Mainland Chinese students in America: Community and marginality

Koji Hoshino

The University of Montana

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Mainland Chinese Students in America: Community and Marginality

by

Koji Hoshino


Presented in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

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Approved by:

[Signatures and dates]

Date
ABSTRACT


Mainland Chinese Students in America: Community and Marginality (172 pp)

Committee Chairperson: Dr. LeRoy C. Anderson

This study uses the concepts of community and marginality as a conceptual framework to examine the adaptation process of mainland Chinese students in the United States. Two methods are employed in order to accomplish this goal: ethnography and statistical analysis.

Five "types" of Chinese students in the United States are identified in the ethnographic study, and several key aspects of their adaptation process are noted: a big trend of going to America, frustrations, curiosity, expectations, confidence, obligations in China, a strong impression of American high living standards, appreciation of the American social system, as well as disappointment, China connections, hard work and study habits, friendships, ethnic identity, and participation in church activities in America.

In the statistical study, multi-regression analysis was conducted and a path model was proposed in order to verify the discussions emerging from the ethnographic study. The statistical study suggests that appreciation of the American "system" and "loyalty" to China are the two most significant factors influencing Chinese students' intentions to stay or return.

In the conclusion, two fundamental orientations of Chinese students' social actions and attitudes are articulated: an "instrumental" orientation and an "expressive" orientation. Along with these discussions, two sociological concepts of "Gemeinschaft" (community), and "Gesellschaft" (association) are compared and discussed in order to examine marginality and its impact on Chinese students in the United States. While "instrumentally" assimilating in the American system as Gesellschaft, Chinese students fail to obtain an "expressive" sense of Gemeinschaft in their host country. Finally, five scenarios are predicted: (1) return to China, (2) hold onto Chinatown, (3) double rejection, (4) still knocking at the door of America, and (5) creation of a new community.
TO
THE MEMORY OF MY FATHER

ISAMU HOSHINO
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have contributed to the development of this thesis. First, I would like to thank the mainland Chinese students, both in Missoula, Montana, and Norman, Oklahoma, whose input contributed to this project. They provided valuable information through interviews and questionnaire surveys. I hope this work will provide further understanding of mainland Chinese students and consequently improve their social conditions in both the United States and China.

Second, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to my thesis committee: Dr. C. LeRoy Anderson, Dr. James W. Burfeind, and Dr. Gretchen G. Weix. Special thanks are extended to Dr. Anderson, Committee Chair, whose generous consultation at every stage of this study provided me academic and spiritual encouragement.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge my friends, who provided me assistance throughout this project. Thank you all very much: Ms. Lei Yuha for the access to Chinese students at Norman; Mr. Patrick Runkel and Ms. Yi Dan Chen for translation of the Chinese song, "XIO SA ZOU YI HUI;" Ms. Shari Linjala for her editorial assistance; and Ms. Shelly Beller, Mr. Christian Gebhardt, and Ms. Shir-Khim Go. Without their assistance, this work would not exist as it does today.

Koji Hoshino
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"XIAO FANG"

Twenty-five years ago, millions of young, mid-high school graduates were sent to the countryside— the bigger world. Many stories of love and sadness resulted. "Xiao Fang" (a girl's name) tells such a story. It says:

A girl in the village was called Xiao Fang,
She was kindhearted and pretty,
A pair of beautiful eyes, the long and thick plaits;

In the eve of returning to city,
You and I came to the small river,
Tears which never shed,
Endlessly trickling with the river;

Thank you for giving me love,
I will never forget it in my life,
Thank you for giving me warm,
Keeping company with me through those years;

Again and again,
I turned around and looked at past journey,
Whole heatedly thank you, a kindhearted girl;

Again and again,
I turned around and looked at past journey,
You were still standing in front of the village.

quoted from the article The 1.5th Cultural Shock--China Stories from A "Detective for the Green Card Home-Visit-Army (part I) by Jianhong Li, Chinese Community Forum (CCF) issue #9317 December 9, 1993 in the China-net.
I used to have a Chinese roommate who studied computer science at The University of Montana. Fall Semester 1992, she worked in the Food Service for two to three hours a day despite carrying twelve graduate credits. Her study ethic was impressive—despite studying until midnight nightly and jogging every morning, she always arrived on time for her eight o'clock class. As an international student, I understand and share a similar motivation, but hers definitely overwhelmed me. My association with mainland Chinese friends, including this ex-roommate, convinced me that they differ significantly from other international student groups. I would use the term "fanatic" to describe the way they study in school. Why are they fanatic? What makes them so? These were the initial questions that drew my interest and later became the driving force for this study.

Mainland Chinese students in America are said to be "marginal" (Wang XL 1991). If so, how are they marginal? What makes them marginal? Did this marginality make my ex-roommate a "fanatic"? To answer these questions and to know the meaning of life in America as "outsiders" are the fundamental objectives of this study. These goals are challenging because they require great depth of understanding of the societies and cultures of both America and China. My
knowledge was limited, yet I did not give up my interest because I've dealt with similar problems of marginality as an international student in America. I had to look for answers to these same questions myself.

B. Objectives and Procedures

This study uses the concepts of "community" and "marginality" as tools to examine how mainland Chinese students adapt to American society. In Chapter II, I briefly discuss the two concepts and construct a framework "operable" to this study. Eventually I will point out five criteria of community and four social conditions of marginality.

I employ two research methods in this study: ethnographic (qualitative) and statistical (quantitative). The ethnographic study in Chapter III contains three parts. The first part describes the preliminary stage at which Chinese students decide to study abroad. In this part, I ask such questions as: Why do Chinese students decide to come to America?; What factors make them decide to come to America?; and What problems do they face in China? Subsequently, I will note several major points such as; (1) a strong trend to study abroad among scholars, college graduates and students in China, (2) their frustrations and curiosities, and (3) high expectations, strong confidence, and obligations in China.

The second part discusses the adaptation process by which Chinese students become integrated into the American host
society. I ask questions regarding the problems they face in the adaptation process, and how they cope with these problems or solve them? Subsequently, I discuss several aspects of their lives such as: (1) high American living standards, (2) appreciation of the American social system and its culture, (3) disappointments, (4) Chinese connections, (5) hard work and study habits, (6) friendships, (7) ethnic identity, and (8) church activities. I especially highlight two aspects of the Chinese students' adaptation process. One is their successful assimilation into American society due to their intellectual abilities, hard work and study. The other is their perception of subtle rejection on the part of the host society. This paradox creates the core source of their marginality in America.

The third part of the ethnographic study discusses the future of Chinese students in America, more specifically whether they will stay in the United States permanently or eventually return to China. In this section, I ask such questions as: What are their main concerns when deciding?; and What factors impact their decisions? In summary, I identify five types of Chinese students in America.

In the statistical study described in Chapter IV, I first explain the sampling and data collection procedures. Discussions of questionnaire construction and the reliability, and validity of variables follow. Multi-regression analysis helps us identify factors affecting whether or not Chinese
students stay in America. Finally I propose a path model showing causal relationships among the factors. I discuss those results in connection with those of the ethnographic study. The statistical study reveals that students' preference for the American "system" and "loyalty" to China are the two most significant factors.

In the concluding discussions of Chapter V, I first discuss two basic orientations of Chinese students' behavior and attitudes: the "instrumental" and "expressive" orientations. I then compare and describe the two sociological concepts of "Gemeinschaft" (community) and "Gesellschaft" (association) based on the results found in the ethnographic study. Second, I examine the marginality of Chinese students by referring to the four social conditions defined in Chapter II. These examinations lead me to define marginality as the "loss of community." Finally, I discuss five possible future scenarios for Chinese students. In the following sections, I briefly describe the social background and demographic characteristics of mainland Chinese students in America.

C. Social Background of Chinese Students

After the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), the Chinese Communist government headed by Deng Xiaoping drastically switched its economic policy from a traditional centralized economy to a market economy system. The fundamental
objectives of this change were to (1) replace collective farming practices with a contract responsibility system in rural areas; (2) establish private enterprises in the cities; (3) redistribute greater authority to states' enterprises; and (4) reform the irrational price system (Chen 1990, p. 15).

In 1979, the Chinese government also abolished its long-time isolationist policy toward the West and implemented an "Open-Door" policy, subsequently introducing foreign capital, technology, and management techniques (Chen 1990, p. 18).

Since then, economic and political changes have greatly influenced the lives of all people in mainland China. According to current economic indexes China's Gross National Product (GNP) is growing rapidly\(^1\). The World Bank projects $639 billion in net imports by the year 2002\(^2\), making China the second largest importer after the United States, surpassing $521 billion in imports for Japan. China's gross domestic product (GDP) in the year 2001 is projected to be $9.8 trillion—greater than the United States at $9.7 trillion (Kristof 1993, pp. 61-63).

China's rapid economic growth is not without problems. It is facing regional disparity, which is described in The Wall Street Journal as follows: "The rich regions get richer, and the poor regions get poorer." The unequal distribution of

---

\(^1\) "China's present economic boom started in around 1978 and has since resulted in real growth averaging about 9 percent per year. It is not slowing down: in 1992, GNP grew by 12.8 percent, and this year (1993) 13 percent growth is predicted (Kristof 1993, pp. 62-63)."

\(^2\) Chinese net imports include imports of Hong Kong and Taiwan.
wealth among regions and people is causing concern. The article summarized the economic problems by using the following anecdote: "One in 10 bicycles in Beijing may be a new mountain bike, but nine are not" (Brauchli 1993).

Under the Open-Door policy, Western culture has flowed into this communist country through mass media--television, radio, cinematic and print media, and this new Western information has stimulated the formerly-isolated Chinese. The Chinese have started paying greater attention to Western countries, examining all aspects, from their popular cultures to their economic and political systems.

In the early stages of the Open-Door policy, the majority of Chinese citizens traveling overseas in various exchange programs were scholars. Chen (1990, p. 87) describes the situation as follows:

Tens of thousands of Chinese scholars visited Western countries such as the United States and Western Europe under various exchange programs. Western social scientists were also invited to give lectures in China. These intellectual exchanges, as a result, injected Western ideas and stimuli, significantly widening horizons of Chinese social scientists.

By the mid-1980s, the Open-Door policy allowed many college graduates and students to study abroad, as well as selected scholars. As more people were exposed to the outside world, and recognized the disparity in social, political and economic conditions between Western societies and China, more people began looking for opportunities to go abroad. The mounting frustration was directly reflected in the 1989 June 4th pro-
democracy movement. The subsequent military crackdown added political meaning to the outflow of residents from mainland China. The crackdown aroused self-awareness in the Chinese population of "being half-exiled" among Chinese intellectuals (Lee 1991).

At present, Chinese students continue to leave China but few return to the country. They are still "exiled" in America but the majority seem to be more economically motivated than politically oriented. Many former pro-democracy activists are now said, in the last five years, to have switched their interests from politics to business (Hon 1993). The recent economic growth in China obviously facilitates this new trend among Chinese students in America. However, despite the high possibility of materialistic success, they could be spiritually agonized because of a lacking "bridge" element between their material or academic achievements and cultural identity. They are more likely to become scientists, engineers or business professionals but not "cultural mediators" (Wang XL 1991).

**D. Demographic Characteristics of Chinese Students**

Although an increasing number of Chinese students desire to travel to the United States, only a small portion of the entire 1.2 billion population get this opportunity. Statistics show that about 43,000 mainland Chinese students live in the United States (Orleans 1989), and this number is
increasing. Table I and Figure I show the recent increase in the number of Chinese students in the United States. In Figure I, "J-1" represents the exchange scholars who come under various exchange-programs and "F-1" represents those who hold student visas. The statistics indicate that once students come to the U. S., they tend to stay. Their return rate was only about 25 percent in 1985. Recently, a newspaper reported "Over the past 15 years more than 200,000 Chinese students had gone abroad to study—and only 70,000 had returned" (CND-Global News, February 3, 1994), indicating that approximately 35 percent of mainland Chinese students who traveled overseas returned to China. This statistic includes students traveling to countries other than the United States, so its return rate is a little higher than the figure shown in Table I. These figures imply that the return rate among Chinese students in the United States is much lower than that of students who studied in other countries. Chinese students in America are more likely to remain in their host country than their counterparts in other countries.
Table 1: Number of Mainland Chinese Students in The United States

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<tr>
<td>J1 (SCHOLARS)</td>
<td>2,720</td>
<td>2,358</td>
<td>6,985</td>
<td>9,779</td>
<td>11,505</td>
<td>12,899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F1 (STUDENTS)</td>
<td>2,840</td>
<td>4,972</td>
<td>5,407</td>
<td>5,191</td>
<td>5,230</td>
<td>6,479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>5,560</td>
<td>7,330</td>
<td>12,392</td>
<td>15,970</td>
<td>16,735</td>
<td>19,378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RETURN</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>1,661</td>
<td>1,088</td>
<td>2,905</td>
<td>4,946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERCENT</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
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In the next section, the demographic characteristics of Chinese students will be described, based on the questionnaire survey conducted at The University of Montana, and the University of Oklahoma in 1993 and 1994 respectively.

1: Provinces of Origin

Chinese student respondents mainly came from the provinces of Beijing (20.2 percent), Jiangsu (15.1 percent), and Shanghai (12 percent). Students from the south coastal provinces, Guangzhou, Fugian, and Zhejian combined consisted of only 16 percent of the respondents. Respondents tended to be from the "High North and Low South."

In addition, 75.6 percent of the respondents were from large cities of more than one million. The economic reform and the Open-Door policy are affecting residents in big cities, more than those living in the rural areas (Brauchli 1993).
2: Legal Status

In terms of their legal status, 72.3 percent of the respondents were currently "F-1" students and 12.6 percent were either "J-1" exchange scholars or university faculty. Ninety-two percent of them were family members, most likely spouses.

3: Duration of Stay in the United States

On the average, students live in the United States for 35 months (approximately three years). Eighty two percent of them have been in the United States less than 48 months (four years). This statistic, however, does not imply that they go back to China after four years. The majority likely find jobs and remain in the United States after graduation. Three to four years is the average time they hold student status in the United States.

4: Age and Sex

The mean age of respondents was 31.6 years; and 57 percent fell between the ages of 25 and 35. Gender distributions were 58.8 and 41.2 percent respectively for males and females. The number of male students slightly exceeded the number of female students, with male students being about five years older than females (on average 33.7 and 28.5 years old, respectively).
5: Academic Majors

The major subjects studied by Chinese students in the U.S. fall into three categories: Physical science such as physics, chemistry, biology, and mathematics (36.1 percent); engineering such as chemical engineering, genetic engineering, and bio-engineering (25 percent); business management, including accounting (12.6 percent). A fourth area of interest is computer science at 6.7 percent. Humanities, and social science make up the remaining majors. Generally speaking, students are more likely to study more concrete and applied subjects than abstract and philosophical ones.

6: Work Experience and Years of Work

About 80 percent of the Chinese student respondents had work experience in China. Of this group, 68.6 percent worked for academic institutions such as universities and research institutes in China, 17 percent worked for Chinese companies; and 8.6 percent had worked in governmental offices at a variety of levels. Only 2.9 percent of them worked for "joint-venture," foreign companies.

Student respondents worked an average of 4.07 years in China, with 68 percent traveling to the United States within five years of graduation from Chinese universities. In light of current government regulations emigration within five years after graduation is reasonable. However, since the government requires Chinese college graduates to work in China for at
least five years, graduates desiring to study abroad before completion of the five-year-requirement, must reimburse the government for their college costs. The mean number of years of work experience is slightly shorter than the government requires. In order to exit China, more than half of the respondents paid back a portion of their education costs with personal funds or by borrowing.

7: Job on/off Campus

More than 80 percent of the respondents were employed on/off-campus and 52.4 percent of them had academically oriented jobs, such as teaching or research assistantships. The majority subsisted on on/off campus jobs.

The statistical analysis provides the following description of mainland Chinese students: Chinese students, both male and female, come to the United States after about five years of work experience, most commonly in an academic setting in China. They have lived or resided in the United States for about three years and are around thirty years old. They are most likely to major in physical science, engineering, business, or computer science. They are likely to sustain themselves through either academic jobs or on/off campus jobs.
CHAPTER II

COMMUNITY AND MARGINALITY: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The analytical framework is comprised of two central concepts, community and marginality. Marginality is fundamentally understood as the "loss of community." Marginality does not mean complete social isolation, but instead means a combination of social acceptance and rejection. Marginality is measured by the "distance" between the "marginal person" and the social group. Stonequist (1961, pp. 2-3) defined the term, "marginal man" as follows:

The individual who through migration, education, marriage, or some other influence leaves one social group or culture without making a satisfactory adjustment to another finds himself on the margin of each but a member of neither.

People are "marginal persons" when they are on the "margin" of two social groups, failing to establish full membership in either group.

"Community" is relevant to the concept of marginality. A community is a group of people who share the same "culture." When Stonequist refers to a social group in his definition, the term "social group" implies community. Stonequist incorporates the terms "culture," and "member" in his definition. Both terms are essential components of a "community." Before examining the concept of marginality, the basic attributes of a community will be discussed.
A. Concept of Community

Sociologists define the concept of community in various ways. Hillery studied 94 different definitions of the concept in sociological works and concluded that the only commonality found was "people" (1955). Despite its sociological significance, however, there is no common definition of the concept. Regardless of the lack of a common definition, the relevant attributes of the concept have been studied by three major theorists: Toennies, Weber, and Parsons.

Toennies thoroughly defined the concept in his study of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft and argued that societies are the products of two types of will. Natural will (Wesewille) is the expression of instinctual needs, habit, conviction, or inclination. Rational will (Kurwille) involves instrumental rationality in the selection of means for ends. These forms of will correspond to the distinction between community (Gemeinschaft) and association (Gesellschaft). Communal life is the expression of natural will and associative life is a consequence of rational will (Toennies 1957). Whether or not this categorization of society is valid to our contemporary society, it has provided a conceptual framework in the past for many community studies.

As a Verstehen sociologist, Weber rebuilds Toennies' categorical concepts of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft into analytical concepts. Weber uses the German terms "Vergemeinschaftung" and "Vergesellschaftung," meaning
"communal" and "associative" relationships respectively. Weber defines the two concepts similarly to Toennies, but focuses on social relationships rather than categories of society. Weber (1968, pp. 40-41) defined the two terms as follows:

A social relationship will be called "communal" relationship (Vergemeinschaftung) if or so far as the orientation of social action--whether in the individual case, on the average, or the pure type--is based on a subjective feeling of the parties, whether affective or traditional, that they belong together.

A social relationship will be called "associative" relationship (Vergesellschaftung) if and insofar as the orientation of social action within it rests on a rationally motivated adjustment of interests or a similarly motivated agreement, whether the basis of rational judgement be absolute values or reasons of expediency.

His main focus was to reformulate Toennies' categorical concepts into analytical concepts in order to examine social relationships.

Parsons contributed to the conceptual development of community by transferring these dichotomous concepts into more analytical and operational concepts or "variables." He eventually integrated them into his general theory of social action. The development of the "Pattern Variables" reflects sociological works done by Toennies and Weber. Parsons developed five variables. The variables linked with social action and recaptured the dichotomous concepts, Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft, forming the fundamental dilemmas that actors face in any situation. According to Parsons, there are five
sets of dilemmas. (1) **Affectivity versus affective neutrality** - actor either engages in a relationship for instrumental reasons without the involvement of feelings (affective neutrality) or for emotional reasons (affectivity). Parallel with this variable set, Parsons uses the terms "expressive" and "instrumental." Whereas the "expressive" represents the actor's emotionally oriented social actions, the "instrumental" refers to means-goal oriented social actions. (2) **Collective-orientation versus self-orientation** - actor either pursues his/her private interests as a legitimate goal or pursues the common interests of the collectivity. (3) **Particularism versus universalism** - actor decides whether to judge a person by general criteria (universalism) or criteria unique to that person (particularism). (4) **Ascription versus achievement** - actor decides whether to judge a person by what they do (achievement) or by their personal characteristics (ascription). (5) **Diffuseness versus specificity** - actor chooses, in any situation, between engaging with others totally, across a wide range of activity (diffuseness), or only for specific, restricted purposes (specificity) (Parsons 1951).

These discussions suggest that Gemeinschaft or "community" contains attributes represented by the left side of each variable set. The right side of each variable set represents attributes of Gesellschaft or "association." In other words, as social relationships favor the left side in
the continuum of each variable set, we could consider the social relationships as more "Gemeinschaft-like" and vice versa.

These variable sets will be effective criteria in analyzing and categorizing the Chinese and American communities in this study.

B. Concept of Marginality

Many sociologists have refined and developed the concept of marginality since it first appeared in an academic context, and have studied various social groups such as immigrants, or racial and/or religious minorities to understand the concept of marginality (1961).

A general review of the term "marginality" in academic works emphasizes two aspects of marginality. One refers to psychological marginality—the mental state of marginal persons. The other refers to sociological marginality—certain social situations where the marginal person lies.

According to Stonequist, people like immigrants or racial minorities experience psychological strain due to dual cultural experiences. Psychological marginality emerges in various forms of psychological anguish: dual personalities and

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3 Robert Park initially used to the term marginality in an academic work and made detailed reference to the concept. However, the terms "marginality" and "marginal man" are more often linked with E.V. Stonequist and this work Marginal Man.
double consciousness, ambivalence about themselves, excessive self-consciousness and race-consciousness, inferiority complexes, hypersensitivity, social escapee attitudes, and aggressive personalities (Stonequist 1963, pp. 139-158).

Stonequist also examines sociological marginality. He makes two points in his construction of sociological marginality. The first one is that marginal individuals are in contact with two social groups and their cultures. The second is the dominant and subordinate hierarchical arrangement of the two cultures. People tend to identify with the dominant culture but members of the dominant group are likely to reject people from the minority group. The individuals may relate to both social groups or cultures but belong to neither group. Such persons are marginal. Stonequist examines several marginal peoples such as the Eurasians (Anglo-Indians) of India, the Cape Colored, Jews, immigrants and their second generation, and so forth (1963).

The focus of studies on sociological marginality is to define the concept without biological and psychological elements (Johnston 1970, p. 367). Kerckhoff's study employing the concept of "reference group" is consistent with this focus. Kerckhoff saw a marginal person as "One who uses a non-membership group as a reference group" (1955, p. 50). He defined marginality as the inconsistency between one's membership group and one's reference group. This definition of marginality implies social causes but still contains a
psychological element. The identification of a reference group implies a psychological element. Besides Kerckhoff, many a researcher has studied "status congruence" in various social groups (Adams 1953; Lenski 1954 and 1956; Kenkel 1956; Goffman 1957; Jackson 1962). These studies have also attempted to refine sociological marginality (Dickie-Clark 1966a, p. 367). Dickie-Clark summarized these studies in his broad definition of sociological marginality, where he saw marginality as inconsistencies of rankings in social groups.

Marginal situations can be defined as those hierarchical situations in which there is any inconsistency in the rankings in any of the matters falling within the scope of the hierarchy.

He used an example of Durban Coloreds in South Africa to explain the core of sociological marginality. In South Africa, dominant Whites treat Durban Coloreds as the top rank among the racial subordinate groups but at the same time treat them as inferior to Whites. The inconsistencies between rankings are taken as the essential core of sociological marginality (Dickie-Clark 1966b, p. 39). Sociological marginality is a question of "ambivalent membership" due to inconsistent rankings in a social group, or community. The ranking which one perceives to hold is discrepant with the ranking given to that person by other members. Some psychological element is still observable in Dickie-Clark's definition. Yet, his definition provides a more concrete criteria of marginality than Kerckhoff's.

After summarizing these conceptual refinements of
marginality, Johnston (1976, p. 147) pointed out the following four sociological conditions necessary for the emergence of marginality:

1. Life in a bi-cultural milieu arranged in a two tier hierarchy, in which the ethnic culture is evaluated as inferior.

2. The ethnic group members have achieved a certain level of assimilation.

3. The assimilated individuals are rejected by the members of the host group.

4. There is uncertainty among the ethnic group members as to the choice between the ethnic and dominant culture, even if membership of group in both cultures is open.

According to Johnston, a marginal person emerges under conditions of ambiguous social assimilation—half-acceptance and half-rejection. People who achieve a certain assimilation into the dominant society tend to be relatively distanced from their original subordinate group. Despite the assimilation, people still find themselves not fully accepted and subtly rejected by the other members of the dominant society. At the same time, the individuals also find that they have drifted away from their original groups. They subsequently find themselves in marginal situations because they no longer belong to any social group or "community." A marginal person can be roughly defined as one who has lost his or her own sense of community. With this conceptual framework, the Chinese students' adaptation process will be examined in the following ethnographic and statistical studies.
CHAPTER III
ETHNOGRAPHY OF CHINESE STUDENTS IN AMERICA

An Ethnography is the study of a particular community. Ethnographers attempt to discover "culture"—the webs of meanings and understandings shared by the community members—through direct observation, interviews, and written documents. Chinese students presumably share a common "culture" as community members. This study examines values, attitudes, knowledge, and basic expectations shared by Chinese students through ethnographic research techniques.

A. Sample

Qualitative data was collected from the Chinese student community in Missoula, Montana, where there were about seventy mainland Chinese students and exchange scholars at The University of Montana in 1992. Since some Chinese students had brought their spouses and children to the community, the Chinese Student Association in Missoula had approximately one hundred Chinese Community members. Community members belonged to three legal groups. About 70 percent of the community population were students enrolled at the University, and classified as F-1. Exchange scholar/university faculty were classified as J-1, making up about ten percent, and family members belonged to the third category.

4 The number of Chinese students in Missoula declined last year for various reasons. The primary reason is the U.S. policy of issuing visas for Chinese students. The US embassy tends to suspect those student-visa applicants as potential immigrants to the U.S., so it is getting difficult for them to obtain student-visas.
B. Interview

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews. In the initial stage, each interview covered some recurring topics such as life in China and the United States, families, friends, and schools. As the interviews proceeded, frequently emerging topics were explored. The interviews were conducted in a random order and on the basis of convenience with 22 Chinese students and three exchange scholars/university faculty. Additional interviews were conducted with four school officials and one American observer who interacts with Chinese students on a daily basis.

C. Analysis of Qualitative Data

This study employed "Topical Analysis" (Driessen 1992) to analyze the data collected in the interviews. Analysis of the procedure proceeded as follows:

First, transcripts of the tape-recorded interviews were read to identify "meaningful" topics. Once suitable topics were identified, the researcher concentrated on gathering further information on the selected topics until formulation of certain concepts or propositions were identified. Second, the propositions were tested through further conversations and interviews with the Chinese community members. Third, a tentative but more generalized "grounded theory" (Glaser and
Strauss 1967, pp. 85-112) was proposed with those concepts and propositions.

Here are their stories⁵:

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⁵ All names in the quotations have been changed for protection of privacy.
D. THEIR STORIES

1. Coming to America:

1.1 Trend:

"If You Stay At Home, People Think You Are Disabled"

A popular trend in China is to go abroad. Studying in America is a main focus for Chinese students and scholars, and many start preparing when they are in high school or college.

In high school, I had a lot of classmates. There are two hundred in my class. Fifty students already had been in the US. I started thinking about going abroad since I was in the sixth grade of the high school, just before I entered the university in China. When I was an undergraduate student in the university, I was influenced by the society and by other students and also by foreign countries. We received the news from foreign countries and we can see movies and news, concerts, and V.O.A., Voice of America.

Another said:

The situation in Shanghai is everybody, especially university students want to go abroad, going to the US. Whenever everyone's topic is "Oh somebody got a Visa. Somebody is taking [the] TOEFL test."

Consequently, the first requirement for application to an American university is submission of the TOEFL score. Chinese students focus more on scoring high on the TOEFL and GRE than on their university course work. The required score varies from school to school, but usually ranges between 500 and 600. Some prestigious American schools require scores greater than 600, but if applicants receive 600 points, they will almost

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6 TOEFL stands for Test Of English as Foreign Language, which is required of every international student whose native language is not English.
certainly get admitted somewhere. American universities also require the submission of a financial statement by all international students. As I will discuss later, for Chinese students this is actually a much more difficult requirement to satisfy than meeting the TOEFL criteria. However, receiving a high TOEFL score is the important first hurdle to clear toward studying in America.

Every student in a college, they pay a lot of attention to the TOEFL and GRE. [TOEFL] seems much important than [their college] courses. [There are] A lot of night schools something like that to prepare [for the TOEFL].

The so-called "top-ten" or "top-twenty" university students especially aspire to study in America. Accordingly, because of the rigid admission standards, those preparing for study in America are likely to be the "best" students in China.

Going abroad is a big trend in Chinese society. Everyone is looking for this chance, and the atmosphere produces certain social attitudes. People judge others by their abilities to go abroad. One interviewee described the atmosphere as follows:

Now, for young people in China, if you see your fellows who get a better job or go to America, you would think it is glorious. But if you stay in home, people think you are "disabled." Some people have no way to avoid this [atmosphere].

A whole society is pushing people to "move out." "Move" equates with the positive and "stay" with the negative in contemporary China. "Move" means both moving "inter-
provincially" and "internationally." People push themselves to move out, from inner farming villages to coastal industrial cities and from big cities to America or other developed countries. People in China are motivated to "move out" because they desire to get a "better job" and a "better life." The better life can be achieved through strategies ranging from illegal migration, to receiving a high degree in the United States. In this context, being a student in the United States is at the end of the continuum and is the most desirable way of "moving out."

Actually, the United States is not the only destination for the Chinese people. European countries, Australia and New Zealand, and Japan are other destinations, however, the United States is the most prestigious. Living in America is itself prestigious in a sense. A student clarified feelings about being in America:

It is always proud of being in America. When I came to America, I felt real good. I told my classmates, "I go to America." They really admired me.

The Chinese favor visas when applying to visit the United States. The process includes an interview in an American embassy or consulate, where the large number of applicants and the American government’s recent restriction on issuing visas has caused long lines of applicants.

Just the outside of the [American] embassy, there is a long line. Everybody is crazy. Whenever one person comes out, people ask "Are you O.K.? Did you get a visa?" and continue "What did they say?" People are always asking something like that. They
want to get some information.

Relatives who have previously lived in or visited America directly stimulate those aspiring to go abroad. These relatives report the details of success stories in America.

Say, my brother in-law, he has been studying in America for one and a half years. Now, he got a job. His salary is thirty or forty thousand something like that. We can know that from our relatives and our friends. Seems everybody works hard and gets a better life.

The success stories not only stir up student desires, but raise the expectations of family members as well. Family members are also a part of the big trend.

I have a cousin in here [Missoula]... They [parents] supported me. My parents wanted me to come. Actually, a part of reason I came is that my parents persuade me to come. Kind of whole environment is pushing me.

However, unlike their friends and classmates, family members have mixed emotions about students studying abroad. Although some family members are positive about their children’s experience, like the case quoted above, other family members have negative attitudes about America. For example, both parents of the student quoted below had reservations about her coming to America.

They [my parents] didn’t like [me traveling to America] very much. They worried about me. In China, my parents are ordinary Chinese, not people who control the country. So they don't know the outside what Americans are. According to books, America is not good. So they worried about me.

In this case, the parents eventually let her go because her husband had already traveled to the United States. Female
parents seem more reluctant to let their children study abroad than their male counterparts. A student said:

My father supported my study. He supported every thing if you study. He thinks study is every thing. She [mother] wants me to be a "normal" person. She didn't support me to go abroad. My elder sister gave me a strong support, giving me an economic support. She is working in a trading company.

Another student said:

My grandparents didn't like me to go abroad. My father is O.K. He likes me to study more. He believes in Confucian. He likes education. My mother is O.K., too. She likes her children to get more education but she doesn't like me to go abroad.

Their spouses sometimes do not provide support like the case quoted below.

My wife is not supportive. She was quite comfortable with living in China because we have rooms, enough money to support our expenses in China. So she didn't like my plan. . . . Of course her parents did not like so much either. I hope I can contact with them as soon as possible. My parents hoped I can go abroad, America, anywhere to start new life.

In this case, this student eventually contacted his wife and convinced her to come to America, but their son still lives with his grandparents in China.

Hesitations among family members are natural in the sense that a family is a fundamental unit of human society. Traditional family ties are especially strong in China.

Along with a strong family-orientation, hesitation among some parents might be due to the fact that some students are the only children in their families. Parents may fear that a
child studying abroad will fail to fulfill his/her obligation of filial piety, causing parents to withhold support for their child's decision to study overseas. One respondent said:

I made my own decision. Sometimes I asked them for help, if I think they can help. They are kind of "neutral" [to my study abroad]. I am the only son in the family. I don't have any sisters. I am only the child of my family.

Although a major portion of society has been influenced by the recent trend of "moving out," most families do not strongly push their children to go abroad. However, parents truly hope for their children to have a "better future" and ultimate happiness. With some hesitation, many parents support their children's decisions to study abroad. One respondent said:

My parents said, "We trust you. You can struggle for your better future by yourself. You are a strong girl." They just said, "Study hard and struggle for your future. You will be success"... I don't think when a lot of people come to America, their parents would say "Please come back." No, No. They would say, "Maybe someday we can live in America." They would not say "Come back." They seldom say "Come back."

Most parents are "open-minded" or at least they respect their children's decisions. They may have some reservations in their hearts but if their children ask to leave, they will eventually let them go.

Now, I am a grown-up. I am a man. They let me choose. Psychologically speaking, they like me to stay with them. The parents don't like the son to be so far away from them. I can live comfortably at home but they respected my choice.

Through these discussions, I see Chinese students being
pulled by two conflicting forces. One is the strong social trend toward "moving out" experienced by the contemporary Chinese society as a whole. Everyone is affected by this trend. People are looking for a better job, a better education, a better position, and a better life. People expect each other to "move out" and get promoted to a superior social status. This trend is understandable and reasonable, especially in light of the Economic Reform and Open-Door policy instituted after the disastrous Cultural Revolution. At the same time, however, family members attempt to "hold" the students at home. Family members show some reservation when their children contemplate "moving out," because the parents want to bind with their children as a family. This reservation is also natural. However, at this moment, it seems forces pushing students to "move out" are much stronger than those urging them to "hold." Consequently, people are moving out inter-provincially and internationally, including those Chinese students who have come to America.

1.2 Frustration:

"You Need Something Beyond Your Ability"

Frustrations among Chinese students are also a factor motivating them to "move out." The extent of their frustrations vary, but they generally seem dissatisfied with their current "place" and want to "escape" from it. One respondent said:
Q: In your opinion, what kind of people are more likely to want to go abroad?

A: People who are not satisfied with their personal life and . . .

Q: What you mean by "satisfied," income level, social position, status?

A: Yeah, and kind of tired of their jobs, lives. They just want to have a change. Well, that is not only in China. People are a very strange creature, sometimes they feel tired of their own places, maybe not satisfied to their family, their social status, their jobs. They think they could be better in other place. That is the reason, a kind of escape. They just go. They are responsible for themselves. They take it because it is your choice. You had choice which is better than you give up to choose.

Q: Is that your case?

A: I think so.

As this student notes, many social and political factors cause frustrations and dissatisfactions. For example, China has a personal information file system called "Dang An":

In China, there is a file. Everybody has a personal file. When you are in Beijing, you have to have the information package in Beijing. When you are in Changsha, you have to have it in Changsha.

Q: I have heard of that. You can't open the file, right?

A: No, you can't. Only government officials can open it. Then, they can know what the person did. After graduating from Beijing University, my information package was sent to my hometown province. You don't have to do anything but you can find a job in your hometown. When you find a job in the province, the information package is sent to the company. The company is in charge of you.

Another interviewee mentioned that if she/he were, for
instance, an activist during the 1989 June 4th movement, his/her involvement would be entered in the "Dang An" file. Wherever she/he goes now to settle down, the local government officials can immediately access that record. The system seems to function as a psychological deterrent, producing a sense of "being watched" by authorities. When people realize the importance of basic human needs such as "privacy," they will not tolerate social practices like this one and view them as an intrusion.

An interviewee mentioned "political study," which is a program required for all employees in China.

In every company, you should have a half day or one day work and study. So, I don't like that... Many people hate political study. They like to work but [do not like] political study.

Political study requires participants to study various political documents such as the works of Marx, Mao, and Deng and then to discuss various political issues. Participation is mandatory for all Chinese employees, including those working for joint-venture companies. One student, a clinical physician in China and also a pro-democracy activist during the Tiananmen Square events said that a leader of the political study group told him to write about what he had done during the pro-democracy movement. He proceeded to honestly write about the protest. Because he was not involved in any destructive activities, authorities did not punish him. Yet this situation was embarrassing.

"Identification" with one location and restricted
mobility also causes frustration for students. One interviewee explained his situation:

If I was born in Sichuan and I worked in Chengdu, my identification would be Chengdu. If I have this, I cannot go to other city to work, I can't go to Beijing to work. But in America... I can go anywhere.

Chinese students cannot easily change the jobs they've been assigned by the government when they graduate from universities. If they are satisfied with the assigned job, a problem never emerges, but in many cases, limited career options create dissatisfaction. Chinese employees must struggle with the bureaucracy for a long time to change jobs. One respondent said:

According to the law, they have a right [to change the job] but actually it is not easy to change [a job]. This is a problem. If you want to change your position from one company to another, you have to get through a lot of procedure and you have to wait for several years. It is quite ridiculous. So, going abroad is the fast way to avoid this bureaucracy.

In addition to these political and social practices, particular work environments often frustrate employees. Workers, if employed in a company, must belong to a "Dan Wei" or work-unit. Work-units control the distribution of employee-benefits, housing, medical care, schooling for children, and various kinds of amenities. Therefore, employees must have "skills" to deal with the work-unit officials in charge. One student described his situation in the work-unit.

The key part of the benefit in China is a house.
They [employees] only pay low rental fee. I didn’t get the benefit, which made me really angry before I got out [of China]. Nobody want to give me a house although at the moment our daughter was four years old. I still compared with other persons but I still didn’t get a house. Somebody indicated me I should bribe officials in charge. So that made me feel bad. I don’t feel comfortable about this kind of situation. Young people in that institute who just got married could get a house if they have a good relationship with the officials. So they can find some reason to get him a house not for me. Before I came here, I only got the permit that I can loan a small house. I think that’s unfair.

He continued to complain about his treatment in the institute and concluded that people in China need "something beyond their ability" to get things done.

Another strange phenomenon in the institute is that a lot of young people are working in an academic world but the positions for those people are pretty low. That made me feel very angry. That is why I have got a feeling that in China your ability and plus something beyond your ability work in your whole future. I don’t like this.

In China, good relationships with others, especially the officials in charge, are essential to living without hardship. The Chinese call it "Guanxi" (relation connection). One student described an aspect of Guanxi:

Because I hadn’t had any contact with society, I didn’t have any experiences of dealing with bureaucracy. So, my parents helped me to get all those documents. Even if I am financially Ok, I still need that kind of experiences to get out of there. Say, you have to establish your own personal connection. Actually, it was pretty uniform in China. If you were working in a place, when you want to get something done, it’s not paperwork. In America, it’s like paperwork. Bureaucracy is somehow predictable, fill up an application form and if you are truly qualified, then maybe it’s not 100 percent, but 80-90 percent you are sure you can get the thing. But in China, paperwork is very superficial. After paperwork,
you have to do back-door action. You have to push people the other way around by using personal connection... According to American standards, it might be called a bribe, you have to do that in order to get something done. It is very important. For example, it's like getting a passport. It was very serious thing. Actually, my parents spend a lot of time and also money on that. It is true frankly speaking... Might not be just give them cash. It's too obvious. Say, they might invite them to dinner something like that. That is very common those days.

Guanxi has an important social function for the Chinese people who live in contemporary China but is also a serious social problem which will obstruct China's modernization in the coming decades (King 1991, p. 80). Even if people possess abilities and work hard, they still may not be able to accomplish tasks without a good relationship with the officials in charge (Guanxi). Such practices often frustrate people, especially if they are competent and have confidence in their abilities.

In addition, problems of personal maladjustment to particular environments also frustrate them. Some individuals, for personal reasons, cannot fit into certain work environments, raising the level of frustration. As the following interviewee explains...

I thought I could do a lot of things after getting bachelor and master's degree. I was working for a company, the Bank of China in Changsha, Hunan. I found I couldn't use my knowledge of my major. I felt I was stupid... I was an accountant there. Sometimes I used a computer but they want me to have basic training of an abacus for one month. I didn't like it because I couldn't use high level of knowledge I'd learned. People have a high expectation for me because I have a high degree but I had no knowledge of economics, accounting. So, I
didn’t feel good because my knowledge couldn’t contribute to the bank. So, I quit.

Another interviewee mentioned that competition and the work pressures resulting from working for a foreign company in China caused her frustrations:

First, in such a company you have happiness and also have pain with clients. You have to be careful. Work very hard. Otherwise, your position would be taken by others. It is a very strong competition. That is a foreign company, especially for Hong Kong bosses. They are different from China [mainland Chinese]. They are different from Americans. They are real foreigners. So, you have to deal with Chinese, Hong Kong people and foreigners. There are a lot of pressures on me.

Or they were simply tired of repeating the same thing:

In China, I didn’t like my job very much. It was good payment and a good environment but it was a boring and routine job. It was hard to change. I just wanted to change my direction totally. That’s why I came here. I can’t say I came here to get every thing but at least I have a chance to change my life a little bit.

These problems are not unique to Chinese students but common for members of any society. What is different, however, is that these personal dissatisfactions are not totally derived from their personal lives or their particular work situations, but their adjustment problems are closely connected to their social and political environments: "Dang An," Political study, Identification, Work-unit, and Guanxi. Both dissatisfaction with the larger system and personal maladjustment intertwine and increase frustrations for Chinese students.
1.3 Curiosity:

"I Want To Know A Different Culture"

After experiencing a long period of isolation from the West, people of China are eager to explore the rest of the world. Curiosity is one of their motivations, but they also aspire to expose themselves to the outside world and absorb knowledge from it. Some Chinese students show an interest in their academic fields such as this respondent:

Before I came to the US. I didn’t know what academic geological fields are doing, what kind of methods, what kind of philosophy is conducted in a research. If you come over, you can see it by yourself.

Another said:

In China, if I teach American history and I have no experience in the US, people would think it is ridiculous. You have never been to America, Japan, Russia, West Europe, how can you teach?

Curiosity is closely linked with frustration. People who are curious about the outside and grow more knowledgeable about it could become more frustrated. It is important to note that curiosity about the outside world is not inherent to Chinese students. If people fully fit into a particular social group such as a work place, institute or local community and are satisfied with it, they might not look to the outside world. However, if they are dissatisfied with their surroundings for some reason, they may start looking at other environments. One student confessed his curiosity and frustration as follows:

I wanted to learn [about a] different culture. I
wanted to train more, see more society as well. It's a totally different society. I want to experience what's so far away from home. I don't want to spend ten years of youth at home to repeat the same kind of stuff.

Here I can see the connection between his frustration and curiosity. He wanted to learn about a "different culture" because he was tired of doing the same thing year after year. He was looking for a chance to stop and change his routine, and therefore consciously or unconsciously started looking at "different cultures." He probably did not want to study different cultures as an anthropologist but simply wanted to break his routine. His curiosity was an expression of frustration. Frustration and curiosity are in the same causal circle. The circle might go as follows: Because of the general trend of going abroad, family members' expectations or other reasons, Chinese students become curious about the outside world and study it. Subsequently they compare what they learn with their current situations, adding to their frustrations. One student talked about how Shanghainese felt when they learned about the outside world:

Shanghai is a big city with long history. I think long time ago Shanghai had been influenced by Western cultures. So, among the people in Shanghai, especially intellectuals like teachers and doctors still think [the] Western [societies] has a lot of good things and not all are bad unlike the Communist Party said. Sure there must be bad things next to good things. So, the Communist party emphasized bad things and common people didn't know these good things. But after opening of China, we were very surprised at America, Japan, Europe, even the "small tigers" in Asia. Compared with their living standards, we felt that we were "cheated." This kind of feelings are very bad especially in Shanghai.
He used the word "cheated." The word seems to express his strong frustration from comparing his situation with the outside world. This frustration caused him to look for more knowledge, thus creating more frustration.

Some interviewees observed or actually participated in the 1989 Tiananmen Square incident. They mentioned that the incident was one reason they came to the United States.

In 1989, I was in Beijing. That is the reason why I wanted to go to the United States. I saw everything. I participated in demonstration and donated a lot of things including money, foods, clothing, to the students. My working place was very close to the universities. Beijing Teacher’s University, China People’s University, and several universities. I was educated by the students. I can’t tell you how many people died. Not too many but not too few . . . I thought there is no hope. The government didn’t care how [what] people thought about.

At the same time, however, the majority of the interviewees, including students from Beijing, said, "I decided [to go to America] before that [Tiananmen incident]." Their aspiration to go abroad and the pro-democracy movement in 1989 seem to have had the same social origin. The "moving out" trend, frustration and curiosity developed long before the Tiananmen incident. The government’s violent crackdown confirmed their dissatisfaction with the situation in China.

1.4 Sponsor:
"They Need A Sponsor"

Even though Chinese students are academically qualified to study at American universities, they face numerous hurdles-
-their biggest hurdle being the financial problems they face, since with few exceptions, they cannot afford their own education costs in America due to the present currency exchange rate between the US dollar and Chinese Yuan. It is also very competitive and difficult for Chinese students to obtain financial aid from the Chinese government or the U.S. schools in which they hope to enroll. Consequently, most Chinese students, except "exchange scholars," must look for their own financial sources. One student mentioned that what most Chinese students need is a financial sponsor:

If they [Chinese friends in China] ask [for] my help, I can help them. I'd like to but so far I didn't do so much because when they need, I can't prove or I can't provide. I can collect information for them. But that is not what they really need. They need a sponsor.

In many cases they ask for financial sponsorship by overseas relatives if they have any in Taiwan, Hong Kong, or the United States.

I had a personal chance to go outside. One day, my mom got sick and my uncle in Hong Kong came to see my mom. He said to me "You have to go outside to study." But I had no money and then he supported me as a sponsor. So, I needed to take the TOEFL exam and got the passport and visa. It was a long march.

Along with some luck, and the utilization of personal connections, some students can make their dreams come true.

I met an American journalist in China. She was my teacher and her family lives in Helena. She works

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7 With the rise of income level in the last decade, some Chinese families, especially in the large coast cities, are wealthy enough to send their children abroad for study (Orleans, 1988, p. 92). Yet according to my interviews, such "wealthy" families are still very rare.
in Spokane. She was a NBC reporter. Now, she switched to CBS. She was my teacher and her family visited us. Then, they decided to help me to come here as my sponsor. That's the third reason because they asked me to come. I decided it.

Some of them may even have to borrow money from several relatives and friends:

Everyone has his/her own way to get a visa. Some people get financial support from the university. Some [students] are from their relatives. Some guys borrow money to deceive the university.

When Chinese students apply for a visa, their sponsors must sign their financial statements, however, once they arrive in America, they are likely to have to subsist on their own. The questionnaire survey results showed that more than 80 percent of the respondents were currently employed on or off the Norman Campus at the University of Oklahoma.

1.5 TOEFL and GRE:
"GRE And TOEFL Mean America To Me"

The TOEFL and GRE scores contain significant meaning for those Chinese students planning to study in America. Chinese students pay more attention to the TOEFL and GRE tests than their regular university coursework. Some interviewees attend night school to prepare for these tests, because receiving high scores not only gains them admission to American universities but, more importantly, helps them obtain financial aid.

If you get high score in TOEFL and GRE, you can get money. It is very difficult to get a visa if you don't have financial aid . . . For us, Chinese,
it's for financial aid. You can get admission so easily but the point is a visa and financial aid.

It is not common for Chinese students applying from China to get financial aid from American universities. One official talked about the case of The University of Montana:

In fact, I don't recall any Chinese students who got assistantships before they arrive. . . Quite a number of Chinese students have assistantships, but [those are] not given to them before they arrive.

The official explained that the school usually does not offer graduate assistantships to any new international students:

One time, we scheduled foreign students to teach before they got here. Then, we regretted it because even though their TOEFL scores were very high, they could not speak fluently enough in the classroom to be effective. Usually, we are able to give assistance [assistantships] to only one or two first year students. So that makes it difficult for the students who have to have financial aid to get in.

Therefore, some Chinese students who are academically qualified, because of financial problems, are unable to come to America. The same school official noted such a case.

In fact, last year this was pretty much the case. We cannot offer them graduate assistantships, so they [mainland Chinese students] still can't come with few exceptions. We got two students [from mainland China]. We thought they would be in the next semester. We admitted them last spring but they couldn’t come because they didn’t have financial support for a visa.

For Chinese students, taking the TOEFL and GRE (or GMAT) is not the same as taking other academic tests: the TOEFL and GRE have a special meaning for them. One student put it clearly:

I studied much harder than now to my TOEFL and GRE
because I was crazy for America.

Q: What was the meaning of TOEFL and GRE for you?
A: GRE and TOEFL mean America to me at that time year after year.

China used to have an imperial examination system called "Ke-Ju." Many applicants spent an enormous amount of time and energy preparing for the exam, because those who passed, no matter who they were, were promised positions as high ranking government officials and guaranteed respect for life. Now, the TOEFL and GRE seem to be a contemporary version of "Ke-Ju."

1.6 Expectation, Confidence, And Obligation:
"If We Get Nothing And Go Back, We Feel Ashamed"

When students finally leave China, they have high expectations for success in America. They have already successfully overcome many obstacles: getting high TOEFL and GRE scores, finding a financial sponsor, dealing with the bureaucracy, and getting a passport and visa. They consider these obstacles to be much harder than the academic competition they will face in America. They tend to be self-confident and expect to be highly successful at this stage. One respondent said:

Chinese kind of make a joke when we came here to [compete] against Americans. That is much easier than go back to [compete] against Chinese because Chinese can work as hard as we do. Here we got Americans, we work much harder than Americans.

Another said:
First of all, I have confidence that I can compete with American guys. This is a good challenge for young people. I like it.

When he said "This is a good challenge," he must have felt confident as he considered his former achievements. If he weren't truly confident he might not have wanted to take such a challenge. What he meant by "This is a good challenge" expressed confidence in his demonstrated abilities. One school official confirmed the high expectations and strong confidence demonstrated by Chinese students:

Those who finally can get out are really looking at the top. They are the ones who have stamina, have motivation. Most of those [international students] who came here are much easier to travel outside. Among [mainland] Chinese, it is much difficult to get out [of the country]. Those who succeeded getting out usually are very aggressive and assertive.

They are especially proud of their abilities because unlike those going to Japan for economic gain, they are coming to America to study.

There are two levels. People who come to the US are higher level than people who go to Japan. People who go to Japan are not necessarily educated. They just go there to earn money. We don't look upon those people [who go abroad for] getting money. We look upon [people who go abroad for] education.

Another said:

I think those days it was easy for them to go Japan because going to Japan is just you need a "hoshonin" [sponsor]. They just find a job to earn money. But Chinese people who come [to] the United States are different. They really want to study. They pass the TOEFL exam.

At the same time, however, Chinese students shoulder
heavy family obligations. In a practical sense, they owe
time, money, and emotional support to their families,
relatives, and friends, for those are the people who have
supported them. The students are expected to accomplish
"something" in America, and these expectations weigh on the
students' shoulders as heavy obligations. If the students are
unable to succeed, and to meet these expectations, all the
efforts made by those supporting them back home will have been
in vain.

When we come out of the country, we have a lot of
expectations from relatives, from friends, you
know. If we get nothing and go back, we feel
ashamed.

Another said:

Once they come here, they find the situation is
hard. But they can't go back. If they go back
home, there is no place to go. Many Chinese girls
here cry, to my knowledge, for hard situation,
especially for the first year. If they go back,
their parents would blame them or maybe their boy­
friends blame them too.

Going to America is a big trend and studying in America
is the most desirable way to do it. Certainly, education is
important for Chinese students, and means more than acquiring
knowledge, but in the contemporary social and cultural context
of China, education has a deeper meaning. Education provides
Chinese students the high social respect and status that only
a small percentage of the population are able to achieve. For
those sent to the countryside during the Cultural Revolution,
passing the college entrance examination was the only way they
could return to the cities and enjoy "civilized life" and
tuition-free privileges. Now, education makes it possible for them to come to America "legally" and ultimately achieve higher status and better living standards. For practical reasons, rather than academic ones, Chinese students can appreciate the education systems of both China and the United States.
2. Facing America

2.1 Getting into the American System and Culture.

"This Is A Reasonable Society"

When Chinese students arrive in the United States for the first time, the high living standards make a strong impression on them. One respondent said:

Compared with China, the living condition in the United States is better than that in China. They have a car. They have a house. In China, we do have an apartment and some people maybe have their own houses. In country side, they have their own houses. But most of people in cities live in apartments.

This impression of America's material existence is derived from the simple fact that they have never experienced such high living standards. An American observes that aspect:

The main point is that Hong Kong people had wealth for a while. [Mainland] Chinese are not. Chinese are more concerned about materials than Hong Kong Chinese because Hong Kong had it for a while. They don't worry about it.

In accordance with this account, one Chinese student said:

I just make money and I can show that I have abilities. I have been poor from I was small. I want to be rich.

Chinese students enjoy living in their own apartments with a "nice big kitchen," buying a car and driving to school. Most Chinese citizens would never be able to afford such luxuries and have a much lower standard of living. Therefore, buying and driving a car, for example, seems to have a meaning beyond convenience. One Chinese student described buying and driving a car as "Americanization."
I feel more and more comfortable with driving now. It is true that I feel much more Americanized [by] being able to drive around. I guess that is one reason Chinese students are willing to buy a car when they have enough money. Of course, there are also other practical purposes.

What he meant by "Americanization" was probably what he believed to be his "assimilation" into the American society. Buying a car had a symbolic meaning for him: as another interviewee said, "I can show that I have such an ability." He could identify his achievements in America with the concrete objects he was able to purchase. This feeling must certainly be shared by many Chinese students in America.

The "freedom" enjoyed by citizens of the United States makes a strong impression on Chinese students. Having lived with various systems and rules and regulations controlling people in China--work-units, identification, personal information files, political studies, bureaucracies, and Guanxi (connection)--the lack of control is refreshing, and means "liberation" from these "repressive" social practices for awhile. One student described her impression of freedom:

I like freedom because in my country it's not free.
I mean I can go anywhere I like. I can look for job I like. If I don't like the job, I can quit the job.

Americans would not accept such control, yet in China if employees intend to change jobs, they must deal with the bureaucracy by using the Guanxi (connection) and then wait for several years. We can only make sense of such accounts by considering the social backgrounds of these people. One
interviewee said, "Going Abroad is a shortcut to avoid this bureaucracy."

According to Chinese students, freedom has many implications. First, they feel "free" in a sense that nobody monitors and restricts their activities.

Nobody tries to influence you and force you to change your mind. Social voice is very weak. American society doesn't have main stream of cultural directions. Everybody is surprised about that. So, if you want to go to your way. Nobody would try to stop you and try to influence you to change. If you succeed you deserve that. If you failed, you deserve that, too.

However, freedom brings the sense to them of a "weak social voice," in America. One student said that this is a "lack of culture."

I like American culture because they don't have culture. As my understanding, they don't have culture. I got Chinese background but I still consider myself as American because they don't have particular culture things, although most of them are [dominated by] White.

I don't believe he's saying that there's no American culture in a literal sense, but means that America has a diverse cultural heritage, with many cultural traits rather than one dominant one as they have in China. Thus, newly arriving people, like this student, do not have to follow a certain cultural trait in America—"Nobody would try to stop you and influence you to change." This is a welcome aspect of freedom.

Who then do Chinese students have to depend on? Obviously, "you must depend on yourself" and "you have to take care of yourselves." Freedom also implies individualism. One
must try to accomplish whatever he/she wants based on his/her individuality. Individualism is defined as people giving priority to their own concerns over those of others. However, those coming from oriental countries, including mainland China, often consider individualism to be a form of "selfishness." Generally speaking, social interactions in oriental societies are active and close so that even neighbors are considered family. One respondent said:

They [Americans] tend to respect their privacy much more than Chinese. In China, they are accustomed to an extended family life. The members of family live together. Sometimes neighbor can be considered as a family. They know each other and take care of each other. Also, they watch for each other sometimes. There are different feelings each other, you know. Interaction is very active. People care and watch out for each other. For those coming from such a culture, American society and culture must be impressive. One Chinese student characterized American culture as "fresh and independent."

Chinese students feel that as long as people can take care of themselves, they can do whatever they want in America. Freedom also implies openness in the people and the society. The American society freely accepts new people, such as Chinese students, as members of society, and according to one student allows for greater growth in individual abilities, so newcomers can contribute more to American society.

In my view, I think this system can maximize my ability to better my life and maximize my own performance based on my educational and working experience. I may be able to serve for this society. I am not talking about a country. But
for myself, both a sense of value and a sense of culture, I like that.

What the Chinese mean by "freedom" does not necessarily refer to the American social structure or political system, but refers to the American cultural context. "There is no culture in the United States." "Nobody cares about you." "No one tries to influence you." "You have to take care of yourself." This environment must seem "fresh" for those coming from a society where neighbors are considered to be extended family and people watch out for each other. For people from China and perhaps other oriental societies, experiencing American society means more than travelling to a foreign country. Coming to America means leaving a "closely-tied" community. After arriving, they often feel "free," not because America is politically free but because America is "culturally" free: Chinese students feel out of touch with "community ties." This is the core part of what Chinese students mean by "freedom."

According to an international comparative survey on political culture conducted by Nathan and Shi (1991,p. 105), the results went beyond what the researchers expected:

Although the regime in China controls the daily lives of citizens more totally than was the case in the five nations [United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, Mexico], fewer citizens are able to identify such [national government's] control.

Nathan and Shi were puzzled by the results, saying "We do not know what mechanisms are at work to produce this paradox." (1991,p. 105). Despite that, the researchers were puzzled
when their survey results clearly indicated the "community-orientation" evident in Chinese society. I would explain this paradox by stating that in China people live in "close-tied communities" where people "watch each other closely"—as extended family members. People are closely tied not by the Communist central government and its political system but by the social fabric of the "community" model. The influence of the neighborhood community bonds have a stronger impact on people's minds as a controlling force than does the Communist national government. People do not identify with the power of the national government as much as that of the local communities.

During my interviews "opportunity" emerged more frequently than any other topic as an area of great interest. Virtually every interviewee used the word "opportunity." What they meant by opportunity implied a greater number of "choices." Even if students are unable to accomplish one choice, they can pursue others. One interviewee describes opportunity as follows.

If you can't get into this [American] society... Chinese people maybe think they are the inferior and you are not good in that society. But in this society whole bunch of opportunities you can work [on] and then maybe you can get your success. In this way, it is pretty much challenge. I really want to meet this kind of challenge. That is why I want to find opportunities which let me stay in this country.

People can choose what's best for them from a "whole bunch of opportunities." If they do well they can succeed.
Success is dependent upon their personal ability and effort. "It is a challenge" the interviewee said. If people succeed, they are rewarded accordingly. Yet if they fail, they also get what they deserve. The consequences are a result of the individual's ability and the effort put forth. One student commented that success and one's standard of living are proportional:

Living standard is higher here. But in China, you know if you survive well, your living standard could be higher than here. Here you could loose every thing and you are out of touch with a society. If you fail, you could be worse than in China. So, your living standards are directly connected with your personal success. I think my personal goals or personal achievements would be automatically relating to my living standards. The two things are proportional.

Accordingly, personal achievement and one's living standards are related proportionately. What you get depends on what you achieve. Chinese students say that this is very "reasonable."

The most important thing is that it is very equal. You have an equal opportunity to develop yourself. It is very important. In this way, I struggle with myself. I can get what I want by myself. If I study hard, I can get. It's a very "reasonable" society. You know it is a reasonable society. What you struggle [for] is what you get. Sure it depends on chance. But in China it is not equal. It is not reasonable.

"What you struggle [for] is what you get"—what you get is neither more nor less than what you achieve. For Chinese students, American society is a "reasonable" society based on "equality." Another student described the American society as "simple."
The major factor in this society is something really "simple." If you work hard and if you have achievement in your specialty, you can get promotion and you can be recognized by this society. That is quite different from the situation in China. In China, something beyond hard working or achievement, you have to wait.

If people are competent and work hard, they can achieve success. This straight-forward system contrasts with that found in China—a "Guanxi" (connection) society. American society is "really simple," the students say. This simple, and more straight-forward structure the American system is based on provides hope and energy to Chinese students.

I think I like the culture. It was positive. It gave people hope and made them strive hard for the future. They had a strong belief that if you work hard, study hard, you have a chance to succeed.

In summary, according to Chinese students, the American system consists of several meaningful elements. America is "free," and freedom implies individuality instead of collectivity. People can try whatever they like based on their abilities and responsibilities, and nobody tries to stop them. People are free to pursue their own goals unrestricted. In America success is "open" to everyone. If people succeed, they are rewarded. "If they fail, that is also what they deserve." "What you struggle [for] is what you get." America is an "equal" and "reasonable" society, according to Chinese students, and success depends on the individuals' abilities and efforts, not their Guanxi connection with officials in charge. People have many "choices" and are free to decide what is best for them. Opportunity implies that people are
free to choose what is best for them. Even if they cannot succeed in one way, there are other options--this is what Chinese students mean by "opportunity."

This is a basic picture of the American system according to Chinese students. Whether or not the picture is congruent with reality, most of them continue to believe in it to some extent. Chinese students appreciate such a "simple," "equal," and "reasonable" American society.

"Freedom Has A Price And Opportunity Is Competitive"

Although Chinese students fully appreciate the "reasonable" American system, most have experienced the other side of freedom and opportunity in America. One student expressed his impression of freedom and opportunity simply:

But when you learn more about the reality of the American life, you are kind of disappointed. I expected a land of opportunity there and freedom. What you expected is so different from reality. When you come here, you find freedom has a price... And also opportunity is very competitive here like finding a job or scholarship, everything. If you move ahead, it is very difficult for minorities. Not for "old minorities" but for someone who came from other countries. It is very difficult.

"Freedom has a price and opportunity is very competitive." This revealing statement is indicative of the psychological dilemma facing Chinese students. On the one hand, they appreciate the freedom and opportunities provided by the American system, while on the other hand, they must face other realities, which fail to meet their expectations.
For example, students applying for jobs often encounter difficulties.

Yeah, like working in the University Center. I applied for the job but American students are much easier to get the job than I am. I felt bad.

They try to rationally understand discrimination issues but often feel discriminated against. One interviewee rationalized being discriminated against—he was an international student, a minority, and not an American citizen.

I’m saying opportunity is limited because I am a minority. In a situation like when you are hunting a job and they are looking for somebody who is a U.S. citizen. You don’t have the qualification. When you are in school and you are not an in-state student, you have to pay out-state fee. It is not discrimination. It is American law... Another interviewee said:

For example, if apply for one position, a working position, something like that, usually I feel foreigners are more competitive. You have to be more qualified for the position than Americans. That is normal, to some degree. This is reasonable.

Foreigners consider the need to be more competitive when seeking employment as "normal" and "reasonable," he said. If, however, he truly believed in the equality of the American system, and believed that his abilities qualified him for a position, there should be no reason for him to believe that international students have to be more competitive than Americans. He notes that the American system is not as equal as he expected but still operates with greater equality than its Chinese counterpart. This allows him to continue to
perceive the American system as "normal" and "reasonable." Although he does not believe that the American system is totally reasonable in a literal sense, he considers it much "better" than the Chinese "Guanxi" system. His double standard reflects his dilemma between what he expected in America and what in reality he sees.

Another disappointment for mainland Chinese students is financial—obtaining economic resources is their greatest problem. Obtaining a financial sponsor before coming to America is a prerequisite to obtaining a visa. Yet in many cases, since the money received from a sponsor must be repaid, students cannot freely use it. Thus, in order to stay in America, Chinese students more than likely must work to support themselves. One student said:

First we came here, we had no money to pay the tuition and fee. Some students just go out to work. Work is, in a lot of cases, not supposed. It is a sort of immigration policy something like that. Money is concern. You know study itself is not easy but for almost Chinese students, study is good. Financial problem is a very important concern.

Another said:

Many Chinese students spend a lot of time to work on campus because they get to pay the tuition. Whether or not they work is decided by their financial situation not by their personal choice.

As mentioned in Chapter I, the questionnaire survey conducted at Norman, Oklahoma shows that more than 80 percent of Chinese students currently work either in their departments or on/off campus.
Their limited English proficiency is also a common problem they must face in America. One school official said:

The major problem they typically have, is the language barrier, and typically the first year they have difficulty understanding what has been said in the classroom. Most of them are proficiently able to read English but have difficulty understanding what is said by professors in the classroom. Generally they have trouble with that. [They] take about a year.

High TOEFL scores will qualify a Chinese student for admission to an American university but such tests do not necessarily reflect one's English abilities—especially speaking ability. One student described his English problems:

My TOEFL score is six hundred. It is not bad. But that is only a test score. It doesn’t measure practical ability. Only by living in the American society, we can improve our practical ability, speaking, listening. The TOEFL score [tests] usually emphasizes grammar. So, my speaking ability is poor even through I have the good score in TOEFL. I can understand what people say but I don’t know how to express my feelings.

Therefore, many Chinese students are seriously concerned about their English. To improve their language skills they intentionally make American friends and stay with American families, like this student:

I made a lot of American friends. I have never lived with Chinese students because I don’t want to restrict myself to Chinese. I want to expose myself to English speaking environment. My roommates are all Americans for years. Now, I still live in an American family. I have never lived with Chinese . . . I don’t avoid [Chinese] but I am very sensitive to improve the language, improve speaking ability. That’s all. That’s my priority. That is what motivate me to do what I want. There is nothing I feel uncomfortable about being a part of Chinese.
Besides academic concerns, English fluency seems vital for their success in America. Their speaking ability makes the difference when achieving their goals; applying for jobs, seeking financial aid and so forth. One student confessed that she tried to get rid of her Chinese accent. Though her English "fluency" was good enough to receive a teaching assistantship in her department, she still described her English as "lousy."

"I Work Hard And Then I Can Get More Chance To Get Financial Support"

When Chinese students come to America, they are confident and expect to succeed in their host country--to get good grades, get an advanced degree, and get a stable job. Yet, they often meet with obstacles such as; minority status, "discrimination," financial difficulties, and the language barrier. How do they cope with these problems? The answer is very simple: work and study harder than ordinary American students. Studying and working are the basic ways they try to solve their problems.

In the first quarter, which was the Spring of 1991, I studied very hard. I studied almost . . . when I went to bed one o'clock at night and got up around eight in the morning. During the day, I almost studied whole day because at that time I didn't know the environment. I had a strong sense of insecurity so I studied very hard.

One school official described Chinese students' hard working habits in the following anecdote:
I had students who had hardly gone to downtown Missoula in the first five months. They would go from home to the lab and classes. At Christmas, we had a tour of the town and a lot of Chinese students [joined]. This was their first time downtown. It is not to me peculiar.

Department chairs have recognized Chinese students' high motivation. I interviewed three current or former department chairs (Business administration, Computer science, and Mathematics) about Chinese students. To quote from three interviews:

With very few exceptions, they are better students in terms of academic standing in the program. They are always highly motivated. They work hard. [They] seem to spend more time than American students do in general.

In general, probably I think they are more highly motivated than most of students we have. I am sure that is simply a product of the selection process. To be a student from mainland China requires a lot of work and commitment when they get here. They are very serious and very dedicated students.

I do feel Chinese students, work hard. They have good study habits. They work hard and do well. Average [students] don’t come to this country. They do well because they work hard.

To overcome difficulties and achieve their goals in America, Chinese students are highly motivated. They believe that by studying harder they will increase their chances of obtaining more financial support.

I work hard and then I can get more chance to get financial support. We have to be more qualified than American guys. Otherwise we could not survive in this land.

The American ideas of "equal" and "reasonable" motivate them and contribute to their high expectations. Although
Chinese students realize that the American system does not operate ideally, but they strive to overcome the handicaps of their minority status—"discrimination," financial stability and English problems. Most students have confidence that they can overcome these difficulties, and comparing the American and Chinese systems, they perceive the American system as "much better."

Before I came here I thought America is better. I mean social structure, people and those things but . . . Before that, exactly I was an activist during the Democratic demonstration, 1989. So, most of us thought America should have the best system in the world. Now, I think they have a very good system but far from perfect, even worse than what I thought before coming here . . . I can't see so many social problems such as crimes, those sorts of things. Also, I saw the election the first time, I mean the Presidential election this year. I don't think everything is perfect system but of course it is much better than a socialist system.

In response to the survey questions about students' political and economic systems preference, 50 percent of the respondents preferred the American system. By contrast, less than 10 percent preferred the Chinese system. Forty percent were undecided.

2.2 Getting Into a Community

Chinese students seem to enjoy American "freedom," and being liberated from the "closely-tied" community lives they experienced in China. Yet, Chinese students living abroad still look for emotional bonds and never abandon community ties. There are several reasons that they look for the
"China Connection"

With their limited "resources," the China connection is essential, in a practical sense, for survival. The China connection helps students find apartments, jobs, places to shop, and other basic needs for daily survival.

There are some Chinese students in the university. When he just went there, he found everything, place to live. They help a [Chinese] student in [on] the street. Then after that, when new students come, those old students help the newcomers. Every semester when new students come, other students always help them to find rooms and to get a social security number.

Friends are "useful" when solving practical problems:

Friends are always, in a practical word, useful. We depend on each other. You can give help to your friends and your friends help you. They really help me a lot, information. When you said you are moving out, Chen first come up to me and said whether or not I want to move in. Otherwise she put an advertisement in the UC. So definitely sure I move in. And also finding the job is Fai. She talked to me when I talk to her. "It's easy to get a job," she just said "Maybe you go up directly and talk to the manager to give him an impression of you. So they give good advice and then I took the action. I took the advice but still it is me to take an action. It's better to have as many friends as possible.

Understandably, Chinese students usually start looking for a China connection immediately after arriving in the U.S.

I informed the International office when I arrived and asked them to pick me up at the airport. So, they informed me Mao. Anyway, I didn't use her at last because one of my friends was supposed to pick me up. But I had her [phone] number. As soon as I arrived, I called her.
At The University of Montana mainland Chinese students are automatically given membership in the Chinese Student Association, primarily to help them get to know each other and "exchange information."

First time there is for New Year and at the second time, we elected a new chairman and governing body. At this occasion, I didn't like actively involve in the preparation or leadership position in those meetings. I just participated in as a common member and talked with people to get acquaintance with a lot of people and exchange information (laugh). I think that's the purpose of these meetings to get know each other and then exchange information.

This China connection provides Chinese students with practical information to help them adjust and live more "efficiently" than other international student populations. One school official pointed out:

They learn fast. They are more adaptable. I don't know ultimately how they are going to use that, what is the outcome. Comparing Chinese students with other groups, they are capable of learning and using the system quicker than others.

Of course, looking for members of one's own ethnic group when living in a foreign land is common. It is significant, however, that due to limited resources, Chinese students are forced to utilize their racial ties more than other ethnic groups. In response to "Do you want to learn American culture, values, ethics, more?," in the questionnaire survey, 63 percent of the respondents said "definitely," and 28 percent said "some." However, 50 percent of the respondents said they associate more often with Chinese and 34 percent said they associate with Chinese and Americans "equally."
Only 14 percent associate more often with Americans than with Chinese. One student said:

Actually, Chinese students in the U.S. are still in Chinese student community just like me. I’m in the U.S. for almost four years, most of the time I contact with Chinese students.

Another said:

That is just like staying in China. We invite for lunch each other. I go to their apartment. They come to my apartment to have lunch or dinner. Even we don’t need to make a phone call. Nearly every day we talk about something. I think that is very good. I can talk to Chinese friends about something.

Of course, they associate with Americans when they need to do so, but generally their first choice would be to contact their fellow Chinese.

In China, "friend" has a very narrow meaning. If I met some problems, my friends give very good help. But in the U.S., it seems very different. If you meet some problems, but [it] depends [on whether] he or she may help you or may not. So generally when I meet some problems, I would give a call to my Chinese friends. I discuss even big problems with them. But if the problem is complicated and Chinese can't answer, I would ask the landlady and the landlord because they are my very good friends. But since they are Americans, they know other things which my Chinese friends can’t understand. So, my first choice is my Chinese friends and then if they can’t answer my questions, I would ask my American friends.

An American interviewee made the following observation:

There is a little bit of hesitation to associate deeply with Americans. Every foreign student has a little bit of that. They do not associate too much with other Americans. Every foreign student has that. Mainland Chinese [students] have a little bit more of it. I notice that.

One student described this as a result of "outside pressures."
Kind of outside pressure make them [mainland Chinese] close. I mean Chinese and Chinese. They don't necessarily like each other. Like Chen, I know that Chen doesn't like another guy, his ex-roommate but they still get together because of kind of outside pressure.

What did he mean by "outside pressures"? The most significant would be the language barrier.

I think still Chinese [talk to Chinese] including overseas Chinese from different countries like Malaysia and Taiwan. I feel more comfortable when I talk to Chinese than talk to Americans. Basic reason for that is the language.

Another said that similar backgrounds make their relationships closer:

Most of them are Chinese because we have the same backgrounds, the same culture. It is easy for me to communicate each other. Of course, I have a few American friends but . . . A big problem for me to have [American] friends is language. You know. I can't communicate freely. Sometimes I can't understand what American friends say. Of course, I can't express what I had like to say. So, it is a big problem. With Chinese, there is not this problem.

An American observer pointed out that the difference in social and political backgrounds between mainland and non-mainland Chinese students contributes to a "break" in their association with one another.

That is a part of hesitation for non-mainland Chinese to associate with mainland Chinese because there is still different political background or political opinions . . . there is a tendency for them [mainland Chinese] not to associate with Taiwanese, Hong Kong Chinese too much. That is maybe culture. Culture is so different from free China and non-free China. There is definitely non-mainland Chinese has a sort of prejudice against mainland Chinese.

Of course, Chinese students do not intentionally separate
themselves from Americans, as one respondent notes:

Now, if I had a problem, I would ask more help from Chinese because they are closer and they know what I need. So, you can help me more but that doesn't mean I don't [get] help from outside community. I don't have any ethnic preference.

Along with the language and cultural barriers, Chinese students feel that communication between Americans and Chinese often lacks depth. Sincere communication means not only the exchange of words but emotions and feelings as well. Emotional attachment makes the difference in the depth of their friendships.

For example, when we talk about something among Chinese and Americans, most of time we talk about general topics. [But among Chinese] we go deep, especially emotions. You know in Eastern countries, people have deep friendships. But American people take a friend as quite general. I mean they may exchange emotions but not in depth.

Another interviewee said:

I think almost all Chinese people point out that it is impossible get a real American friend. I think so. Friend has a lot of meanings. It is a different definition. But it is impossible to get friends that I have got in China.

Because of difficulties in building deep friendships with Americans, Chinese students "unconsciously" alienate themselves. One student talked about the difficulties of attaching emotionally with Americans.

A: I have lived with the latest roommate for a whole year, we get along very well. But I felt lonely when I lived with the American roommate.

Q: Why?

A: I don't know. You can explain by yourself. I really can't explain. We talk a lot. We get
together but I was lonely when I was with the roommate.

This is a significant comment. While sharing living space with an American roommate he still felt lonely, implying there was a lack of emotional exchange between the two. His loneliness was due to an unfulfilled emotional need. He was delighted to have an American roommate to ease his adjustment into American culture and to improve his English, but his roommate could not satisfy his emotional needs.

"American Friendship Is Shallow"

What differentiates American friendships from Chinese friendships? The fundamental difference rests on cultural expectations. An American observer said that Americans and Chinese expect different things from their friendships.

He [a Chinese student] is good friend of mine, but we have always had those kinds of conflicts. He expects more of me because I am his friend. He is expecting too much. But it is also clear that we developed the situation or relationship—he knows what I expect and I know what he expects. Both of us are aware of our cultural differences.

Then, what do Chinese students expect from friendships? The same American observer points out that Chinese students expect "deep" and "long lasting" friendships.

All foreign students are hungry to meet American students and some are better than others. Mainland Chinese students don't seem to be good at it. I know they have the desire, especially when they come over but it is true that every foreign student wants to have deep lasting friendships. Problem is that I can't give them deep lasting friendships. I only have few friends that are really close, too. I gave them whatever an American can give, casual
friendship. That is not enough. They are looking for something more. That is all that I can give them. It is hard for them to get what they need, deep lasting friendship. I haven’t seen any mainland Chinese develop deep lasting friendships with somebody, definitely not with Americans. At least, I can’t think of any case.

The American observer continues by pointing out how disappointed students are when friendships do not meet their expectations.

She also criticized that they [Americans] pretended to be her friends and I think they are friends in an American sense. She thought she got here and got a stable environment, and friends—she got everything she needed. And when she started living, she found out they didn’t offer the kind of friendship she expected—moral guidance, or something.

How do Chinese students describe American friendships and how are they different from Chinese friendships? One Chinese student contends that Americans compensate their friends for favors they have done with "money"—something he does not like.

In America, they use money even if they are good friends. Today, my friend told me "Could you take care of my child? I will pay you." That’s American way. I don’t like this kind of thing. Humans should have a good friendship, helping each other. You can’t use money to do everything. That is America I don’t like. I live with an American family. They have kids and they have some good friends. They ask the good friends to come to take care of their kids even for one hour or two hours. They have to pay them. If you don’t pay, they don’t come.

This contrasting interpretation seems to be a cultural conflict. For him, the use of money makes the friendship feel more superficial, or business-like. On the contrary,
Americans give money as a means of showing appreciation for a friend's time and effort. There is no moral issue involved. Thus, it is easy to see a difference in the degree of emotional involvement Chinese and Americans expect from their friendships.

Chinese students tend to expect much deeper, more emotional and morally supportive relationships than do their American counterparts. A Chinese described American friendships as "shallow":

American [friendship] is shallow. Everybody can be friend. You can say "Hello" to everybody but they don't really get good friends. In China, it is hard too nowadays. You can get dependable friends only when you are in high school or in a college. American [friendship] is very "shallow." You can be just a friend. Chinese also say hello, too. But that doesn't mean you are friend. If they [Chinese] don't know you, they hardly talk to you. They try not to talk to you.

He said "American [friendship] is shallow." What does that mean? Building friendships for anyone requires a lot of time and commitment, however, Chinese students expect a much stronger emotional involvement than do their American counterparts. The language barrier and the relatively short time of residency in the U.S. may limit their emotional involvement with Americans, contributing to what Chinese students might naturally define as "shallow" relationships. Whether or not American friendships are truly "shallow," it appears that such friendships have much less emotional involvement than those between Chinese. Therefore Chinese students prefer the Chinese custom of "deep friendships."
Well, I should say they treat each other very well, looks very polite but it's very strange to me. I haven't seen American people having "deep relationship." I like Chinese human relationship.

An American observer also confirmed the "shallowness" of American friendships.

Problem is when you say friends, it is used in such a casual sense that it doesn't mean friends in a more intimate sense. You can say all in the dome are my friends because I say "Hi" to them even if I don't know their names. We do have more close friend relationships. But even that I think especially for Chinese there is still realization that... they can graduate and go some place else they never keep in contact with each other. Even though they were close friends one time, there is a realization that they are mobile. It's not prominent [permanent?] thing.

Whether or not American friendships are truly "shallow" is another question. Maybe this American observer misrepresented American friendships. Yet according to the accounts of Chinese student, American friendships are "open" and "polite," but "shallow." By contrast, Chinese friendships are "closed" and "close," but "deep." The different depths of friendships relate to the amount of emotional exchange.

How then do Chinese students exchange emotions? Their ability to help one another reflects the degree of emotional exchanges in their relationships. One interviewee described her attitude towards friendships as follows:

When I have some troubles, I can talk with them. What I mean by "talk" is that I can get help to get through my trouble. If you ask me general talk such as say "Hello" I can talk to everybody. But when I'm in trouble, I can really talk with the four students... I think if she is my friend, I will do as a friend. But if I don't think she is my friend, I just say "Hello." That's it. That's
my attitude.

Chinese students base deep friendships on whether or not they can ask for and receive help from one another. In this regard, we must consider the cultural context of saving "face." For the Chinese, asking someone for help with a personal matter could be considered losing "face." One student told his attitude about asking for help with a personal matter:

If problems are like shopping, I sometimes call Liu but as my study or as my financial situation or family matter, I never call Chinese. I try to solve by myself because first of all I am quite old and also because of my personality. I don't want to ask somebody and say "Please come here to talk to me." I don't want to do that.

Why can't he ask other Chinese for help? He says its because of his "age" and "personality," which is true, but it is also because he is concerned about his "face." Another interviewee expressed the same hesitations:

If I feel uncomfortable, like my boss is not good or the professor is unfair like that, I can find a lot of people to talk with. But about some private things, I can't find any. . . About my girl friend. If I have two girl friends, I have to make decision about whom I should marry because it's very important for us. In two or three years, I should make a decision. In that case, I can't find anybody [whom I can talk with].

Caring about their "face" is not unique to Chinese students but may also be characteristic of Americans. However, Americans are much more "open" to the idea of talking about their problems with someone else, as is evident by the various kinds of counseling services available in the United
States. Chinese students seem much more reserved and concerned about saving "face." In this sense, for Chinese students to share their personal problems with others, they most likely would be more emotionally involved in mutual friendships than their Americans counterparts. Chinese students believe that Chinese friendships are deeper than those shared with Americans and expect greater emotional attachment from their Chinese friends than from their American friends.

"You Can't Just Indulge In The Community. You Never Progress"

Do Chinese students really develop deep friendships with other Chinese while in America? Possibly, but not always. One student said:

It's hard, even it's hard to get help even from Chinese friends here. But in China you always can find useful people you can get ideas and sometimes help. In America, you can't. So if you are in everything dependent on yourself, you are OK. But you want to get some help, you will be disappointed, sometimes.

Why is that? An obvious reason is limited "resources." They are limited by both money and time. If students could afford to help others and had more time to socialize, they would. They are simply too "busy" with their own studies and work.

You see most Chinese are very busy, studying, earning money. They already have high pressures. So, their supports to you are sometimes quite limited because themselves are "disabled" here.
Another also said:

I think in America, they [Chinese students] work very hard, study and work because in America they must support themselves. If they want to get financial support, they have to study hard to improve themselves. Because of that, I think, Chinese students get together not so frequently.

One school official noticed that:

They are engaging people, you know. They can talk. They have many things to contribute. . . But. . . They don't allow themselves the opportunities to socialize as much as they want, because financially they have restrictions. They may not [be able to] afford [it]. They want to finish school as soon as possible. If you work and study, at the same time [there is] less and less opportunity for social [activities].

Competition among Chinese students may also contribute to their limited sociability. One student related the following anecdote:

A: In general, they don't give me good impression.
Q: Why?
A: Because I came here the last January. I wanted to get some help. It was hard to get [help] from them. After while some of my friends here told me that a lot of Chinese [here] are very cold. If they think they can get benefit from you, they may want to talk to you to get some those [benefits]. When I just came here in the second day, I went to the class. I missed the first class and then I saw one Chinese in the class. I asked her to let me see the class notes. But she didn't want. She said "I didn't bring my notes." I know she always bring her notes. She looked unhappy and said "You can ask somebody else." So I think it is so bad.

Also, some Chinese students intentionally keep their distance from the closed Chinese community for the sake of their own individual achievements. One respondent said:
I like to connect to the community. It's helpful. If you are lonely, you have an association or community you depend on. But you can't just indulge in the community. You can never progress.

Most Chinese students are concerned about their ability to speak English, which they consider essential to their success in America. In the questionnaire, I asked "What is the most important thing at present in your life." One respondent wrote:

1. Improving my English.
2. Improving my speaking English.
3. Improving my writing English.

This answer may reflect the sadness and bitterness this student is feeling due to his/her "poor" English. Close association with fellow Chinese may provide comfort while living in a foreign country, but may not provide all that is expected. One student said:

I think this is why I came to the U.S. When I go back to China, I don't like to tell my friends, "I spoke Chinese every day in the U.S. and I learned Chinese very well." This is stupid.

Chinese students like to associate with fellow Chinese as well as nurture those contacts to help them survive more efficiently. At the same time, however, they cannot indulge in the comfort of the Chinese community because of limited resources and their strong motivation to realize their individual goals. Chinese students expect much "deeper" friendships with fellow Chinese than with Americans but cannot afford the resources necessary to maintain them. One student pointed out the psychological dilemma:
That always confuse me. I don’t want to be dependent on other people but I think you need friends. Independence and friends are different. One should be independent economically, spiritually but you still need friends.

"I Don’t Feel This Land Is My Home"

What kind of problem does this dilemma cause students facing daily life? As I have mentioned, Chinese students must keep in contact with other Chinese to survive, but don’t necessarily attach themselves emotionally to the community. They are losing the strong sense of community they experienced in China, and consequently, are vulnerable. One respondent admitted her loneliness:

Small problems make me get frustrated maybe because I am not really happy, I don’t know. ... Something like study, something like to deal with people, something like that. Small problems make me feel sad. I should admit that I feel. I feel lonely, something like that.

Along with loneliness, they suffer from lack of self-esteem. One student said:

Sometimes you feel no worthy [unworthy]. In China, if you work, you have to work for others. Your work is worthy. In the United States, you always have to do by yourself. You got to succeed by yourself. You get well by yourself. Your work doesn’t get support from other people but in China you should think you get support because you are not just yourself.

Of course, this perception is relative to his reference point, but it is safe to say that in general Chinese students in America do, to some degree, receive less respect than they did in China. Another interviewee confirmed the lack of
You will never be as equal in the US as you are in China. You never get the same kind of respect. You are a minority here. You are different. But in China, you are a part of it. You are the best of your people. In racially speaking, you are a minority here.

Further, losing a sense of community weakens cultural values, norms, and group identity for Chinese students. Stonequist pointed out ambivalence about themselves as a symptom of psychological marginality (1963, pp 145-146). One interviewee said he does not know how to behave on some occasions:

American society is not free for foreigners because. . . You don't know how to behave in some occasions. So I don't feel as free as when I was back in China.

Another described her confusion about her ethnic identity:

It sometimes makes me confused because sometimes I don't want to identify myself as a part of Chinese, you know. It sometimes makes me confused. It also seems impossible, or maybe I don't like, to become really a part of this society. And I feel sometimes I am not belonging to that society. . . It makes me really confused. Sometimes I feel I no more belong to that society.

Another mentions his confusion at knowing what is "right and wrong":

This is also my impression when I have social contact with American students. I just lost a sense of right and wrong. In a certain kind of situation, I don't know what kind of behavior is socially acceptable. What is acceptable, distinction between right and wrong, is just gray and confuses me so much. So, I don't know what to act. Americans ask me to do this and to do that. I always hesitate a little bit unless I am certain it's right according to my standard. So when we have a party together, I have to just totally
disregard my own standards and follow their rules as long as it seems OK to me although in my mind I disagree with many things.

In the questionnaire, I asked, "In general, when Chinese standards of behavior and American ways of behavior conflict in a certain circumstance, what would you do?" Thirty-two percent of the respondents said "Maybe" follow the "Chinese way," 26.2 percent said "Not sure," and 27 percent said "Maybe American way." These results indicate that 85.7 percent of the respondents swayed back and forth between Chinese and American standards in a general sense. Certainly some might say, "It depends on what kind of situation you are talking about," and their perception of reality may not always be clear: sometimes they follow the Chinese way and at other times the same individuals follow the American way. Taking these arguments into consideration, the cultured confusion of Chinese students is obvious. This confusion causes the majority of them to feel they are still "foreigners." With few exceptions, they feel "This is their country, not my country":

Disappointment is that I don’t feel this land is my home. This is the feeling from the bottom of my heart. I think most people from Eastern countries have the same feeling. Even they have a visa, green card, they still don’t think they are American people. Maybe for Japanese, it is the same. Most Chinese may feel the same.

Another interviewee said:

But I don’t think I will live here. I don’t belong to here. It’s different still. You can appreciate this kind of culture but you are not a part of it. I just don’t belong to here.

Having resided in the United States for a relatively
short period of time could certainly be justification for these feelings, since those participating in my survey had only lived in the U.S. an average of about three years. I am uncertain as to whether or not they would identify America as their home if they stayed longer. However, one respondent mentioned the experience of a friend who had lived in the United States for a relatively long period of time. He said "It is hard for Chinese to get into American society":

This is my personal view. I talked to Chinese who came from Taiwan. She married with an American associate professor. She told me that. This story was four years ago. [She said] "Mao, if you are single, you can marry an American girl." I said, "Yes, I can marry." But she said "No, it is very hard for you to get into American society." So, after four years in America, I think it's true. It's hard for you to get into.

Obviously some respondents will feel more at home in America than others. One who lived in America for ten years said:

American people are more friendly and open. I like America because people here are all immigrants. Nobody can say this is my place. Everybody is an immigrant.

In the questionnaire, I asked "Do you feel you are a 'guest' under someone's roof (the U.S.)?" Fifty percent responded with either "Yes, definitely" or "Yes, maybe so." When we consider their relatively short residency, this is an understandable reply. However, what impressed me was that 39.3 percent responded to the same question, with either "Maybe not" or "Not at all." That means about 40 percent do not feel separated from their host society. In response to
the question, "How much do Americans accept you?," 50 percent of the respondents felt that Americans "more likely" or "always" treated them as Americans. These two results, considered along with the interview accounts, suggest that the majority of Chinese students still consider themselves as "foreigners" in America on one level, but also believe American's "open" society somehow treats them as "fairly" and "equally" as Americans. Whether American society is actually fair and equal could be controversial, but Chinese students perceive it that way according to these accounts. They paradoxically perceive themselves to be socially accepted and rejected in America.

"If The Country Is Not Strong, We Overseas Chinese Always Suffer"

How do Chinese students handle this dilemma? There are basically two ways to solve or "cope with" the problems of their homeland. One is to identify their Chinese origin, and the other is to avoid the problem.

With regard to Chinese identity, most students indicated they were proud of their heritage. In the questionnaire, 60.7 percent of the respondents answered that they were "definitely" proud of their traditional Chinese values. If those who said "I guess so" are included, 81 percent of the respondents were positive toward Chinese traditional values. In addition, 60.5 percent of the respondents said, "Definitely I feel responsible for China." Including those who said they
felt "some responsibility," 87.4 percent in all showed a sense of responsibility for China. One student simply said "that is my motherland":

I exactly worked in the institute for five and a half years. I don't feel any guilt [about leaving China]. But if you calm down and think about it. That is my motherland. I was born there, educated there. You know mentally that is still my motherland. I should make some contribution.

Chinese students try to ignore the dilemma by continuing to embrace the idea of a "strong China." Every Chinese student seems to share the desire for China to be a strong nation.

Especially in America, I feel that way. If the country is not strong, we Chinese overseas always suffer. And also I watch the Olympic games because I want China to win.

Support for their nation's Olympic teams may not be limited to the Chinese but may well apply to all nationalities. Chinese students certainly aspire to perceive China as a strong country of which they can be proud. Stonequist pointed out excessive race-consciousness as one type of psychological marginality (1963, p. 148). Whether or not it is considered to be "excessive" race-consciousness, the quotation above indicates a self-awareness of Chinese origin is connected to the psychological dilemma of daily life.

Preference to the use of Chinese names also reflects the students' Chinese identity. Some students use American names but most prefer their Chinese names. In response to the question "Are you willing to use an American name instead of
your Chinese name?," 71.4 percent of the respondents said either "definitely not" or "prefer Chinese name." The following are comments of those who actually have an American name and use it in daily life.

I prefer my Chinese name actually because it sounds much more to me. Suzan is a kind of label. As far as people feel convenient, I just use it. I don't mind it, because it's easier for them [Americans] to call. Name is not important.

Another said:

My professor made the name. We are very good friends. He called me Norman. I don't mind. Name is name. I never introduce myself as Norman. When I meet people, I introduce myself by the Chinese name. But all geography people call me Norman. I don't care at all.

An old Japanese nationalistic slogan states, "Use Western technology on the surface but keep Japanese spirit in your heart." This attitude could be applied here. Even though Chinese students use American names, it doesn't necessarily mean they are willing to identify with "Americans." They are Chinese in their hearts, but "do not mind" using American names for the sake of Americans.

In responding to the question "Do you feel you should go back to China to serve your country?," 52.4 percent said either "Yes, definitely I do" or "Some." Only 15 percent said that they want "Nothing to do with China." Accordingly, more than half feel they should go back to China.

Does this mean they are going back to China? Most have mixed emotions about returning. In the comment section of the questionnaire, one respondent jotted down the following
comment:

Some problems are "not so simple." You don't understand China, so you don't know that Chinese choose to stay in the US instead of to go back.

This respondent failed to elaborate much, but his/her comment suggested the complexity of the many conflicting feelings Chinese students must consider. The following account partially explains the conflict:

As an individual, I don't have a strong sense of mission. I do want to contribute to the process of change. Even if I stayed in the U.S., I am not hostile to my country and my people. I don't have a strong feeling of mission. I think China is a big country and bureaucracy is deeply rooted. There is very little to change. That is what disappoints me. I know it's very difficult to change. I don't have a strong sense of doing about it.

This interviewee would like to work toward change in China but he knows there is little he can do as an individual. He feels "powerless." Another student said that he would like to contribute something to the country but "the country seems not to need me." His individual aspirations do not match his country's current needs.

I should make some contribution [to China]. But for my ability, for the country's needs or demands, there is still some gap between the two. So, I think it is pretty far away from requirement for Chinese government. It's pretty contradiction.

Some students would like to contribute something to their country but do not necessarily want to return to China. One student said:

Q: You said you care about your country.
A: Right. Even though I am not going back to China
very soon, I'd like to have a chance to work for the country.

What students refer to as "China" doesn't necessarily refer to the current government. One student showed his dislike and hesitation about contributing to the current government:

Chinese seem like to want to contribute to China's growth or China's prosperity, but they don't want to contribute to the government.

Above all, Chinese students feel a strong sense of responsibility for China. However, their sense of mission is weakened by social factors. First they feel there is little they can do as individuals to contribute to China's development. A gap exists between their general sense of responsibility for China and their individual aspirations.

Secondly, they have negative feelings about the current government. Although in the interviews I did not directly ask a question about their preference for a particular regime, nobody favored the current Chinese government. These unfavorable feelings reduce their sense of responsibility toward China. Their positive feelings about China's future are derived from their general sense of pride in being Chinese. Although mostly negative, there are mixed feelings among Chinese students about the current Chinese government, and the political situation is too tense for them to talk about it. Although they dislike the current government, they seem to avoid vocally criticizing it. They seem apathetic toward the current government but want a modern, stable, and
"If I Am Busy, I Don’t Feel Lonely."

Another way to cope with their internal dilemmas is to avoid thinking about problematic situations. Chinese students rationalize by saying, for example, "This is not my country but their country."

Yeah. I think discrimination is quite normal because this country is not my country. I don’t have a right in this land. Some discrimination for against me is, I think, quite normal because this is their country not my country. This is quite normal.

He trivializes the "discrimination" against him to avoid psychological depression. It is easier for him to think, "This is not my place and I don’t care," and thus avoid his internal dilemma.

Another method of avoidance is simple--Chinese students try to see the difficulties as short-lived.

I do feel lonely not only because I am here [in the U.S.]. But also if I were in China, I would be lonely because I am not belonging to the main stream of the cultural pattern in China. I think it’s normal and it’s healthy. It’s only a short period of your own life. After you cross the period, you will enter very different areas.

Another said:

Maybe at present, the situation is bad but I don’t care about that. I just want to overcome the difficulties. After you get through the hard time, when you look back, you would feel wonderful.

Many students are so preoccupied with studying and work that they can effectively avoid facing the internal dilemmas
they are feeling.

If I feel lonely, how can I do? [I will] Study because I can study to forget it. If I am busy, I don't feel lonely.

As we have discussed, Chinese students appreciate the education opportunities available to them in China because as a result they can acquire not only academic success but occupational success. This is also true in the United States. If they study hard, get a high GPA, and good recommendations from their professors, they increase their chances of receiving scholarships, jobs, promotions, and respect. They realize that the system is not this simple and that a good GPA does not necessarily guarantee a stable job, but they also see education and study as their only means to a better life. When scared, insecure, and lonely, they bracket these feelings off by concentrating on studying and working. The concentration gives them temporary feelings of security. In some respects, education and study function as a "civil religion" for Chinese students. This makes me understand more clearly the "fanatical" manner of study my ex-roommate practiced.

Avoiding the dilemma by rationalizing events could work in the short run, but unfortunately Chinese students are not really solving their problems. They are instead "coping with" them temporarily. The problems do not come from them personally, but come from the immediate social conditions. In the long run they will continue to suffer from these problems,
as one school official predicted:

Q: How do they cope with the conflict?

A: I think it is there. They have more of a sense of help [by] themselves. Chinese may feel that they are so devoted to goals, they are doing as much as possible to succeed in the eyes of [other] people, [they are] not taking care of their own needs, own feelings. . . . I would think the problem is with their family because you are expected to spend more time with your family. You have to take on more responsibilities. If you are not willing to do so, you have more problems, social problems. This [now] is an evaluation period for this thing to emerge. I think in the long term, they could face a lot of problems in the U.S., if they don't change their attitudes. . . . They are successful now. But their personal life might not be.

2.3 Church:

"They Are Nice People"

Some Chinese students look for friendship in church. It is a place for Chinese students to find affective attachments as well as other practical benefits. One American observer pointed out that many Chinese students are involved in Christianity:

I pick up new [international] students from the airport. That is my job in the Foreign Student Office. So, I get to know them from the very beginning. I watch their changes. One of things that has been striking to me is mainland Chinese. It is a religion because actually something happens to every single one of them. It is always a pattern of conversion to Christianity.

In interviews I asked Chinese students about their attitudes toward Christianity. Over two-thirds of them do not
believe in it as a religion, but most have a positive image of Christianity. Their positive impression of Christianity is mainly due to the "nice" and "helpful" nature of church people.

Yeah. First, I met Paul, the Jehovah's Witnesses. Then, I found out and they found too that I can't join them. I just can't believe in that. So right now we stop seeing each other. But they are nice people, very willing to help other people, very kind and generous.

Another said:

For me because I am a scientist, I believe in what is true. In a religion, you can say it is a superstition. To me, if you convince me that there is God, you have to prove it. That is my problem. I used to go to the church irregularly when I was a student in Oregon. As long as somebody invites me, I went to the church. But if nobody invited me, I didn't have time. I think religion would be a shelter for spirit. Also, it encourages people to do good things. I tend to think religions like Christianity are more positive. If you believe in God, I definitely respect that.

In China, a non-Christian nation, opportunities to learn about Christianity are limited and this lack of access to the Christian church might cause Chinese students to be curious.

Actually, I am very interested in Christians or some churches but I can't express my ideas. I am just curious about this kind of thing. In China, you can't find anything like this. If I were younger, I would go other way to join associations or groups.

Another said:

When I came here, my cousin told me I should be American because I came to learn American culture. I should know Americans. I lived with Americans. For the first year, I lived with American Christian family and for the second year I lived with my Christian American friend.
This account clearly shows the connection she has made between American culture and Christianity. To better understand American culture, she increased her knowledge of Christianity.

However, a difference exists between Chinese students’ interpretation of Christianity and "real" American Christianity. One Chinese observer from Hong Kong pointed out that mainland Chinese understand American Christianity in a different way.

I think there is a little bit misunderstanding about Christianity. That is why they [mainland Chinese] so easily convert. When I told some other Christians in America, I was so surprised finding so many difference between Christianity in Hong Kong and Christianity in here. In here there is no difference whether you are sin or not to go to heaven. But for Chinese you have to be a "good" person, to be moralistic.

An American observer commented on this account.

In Christianity, being a good person just does not mean you go to heaven. It is not necessary in order to go heaven. But in Asians’ view, it is necessary to be a good person in order to get reward, particularly for Chinese.

Here again different cultural backgrounds create different definitions of Christianity. Chinese students perceive practicing Christianity as acting morally "good" according to Chinese moral standards, giving them a moralistic image of Christianity. On the contrary, as an American observer pointed out, for an American, to be a morally good person and to be a Christian are two different things. He’s not saying that American Christians are immoral, but pointing
out that the two are not necessarily equal. Because of the difference in the understanding of Christianity, problems between Americans and Chinese Christians arise. The American observer described the conflicts from different perceptions of Christianity.

What happened was unfortunately, I think. [Because] it [conversion] happened too quick, within the first two weeks. . . some of them last still that way but also I have talked to a few Chinese who became very angry about Americans. One particular Chinese I remembered. She had an idea of holy thing, being a good person. She lived with few Americans who are both Christians and both in the same group which she was in. For a while she was fine with it. She became a Christian and faithful for it. But after observing Americans' "sinful" behavior and some other inconsistencies between what they say and what they do, then she developed real anger after her conversion and eventually she broke away. She is no longer Christian.

This anecdote possibly portrays more of a cultural than a religious discrepancy. Because the American observer failed to elaborate on the conflict between the American and Chinese Christians, I cannot detect how Chinese Christians perceive American Christians to be "sinful." A boy-friend-and-girl-friend relationship might be one instance where a cultural discrepancy could emerge. The point is not whether or not Chinese are more "moralistic" than Americans--Chinese Christians just tend to judge American Christians according to their own moral standards and are "disappointed" by the discrepancy between what they expect and what they see. Their break-off from the church is not necessarily due to their differing religious beliefs but more realistically to the
dissimilar moral standards found in their culture. Here there is a parallel between the different definitions of Chinese and American friendship.

Chinese students "convert" to Christianity for three basic reasons. The first is a practical one. As I discussed beforehand, they keep in contact with the Chinese community to ensure help in getting limited resources, and some join the Church for the same reason. As one Chinese student points out:

At first, they don’t necessarily believe in that. . . Free food, friendship, good writing on your resume, good activities, more friends. Here you are by yourself and you have no money. Most Chinese don’t have money. You don’t know anybody. Nobody can help you.

One school official confirmed it by saying:

Whatever the church is, they pledge out to make use of that. You never know what ultimate goal is. Whether it is true conversion or means, it could be that way. You hear somebody is always going to help, so why not get the help. If you know exactly what you want to do and you are sure your own values. It is a means to an end. OK, I am going to the church and listen to things. They may use the church.

Secondly, Chinese students see the church group as a way to develop the friendships they feel they are lacking in their host society. Some Chinese students developed their own Bible study group, and in a sense, saw the church group as another Chinese community.

I noticed that Chinese Christians are developing their own group. They still belong to the American group. But they invite more Chinese people . . . I am surprised that many students from mainland China after here one or two months become Christians and
try to get more Chinese to become Christians. But none of Malaysians and Hong Kong Chinese become Christians. I don't know why. Maybe because [American] Christians like Chinese from mainland China. Maybe it is something to do with Chinese backgrounds.

I talked to some members of the Chinese church group, and found that not all members are necessarily mainland Chinese. There are also other oriental students, like Malaysian Chinese, Hong Kong Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese but certainly "Oriental" students hold their own Bible study group.

Thirdly, their spiritual needs cause them to convert. One student described religion for Chinese students in America:

If you believe in God, [you might think] why I got sick. That is God's will. That is, God's testing me. When you got belief, you become stronger without fear. I see a lot of Chinese like that. That is the reason that they become Christians.

Actually most students I interviewed seldom talked about their spirituality and religiosity—even those who have actually participated in the Church group. It is my impression that pure religious conversions are rare among mainland Chinese students.

Above all, church groups provide Chinese students with practical help, warm feelings, friendship, a chance to meet new people, and a chance to practice English and learn about a part of American culture. Of course, some students may really believe in Christianity in a religious sense and maintain a long-lasting relationship with the church. Those
three elements, practical needs, affective needs, and spiritual needs are the fundamental reasons Chinese students participate in church groups.

Chinese students appreciate the "straight," "simple," "equal," "fair" social system which provides them "freedom," and "opportunity" in America, but in return they have to face "superficial," "shallow" friendships. These students are somewhat disappointed by that reality, and thus tend to look for stable, long lasting friendships with fellow Chinese. They often cannot afford to devote themselves to the development of deep relationships with other Chinese or enjoy the comforts of the Chinese community, however.

In some respects, the Chinese community is not as close as it seems. The lack of "closeness" in friendships between members is fundamental to their internal dilemma. In this sense, participation in the church group is understandable and could be considered a substitute for their lack of involvement in the Chinese community.
3. Looking for the future

3.1 "Stay For A While"

What are Chinese students looking for in America? What are they going to do after completing school? With few exceptions, the Chinese students I interviewed said they would "stay in the US at least few years." On the questionnaire, only 3.4 percent of the respondents answered that after getting a degree they planned to "immediately go back to China" and 68.2 percent of them said they would either "stay for a while" or "get a green card." The five percent who expressed a desire to stay in the United States permanently were uncertain as to whether or not they would stay permanently, or eventually return to China. However, many were willing to stay in the United States "for a while." One student said:

I will try to find a job here in the U.S. [I will stay here for] at least several years. I am not sure whether or not I might go back to China but at least I will stay here for several years. I'd like to have some experience and then it depends on the situation in China.

Another said:

I think most Chinese students may stay after graduation, they would work in America for a while and then they decide whether or not they go back. When they graduate, they find a job. They work in America for several years. They make money and also they get work experience. Then they go back and they can be more competitive than other Chinese who didn't come to America. When [they] go back to China, they have more work experience than those who didn't come to America. Also they have more money. Either in academic reason or in financial reason, they are better than other Chinese.
Most Chinese students are willing to stay "for awhile," but there is some disagreement in their definition of "for a while." Some said they would "definitely" stay in America:

Definitely I will try to get a job here and stay here if I can. I think I will get a job eventually to use my knowledge I learned. That will be a key point in my stable life here. But I can't see what will happen after five years.

On the other hand, another said "maybe" he would stay:

Maybe I try the U.S. first and then most probably I will go back to China. Maybe I work here for one or two years because I studied here.

Obviously, whether or not they stay in the U.S. or return to China depends on their confidence and expectations. The goals they set for themselves and their self-confidence influence their willingness to stay in the United States.

According to the interviewees, there are two incentives for Chinese students to stay in America. The first is economic betterment: "get rich," "make money," or "do business." As one student notes:

Maybe I can go between China and America and do some business. To do business between China and America, it is my dream. I like to make money.

Another commented:

Of course, I want a success in my career, business. I want to be a businessman . . . especially I like to be a millionaire. I think the most important thing in my life is [to be] something successful. . . . I want to be a millionaire.

Some who plan to stay in the United States have very specific goals. One student described his plan:

I am trying to find some business to do. I could return to China. It's OK, but I prefer to get a
job here for two things. One is to have more time to make some friends and business relationship to build up personal business network. That's for one thing. The other is that I don't like the idea that I have to get through the paperwork both in China and America when I come back to America especially I am not certain about American side. I have to apply for the visa for each time. If I could, I prefer to find a job and to get a working visa. Then I can travel between America and China freely... I don't care [whether or not I am going to stay] but I want to travel. a green card or working visa is fine. You know China is the best place to make profit as long as I know, even right now. It's so difficult to do business in America and China is developing very fast. China is the best place to make profit.

According to a Chinese magazine, Cheng Ming, there is a significant trend among Chinese students to go into business in the United States. A significant number of Chinese students have gotten into business fields such as real estate investment, trade agencies, or legal consulting, instead of remaining in school. The article explains two reasons for this trend. First, those who arrived in the United States before April, 1990, were entitled to permanent residency, or a green card, under President Bush's Executive Order 12711 and the subsequent Chinese Student Protection Act of January, 1994. Therefore their legal residency in the United States doesn't require their maintaining student status. Second, the current United States economy, unfortunately, fails to guarantee them favorable jobs despite their advanced degrees. According to the magazine article, under such social conditions, three types of Chinese students get into business fields. The first type are the former pro-democracy activists
who switched their interest to business. The second type consists of those who are unable to pursue a higher degree and also are not interested in politics. The last type of Chinese student in the business field is both talented and ambitious. The article concludes that all three types believe that only through business can reform come to China, while as an added benefit, they improve their own living standards (Hong Hui 1993).

Another motivating factor keeping Chinese students in the United States is the opportunity to better their social status. Academically oriented students tend to lean in this direction. They believe that academic success rather than economic success will enhance their social status. One student said:

I wanted to get in a good university and become a professional, an expert in my major. I wanted to get some respect from other people because I am an expert of the major. Then I can get a stable life. In China, you can't do that. In America, they have more opportunities.

Getting a doctoral degree is much more "doable" in the United States than in China, with more program options available and more financial support from the American education system. If they work "a little bit" harder, they can get the "big title," Ph.D., perceived to be unobtainable in China. Certainly getting a doctorate in America is not easy but for Chinese students, it is much more "doable" than in China.
3.2 To Stay or Return

"Depends On Economic Situation"

Whether Chinese students will remain in the United States permanently or eventually return to China is a frequently asked question. No one can really answer it with certainty. Even Chinese students may not be able to answer this question with certainty while they are still in school. What factors do they consider when making a decision? The primary factor is their "economic situation":

It's hard to say. At present time, I think most Chinese students hope to stay here because they pursue Ph.D. or master. After that, whether or not they go back to China depends on economic situation. If economic situation in the US is not as good as in China, they have to go back to China.

What is meant by "economic situation"? The economic factor seems to have many implications, and a first concern is financial security. Students do not need to worry about their basic living expenses in China:

Eventually I will go back to China. I try to go back to China at the end of this year, 1993. I feel very trouble with my wife. I argued. Personally speaking, I feel more comfortable, secure. I don't have to worry about my economics [in China].

Second, having a "high paying job" is certainly a part of one's "economic situation." Chinese students look for lucrative jobs—not just ones which pay for a basic living.

That is the second reason why they don't want to go back to China. That is money. If I went back to China right now, I may just earn one thousand Yuan, around two hundred dollar. That is much better than ordinary Chinese people since I get a degree from the U.S. That means each year I make two
thousand U.S. dollar, comparatively high. [But that is not much in American standard.]

In a monetary sense, Chinese students are likely to see better economic conditions in the United States than in China. However, they expect a brighter economic future for China than for the United States.

In the future, China has much opportunity, I guess. It's not long future. Old system is going to be collapsed. It is always opportunity there.

Another said:

I can expect after ten or twenty years some students will come back because local settings [in China would] provide more opportunities. It is very possible. I expect I will be one of them.

China's booming economy in recent years supports the plausibility of these predictions.

Thirdly, some Chinese students consider social respectability as well as the monetary element when making their decision. In this sense, teaching and research positions in academic institutions could be a part of their economic consideration.

If I can find professorship here, I would stay [in the U.S.]. But I can't find the job, I will go back. I am interested in teaching and research in a university. So if I find a teaching or research job here, I would stay.

Another said:

I tell my American friends I will go back to China. The reason is that I learn some knowledge here and if I go back to China, I would have more opportunities. I would have a good position in China. But here if I want to find a job by myself, that is very difficult. I think it is difficult.

Obviously the term "good position" implies two factors:
economic betterment and social respect. When Chinese students say "It depends on economic situation," they are considering both their financial condition and social status. In the previous section I identified two basic reasons for Chinese students staying in the United States: their desire for economic betterment and high social status. In reality, however, both factors are closely related, making it hard to separate one from the other. The type of job they secure upon graduation and the resulting economic and social status they achieve will determine whether they stay or return. In the questionnaire, when responding to the question "What is the most important thing in your life at present?", 24.4 percent of the respondents said "getting a job." This was the second most frequent answer following "study" (32.9 percent). Some other answers included "family" (6.7 percent), "English" (3.4 percent), and "religion" (2.5 percent). These results emphasize their serious concern about the job opportunities which will inadvertently determine their economic and social status in the United States.

"I Am The Only Child In My Family"

Family responsibility is another determining factor in their decision to stay or return. For only children, family responsibility takes on a special significance.

My family is pretty much understandable. I am the only child for my parents and they are retired, getting old. Although they are in a good health condition, at some point they need somebody to take
care. That is a contradiction to me.

Another said:

One younger brother is just an accountant and another brother is just an ordinary worker. So I really care about my family, financially and physically . . . . Because in my home, I am the only daughter. In Chinese tradition, if you have a daughter, the daughter is supposed to care about the parents much more than the son.

Students who have brothers and sisters in China who are able to care for their parents feel less responsibility.

I don't have to worry. I could go to Hong Kong in future for a while to take care of my parents. I have a sister in Hong Kong. My parents could come here. Actually they visited us last year.

Of course, in China, family responsibility involves not only responsibility for parents but spouses and children as well. Family responsibility can cause a Chinese student to return to China, but frequently they bring their spouses to the United States with them. In the questionnaire, 58.8 percent of the respondents had brought their spouses to the United States, however, the percentage varied according to location. As mentioned in Chapter I, the ratio between the Montana and Oklahoma sample is "statistically" different. However, I cautiously inferred that married Chinese students are likely to bring their spouses to the United States. Thus family responsibility is more often a "bringing back" factor for aged parents in China.
"They Don't Like The Government"

The current Chinese government and its political system are also a consideration for returning Chinese students. One student expressed hesitation to return:

The big reason that they don't want to go back to China is the government. They don't like the government. At that time a lot of students hated the government.

Another student said:

If it [the Chinese government] doesn't change so much, I don't like to come back right after getting my degree. Of course, China is my country and my future will be in China, you know. So, if the Communist Party can change a lot, maybe Chinese students come back.

At the same time, some students consider political reasons an excuse to stay in the United States, but political risks do exist for those living in China. For example, the news recently reported the apprehension of Chinese dissidents. One student commented on the use of political rationale when refusing to return to China.

I don't like people who personally want to stay here [in the U.S.] but talking to Americans saying that they can't go back China because they would be killed. I doubt it. I think that is just an excuse. I'm sure very few Chinese students involved in movements and they might be dangerous in China.

Political considerations are certainly important factors to be considered, but do not seem as strong as economic and family responsibilities.
"I Am A Guest Under Someone's Roof"

The Chinese News Digest (CND) reported the return of two Ph.D.'s to China from the United States. One of them explained the reason for his return as: "I felt I was a guest under someone's roof" (Li 1993). This feeling must reflect to some degree that of all Chinese students. In the questionnaire, 50 percent of the respondents answered that they "Definitely" (14.3 percent) felt and "Maybe" felt (35.7 percent) that they were guests in America. It should be mentioned here also, that 39.3 percent of them said either "Not at all" (10.7 percent) or "Maybe not" (28.6 percent) to the same question. Thus, these results do not suggest the generalization that all Chinese students feel like "guests," but it is safe to say that the feeling of being a "guest" is definitely sensed by most.

"China Like A Big Ma"

Chinese students compensate for the feeling of being a "guest" with a strong ethnic identity. Their feelings of being "guests" are directly proportional to the degree to which they identity themselves with other Chinese: the stronger their sense of Chinese identity, the stronger their feelings of being a "guest" and vice versa. However, their identification with China does not necessarily lead to a decision to return.

It would never be late for me to go back to China. I can go back anytime. I can get everything I need
Another said:

We always see China like Ma, big Ma, always welcome. If China get better, then we feel happy about it. We will be very happy about working in China and doing something for China.

For Chinese students "always welcome" means they may choose to not return to China so soon. Having a place to eventually return to allows them to stay abroad "for a while," and results in a "sojourn attitude" while they’re in the United States. Historically, Chinese immigrants have had this attitude (Wang LL 1993, p. 193). As the old Chinese saying goes "Leaves fall down on the root," meaning the Chinese eventually go back to where they came from. This mentality is shared by most Chinese students regardless of whether or not they eventually return to China.

"When I Get Old, I Want To Go Back To My Country"

The sojourn attitude also implies a connection between their age and when they return to China. One student clearly pointed this out:

Yes. Freedom. It's good for young people, right? If you are old, it's bad, you know. In this country [America], nobody want to take care of old people. In my country, a son takes care of them. So, when I get old I want to go back to my country.

So age is also an important factor when considering whether to stay or return. However, getting older does not increase their tendency to return. An elderly Chinese scholar presented an opposing opinion to the previous account:
In China, I would . . . get a higher position. Even [I will] get richer economically than here. But I feel more stable to me [in the U.S.]. . . . If I were younger, I tend to go back to China because Chinese economy is booming.

There are contradictory opinions between the younger students and the elder scholar. Younger students may want to stay in the United States because there are "a lot of opportunities" but when they get old, they may continue to stay because they "want to have a stable life." In this context, their concern about age might be an influential factor, but not a significant one.

3.3 Five Types of Chinese Students in the United States

A summary of the ethnography suggests five types of Chinese students in America. As described below, each type may not be seen as pure—reality is a mixture of various types. The following descriptions merely delineate the five "ideal" types of Chinese students in the United States.

TYPE 1: Purely Academic Students

The first type can be identified as Chinese students earnestly studying areas of academic interest. At a certain point in their lives, they may voluntarily change or may be forced to change their attitudes when they eventually decide what kind of career to pursue, whether in academia or some more pragmatic area. Most students of this type tend to favor an academic career, however, while in school they turn their
direct attention to their academic interests, ignoring all other distractions. This tendency can be found especially among those who study the physical sciences, such as physics, chemistry, biology, geology, and so forth. One school official suggested that Chinese students are more certain and realistic than other students about what they are going to achieve with their "limited resources." In this context, the ratio of this type of student to the entire Chinese population must be small. One health science student seemed to fit into this category:

Q: What is the most important thing in your life?

A: I think it should be science, money is not the most important thing. Family is also important but I haven't had any family yet. So, I still think science is the most important.

Q: You mean career?

A: No, I don't mean it. I mean the process of the research. That is very stimulative [stimulating].

TYPE 2: Students Who Emphasize Education To Gain Social Status:

Chinese students fitting the second category look for professorships or research positions in academic institutions. They believe that this is the best way to enhance their social status. These students are seemingly a continuation of the first type, and pursue their academic interests simply because they are interested. Instead of becoming economically prosperous, these Chinese students prefer to be socially respected as scholars or researchers. In a sense, they are
still carrying on Chinese "old values." The following quotation from a geology student illustrates many aspects of this type:

I think my success is in my research and study. I really pay attention to this academic achievement. Maybe [it] make me famous, maybe not so famous. I just want somebody to know me, "Oh, That is the guy named Chen Tianhua who is working in this kind of field." This is very important.

TYPE 3: Students Who Emphasize Education For Economic Betterment

Unlike the first two, the third type of Chinese students have "new values," representing contemporary China. They study hard, not necessarily for academic achievement, but for more practical goals. Economic achievements seem more meaningful for them than academic achievements. Since they believe that business and economic development are essential to the improvement of China and their personal lives, they are eager to seek job opportunities or look for business connections in order to start their own businesses. Although faced with many difficulties, both in China and the United States, many have successfully overcome these obstacles and achieved their goals. The majority of the Chinese population in America at present falls into this third category.

TYPE 4: Students Who Regard Education As An Excuse to Stay In the United States

The fourth type of student attends school but his/her real purpose is not education. Education merely functions as
a cover to come and earn money in the United States. A student with this goal may even marry an American in order to stay in the U.S. Frankly speaking, my interviews failed to find this type of student but a student indirectly suggested such a scenario:

I don’t like some Chinese who are too friendly to Americans. Maybe they want to marry with an American guys. It is not bad to marry with American guys but what is their attitude to marry with American guys is that they just want to stay in this country to live luxury life something like that.

Theoretically speaking, we should be able to posit this type of student. This type would not represent a major proportion of the Chinese student population in the United States.

TYPE 5: Students Who Drop-Out And Become Illegal Immigrants

Theoretically this category should exist, but in my interviews I did not hear of any students who dropped out of school and disappeared. Although one professor mentioned two Chinese drop-outs in his department it was later clarified that the students merely transferred to other schools. It is true, however, that this type of Chinese student exists in the United States. In my own experience five years ago at another college, one mainland Chinese student did drop out and disappear from school. Not every Chinese student is academically competent and able to maintain a good academic standing, however, this particular student was academically excellent but interested in things other than school.
CHAPTER V

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF CHINESE STUDENTS

One purpose of this study was to find out whether or not Chinese students remain in the United States permanently or eventually go back to China. What factors impact their aspirations to stay or return? Which factors more strongly contribute to those intentions than others? In this Chapter, I will answer these questions through statistical analysis.

A. Sample

The questionnaire survey was conducted at two locations, The University of Montana in Missoula, and the University of Oklahoma in Norman. Survey questionnaires were mailed in January 1993 to all 79 members listed on the Chinese Student Association membership roster at The University of Montana. Thirty-five questionnaires were properly returned and nine were returned due to invalid mailing addresses (44 percent response rate). Because of the small sample size at The University of Montana, another questionnaire survey was conducted at the University of Oklahoma in order to increase the total sample size. The University of Oklahoma at Norman was selected because of convenience—a Chinese friend at Norman obtained the Chinese Student Association membership roster for this study. Validity of these samples, whether the samples from the two campuses represent the Chinese student population in the United States, will be discussed later. The
questionnaires were mailed in January 1994 to all 243 members listed on the Chinese Student Association membership roster at the University of Oklahoma. Eighty-four questionnaires were properly returned and 15 were returned because of invalid mailing addresses (34.5 percent response rate). Respondents included three categories of "Chinese students" at both locations: "F-l" students, "J-l" exchange scholars and university faculty, and family members.

Due to the ongoing process of the ethnographic study, the questionnaire used in the Oklahoma survey differed slightly from the one conducted in Montana in that it contained more question items than the Montana questionnaire. During the year separating the two survey mailings, 15 question items were developed and added. (See APPENDIX)

First, the two samples were compared using a T-test to determine whether significant differences existed between the two samples. The results are as follows:
Two items from the two samples differed significantly. One item, "Friend," refers to pressures from close friends to either stay in the United States or return to China. Students in Montana answered that their close friends in China and/or in the United States expected them to go back to China more than those students surveyed in Oklahoma. "Spouse" is the other item showing a significant difference between the samples. The results show that students living in Oklahoma are more likely to be joined by their spouses in the United States than the students surveyed in Montana. Despite these statistical differences, the two samples were cautiously combined into one. The combined survey had a sample size of 119 respondents--large enough to conduct multi-regression path analysis.

Table 2: Mean Differences between Oklahoma Sample and Montana Sample

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<td>STAYLEG</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>.995</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAYST</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>1.110</td>
<td>2.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STATECO</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>1.022</td>
<td>2.343</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05  **p < .01  ***p < .001
B. Questionnaire Construction and Reliability

Construction of ten variables based on the ethnographic study were created and 40 questionnaire items, including nine demographic question items, were developed.

Chinese students highly expect to succeed in America, according to discussions in the first section of Chapter IV. They are also confident of their abilities which allows them to succeed despite their obligations to family and friends. Three concepts were identified from these discussions. First, Chinese students highly expect to be successful in America. The variable "Expectation" was constructed to measure how much Chinese students expect to succeed in America. This variable includes three items: expectations about their specialties, income level, and social status. (Refer to question items 10-12, respectively.)

Second, Chinese students are confident of their ability to succeed in America. The variable "Confidence" was constructed to measure their confidence levels. This variable includes three items: confidence in their specialties, their abilities in general, and their English proficiency. (Refer to question items 13-15, respectively.)

Third, Chinese students shoulder heavy obligations to family and close friends. I interpreted their "obligation" as the strength of "pressure" they receive from their primary groups. The variable "Family-Friend-Spouse," (hereafter, "FFS") consisted of three items: how much pressure they
perceive from family members about staying or returning, how much pressure they perceive from close friends about staying or returning, and whether their spouses, if they have them, are in China or the United States. (Refer to question items 16-18, respectively.)

The second section of Chapter IV discusses Chinese students' appreciation of America's "reasonable" society while still feeling, "This [the U.S.] is not my country but theirs." Four concepts are identified in this section. The first concept is their appreciation of the American "system." Chinese students like the American system because it is "straight," "simple," and "reasonable," unlike the Guanxi society of China. The variable "System" was constructed to measure their preference for the American or Chinese systems. This variable includes four items: preference for material life, political system, economic system, and life-style. (Refer to question items 30, 35-37, respectively.)

The second concept is their "sociability" in America. Many Chinese students talked about friendships in America and characterized American friendships as "shallow." Subsequently, they associate more often with fellow Chinese than with Americans. Based on these accounts, the variable "Social" was constructed to measure the degree to which Chinese students integrate into the American community. This variable includes five items: employment, associations, sense of membership, participation, and intimate friendships with Americans.
The third concept is their "cultural dilemma." Chinese students are sometimes confused as to which cultural rituals they should follow in certain settings. One interviewee said, "In a certain occasion, I don't know how to behave and what's right or wrong." Based on these accounts, the variable "Culture" was constructed to measure how much Chinese students embrace Chinese values and norms. This variable includes four items: preference for Chinese name, preference for Chinese traditional value systems, adherence to Chinese norms, and willingness to learn the American culture. (Refer to question items 19-23, respectively.)

The fourth concept is Chinese identity. Many interviewees said, "This land [the US] is not mine but theirs." Parallel to that comment, one student said, "If China is not strong, we overseas Chinese always suffer," showing their emotional attachment to their homeland, China. Based on these discussions, the variable "Loyalty" was constructed to measure Chinese students' attachment to their homeland. This variable includes three items: sense of responsibility for China, willingness to serve China, and belief in China's development. (Refer to question items 32-43, respectively.)

The third section of the ethnographic study discussed five factors that might influence their intention to stay or return. The first and probably most important factor is
economic." That discussion concluded that the economic factor contains not only economic conditions but also social status. The dependent variable "return" was constructed of three items, legal status, economic status, and social status. (Refer to question items 38-40, respectively.)

Other than the "economic" factor, Chinese students talked about several topics: their family responsibility ("I am the only child in my family"), political concerns ("I don't like the government"), a sense of being a "guest" ("I felt I am a guest under someone's roof"), China as "big ma," and age. Because the previously constructed variables cover these considerations, only the variables "Age" and "Duration," (length of stay) were constructed in this section. (Refer to question items 5 and 2, respectively.)

In addition, three additional question items were developed to discuss marginality: sense of acceptance, sense of "inferiority," and sense of being a "guest." (Refer to question items 27, 29, 31, respectively.)

Reliability of these variables, and the consistent variation among the items composing each variable, are indicated by the standardized item Alpha. Reliability of each variable is as follows:
Table 3: Reliability of Variables (Standardized item Alpha)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EXPECTATION</td>
<td>.4157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONFIDENCE</td>
<td>.4340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FFS</td>
<td>.3192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SYSTEM</td>
<td>.5330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIAL</td>
<td>.4668</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CULTURE</td>
<td>.2331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOYALTY</td>
<td>.3945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RETURN</td>
<td>.7051</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some variables show low reliability values, especially variables "FFS" and "Culture" (.3192 and .2331 respectively). Although I decided to keep these variables, their low reliability value weakens the constructs' validity and requires cautious discussions in this chapter. In addition, refinement of these variables is necessary in future studies.

C. Discussions of Validity

Validity is the extent to which an empirical measure adequately reflects reality. I am convinced that a high degree of validity exists with this study for the following reasons.

First, as discovered in the ethnographic study, Chinese students in America are "selected people" who have overcome many difficulties in China. The screening process includes receiving high scores on the TOEFL and GRE tests, finding a financial sponsor, receiving a visa, getting leave permission from their "work-units," and dealing with the deeply-rooted Chinese bureaucracy. Only a certain type of
person can survive this process. As some school officials described, Chinese students are "diligent," "assertive" about their goals, and highly "motivated." In this context, Chinese students in America are relatively "homogeneous" about their attitudes, values, and behavior.

Second, there is no a great degree of difference between the Oklahoma and Montana samples, and the results show no statistical difference between the two samples relative to values, attitudes, behavior, and opinions. The only exceptions, as previously mentioned, are whether their close friends expect them to return to China and whether their spouses reside in China or the United States. These results imply a high degree of homogeneity among Chinese students in America.

Third, the small sample size (119) and the regionally less diverse sampling seems to not be representative of the entire Chinese student population in the United States. Yet the lack of regional diversity may not seriously lower the validity of this study as much as might be normally expected, since the availability of financial support and level of education costs are the first and second concerns, of Chinese students respectively. In other words, most Chinese students do not select a school according to regional preference but instead select it based on financial concerns.

However, there is room to increase the sampling validity in this study, and the following notes should be considered.
The first consideration to be made is the distinction between public and private schools. The University of Montana and the University of Oklahoma are both public institutions which, compared to private schools, are relatively inexpensive. Since financial support was a primary concern of the Chinese students I studied, students in prestigious private schools might have had different attitudes and opinions from those in Montana and Oklahoma.

The second consideration is the size of the Chinese student population at a university or college. The students at schools with small Chinese populations may develop more intimate relationships with other Chinese students than they might at a school with a larger population. In this context, different student populations might attract different types of Chinese students.

The third and least influential factor is the location of student populations. Regional diversity differs from one Chinese population to another since Chinese students basically select their schools according to financial considerations, not regional preference. In this sense, the regional factor may not be as influential to their attitudes, values, or opinions as previous factors. Yet different types of Chinese student populations could be found in various regions, especially in New York, California, and Michigan, areas with high Chinese student concentrations.
D. Problem Statement

These discussions of questionnaire construction, reliability and validity of variables suggest the following hypothesis:

When Chinese students are weighing whether or not to stay permanently in America or eventually return to China, all discussed considerations will significantly influence their decisions. These considerations include: high expectations and confidence to succeed in America, pressures from families and close friends, appreciation of the American system, sociability, cultural adherence, loyalty to China, age, and the length of stay in the United States.

E. Analysis of Quantitative Data

First, a bivariate analysis based on Pearson’s correlation coefficient was conducted to see if a correlation existed between the variables. Second, multi-regression analysis was conducted to discover which variables significantly impacted Chinese students’ intentions of staying or returning. Finally, a path model was proposed to show the causal relationships of those variables.

F. Results

Results of the bivariate analysis (correlation coefficients matrix) are presented in Table 4.
Table 4: Correlation Coefficients Matrix (Pearson's R)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>DURATION</th>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>EXPECT.</th>
<th>CONFID.</th>
<th>FFS</th>
<th>CULTURE</th>
<th>SOCIAL</th>
<th>LOYALTY</th>
<th>SYSTEM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AGE</td>
<td>.403**</td>
<td>.053</td>
<td>.019</td>
<td>.420**</td>
<td>.384**</td>
<td>.225**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXPECT.</td>
<td>.052</td>
<td>.137</td>
<td>.364**</td>
<td>.225**</td>
<td>.384*</td>
<td>.206*</td>
<td>.273*</td>
<td>.217*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONFID.</td>
<td>.052</td>
<td>.137</td>
<td>.364**</td>
<td>.225**</td>
<td>.384*</td>
<td>.206*</td>
<td>.273*</td>
<td>.217*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FFS</td>
<td>-.118</td>
<td>-.075</td>
<td>.206*</td>
<td>.273*</td>
<td>.217*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CULTURE</td>
<td>.023</td>
<td>-.051</td>
<td>.300**</td>
<td>.314**</td>
<td>.111</td>
<td>.240*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIAL</td>
<td>.065</td>
<td>-.005</td>
<td>.210*</td>
<td>-.030</td>
<td>.150</td>
<td>.320*</td>
<td>.259*</td>
<td>.332**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOYALTY</td>
<td>.100</td>
<td>.050</td>
<td>.222*</td>
<td>.178</td>
<td>.206**</td>
<td>.197*</td>
<td>.085</td>
<td>.332**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SYSTEM</td>
<td>.102</td>
<td>-.030</td>
<td>.331**</td>
<td>.110</td>
<td>.357**</td>
<td>.270**</td>
<td>.195*</td>
<td>.472**</td>
<td>.523**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05  **p < .05  (two-tailed tests) N=119

Missing Data=Mean Substitution

DURATION=Duration of stay in the United States, AGE=Age of the respondent, EXPECTATION=How much do you expect in the United States?, CONFIDENCE=How confident are you?, FFS=Expectation of family-friend-spouse, CULTURE=How much you adapted to the culture, SOCIAL=How sociable you are, LOYALTY=How faithful are you to China, SYSTEM=Preference for the system, RETURN=Stay or return.

Almost all hypothesized variables significantly correlate with the dependent variable "return." The variables "loyalty" and "system" show strong correlations of .472 and .523, respectively. However, the "zero-order" coefficients limit the extent of this analysis. The coefficients only show the correlation of one variable with another without simultaneously considering the intervening effects of other variables. In the next section, multivariate analysis was used to examine which variables most significantly impact the variable "return" while controlling the effect of other variables. The multi-regression analysis is presented in Table 5.
Table 5: Multiple Regression on the Dependent Variables "Return"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Pearson's r</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>SE b</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>Partial T value</th>
<th>Sig. %</th>
<th>TOTAL EXPL VAR. %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SYSTEM</td>
<td>.5226</td>
<td>.359603</td>
<td>.011603</td>
<td>.354475</td>
<td>.390886</td>
<td>.4.434</td>
<td>.0000 .1852 .409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGE</td>
<td>-.0299</td>
<td>-.020554</td>
<td>.019820</td>
<td>-.081915</td>
<td>-.098892</td>
<td>-1.038</td>
<td>.3018 .0002 .000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIAL</td>
<td>.1953</td>
<td>.042295</td>
<td>.087534</td>
<td>.038850</td>
<td>.046232</td>
<td>.483</td>
<td>.6299 .0075 .048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CULTURE</td>
<td>.2696</td>
<td>.079625</td>
<td>.106583</td>
<td>.061164</td>
<td>.071374</td>
<td>.747</td>
<td>.4566 .0164 .036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FFS</td>
<td>.3512</td>
<td>.049753</td>
<td>.087373</td>
<td>.159281</td>
<td>.181506</td>
<td>1.927</td>
<td>.0566 .0569 .125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONFIDENCE</td>
<td>.1096</td>
<td>-.089407</td>
<td>.112708</td>
<td>-.069326</td>
<td>-.076869</td>
<td>-.805</td>
<td>.4226 .0076 .016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DURATION</td>
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<td>.005088</td>
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<td>.051276</td>
<td>.060523</td>
<td>.633</td>
<td>.5280 .0052 .011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOYALTY</td>
<td>.4720</td>
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<td>.100546</td>
<td>.264438</td>
<td>.287288</td>
<td>1.320</td>
<td>.1248 .0022 .125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXPECTATION</td>
<td>.3313</td>
<td>.123038</td>
<td>.077305</td>
<td>.138701</td>
<td>.151472</td>
<td>1.600</td>
<td>.1125 .0459 .101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-1.91892</td>
<td>1.690648</td>
<td>-1.135</td>
<td>.2589</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001 (2-tail tests) N=119 R square=.43712
Missing Data=Mean Substitution

The variable "return" is treated as a dependent variable in this model. Two variables show a significant impact on "return" as shown in Table 4: "system," preference of the respondents to the political and economic systems and material life (Beta= .354, p< .001), and "loyalty," the respondents' sense of responsibility, mission, and belief in China (Beta= .287, p<.001). Other variables previously shown to be significant lose their significance when the model controls for other variables. Family-friend-spouse (FFS), pressures from primary groups have less impact on students' intentions than their appreciation of the American "system" and their "loyalty" to China. The same can be said about their "sociability" to either Chinese and/or American communities, "cultural" adherence to China and their "expectations" and "confidence" of success in America.

Figure 1 is a path model showing causal relationships of Chinese students' intentions to stay or return. According to
this path model, when deciding whether to stay or return, the two major variables influencing Chinese students are: "system" and "loyalty." Although variables such as "expectation," "confidence," "sociability," and "culture" interrelate with others, they have less impact on Chinese students' intentions.
Figure 1: Chinese Students' Intention to Stay/Return
G. Discussion and Summary

This path model suggests new results which go beyond those found in the ethnographic study. First, the variable "system" shows the largest impact on students' intentions to stay or return. This variable includes their preference for the political and economic system, materialistic life, and life style. Most Chinese students prefer the American "system," especially the American economic system. Sixty-eight percent of them either "maybe" or "definitely" prefer the American system to its Chinese counterpart. A Chinese student said "What I have done is what I get." Her account strongly expresses how much they appreciate the American system, especially in light of the "Guanxi" practices found in China. Another student said "You need something beyond your ability in order to get promoted in China." Chinese students understandably prefer America's straightforward "system" to China's counterpart. Their preference for America's material life is also congruent with their appreciation of America's system. In terms of the political system, many students said the American system is "better" than the Chinese political system. However, their appreciation of the American political system was less significant than that of the economic system. And the majority prefer the Chinese life style over its American counterpart. Fifty three percent of the respondents "maybe" or "definitely" prefer the Chinese life style. With
these considerations, the strong impact of the variable "system" is largely derived from students' preference for the "reasonable" and wealthy economic system of America. The greater their preference for the American economic system, the longer they stay in the United States.

Second, the variable "loyalty" also significantly impacts the dependent variable "return." The variable consists of three items: sense of responsibility to China, sense of mission to serve China, and belief in China's successful modernization. The results show that most respondents want to do "something" for their homeland, China, and according to these statistical results, the stronger their "loyalty," the more likely they are to return.

The ethnographic study, however, shows their sense of responsibility for China does not directly correspond to their willingness to return to China. Chinese students showed a desire to contribute "something" to China but their "loyalty" was not necessarily toward the current government. The ethnographic study also suggests a lack of consistency between a sense of patriotism and their individual choice to stay or return. In light of these observations, the variable "loyalty" implies something more than a general sense of patriotism. One student confessed, "If the country is not strong, we Chinese overseas always suffer." Her statement implies a connection between her attachment to China and her social life in America. The variable "loyalty" involves
students' sociability, willingness to accept American culture, and confidence.

The path model illustrates that the variable "confidence" negatively relates to the variable "loyalty." If students have a strong sense of self-confidence, they care less about China, and vice versa. In addition, the variables "culture" and "social" also significantly impact the variable "loyalty." The path model indicates that the greater their willingness to be absorbed in American culture and the greater their association with Americans instead of Chinese, the less they care about China, and vice versa. The variable "loyalty" implies a mixture of the three variables, "confidence," "social," and "culture," and not a sense of patriotism toward China in general. More specifically, those suffering from some maladaptation to the host society such as insufficient language skills and cultural confusion are more likely to develop and hold a strong sense of Chinese identity. They often say "This (America) is not my country but theirs." However, these relations were cautiously discussed due to the reliability problem—especially the variable "culture" in this case.

Third, although the variable "age" and "duration" correlate with each other, they not only fail to show significant impact on the dependent variable "return" but also fail to impact other variables. Some interviewees mentioned, "When I get old, I will go back to China" or vice versa. The
path model suggests that Chinese students' "confidence" and "expectations" to succeed in America, their preference for the American "system," their "loyalty" in China, and their intentions to stay or return do not differ according to how old they are or how long they stay in the United States.

Fourth, the variable "FFS" shows a significant impact on the variable "expectation." The questionnaire did not ask the extent to which family and friends expect Chinese students to be "successful" in America, but instead asked how much pressure they receive from this group to return to China. Yet the results of the ethnographic study suggest that "FFS" can be interpreted as expectations or "pressures" from primary groups to succeed in America. The ethnographic study shows that the current social trend pushes people to "move out," however, in China people often consider staying in their home town synonymous with "disability." Pressures from family and friends significantly influence student "expectations" in America. However, again, the reliability problem of this variable may limit this argument to some extent.

Fifth, the variables "expectation" and "confidence" significantly correlate with each other. The variable "expectation" includes the degree to which students think their major subjects are marketable, and the level of income and social status they expect to achieve in the United States. In terms of income level, 90.8 percent of the respondents said they "definitely" or "may" achieve a higher income level in
the United States than in China (the currency rate adjusted). In terms of social status, 69.7 percent of them said they either "definitely" or "may" not achieve as high of a social status in the United States as in China. These results indicate that student expectations mainly focus on economic betterment rather than social status.

For Chinese students, the variable "confidence" includes their level of confidence in their general ability to compete with Americans in their major subject, and their English ability. Eighty-two percent answered that they are either "definitely" or "maybe" confident of their ability to compete with American students in their major subjects. This result is congruent with that of the ethnographic study. When Chinese students leave the country, they have already successfully cleared many hurdles in China, and are confident of themselves. In general, the greater the Chinese students' expectations in the United States, the greater their self-confidence and vice versa.

Finally, the variable "confidence" significantly impacts the variables "culture" and "social." If students are confident in their ability to compete with Americans, they are more likely to absorb American culture and vice versa. Furthermore, the greater their confidence, the more likely they are to associate with Americans rather than fellow Chinese.

In summary, two major factors significantly influence
whether Chinese students decide to stay or return. One is their appreciation of the "equal," "simple," and "reasonable" system found in America and the other is their identity as Chinese. Other factors such as students' "expectations" to succeed in America, "pressures" from primary groups, "confidence" in competing with Americans, "sociability," and adherence to Chinese "culture" fail to show significant impacts on the stay/return intention. However, these factors correlate with each other and have an indirect influence.
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION

A. Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft

The ethnographic study identifies two orientations of social actions and attitudes among Chinese Students in America: an orientation toward "achievement" and an orientation toward "affection." The achievement orientation actualizes itself when individuals seeking private achievements based on means-goal thinking exhibit a pattern of actions and attitudes. Examples of Chinese students exhibiting the achievement orientation are: preparing for the TOEFL and GRE exams for American universities, studying hard to get good grades and financial aid, working toward a degree, earning money on and off campus, and seeking employment. Those are all considered achievement-oriented actions based on their means-goals rationality. Parson used the term "instrumental" to refer to this orientation of social action.

The orientation towards affection actualizes itself when individuals seeking emotional attachment to a collective entity exhibit a pattern of actions and attitudes. Examples of this orientation are: having strong family ties and friendships in China and/or America, living in the so-called "China house," participating in various Chinese groups, joining Bible studies and other church activities, having parties with fellow Chinese, and expecting respect or recognition from others. These behavioral patterns and
attitudes satisfy the need for emotional satisfaction rather than rational satisfaction. Again, Parsons used the term "expressive" to refer to this orientation of social actions. These behavioral orientations were statistically substantiated in the previous chapter. Whereas the variable "system" is closely linked with the "instrumental" orientation, the variable "loyalty" is associated with the "expressive" orientation. When Chinese students describe the American "system" as "reasonable," they basically appreciate the society in an instrumental sense. By contrast, the variable "loyalty" connects with the expressive orientation. When they say "This [America] is not my country but theirs," they express their emotional feelings, not their rational thinking. For future reference, a social group based on instrumental orientation is defined as "Gesellschaft" and a social group based on expressive orientation as "Gemeinschaft." This dichotomous distinction of social groups will provide the theoretical basis of social marginality. Before discussing social marginality, several attributes characterizing the two types of social relationships will be discussed by employing Parsons' "Pattern Variables." Of the five variable sets, three relevant ones will be employed: (1) Affectivity versus affective-neutrality, (2) Collective-orientation versus self-orientation, and (3) Particularism versus universalism.
1. **Affectivity versus Affective-Neutrality**

People in Gesellschaft, by definition, associate with each other based on their individual rational choices and calculations. By contrast, non-rational feelings and emotions, dominate social relationships in Gemeinschaft. Thus Gemeinschaft social relationships are more emotionally cohesive than those found in Gesellschaft. Gesellschaft social relationships are more rationally organized than those found in Gemeinschaft.

Ethnic groups are a typical example of Gemeinschaft. Chinese students understand the significance of associating with Americans for practical purposes: improving their English, learning American customs, and becoming accustomed to the American system. However, the statistical study shows that Chinese students are more likely to associate with fellow Chinese. This tendency is obviously not derived from their rational will but from their natural feelings. A Chinese student confessed, "I got along with the American roommate and talked a lot but I still felt [that] I was alone." What he meant was that his association with the American roommate was an instrumental relationship—a Gesellschaft social relationship. The association lacked the emotional orientation of a Gemeinschaft social relationship.

The difference in friendship expectations between Chinese and Americans is parallel to the relationship of affectivity versus affective-neutrality. The Chinese students interviewed
expected "something" more from a friendship than Americans could provide. American friendships seemed "shallow," and often disappointed Chinese students, who expected a stronger emotional attachment. The difference in expectations parallels the differences between social relationships in Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft: people in Gemeinschaft are more expressive in their associations than those in Gesellschaft.

"Similarities" facilitate emotional attachment. The similarity in language, cultural and social background, and physical appearance binds the Chinese with other Asian students and makes their relationships closer and "deeper" than those with Americans.

For example, "similarities" enhance ethnic identity. Ethnic identity is defined as the recognition of him/her with a collective entity (Hsu 1991,p. 227). Ethnic identity is fundamentally a matter of how similar people are to each other as a group. When Chinese students say "I am a Chinese" and "This country [America] is not mine but theirs," they are implying how much they differ from Americans (presumably Whites) and how similar they are to Chinese (presumably the Han race).

Generally speaking, Chinese students tend to more easily befriend not only other mainland Chinese, but Taiwanese or Hong Kong Chinese, Malaysian Chinese, Japanese, Koreans and other Asian students rather than American students. The reason being, that those students share a greater "similarity"
with the Chinese than Americans in terms of physical appearance, language, experience as international students, and cultural background. Not surprisingly, Chinese Christians tend to hold group Bible meetings with other Chinese and Asian students—another example of Gemeinschaft based on "similarities." They select whom they befriend, not rationally but emotionally. "Similar" people are more likely to form a Gemeinschaft social group than a Gesellschaft one. To put it differently, because of "similarities," people in Gemeinschaft relationships are more emotionally attached to one another than those in Gesellschaft relationships.

2. Collective-Orientation versus Self-Orientation

People in Gemeinschaft are more collective-oriented than those in Gesellschaft. Group goals supersede individual goals or achievements in Gemeinschaft. By contrast, priority is given to private interests in Gesellschaft.

For example, when Chinese students come to America, they consider their family members' opinions. They eventually make their own decisions, and their families are generally supportive, but most Chinese students express serious concerns about family groups in China. Those who are only children especially show a strong sense of responsibility for their parents. This kind of sensitivity is stronger in the group-oriented social groups (Gemeinschaft) than in the self-oriented social groups (Gesellschaft). Furthermore,
patriotism, a sense of responsibility for one's country, is also stronger among people in Gemeinschaft, based on their emotional bonds.

Chinese student concern for saving "face" indicates a group-orientation of Gemeinschaft. Chinese students are more concerned about their "face" than Americans are. In Gemeinschaft, people are concerned about saving their outside "face" much more than their inside "voice," whereas in Gesellschaft, people are more concerned about their internal "voice" as individuals rather than their external "face" as group members.

People are "free," based on their individuality, abilities and responsibilities, to do whatever they desire in Gesellschaft, and in order to achieve their common goals they compete against each other instead of collaborating. By contrast, in Gemeinschaft individual social behavior is more "restricted" due to strong emotional bonds. Rather than pursuing different private interests people in Gemeinschaft have the same or "similar" orientations. In this sense, a Gemeinschaft social group orients its members more directly toward its group goals than does a Gesellschaft group.

Differing degrees of affective bonds shared by Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft members may partially explain the processes causing the decline of the Communist parties in China and the Soviet Union. China's Gemeinschaft social fabric promotes social conformity and allowed the ruling
Communist party to remain in power even after the international downfall of the Communist movement. By contrast, the Soviet Communist party was doomed immediately after the ideology lost its legitimacy due to the Soviet's Gesellschaft-like social structure, which is characterized by a low degree of expressive and high degree of instrumental orientations. The Chinese social structure is currently becoming more capitalistic or "instrumental" but the existing Gemeinschaft-like social and cultural structures prevent a rapid political transformation.

The difference between a collective-orientation and a self-orientation may also partially explain the discrepancy between China and the United States over human rights issues. Human rights in the American context protect individuality, and encourage private interests, goals, and achievements, whereas in Gemeinschaft-like societies such as China, the emphasis is on collective goals, prioritizing economic growth and social stability. The American Gesellschaft-like social context is likely to see the Gemeinschaft group-orientation as a violation of individuality; the Chinese Gemeinschaft-like social context is likely to see American individualism as granting "too much freedom" to individuals. In this sense, the human rights dispute between the two governments emerges as a cultural rather than a political conflict.
3. Particularism versus Universalism

The fundamental principle of the Gesellschaft social group is "universalism." A Gesellschaft social group establishes standardized rules and universally enforces them on members. For the rules to be "fair," they should be universally applied and enforcement should not vary because of favors to particular parties (particularism). Universalism and affective-neutrality are the principles guiding Gesellschaft social groups, whereas particularism and affectivity are terms characteristic of Gemeinschaft social groups.

Culturally and racially diverse societies like America should be directed with universal, and not particular rules. By contrast, when social relationships become intimate, rules become more personalized and particular to members.

An analogy might be made as people talk about Missoula's 1993-4 winter. Those familiar with the usual winter temperatures in Missoula would say that the winter was "warm" or "mild." However, for new arrivals from Malaysia, it seemed to be a "cold winter." Although the two parties are referring to the same weather conditions, their interpretations are relative to different reference points. When people talk with those sharing the same knowledge, they can communicate by using "particular" or "relative" expressions like "warm" or "cold." However, when people communicate with those who do not share the same backgrounds, they cannot rely on their
particular or relative interpretations. Instead, to describe the Missoula weather conditions, they must use "universal" or "absolute" measurements of temperature such as degrees in Fahrenheit or Celsius.

Cultural and racial diversity facilitate universalism in America. Universalism means that authorities apply standards to everyone without exception. In this context, universalism implies "fairness," equal treatment for everyone. One school official talked about American universalism and fairness:

> In this society, laws and regulations are more important than people. [It] doesn't matter who you are. Here the constitution and laws are more important. I have a student who breaks the law sometimes without knowledge, being completely ignorant. This is no excuse. People have piety. You may find somebody bending the law because they really care how other people feel in some society. Here [there is] no such thing. They think they treat [you] good because they treat you "fairly." It is very harsh. People do not consider feelings [in America].

Money has a universal meaning for Americans. Americans say "Money talks." In a society consisting of people with diverse ethnic backgrounds, money becomes a universal measure of humanity. The ability to earn money becomes more important than age or racial origin. Chinese students, in contrast, traditionally differ in their view of money, believing wealth may be admired by some but is not necessary for social respect. People in gemeinschaft pay greater attention to particular relationships with others such as Guanxi in China, and they often refuse to judge others using universal measures such as money.
For example, a Chinese student was upset by his American friend offering him money to compensate for time spent babysitting. That's because the use of money in this social context essentially disconnects emotional attachment—the basis of close friendships for Chinese students. A Gesellschaft social group, an "instrumental" social relationship, deemphasizes the moral dimension of exchanging money. People pay their friends for babysitting to compensate them for their time and effort. Americans and Chinese expect different forms of compensation from friends. Friendships in Gemeinschaft are based on people's "particular" emotional attachment, not on universal, rational, or business-like calculations.

Along with the principle of universalism, a Gesellschaft social group is more "open" to newcomers, accepting anybody who meets certain standards. By contrast, Gemeinschaft requires newcomers to establish particular emotional attachments with other members, a process which takes tremendous time and energy. In other words, a Gesellschaft social group is "open," and Gemeinschaft social group is "closed."

For example, when Chinese students say, "America is free and I like it," they are not necessarily referring to political freedom or institutional flexibility but instead to what they describe as a "simple," "straight," and "reasonable" social system. If people meet certain standards, the American
society accepts them as members. International students whose TOEFL scores are greater than 600 get admitted to all American universities. Certain GPA and GRE scores would allow them to obtain teaching assistantships regardless of their nationality or cultural background. Chinese students often say "What I have done is what I get." This comment strongly reflects how much they appreciate the open and "instrumental" Gesellschaft system of America. By contrast, Chinese students must establish particular relationships with government officials to receive benefits in China. Chinese students have a special term for it, Guanxi. Without Guanxi, they cannot accomplish things in the Gemeinschaft system of China.

Reality exists as a combination of the two types, and the difference between the two societies is a matter of degree. Drawing generalizations between Chinese and American societies as pure Gemeinschaft or Gesellschaft is far from the purpose of this discussion. However, the degree of Gemeinschaft, it seems, is much higher in Chinese social groups than in their American counterparts. The degree of difference in these elements is the basis for Chinese students' marginality, which will be discussed in the following section.

B. Marginality and Chinese Students in America

In Chapter III I briefly defined the concept of marginality--inconsistent rankings in a social group, caused by the following social situations:
1. Life in a bi-cultural milieu arranged in a two-tier hierarchy, in which the ethnic culture is evaluated as inferior.

2. The ethnic group members have achieved a certain level of assimilation.

3. The assimilated individuals are rejected by the members of the host group.

4. There is uncertainty among the ethnic group members as to the choice between the ethnic and dominant culture, even if membership in both cultures is open.

In the following section, the social marginality of Chinese students will be examined and discussed with reference to four items.

1. Are they living in a bi-cultural milieu in a two-tier hierarchy, in which the ethnic culture is evaluated as inferior?

Chinese students are coming to the United States following China’s isolation from the West for three decades, and must face an American cultural context which conflicts with its Chinese counterpart. Cultural confusion about friendships, Christianity, use of money, etc., sometimes upsets Chinese students in America.

In addition, Chinese students hesitate to recognize their "inferior" status in America. They are confident of their specialties, however, on different dimensions such as language and cultural barriers, their legal status as students, and economic difficulties they are "handicapped" and "disabled." They have recently arrived in this country and exist as a minority member of society. In the survey question, "Do you
feel you are considered as somewhat "inferior" by Americans because you came from another country?" Their answers were split. Thirty two percent said "not sure" and 44 percent answered either "maybe" or "maybe not." These results seemingly reflect their split self-images. Although they are confident of their individual specialties, due to their minority status, Chinese students do, reluctantly, notice their "disadvantaged" situation.

2. Have the ethnic members achieved a certain level of assimilation?

America's "instrumental" society facilitates the assimilation of Chinese students. Although they have recently arrived in America, they can easily integrate into their host society because of its instrumental orientation and "openness." Many commented that the system is "straight," "simple," and "reasonable"—what you work for and achieve is what you get. This is a clear statement of their preference and appreciation for American society. Most Chinese students expressed a desire to remain for at least several years in America after they graduate from school, and one school official admitted that Chinese students are the most "adaptable" and "successful" of people.

Feeling confident of their ability to compete with American students, Chinese students expect to succeed in America. By the time they have received their "ticket" to study in America, they have already out-competed many fellow
Chinese, and have made a commitment to pursue success, while shoudering obligations to their families, friends, and themselves. Getting a job and subsequent economic betterment facilitates their adaptation process, and indicates "a certain level" of assimilation into American society.

3. Are the assimilated individuals rejected by the members of the host group?

Chinese students are subtly rejected. Although nobody directly mentioned an experience of discrimination, most emotionally expressed that "This society is not my county but their country." This comment does not directly show discrimination by Americans but reflects their psychological "distance" from American society. Students are disappointed with American friendships and frustrated about the language barrier. In addition, they must constantly concern themselves with their financial situations. Although financial difficulties generally exist for every international student, the unfavorable currency exchange rate disadvantages mainland Chinese students more severely than others. They must always worry about "something" in America, and the "something" alienates them from the host society in spite of their appreciating the "open" American society.

These discussions seem contradictory to the discussions following the previous question, but are fundamentally derived from inconsistencies between how much they assimilate in an instrumental sense and how much they feel they are a part of
the American society in an expressive sense. The two conflicting elements become sources of their marginality.

4. **Is there uncertainty among the ethnic group members as to the choice between their ethnic and the dominant cultures?**

The "openness" of American society, combined with students' abilities and motivations, make it "possible" for Chinese students to assimilate into American society. By comparison, Chinese "work-students" in Japan may earn money but can rarely make their "place" in the host society due to its "closed" nature. Chinese students in Japan are often excluded from the host society, thus limiting their social membership in Chinese Communities in Japan. Illegal Chinese immigrants in America might face the same situation as work-students in Japan, however, Chinese students in the United States are not restricted. Most of them are highly motivated due to the openness of American society and the fact that they are allowed to associate with Americans and other fellow exchange-students. Since both their ethnic social group and the American host society are "open" to them, many are uncertain about where they belong. Chinese communities (expressive social groups) are open to them simply because they are Chinese. American society (an instrumental social group), is open to them due to the characteristics of "freedom" and "openness." These characteristics are what sets the United States apart from other foreign countries, such as
Japan. At the same time, it is hard for Chinese students to get accepted into the "core" of American society.

Their minority status and instrumentally oriented behavioral patterns discourage Chinese students from fully associating with both American and Chinese communities: they are too busy to associate with both their fellow Chinese and their American friends. In addition, their short length of stay in America (about three years on average) prevents full acculturation into the American host society.

Chinese students face marginal situations where they find themselves being pulled by both Chinese ethnic groups and the American host society. Their strong instrumental orientation forces them to keep their distance from their own ethnic group, although for practical purposes they need to maintain contact with the Chinese community. While Chinese students are successfully achieving their academic and economic goals on the one hand, they often perceive that they are subtly rejected by American society. Obstacles to their acceptance are language, friendship, and financial barriers, with each Chinese student facing different types of problems in varying degrees. Some Chinese students speak fluent English while others do not. Some students are economically better off than others. Generally, those who are economically better off in America (getting a scholarship, getting a stable job, buying land and houses, etc.) comprise a small portion of the Chinese student population. The majority still "strive" to
survive in this foreign land while preserving their high expectations and self-confidence. The success stories narrated by a small portion of Chinese students often frustrate the rest of them. This somehow "inevitable" frustration makes them psychologically marginal in America.

What then is the sociological meaning of marginality of Chinese Students in America? I will expand the concept of marginality a little further along with the concepts of Gesellschaft and Gemeinschaft.

As defined in Chapter II, marginality is the inconsistency between the ranking one perceives oneself to hold and the ranking which other members give to the same individual.

What creates this discrepancy? Basically the gap between "instrumental" and "expressive" orientations creates the discrepancy. Receiving a teaching assistantship, getting a scholarship, getting a job, and earning money in America are all aspects of instrumentally oriented social actions. Chinese students perceive those achievements to change their social ranking in an instrumental sense. At the same time, Chinese students face many problems: language and cultural barriers, financial difficulties, lack of respect, and loneliness. In other words, they fail to satisfy their "expressive" orientation. The ranking achieved through their instrumental orientation (what they think they should hold) becomes inconsistent with the ranking achieved through their
expressive orientation (what they feel they have).

Those discussions suggest that the sociological marginality of Chinese students is fundamentally based on the inconsistencies between Gesellschaft (social relationships based on the instrumental orientation), and Gemeinschaft, (social relationships based on the expressive orientation). When one achieves instrumentally but not affectively to the same degree, that person becomes marginal. The marginality of Chinese students is evident in situations where they sacrifice their affective attachment for their instrumental achievements in the United States. Not everybody is marginal, of course. Yet, the high expectations, confidence and achievement-oriented social pressures found in America drive them excessively toward instrumental orientation. Meanwhile they sacrifice their expressive relationships with other members of various Chinese and/or American groups. This fundamental depiction of marginality is illustrated in Figure 2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&quot;reasonable&quot; American System/culture</th>
<th>&quot;shallow&quot; American friendship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expectation/Confidence/Obligation</td>
<td>Chinese friendship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental Orientation</td>
<td>+ connection for survival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressive Orientation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family/Friends/Spouse</td>
<td>Marginality:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trend/Frustration/Curiosity</td>
<td>imbalance of instrumental and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>expressive orientations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Figure 2: Diagram of Marginality of Chinese Students]

Strong aspirations for success in America divide instead of unite expressive social groups of Chinese students. This
is the situation causing the marginality of Chinese students in America: "loss of a sense of community."

In reality, of course, the "instrumental" and "expressive" orientations are interwoven into social actions and attitudes as the warp and the woof of fabric. The relationship of the two orientations may be temporarily disproportionate but balance each other in the long run. Instrumental orientation of Gesellschaft is a "force of progress" which represents their individuality, rationality, universalism, self-orientation, freedom, openness, and independence. Expressive orientation of Gemeinschaft is a "binding force" which consists of emotion and affection, particularism, collectivism, group-identity, closeness and closedness, and the dependency of humans. Humans are a balance of the two forces.

C. Final Comments: possibility of the Marginality

1. Chinese society: from Gemeinschaft to Gesellschaft

Chinese society is much more like a Gemeinschaft, "community" compared to American society. The ethnographic study observed many attributes of Gemeinschaft in some social practices such as personal information packages (Dang An), political studies, work-units (Dan Wei), and Guanxi. Chinese students prefer the "deeper" friendships found in China to the "shallow" ones found in America. Yet it is impossible to know the depth of human relationships in China without
understanding Guanxi or other practices. Both Guanxi and Chinese "deep friendships" provide examples of particularism, a characteristic of Gemeinschaft. Political studies, personal information packages (Dang An), and work-units (Dan Wei) can also be seen as an exchange of "emotions" among the Chinese people. In this specific sense, the "disastrous" Cultural Revolution, especially in the first five years (1966-1971), was a series of experiences involving emotional exchange. The experiences were excessive enough to destroy families and local communities, fundamental units of a stable social structure. That kind of phenomenon can be called an "extraordinary communal experience." Under the Economic-Reform and Open-Door policy Chinese society has apparently redirected itself toward a more Gesellschaft-like society based on instrumental orientation.

2. Five Scenarios of Chinese Students

Final question: will Chinese students stay permanently in the United States or eventually return to China? Precise predictions are impossible since this question is based on many uncertainties, including China's political situation and job opportunities in the United States. However, several possible scenarios for Chinese students can be identified. The statistical study shows the two major factors impacting Chinese students' intentions to stay or return, and basically these two factors determine their future. The first factor is
"system"; Students look for the most reasonable, or instrumental system in which they can achieve their goals "equally" and "freely." The second factor is "loyalty"; Chinese students look for emotional attachment to a collective entity.

SCENARIO 1: Return to China

The first scenario is that Chinese students will eventually return to China, and there are two basic reasons for this decision. One is that with the recent economic growth in China they will find better job opportunities. They must pursue their instrumental orientation. If they were to find better opportunities in the United States, they might remain, but in light of their cultural and language barriers, job opportunities for them are probably greater in China than in the United States.

Another reason for their return might be a lack of expressive orientation. Although they might be economically successful, because they are living in a "foreign land," they may still feel powerless. An old Chinese saying goes "Leaves fall down on the roots," and China is the place where they were born and raised. It is natural for human beings to return to their place of origin. For similar reasons, however, they may choose to stay in the United States if they have families and/or close friends which satisfy their expressive orientation. They could feel disconnected from
their homeland if they've been staying in the United States for a long time. They may remedy this feeling by visiting their parents and old friends in China, yet they may choose not to return to China in exchange for the "expressive" connections they have established in the United States. The kind of family, community life, and work place they have in the United States are crucial to this decision. Whether or not fellow Chinese people surround them may also determine their level of expressive satisfaction fulfillment. However, students probably will find greater emotional attachment back in China than in the United States. They probably will eventually return to China.

SCENARIO 2: Hold on to Chinatown

The second scenario is that they stay in the United States and remain an active part of a Chinese Community. They may decide to stay in the United States for various reasons while simultaneously seeking emotional attachment with fellow Chinese. They may satisfy their instrumental orientation living in the United States but lack affective attachment, and meet this need by staying in various Chinese communities, or "Chinatowns." The term Chinatown does not necessarily refer to Chinatowns such as those located in big cities like in San Francisco or New York. It also refers to the Chinese communities commonly found in every university town in the United States. They may not be concentrated in certain
districts of a city like the old Chinatowns but still maintain
the China connection which helps members survive in this
foreign land by providing emotional satisfaction.

In addition, the recent development of a Chinese
community through the e-mail network is worth mentioning.
Although this high-tech information network does not provide
face-to-face interactions, Chinese students are uniting
through it. For example, when Chinese figure skater Chen Lu
won the bronze medal in the 1994 Winter Olympic games in
Lillehammer, Norway, she received many bouquets. There is a
reason why she received those flowers. In the previous
technical competition where Chen Lu finished fourth, she
received no flowers at all, despite her historical
accomplishment as a Chinese athlete. That night, a Chinese e-
mail netter wrote about her success and asked fellow netters
to send flowers. Two days later, in the final free-skating
competition, she received dozens of bouquets. Although
Chinese students in the net do not personally know each other,
they share moments of emotional attachment through this new
technology. This kind of "Chinese community" definitely will
provide expressive satisfaction, to some degree.

**SCENARIO 3: Double Rejection from American and Chinese Communities**

The third scenario is that students fail to satisfy their
instrumental orientation and lose contact with both Chinese
and American communities. If they fail to find satisfactory
jobs in the United States and thereby fail to assimilate instrumentally to this society, they are forced to return to China. If, however, they decide to remain in the United States they may elect to stay in a "Chinatown." If, however, for some reason they do not successfully gain membership in the Chinese community, they must face a situation of "double rejection." A human cannot live properly without "achievement" or "affection," and alcoholism, family violence, or criminal acts could be the consequence. This scenario actually took place the fall of 1993 in New Zealand. A contemporary Chinese poet Gu Cheng hung himself after murdering his wife. According to the reported information, he apparently suffered from double rejection. "Gu Cheng was considered odd," the news report said. "He had lived in New Zealand for five years but refused to learn English." It also said that he "did not always fit well with his constant need for audience and company of fellow (Chinese) intellectuals." He was eager to go back to China but was unable to, as an exiled pro-democracy poet (November 6, 1993, CND-Book & Journal Review). Perhaps, this case is unique, and there might have been some hidden reasons or family problems which caused the suicide, but this case provides a plausible example of double rejection.

**SCENARIO 4: Still Knocking at the Door of America**

The fourth scenario is where students continue to knock
at the door of American society. They simply remain "marginal" in America. As discussed earlier, marginality is the product of two elements: a certain degree of assimilation and subtle rejection from American society. Students rationalize these situations to protect themselves by saying things like "I am here for just learning technology" or "I do not mind being discriminated [against] because this is not my country." If they obtain instrumental achievements, they can endure marginality for awhile, yet they cannot be marginal for a long time. One could perhaps remain in a marginal situation for a considerable period of time, but must be willing to assimilate into American society. This is a situation similar to the third scenario, however, in that situation they look for acceptance into a Chinese community but are unable to gain membership. By contrast, in scenario four, they distance themselves from the Chinese community and unsuccessfully try to get into American society. This is a stressful situation and continues their current marginal situation.

SCENARIO 5: Creation of a New Community

The fifth scenario is the creation a totally new community in America. They may go beyond seeking membership in Chinese communities or continuing to knock at the door of American society and instead create a community where Americans treat them as members. Chinese members would understand both the positive and negative sides of American
culture and local American members would know and understand the Chinese members in their communities. The probability of this scenario occurring may not be as high as the other scenarios but the possibility is there.

Either way, lack of information makes additional predictions about the future of Chinese students impossible. These scenarios describe every possible consideration and option Chinese students must weigh as they make their decisions.

Eventually, all things are merged into one: "Achievement" and "affection" will determine the future of Chinese students. The balance of the two elements will truly satisfy Chinese students. The Cultural Revolution, an "extraordinary communal experience," left most Chinese frustrated two decades ago. However, if the present instrumental orientation is too extreme in the converse, it will cause frustrations. The possibility could arise where people in China go back to an extreme expressive orientation such as Chinese ultra-nationalism. Although Chinese students aggressively pursue economic achievements temporarily, they will eventually look for a balance between the two essential elements of human nature.

Blaming the contemporary Chinese people for becoming "materialistic" is unjust. They, like ourselves, are looking for true happiness, and human happiness is a product of the proper balance between "achievement" and "affection." Now
Chinese students enjoy the freedom to pursue their private goals "for awhile" until the two elements reach equilibrium.
APPENDIX

Survey Questionnaire

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS:
Use either a pen or pencil to complete this questionnaire. You may answer most of the questions by simply circling the appropriate number or writing the appropriate answer. However, you may write in additional comments whenever you wish to do so. Also, some questions might embarrass you. If they do, you can leave them blank.

*1. Are you (1) a student, (2) a student’s family member, (3) an exchange scholar/university faculty, (4) other?

2. How long have you been in the United States? (____ months and____ years)

3. Which province in China did you come from? (___)

4. Are you from a big city, more than 1,000,000 population? (1) Yes (2) No

5. What is your age? (___)

6. What is your sex? (1) Male (2) Female

7. Please indicate your major. (___)

8. Had you been working in China before coming to the United States? (1) No, I was a student. (2) Yes, I was working in Chinese government (at any levels). (3) academic institute. (4) Chinese company. (5) joint venture. (6) foreign company. (7) other. for (___) years.

9. Do you have a job of any kind right now? (1) Yes, I have an academic job such as T.A., R.A., etc. (2) a job on campus. (3) a job off campus. (4) No, I do not have any right now.

10. Do you think your major will be much more marketable in the United States than in China? (1) I don’t think so. (2) Maybe not. (3) Same. (4) Maybe. (5) Yes, definitely.

11. Do you expect you will get a higher income in the United States than in China (the currency rate adjusted)? (1) I don’t think so. (2) Maybe not. (3) Same. (4) Maybe. (5) Yes, definitely.

12. Do you expect in the United States you will achieve as high a social status as you will get in China? (1) I don’t think so. (2) Maybe not. (3) Same. (4) Maybe. (5) Yes, definitely.

13. Are you confident of your ability to compete with Americans in your field? (1) Not at all. (2) Maybe not. (3) Well, yes and no. (4) Maybe. (5) Yes, definitely.

14. Do you think you can do whatever you want if you have ability in America? (1) I don’t think so. (2) Maybe not. (3) Well, yes and no. (4) Maybe. (5) Yes, definitely.


16. Do your family (parents and/or spouse) in China and/or in the United States expect you to go back to China eventually? (1) Yes, definitely. (2) I guess so. (3) Not sure. (4) Not really. (5) Encourage to stay in the US.

---

8 This questionnaire was used in Norman, Oklahoma.
"*" indicates the questionnaire items which were used both in Montana and Oklahoma.
17. Do your close friends in the U.S. and/or in China expect you to go back to China eventually?  
(1) Yes, definitely. (2) I guess so. (3) Not sure. (4) Not really. (5) Encourage to stay in the US.  

18. Do you have your own family (your spouse and/or children) in the United States?  
(1) I have my own family in China. (2) I am single. (3) I have my family in the US.  

19. Are you willing to use an American name instead of your Chinese name?  

20. Are you proud of Chinese tradition, culture, philosophy, way of behavior, beliefs?  
(1) Yes, definitely. (2) I guess so. (3) Not sure. (4) Not really. (5) I hate it.  

21. In general, when your Chinese standard of behavior and American ways of behavior conflict in a certain circumstance (hugging in public, putting your foot on the study desk, etc.), what would you do?  

22. Do you think American people expect you to follow American ways of behavior, norms, beliefs?  
(1) I don't think so. (2) Maybe not. (3) Not sure. (4) Maybe so. (5) Yes, definitely. They respect me as Chinese.  

23. Do you want to know more about American culture (e.g. American values, attitudes, ethic and so on)?  
(1) I don't want to. (2) Not really. (3) Not sure. (4) Some. (5) Yes, definitely.  

24. How often do you associate with Americans and Chinese in your daily life?  
(1) I always associate with Chinese. (2) More often interact with Chinese. (3) Almost equal. (4) More often interact with Americans. (5) Definitely, I'm active in both Chinese and American groups.  

25. Do you feel that you are a member of the Chinese community in Norman?  
(1) Definitely. (2) Yes, some. (3) I feel marginal. (4) I feel belonging. (5) Definitely, I'm a part of it.  

26. How often do you participate in the activities of Chinese community and/or in American social groups?  
(1) I'm always in a Chinese group. (2) I'm sometimes in a Chinese group. (3) Equal or not, I'm always in an American group. (4) I'm sometimes active in both Chinese and American groups. (5) Definitely, I'm active in both.  

27. How much do American people accept you in their society?  
(1) Always treat me as an American. (2) Treat me more often as an American. (3) Just between. (4) Treat me more often as an alien. (5) I'm a member of it.  

28. Do you think you can develop an intimate friendship with Americans?  
(1) I don't think so. (2) Maybe not. (3) Not sure. (4) Maybe so. (5) Yes, definitely.  

29. In general do you feel you are considered as somewhat "inferior" by Americans because you came from other country?  
(1) Yes, definitely. (2) Maybe so. (3) Not sure. (4) Not at all. (5) I hate it.  

30. Are you comfortable with the American material life? (e.g. housing, transportation, shopping, foods, and so on)  
(1) I hate it. (2) Don't really like it. (3) Not sure. (4) I like it. (5) Very much.  

31. Do you feel you are a "guest" living under someone's roof (the United States)?  
(1) Yes, definitely. (2) Maybe so. (3) Not sure. (4) Maybe not. (5) Not at all.  

32. As a Chinese intellectual, would you feel a responsibility to your country (not necessarily a particular regime)?  
(1) Yes, absolutely. (2) Some responsibility. (3) Don't know. (4) Very little responsibility. (5) I have nothing to do with China.  

33. Do you feel you should go back to China to serve your country?
34. Do you believe that China will "modernize" and improve, politically as well as economically in the near future?

|------------------|--------|-----------|------------|------------------|

That's another story.

35. Do you prefer the American political system to the present Chinese system?

|----------------------------|---------------|----------|----------------|----------------------------|

36. Do you prefer the American economic system to the present Chinese system?

|----------------------------|---------------|----------|----------------|----------------------------|

37. Do you prefer the American way of life (e.g. friendship, marriage/family life, neighborhood, and so on) to the Chinese counterparts?

|--------------------------|---------------|----------|----------------|----------------------------|

38. Do you want to stay in the United States permanently?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>After getting a degree, I want to go back to China.</th>
<th>A &quot;Green Card&quot; is enough, I can travel to China.</th>
<th>After a while, I'll go back to China.</th>
<th>I want to be an American citizen and stay here forever.</th>
<th>Definitely, American way.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

39. If you could not achieve as high a social status in the United States as you could achieve in China, would you go back to China?

|------------------|--------|----------|------------|---------------------------|

40. If you could not make as much income in the United States as you could make in China, (the currency rate adjusted) would you go back to China?

|------------------|--------|----------|------------------------------------------|

41. When you were in China, were you satisfied with your life in general?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes, definitely.</th>
<th>Maybe.</th>
<th>Not sure.</th>
<th>Maybe not.</th>
<th>Not at all, I was frustrated.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

42. What is the most important thing at present in your life? Please indicate only one.
REFERENCES


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Twenty five years after the Cultural Revolution, people started walking by themselves to look for their own happiness. Of course, they faced many hardships and much sadness. However, it is much "better" now than it was twenty years ago because people notice that they are "getting free" to look for what they really want and they will never give up this freedom.

"Xiao Sa Zou Yi Hui" (Go Once With a Light Heart) is a song of these people:

Go Once With a Light Heart

There is a vastness between heaven and earth
We are only travellers here
Coming and going with the tides

Existence is full of pain and joy
No one can figure out the meaning of life and death
Our blood surges with deep emotion

Sooner or later we must all leave
Remain half-sleeping, half-waking
Then, at least, you can follow your dreams

I will gamble the future with my youth,
You will sacrifice the present for your beliefs

Since the world cannot feel human sadness
Why not go with a light heart this once?

(translated from the Chinese rhetoric)