respondent 9 from Edinburgh told me, 'After a year, I still haven't got used to the accent. I seldom contact the local people. It is a vicious circle, the less I tried to meet them, the more difficult it became to understand.'

Quite a number of students did try to avoid further communication because of the language difficulties. Respondent 7 from Cardiff said that if there was a staff and a cleaner nearby, he would ask the staff, knowing that his English would be easier to understand. 'Another problem is Welsh', he went on, 'Some street names are Welsh, impossible to pronounce in English, so people did not understand me when I tried to ask my way around.'

Students from Scotland will no doubt feel sympathetic with him. How do you expect a new arrival in Glasgow to say some of the names properly? For example, how do you pronounce such names as St. Enoch, Sauchiehall Street,

Milngavie and Balloch? It surely causes problems for English people, let alone Chinese speakers.

'Northern Ireland has a funny accent', Respondent 76 commented. It took him a year to get used to the accent and he was afraid to talk to Irish people although they are very friendly. Even for those areas like Oxford and Cambridge, problems can still arise here and there. Oxford English has been recognised by most Chinese students as standard English, because it was the norm which they were exposed to through either BBC or other means when they were in China. But this does not mean that they would have no problem at all. Respondent 3 is a PhD student at Oxford University. He found that his flatmates from different parts of Britain were very difficult to understand. Besides, most inhabitants of Oxford do not speak 'Oxford English', which is the speech of highly educated upper class!

Respondent 25 from Northern Ireland has a sense of humour as he recalled, 'When I heard a child talking to his dad, I was very upset because I could not understand him. When his dad spoke, the child understood, while I was at a loss. It drove me mad that the child was much more competent than I was.'

However, not everyone is as sensitive and self-conscious as he is. As a matter of fact, behind all the superficial difficulties with either accent or general language incompetence, there may be a lack of confidence within those students, who were shy, timid or even tried to get away without much effort to conquer the barriers. For others, though relatively few, it is simply a matter of motivation and interest, the lack of which prevent them from further communication. There are still others, who take it easy, either because of their easy-going personality, or out of laziness,

choose not to bother with their language inefficiency and leave it as it is.

5. 3. 2. Problems of Everyday Living

Apart from the biggest problem with English as a foreign language, there are many other problems relating to the way of life in this country. One common phenomenon for many Chinese students have been the difficulty of finding accommodation, when they first arrived in this country. A number of my interviewees complained of the headache and the hustle they had been through. It took some students a week or more to find a place to settle and it had made them feel quite disappointed and disillusioned with the reality.

Let us have a look at Respondent 7's experience after his arrival: 'I lived far from the city and the university, and had nobody to talk to - no Chinese nearby and my English was very poor. I felt very lonely and felt like going home straight away.' Respondent 1 from Oxford is a medical student who had a similar bad experience: 'When I first arrived, my supervisor was away in the U.S.A. and it was a Friday afternoon. I couldn't find anybody, nor supermarket. My place was a hospital and far from the town, so I could not help crying what on earth I am here for.'

Lots of students had expected a warm reception as soon as they arrived. Respondent 1 explained that he had read from the English textbooks that supervisors would be at the airport, holding a sign with the newcomer's name on it. The reality turned out to be what Respondent 9 described: 'When I arrived at London airport, I was surprised that the people from the Chinese Embassy were very unfriendly and unhelpful. I also found that the university did not give the kind

of reception which we give to foreign students in China.'

It is true that visitors to China usually are warmly welcomed and their accommodation and everything else are organised. The different picture we find in Britain is due to the fact that there are so many foreigners in this country and they have to find their own way around. Another practical problem is the different type of food. We have had some discussion earlier and will go into more details in a later section.

Other problems relating to daily life may seem trivial but should not be overlooked, such as going to banks or making phone calls. In China, we do not depend so much on the bank for getting or spending money. There is no such thing as auto-machine or visa card. While the British people may take the banking system for granted, it is something completely new to Chinese new arrivals. The good thing is that the system works so wonderfully that it is convenient and easy to use.

The same is true for telephones. The public phones in China are few and not widely used. In Britain, the appointment system has probably helped the British Telecom make the fortune. Many Chinese students would have to get into the habit of making use of the telephone for appointments, whether meeting supervisors, or going to see doctors, etc. One middle-aged lady told me that she felt very nervous at making calls, and after a year, the very idea of calling somebody still bothered her.

Respondent 15 from Liverpool had experienced a more personal problem and he would undoubtedly find sympathy from those who have had the same difficulty. "I

found the English law very strange. I am a visitor to my wife. I wanted to stay but I had great difficulty with my visa."

According to the British Immigration law, an overseas woman visiting her husband is categorised as a dependent and there are not limitations relating to studying or working, while a husband in the same situation can only be short-term visitor, no longer than a year. He cannot work, nor can he study part-time. Respondent 15 was one of the lucky ones who succeeded in changing his visa to a student's one after he managed to get scholarship for a postgraduate degree, though he had to go through many troubles.

Everyone has had some problems at one stage or another. This can hardly be avoided in a completely new environment. More discussion will follow to draw a more comprehensive picture of their lives in the United Kingdom.

5. 3. 3. Mixing with Other Cultures - Local People, Colleagues and Mates

How did the Chinese students meet British people and other overseas people in Great Britain? The following figures may give us a rough idea as to the social interaction among the Chinese students in the context of another culture.

On the one hand, about 26% students have found the local people very friendly, 15% have found it easy to mix with other overseas people, and an extra 6% could be added to this positive response as they felt both above. On the other hand, 21% have found it difficult to mix with other cultures, felt like foreigners, while 31%

only go out with Chinese, though some of them have found the people here friendly.

There are 63 respondents who have given reasons for not mixing with peoples from other cultures. The following chart will show us clearly as the number indicate the number of students and the alphabet stands for the reasons:

A. Language Obstacle
B. Cultural Background
C. Financial Problem
D. A+B
E. B+C
F. A+B+C
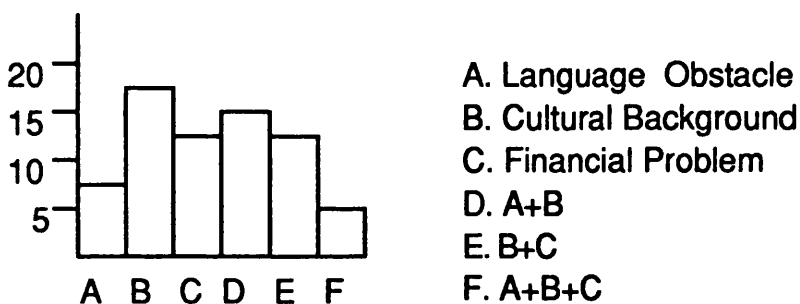
Chart 2. Barriers to social interaction.

This chart seems to suggest that culture is the biggest barrier in the way of communication. In other words, our cultural background plays an important part in our daily interaction with other people. We will now focus our mind on the cultural communication.

As we know, meeting people can be quite difficult and clear communication is essential under these social circumstances. It is often more problematic when we meet people whose cultural background is different from our own. At that stage, the communication is not simply confined to expressing ourselves in a mutually understood language, the communication becomes far more implicit and more demanding. How can we get across our meanings without causing confusion or misunderstanding? This will demand our good knowledge and probably deep compassion of other cultures. The effective communication does not depend on good will only, but it demands a lot of effort and conscious labour.

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What kind of cultural problems do you have when meeting with peoples from other countries? The answers did not come as easily as the question. Some people have never thought of their problems as profound as cultural conflicts. When they do, it is difficult to list them all. Anyway, we will look at some of their responses.

"I felt culture shock when I first arrived. Although I was prepared but I still found a lot of cultural differences, like the sense of value. For example, when an Englishman/woman opens the door, he/she usually waits for the next one to pass. I have to say thank-you all the time. It took me a while to get used to,' Respondent 70 from Nottingham regarded his culture shock from a positive point of view. Like many Chinese, he went through some useful cultural learning through these experiences.

The example he gave reminded me of a book called 'The Ugly Chinese' by a Taiwan writer Bai Yang (1988). In this much debated book, Bai Yang explored a lot of the ugly side of the Chinese national characteristics. He had a vivid description of how he learnt to hold doors for the person(s) behind him and say automatically 'thank you' to others in the States, then how he had to give up shortly after he returned to Taiwan, when he found that Chinese people do not appreciate it if somebody opens the door for him/her. Nobody seemed to bother to say 'thanks' but looked at him as if he was insane. Are the Chinese people too busy to be polite? Or are they so self-centred that they do not mind if the door behind him smashes somebody's face? It was a shock to Bai Yang that his own people respond so badly to his acquired cultural behaviour and it seemed to suggest that the western

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civilisation does not always appeal to or could not apply to our own civilisation, which we have so much to be proud of or boast about!

To many Chinese students, language difficulty does not prevent them from interacting with other people. Communication can get across by other means like body language. Respondent 26 is an elderly visiting scholar, his observation and experience gave him the impression: 'I find that we Chinese were conservative in the past, but the British are conservative as well. Why can we not really become close friends with English people? The point is what we mean by 'close' culturally. The English have very different kinds of relationships. For instance, parents and children have very distinctive line about money, while we Chinese think that even friends should not bother about money, let alone relations.'

Instead of answering my question, Respondent 15 once asked me, "Do you know that you can never borrow any money from English people?" He did not expect me to reply, because he went on to tell me that he and his wife were thrilled that a couple of Irish people lent them some money when they were in difficulty. He further suggested that we had to communicate in a different way with the British as their culture is so different from ours.

It is true that the British people, and actually most westerners, have very different ideas about money. I have been to a 'Hen party' with a group of women and each of us paid for our own food (a hen party is a Scottish custom that before a girl gets married, she would go out for a meal with her girlfriends for a wee celebration, while her would-be-groom would go out with his male friends, which is called a 'Stag Party' or 'Stag Night'). It is the practice here that each one pay

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his/her own share no matter who initiate the idea. This is out of the question for the Chinese. If we do go out to a pub or restaurant, which is not often, it is normally the one who invites the rest of the party would pay. Good friends do fight sometimes as to who would pay, but one or the other has to give in eventually.

The compromise is not that each would pay for his/her share but over who would pay for the next time. The loser will always have another chance and be the winner. A Chinese would therefore say: "Fair play, isn't it?"

Have you tried to communicate positively despite of all kinds of cultural or language difficulties? Respondent 1 answered that the language difficulty should not be a problem but a condition for communication. Many shared his view that because one's culture is different from others', one could talk about one's own and exchange ideas. As Respondent 25 put it: "Once when I settled down, I don't feel shocked any more. I have noticed more differences but no longer find them that strange."

Everyone living in a new country will experience the so called culture shock to a more or less degree. For some, like Respondent 25, the shock got over soon when he learnt to accept the cultural difference. For others, like Respondent 1, the culture shock became the motivation to communicate with other peoples.

Nevertheless, communication does not mean that there are no more culture shocks. Respondent 1 said sadly, "One thing really bothered me. I sometimes went out with some English the night before and had a great time together, but

the next day when we met, they behaved as if they didn't know me. I have found the English people very polite,but only under certain circumstances." A couple of others have had similar complaints against their English acquaintances.

Respondent 78 from UMIST confessed, "When you listen to English people talking among themselves, sometimes you don't understand, at other times you just don't know what they are talking about. Even if you are interested, you cannot talk much." A simple example may clarify his point. If a group of people are laughing away at a well-known joke about a 60's pop group, how do you expect a Chinese by-stander to join in the fun? Some more knowledgeable Chinese may have heard some songs by the Beatles in the eighties. Would you be surprised to find some Chinese who had been to Britain for a few years but never listen to Radio One? On the other hand, how much does a westerner know about Chinese jokes and Chinese music? Some British probably believed that there were no pop stars or Rock & Roll in modern China!

Respondent 27 came to work in Britain and he seemed to have a strong feeling against his host: 'I don't want to talk to any of them. What we are concerned with are very different. I think we know them better than they know about us. They do not understand us and I don't bother to tell them, why should I? Although people here can travel all over the world, they do not have much world knowledge as we Chinese do. I find it very strange because our communication is not so good and we stay in our own country. We learn a lot from books and they are ignorant.'

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His view may sound very biased and extreme. But every nation tends to think that her race is the best. We must acknowledge that there are some Chinese people like Respondent 27 who have certain prejudice against English people, just like some British people may hold something against the Chinese or other nationalities.

It is worthwhile pointing out the fact that in all countries, even those with an educated majority, there is little interest or desire for anything foreign and unknown.

Not everyone would think the same way. Respondent 70 had his own point of view: "I think most English people are willing to communicate with foreigners. They do not have much prejudice against Chinese. They told me that the Chinese people are very intelligent and the oriental culture appears mysterious and fascinating." He then went on saying that the British were more against the Indians and Black people. Although he personally found people from the Third World were easier to mix with and emotionally closer, he thought that they did not have very good qualities - 'lack of self-confidence and not very tidy.'

Some Chinese would blame others for the lack of communication. "English people only go out with English. I found that the white people are together while the Indians and Pakistan mix with their fellows, although they are all British citizens. I feel that English people think very highly of themselves and look down upon Chinese because we are poor," Respondent 55 then could not help smiling as she continued, 'I once asked a Belgian if he liked the English, and he answered that nobody liked them.'

Are we to blame at all? Respondent 13 looked at it from a different angle: "Chinese people here have very limited social circle. We do not normally go to pubs or church to meet local people. We are not used to going to bars and we do not participate in the international parties. Another point is that Chinese are very family-bonded. We usually socialise within families and friends. There are so many Chinese here and they seem to have no such need to go to mix with outsiders." Are the British people outsiders.? We still refer other people rather than Chinese as 'foreigners', although indeed we are in a foreign land rather than our own.

We have, so far, discussed about how we interact with other nationalities in general. How do we get along with our colleagues or classmates, with whom most Chinese students have more daily contact and communication?

Except few Chinese who have had no classmates nor colleagues side by side, most Chinese students work closely with other mates. There is no doubt that these colleagues are very helpful academically, in terms of language or research. Some also go out with them socially and have developed some kind or relationship from which both parties would benefit and enjoy.

Respondent 8 commented on the people beside him: "My German colleague speaks very good English, while the French girl's English is very difficult to understand. The Arabians speak very fast.' Through communication with people from different parts of the world, one will not only recognise their difference in accents or language proficiency, but more importantly, one will get to know other cultures. Many of my respondents agree that we come abroad to learn the language but

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also the culture.

5. 3. 4. Financial Situation Prevents Communication

The survey among the Chinese students and scholars has highlighted the point that financial pressure is one of the biggest problems in the way of communication. The following graph illustrates the type and amount of grant awarded to Chinese students from 1987 to 1993.

amount £
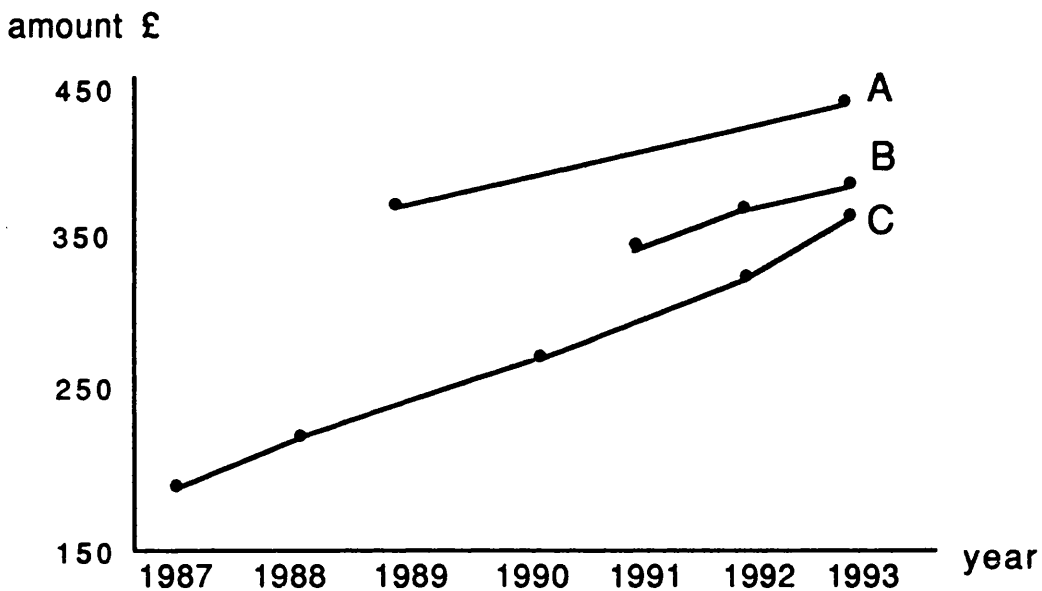
Graph 1. Yearly increase in Chinese student grant awards.
A: British Council Sponsorship
B: University Scholorship (Glasgow University)
C: Chinese Government Grant

As can be seen from the above graph, the number of Chinese students in British universities was relatively small in the early 1980s, and their grants from the Chinese government were also very limited (approximately, from £100 - £170 per month). In 1988 the monthly grant was £210, and was increased to £260 by the

end of 1990. The beginning of 1992 saw another increase to £320. The present 1993 level is £360 outside London, and £400 inside London. (Please note that the pilot study was conducted in the academic session 1989-90, with the main survey taking place in 1990.)

Students sponsored by other agencies have, to some extent, been better off. Those sponsored by the British Council received £367 in 1988. This amount was increased annually, and now stands at £449. As far as university grants are concerned, these varied slightly from university to university. For example, University of Glasgow scholarships were £340 in session 1990-91, £367 for 1991-92, and £383 for 1992-93.

It has been pointed out that the gap in the living conditions between China and Britain, as well as the traditional responsibility of Chinese keep them from enjoying the freedom from financial worries.

Based on the existing data and facts, I set out in my interview not to confirm that there were financial problems, but to find out how they had affected the social interaction. I was also interested in looking for ways of improving the present situation.

Over 80% of the student surveyed agree that financial problems inhibit the way we socialise and determine our social life. Overseas students from other poor countries may also have financial problems, but I believe that the problem is unique to the Chinese students in the sense that all mainland Chinese students depend

totally and solely on the scholarships or grants from either British or Chinese sponsors. There is no extra support from family or former savings. Instead, they have to save from the limited grants in order to give relatives at home extra bonus. You would find a different story even with Chinese people from areas or countries like Hong Kong or Singapore, many of whom come to study, supported by their families or own savings in former employment engagement.

In what ways does this prevent social interaction? Respondent 83 told me: "We must be very careful with money, so we cannot travel like other people. My German flatmate drove around with her car, while I cannot afford money or time to do so."

Many students feel that financial shortage limit their daily social life. It is impossible to go out often. You need money to go to pubs or cinemas and the grants are barely enough for food and basic supplies.

"Lack of financial support," Respondent 6 said: 'gives rise to many problems, for example, some students, especially short-term visiting scholars would not concentrate on their research but look for ways of improving their financial situation.' He is obviously worried with the fact that so many Chinese scholars spent much of their time working in restaurants.

It is sad but true that a lot of Chinese students go to work in Chinese restaurants, at the cost of neglecting their studies or research. Worse still, they work at weekends instead of enjoying themselves. The extra cash does not bring happiness or more freedom, but captivates some students as slaves for money.

Many students think that working in restaurants is a good way, some believe that it is the only way to improve the financial situation. I am not trying to condemn it because there is nothing wrong working for more money. Yet there are better and more sensible ways at achieving financial improvement.

Some students suggest that our financial situation could improve, like doing something for the supervisors or giving tutorials. Some even suggest that one could open some kind of business or try to find a job.

When asked if it is worthwhile to ignore financial problems to try to mix with other nationalities. Most people think that it is worthwhile to do so, because it is not only good for language but also good for understanding other cultures. Respondent 78 from Manchester put it this way: 'I think going out with people helps us to know them better.'

During one interview in Birmingham, Respondent 30 told me: 'One needs to go out with other people. I don't think it is a sacrifice financially to meet other people. I found it enjoyable and great fun.'

However, for many people it is not simply a matter of shortage of money, it depends on how one looks at this matter. Personality obviously plays a part in the way the personal finance is handled. Some people do not like spending even if he/she has a lot of money. This is true not only for Chinese, it is universal.

The general financial pressure among the Chinese students does not mean that there is no extra money for occasional social meetings. As we have seen, the Chinese government has tried to promote the living standards by increasing the grants every now and again and so have been the other sponsoring bodies. Some people might argue that this was because of inflation and was not good enough, but others may agree that finance is not the only dominant factor for social life. There are some people who don't like meeting people at all. There are others, though very few, who simply dislike interacting with 'foreigners'.

It is found that the situation is better for those who stay in Britain in a longer term. Their ideas change, which is inevitable. Even the most conservative Chinese, like Respondent 27, believe that the long-term visitors here should try to understand the host culture and interact with local people. It is also true that lots of students can manage better with their money after some time. It is a common phenomenon that many students buy cars and can travel more as time goes by. These are normally students who have a long-term plan and whose families are here with them.

On the whole, finance is a pressure which not only limits the social activities, it seemed to dominate daily life to a great extent for most Chinese students. Other issues related to this will be discussed eventually and we can see this problem as a chain of problems.

5. 3. 5. Lunch and Chinese Food

One can imagine that different types of food can cause problems in the new place. We have a saying in Chinese 'Improper water and earth' (This is my own translation direct from the Chinese expression which may not convey the nuances), which means that when one goes to a new area, not necessarily a new country, one might have a certain kind of reaction to the food and find it difficult to cope. Some really old-fashioned, superstitious people believe that bringing a handful of native soil and water to the new settlement would help to adapt and some are said to do so.

It is unlikely that any Chinese students in Britain have brought along any 'yellow earth' or water from the Yellow River to help them to get used to the new type of diet. But the traditional Chinese food background has determined that it would be more difficult for most Chinese people to get used to the western food than people from Italy or France.

Anyone who has ever been to a Chinese restaurant could tell that the Chinese cuisine and serving is very different from any other type of food, although the Chinese food in China Town may not be genuine. The Chinese food in Britain or other western countries is more or less modified to suit the western taste.

It should be known that because China is a huge country, the food varies a lot from one place to another. The most four distinguished types of food are categorised as Sichuan, Beijing, Canton and Jiangzhe. They are considered as the best Chinese regions for food and are different in such ways as preparation,

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spices and so on. It should also be emphasised that the Chinese food available in Britain is mostly Cantonese because the chefs are mostly from Hong Kong, which no doubt add an extra style.

If you, as a British reader, think that you have had authentic Chinese food just by going to the best recommended local Chinese restaurant, do not be discouraged if someone tell you that you are wrong. Even if you have tried the food by the best Chinese cook available, do you really eat in the way we Chinese would do? Do you have soup as the first course or last? Chinese people will have soup last and only Cantonese people start a meal by drinking Chinese tea. In his book 'Inter-cultural communication,' Michael Argyle talked about the different use of non-verbal signals and said: 'In several cultures 'thank you' is signalled non-verbally; in China this is done at meals by rapping lightly on the table'(Argyle, 1981). This is not completely true, because only Cantonese people do this when the tea is served. The majority of Chinese people would not appreciate it if you rap the table and they would probably think that you are getting impatient for your food.

Let us come back to our concern as to how the Chinese students cope with the western food. We must understand that very few Chinese students had tried western food previously, let alone British food. First of all, western food is only available in big cities like Beijing or Shanghai. The choice is very limited and is by no means popular even in those posh places. It is probably too exotic and luxurious in modern China for ordinary people.

In response to my questionnaires, 55% students regarded that it was all right to have British food occasionally, but preferred to cook Chinese food; 7% students

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simply cannot put up with the 'foreign food,' while 2 people had found it uncomfortable with knife and fork.

This anti-western food attitude can be excused if we believe that the diet we are used to is not easy to change, especially when there is no such need or obligation in a country where one's own customs are respected and encouraged. The ready access to most Chinese food ingredients in most British cities has made life so much easier for the Chinese students. Some students manage to get along without ever venturing to try any British food.

Because they do not like western food, they have to cook Chinese food even if some of them hate cooking. It is normal for some Chinese students to cook some Chinese meal in the evenings and bring it to the university for lunch the next day. It usually takes a longer time to prepare Chinese food because there is a lot of chopping and cutting. The financial problem again come in the way because few can or are willing to buy ready-made or processed food, instead the cheaper choices are the priority, which means more work and time are needed.

There are some who do enjoy cooking Chinese food and Chinese are known for their love for food and healthy eating. There are also students, about 29%, who do not really like the western food but find it easy and quick. Those would normally have lunch in the canteen.

About 7% students enjoy western food and some even try to cook the British style food. When I went to interview in the Edinburgh, Respondent 83 was baking a western cake and she told me that she liked cheese but hated butter.

Even those who enjoy having western food, they find it expensive and few could really afford to eat out often. There has to be a compromise between finance and daily food supplies.

5. 3. 6. Age and Sex, Do They Matter?

There have been a lot of studies and investigations about second language acquisition (SLA). One of the heated discussions has been the factors affecting the success of learning a second language. These main factors are age, aptitude, cognitive style, attitude and personality, all of which have important roles in learning a foreign language (Stern, 1983; Theo van Els...[et al.], 1984; Ellis, 1985; Preston, 1989; etc.).

We will not study each factor, but will look at age, particularly in the context of learning a foreign language and adapting to a new culture. We will also discuss issues relating to sex in the same context.

Age in relation to second language learning has been one of the most debated issues amongst relevant researchers. Penfield and Roberts (1959) argued that early years of life before puberty were crucial for learning. Lenneberg (1967) also regarded the years before puberty as a biologically active period of language development. The later investigators (Schumann, 1975; Rosanskey, 1975; Krashen, 1981; etc.) explained the relationship between age and language acquisition in a more cognitive way, but their arguments were all based on the assumption that children have a greater empathy and are better language

learners. On the other hand, there have been opposing viewpoint that adults have greater cognitive and affective advantages over children (Stern, 1963; Ausubel, 1964).

While there has been great concern for age difference in both sociolinguistic and SLA research, the sex difference has been explored mostly in sociolinguistics and little in SLA. From an earlier account by Jespersen (1922), he believed that women were quicker in terms of reading and speaking, and " the greater rapidity of female thoughts is shown linguistically" (Jespersen, 1922). Some more modern researchers also found that great differences existed in gender specific conversational behaviour, e.g, selection of topic (Aries, 1976); lexical and grammatical chioce (Fishman, 1980). Fishman (1978) discovered that women display greater tendency to ask questions and " more actively engaged in insuring interaction than the men".

Some cross-cultural investigations stress that men's and women's language features are reflections of the social roles, assigned by the cultural environment, not biologically determined characteristics (Preston, 1989). Harding (1975) argued that the different social needs of men and women " have led them to sexually differentiated communicational cultures, with which each sex learning a different set of skills for manipulating words effectively" (quoted Maltz and Borker, 1982).

Instead of speculating any further on age and sex difference in relation to sociolinguistics and SLA, we will focus our attention to the researcher's assumptions. Through my research and personal experience, I have drawn some

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conclusions and we will have a close-up study at each of them. It was intended to find out if younger learners are better off in terms of commanding a foreign language and mixing with people from other cultures. This assumption was derived from the idea that the younger ones are better lanugage learners, though our age difference are not between children and adults, but rather between younger students and elderly scholars. We will also look at the female Chinese students and see how they have adapted to the new world in comparison to their male counterparts. We could draw a few references from the above discussions about sex differences to support the assumption that Chinese female students have adapted better in Britain. We will distinguish women who are students from those who come to join their husbands and find out what kind of problems they have and how they have coped with them.

Conclusion 1. Younger Students Benefit More Than the Olderly Scholars

When the questionnaires were distributed, attention had been given to make sure that each age group would be fairly represented. Their returning of questionnaires have shown that the majority of the Chinese students were from 26 to 40, namely, 49% were aged 26-30, 31-40 came second as 36%, only 6% of the students were under 25 while 9% were over 40. The actual percentage of each age-group may be slightly different and it is possible that there are more elderly scholars due to the existing Chinese policy of sending older people abroad.

The samples of interviews were based on the questionnaire findings and for this particular discussion the respondents are devided into two groups: the younger

students under 30 pursuing postgraduate studies and those relatively older scholars over 30, visiting the British institutions on the short-term basis. There are exceptions to this rule because there are elderly postgraduates and younger short-term visitors. Our main concern, however, would be how one's age affects one's way of life in the new environment.

A lot of people have complained that sending olderly visiting scholars had been a waste of time and money for the Chinese government. It had not been accountable in many ways. The primary accusation has been that most older scholars tended to ignore their research and spend a lot of time trying to improve their financial situation.

There are several justifications for this accusation. It is true that the visiting scholars stay a relatively short time, usually from three months to a year, so that most of them do not have a specified purpose or task academically. Besides, their social life can be so limited and boring that they choose to do something more 'profitable.'

For most Chinese students, the only way to improve their financial situation is to work in Chinese restaurants, carry-out shops or some temporary work. This kind of job does not need much English but occupies a lot of time. Although the students came to Britain to study or do research, the unsatisfactory reality, that is, the general shortage of money had led many students out of the right track.

Partly due to the historical reasons I mentioned in the last chapter, most elderly scholars do not seem to have a very good command of English. From our

discussion above, age does come into the process of learning a foreign language and its ultimate success. One may argue that the younger one is , the easier it is for one to pick up another language, and it also seems to be easier for younger people to adapt to a new way of life since they are probably less dominated by the values from their own culture and more flexible in accepting new things.

It is believed that older Chinese scholars could not benefit a lot from a short visit to Britain. Firstly, it is not possible for them to improve their English in a short time, especially when most of them have not tried hard enough to do so. Compared to younger students, they also have more pressure on them. While the elderly ones are more concerned about responsibilities to their families, many younger ones may believe in "Live for today." When the elderly scholars could afford time to devote themselves to work in restaurants for longer hours, the younger students do not have to do so. It is not only that their courses in the universities would occupy a lot of their time, but also they have fewer family burdens if they are still single.

Younger students have other advantages as well. They usually try harder to extend their stay abroad and they are more likely to succeed in their applications for scholarships or jobs. It is not to say that age is the only determining factor, because the success has more to do with opportunities, abilities or specific subjects.

How do the elderly scholars evaluate themselves? Respondent 26 was a visiting scholar in his early fifties and had spent nearly a year in Nottingham when I interviewed him. He said to me earnestly: "People of my age are different from

those in their 20's or 30's. It may not be fair to say that we have no purpose nor ambition, but we definitely are not as ambitious as younger people. We are more practical."

On the whole, Chinese people are very practical-minded and we had some discussion about this in Section 4.4, chapter 4. Many Chinese students would agree with Respondent 3 when he said that we only spend on or did something for a certain purpose. If somebody came abroad with the expectation of bringing home something, he would try every means to achieve this.

Taking into account these aspects, such as limited time of stay, heavy burden of responsibilities, gap between the Chinese and western living standards, it appeared to be very difficult to expect that the elderly scholars could benefit as much as the younger folks.

The situation and background have restricted their achievement, and their lack of confidence and motivation from their own part have no doubt added to the difficulties.

Conclusion 2. Female Students Appear to be able to Adapt More Easily Than Male Stdents

There has been some research into whether women are better language learners and it has been a controversial topic. The myth remains that women pick up a language more quickly and become quite good at it, though some experts may have strong arguments against it.

In China, many parents often believe that baby girls would talk ealier while baby boys would walk earlier, though there is no statistics to support this. When comes the time for certain decisions (i.e, Chinese parents still play a vital role in their children's choices, such as subjects at university which would lead to certain careers), parents usually prefer their doughters to specialize in Arts or Social Science, especially language-oriented subjects, while male children are more encouraged to enter engineer and other highly technogically demanded professions. Whatever the reasons behind this, you will find more women working as teachers, interpretors or translators in China.

The same is true in Scotland in terms of the teaching profession. While there is no significance in the number of male and female teachers in the secondary schools, the statistics about the primary and nursery schools show the striking difference with 22663 female teachers versus 2095 male teachers in primary, and 1033 female versus 40 male teachers in nursery schools. As far as ESL (English as a Second Language) teachers are concerned, there are 92 female teachers and 11 male teachers across sectors in Glasgow. (Source: SED statistics, 1993).

Let us come back to the argument that female Chinese students have adapted better to the western culture. We have looked at some of the problems Chinese students have to face daily, mainly in three aspects - language, culture and finance. Do they affect the female students the same way as they do the male ones? If different, in what ways?

Several reasons can be given to support the above argument. Firstly, there are relatively fewer female students and they have to be very good in many ways in order to compete with the male counterparts. Among all qualifications they have to have before coming to Britain, one would be that their English was good enough. The female respondants whom I interviewed were either English majors or other subject specialists. Their general command of English impressed me more than those male respondants.

Secondly, I think that women are naturally more open and less conservative. Again some people may disagree. I once had a very informal interview with a group of Chinese male fellow students. When asked if they would agree that female Chinese were more sociable and outgoing than they were. Everybody present had no objection to the point. To answer my question as to why this was the case, one of the students gave me the example of an imaginary situation: there were two Chinese, one woman, the other a man, at the same time and same place. There were two English, one male and one female. The Englishman would come to talk to the Chinese girl, but the English girl would not come over to chat with the Chinese guy. When I asked him why the Chinese man did not go to talk to the English girl, he was speechless.

There are several interpretations of the above example. The Chinese girl might appear more willing to socialise with non-Chinese than the male Chinese. She might also be more confident in herself as well as in other people. She might be more trusting and more open-minded. She might be less racist and discriminative and not confine herself within the Chinese social circle. It is likely that the Chinese girl was more attractive than her companion in that particular case.

Some cultural implications are also embedded here. The Chinese tradition has given man such privileges as making initiatives under social meetings. Even in modern China today, it is still more common, or socially more acceptable, for man to approach woman in any given situation. However, do not be surprised if you find a different picture among the Chinese students in western countries.

Of all the female Chinese whom I had interviewed or met under other social circumstances, few have ever shown any dislike or reluctance in terms of mixing with people from other cultures. A lot of them have really enjoyed the multicultural friendship and communication. On the contrary, I did meet quite a number of Chinese men who had strong anti-western attitudes, manifested in various ways. Some of them refused to have anything to do with people from other nations; others try to avoid being in contact with 'foreigners' and made comments on their behaviour as unacceptable; a small number of Chinese men would go to the extreme as to hate their countrymen/women because of their involvement with other peoples.

Another man among the group of my informal interview bursted out angrily: "I don't like the way some Chinese girls talk and behave among westerners. There should be a difference between Chinese and foreigners." He further insisted that what could be said among Chinese should be kept secret from foreigners.

An Italian friend had once commented that it was so much easier to make friends with Chinese girls than with Chinese men. "I like Yang and Tang and they are very nice to me. I never get to know them at a deeper level. They seemed to avoid me for some reason I don't know of," he sighed. Yang and Tang were his classmates

at university, and his Italian style warmth and friendliness seemed to have lost its effect on the Chinese men he met. His comment did not stand alone and his French girlfriend shared his view as well.

For a variety of complex reasons in most societies women tend to be more open and more outgoing than men. A French man who was going out with a Chinese girl from Hong Kong tried to explain this: "You will find more Frenchwomen married to foreigners than Frenchmen marrying foreigners. Women certainly have less prejudices." I have no statistics about cross-cultural relationshipa among the Chinese students in the U.K. A report in a Chinese magazine (Dang Dai, 1989) suggested that a number of Chinese females were marrying westerns with fewer cases of Chinese males married to "foreign " females, and it had caused great concern amongst relevant authorities.

Thirdly, Chinese women have had fewer responsibilities and fewer expectations from their families back home, so they could spend more money socialising and enjoying themselves. Respondent 83 from Edinburgh had much to say about this: "Men are more cautious and stingy with money, they will save the extra. Another reason for their stinginess is that there are more men here and they are mostly from the countryside by origin. Their background has decided their way of spending."

Finally, the society seems to be more caring and protective to women in some ways. According to Roberts (1982), women of all ages tend to have more supportive relationships than men, especially those of an intimate and confiding nature (Roberts et al, 1982). Men are encouraged to be kind and generous toward women as well. Under the typical Chinese practice, it is normal for a man

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to pay for a lady and she is not expected to resist this but take it for granted. Therefore, very few Chinese would or could afford to go out due to their financial concern, while Chinese girls would not be bothered whether they could pay or not.

Because of all these advantages over men, female Chinese students have learned much more about the western culture and enjoyed more of their stay in the West. Their proficiency in the target language has made life a lot easier in many ways; their natural openness has helped them to make friends from other cultures; their social life is more colourful due to less financial strain; and the more tolerant and supportive attitude of the society and the male companions assist them in solving some of their problems. There are also fewer stresses on them from the academic point of view. They are, in most cases, not so much pressed by ambition and drive, which may be more demanding on the male students.

Conclusion 3.   Female Students Tend to Have a More Satisfactory Experience Than Female Dependent Spouses

An increasing number of wives have come to join their husbands in Britain. Some come on their own, others bring their children with them. In the beginning of this research, there was no intention to explore this area, but the needs seemed to become more and more obvious. A couple of wives wrote to me while a lot of others talked to me about their problems when they found out that I was doing a research about the Chinese students. With some close contact with them as well as my own understanding, we shall look into their situations and compare them to those female students and find out what kind of problems they have to face in the new culture.

Female Chinese students and scholars have more or less the same background in China, that is, they are from universities or academic fields, while the dependent spouses of male students tend to come from more different educational background and social spectra. There are medical doctors, nurses, teachers, office clerks, students, factory workers, athletes, pop singers and so on and so forth. Most of these wives had little English at arrival, so they had more language difficulties.

Whatever they do in China, one thing is sure - they are independent financially as well as in any other aspects. Some of them even earn more than their husbands at home. After they arrived in Britain, their life had to go through fundamental changes. First and foremost, their status changed and they now had to depend on their husbands for almost everything. They could not have brought any money with them as Chinese money is worth little here. Nor could they find a job easily. Unemployment is high in this country, let alone Chinese housewives with little or no English.

With the exception of a very few lucky wives who either got scholarships or limited kinds of jobs, like a research assistant (RA) in higher education, most Chinese wives are left at home. This would have been something they had not expected nor what they had wanted to be. They had not only to rely on their husbands for basic supply, they also had to depend on them with daily communication with the outside world.

Almost all wives went to some kind of English courses when they first arrived. Again due to the financial pressure, few could afford to attend formal language schools. The little input from the free English classes could not help them to pick up the language in a short time, especially when they do not use English at home. Many just gave up shortly after a period of unsuccessful learning and effort.

It is hardly possible for a family of two or more to live on the limited grants. As a result, many wives had to go to work in the Chinese restaurants, where more Cantonese is needed than English. Working in the kitchen was definitely not what they wanted, but it did give them some kind of financial independence and extra household spending. It also kept them busy and not so much confined at home. What could they do when their husbands were at work and children at school?

For those whose children were too small for school, the situation was much worse. In China, the young children would be looked after either by their grandparents or nursery school. Housewives are rare in urban areas. Could you imagine how the wives would feel when they could not go to work but had to take care of their young babies at home? The don't even have many people to talk to. Even if they do speak some English, life in Britain is completely different from China. One may have little privacy or many other difficulties in China, but one would never have felt lonely or isolated, which has been the case with many Chinese housewives in Britain.

One such example is the wife of a Chinese student studying in Glasgow. Though a fully qualified doctor, she had been working in a Chinese restaurant as a waitress since she came to the U.K. She had expected that she could at least improve her English by working as a waitress rather than washing dishes in the kitchen. All she

had learnt so far have been a few expressions like "Can I help you?", and some vocabulary of Chinese food - sweet and sour chicken, or beef curries. It is not difficult to understand her frustrations and unhappiness. Like many other Chinese wives, she felt lost and unfulfilled. What could she do? Could she not have been so much happier working as a doctor in China?

There was another Chinese wife who could not stand doing nothing but looking after her baby and she went back to China after only two months' visit. She took her child with her and left behind her husband struggling with his PhD on his own.

Most housewives, however, have to stay whether they like it or not. They just have to get over the culture shock and try to get used to the role they have to play in the new culture. There are some who are coping well due to their natural adaptability or out of their love for their husbands. For those Chinese men, their being in Britain may mean greater achievement and better prospects, but for most of their wives, it really means more sacrifice. Compared to those female students, they have to sacrifice much more to support their husbands.

The following table summarizes some of the characteristics of the Chinese students in the United Kingdom. The statistics were obtained through the main survey by making use of computer analysis.

Table 8: Main Survey: Characteristics of Chinese Students in the U.K.

Gender	M 79.83%		F 20.17%			
Marital Status	Married 82.33%		Single 15.97%		Unknown 1.68%	
Age Group	<25 6.72%	26-30 49.58%	31-40 36.13%	>40 7.56%		
Subject Specification	Arts 9.24%	Social Science 9.24%	Science 18.49%	Engineering 55.46%	Medicine 4.2%	Other 3.36%
Qualification Obtained	PhD 13.45%	MA/MSc 52.1%	BA/BSc 27.73%	Other 6.72%		
Qualification Sought	PhD 62.18%	MA/MSc 10.08%	Visiting Scholar 27.73%			
Financial Sponsors	B.C * 17.65%	C.E.C* 9.24%	Joint Sponsor* 21.01%	ORS & Univ. Grants 15.13%	Other* 36.99%	
Training Courses	1 year 10.08%	half year 36.13%	3 months 11.76%	Other 3.36%	None 38.66%	
Tests	TOEFL 8.4%	ELTS 36.97%	EPT 15.13%	More than one test 21%	None 18.49%	

* Note: B.C. - British Council   C.E.C. _ Chinese Educational Committee
Joint Sponsor - B.C. and C.E.C.
Other includes self support

CHAPTER 6

ANALYSIS OF MAIN FINDINGS (II)
-RECREATION, PERCEPTION AND EMOTION

6. 1.   Accommodation, Leisure and Social Activities

The pilot study in the Glasgow area has shown that most Chinese students live in relatively poor and cheap accommodation. Their leisure and social activities are very limited and insular. We have discussed some of the causes earlier, such as the financial pressure from outside as well as from oneself; the unwillingness to go out and mix with other people; busy academic life and other commitments and so on. In the following sections, we will try and find out other factors which affect the daily life of the Chinese students.

6. 1. 1.   Present Accommodation and General Living Standard

The main survey throughout the UK told us that there were about 42% Chinese students staying in university residence; 50% of them renting private flats and 7.5 % living in council houses. These figures from my questionnaires may not have shown us the true distribution of accommodation types, but rather implied that I received more completed questionnaires from those who stayed in the university halls of residence.

I have been to various university residences, private flats and council houses during my formal and informal visits to over 10 universities in different parts of the United

Kingdom. I have gathered enough information and evidence to comment on the general living conditions of the Chinese students here in Britain. As one of them, I have also the privilege to see some of the implications behind the scene.

First of all, It is found that fewer students stayed in university flats and the situation varied a great deal from one place to another. Students from some universities or cities are better off than some others. The investigation revealed that in places like Glasgow, London, Manchester and Cardiff, students mostly rented private accommodation, either because the university halls were too expensive, or because they were hardly available for many postgraduates. On the other hand, students studying in Nottingham, Warwick and Birmingham tended to stay in the halls of residence. Let us take Birmingham as an example: although Birmingham is not appealing to many Chinese students as a big city, the university itself is situated in a beautiful site outside the city centre. If any overseas student wishes to apply, the halls of residence are usually available, the cost are reasonable and the conditions are satisfactory.

Secondly, the general living conditions of the Chinese students were poor and unsatisfactory. Respondent 55 from Manchester commented, displaying her anger and sorrow: "Food here is all right and we eat better anyway, but accommodation is really a problem. Even the Principal of the UMIST know that the Chinese students live in the worst areas. He once expressed to a Chinese Educational Delegation that he felt very sorry because the Chinese students were the best scholars but lived in worst places:" However, she felt that it was our own fault because we chose to stay in poor areas even when we had more money.

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How did the Chinese students find their accommodation? 47% students found it satisfactory including those 9% very satisfactory; 45% had no complaints - "Well, not too bad," while only 8 % felt that it was unsatisfactory. These figures could tell us little unless we look at the implications behind. It may be necessary for the readers to know some background information.

A glimpse of accommodation in Chinese universities may help us to see the situation better and become more understanding. Due to the high population and limited space in China, the general living standards are quite low, especially in terms of accommodation. We will take a closer look at the university accommodation in Chinese higher institutions as a comparison.

Generally speaking, all state-owned universities or colleges in China have student dormitories which accommodate almost all registered students. Higher education has been free for most students and so has been the accommodation. Throughout the university, students live in such dormitories and four to eight students sharing one room has been the norm. There has been no bother to look for accommodation as it has already been allocated and neither has there been any other choice.

After arriving in the UK, finding a suitable place to stay has been a headache for many Chinese students. One may or may not get a place in the university owned accommodation. Most of all, with little money in the pocket, the primary concern would be the cheaper, the better. Because of the incredible gap between the two countries, when one had to pay nothing in China but most had to use half of the grants for accommodation in Britain, there is no wonder that nearly every Chinese

student sought to look for a cheaper place to stay on arrival.

As a result, many Chinese students, about 37%, excluding couples, share accommodation among themselves. A number of single students tended to share rooms, more for the purpose of saving money than companionship. It is not uncommon and rather sad that many flatmates didn't get along and had disputes over financial matters, but the "common interest" - living as cheaply as possible - served as a bond between them. Anyway, they had been used to living with other students or colleagues back home.

During the interviews, information was sought as to the type of accommodation they would expact to live in before they came to Britain, and whether or not they were happy with the reality. The answers were very diversified and there were mainly three categories: high expectations, low expectations and no expectations. The first group of students were very idealistic and became genuinely disappointed with the reality. Respondent 78 told me frankly: "I thought when I came to Britain, everything would be arranged, like the foreign students in China. Here I had to look for a flat myself. The council house I live in now was empty and I had to buy everything when I moved in. Besides, I could only afford second-hand furniture."

According to Respondent 1 from Oxford: "Most Chinese students live in worse accommodation than what they had at home. This is not only due to the poor financial condition, also due to the high inflation in Britain." His colleague, Respondent 3 shared this view: "I was really shocked at the poor condition in which the Chinese students live after I got to Britain. I didn't live in such horrible places in China. It is much worse than I had expected."

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Another group of students were either too pessimistic or had had some information about the accommodation in Britain. Some had realised that Britain was not like the U.S.A. and were told that accommodation would be very poor before coming out. A small number of people were quite happily surprised when they found that the university flats were better than they had anticipated.

The third group of students who had had no expectations comprised the majority. For some of them this may be due to a lack of imagination or information, but they were more realistic and practical. Respondent 8 from Cardiff put it plainly: "Accommodation is just like dormitory, a place to spend the nights, so I did not expect much."

A lot of Chinese students would certainly agree with him. It was hardly an exaggeration that the flats were merely places to sleep in as most students spend most of their time in universities, let alone that many students sacrifice most of their evenings and weekends in Chinese restaurants and take-aways.

Accommodation may be essential for British people, simply because it represents home and security, possibly comfort and luxury. On the contrary, for most Chinese students, it could hardly bring any comfort. One respondant has been living in Britain for nearly seven years and his wife joined him about five years ago. They had no jobs nor children back home in China, but they had never regarded their flats as their home.

It could probably be understood now why many Chinese students were quite content with their poor accommodation. Most students living in university halls of residence were quite happy about them, though there were some complaints. Apart from the feeling that some university services regarding accommodation management were poor, one scholar from the University of Nottingham found it difficult to understand: "The university has a very strange system about allocating accommodation. I had to move out in August while I ended my stay in October." As I understand it, quite a number of universities, like the University of Warwick, provides accommodation during the term, while one has to move about for holidays. Many students had found this instability hard to cope with. Fortunately, it is something one could get used to after a while and as most Chinese students were homeless wanderers with few belongings, moving in and out had not been a big problem.

Nevertheless, what would have been their ideal accommodation? Some told me that they would like to live in a typical English house which they had seen in films or had vivid imagination about when they were reading British literature in their old school days!

6. 1. 2. Spare Time and Leisure Readings

It has been recognised and understood that a lot of Chinese students could hardly enjoy their social life due to obvious obstacles. The statistics from the questionnaires had shown that 68% students claimed that they had some sort of social activities, while 22% students had little time to spare for socialising.

What was their leisure reading like? About 92% Chinese students spend their spare time reading newspapers, magazines or novels. The following figures may tell us the types of their leisure reading:

19%	various newspapers
17%	scientific journals/magazines
14%	general fiction
26%	easy reading
15%	all kinds
8%	nothing

The majority of the Chinese students read what is available from libraries but their reading seems to be more or less confined to their own subjects. The reasons for this are straightforward: materials relating to their subject matter are necessary if not compulsory and easier to understand. Taking into account that many Chinese students have language difficulties, it would probably be too much to ask for them to cope with the huge selection of reading matter available in Britain.

Besides, a lot of my respondents felt that they were too busy and had little time for leisure browsing. Many considered it as a good break to read at home, but very few people were willing to buy newspapers or magazines on a regular basis.

The general impression was that there were very few Chinese journals or newspapers available in Britain. Although some local libraries have a small Chinese section, the choice is very limited and they are mostly novels from Hong Kong or Taiwan. The only Chinese newspaper within the reach of most Chinese students is the overseas version of "People's Daily", which is the official channel from the Chinese government. There is no comparison to what one can get back in China,

or even in countries like the U.S.A. or Canada, where there are more Chinese people as well as more Chinese literature.

For many Chinese students, leisure reading in English was not only for information or entertainment, it also served to help their English. Respondent 17 from Oxford added: "Reading is a good way to understand the society and you know what other people are talking about, so you could participate in the conversation."

Respondent 27 always had his own point of view: "I have been reading something about China written by foreigners. I think they are quite interesting and the writers seemed to have a good understanding of China." It is true that reading can broaden one's knowledge and open one's hearts to new ideas or bring about better understanding.

It is not possible to list all the titles reported as their favourite reading. However, I did get some clues and was able to draw some generalisations. Since most of my respondents were scientists or engineers, there was an obvious preference in their choice of magazines and newspapers. Among journals and magazines a lot of students chose to read the New Scientist, Nature and the Economist. The favourite newspapers seemed to be The Guardian, The Financial Times, Observer and some local newspapers.

A couple of ladies whom I interviewed appeared to have more romantic souls. They liked to read English novels and fictions. One of them paid regular visits to second-hand shops. One lady favoured looking through Cosmopolitan and other women's magazines.

6. 1. 3. Favourite TV Programmes and Other Enjoyments

An article on the Observer, "TV Sales Boom as China Switches on to Wealth" (by Steve Vines, Sunday, 19 April 1992), tells us about the consequences of the economic success in southern China. According to him, "The Chinese bought more than 19 million television sets in 1990", but "China is slow to produce statistics, so there is no accurate information about last year's trends."

The craving for TV is also true for the overseas Chinese students. The popularity of television both at home and abroad derives from evident reasons, such as the lack of social life by other means. For many Chinese, sitting at home watching TV in the evenings after a day's hard work would be the best treat one could ever wish for.

The majority of my respondents considered watching TV as their favourite pastime. 43% of them spent most of their spare time on watching TV, while about 30% students enjoyed this as well as listening to music, playing cards or going to the cinema.

Since watching television has been the dominant trend among the Chinese students, all families and most single students had TV sets, which might have been purchased second-hand, or passed down from the older generations, who had either left the country or moved to another place. A TV set, big or small, coloured or black and white, has become one of the essential decorations in a Chinese flat.

News on TV was the most popular programme for most Chinese students, even for those who seldom watched TV. They found the news on the British TV channels was fast, accurate and had a lot of variety.

A number of students mentioned the Parliament Debate on TV as their favourite. I assume that it is part of the British democracy which fascinates many Chinese audiences. Respondent 17 explained to me why he liked it: "I am learning the speaking skills from some of the speakers and the topics are usually quite interesting."

Another favourite programme was Blind Date, though It seemed stange that anyone could like Cilla Black. Anyway, many found it funny and very entertaining. Sports programmes were very popular, especially with male Chinese students. Respondent 6 from Nottingham became quite excited when he told me that he loved to watch sports like football matches: "If there are international or national games, I'd give up work for them." He was just one of the many sports fans.

Some Chinese viewers found the quizzes on TV very interesting. "They encourage competition and provide some useful knowledge," as Respondent 7 commented. Others would stay up late and watch the night films or some soap series about detectives. One student from Birmingham used to follow "Dallas" when he first came to the UK.

A number of Chinese students liked scientific programmes such as biology or wild life; those who were more romantic or sentimental tended to watch old English films from the 30's and 40's. There were a few students who did not like British TV programmes but found the American ones more appealing.

Although some new arrivals found some of the TV programmes difficult to follow which seemed to put them off, the majority tried to overcome the difficulties and take up the challenge for the sake of improving their English. There was no doubt that watching TV proved to be one of the best ways to learn the language. A couple of students did watch TV purely for academic reasons. They chose the Open University on BBC 2 and other educational programmes.

It is not easy to identify their favourite channel as each individual has his/her own tastes or preferences. Some found the news on Channel 4 was detailed, others liked ITN best. As I was interviewing Respondent 101 in his London home, his little daughter came in and said that she liked the Children's BBC.

Apart from watching TV, playing cards or chess probably came next down the list of favourite pastimes. Friends and families do get together regularly, flatmates also gather around the kitchen table for occasional celebrations, such as Chinese festivals or birthdays. After a big feast, most people would be ready for playing cards. The Chinese card games are various and there are national games with regional versions which could bring a lot of fun and enjoyment. Some students could become really competitive and small bets on Mahjong could make it more exciting.

In most cities, CASS organises local competitions, such as chess or bridge, and some enthusiasts go along regularly, pleased to win the occasional prize of a photo album as a reward by the end of the day.

Chinese people love sports and have a firm belief in keeping fit. Many Chinese students do exercises in the university sports centre. Swimming, playing badminton and table tennis were most popular. A number of Chinese female students join aerobic or popmobility classes, while many male students are more keen on team sports like basketball or volleyball.

An annual "Overseas Chinese Students' Games Day" is organised by the Chinese Embassy, in association with the national CASS in the UK. Before that, certain regional or local sports Days would take place. These have been one of the biggest social gatherings among the Chinese students in this country.

Not many Chinese students could afford to go to cinema very often. In this case, the students from universities like Manchester and Warwick considered themselves as privileged because they could join the film society and were able to watch a lot of good films at a cheap rate. The less fortunate students had to find consolation by watching TV at home. After all, it has been an universal phenomenon that going to the cinema - once regarded as one of the most cultured and most enjoyable activities - is being displaced by modern technology: FST television and satellite programmes.

A lot of Chinese people enjoy music. Very few Chinese students had opportunities to go to concerts or theatres, but they were genuinely happy with a walkman stereo, though a good hifi would be even better. On the whole, Chinese people are quite optimistic no matter how hard life can be. We love singing and dancing. CASS organise parties regularly and most Chinese students would make time for them and have fun. These parties provide opportunities for new students to meet,

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old friends to reunite, lovers to court, wives to gossip and children to scream. Singers and dancers could sing or dance with music. Even those who have no talents could enjoy free glasses of wine and other snacks while watching others' performances.

6. 1. 4. "Pub Culture", Museums and Galleries

Only 2.5% students said that pubs were their favourite places for their spare time. This may sound surprising to some British pub lovers at first sight, but it may be more understandable and rather natural, given the embedded cultural and national factors which have been discussed in earlier chapters. To many Chinese, pubs are not essential places for social activities, but they do recognise that they are closely interrelated to British culture.

Regarding their attitudes towards British pubs, I divide my respondents into four groups. About a third of my respondents belong to Group 1, who did not like pubs or bars at all. Some did not like it because "it is too expensive and a waste of time and money" (Respondent 7 from Cardiff); others did not like it because it was too noisy and the music too loud. As Respondent 15 said to me: "I don't like to go to pubs because I prefer peace than noise. Another thing is that you tend to drink too much, and by the time you come out you are almost drunk. I could not improve my English and it took too much time as well."

Respondent 9 from Edinburgh found that the British pubs were poorly decorated and lacked glamour when he compared them to the relatively few pubs in China. As usual, Respondent 27 from Liverpool was very nationalistic, he went further:

"British pubs are too different from the Chinese culture and I don't intend to get used to their culture and customs."

Group 2 are students who felt indifferent about pubs. Respondent 25 from Belfast expressed his attitude: "Pubs are all right. Foreigners invite us to bars just like us Chinese having a meal together." He, along with many others, would not mind visiting pubs once in a while, on the condition that the expenditure was within his budget.

Those who liked pubs fall into Group 3. Respondent 70 from Manchester described pubs in this way: "I think that pubs are very important places for British to socialise, not only for drinking. People of all ages go there and it is like a miniature of the British society." Her colleague at UMIST, Respondent 105 had the same feeling: "I was surprised at the popularity of pubs. Once I went to a conference with my supervisor. He had driven for a few hours and I thought he must have been very tired and would need a rest. He dragged me and another companion to a local pub as soon as we got there in the evening."

Some students visited pubs on a regular basis, either once a month, or as often as they could manage in terms of money and time. Respondent 13 from London found that English people were very friendly in the pubs and they, talked about everything. He like it because he could make friends there. For Respondent 78, he also had good reasons for it: "You don't have to spend too much money there (as you do in a restaurant), and you can chat. You get very excited so you can talk a lot."

Respondent 30 from Birmingham University had been to the USA for a conference and he liked the bars in New York, where one can sit in front of the counter. When Respondant 21 visited the Continent, she found it really nice and relaxing to sit out in the streets or by the river, under the sunshine or under a parasol. She commented that the scene of people enjoying a pint of beer or an icecream reminded her how wonderful life was. Unfortunately, the British weather has made this difficult.

A relatively smaller number of people belong to Group 4 who felt curious about pubs but never ventured to go in and find out what they were like. Respondent 26 represented some older, less adventurous scholars: "I have never been to any pubs, I only looked in from outside." It is really a pity that some short-term visitors have never been able to visit a pub, which is so important in the British way of life.

Another important part of British culture is demonstrated by hundreds and thousands of museums, galleries and exhibition centres. Many Chinese students were fascinated by the number and variety of museums and other means of preserving cultural heritages. As Respondent 8 commented: "The British history is not as long as that of China, but it has been well preserved and managed. The scientific museums are very educational and it is good that they are open for all people." It is agreed that museums serve valuable educational purposes in such ways as scientific, historical, artistic or technological. They also broaden our knowledge and cultivate our awareness of culture, customs and traditions.

Quite a number of Chinese students were impressed by the fact that some items or instruments in museums could be touched and tried out. They were also impressed by the categorisation of items and the good management. This was contrasted with their counterparts in China, where exhibition items were protected, and the administration was very poor.

Since museums and galleries have the significance of education, visitors do get some insights during or after their visits. Respondent 14 was thrilled after visiting various places: "I find the items in the museums are beautiful and I feel very proud that there are many Chinese artifacts. British people exhibit and appreciate them, which shows that we do have some beautiful things after all."

Many Chinese students reacted adversely as they strolled in the museums. As Respondent 15 said: "When I visited the British Museum, I had the feeling that everything was plundered and I wondered how the British could have pirated so many precious things from other parts of the world." He recalled his experience when he visited the same place with one of his English friends: "My English friend told me that those would have disappeared if they were not kept in the museum. According to my opinion, this is an exhibition of the British plunder of other countries." There was one student who actually expressed his hatred towards English "because they had taken so much from China."

There is a heart-felt appreciation that Britain has a rich collection, and has been excellent preserving different cultures and historical heritages. A couple of students felt sorry for the passing glory of Great Britain and they thought that this had left some British people with a sense of loss. They also felt that Britain

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had contributed a great deal to the world in the past. Respondent 14 was very positive about this: "Although Britain has a short history, the process of civilisation has been very quick. When we still had our long pigtails, the industrial revolution was taking place in the west."

Many Chinese students felt that China should lay emphasis, expand and open more museums. In her opinion, Respondent 83 would like to see China achieving this: "I felt that it would be so nice to bring children along and tell them about these things. There are so much to play with and so much to learn from." Indeed, China had a lot to learn in preserving the cultural heritage as well as developing modern technology.

6. 1. 5. Religion - Perceived as Part of the British Culture

Apart from visiting museums, galleries, exhibitions and cinema, church has been another place which has attracted some Chinese students on Sundays. The investigation showed that a large number of Chinese students had been to church. Some visited a local church regularly, while others went on special occasions.

The majority of the Chinese students were curious about religions and churches in Britain and wanted to find out what they were like. As Respondent 13 said: "Before I came to Britain, someone told me that if I wanted to know the British society, go to the Parliament debate and go to church." Respondent 8 put it this way: "I don't believe in any religion, but I want to understand the culture and the British society." They believed that churches reflected part of this society, so they went to local churches out of this natural interest.

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As a matter of fact, many Chinese students had been quite ignorant about religions, especially Christianity as a western religion. There has been little freedom in China regarding religions and their little knowledge about Christianity from western literature or art had made it fascinating. After arriving in Britain, they were eager to explore to satisfy their curiosity.

Despite the Communist propaganda against religions, many Chinese students looked at them positively. Respondent 7 said that religion did encourage people to do good things and it kept the society stable. According to Respondent 17: "I think that religion is worthwhile existing. We thought that it was superstition and wondered ho it could co-exist in the modern world. Now I can see that it is far from superstition. It is welfare in the society, it also educates people. The hymns in the church are good music education and the bible reading is cultural education."

One thing that a lot of Chinese students found in common was that the people in the church were very friendly, kind and helpful. Respondent 9 recalled his first experience with the church: "The next day after I arrived in Edinburgh, I felt very lonely and it was Sunday. Out of curiosity I went to a church. The atmosphere in the church was very friendly and gentle. I love the music and I could make friends there." He became rather emotional as he went on: "I remember that I could not find my way home after the service because the buildings looked alike everywhere. Someone from the church took me to his home and we had a meal together. After that, he looked over the phone book, found my address and took me back." To many Chinese, the church was like another world where they felt welcomed and at home.

Usually, some local churches have contacts with the British council and they would invite newcomers to go along to their services. Some Chinese students were taken to church by their local Christian friends. In some big cities like Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool and Glasgow, the Chinese Christian Fellowships, whose members were mostly from Hong Kong, Singapore or Malaysia, were active in involving the Mainland Chinese students. They organise annual Welcoming Nights and Bible studies. Respondent 13 from Manchester had been invited by some Hong Kong friends and she told me: "I was very lonely so I went along. I felt that it was a comfort to see some yellow faces and they were very friendly."

While some Chinese students visited the church because of the fascinations of its music, "which made me feel holy and noble" (Respondent 1 for Oxford), others went along in order to discover the host culture and traditions. Besides, a large number of students went to church to improve their English. Respondent 26 was one of them: "I found that the preacher had very good English and I could improve my listening comprehension." For the same reason, some students also welcomed some religious workers, such as Jehovah's Witnesses, into their flats and had bible studies with them. One of my respondents said to me: "I felt really sorry for these people. They are very pious and devoted, and we took advantage of them."

Although a great many Chinese students had been to church, attended home bible studies, or joined their outings, few were ready to step forward and became converted. There were a couple of obvious reasons: some were brought up firmly believing that there was no God; others became very interested in Christianity but found it difficult to go further, fearing that they would be in trouble back in China.

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Nevertheless, there were a few Chinese students who had found faith in Christianity though they kept it a secret for security reasons. One of them told me: "Many of my Chinese colleagues were very unhappy and miserable, because they don't believe in anything. Faith in God has made life so much more meaningful."

Even those determined non-believers couldn't help going to church occasionally and being impressed. Respondent 76 was open to me: "I am a Communist Party member, an atheist, but I feel that Christianity is important in this society, which teachs some moral standard." Like many others, he had been to church services at Christmas or Easter and enjoyed his visits.

A lady from Birmingham, Respondent 14 expressed how she thought of Christianity in Britain: "I went to church out of curiosity in the beginning, then I realise that it is quite good if God can help me. I like to attend Wedding ceremonies. I found that different denominations are quite competitive and they are also very powerful."

A couple of students made some comments as to whether or not Christianity was reviving in this country. One said that the church had changed a lot from the traditional one so as to attract more people.

Another student commented that religion here was more or less detached from politics. There could be some really interesting debates because some students believed that the church has such impact on society and people's lives. It was suggested that few shops were allowed to open on Sundays came from the influence of churches. At least Christianity is seen as symbolically important in the way that the Queen is the head of Church of England!

The above discussion derived from the perceptions of religions among the Chinese students before and after they came to Britain. Some British readers may perceive a different picture about religions or church going. According to the English Church Census on 15 October 1989, only 3.7 million adults attended church, which showed a decrease of 8 per cent since 1979. Church attendence in other religions or different denominations recorded either increase or decrease in numbers (Source: Social Trends, 1992).

6. 1. 6.   Travelling and Transport

Tourism has become very popular in China in the past decade. As China opens her door to the west, a great many foreigners rush into the country to discover the exotic beauty. On the other hand, recent national economic development has made many Chinese better off financially, so that they can travel within the country more extensively. International and internal travelling become easier than ever before. It is almost trendy for people to travel from one place to another, and almost every tourist spot in China is crowded with foreign as well as home visitors, despite the fact that both transport and tourist services are still poor and inefficient.

In order to give the readers who had never been to China some idea as to what travelling is like in the country, I will mention a few points as a brief introduction. So far, aeroplanes are very expensive and the availability is very limited for ordinary Chinese people. Very few people own private cars, though many can rent state-owned cars for business uses or short distance outings. Travelling by ships

or ferries is only available in certain areas and it usually takes ages to go from one place to another.

As a result, the most popular means of transport are trains and coaches. The railway service is so busy that there is an effect on efficiency. As the geographical situation in China varies so much, the roads are usually in very poor condition in many places. Mostly, because China is so big with such a huge population, travelling is really difficult.

Compared to China, Britain is so much smaller. Meanwhile the transport is so much easier and more convenient. Because of this, many Chinese students took the advantage and travelled as much as they could. Some travelled for business, such as attending conferences; some travelled simply for recreation; others travelled because "the weekends are too long and there is nothing to do." Most students had found travelling enjoyable as well as educational, because it helped to understand the customs and culture of the British and other peoples.

There were 25% students who had travelled a great deal; 31% students were only able to visit a few places nearby. Tourist spots in Britain like Lake District, York, Stratford, Edinburgh, St. Andrews and Wales had been popular places for Chinese tourists. London had been "compulsory" as it had to be the first city where every Chinese new-arrival landed.

Those who liked going to places had some interesting experiences while travelling in U.K. or abroad. "Travelling in Britain is very convenient and you don't have to book a place for the night," Respondent 30 was very pleased with this. He sometimes

travelled with friends by renting a car and they had found that the services were excellent.

Respondent 13 was very impressed by the way the British people enjoy their life on holidays or at weekends: "They would go to the seaside in their caravan and it's another kind of life." She was invited by her English friends to a trip like that and it thrilled her.

A number of my respondents had been to other countries. France is obviously the most attractive destination due to her renowned culture as well as her easy access from Britain. Well, as a matter of fact, for many Chinese students, going to France is far from easy because of the difficulty in getting a visa. However, those who did visit France had little regret over the "hassle." Respondent 17 had found that travelling in France had helped him to know the culture: "I had a friend in Paris and I stayed in his home. Paris is very artistic and romantic. Compared to Paris, London is so industrialised and ugly. I could speak some French but not understand much."

When she went to France for a conference, Respondent 2 had some problems because "French people don't speak English." She had also been to Ireland for an outdoor experiment as part of her geological research: "I find the western countries are very developed in living as well as in some other aspects. Ireland is relatively poorer than Britain, but it is still the western style of living."

"I have been to Japan before I came to Britain," Respondent 101 told me: "My impression was that Japan was prosperous and colourful everywhere. She also had very rich products and full of choice." A couple of students who had been to

the USA for conferences had a similar impression and found that the British way of life was very different: slow and less exciting.

Respondent 6 visited Germany before the Berlin Wall fell, and he had "noticed the difference between the West and the East. Germany is also very different from the U.K. The German people gave me the impression that they were hard-working and lively. They were easy to communicate with."

For many Chinese students, visiting other countries had provided them with useful information and unforgettable experiences. Respondent 78 had been to Hungary and felt that it was quite exciting to travel abroad: "Although Hungary was a Communist country, it was very different from China. One instance was that they did not sell tickets on the bus and nobody checked on the bus either. You buy tickets at the post office. it is very cheap and the price is the same anywhere you may go." His example reminded me of my visit to Prague. The same was true for Czechoslovakia, where everything seemed to be relatively cheaper than western countries, but the public phone never worked properly.

Respondent 27 had been to Italy for a conference: "I found that the Italian food was much better than the British food. Another thing I noticed was that because the Italians had black hair, they were easier to approach than fair ones. They are more like Chinese in a sense. Their English was very poor, worse than that of many Chinese, but they were more friendly than English people."

One might argue that each country distinguishes herself from others by her national characteristics. People from the east could hardly tell the difference between French, Italians or Spanish before they could visit these countries or meet

some Frenchmen or Italian girls. The colour of their hair or eyes could tell you little, not even their accent, but their behaviours could probably reveal more of their cultural background.

Some more adventurous students had travelled on the continent by Interrail which allowed students to tour economically within European countries. Respondent 25 did that a couple of years ago on his own and he had been to Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, Germany, Austria and Italy etc. According to him: "Travelling helped to know other cultures but it was very tiring. I had to travel at nights or sleep in Youth Hostels." Nevertheless, he was planning to go on the tour again with his wife.

It is true that many Chinese students could not travel much or at all due to various reasons. 18% of my respondents said that they would love to travel, but were too busy to do so; 8% of the students found that it was too expensive to afford to; 5% respondents do not like travelling in a foreign land by oneself. There were 15% students who could only join the trips organised by CASS due to the reasons above. Some of them did complain about these trips that they were "always in a rush, you just get out of the rented coach and take a few photographs."

On the whole, there had been more fun and gains than problems. Language and cultural differences had hardly been a disadvantage or hindrance but rather a motivation to travel and discover. Chinese students love travelling and have benefited from doing so. Travelling not only improved our English proficiency, but also made us aware of different cultures. It not only provides education, but also affects ideas and attitudes.

Let us take a look at the Chart 2 which may well summarise what we have discussed so far - the life of Chinese students in the U.K. The approximate percentage of the number of students derived from the analysis of the questionnaires.

A   Leisure Reading

B   TV, Cinema and Music

C   Museum, Gallery and Exhibition

D   Sports, Chess and Cards

E   Pubs and Disco

F   Travelling

G   Church and Cathedral
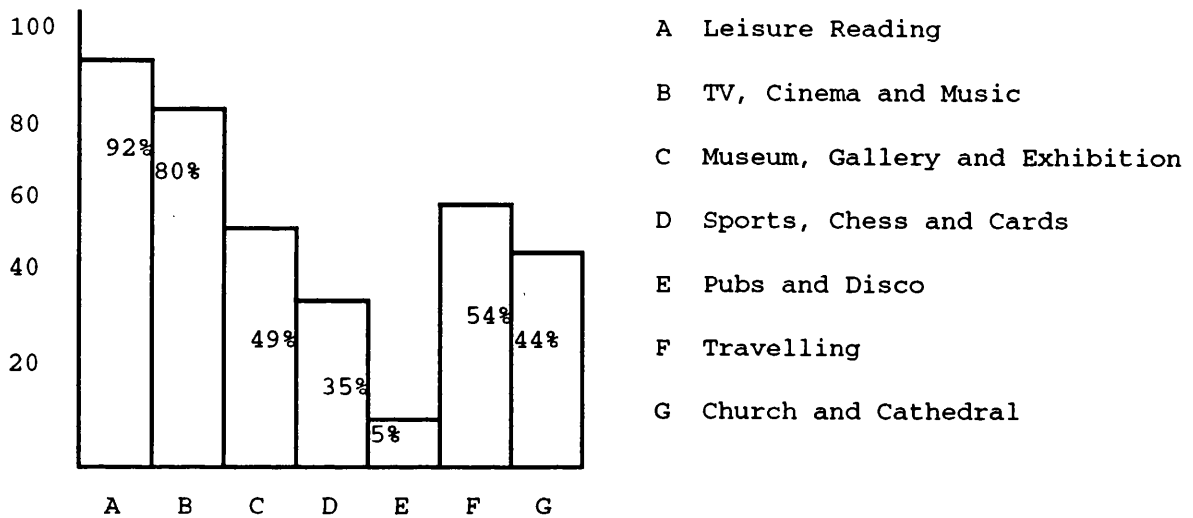
Chart 2: Dimentions of Social Life

6. 2.   Sensitivity, Emotions and Expectations

As we know, most Chinese students and scholars had never been abroad before they came to Britain. What is it like to leave home as adults? Coming to Britain is more than simply leaving home. We not only leave behind our families, friends or colleagues, we also leave behind all the familiar signs, the whole culture which has been deeply embedded in our upbringing. It may not really sound as bad as that, but we do experience a certain sense of loss and other emotional imbalance in one way or another.

Even at the beginning of this research, I had realised that some part of the investigation would be very sensitive and might even cause some uneasiness and disturbance to my respondents. However, the information was so important and relevant that it had to be sought to make this research complete and more worthwhile. To my great relief, except for a few problems such as delay of questionnaires and abusive comments about some sensitive questions, most of my respondents, especially those I had interviewed, were highly co-operative and honestly shared their thought with me. They opened their hearts even to most sensitive questions. They explained to me their emotions as well as their expectations before or after they came to this country.

6. 2. 1.   Homesickness For China

According to my survey, 82% of my respondents were married, but only about 35% of them had their partners with them at the time (I assume that more have come to join them recently). Most husbands and wives had to leave their children back home. There is no wonder that homesickness would be common among the Chinese students.

Except for 4% respondents who were either single or very strong-minded, declared that they don't miss home at all, most Chinese students feel homesick to a greater or smaller degree. 39% Chinese students miss their families all the time, 31% students felt homesick in the beginning, but got used to it after a while. About 12% students miss the old way of life occasionally, while 8% found that the longer they stayed, the more homesick they had become.

It is not difficult to comprehend that older students tend to miss home more than younger ones as the former had to leave a lot more behind: their families, their work and other responsibilities. As Respondent 26 from Nottingham told me earnestly: "I often miss home. Young guys here remind me of my son and old ladies remind me of my mother. I wanted to go home, if not that I was sent abroad for a purpose." Like many others of his age and situation, he wanted to go home but knew it was unrealistic.

A lot of Chinese students felt homesick when they first arrived, especially when they confronted difficult situations such as looking for accommodation, but most of them overcame the feeling eventually and got used to the new way of life. There are some who could never get over the homesickness and it got even worse as time went by.

Nobody could miss home all the time. There are times or occasions when one misses home more. Different people feel homesick at different times for different reasons. Some of my respondents said that they missed home most when they felt miserable and lost; or when they were sick or felt lonely. Others felt homesick at festivals or their parents' birthdays, while Respondent 9 found that the busier he was, the more lonely he felt. Respondent 70 felt quite the opposite: "When I am too busy working, I don't have time to miss home."

Respondent 15 had a sense of humour when he told me that he only missed home when nobody cooked for him. For British people, weekends may mean family gatherings or holidays together, but for many Chinese students, weekends with little to do may mean terrible homesickness and misery.

As Respondent 13 said to me: "I missed home for the first 8 months. When I first came, my daughter was not with me, so I missed her terribly." By the time I interviewed her, she had her 4 year old daughter with her and her mother-in-law was looking after the youngster while she and her husband pursued their postgraduate studies. They were among the few lucky ones whose families were with them so that they could concentrate on their research. For thousands of other Chinese students, they had to study in British Institutions, without any family support. Respondent 76 expressed his feelings for many: "I miss home although both my wife and child are here with me." How much does one have to leave behind when one goes to another country? One's home, families, friends, familiar faces and signs and a whole lot of cultural background, which one had been brought up with and relied upon.

"Sometimes I miss my country, I feel something missing," Respondent 2 said sadly, "I'm in a foreign land. Sometimes I can sit for a couple of hours, thinking of my university days in China. I miss home in a broad sense." Many students miss home in that sense. It is a feeling which could hardly be put into words. One of my respondents described it as "subtle but lingering on and on." It is a very unspecific homesickness which is closely tied up to a specific object - China.

6. 2. 2.   Length of Stay Abroad

No matter how much Chinese students may miss home, there has been an ever-increasing tendency that most of them had tried or would keep trying to extend their stay in the U.K.. We will look into some deeper implications and seek for more explanations in the next chapter. We will now look at some factual findings.

The figures show that 21% Chinese students planned to stay 3 years while 42% students had a longer term plan. These were PhD students whose courses require that period of time to accomplish. About 21% students planned to stay for only one year, either because they were sent for less or just one year, or because they couldn't stay even if they wanted. About 14.3% were either uncertain of what they wanted to do, or they chose not to give any answer regarding this sensitive question. Only a small proportion, about 1.7% students stayed for 6 months, although the government had sent a bigger population of short-term visitors.

Most Chinese students certainly know what they want out of their stay in the U.K. Some wish to get a degree, especially those who came as a visiting scholar initially. Quite a large number of Chinese students had managed to extend their stay by getting scholarships for postgraduate courses or research. They all believed that longer stay means learning more and benefiting more. One can argue that a short-term stay , half a year or so, is hardly enough to do any research.

Generally speaking, my respondents fall into 4 different groups regarding the length of their stay abroad. The very first group were those who were determined to stay and work in another country. Respondent 15 was one of the few who openly admitted this: "I want to stay as long as possible. It is free here. I mean if you are capable and if you work hard, you can do whatever you want to do. This is not possible in China."

Very few actually want to stay in the U.K. like Respondent 30, though he did not plan to go back to China, he did not like the idea of staying in Britain either. He said he would love to go to U.S.A. Not long after the interview, he got an offer

from Singapore which he had accepted and started working for the company since March, 1992.

The 2nd Group were the ones who didn't want to stay abroad any longer than they had to. Respondent 26 was one of them: "I don't want to extend my stay, not for a day. I don't like the place and I don't find it's a place for me to stay or work." A couple of old scholars expressed the same view as they had strong family responsibilities to hold them back.

The majority of my respondents fell into the third group. They plan to go back eventually but tried to extend their present stay for various reasons. Many tried to extend their stay, wishing to get a degree, preferably a PhD or a post doctorate. Respondent 55 was an ambitious lady and she was frank about her plan: "It will take me 3 or more years to finish my degree because my supervisor normally keeps a student working for a few years, which is longer than required. Then I will work for a couple of years, maybe in other countries. Post-doctor seems to be a degree now and everybody is doing it. It also means a better financial position to stay longer abroad."

Respondent 17 from Oxford gave me a more detailed account of his situation: "I've been here for six years and I plan to stay another 3 years. I'm finishing off my thesis here and I'm going to Durham University where I have a 3 years contract to work. I've extended a few times, first as a visiting scholar in 1985. My family and I expected to get a PhD, then I didn't have the financial support, so I taught Chinese along with doing a PhD." It has taken him longer to do his research and it seemed to be quite normal for a literature PhD to carry on for 6 - 7 years.

Among those who tried to extend their stay, there was a contradictory feeling. Respondent 13 expressed her own feeling with which many Chinese would agree: "I want to extend my stay abroad, either here or another country. One reason is finance. If you work here for a few years, you will have a better life when you return. The present situation in China is very depressing. However, it is not a nice feeling here because you work as a RA and you feel like a secondary citizen. In China, we have more advantages in terms of promotion and so on, but one feels depressed. One motivation is that when I do go back after staying abroad for a while, I will feel better and the situation will be better by then." Like her, many students would like to stay abroad and hope that the situation in China will improve by the time they return.

Group 4 consists of students who were uncertain and they had not much choice but to "wait and see." There is no doubt that few Chinese students could have a long-term plan and a seemingly simple decision as to whether to go back to China or to stay in the West would be very hard to make. It depends on many factors. As Respondent 25 commented: "Britain is difficult for any Chinese to stay in. We cannot plan and there's no certain future for us. Everyone wants to see what's going on in China before deciding to go back. We want to have some hope and know what we can do when we get back."

It is true that our plan, if any, depends on factors such as opportunities, as well as many other factors. Respondent 101 said: "I don't have any plan. I've extended twice. I came as a visiting scholar. The first time I extended to do my PhD, now I have extended to work, without the permission of the Chinese authorities."

As for Respondent 2, it is a different story. She told me earnestly: "The shortest plan is to finish my PhD and my husband finish his. I'd like to stay, just to be together with my husband."

6. 2. 3.   Impressions of the U.K.

In Chapter 3 we listed some of the findings, from the pilot study, which included some favourable and unfavourable impressions of Great Britain by Chinese students. With the survey throughout the United Kingdom, a more detailed and comprehensive report has been made available. We will look at these findings in a new light. Some were first impressions which may have changed as time went by; others may be impressions formed after staying in this country for a period of time. There were positive and negative; typical, general opinions and individual, biased ones, all of which will be discussed in the following categories.

Impression 1:   People - National Characteristics and Personal Relationships

There are a variety of opinions about the British people among the Chinese students, depending on their experience of interaction. Most students were impressed by the British politeness and courtesy. After spending some time in Britain, it is unlikely for Chinese students not to pick up English phrases such as "Thank you very much," "Excuse me" or "I'm sorry", which we hardly use in a purely Chinese context. It is not that Chinese people are not polite, but that our politeness is manifested in different ways. Most British people appear to be

friendly and helpful. A great many of Chinese students have experienced welcome from their host British friends and they appreciate this more than anything.

However, there are some unpleasant encounters, even conflicts, between the Chinese guests and British hosts. A lot of Chinese students had complained to me that it was difficult to mix with English people and some of them had suffered racial prejudice. Many Chinese students had never ventured to interact with the local people and they had formed some kind of negative impression of some British people as proud, snobbish and lazy. A few Chinese students disliked the distance between one another among the British people and found this cold relationship appalling.

Impression 2: Weather and Environment

As I have commented earlier in the pilot study, there was a controversial feeling about the British weather. You will not hear a lot of Chinese students complain about the weather as British people do, but there is no doubt that the British weather is more changeable and unpredictable. No matter where Chinese students were from, either North or South, either East or West, the Chinese climate is stable and there are distinguishable seasons. Some students may prefer the mild British weather as they could not stand the sweltering heat of their hometown, while others may miss the constant sunshine back home. Some students may complain about the British weather being too windy with too much rain in winter, simply because they were unhappy and miserable here.

Although a number of Chinese students found the British scenery rather plain and similar everywhere, the majority of students love the vast space of green grass and peaceful, beautiful countryside. The tranquillity and fresh air of the country contrast with the noise and dirt of the city. Though many students did not like big cities like Liverpool and Manchester, which they found dirty and unclean with too many cars. They were impressed by the fact that the tininess of British Isles and easy transport made it possible for people to be away from the maddening crowd and enjoy peace elsewhere.

A number of students complained that dogs make a mess on the streets. They also found the urban roads were not in good condition and there was not enough space for cycling.

Impression 3: Culture - Traditional Customs, Celebrations and Humour

Britain is well-known for preserving cultural heritages and traditional values and customs. Many Chinese students had the impression that Britain was not modern enough, which may not necessarily be a criticism but rather a compliment for beautiful historical spots and classical architecture. We love visiting castles, palaces and museums.

We love traditional festivals like Christmas and Easter. Those national and local celebrations brought Chinese students good fun and entertainment. The Edinburgh International Festival attracts a lot of Chinese visitors every year. While the Chinese students in Wales enjoyed the Welsh Eisteddford, their counterparts in Ireland had fun in the local Irish celebrations on various occasions.

As a multicultural and multiracial society, Britain also celebrates festivals of other cultures or religions, such as Ramadan, Divali on Eid and so on. For Chinese students, the Chinese New Year means a great deal and there are various celebrations wherever there are a crowd of Chinese people.

A couple of students mentioned the 18th and 21st Birthday celebrations which marked the turning point of growing up, becoming mature and responsible.

Humour is listed among the things we like about Britain. We also appreciate the fact that British people respect privacy, which has not been possible, if not condemned, in China. But there are some cultural aspects which some Chinese students do not like, such as some TV programmes and deadly quiet Sunday with few shops open in towns.

Impression 4:   Social and Political Structure

As soon as one arrives in the U.K., or after he/she spends some time in this country, he/she is bound to form his/her opinions about the political and social system of the country. The general feeling was that we like the political democracy which is manifested in such ways as free speech, comprehensive legal system and social welfare and so on.

On the one hand, the Chinese students were impressed by the efficiency and speedy news. We also appreciated the good services including transport, health, catering and tourism compared to their counterparts in China. Bank systems,

easy access to books and information were also among the list of things we like about Britain.

On the other hand, there were some aspects of the British way of life which some Chinese students dislike or find difficult to accept. For example, a lot of Chinese students were disappointed to see the slowness of life pace and its lack of liveliness. Some students complained about the racial prejudice, especially restrictions to Chinese. It is very difficult to come in and out of Britain for many Chinese passport holders. There are certain problems, such as inflation and poll tax, which Chinese students were unhappy about. One student mentioned that there were too many homeless and drunken people in this country, which is very sad.

Impression 5: Food and Accommodation

Although most Chinese students found the British food boring and tasteless, we did find that there was a rich choice of goods in supermarkets and groceries. One student commented that he liked beer while another one loved milk. The British readers may find this funny or uncomprehensible, but the fact is that beer and milk are part of the western diet and drinks, which are available in China but by no means popular.

The general living condition in Britain is better than that of China, especially in terms of accommodation. We had discussed the types of accommodation which the Chinese students had in this country earlier, now we are looking at the British homes. Chinese students like the typical English houses with plenty of rooms and

nice gardens. There is a lot of privacy living in this country and most people enjoy a quiet and comfortable life style.

However, most Chinese students think that it is an expensive country where food and living are concerned. It has been impossible for the Chinese students to afford the way of life which most British people take for granted.

Impression 6: British Higher Education

There was a long list of elements that the respondants liked or disliked about British universities or colleges and it would be too ambitious to try to put down everything. We had managed to cover some aspects in Chapter 5, and we will take a look at other features.

The majority of Chinese students found that British higher institutions had lively academic environments, full of new ideas and good research facilities. We like the computer service and library, which provided fast information and wide choice of materials. Some students were impressed by the co-operation between departments and universities, and found the booking system for using instruments or facilities were very good. They liked the differentiated responsibility at different levels.

However, some students complained about the facts that there were too few scholarships, fees were too high for overseas students and there were lack of funds for researches or facilities. A couple of students also dislike the working environment and bad management.

As far as the campus or supervisors are concerned, there were different opinions, which very much depended upon which university or what kind of supervisors they happened to be in or with. While students from Southampton or Nottingham were happy with their campuses, students from UMIST found it boring and too near to the city centre. Some also complained about the lazy technicians, short lunch break and too many assignments.

6. 2. 4.   Expectations and Major Achievements

In Chapter 4 of the pilot study, we had a brief discussion about "expectation versus reality," which explained some of the great expectations we had about Great Britain.   There were obviously some contradictions between the two. Through the interviews and the main survey, the researcher tried to explore this area more fully. The following questions were asked during the interviews: What did you expect Britain to be like before you came? What were the sources of your expectations? Are you learning a lot academically since you came to Britain? What are your major achievements?

By looking at some of the answers from various respondents, It is hoped the readers may be able to make some generalisations and achieve a better understanding of what most Chinese students wish for and how they strive for these goals.

What were the expectations of Britain? To answer this question, Respondent 30 gave a vivid description: "My image of Britain was somebody, a gentleman wearing

a black hat and holding a stick, and the sky was grey. After I arrived in London, I took the coach from Heathrow to Birmingham, my impression was that it's a green, green country." His comments reminded me of Sherlock Holmes and I am sure that many Chinese students had that stereotype of British people. It is indeed a bit disappointing when we did not have the chance to meet any.

A lot of Chinese students tried to compare Britain to the USA, though most of them have never been to the States. Respondent 27 told me assertively: "I think Britain is like Shanghai, which had been prosperous but not any more. U.S.A. is like Beijing, absorbing all kinds of people from different parts of the country. Britain is very limited. I was shocked when I got to London. I'd expected that it would be a modern and very cosmopolitan city, but the shabby underground gave me a surprise." Respondent 70 also had poor expectations of Britain: "I had expected that Britain was conservative and very small, with fewer universities. She does not have as many opportunities as the U.S.A." He had found that some of the realities were worse: "I am majoring in the structure and I have noticed that although some buildings are new, the styles are out of date. It may be that Britons are trying to keep their tradition, but it gives the impression that the overall design is very depressing and lacking vitality." A number of other respondents who had expected to find a modern Britain were disappointed to face singular rather old-fashioned architecture.

Respondent 55 compared Britain to China as she told me about her expectation versus reality: "I had expected Britain much better than it is, because China is so weak and poor. After I came, I've found Britain better off in many ways, like transport, accommodation, the general living conditions and the research level.

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But I don't like their universities at the undergraduate level which is not, as good as that of China. The undergraduate students don't study and they play around. I do not think this country has any hope. They are rich enough so the people become very lazy. Their lives will be OK but there is no future for this country."

What were the sources of Chinese students' expectations? Respondent 9 explained to me: "My expectations of Britain was that it would be much more advanced than what I have seen. The sources of these expectations were propaganda and pictures. I thought everything would be very modern and automatic; education would be perfect but it is not the case." He was one of many Chinese students whose expectations were based on the available propaganda from TV, newspapers or other second-hand sources, which could be somehow biased and misleading.

Another important source was from those who had been abroad. This more informal information could be very different and varied, and they were mostly depending on individual experience and personal judgment. Respondent 83 obviously had very negative ideas about Britain before she came: "I thought the people would be distant, but the Scottish people are more warm-hearted and friendly than I'd expected. The food is also cheaper than I was told. Those friends of mine who had visited Britain said that Britain was poor, the weather was horrible, people were conservative and difficult to get along with".

Respondent 25 had a good reason to be informed negatively: "People told me that it's dangerous to go to Northern Ireland and it's a bit frightening due to the fact that there might be fighting and bombings." Then he thought that there were

many people living there and so would he. In fact, he was happy and safe after spending six years in Belfast when I met him.

Someone like Respondent 78 was bound to have a few disappointments because he had high expectations about Britain: "My friend in America wrote to me saying that it was like Paradise and all he wanted was to enjoy himself. I thought Britain was going to be the same." If we remember, Respondent 78 had also expected that when he arrived in this country, everything would be arranged for him.

Most Chinese students had certain kinds of expectations of Britain, whether by the influence of propaganda, or by visual sources such as films, pictures and paintings, or through pure imagination from literature or certain invisible inspiration. Whatever their expectations may have been, their real experience would have to testify the truth.

Have the Chinese students learnt a lot academically since they came to Britain? What were their major achievements? The answer to the first question was positive. The majority of Chinese students came to this country for academic reasons and most of them were making progress in their research and studies. An example of this is Respondent 15, who although he came to visit his wife initially and would rather have gone to the U.S.A., was very pleased with his course at Liverpool Polytechnic: "I think I am doing real research here which I am interested in. It might take me 20 or 30 years to do the same thing in China."

Many Chinese students would agree that they were learning something new and their knowledge had broadened a great deal. Respondent 2 told me: "I learned to

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do research, to solve problems and many more things." Respondent 8 added: "I began to see what has been done in my area and have a better understanding of many things." It is true that most Chinese students have improved academically in one way or another. Many learned useful research methods and were able to carry out independent projects in advanced areas; some very hard-working and bright Chinese students published various papers in professional journals. For many, the straight forward answer was that they were getting their PhD degree which in itself was a great achievement.

Academic gains were not exclusive. Respondent 13 explained to me how he felt: "One thing I don feel very strongly here in Britain is freedom. You don't understand it before you really experience it. The propaganda in China is usually the dark side of capitalism, or on the other hand, it seems to say that it is very easy in terms of materialism once you are abroad, or you can get whatever you want. I have found that life is a struggle, even for British people. There are opportunities, but one has to look for them and you can achieve after you have tried. I feel that democracy does bring freedom. Ideologically, I have a sense of freedom and equality here." He was not the only one whose achievement was in a broad sense and multidimensional -- academical, spiritual, social and financial.

Each individual had his/her own perception regarding their achievement. Respondent 6 found himself with a broad new outlook about himself and foreigners. He was able to see that foreigners were not untouchable. Respondent 7 learned something from his work in Britain: "It is quite good that the universities here have contact with commerce and business which allow theory to be applied into practical use. I think the research projects should have contacts with the

industries so we can do something they are interested in."

Not every Chinese student felt that he/she was achieving what he/she had arrived for or expected to obtain. The reasons were various. Some students never stay here long enough to allow them the opportunity to benefit academically or otherwise. Some students felt that their language and financial barriers had limited their gains. Some really ambitious Chinese students thought staying in Britain could hardly be called an achievement. They could surely do better elsewhere. Those who had expected to make miracles or achieving a breakthrough in their academic life were not very satisfied with what the reality had to bring. Even so, most of them still admitted that they were doing something useful and there were some good experiences in Britain.

6. 2. 5. Perception of China - Change for Better or Worse?

When we were in China, we seldom looked at China as an abstract object or thought of her good and bad sides. We lived there and took everything for granted until one day we left her, for whatever reasons, for whatever length of time. Then we began to realise that we could never really leave China behind and she would always be part of us, simply because we are Chinese no matter wherever we may be. To some extent, we overseas Chinese feel more Chinese abroad because we are made more conscious of the fact, either by ourselves, or people of other races around us.

Not only that - we may feel more Chinese in a foreign country, but also that our perception of China may change when our surroundings are different and we are

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more or less influenced by new ideas. One may argue that it is hard to change one's outlook in a short time, but one's perception does change as time passes or when the situation differs. One's mind can even change completely overnight due to an important event. For example, the Tiananmen Square Students Demonstration in June, 1989 had such an impact on all Chinese that it certainly had the effect of changing our perception of China in many ways.

A lot of the respondents recalled this important historical event. Some of them were already overseas, while some of them were in China, participating or witnessing in various demonstrations. Their experience and frustration led them to believe that China has to change and she has to be strong.

Almost everyone agreed that China, had too many problems. *What could be done?* According to Respondent 3 reform is the answer: "If China insists on reforming, she has hope yet. The only way out for China is to open and to reform. it takes some time. Economically she needs a breakthrough, and politically it will be a slow changing process."

Respondent 1 looked at the problems in more depth: "China has to change politically. The power passover should not affect people and give rise to upheaval in society. From Mrs Thatcher to John Major, Britain stays stable. In China, it could be a disaster. The other thing is that the Party should not have control over the arm. We are very backward and poor, and the general educational quality is so low that we still have lots of illiterates. What we could do is to develop economically and then the gradual change of ideas among the people."

He went on explaining how he had felt differently after he came to Britain: "When I was in China, I thought that the communist was not doing the right thing. Now after I have seen what is happening in The Eastern Europe, I feel that China has to be this way. We cannot have a radical change overnight. We need a slow and painstaking process to change."

It is true that China cannot change too quickly because many people would find it difficult to adjust. We need fundamental changes politically and economically, but these changes have to come from the willingness of Chinese people. How much do we want to change and how anxious are we in pursuit of change?

Respondent 101 tried to look for the implications behind all the problems in China: "The long history of feudalism with highly centralised power system, as well as the close-door policy has affected the progress of our society. The eagerness to change radically in the modern times together with the lack of planning without careful thought had led to great failure."

Some students were very disappointed with the fact that China seemed to be going backwards for the time being. They were not confident and felt hopeless about China's future. As Respondent 2 commented sadly: "I find the Chinese people have a very hard and tiring life, compared to westerners. We work so hard and have had no reward. There are too many problems in China, everyone complains and it is of no use. It seems that it is impossible to do anything." He went on with a deep sigh: "We could learn something good here, but it is difficult to put them into practice in China. The government takes no advice nor suggestion from ordinary people."

His apprehensions and helplessness were shared by many Chinese folk. Some students became quite emotional once they started talking about China. It is especially so when they are abroad. Respondent 7 said: "I only began to see what patriotism really meant when I am abroad. In China, we complained a lot. Here it is OK for us Chinese to complain, but I feel very uncomfortable to hear other people's criticism."

Not only do many Chinese students feel more patriotic than before when they were in China, they feel a deeper desire for China to be strong. Respondent 15 explained to me: "I feel very strongly that our country has to be strong. You are always a stranger in foreign countries. We are looked down upon because we are poor. There is no democracy if there is no economic foundation, just like the Eastern Europe and India. Taiwan was the same. We need economic development first of all."

Respondent 83 certainly agreed with Respondent on this point: "I think the image of the country is very important. No matter how much I spend, it does not change the image of China. If our country is rich and strong, it would be very different." She felt that many of our problems were due to the fact that China has low status politically as well as economically.

Contrarily, some students blamed ourselves. Respondent 27 always had his own point of view: "After I came to Britain, I perceived a better China. Britain does not treat Chinese people as British. There are few opportunities and there is no such thing as political rights or so on. Some Chinese students and scholars have no

complaints against their British bosses, while in China they complained against the government. I am very upset by this. I think if they work in China as hard as they do here, it is much better and more comfortable to work in China." As he continued to talk, I could tell that he could hardly wait to finish his one-year working contract and go back to China.

After the interview with him, I was not surprised when Respondent 9 told me what he thought of his own people: "I think that Chinese people are much more clever than western people, but none of think of freedom in our country. We only think about ourselves." He condemned his own people as selfish and uncaring. I wondered what experiences had brought him such conclusions and I felt that it must be very sad to lose faith in one's own people and own country.

Fortunately, many Chinese students have not given up their wishes for China and they want China to be better and better. Respondent 30 told me with enthusiasm: "I have hopes for China's future. I hope that in ten to fifteen years time, China will change in society and economy." He expressed his feelings which many Chinese would share: "When I was in China, I did not look at or study her. I just lived in her. Once I came out, I realised that something had to be done to reform and change. One fundamental change should be the system. Another thing is human rights, which we don't have in China." He then explained to me how his father suffered during the Cultural Revolution and he had very unhappy memories as a child.

The bad times in Chinese history had such an effect that many Chinese students could still feel the pain and there have been a lot of fears and distrust as a result. After I asked Respondent 76 about his perception of China, his immediate reaction

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was almost instinctive: "Are you going to report this to the government?" I had to assure him again of the confidentiality of this investigation. Then he opened his heart to me: "I have had communist education all the way along and I am a Party member, but was June 4th was so disheartening. How could they have used the army to oppress the students? The corruption within the Party is just appalling, and the newspapers didn't tell the truth."

Another Party member, Respondent 26, also gave his comments, but from a different angle: "I think except corruption and other bad aspect, China is stable. There is a contradiction among us Chinese people that we want reform but we also want peace." He must have been thinking of Russia and her dilemma when he came to such a conclusion. He criticised the Communist Party as lacking self-construction and unworthy of trust. he added: "After I came abroad, one thing I realised is that Chinese people are not, conscious of the legal system. We also need to reinforce patriotic education, which we have a lot, but very superficial. We sometimes say that foreign countries are terrible, at other times we regard them terrific. We should learn from western countries that we govern through law."

He had a lot more to say and I could hardly stop him: "I love my country no matter how poor and backward she is. We need to improve and we are all responsible to do something." Most sensible Chinese would probably agree with him. China is our country. Her cultural heritage is our pride and her history has written some disgrace, but her future is in our hands.

6. 3.   Summary of Main Findings

The amount of main findings was enormous and the contents were varied so the discussion was divided in the last two chapters.

Chapter 5 looked into the educational problems both in China and in the U.K. Some discussions were focused on the training courses in terms of the administration, teaching and learning in the Chinese institutions. Various tests such as ELTs, TOEFL and EPT were evaluated in the light of interviews. Discussions also included if the lectures or supervisors in British institutions had been helpful to Chinese students and how the students handle difficulties with their language learning, literary survey and making use of research facilities.

Another important aspect of this investigation was to find out how the Chinese students communicated or interacted with British and other cultures. Financial difficulties surely had inhibited the interaction and there were also a great deal of cultural barriers. Even though the different type of diet in Britain did not have much effect on the daily life of Chinese students, age and sex had no doubt played a part in everyday life in terms of language proficiency, social interaction and adaptability.

The first part of Chapter 6 dealt with some practical problems of Chinese students, such as accommodation, leisure and social activities. The survey throughout the U.K. has provided us with information about their general living conditions. We also had a glimpse of how they spent their spare time and what kinds of leisure reading they occupied themselves with. As one of their favourite

pastimes, TV programmes were evaluated from their point of view. There were also some discussions about where the two cultures had conflict, specifically on pubs, museums and religion. How did the Chinese students survive and cope with these cultural differences? What were their effects on their daily life and future prospects? There is no doubt that easy access to transport and travelling had allowed many Chinese to see much of Britain, even parts of Europe and these experiences had more or less benefited their stay in this country.

The latter part of the chapter was concerned with the emotions and expectations of Chinese students. Do they miss home? It is more than their families they are missing. China is far in distance but close at heart. Their perception of China may change, but their love for her does not wane and becomes even stronger. How do they regard the U.K. their temporary shield or permanent home? There are things they like about Britain, there are also things which they dislike or reject. While most Chinese students found that they were achieving academically as well as otherwise, some students were eager to go back home. What were the determining factors for their decisions? All the discussion was based on the factual findings and the personal opinions given during my interviews, and they have shown us a rather comprehensive and very realistic picture of the social and spiritual life of the Chinese students all over Britain.

CHAPTER 7

FUTURE PROSPECTS - RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

7.1.   Policy-making and its Implications

It is of great importance to examine the educational policy-making and to study the different perspectives of the relative policies. To search for the implications behind certain policy-making and its effects makes it possible for us to understand the policies and innovations which have determined the past practice as well as future prospects. In this chapter, we will focus our attention on the policy-making relating to overseas study from the point of view of both sending countries and host countries. In this particular case, the discussions will be based on assessing the existing policies of both Chinese and British counterparts, and making necessary recommendations for future innovations.

Studying in a foreign country rather than in one's own has become an issue of great concern and controversy in recent years. The ever-increasing number of students studying or doing research outside their home countries has won considerable attention from researchers as well as policy-makers. The impact has not been fully recognised and research on policy-making and related aspects has been so far ignored.

In the special issue about "The Foreign Student Dilemma," P.G. Altbach introduced "foreign students in a comparative perspective." According to him, "Not only are

foreign students a significant educational variable, but they reflect basic issues in higher education. Those involved with policy making on both sides of the equation - the 'sending' countries and the 'host' nations - must fully understand the complexities of the situation." (Altbach, 1985). He further explained the factors which affected policy making - educational, economic and political factors. In other words, policy making has to take into consideration aspects of curriculum, economics and politics, each of which plays a significant part in determining the appropriate or inappropriate policies.

Following his discussion, we will explore more about the overseas students policy from the perspectives of 'sending' and 'host' countries. What are the advantages and disadvantages of sending scholars abroad from the sending government's perception? What are the benefits and losses for individual overseas students? What impact do these students have on their host countries or institutions? How do these host countries deal with problems resulting from foreign study?

7.1.1. Sending Countries and Their Policies

Though it is not uncommon for students from one developed country to go to another developed country to study, the trend has been for the students from developing countries to make their way to developed countries. The reasons behind are varied and complex. What justifications do the sending country have to send her students abroad?

First of all, political factors play an important role in decision-making, such as how many students are sent, or to which countries these students are going. Take

China as an example, in the fifties, she sent a great many students and scholars to USSR due to the close relationship with the "Soviet Union Old Brother." In the next decade or so, she shut her door to the outside and was devoted to her internal revolutionary education. From the late 70's until present, thousands and thousands of Chinese students flowed into developed countries. According to China's paramount leader, it is one way of adopting "useful things from the capitalist system." It is also true that the overseas study policy has remained at governmental level rather than institutional on individual decisions.

Secondly, economic implications are important and cost benefit evaluation is constantly used in the policy making and its effects. The sending country has to consider and measure if the overseas study funds are well spent and if she gets what she wants by the end of the day.

There are obvious benefits for the sending country by looking at the overseas study in the past as well as at the present. When the home country does not have or cannot afford the necessary resources and facilities, there is a demand for foreign study through which new skills, technology and knowledge could be acquired and made use of in the home country. There are also exchange programmes or other trainings aided by host countries or foreign agencies for helping developing countries. In this case, the benefits should be justified by the costs.

However, a number of problems may arise which surely add difficulties for cost-benefit analysis. Overseas study is very costly and it is becoming more so. Is there a justification between the demand for sending students abroad and

educating students at home? How about the students who finish their training abroad and decide not to return? For many countries, there are also worries about the negative influence of western culture and ideology which may add pressure on or even provoke unrest in the home country. All of these have to be taken into account when the sending country makes her relative policies.

Thirdly, from the educational point of view, could the western academic institutions offer what is regarded as relevant for the needs of sending countries? The assumption is that what the students learn in a foreign country could be transferred and put into practice in the home country. How practical would their educational experience be in terms of helping policy making and development at home? Are the research and relative strategies they acquired abroad of relevance and appropriate when they return home? There is no doubt that some scientific theories are universal and could apply everywhere, when we look at the curricula for Arts or Social Science, they appear to be more complex and problematic regarding to their transferability and application in the home country.

7.1.2. Host Countries and Overseas Students Policy

As more and more international students flow into another country to pursue academic goals, the host nations have to take measures to meet the needs. As we know, governments of many host countries have certain policies specially related to overseas students. They may employ some specialists to help in the administration or advisory service for foreign students. Other agencies and organisations are also set up in order to help foreign students in various ways.

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Different host governments adopt different policies according to their own needs and these policies are likely to influence the decision-making of sending countries. A well-known example is that when the British government decided to raise the overseas students fee in 1980, many sending countries, notably Malaysia, made drastic policies to show their anger and retaliation. For a period of time, Britain's overseas students number fell.

What are the concerns and worries of the host nation regarding overseas students? Why do they change their policies? It is obvious that economic factors are of great concern to the host countries. They will calculate the costs and benefits of overseas students. They will also have to make necessary curriculum changes to cater for overseas students at the institutional level. However, there are complaints that little has been done to adapt the courses,and textbooks to suit foreign students. The relevance of what foreign students learn at western academic institutions has been questioned and debated.

In Altbach's view, there are evident benefits of foreign students for host institutions. "Foreign graduate students frequently provide research, and sometimes teaching assistance, at relatively low cost and are particularly valuable in fields like engineering and computer science, where local students are in short supply. Foreign students bring foreign exchange into a host country, and therefore help the local economy by using its services. A further benefit is, of course, the cross-cultural understanding and enlightenment gained both by students and by people with whom they come into contact in the host country." (Altbach, 1985)

On the whole, there are some discrepancies where the policies regarding overseas students are concerned. According to Anderson, the fault is with the host nation because of these factors - "the need to limit government expenditure, the lack of conviction that the higher education system is a great national asset. The absence of a genuine cultural vision and skepticism about the pay-off of educating foreign students." (Anderson, 1987, quoted Williams, G. et al. eds.)

7.1.3   Individual Perspectives

What are the key factors which cause individual students to decide to cross borders and join the foreign study trend? P.G. Altbach had a table which listed the key variables affecting the personal decision to study abroad. The following discussion is based on his article "Introduction - Foreign Students in a Comparative Perspective" (Altbach, 1985).

In his view, there is inequality in terms of political economy and technology and it is this inequality which gives rise to the international students flow in the modern world. There are certain factors which push students away from their home country, such as poor quality education, lack of research facilities, prestigious value of foreign degrees, politically or economically uncongenial situations and so on and so forth. On the other hand, the host country have certain attractions which pull students, such as availability of scholarships, advanced research or educational facilities, opportunities for quality education and general international life experience, and better socio-economic and political environment.

It is true that overseas study could bring a great deal of advantages for individuals. In a broad sense, it provides an individual the opportunity to broaden one's knowledge and enrich one's cultural, educational, social and general experience. More specifically, going abroad means better financial gains, more prestigious social status, greater academic achievements and many more.

The disadvantages for individual students have often been overlooked. Despite their gains, there are great losses when we take into account the various problems they have to face both abroad and at home. Once he/she decides to leave his/her own country, he/she has to leave behind many valuable things in his/her life - cultural roots, families etc. As soon as he/she steps on a foreign land, he/she has to confront culture shock and other practical difficulties. If he/she decides to return to the home country after a while, the application of his/her new knowledge and skills, the readaptation of the old way of life and his/her changed outlook can surely cause some problems in working and living.

In short, policy making regarding overseas study is a controversial and complex issue. It concerns more than one party - the sending countries, the host nations as well as individual students involved in overseas study. The policies at different levels at the moment are far from sufficient and a lot of research and effort needs to be put into this area. Attention and concern have to be sought from the governments, researchers and individuals involved. The significance and impact of overseas study must be addressed and receive full recognition.

7.2. Recommendations to the Chinese Government and Institutions

As stated in the Introduction, the evaluation's aim is one of improvement and innovation. One of the expected outcomes was to make recommendations to the Chinese government and institutions, so that the present situation could be improved.

There is no doubt that China has a number of policies regarding to overseas students and the policy making has undergone some changes, whether for the better or worse. So far, it seems that the government is still determined to send students abroad, although the number of students and their flow direction are under careful government supervision and control.

How do the Chinese students in the U.K. feel about the present Chinese policy? According to my general opinion poll during my investigation, there are two different kinds of response. A small number of people felt that due to the economic situation in China, it was quite difficult for her to support students abroad, so it was not possible to expect much from the government. Respondent 76 even said there was no reason for students to complain against the government, which was quite open and flexible in terms of overseas policies.

However, the majority of the students do complain and expect government policy to improve. Among them, some students felt completely disappointed with the present policy. Respondent 30 made a strong statement and told me why. "I think the Chinese overseas policy is a total failure. Some scholars came here for a year doing nothing. I work for the CASS and I have seen this. There are those

who came to have a look around. There are some overseas students here from other countries, who have got contracts with the university and have tasks to accomplish. Our scholars come just to work in the Chinese restaurant." Respondent 8 was in the same line when he said: "The government spends a lot on scholars and this has to be justified, especially with visiting scholars. It is true that elder ones are more experienced and more likely to return, but once they are abroad, they have no specific task and their stay is too short to really benefit anything."

There are also accusations for the government control over the overseas students flow. Respondent 13 told me during the interview: "Now China sends more students to Britain than to USA. I think this is a stupid policy. Britain accepts everyone due to her own financial problem and some students here don't have a relevant project for research. Many people would probably get scholarships from the American side and it is to the advantage of China. In Britain, the overseas fees are so expensive and difficult to get support, so it is a great pressure on the Chinese government."

Despite some bitter complaints and condemnations, many students expressed great expectations for the Chinese government to change for the better. According to some of their suggestions and my interpretation, I shall put forward a number of recommendations regarding overseas students policy at both governmental and institutional levels.

7.2.1. Open Policy and Its Desirability

Over 90% of the Chinese students expressed that they wanted China to be more open and there should be no control over coming or going abroad. As Respondent 7 concluded: "We need freedom to go abroad and come back. it is impossible to stop people which only makes people resistant and unwilling to return." Many Chinese students shared his view. In Respondent 14's words: "When the Chinese authorities refuse to give permission for students who want to extend their stay, they really push us away instead of making us feel close to the country."

It has been the case that many students and scholars come initially for a short visit. Either because they succeeded in getting scholarships for further education, or because they managed to find a job somewhere in Britain, they wanted to extend their stay. Though many students did extend eventually, they were confronted with a lot of difficulties and bitterness. The government has used various means to make it difficult, as Respondent 1 told me with anger and sadness: "It is ridiculous that I have a two year passport. Because my home hospital doesn't give permission, I could not change but had to extend the passport. This means that I cannot go back for a visit because it is a single entry passport. Even if my wife joins me, I would like to go back and visit. With my current passport, I could not return for four years. This is inhuman and hateful, but who should I hate? Because I had no particular person to hate, I had to hate the government," he went on with more enthusiasm: "China has to open. I don't think they understand us. People like me would like to go home although we could stay abroad. Now they are trying to prevent us from coming out, those who are

determined still succeed to come out, and those who want to return dare not return. This creates lots of pain and hatred, such as preventing wife and child to come over for more than three years. It is the local authorities who make it difficult out of their own motives, but it makes the victims hate the government. They should trust us and I simply don't understand many of the policies."

Respondant 50 also had similar difficulties. As he had a single-entry two year passport, his mother had been trying to stop him from visiting home and her worry was that once he returned, he would never be able to come out again to finish his research. There were cases where husband and wife were kept apart for years and children were kept almost as hostage because the home institutions or other authorities refused to give consent. A great deal of pain and misery were caused, such as long separation and divorce. It is also sad for some Chinese when they could not be present at their parent's death-bed and at various other occasions.

It is obviously quite frustrating for those students who could not come into and go out of China according to their will. It is natural for them to expect the government to be more sympathetic and understanding. From the government's point of view, it is none the less desirable to let people pass through the borders freely if there is a good reason. This freedom will no doubt create good will and mutual understanding between the government and individual citizens. Every effort made by the government to adopt a more open policy regarding overseas study will be appreciated, or at least justified in due course. Doubtless to say, only an open and trusting government could win the respect and trust of her scholars, and she will, in return, be bountifully rewarded in various ways in the long term.

7.2.2. Flexible Policies Home and Abroad

It is not enough for the government to insist on open policy at the top level. Authorities at different levels should adopt appropriate policies to make way for overseas study. It is understood that the students are expected to return, but it is not the main reason to send students overseas and neither should it be the reason to stop them from going. There are a number of practical things which the Chinese side could do for overseas students or would-be overseas students from China.

Firstly, the Chinese government and local institutions should simplify the out-of-country procedure and make it easy for people to come out and go back through borders. It may take a long time for every Chinese citizen to hold a passport, but certainly something could be done to cut down difficulties. The present procedure to apply for a passport takes a long time, normally about eight to twelve months and the applicant has to go through five or more levels of authorities before he could even obtain a visa. As Respondent 17 commented: "After all kinds of hardship, such as cold faces or worse confrontations, one is unwilling to return." Many students complained about the inefficiency and terrible service of Beijing Language Centre, where most people get their passports. Many respondents witnessed and experienced a lot of humiliation, frustration and anger. It was sad to see those elderly professors and scholars humbling themselves in front of the youngish Centre workers in order to come abroad for professional reasons. It was disheartening to watch those who worked in the Centre treating the applicants as if the latter were in debt or worse.

Respondent 13 once suggested to me: "I think China should adopt the five-working-day policy. I believe in a place like Beijing, if people work five days a week, they won't feel so tired and bad-tempered." Not everyone could afford to be bad-tempered. If you want to go abroad, you have to control your temper and humiliate yourself when necessary, while if you are in service to the government, especially if you have the power to control people from coming in or going out, you are more than justified to let go your temper as you wish.

The above description leads to my second practical suggestion regarding overseas study. The government should provide good service at different levels and make sure that students are happy and feel comfortable about going abroad and coming home. The current service throughout China is notorious and measures have to be taken to improve the situation as well as to save the deteriorating reputation of China.

Thirdly, the Chinese government should improve the living conditions of overseas students, so they can benefit more from being abroad. It is true that China has tried to raise the grants for overseas students from time to time. It is also understood that the economic situation in China is difficult and unsatisfactory. But the government could certainly try harder and do better in various ways. For instance, China could encourage students to apply for scholarships from host countries or other overseas bodies. She could also encourage working contracts abroad and exchange students.

Respondent 101 suggested that the living standards of government-sent students should be of international standard. He added that they should be allowed to bring their spouses who should also get some financial support. A couple of my respondents recommended that the government-sent scholars should be banned, although their reasons were very different. Respondent 55 believed that the government should stop sending scholars because "they come for a year or so and benefit little. I am against sending older scholars for a short time, they go to work in restaurants or simply to look around." Respondent 27 looked at the problem form a different angle: "I think all the students and scholars sponsored by the government should be changed into self-support, because they don't go home. The government spent a lot on them, more than a peasant or a worker could earn for his/her whole life." Respondent 55 gave the reason behind this: "Our parents cannot support us with their low salary because the government has charged too much tax from the low income."

However, it seems to be incompatible to have both open policy and higher grants. How could the government invest a lot of foreign currency on students who decide not to return after they finish their study? This has been a worrying problem for most sending countries, especially for a developing country like China, and it will remain a problem for quite a long time. It is difficult for any government to deal with it efficiently. It is true that China has taken some measures, such as imposing a financial fine, keeping relations from going abroad and so on, to ensure that students would therefore return. But they have not proved to be successful in many cases. The fact may be that an open policy is costly and it has to be implemented even to the detriment of financial loss and brain drain. It is hoped that the discussion in the following section will provide some insights to the

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problem for the governmental decision makers as well as for institutional authorities.

7.2.3. Preparatory Training and Other Aiding Policies

How can the students benefit most from studying overseas? How can China make the best out of sending her scholars to the west? What kind of practical help can China provide to equip her overseas students? I think there are a number of ways to achieve this. I regard them as essential preparatory trainings to help the Chinese students during their stay in foreign countries.

First and foremost, there should be good language input in Chinese institutions. We tried to evaluated the training courses in China in Chapters 5 and found that most of these courses were far from satisfactory. Chinese institutions should aim at improving these courses as well as the EFL standard throughout the secondary and higher education. In order to solve the existing problems, the Chinese institutions should make efforts in the following aspects: a) updating the teaching methods and providing quality teaching/learning; b) providing good pre-service and in-service for EFL and other foreign language teachers; c) modernising and providing sufficient facilities which assist language teaching/learning; d) providing up-to-date and relevant teaching materials, such as textbooks and audio-visual aids; e) making sure that foreign language learning is available for everyone who is motivated to learn.

Secondly, there should be a multicultural education curriculum within foreign language teaching at different stages. The students should be exposed to foreign

cultures and traditions. They should be equipped with authentic and unbiased knowledge about foreign countries. Especially for those who are about to visit another country, the host cultural background is a must to know and understand. There is no doubt that the more they know about the host country, the less they are likely to experience culture shock and the better they are to cope with living abroad.

Thirdly, the Chinese government and home institutions should have well-organised programmes to monitor the progress of overseas students. They should be given appropriate and relevant tasks while they are abroad, and their research should be under constant monitoring and evaluation, so what they learn abroad could be put into use after they return.

Fourthly, a joint supervision programme may be encouraged and developed. For example, a Chinese research student could have a supervisor in a Chinese university and meanwhile carry on the research in a British institution under the instruction of a British supervisor. This will be beneficial to every party concerned and in many ways. It is good because the student could maintain contact with the home culture and educational system. What he/she does in Britain could therefore be closely related to what is needed in China. In other words, his/her academic or research task becomes more relevant and useful because he/she would have such advantages as the better research environment, advanced facilities, a wide range of resources and excellent supervision abroad on the one hand, and the practical field work back home on the other hand. In a broad sense, this co-operation could bridge the communication between the British and Chinese academic staff, between the British and Chinese institutions and between the two different cultures. It not

only promotes the cultural and educational exchange at the national level, it is also a way to ensure that the students could benefit most from such programmes and return to China as they are expected.

Fifthly, in order to encourage students to go back to China, the government should abandon the current policy which demands huge financial fines from those who do not return to their original working units. (The Chinese call the organizations which they work for " working units". These units have tremendous power over their employees.) Many students would like to return to China, given time and choice, but they are not willing to go back to the " same old place". After all, they have tried so hard to come out in the first place! One of the biggest attraction of studying overseas is the prospect of promotion and change. Anyway, Chinese people should have the choice of employment and freedom to move to places where they want to live and work.

Last but not least, provided that students could make their own choices as to stay abroad or return to China, Chinese government and institutions could make them feel welcomed without using force to make them come home. That is to say, China could try to attract overseas students to come back through various means. For instance, when students decide to return, they should be provided with the choice of jobs and places; they could also be offered a reasonable accommodation and better financial consideration. This does not suggest that the overseas students should have certain privileges once they are back. But there should be some relative policies which help them readapt to the "old" way of life, or make them feel justified in coming back and find themselves useful. As for the better academical, financial and housing conditions, they should really come on the

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agenda of reform throughout China.   We deserve more human rights and better living conditions.

7.3.   Proposals for the British Counterparts

According to the Unesco statistical yearbook 1983, Britain was No. 5 of the 'Top 20' of the world's leading hosts of international students.   The same source indicated that China was No. 4 among the leading senders.   At present, more and more Chinese students have come into the U.K. since and there are many other overseas students in this country.   What could the British government and institutions do to make our visit more beneficial and enjoyable?   What services could they offer to help the Chinese students and other overseas students in their daily and academic life?

In order to make my proposals sound and appropriate, we will look into some of the British policies regarding the overseas students.   There have been some changes during the past decade and we will evaluate them in the light of future improvement.

7.3.1.   Recent Developments in Policies since 1980

As we know the British government introduced a full-cost fees policy in 1980, in spite of the strong opposition from British universities.   As a result, there was a marked decline in the overseas numbers.   What implications have this policy brought about?   It is evident that the overseas student issue is integrated with financial, educational, cultural and social development, and the implementation of

such policies have caused a long-term effect on British higher education.

From the British government point of view, implementing full-fee for overseas students was a measure for domestic economical problems. The justification was that overseas students should not be subsidised by the British taxpayer. However, this argument has been constantly challenged by other organisations and researchers. The United Kingdom Council for Overseas Student Affairs (UKCOSA) believes that foreign students should not be considered "simply as either a source of revenue or an expression of the willingness of the taxpayer to help the world's poor. There are educational considerations that are equally important" (Quoted Michael Clarke, 1987).

There is no doubt that overseas students policy is embedded within the external cultural policy of any country. William Wallace wrote: "The stronger arguments made for cultural activities as such, and for encouraging students to study in this country in particular, have in recent years been political and economic, to increase the United Kingdom's influence and access to other governments and similarly to increase our influence and access to foreign companies, institutions and governmental agencies when purchasing supplies and negotiating contracts" (Wallace, 1981, Quoted Anderson 1987). That is to say, overseas students, in a broad context, promote the economic well-being of the host country as well as strengthen her political status.

Because of the important role within the British foreign policy, certain measures have been taken to attract foreign students into this country. The "Pym Package" was introduced in 1983, which increased scholarships for foreign students selected

from particular countries. Other organisations or agencies also set out to provide aids and sponsorship to foreign students. There is an increasing awareness of the foreign students issue,though a comprehensive, fully-complemented strategy is a long way off.

7.3.2. Chinese Students View British Overseas Policies

How does the British overseas policy affect the Chinese students in the U.K.? What do the Chinese students think about the policies? Part of this investigation aimed to find out answers for the above questions and the findings may give the readers a few surprises.

How many British people know about the fact that there is a differentiated policy between male and female regarding foreign students' spouse visiting Britain? Until recently, if a student's wife came to join her husband, she is categorised as a dependent, which entailed that she could stay as long as her husband and she is entitled to such benefits as the possibility to work or to study part-time. On the contrary, if the husband came to join his student wife in Britain, he was regarded as a visitor. That is, he was initially allowed to stay for six months. A planned length of stay beyond six months would be very difficult. As a visitor, he was not supposed to change his status to a student even if he received a scholarship and wished to study himself. He is definitely not allowed to work, nor could he study on a part-time basis.

A couple of my respondents had been through such difficulties that their unpleasant memories certainly gave rise to negative evaluation of British overseas

policies. Actually, many students experienced a great deal of hassle in applying for visas. The Home Office usually issue a one-year visa, which means that he/she has to apply to renew every year, though he/she might be doing a PhD which lasts more than three years.

Another difficulty for many Chinese students has been the student visa which does not allow the holder to work paid or unpaid. Due to the situation in China as well as other academic reasons, a large number of Chinese students are able to find relevant jobs in British universities or companies. One essential procedure before he/she could feel secure with the employment has been that he/she needs a work permit, which may take a long time to get and sometimes could be rejected. Who knows the frustration and worries about whether to stay or not? Who experiences the uncertainty of future? If you ask a Chinese at random, he/she will surely have a lot to say to you.

A number of my respondents complained about the overseas students fees which are becoming increasingly expensive. It is true that most Chinese students are either supported by Chinese government or some foreign aiding agencies like the British Council or World Bank. With the present economic situation in China and the little value of Chinese currency, it is almost impossible for any Chinese family to support their children overseas. It is also unlikely for many Chinese scholars to support themselves abroad. Many Chinese students are prepared to pursue their study while they work to support themselves. The restrictions to Chinese students by the Home Office make it difficult for them to get proper employment, while working in Chinese restaurants provides little time for study as well as being under paid. Although many students would like to further their education at their own

expense, the huge amount for university entrance makes it only an unattainable dream, or at least many have to give up the idea completely or try elsewhere.

Nevertheless, there are some students, though quite few, who go ahead with their plan after a great deal of struggle and careful thought. They either get a loan or pay every penny of their hard-earned savings. In some cases, their spouses offered to support them by working themselves. It is definitely wrong to condemn all students or scholars who work in Chinese restaurants simply to bring some money home. Some of them work there because they have no alternative, no grants nor scholarships. They work so hard and save every penny so that they could eventually pay for a foreign degree. How much is it worth? It is not exactly the fee they have to pay to make it valuable. It is the effort they put into education and the value they place on education. As Alastair Niven commented: "They have discovered a spirit which is formidable and a sense of purpose which is far from narrow. It used to be said that all the overseas students required was the chance to get on quietly with the work and to go home with a British qualification. That view was probably always paternalistic but today it will not hold up at all. Overseas students still want to prosper from the education, but their vision is wide and skeptical." (Niven, 1987) The same is true for most Chinese students in Britain.

7.3.3   Proposals for British Government and Institutions

Ever since the introduction of full-cost fees for overseas students in 1980, there has been constant debates and request for monitoring. Until now, it is the British national policy which has been gradually accepted and widely in use. It may be too

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arrogant and unrealistic to suggest that Britain should change her present policy. But I will make a few proposals which the relative institutions or government agencies may find relevant.

First of all, the Home Office could certainly try to be more helpful and flexible in terms of visas and work permits. It would be even better if the student visas allowed students to do some part-time work. It is understood that every country must have her immigration regulations and certain restrictions to foreigners are necessary. It is also understood that the unemployment rate in Britain is high and job priorities are give to native people. But it is to the advantage of everyone concerned if the visa procedure is simplified and more flexible. Our stay in Britain would be so much happier if we could be free of constant worries about visas and the feelings of uncertainty.

It may not do anyboby any harm if the British government grants overseas students the opportunity to seek employment or a part-time job while they are studying. It is evident that overseas students do provide expertise in some research areas and their diligence and relatively cheap labour are beneficial to the British employers rather than a threat to their British colleagues.

The abolition of the re-entry visa in 1991 was a good move forward. It did make things easier for foreigners and it is more convenient and less hassle to go out and come back into Britain, though it did not make it any easier for Chinese students to visit other countries. But there are some other recent changes regarding immigration policies in Britain, which bring in more and more restrictions and less security for non-British citizens. More discussion will follow in 7.4.2.

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Secondly, I suggest that more information be given to overseas students. Taking into consideration the culture shock for any foreign students in Britain, especially new arrivals into the country, it is essential that relevant information and help are available where necessary. Some specific measures can be taken to help foreign students. For example, the students could be given up-to-date information about the British way of life. It has been the case that the British Council provides such useful information as how to use the bank, British transport etc. to the students it sponsors. The difficulty has been with those who come on their own or supported by other organisations. There are complaints that the Chinese Embassy and consulate are not very helpful. It is difficult to expect much from the Embassy because the workers there keep the Chinese way of life and they hardly know the outside world themselves.

As a result, many Chinese students arrived in Britain without knowing where they could go for help. It will be useful that certain agencies be set up especially to give guidance to overseas students, such as helping them to look for appropriate accommodation; organising trips to see Britain; arranging parties to meet the British host and so on and so forth. A lot of universities do offer accommodation which we have discussed earlier. There are also opportunities for social interactions which are made available through such organizations as HOST.

HOST has been trying to help overseas students by means of arranging visits to British homes. Trough British Council, International Students' Offices at universities or direct contact with the HOST offices, any overseas student can apply for a visit either for weekends or during holidays like Christmas. There are over 2000 British

families throughout the U.K. willing to host overseas students at various occasions and the Chinese students have been very popular with them. According to the statistics provided by HOST, mainland Chinese students make up the biggest group and there was 929 visits in the session of 1991-1992, which was one fourth of the total number of visits by overseas students. The figure was said to be increasing by 10% every year and HOST are expecting more publicity and initiative from both British hosts and overseas students. (Source: HOST statistics) It would also be good to see more agencies set up to help overseas students in various ways.

Thirdly, I think that constant monitoring of Chinese students should be on the agenda, especially for visiting scholars. The British institutions and supervisors could write a regular report about their problems and progress. The visiting or research programmes of overseas students should be well organised and under good administration. Their tasks should be realistic and relevant, with stated achievements or goals which are agreed upon and are constantly revised. In short, the students should have a specific purpose with their progress under British monitoring and assessment.

Fourthly, as suggested in Section 7.2.3, the co-operation such as joint supervision shared by both Chinese and British institutions should be encouraged and further developed. Apart from the benefit to the students, also this could be seen as beneficial to British institutions and supervisors. For one thing, the close link with the students' home country could make their work more useful. It may also bring some freshness and inspiration for the research in Britain. Having known what the needs are, the British institutions and supervisors may be more understanding and

therfore provide more direct help to these students.

Fifthly, talking about the needs of overseas students and those countries who send a large number of overseas students to Britain. How much do the British institutions know about them ? I strongly recommend that more research in this field be encouraged and carried out. For example, how relevant are the British courses for Chinese students after they return to China? How much do these courses help in their work back home? These courses should be constantly evaluated and modified to fit the changing needs of students. Questions should also be asked about how much overseas students benefit from their stay in Britain and how can the culture shock they experience be reduced to a minimum.

Finally, Britain may have seen the importance of overseas students and has been trying to help in various ways. But is Britain fully aware of the impact that the overseas student may have on various aspects of British life? It should be emphasized that overseas students are cultural ambassadors of their home country. They could also help to build useful relationships in commerce or industry between host and home country. Therefore, I think that Britain should try to involve Chinese students in cultural exchange project or local organisation. For example, local educational authorities could invite Chinese students to go to schools or colleges to talk about Chinese culture or related subjects. This is part of multicultural education which is within the national curriculum. I am sure a lot more can be done to make use of the expertise of overseas students. There is no doubt that this kind of cultural and information exchange is beneficial to the host as well as to the guests.

7.4. Learning from the Past, Learning for the Future
- Individuals in Perspective

In the book "The Overseas Student Question" edited by Peter Williams, the following statement was written in the editorial introduction: "Much of the demand from overseas for study opportunities in Britain is in fact a private demand from individuals and families which support them. The British tradition is to see the relationship between the individual student and his college tutor or lecturer as fundamental to our education system." (Williams, ed.1981). It is true that the majority of Chinese students in Britain were sent by the government, but more and more students have been trying to enrol at British institutions out of their own ambition and desire. I may also add that it is not only the relationship between individual students and their tutors which is fundamental to the British education. The relationship between overseas students and any members of the host country is also a vital part of their education in Britain. The experience of the individual overseas students may be personal, but bit by bit it composes the whole learning process.

Why do overseas students choose to come to Britain? What have they learned during their stay no matter how long? What kind of prospects do they have after they finish their study? Do they have any impact on the home and host countries? We will look at these questions in a broad context where Chinese students and Britain are concerned.

7.4.1.   A Foreigner in a Multicultural Society

What is it like to live in a foreign country like Britain?   How is a typical Chinese student coping with the British way of life?   It is understood that each individual may have different experiences and he/she may react completely differently from his/her other folks under exactly the same circumstances.   However, our behaviour and thinking do follow certain patterns, which may be universal, may be more or less culture-bound.

In order to have a better understanding of how an individual Chinese student lives and studies in the U.K., it is necessary for us to look into various features of British society.   What does Britain, as a multicultural society, have in store for a foreign student?   In other words, how well could an alien fit into the culture which is so different from his/her own?

In his article titled as "**Salad Days without the Dressing?   What British Higher and Further Education Institutions Can Do for Their Overseas Students**", Niven wrote: "Historically there has been a tendency in Britain to ignore the presence of overseas peoples in our midst.   At its best this has encouraged assimilation; at its worst segregation." (Niven, 1987)   His comments are frank and straightforward.   A foreigner in Britain was expected either to follow suit with British way of life and lose his/her own identity, or to be separated from the majority and maintain his/her inferior and alien status.   Neither is what a foreign student chooses but he/she has barely any other choice.

Given the choice, what would Chinese students in Britain want out of their stay? From the in-depth investigation and my own experience, I would like to express some of our feelings, hopes and wishful thinking.

Firstly and foremostly, we want to feel at home in Britain. Whether we stay long or short, whether we come to study or visit for other purposes, we wish that we would be welcomed by our host country and her members. We want British people to accept us as friends and good companions. We expect to share our cultural experiences and ideas with them. We do not want to exclude ourselves from them and become strangers to them.

Secondly, we come to learn. We come not only to learn science or technology, or for other academic reasons, which are the important part of our mission, we also came to learn the British culture and from British people. Britain is quite cosmopolitan with peoples from different parts of the world and it has been an excellent place to learn, where we can learn from each other. Most Chniese students had never had the chance to meet so many different peoples in China, and only in Britain, we were able to meet peoples from Spain, Italy, Cyprus, Greece, Ghana, Zambia, Japan, Malaysia and many more. All these countries and their cultures become real rather than just tiny drawings and descriptions from geography and history books. Most of all, Britain is alive with her people, her castles, museums and other real objects. She is no longer what we learnt from literature, remote and mysterious. Britain is what we see and how we feel.

Thirdly, we want to experience Britain and we want to contribute positively to her development. As an individual, his/her experience may be very personal and

insignificant, but as a group of people, like the Chinese community, or overseas students body, we may have a strong impact on Britain politically, educationally as well as socially. Each group of people in this multicultural society can make contributions to the country as well as to the world. The ever-increased number of Chinese students and scholars does participate in various ways.

Fourthly, It is to be emphasized that we want to mix but not assimilate. We Chinese believe that we are forever Chinese wherever we may be. Travelling around the world, you can hardly visit a place without seeing a few Chinese faces or Chinese restaurants, let alone the big population in the mainland China. With our long history and civilisation, Chinese people have survived all kinds of natural disasters and man-made calamities. Partly because of the present disastrous economy and political situation in China, millions and millions of Chinese are building up their lives in foreign lands. But wherever we may settle, our roots are deep and our hearts are with China, where our ancestors worked and sweated, where our culture is rich and colourful. For her, we shed tears and dream beautiful dreams; For her, we bear pain and we suffer; for her, we feel sorry and miserable. For her, we have all our emotions - disappointment, frustration and love. The reason is simple: it is home.

7.4.2. Home and Away

Why do we leave home? Why do we leave behind all those familiar signs, our families, our friends to come to a strange land such as Britain? What are the losses and gains after we make such an important decision? Our discussion in Chapter 5 & 6 have more or less answered the above questions. Here I would like

to look at these questions again from an individual's perspective. It is intended that those Chinese students who have been abroad or who are still in a western country may share some of the views and experiences. It is also intended that those who are still in China and plan to go abroad may find this helpful and be more prepared for their visit overseas. It may be appropriate to address this part of my discussion as advice or proposals to individual Chinese students home and away.

a) Life Is Not Easy In Britain

When someone leaves China for Britain, he/she needs to know that he/she is leaving behind and make sure that he/she is well prepared for what is in front of him/her. It may be obvious that he/she is leaving his/her job, his/her families, relatives and friends, but it may be extremely difficult to foretell what he/she would miss most until he/she comes out. Meanwhile, he/she may be able to predict what kind of problems or difficulties he/she would confront in Britain, but only after he/she arrives in the new country, he/she begins to realise what the real difficulties are and how serious they can be.

What are the major problems for the Chinese students in Britain? Each individual has different problems and he/she may experience difficulties at different stages and at different degrees. We have listed the types of problems earlier and a quick review may remind us of some points. For someone who just arrives in Britain, he/she would confront language barriers. Whether or not could it prevent communication, it depends on his/her English proficiency. Certain cultural differences may also come in the way. Can he/she get over the culture shock and

how much does it affect him/her? His Her attitudes towards his/her own culture and the host culture play an important role in his/her attempt to adjust to the new environment. The attitudes and behaviours of the British host also determine the outcome of his/her adjustment. For instance, if he/she suffers from racism and is ridiculed by British people, it is unlikely for him/her to value Britain or British people in a positive way.

If you happen to ask a Chinese student in the U.K. about what he/she thinks of this/her stay in this country, you should not be surprised when he/she tell you that life is not easy here. For many Chinese students, their daily life is full of difficulties.

b) <u>Visit To Britain Is Life-Transform</u>ing

Although there are bitterness and confrontation, there are enormous gains for those who are hard-working and try their best. Academically or professionally, getting a British degree is significant. It is even better if his/her research is of international standard and top class. What else do you expect if you read papers at international conferences, publish articles on professional journals or get offers of permanent jobs at first-class universities? A number of Chinese students in Britain are achieving this and the reward is overwhelming.

Apart from academic advancement, there are other benefits such as financial improvement and enriched experience and so on and so forth. How does one view China and the world? How does one see oneself? No matter how you perceived China before, no matter what was your worldly outlook, no matter what you thought of yourself before, your views are bound to change to a certain extent after your visit to Britain. It is no exaggeration to suggest that Britain has

brought you a brand new world and your life will never be the same.

It is not that you will lose yourself and become somebody else in the new culture. The truth is that life in Britain is so much different from that of China and there is no way that anyone could stay exactly the same no matter how hard he/she may try to do so. Let us use our imagination in this situation: a certain Chinese, who has lived in Britain for a few years, goes back to visit his/her family. Would his/her parents find him/her exactly the same as before? There will surely be a few surprises between him/her and the parents. Even if someone who has been to Britain for a short time, after returning to China, s/he would probably find the Chinese service less acceptable and more likely to venture his/her complaints.

C) East or West, Home is Best?

We have devoted some discussion as to whether to stay abroad or to go back to China. This is an extremely controversial topic and there is no simple or straight forward answer to it. For every Chinese student, this is a difficult decision to make, and whichever his/her choice is, there are pros and cons. I believe that this should be a personal decision and this decision is fully justified.

What are the factors which make an individual Chinese student decide to stay in Britain? There are push factors from home and pull factors from the host country. Politically, China is still very conservative and everything is under tight control. Tiaanmen Square Event on the 4th, June, 1989 had tremendous effect on overseas Chinese students and many decided not to return in defiance of the government. Economically, China is making progress but the economic reform

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without political reform could bear little fruit. The development is slow and far from satisfactory. Those who feel that they could achieve better abroad in terms of financial position and academic success choose to stay. Some plan to stay for simple, personal reasons, such as having married to a British person or because his/her spouse is here.

There are obvious pull factors from Britain, where there are green, green grass; easy life style; democracy and freedom; social wellfare and good health care. If one is lucky, there is even an excellent job offer. For instance, Respondant 20 is a very bright Chinese PhD student majoring in Management and Administration. Two years ago while she was talking about her plan to get a job in Britain after graduation, she was stopped half way through by her friend H. H was from Hong Kong and was working as an engineer in a British company. His thirteen years' experience in Britain told him that there were no equal opportunities for Chinese people or any black peoples in this country, and he did not believe that Respondant 20 would get a job suitable for her qualifications. Time gives best testinony. Respondant 20 was recently offered a job as a lecturer at Liverpool University and she was thrilled at the prospects. She is one of the few lucky ones who believe that if you try hard enough, you will succeed wherever you may be.

Those who decide to go back to China also have good reasons. Likewise, there are push factors from Britain and pull factors from China. Britain is not a country for every Chinese student to stay, with her recession, racism, limited job opportunities and a lot of other difficulties. We will look into some of the immigration difficulties both as an overview as well as some specific implications for Chinese students.

Immigration policies in Britain have undergone some changes in the past few decades. Before 1962, everyone from the old British empire had the same rights to live and work in Britain.With the labour shortage,they were encouraged to come and work in Britain. " The 1962 Immigration Act closed the door and more laws followed ,to keep people out,especially those from the Third World countries." (Quoted " Race through the 90s " by Commission for Racial Equality , CRE , 1992)

According to CRE publications,there are some shocking facts about immigration which few people know of.For instance,more people leave Britain each year than come here to settle.Secondly,2 out of every 3 immigrants are white.The truth is that the   " law against racial discrimination does not apply to immigration " (ibid,1992).

There is no doubt that immigration difficulties are closely tied to the racial discrimination in this country. People from Third World countries have to prove that they have no immigration tendency before they can get a visa and many have been stopped from visiting their families or attending university courses. They can appeal but it may take months and very difficult to win in many cases.

An interview with officials from UKIAS (United Kingdom Immigration Advisary Services) in Glasgow allowed the researcher to get some facts and figures. There are about 600-700 mainland Chinese in Strathclyde Region(It is difficulty to get the precise figure because of the transient nature of the scholar population and theie wide dispersal).   Apart from a very small number of earlier settlers who came in the 60s via Hong Kong, there has been an increasing number of Chinese

coming over since the 1980s, mostly for academic reasons. Quite a number of Chinese students have been to UKIAS for information and advice but very few actually ventured to apply for immigration. Those who did apply and succeeded in their cases were dependents who married British citizens. According to UKIAS statistics, the success rate for all ethnic minorites was about 30%.

There are various obstacles for those who intend to make a home in Britain. The foremost difficulty is to get a work permit without which non-British are not allowed to work. There are other hassles from immigration officers, the police or racists under various situations. In some cases, the Home Office would just keep the applications for as long as they wish. For example, H was from Hong Kong and had been studying and working in the U.K. for over thirteen years. Because of the uncertain prospects of Hong Kong after 1997, after he got his perminent residence (PR) in 1988, he submitted an application for British citizenship in the following year as required. His application and passport have been kept in the Home Office since and every time he tried to pursue the case, the answer has always been the same: we are considering your case.

For the majority of mainland Chinese students who came to study, the prospect of staying in Britain is bleak. In any case, very few people would decide to stay in a foreign country for good. With all her problems, China still has a lot to offer for her scholars. The job security, promotion prospects and family bondage. after all, it is home and there is a sense of belonging. Who first said this: east or west, home is best? Ultimately the decision has to rest with the individual.

7.5.   Chapter Summary

Who is in control of the overseas student number and its flow? It is the sending countries and host countries. Each government concerned has her own policies relating to sending students overseas or hosting overseas students. Personal decisions of overseas students also matter to a certain extent as to which country or university they wish to go to , where they can get scholarships, or whether or not they are ready to pay for his education abroad.

What can the Chinese government and institutions do to improve her present overseas students policy and benefit more from sending students overseas? They have to adopt a more open policy and allow students to come and go freely. Certain specific suggestions are put forward for this to come true. Policies at the local level should also be more flexible and more helpful. Besides, more preparatory training can equip Chines students better as to how to cope with their studies and lives abroad, and how to readapt to the old way of life once they decide to return.

How can the British government and institutions help the Chinese students more efficiently? The government can be more liberal in terms of visa and work permit. The local institutions and other relevant organisations can provide more information and service to make life easier for Chinese students. They could also get Chinese students involved in cultural and informational exchange projects which are beneficial to both parties concerned.

What does an individual Chinese student learn from his/her stay or anticipated

stay in Britain? It is true that everyone has his/her own expectations, goals and experiences, but everyone has something to learn. Whether he/she decides to stay in Britain, or return to China, his/her experience in a foreign country like Britain is of vital importance and may even mark a turning point in his/her lifetime.

CHAPTER 8

C O N C L U S I O N

In spite of the fact that overseas students reported a higher percentage, the relevant research is underrepresented. The number of Chinese students and scholars has been increasing steadily and rapidly since 1980, which was the year when Britain introduced full-fee cost policy for overseas students which caused a drastic drop on the enrolment of overseas students at British institutions. The early statistics about overseas students had not listed China because she only started to send her students overseas in the late 70's. Now China is among the world's leading senders and the figure is still going up.

How much do we know about the Chinese students in the U.K.? Nearly 10,000 Mainland Chinese are scattered all over this country and live among British people and other peoples. Why do they come to Britain? How do they find Britain and British people? What are their expectations, fears, hopes and wishful thinking?

You may ask a lot more questions about them and this research was intended to tell you the answers. As one of the Chinese students in Britain, I felt the urge to write about us, about our academic, emotional and day-to-day life, to share with those who care, who are interested in overseas students, and who are willing to offer help in various ways.

Chapter 1 gave this investigation a brief introduction. The focus of this research was to look into some of the linguistic, cultural and financial problems Chinese students had to face during their stay in Britain. The research was based on

certain assumptions which were to be proved during the main investigation. The significance of this investigation was stated and the expected outcomes were to make recommendations to all concerned.

Chapter 2 was the theoretical exploration about language and culture. There was a detailed discussion about culture shock, its origin and its effects on different groups of people, especially on overseas students. The emphasis was on how people could develop cultural awareness and understanding and the importance of cultural studies in the context of foreign language teaching or learning.

Chapter 3 revealed the methodology of evaluating a group of Chinese students. The research has adopted both formative and summative evaluation where necessary. It has been 'scientific' and quantitative in the way that a number of questionnaires were distributed and put into computer for analysis, but it emphasised more on description and interpretation of the findings, which is called "illuminative" or descriptive method. There were plenty of practical difficulties during the main survey, such as drafting and distributing questionnaires,and arranging interview meetings. But all the efforts proved to be worthwhile at the completion of this research.

Chapter 4 was the report about the pilot study carried out in Glasgow. The small sample of 30 students was drawn and the result allowed me to revise the questionnaire and go on to the main survey.The polot study was seen as worthwhile and it provided some useful conclusions and insights, which proved to be helpful for the more comprehensive investigation.

Chapter 5 started by analysing some of the main findings. It traced the background of certain problems, like the training courses and current tests in China. The focus, however, was on the linguistic and cultural difficulties which Chinese students confronted after they came to the U.K. There were discussions about how well they were coping with the British way of life and if age and sex mattered in terms of language and culture.

Chapter 6 dealt with more practical as well as sentimental issues. There were pictures about what kind of life style most Chinese students had and how they spent their spare time. There were discussions about their favourite TV programmes, their view of the 'pub culture', religion and travelling etc. The exploration about their emotions was sensitive and sentimental. Their homesickness about their family and China; their frustrations as whether to stay or go back, or how long they planned stay; their impressions of the U.K. and expectations they had; their perception of China and the achievements in Britain, all of this was breathtaking.

Chapter 7 examined the policy-making and its implications, from the point of view of each party concerned - the sending countries, the host countries and the individual students. Some recommendations were put forward to the Chinese government, the essence of which was open and flexible policy regarding overseas students. A number of specific suggestions were also made, such as more authentic foreign language input and relevant cultural education of host countries. To the British government and institutions. I expressed some of our wishes. There is a lot that Britain could offer to Chinese students. She could provide more information and advisory services; she could be more liberal and flexible in granting

visa and work permits; and most importantly, she could provide home for thousands of 'homeless' Chinese students. This research has also intended to provide individual Chinese students some guidance in a number of ways. The lesson for each individual was that the overseas students come to Britain to learn.

I wish to conclude this report with a quotation and a question. The quotation is from the book - The New Chinese Revolution: "A Chinese weakness is that they are not naturally at ease with foreigners" (Lynn Pan, 1987). The question is: If you are British, or any other nationalities, are you at ease with Chinese?

QUESTIONNAIRE

(VERSION 1: PILOT SURVEY)

I am doing a research investigating the linguistic and cultural problems Chinese students have met in living and studying in the U.K. It would be a great favour if you could complete the following questions. Your information will be very valuable and confidential as well. Please write your answer in the box when there is a choice.

SECTION I: PERSONAL DETAILS

1.1 Name _____
1.2 ( ) Sex   a.female   b.male
1.3 ( ) Age   a.under 25   b.25-30   c.31-40   d.over 40
1.4 Where are you from (please specify city, town or village)?

_____

1.5 Your institution in the UK_____
1.6 Your planned stay in the UK: from date/month/year to month/year

__ ___ ___   ___ __

1.7 Name of your course _____ length _____
        degree _____
1.8 Do you have a financial sponsor at present? YES/NO
1.9 If yes, who are sponsor(s)
        ( )a.British Council   b.Chinese Educational Committee
            b. ORS and Univ. Grant   d. Other (please specify)_____
1.10 If no, how are you expecting to complete your course?_____

_____

1.11 Did you have a test before you came to the UK? What was it?
        ( ) a.TOEFL   b.ELTS   c.EPT   d.None
1.12 Do you have your wife/husband or children with you?_____
1.13 If yes, is your wife/husband studying, working or a dependent?___
1.14 Where do you live now?
        ( ) a.university residence   b.private rooms/flat/house
              c.council house_____
1.15 Do you share accommodation with others? YES/NO
1.16 If yes, who are they?
        ( ) a.landlady/lord   b.British students
              c.Chinese students   d.overseas students
1.17 How do you describe your accommodation?
        ( ) a.very satisfactory   b.satisfactory

c. well, not too bad   d.uncomfortable

1.18 Where did you start learning English?

( ) s. at school b.at university c.self-taught d.at work

1.19 For how many years had you studied English before you came to the UK?

_____

SECTION II: PROBLEMS ON ARRIVAL IN THE UK

2.1 Did you have problems as soon as you arrived in the UK?

( ) a.yes, a lot   b.quite a few c.very little   d.not at all

2.2 Did you find it difficult to understand native speakers? YES/NO

2.3 If so, why?

( )   a.they speak too fast   b.they have a strong local accent

c. they use unknown vocabulary   d.other_____

2.4 Did you have problems in understanding lectures in the beginning?

( )   a.I could hardly follow the lectures

b.I had to listen very carefully and it's a bit frustrating

c.I could understand, but I couldn't take any notes

d.no problem at all

2.5 How did you find the people around you?

( )   a.I found people here were very friendly

b.It was easy for me to make friends with other overseas

c.I found it difficult to mix with people from other countries,

I felt like a foreigner

d.I couldn't make friends because I had a language problem

e.I only went out with other Chinese

2.6 Have you ever tried British food? YES/NO

2.7 If yes, how did you find it?

( )   a.I love it, but it is too expensive for me

b.I don't really like it, but it is quick and easy

c.It is OK to have it occasionally, I prefer to cook Chinese food myself

d.I felt uncomfortable with knife and fork

e.I can't put up with British food

2.8 What was your first impression of Britain?

( )   a.It was what I had expected   YES/NO

b.I was completely lost at first   YES/NO

c.I was shocked at some aspects, YES/NO if yes, please give details

_____

_____

_____

d.please comment on any other impressions_____

_____

_____

_____

SECTION III: GENERAL INFORMATION

3.1 How often do you speak English/Chinese?
( ) a.about 50% each   b.80% Chinese
c.80% English   d.other___% English

3.2 With whom do you use English most?
( ) a.my supervisor   b.my classmates or colleagues
c.my landlady/lord   d.local native speakers
e.other_____

3.3 How many hours do you spend on your research/study on the average (including course work, time in lab, time in library etc.)
( ) a.2-4 hours per day   b.4-6 hours per day
c.6-8 hours per day   d.other_____

3.4 How many books and articles did you read for study purposes last term?

_____

3.5 Do you consider that the reading which you are required to do at your course   is
( ) a.to much   b.much   c.enough   d.not enough

3.6 How do you find it when you write essays or research papers?
a.it is extremely hard to find the exact words to express the meaning
b.I find it difficult to organise ideas
c.I had difficulties in structures
d.it is hard to write long essays because I had little practice before
e.other_____

3.7 Do you consider the written work is
( ) a.too much   b.much   c.enough   d.not enough

3.8 What do you think of the facilities for your study/research?
( ) a.very satisfactory   b.satisfactory
c.not satisfactory   d.not always available

3.9 How do you usually go to university?
( ) a.by bus   b.by bicycle   c.on foot   d.other_____

3.10 How about your lunch at weekdays?
( ) a.I sometimes eat at university canteen
b.I always bring my own food
c.I go back home to eat
d.other_____

3.11 How often do you go shopping?
( ) a.once a week   twice a week or more
c.once a month   d.every day

3.12 How much social activities do you have?
( ) a.a lot   b.some   c.little   d.very little

3.13 Do you spend any of your leisure time reading newspapers, magazines or novels etc. in English? YES/NO

3.14 If yes please name the titles of newspapers and magazines or types of novels._____

3.15 Could you tell me if you have visited any of the following within the past month?

( ) a.museum/art gallery   ·   b.movie   c.exhibition

    d.church   e.other_____

3.16 What is your favourite pass-time?

( ) a.watching TV   b.playing cards   c.going to cinema

    d.going to pub or disco   e.listening to music

    f.other_____

3.17 Have you ever travelled in UK or other countries for holidays since you arrived?

( ) a.yes, a great deal. I love visiting places and finding out more about
                               Western countries

    b.just a few places nearby

    c.I'd love to, but I've been too busy

    d.it's too expensive to travel

    e.I don't feel like going around foreign countries on my own

3.18 Have you ever felt homesick?

( ) a.I miss my family all the time

    b.I miss the old way of life occasionally

    c.I felt homesick as soon as I came but I got used to the life here after
    · a while

    d.the longer I've been here, the more I miss home

    e.I began to miss home after _____ months

    f.not at all

3.19 If your wife/husband is with you, do you still feel homesick?

    Why?_____

3.20 Which skill(s) in English do you think you still need to improve?

( ) a.listening   b.speaking   c.reading

    d.writing   e.other _____

3.21 Please list a few things you like/dislike about the UK

things you like	things you don't like
1_____	1_____
2_____	2_____
3_____	3_____

3.22 Please list a few things you like/dislike about your university

things you like	things you don't like
1_____	1_____
2_____	2_____
·3_____	3_____

3.23 Could you please tell me if the Beijing event has somehow affected you? In what way?   (you can choose not to answer this question)

_____
_____
_____

3.24   Final comments or suggestions: _____
_____

Thank you very much for your effort and patience. You cooperation is highly appreciated and I'll be very grateful if you could send the completed questionnaire, as soon as possible, to the following address:

Ms. Junying Zeng
Dept. of Adult & Continuing
Education,
Univ. of Glasgow, G12 8LW

QUESTIONNAIRE
(VERSION 2: MAIN SURVEY)

To My Chinese Fellow Folks,

  I am doing a research investigating the linguistic and cultural problems Chinese students have met in living and studying in the UK. It would be a great favour if you could complete the following questions. Your information will be very valuable and confidential as well. No real name will appear in my report. I also hope that the results of this investigation will benefit all the Chinese students in the UK in one way or another. Please tick the appropriate box where there is a choice.

  Thanks in advance!

<div align="right">Yours sincerely,</div>

<div align="right">Zeng Junying</div>

SECTION I: PERSONAL DETAILS

1.1 Name (optional)_____(please give your name if you don't mind
             a further contact)
1.2 Sex a. female( ) b. male( )
1.3 Age a.under 25( ) b.25-30( ) c.31-40( ) d.over 40( )
1.4 Your institution in China_____
1.5 Your subject of study : a.Arts( ) b.Social Science( ) c.Science( )
      d.Engineering & Technology( ) e.Other (please specify_____( )

1.6 Your specific major_____
1.7 Degree obtained: a.PhD( ) b.Master( ) c.Bachelor( )
      d.other (please specify)_____( )
1.8 Your institution in the UK_____
1.9 Your present subject: a. the same as in China( )
      b. different (please specify)_____( )
1.10 Degree sought : a.PhD ( ) b. Master ( ) c. Diploma( )
      d. Visiting ( )   e. Other(please specify)_____
1.11 Your planned stay in the UK: from date/month/year to month/year

        ___ _____ ____ _____ ____
1.12 Do you have financial sponsor at present? a. Yes( ) b. No( )

1.13 If yes, who are the sponsor(s)?
        a.British council ( )   b.Chinese Educational Committee ( )
        c.ORS and Univ. Grant ( ) d.Other(please specify)_____( )

1.14 If no, how are you expecting to complete your course?

_____

1.15 Did you have a test before you came to the UK? What was the name and the score?
        a.TOEFL ( )_____   b.ELTS ( )_____   c.EPT ( )_____   d.other( )_____

1.16 Are you married? a.Yes ( ) b.No ( ) c.Other_____( )

1.17 Do you have your wife/husband or children with you?
        a.Yes ( ) b.No ( )

1.18 If yes, what is your wife/husband doing?
        a.studying ( ) b.working ( ) c.dependent ( ) d.visiting ( )

1.19 Where do you live now?
        a.university residence ( ) b.private rooms/flat/house ( )
        c.council house ( ) d.other (please specify)_____

1.20 Do you share accommodation with others? If yes, who are they?
        a.landlady/lord ( )   b.British students ( )
        c.Chinese students ( )   d.overseas students ( )

1.21 How do you describe your accommodation?
        a.very satisfactory ( )   b.satisfactory ( )
        c.well, not too bad ( )   d.unsatisfactory ( )
        e.very unsatisfactory ( )

1.22 Where did you start learning English?
        a.at school ( )   b.at university ( )   c.self-taught d.at work ( )

1.23 For how many years had you studied English before you came to the UK?
        a.over 20 years ( ) b.20-15 years ( )
        c.15-10 years ( )   d.less than 10 years ( )

1.24 Have you attended any English training course before you came abroad? If so, how long?
        a. one year ( )   b. six months ( )
        c. three months ( )   d. other____months ( )

SECTION II: PROBLEMS ON ARRIVAL IN THE UK

2.1 Did you have problems as soon as you arrived in the UK?
        a. yes, a lot ( )   b. quite a few ( )
        c. very little ( )   d. not at all ( )

2.2 Did you find it difficult to understand native speakers?
        a. yes ( )   b. no ( )

2.3 If yes, why?
        a. they speak too fast ( )   b. they have a strong local accent ( )

c. they use unknown vocabulary ( )

d. other(please specify)_____( )

2.4 Did you have problems in understanding lectures in the beginning?

    a. I could hardly follow the lectures ( )

    b. I could understand partly, about_____% ( )

    c. I could understand, but I couldn't take any notes ( )

    d. no problem at all ( )

2.5 How did you meet the local people?

    a. I found people here were very friendly ( )

    b. It was easy for me to make friends with other overseas ( )

    c. I found it difficult to mix with people from other
       countries, I felt like a foreigner ( )

    d. I only went out with other Chinese ( )

2.6 If the answer is c or d, the reason is

    a. language obstacle ( )   b. culture background ( )

    c. both a and b   ( )   d. financial problem ( )

2.7 Have you ever tried British food?   If yes, how did you find it?

    a. I can't put up with British food ( )

    b. I don't really like it, but if is quick and easy ( )

    c. It is OK to have it occasionally, I prefer to cook Chinese food
       myself ( )

    d. I felt uncomfortable with knife and fork ( )

    e. I love it, but is is too expensive for me ( )

2.8 What was your first impression of Britain?

_____

2.9 Did you find the UK the same as you'd expected?

    a. It was what I expected ( )

    b. I was shocked at some aspects ( )

2.10 If Britain is not what you had expected, please give details:

_____

_____

_____

SECTION III: GENERAL INFORMATION

3.1 How often do you speak English/Chinese?

    a. about 50% each ( )   b. 80% Chinese ( )

    c. 80% English   d. other____% English ( )

3.2 Under what circumstances do you use English most?

    a. discussing with supervisor ( )

b. talking with classmates or colleagues ( )

c. dealing with landlady or landlord ( )

d. meeting local native speakers ( )

e. other (please specify)_____( )

3.3　How many hours do you spend on your research/study on the average (including course work, time in lab, time in library etc.)

a. 2-4 hours per day ( )　　b. 4-6 hours per day ( )

c. 6-8 hours per day ( )　　d. other____hours ( )

3.4　How many books did you read for study purposes last term?

a. over 50 ( )　b. 30-50 ( )　c. 10-30 ( )　d. less than 10 ( )

3.5　How do you find it when you write essays or research papers?

a. it is extremely hard to find the exact words to express the meaning ( )

b. I find it difficult to organise ideas ( )

c. I had difficulties with structures ( )

d. it is hard to write long essays because I had little practice before ( )

e. other (please specify)_____( )

3.6　What do you think of the facilities for our study/research?

a. very satisfactory ( )　　b. satisfactory ( )　　c. not satisfactory ( )

d. not always available(please specify)_____( )

3.7　How about your lunch at weekdays?

a. I sometimes eat at university canteen ( )

b. I always bring my own food ( )

c. I go back hone to eat ( )

d. other(please specify)_____( )

3.8　How much social activities do you have?

a. a lot ( )　b. some ( )　c. little ( )　d. very little ( )

3.9　Do you spend any of your leisure time reading newspapers, magazines or novels etc. in English?

a. yes ( )　b. no ( )

3.10　If yes, please name the types of newspapers, magazines or novels

a. scientific magazines/journals ( )

b. general fictions ( )

c. leisure reading ( )

d. other (please specify)_____( )

3.11　Your favourite newspaper/magazine/novel_____

3.12　Could you tell me if you have visited any following places lest term?

a. museum/art gallery ( )　b. movie ( )　c. exhibition ( )

d. church ( )　　　　e. other (please specify)_____( )

3.13　What is your favourite pass-time?

a. watching TV ( )　b. playing cards/chess ( )　c. going to cinema ( )

d. going to pub or disco ( )　　e. listening to music ( )

f. other (please specify)_____( )

3.14　Have you ever travelled in UK or other countries for holidays since you arrived?

a. yes, a great deal.　　I love visiting places and finding our more about Western countries ( )

b. just a few places nearby ( )

c. I'd love to, but I've been too busy ( )

d. it's too expensive to travel ( )

e. I don't feel like going around foreign countries on my own ( )

3.15　Have you ever felt homesick?

a. I miss my family all the time ( )

b. I miss the old way of life occasionally ( )

c. I felt homesick as soon as I came but I got used to the life here after a while ( )

d. the longer I've been here, the more I miss home ( )

e. I began to miss home after_____months ( )

f. not at all ( )

3.16　If your wife/husband is with you, do you still feel homesick?

a. yes ( )　b. no ( )

3.17　If yes, why?_____

3.18　Which skill(s) in English do you think you still need to improve?

a. listening ( )　b. speaking ( )　c. reading ( )

d. writing ( )　e. other (please specify)_____( )

3.19　Please list a few things you like/dislike about the UK

things you like　　　　　　things you don't like

(1)_____　　(1)_____

(2)_____　　(2)_____

(3)_____　　(3)_____

3.20　Please list a few things you like/dislike about your university

things you like　　　　　　things you don't like

(1)_____　　(1)_____

(2)_____　　(2)_____

(3)_____　　(3)_____

3.21　Final comments or suggestions:_____

_____

Thank you very much for your effort and patience.   Your cooperation is highly appreciated and I'll be very grateful if you could send the completed questionnaire, as soon as possible, to the following address:

Ms Junying Zeng
Dept. of Adult & Continuing
Education,
Univ. of Glasgow, G12 8LW

Table 1: Distribution of Questionnaires and Interviews

Name of University	Number of Questionnaires Distributed	Number of Questionnaires Returned	No.People Interviewed
Oxford	30	14	3
Manchester/UMIST	25	14	3
Liverpool	25	13	2
Nottingham	25	13	3
Birmingham	20+	11	2
Edinburgh	20+	10	2
Queen Univ.of Belfast	25	9	2
Cardiff	25	8	2
London	25	10	2
Cambridge	30	5	
Warwick	25	4	
Southampton	25	2	
Leeds	20+	6	
Stirling	/	1	
Peterborough Poly	/	1	
Loughborough	20+	2	
Sheffield	20+	4	
Reading	20+	1	
East Anglia	10	3	
Aberdeen	10	0	
20	400+	130	21

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