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The Impact of Academic Exchange between China and the U.S., 1979-2010

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The Impact of Academic Exchange between China and the U.S., 1979-2010 – Kaitlin Peck

The relationship between China and the United States has been complex and often tense. In the second half of the twentieth century, both countries experienced ups and downs in their diplomatic, cultural, and political relationship. An important part of this relationship included the strains of the student exchange program. Because of the tension between the U.S. and China, these educational exchanges ended in 1950 and did not resume until the United States officially recognized the Peoples Republic of China in 1979. After this point, education exchange between China and United States grew and expanded. To understand this growth, many aspects of the academic exchange program will be analyzed, including the advantages and disadvantages of academic exchange between China and the U.S., the experiences and problems of students studying in each country, historical events and controversy that have affected this exchange, and the current state of the exchange program. Since 1979, the education exchange between China and the U.S. has been mostly beneficial for improving their relations despite the problems it experienced.

To understand the education exchange between the two countries, it is important to understand their cultural relationship and its connection to academic exchange. Although China and the United States appeared to understand the importance and the benefits of cultural interaction and cooperation, there was still some distrust on each side as well. For example, China viewed the United States as being self-serving and interfering. Furthermore, not all American values were considered acceptable, and many of the tense relations between the two countries came from differences between the values of the East and West. At the same time, the U.S. also shifted to viewing China as either weak and in need of assistance, or as a threat because of its growing power. Especially from 1950-1979, China was seen as a Communist threat. As a result, China was essentially isolated from the West and had no diplomatic relations with the United States during those years. China and the US resumed diplomatic relations in 1979, which significantly altered the international balance of power and influence, although most Americans opposed new relations. Statistics show that, “only 46% of the respondents favored diplomatic relations with the People’s Republic of China. Thirty-eight percent felt that a non-aggressive pact was in order, and 23% recommended a military alliance pact in view of possible Russian



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aggression.”¹ Despite some of these unfavorable views, both nations share a goal of strengthening ties with one another. Furthermore, there has also been a significant increase in cultural interchange between them, and one important interchange has been in education.

Educational exchange is an important aspect of the cultural relationship that has developed between China and the United States. Chinese and American students are both being influenced by one another like never before, and China has sent more students to the United States than any other nation, especially after the end of the Cultural Revolution that lasted from 1966-1976.² Scholars Dudley Poston and Luo Hua have noted, “in the past few decades their numbers have increased rapidly. China usually ranks among the top two or three countries sending student immigrants to the U.S. Since 1983, Chinese students have comprised over 10 percent of all foreign students in the United States.”³ As a result, these students are providing a major economic contribution when they come to study at many of the major American universities, especially if they are paying full tuition for their education. Furthermore, schools in China are being influenced by Western education and culture, and many have adopted English language training as a way to help China’s modernization strategy. Consequently, English language teaching has become an important part of Chinese education, which has provided significant benefits by making it easier for them to communicate with students from English-speaking countries.⁴

Although not nearly as many American students study in China as Chinese students study in America, there are many examples in US schools and universities that demonstrate how China has come to influence American culture and education, including the increase in Chinese language courses in the US and other courses that focus on China’s history and culture. Furthermore, there has been an increase in the number of American universities in China, especially in recent years as the United States has experienced economic problems. Even though progress has been made towards educational exchange between China and the US, there is still a slight unbalance. This concept of student exchange between China and the US is significant

¹ Hans Sabald and Gloria J. Milton, “China as Perceived by American Students: Attitudes, Knowledge, and the Relationship between Attitudes and Knowledge,” *International Review of Modern Sociology*, 12:1 (Spring 1982), 30.

² Xinshu Zhao and Yu Xie, “Western Influence on (People's Republic of China) Chinese Students in the United States,” *Comparative Education Review*, 36:4 (Nov., 1992), 509.

³ Poston Jr., Dudley L., and Luo Hua, “Chinese Student and Labor Migration to the United States: Trends and Policies Since the 1980s,” *Asian & Pacific Migration Journal. America: History & Life*, 324.

⁴ Ronayne J. Cowan, Richard L. Light, B. Ellen Mathews and G. Richard Tucker, “English Teaching in China: A Recent Survey,” *TESOL Quarterly*, 13:4 (Dec., 1979), 466.



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because it may influence future relations between the two countries, as well as how well they will work together and cooperate as two major powers competing for global power and influence.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Education Exchange

One major benefit of education exchange is the ability to help reduce tension between nations during times of crisis. This use of educational exchange was helpful for the United States, even though it still had no relations with China during much of the Cold War. In order to improve diplomatic relations with other countries during this time, asserts scholar Liping Bu, “the US government made new cultural policies in terms of Cold War political concerns and relied extensively on private resources for the implementation of cultural diplomacy via educational exchange.”⁵ In other words, the United States used education exchange to improve many areas of diplomatic relations, including exchange programs that focused on cultural activities. As a result, the use of educational exchange has become associated with the diplomatic goals of the United States. Therefore, the aim of increasing educational exchange in the post-Cold War years was to improve many areas of diplomatic relations between the United States and other countries.

Another benefit of education exchange is the opportunity to increase understanding between countries. This understanding is especially crucial for promoting peaceful diplomatic relations as a way of avoiding conflict and violence. The need to gain knowledge of other nations is especially important for the United States because, as social scientist Jacob Cantor wrote, “Whatever political differences we may have, a considerable number of informed people abroad have been helped to cut through the myths about the United States to the realities, and thus to create a climate in which honest communication and understanding can take place.”⁶ In other words, it is important for both China and the United States to be informed about other countries and one another, in order to achieve those necessary goals of communication and understanding. The most efficient way to achieve these goals is through education exchange, because those students who participate have the potential of becoming the future leaders and politicians of their home countries. This means that educational exchange should be a long-term investment because the knowledge Chinese and American students gain about one another today can help improve relations for future generations in both countries. Once these goals are achieved, it will be much

⁵ Liping Bu. “Educational Exchange and Cultural Diplomacy in the Cold War,” *Journal of American Studies*, 33:3, Part 1: Women in America (Dec., 1999), 393.

⁶ Jacob Cantor, “Our Cultural ‘Exports’: A View of the United States Exchange Program,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 384 (Jul., 1969), 88.



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easier to improve the diplomatic and cultural interaction between them, and many conflicts of mistrust and violence will be much easier to avoid.

As China and the United States have increased their academic exchange in recent years, doing so has made each power more aware and appreciative of the other's culture and intellectual strengths. Writing in *Physics Today* in 1989, Irwin Goodwin stated that this growing interaction allowed China to open to Western ideas and influences on both cultural and academic levels. "The bountiful exchange of scientists, scholars, and students between China and other countries, particularly the US, positively invigorated China's economic and scientific life and certainly raised expectations among its students and intellectuals."⁷ This growth of cultural interchange suggests that China and the United States were beginning to place more emphasis on cultural diplomacy and cooperation.

In addition to education exchange, many arts organizations have also been beneficial in promoting cultural interaction between China and the United States, as each country seem to be gaining more appreciation for the other's artistic contributions in many forms. For example, in 2007 the SoHo gallery in New York held a major art show featuring the works of thirteen Chinese contemporary artists.⁸ Considering the arts in both countries is important because "the West and China both have great traditions in art, and one premise of the U.S.-China Arts Education Project is that examination of arts education in two such different societies as America and China could provide insights into both artistic traditions."⁹ Furthermore, this interest in the arts also suggests that both the United States and China have influenced one another and their views on arts education as well as education in general.

Despite the efforts of both China and the US to strengthen their ties through academic exchange, it also created disadvantages for both countries. For China, there was the concern of dominance and economic dependence on the West if they continued to participate in this exchange. In recent decades, Chinese leaders have become aware that "China is clearly in a stronger position economically to benefit from such interaction than ever before, yet the hazards of domination and dependency in the cultural and educational sphere are not absent from the

⁷Irwin Goodwin, "Far From Beijing, Chinese Students in US Fear for Future of Science and Nation," *Physics Today*, 42:7 (1989), 45-47.

⁸ Lauren A.E. Schuker, "Art: China; With New Chinese Works Hot at Auction, Galleries and Museums Join the Action," *Wall Street Journal*, November 17, 2007.

⁹Kathryn Lowry and Constance Wolf, "Arts Education in the People's Republic of China: Results of Interviews with Chinese Musicians and Visual Artists," *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 22:1, Special Issue: Art, Mind, and Education (Spring, 1988), 89.



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present situation.”¹⁰ For many Chinese leaders, this dependency raised the concern of cultural contamination from the West if China continued to depend on the United States on a cultural and educational level. China’s leaders understood the importance of universities for the country’s economic development and for improving its relationship with the West. However, these developments became a two-edged sword for China. Education specialist Ruth Hayhoe pointed out, “On the one hand, considerable support and encouragement for scientific and technological development is provided, together with pressures for scientific findings to be applied to specific economic development needs. On the other, the reflective and theoretical social sciences and the humanities are being purged of Western influences in efforts to mobilize all resources against what is seen as the Western strategy of fostering ‘peaceful evolution’ towards capitalism.”¹¹ Despite the concerns of its leaders, China has become more willing to interact with Western universities, as well as adopt certain Western cultural influences that would ultimately help China during its process of modernization.

China also experienced the issue of what to do with returning students who completed their studies in the United States. Returning students brought home knowledge and resources that could benefit the country with its modernization process. Those students who returned home to look for jobs also brought with them new ideas of culture and education, which could lead to new jobs and new methods for improving China’s economy and status. Even so, the Western attitudes that these students brought home, such as American freedoms, were not always embraced in China. This attitude made it difficult for them to find employment. As Leo Orleans wrote, “despite the recognized value of returning scholars to the nation, the problems associated with their placement and utilization have so far received much more publicity than their contributions--another example of how open and self-critical China is today.”¹² However, the U.S. saw the benefits of allowing Chinese students to return home, because the experiences and influences of those students would allow them to implement certain American ideals and freedoms, especially more freedom in education.¹³

For the United States, the major disadvantage of participating in academic exchange was competition with other countries. Competition has been a concern for the U.S. because of a

¹⁰ Ruth Hayhoe, “A Comparative Analysis of Chinese-Western Academic Exchange,” *Comparative Education*, 20:1, Special Anniversary Number (8): Education in China (1984), 40.

¹¹ Ruth Hayhoe, “China’s Universities since Tiananmen: A Critical Assessment,” *The China Quarterly*, 134 (Jun., 1993), 291.

¹² Leo A. Orleans, *Chinese Students in America: Policies, Issues, and Numbers* (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1988), 57.

¹³ John T. Ma, “From Studying in America to Staying in America,” *Chinese Studies in History. America: History & Life*, (2003), 56.



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possible decline in global power and influence, especially since China has begun to modernize and expand. This suggests the issue of possible tension between the two countries, especially as a small but significant percentage of U.S. students study abroad in China. As a result, the United States has had to deal with increasing competition in foreign exchange programs with other nations such as Australia, New Zealand, and Britain.¹⁴ This decline of the U.S. as an academic destination could indicate that its influence will also decline in other areas, particularly economically and culturally when competing with other large nations such as China. With these advantages and disadvantages in mind, it is clear that both countries have struggled to maintain influence in what has become an increasingly global academic exchange program. Even so, they have still managed to continue their student exchange. The greatest benefit this program provides is the opportunity for these nations to give their students a broader education experience that they will have for the rest of their lives. The knowledge that these students bring back can also benefit their home country by presenting new ideas for improvement and progress that will further promote better relations with other nations.

Experiences of Exchange Students

When considering the experiences of Chinese and American students in the academic exchange program, an important factor to consider is the interactions between Chinese and American students within each country. One difficulty these students encounter is finding a common ground with each other because of cultural differences. Many students who have participated in this academic exchange have expressed that it is difficult to form friendships due to the gap that exists between them. However, there have also been efforts to improve the interactions between Chinese and American students by trying to find similar backgrounds and experiences to make it easier for them to start conversations and form friendships.¹⁵ This aspect of the academic exchange between China and the United States highlights the complexities of the interactions and relationships between American and Chinese students.

Like many international students, Chinese students who come to study in the United States struggle because of the cultural differences they encounter. Language barriers have been a continuing struggle for foreign students who do not speak English as a first language, which often makes communication difficult. Another struggle that Chinese and other foreign students face is the difference in the classroom culture. Many international students are used to addressing

¹⁴ Philip G. Altbach, "Can the United States Remain the Top Destination for Foreign Students?" *Change*, 36:2 (Mar.-Apr., 2004), 22.

¹⁵ Michigan State University, "A Conversation with Chinese and American Students," <http://oiss.isp.msu.edu/multimedia/?id=1-14-4e-103-untitled00000>



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the professors a certain way and placing more importance on the information provided in lectures. As a result, according to Kwasi Sarkodie-Mensah, “the classroom culture in the United States characterized by informality, and even addressing a professor by first name, is a real dilemma for international students. Participating in class, a concept that is foreign to many international students, is also another important issue.”¹⁶ Chinese students are also not accustomed to speaking in class, and they have little experience with didactic critical thinking activities prior to coming to the U.S.

Although many Chinese students have difficulty adapting to their new environment and culture, it seems that in time many of them do adapt to their surroundings by becoming more involved and participating in certain events. One example of Chinese students adapting to American culture is by changing their names so that they are more Western. Many students choose this because it is said to be “a symbolic representation of the bearer’s identity change, be it a change of last name, personal name, or acquisition of a whole new name, a title, or a nickname. Thus, change of name signals a change in the matrix of social relations that accompany the name change.”¹⁷ To further understand how these students generally adapt to their new environment, one account of their experiences expresses that:

“Chinese students said they initially struggle to connect with classmates who speak rapid-fire idiomatic English, listen to different music, watch different TV shows, follow different sports, remember different childhood games and embrace a teen drinking culture that has no Chinese equivalent. Chinese students at Northwestern said they've embraced speaking up in class, landed dream internships and taken advantage of research opportunities they wouldn't have had in the test-based Chinese system. Some live off campus and socialize mainly with other Chinese students, but He, an outgoing economics student from Beijing, is a member of the Chi Omega sorority and Jiang, a competitive hip-hop dancer, practices with the Electric Funketeers dance crew in Chicago.”¹⁸

Another way to look at experiences of exchange students is to look at the experiences of female Chinese students studying in the U.S. This is significant because Chinese female students hold education in high regard, and much of their experiences in America are centered on academic life. Furthermore, the historical significance of early Chinese female students is the fact that they

¹⁶ Kwasi Sarkodie-Mensah, “International Students in the US: Trends, Cultural Adjustments, and Solutions for a Better Experience,” *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science*, 39:3 (Summer, 1998), 216.

¹⁷ Tai S. Kang, “Name Change and Acculturation: Chinese Students on an American Campus,” *Pacific Sociological Review. America: History & Life*, 404.

¹⁸ Nara Schoenberg, “Chinese College Students Flock to US” *The Chicago Tribune*, November 19, 2012.



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were given private funds from Christian missionaries, while most Chinese male students came to America with government funded scholarships. Furthermore, Chinese female students placed great importance on the courses they studied in the U.S. While Chinese male students concentrated in fields such as business administration, chemistry, and engineering, most Chinese female students chose a wider variety of courses, including education, sociology, chemistry, home economics, English, general arts, music, history, psychology, nursing, mathematics, biology, art, archaeology, and medicine.¹⁹

Chinese students studying in America and American students studying in China experience common difficulties, including language barriers and classroom culture. Even so, the experience of studying in either China or the US can also be an enriching experience as well. Students who take the opportunity to experience the culture around them such as the cuisine, art, and architecture of their host country often have a more positive experience and are able to acquire a more well-rounded education. For students who immerse themselves in a different culture, they often gain a new outlook that they will carry with them forever. As long as these programs continue to improve, future generations of students will be able to gain similar experiences by studying abroad as well.

Events and Controversy Surrounding Academic Exchange

It should be noted that although the academic exchange program between the United States and China has strengthened in past decades, it has not been without controversy. Many historical examples show instances of the relationship between China and the U.S. becoming strained, and as a result affecting the students who had traveled to each country. One example has been the differences between the goals of each country and what they want to teach international students. The aim of the U.S. was to teach Western ideas and values to its Chinese students, but Chinese students have had a different agenda about what to study based on the modernization goals of their government. A recent study showed that most Chinese students' "choices reflected the Chinese government's desires, expressed in many an annual plan, to acquire Western technology. So two-thirds of the hand-picked Chinese government-sponsored students have brought home skills in engineering, mathematics, biology or physics."²⁰

One event that severely strained this academic relationship was the Tiananmen massacre on June 4, 1989. This event was devastating for Sino- American relations because prior to the

¹⁹ Huping Ling, "A history of Chinese female students in the United States, 1880s-1990s," *Journal of American Ethnic History. America: History & Life*, (1997), 32.

²⁰ Amanda Bennett, "Bookshelf: Academic Exchange: China Trade Imbalance?" *Wall Street Journal*, Jul 11, 1986.



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massacre, their relations had been seeing great improvement,²¹ Although there was outrage after this event, there was still a question of whether it would be best to suspend education exchange or continue it as way of improving relations between China and the U.S. Unfortunately, the Chinese government immediately suspended the China Fulbright program.²² Another dilemma following this event was controversy over how the situation was handled, in particular the treatment of student demonstrators at Tiananmen Square.²³ Furthermore, the government began punishing those students who were involved in the demonstrations leading to the incident: Students were told they would have to wait five to seven years for permission to study abroad. In addition the government punished students who took part in parallel demonstrations in the US.²⁴ As a result of this incident, immediate effects were felt in both China and the US due to the handling of the demonstrations. In addition to the concerns of the future of education exchange, there was also a growing concern over the safety of university students studying in China. Officials feared that “Chinese universities will be operating under restrictions that make productive research arrangements with Americans impossible, and that the Chinese government might not continue to grant visas to the thousands of students who have flocked to the United States to study.”²⁵

Despite the tension between China and the U.S, there have also been many positive events that have continued to strengthen the education exchange between the countries, such as when Chicago educator Paula Wolff signed exchange agreements with three major Chinese universities. The purpose of these agreements was to strengthen ties between China and the U.S through education exchange, as well as promote academic and intellectual freedom.²⁶ Another positive event that significantly affected education exchange was the reinstatement of the Fulbright Scholar program in 1990, which seemed to further improve the relationship between the two countries.²⁷ The relationship between the two nations was still fragile at that time because of the Tiananmen massacre but the reinstatement of the Fulbright program showed signs

²¹ Matthew S. Hirshberg, “Consistency and Change in American Perceptions of China,” *Political Behavior*, 15:3 (Sep., 1993), 248.

²² Guangqiu Xu, “The Ideological and Political Impact of US Fulbrighters on Chinese Students,” *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, (1999), 53.

²³ Alan P.L. Liu, “Aspects of Beijing’s Crisis Management: The Tiananmen Square Demonstration,” *Asian Survey*, 30:5 (May 1990), 506.

²⁴ “Steps to Aid Chinese Students: [Home Edition],” *The Los Angeles Times*, October 28, 1989.

²⁵ Barbara Vobejda, “Academics Face Dilemma on China; some Suspend Exchanges; Others Try to Restrain Anger,” *The Washington Post*, Jun 16, 1989.

²⁶ Uli, Schmetzer, “US Educator Bedazzles Her Chinese Hosts Proposes Academic Exchange Programs,” *Chicago Tribune*, Oct 04, 1994.

²⁷ “WORLD China to Resume US Fulbright Scholar Exchange Program,” *Los Angeles Times*, Apr 06, 1990.



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of significant progress despite questions about its stability and its future,²⁸ Although it is evident that events strained the relationship between China and the United States, the student exchange program managed to endure despite the controversy because of the successful efforts to strengthen the program.

The Chinese-American Student Exchange Today

The education exchange program between China and the U.S today appears to be stronger than ever before. The continued progress they have made in past decades has allowed the program to strengthen and grow into what it is today. The program in the 1970s and 1980s was “preceded by more than eight decades... of educational and scientific interaction. The links between the two eras are strong... [and] numerous characteristics of earlier exchanges endure today,” as some scholars have noted.²⁹

Another way to measure the current success of the exchange program is through the many accounts of exchange students. Countless blogs, articles, and other forms of media can be found by students documenting their experiences while studying abroad. The importance of considering more current accounts of the exchange program is to determine its strength and continuity today, especially after many years of conflict and uncertainty.³⁰ With these accounts of Chinese students studying in the United States and American students studying in China, it is clear that the educational exchange continues to thrive today. Even though the relationships have at times been strained, the efforts that have been made to improve the quality of the student exchange program have made a significant impact. Both countries appear to making improvements for the benefit of their foreign students, which are reflected in the descriptions that these students provide of their experience. As long as China and the United States continue to improve their student exchange programs and policies, it will be more of an incentive for greater numbers of students to travel and study abroad.

The most recent and obvious proof of the progress both countries have made towards a more effective program was seen in 2010, when China and the United States announced an expansion of the student exchange program that would aim to benefit students from both countries who wanted to study abroad and expand their educational experiences. The

²⁸ Daniel Southerland, "China, US Discuss Resuming Academic Program," *The Washington Post*, Dec 18, 1989.

²⁹ "The Context for Academic Exchange," *A Relationship Restored: Trends in US-China Educational Exchanges, 1978-1984*, Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 1986.

³⁰ Marianne Craven, "Fulbright and Academic Exchange Programs in China," April 14, 2012.

http://blogs.state.gov/index.php/site/entry/fulbright_academic_exchanges_china; Nara Schoenberg, "Chinese College Students Flock to US," *The Chicago Tribune*, November 19, 2012.



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significance of this expansion was particularly important for American students because it offered them 100,000 more places in China over the next four years. This expansion was announced by State Councilor Liu Yandong while meeting US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.³¹

The expansion also had major benefits for Chinese students as well because “China’s emphasis on academic achievement and the prestige of US higher education” lured almost 100,000 students to the US.³² Liu also stated that China would increase the number of government-funded scholarships for Chinese students who wanted to pursue doctorate degrees in the US. Liu further emphasized the need for the two countries to focus on new ways of promoting cultural exchange. Clinton added that the United States would also like to see more progress made towards an increase of student exchanges between the United States and China. Both leaders expressed the benefits of these exchanges and how they can promote understanding and friendship among the future generations of both countries. Although the results have not always been favorable, it is clear that education exchange is still an efficient way to encourage that cooperation.

The significance of this change is especially important because it comes at a time when more than 300 million Chinese people are learning English and Americans are also becoming more familiar with Chinese. Furthermore, about 100,000 Chinese students are studying in the United States, while about 20,000 U.S. students are pursuing studies in China.³³ Therefore, these steps towards expanding the education exchange have the potential to significantly influence the future of academic exchange for generations to come.³⁴ The statistics of Chinese and American students participating in academic exchange also suggests the continuing improvement of cultural and diplomatic relations between China and the U.S. If each country is more willing to adapt to certain aspects of the other’s culture, then future students who travel abroad to study will be able to adjust to the new culture with more ease than ever before due to prior exposure to that culture.

³¹ The talks between them regarding education exchange marked the first meeting of the China-US High Level Consultation on People-to-People Exchanges, which was agreed during President Obama’s China visit.

³² Mary Beth Marklein, “Chinese college students flocking to US campuses: ‘Strong dialogue spurs a surge of enrollment,’” *USA Today*, December 8, 2009.

³³ These statistics are from 2010 when the article was published.

³⁴ Xiong Tong, “China, US To Scale Up Student Exchange Program,” May 25, 2010.
http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-05/25/c_13314782.htm



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Conclusion

What is remarkable about the educational exchange between the United States and China is the fact that it has experienced dramatic growth, an abrupt end, and then rebirth all within the second half of the twentieth century. This exchange is especially impressive when considering that it endured despite tension from the political, cultural, and economic differences between the two countries. Studies have shown it is effective because “the strongest tie between the two peoples, educational interactions--their rise and fall--inevitably had a lasting impact on the political, social, economic, and educational development of both societies and on the relations between the two nations.”³⁵

Another important analysis includes the major changes China has made to its education system in recent decades, which in turn has affected its exchange program as well. These changes are a result of the country’s continuing process of modernization and its development of a lifelong learning system. This suggests that the changes China has made can be extremely beneficial not only to its students, but also to other nations who send their students to study in Chinese universities. When considering the long-term impact, it is clear that China’s lifelong learning system, according to a report published by the World Bank in 2007, must be “flexible, market-driven, and demand-driven--and customized to different audiences and characterized by multiple players and multiple pathways.”³⁶

The attitude towards education in China has begun to change as well. This is another result of the modernization process, which has influenced many to become more broad-minded about what Chinese students should study. This change in attitude has also extended to Chinese law and legal education in the last fifty years. These changes include the difference in how people now view legal education in China. Social scientist Randle R. Edwards wrote, “In China, law was first regarded as, at best, irrelevant and, at worst, a disruption of harmony. . . Law is now, however, viewed as a principle tool for the achievement of socialist justice, social stability, and economic development.”³⁷

Despite the differences between Chinese and American education, it is clear that there are many positive aspects of both as they continue to develop and influence the student exchange between them for future scholars. The most significant benefit to be gained is the possibility that

³⁵ Hongshan Li, *US-China Educational Exchange State, Society, and Intercultural Relations, 1905-1950* (Rutgers University Press, 2008), 176.

³⁶ Carl J. Dahlman, and Douglas Zhihua Zeng, *Enhancing China's Competitiveness Through Lifelong Learning* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2007), 55.

³⁷ Randle R. Edwards, “An Overview of Chinese Law and Legal Education,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 476 (Nov., 1984), 49.



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future Chinese and American scholars will continue to interact with one another, and by doing so help to further improve relations between their countries. This improvement will only occur if the trend in the academic exchange program is able to continue for future students who want to broaden their views of the world.