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CHAPTER 10

The Emergence of Peace Studies in Chinese Higher Education

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SUMMARY This chapter focuses on three main issues: the relevance of peace studies to the new super-power, China; the changing roles of the higher education sector there; and academic links between the United Kingdom and China, viewed through the specific case study of a higher education links programme which brought together Coventry and Nanjing universities. A theme running throughout is an exploration of the limits to intellectual flexibility in Chinese academia. Can the system now tolerate discussion even of controversial topics like pacifism and non-violent protest, which appear to directly challenge important state values such as the right to self-defence? The chapter argues that universities have largely outgrown the dogmatism of earlier generations. Moreover, China itself has a rich heritage of pro-peace thought, and Chinese leaders appear to be committed to non-violent resolution of conflicts wherever possible. It would be desirable if Western ones were to follow their lead.

Introduction

In 2000, the Centre for Peace and Reconciliation Studies at Coventry University initiated research links with faculty members of the History Department of Nanjing University, one of the leading universities of the People's Republic of China (PRC). From 2002 to 2005, the partnership received financial assistance from the British Council under its Higher Education Links (HEL) Programme. A high point of the cooperation was an International Conference on Peace Studies held in Nanjing in March 2005, the first of its kind in China; collaborative work continues up to the time of writing. This chapter addresses several key questions: first, the nature of Peace Studies and why the discipline is relevant to the PRC. Then, what is the relationship between Peace Studies, academic

institutions, and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), with particular reference to China? What lessons have we learned about academic partnership work with China through this link?

Educated awareness of approaches to peace and conflict in different cultures is now essential. I am sure that the United Kingdom (UK) and US public would have been better served if, for example, our politicians had known more about conflict resolution in West Asia before embarking on military adventures there. It is quite reasonable to suggest that the Chinese should learn more about international pro-peace discourse, the theory and history of peaceful politics, the heritage of Gandhi, King, and Tutu for example. There is, perhaps, an even more urgent need for non-Chinese to gain a deeper and more respectful understanding of the Chinese cultural heritage. There are practical reasons for doing so. It is almost certain that in the twenty-first century, a much larger proportion of political and economic power will devolve to Asian countries – India, China, Japan, Korea and others – so, inevitably, Asian modes of discourse and practice will permeate international organisations. Specifically within Higher Education (HE), a large proportion of the world's engineers and scientists will receive their education in Asia, many of them in the PRC. Negotiations about trade, the environment and military issues will be increasingly conducted in a more cosmopolitan language, not comfortably couched in the dominant end-of-history Atlantic dialect. This reference to language and dialect points not only to the rapidly expanding use of Mandarin Chinese as lingua franca in parts of Asia, but also to the fact that Western modes of organisational behaviour are only a subset of global practice. Relations between state and citizen, lawmaker and business person, 'ally' and 'enemy' may take on various shades of colour in different streets of the global village. As we walk around, we need to learn and adapt.

The need to put an end to international warfare is hopefully self-evident to most people. Apart from avoiding direct military casualties, another important reason to promote peace is that armed conflict almost invariably leads to complex poverty and other development failures; in other words, it is a major constraint on the achievement of MDGs. It is difficult to implement successful poverty reduction programmes in societies suffering protracted social conflicts; while conversely, a peaceful environment is needed for sustainable economic growth and more equitable resource allocation. In the past decade, agencies have become increasingly alert to the fact that aid or development programmes need to be sensitive to rivalries and competing claims: delivery programmes can be hijacked, by paramilitaries for example, and can even prolong conflicts by introducing new resources or reinforcing old dependencies.

Historically, power transitions are dangerous. All the indications are that the early decades of the twenty-first century will be a period of

rapid, unpredictable change. There is the evident shift of economic power from the Atlantic to the Pacific, to use a water metaphor, and there are also transitions from carbon fuel to whatever replaces it, from print and terrestrial TV to new media, perhaps from relatively stable to unstable patterns of climate change and migration. China as the major rising power, with all its creative potential and also its internal and external stresses, is consciously concerned with maintaining a peaceful international and domestic environment. Its leaders do turn to think-tanks and the university sector to provide analysis of how to achieve a 'peaceful rising'. Yet the Chinese government is also committed to maintaining a strong nuclear and conventional military deterrent, and to containing social protest. Discussions of peace and conflict, the rights and wrongs of armed state power, are highly relevant to contemporary Chinese society (Hunter & Liu, 2007).

My paper starts by defining Peace Studies, and proceeds to discuss in more detail the current Chinese context in which debates on peace and conflict take place. I then consider some correlations between conflict issues and the Millennium Development Goals, again with reference to China and its Higher Education sector. The paper concludes with an analysis of our link with Nanjing, and the lessons we draw from it.

What is Peace Studies?

'Peace Studies' as a recognised discipline in Western academia dates back to the 1960s, when it was stimulated by the reaction on US campuses to the Vietnam war. By then, there was already a small body of theoretical and empirical research into issues related to peace, conflict and violence; most scholars regard the Norwegian sociologist Johan Galtung as a key founder of such research in the late 1950s in Oslo, as can be seen from collections of his early writings (Galtung, 1975, 1996). Yet it is considered by some to be a maverick discipline. First, Peace Studies academics have in several countries a long, and many consider honourable, commitment to grass-roots activism, frequently in opposition to government policies. Most peace researchers regard 'peace' as a social good, and they hope their academic work contributes to peace rather than violence; they draw the analogy of health studies or medical science, where the aim is improvement of health and eradication of disease, simultaneously a value-laden and scientific undertaking (Galtung, 2006, p. 19). But this normative orientation does lead to the critique that Peace Studies is political activism masquerading as a legitimate academic pursuit (Cox & Scruton, 1984). In 2004, for example, conservative US journalists accused Peace Studies professors of being pro-terrorist because many of them argued against the invasion of Iraq (Rank, 2006, p. 123). Second, at its most idealistic, it aims at ending or

curtailing war; or at least questions war's inevitability. To politicians or social scientists who believe that war is inevitable, probably sometimes healthy and necessary, such aspirations may seem ludicrous. Galtung's response has been that Peace Studies is 'biased' against war and seeks its abolition, and that there is 'nothing arcane or inane about that; it is the same as the abolition of slavery and colonialism ... The abolition of war as a social institution means to deprive the state of its prerogative to wage wars, and the state does not like it' (Rank, 2006, p. 124).

> Some twenty years back, a consultative group within the Consortium on Peace Research Education and Development (based in Washington State), asked to define and where necessary delimit Peace Studies, arrived at the following description of its basic characteristics:
>
> – *Central propositions.* 1) The traditional belief in the inevitability of war and injustice is questioned, based on data and insights from peace research and movements for social change; 2) The pedagogical purpose of Peace Studies is to provide students with appropriate intellectual tools with which to examine this traditional belief and inquire into possible alternatives to war and oppression.
> – *Fundamental core.* 1) The central questions Peace Studies asks are: What is the nature of peace? What are the conditions that make peace possible? How are these conditions achieved? 2) The minimum areas of concern are: organised lethal violence among social groups at all levels of organisation (war) and structural violence (systemic discrimination, deprivation, and oppression). 3) The basic values of Peace Studies are a world-wide human perspective, desirability of achieving peace and justice, and recognition of the possibility of their achievement. (Rank, 2006, p. 119)

In the same period, Stephenson suggested that Peace Studies is distinguished from more conventional disciplines, for example international relations, by three key characteristics: it is global rather than state-centric; it considers all levels of interaction, from the interpersonal to the international; it is value based and action oriented, and prescriptive in terms of alternatives to violence (Stephenson, 1989, p. 12).

Despite objections noted above, Peace Studies is now firmly entrenched in academia, and many of its approaches are today adopted in mainstream diplomacy, aid and development projects, and even in military thinking. Issues like conflict sensitivity in aid work; conflict resolution skills; conflict analysis; reconciliation in post-conflict zones; non-violent political movements; peace-building deployments; civilian

witness are all on the working agendas of governmental agencies, despite their arguable origins in the thoughts of flaky idealists. Internationally, the greatest number of Peace Studies programmes in any one country is in the USA, but there are also important programmes in Australia, Japan, South Africa and the UK among others; my recent book (Hunter, 2006) provides a recent overview of the discipline from international perspectives. Peace Studies has started in the PRC, but faces obstacles to which I return in a later section of this chapter.

There have been many theoretical and practical attempts in the past decade to integrate diverse strands of developmental thinking, many of them documented in publications from the UN's development agencies (United Nations Development Programme, 1990-). The formulation of the MDGs has been influential, although atypical in its avoidance of reference to armed conflict. Initiatives with similar agendas but slightly different approaches, all of which include conflict reduction among goals, include the Commission for Africa Report (Commission for Africa, 2005); the human security agenda formulated by, among others, Amartya Sen (Newman & Richmond, 2001; United Nations Commission on Human Security, 2003); and the work of specialists in Germany (Brauch, 2005) and Mexico (Oswald, 2006) who have developed paradigms of comprehensive or integrated security, focusing on the multiple needs of vulnerable populations. Many of these broad human security studies trace their origins back to the 'basic needs' paradigm that was influential in development studies from the 1970s: new challenges that need to be integrated in an updated paradigm include climate change, environmental degradation, sub-state violence, ethnic cleansing and human trafficking.

The *Human Security Report 2005* (Mack & Nielsen, 2006) surprised many readers, not least peace researchers, by arguing that wars and human casualties resulting from direct armed conflict had actually decreased substantially between 1975 and 2005. The authors make the point that armed conflict makes populations extremely vulnerable, and that the sequelae of wars are often displacement, malnutrition and epidemics that do cause vast human misery and poverty. The news in summer 2006 reported a similar story: the Israeli bombing of Lebanon had by early August inflicted one thousand human fatalities, mostly civilians. But there were an estimated million displaced persons lacking food and basic medical care, and the country's infrastructure and economy had been set back several decades. Although it may be difficult to quantify the linkages between violent conflict and poverty, it seems indisputable that, despite the overall reduction in international wars, armed conflicts are still the major contributory factor in many instances of extreme poverty. It requires no great theoretical acumen to discern that the promotion of peace, especially in volatile and potentially violent situations, is an essential component of a sustainable development

package. A simple theoretical model would demonstrate an overall negative correlation between violent conflict and poverty reduction, although a few exceptions might be found – successful war-faring nations with large munitions industries, for example.

The Chinese Context

In 2008, China hosted the Beijing Olympics. This event was celebrated with maximum media impact, as the Chinese leadership intended to highlight the international recognition of China as a leading world power. Economically, China quadrupled its gross domestic product (GDP) between 1980 and 2000, lifting perhaps 100 million people out of poverty; surely one of the great economic achievements in world history. It plans to quadruple GDP again between 2000 and 2020; if successful it will then rank as probably the second economic power in the world after the USA.

Opinions differ as to whether this rise will be a sustainable and positive phenomenon. Some writers stress negative features of the economy, government and social system, believing that China's new-found power makes it an unstable and fundamentally flawed nation-state. Among problems they highlight are an ambitious but outmoded and corrupt form of government by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP); massive if hidden unemployment that is only tolerable because of the short-term boom; and unsustainable predation of the environment. Terrill, for example, presumes that the Beijing government wants a dominant role in Asia, similar to that of the USA in Latin America. However his overall assessment is that the CCP will be simply incapable of fulfilling its ambitions, so China will become a vindictive, frustrated power (Terrill, 2003). Other writers are much more optimistic, and point out that so far China's ascendancy has been remarkably successful. Shenkar for example believes that we are witnessing the dramatic growth of a future world power, with excellent resources at home, and the international financial and technological clout of a sophisticated Diaspora (Shenkar, 2004).

As strategic thinkers, China's current generation of leaders are planning their country's future position in the world politically, culturally and militarily as well as in terms of GDP. All the indications are that they want increasingly to present themselves to the world as a peace-loving, reasonable and non-threatening super-power, one that is more accommodating and sensitive to smaller nations than the USA. At the same time, they are aware that the very rapid social transition currently underway in China could easily lead to violent internal disturbances that might threaten their growing national prosperity and stable rule (Hunter & Liu, 2007).

In general, Chinese leaders appear to be committed to peaceful development, although I would certainly not mistake this for a commitment to pacifism. Indeed China does stress the importance of conventional and nuclear military power for both a general and a particular reason. The general reason is to enhance its status as world power, alert to the complexity of Asian, particularly East Asian, international politics with flashpoints in the East and South China Seas, the Korean peninsula and elsewhere. The particular issue is the 60-year stand-off with Taiwan, in which the PRC always needs, it believes, to maintain a highly credible immediate military preparedness.

A question signposted in the Introduction is: why is the study of peace important in the Chinese context? I believe the CCP leadership has, since 1978 at least, been concerned to maintain a peaceful environment both domestically and internationally during this period of economic progress. We should be grateful for it: the maintenance of stability in the PRC is a major contribution to stability in Asia and beyond. It is fair to infer that they wish to avoid international wars except in the most extreme circumstances. I think the Chinese political leadership will stress peaceful initiatives in several areas, firstly in domestic issues:

1. to assist in the peaceful transition from one-party rule to consultative or eventually multi-party politics;
2. to assist in poverty reduction and social stability at local level by avoiding or reducing violent conflicts between competing groups;
3. to negotiate solutions to potential conflicts between the state orthodoxy and non-state actors, especially religious groups and ethnic minorities;
4. to assist in human rights protection, for example learning to handle demonstrations and protests without resort to military suppression.

Secondly, as China becomes increasingly, and rapidly, a major world power, many international issues are sure to demand careful attention. On a pragmatic note, we could make a short list of cross-boundary priorities:

1. to avoid international military conflict;
2. to mitigate international conflicts over trade or other issues;
3. to develop China's role in 'global citizenship' including its input at the UN;
4. to improve cooperation in areas like the control of illicit arms trading.

I believe that any contribution made by academic researchers and writers, think-tanks and policy advisers that will assist in maintaining peace, or reducing tensions and managing conflict in all these areas, is to be greatly welcomed, whether addressing the public or politicians, and whether in or outside China. Is there a link – or indeed conflict –

between these two groups of issues, the domestic and the international? This question gives rise to some complex correlations. To take a negative example, it is a standard tactic of regimes with shrinking economies to stimulate nationalist fervour and divert popular anger onto an 'enemy' – which in China's case could easily be Japan. If and when the current economic boom slows down, could a future Chinese leadership trade the risk of international conflict for social cohesion at home? Perhaps, but more positive scenarios are also possible, namely that lessons of conflict management learned in the domestic arena will be very useful when China becomes more actively integrated in international affairs.

I hope that we, non-Chinese, can highlight one other aspect, namely the international sharing of cultural resources. We do indeed have our 'peace' heroes and icons outside China, but there are gems in the Chinese tradition to which we are, most likely, profoundly blind. Indeed, the formative period of Chinese philosophy coincided with the numerous political upheavals that characterised the Warring States era (about 500 to 300 BCE). The ideal of a more peaceful society became central to almost all philosophies; disagreements were less about the need for peace, which was seen as self-evident, more often about how to achieve it. Confucians stressed strict adherence to both tradition and inner morality; Daoists searched for harmony within natural cosmic order; other schools advocated universal disarmament and a mode of life based only on agriculture. Meanwhile the Legalists initiated a tradition of statecraft that still resonated two thousand years later: human beings could only be controlled by strict laws which a state power had to implement with ruthless zeal to avoid chaos (Ryden, 1998).

Many Western readers may be familiar with concepts of peace, or arguments for and against war, which derive from Roman and early Christian thought. Chinese concepts are rooted in another civilisation; one in which, for example, water imagery is a key component and root metaphor of philosophy (Allan, 1997). Thus the character '*ping*', used in many compounds to denote 'peace', signifies the flat, unruffled surface of a lake; pacification may be denoted as '*yihun weiqing*', clarifying turbid waters. Perhaps a core Chinese vision, at times of tension, is of conflicted society as a turbulent and muddy whirlpool; effective leadership will make the people turn back towards a ruler who holds moral authority, reversing the flow towards the pure waters higher up the river... Other, non-hydraulic, collocations are the contrast between *luan* (turmoil) and *zhi* (order), while horticultural borrowings are also common: removing the weeds, for example, to allow beneficial crops to flourish.

He (harmony) is another concept central to Chinese culture. *Hejie* is probably the closest in meaning to 'reconciliation' in English, conveying the idea of recovering good relationships between persons after quarrels. *Hemu*, friendship between persons or nations, refers to the ideal relationship in the community, so it can carry positive resonances,

perhaps similar to concord or amity; or, at a minimum, recognition of co-existence. The collocation of the two ideograms *he* and *ping* is interesting. *Heping*, harmony and equality/tranquillity, generally used as the equivalent for the English 'peace', is a resonant word. When the order is reversed, *pinghe* refers to moral and personal qualities which suggest no conflicts in an individual's inner world. Finally, *heqi* means showing a kind attitude towards others. The idea is that if a person holds a high position, is held in public esteem, or regarded as very intelligent and successful, he or she should still be calm and considerate to others, even when they oppose him or hold different ideas.

For the past century or so, the Chinese have been obliged, alongside most of the rest of the world, to operate in an international environment whose discourse and praxis are heavily weighted to suit Anglo-American, or arguably European, norms. These norms indeed have attractive and valuable features that in many respects could set a benchmark for future developments. Core values such as freedom of expression, legal safeguards for individuals and political representation through secret ballots can and are perhaps almost universally appreciated, if not practised. Nevertheless, some Asian commentators argue that 'Asian values', which tend to be more communitarian than the Western focus on individual autonomy, are also valuable. I am sure there are other normative procedures and modes of discourse that seem natural to Asians and perhaps alien to some Westerners, just as many Asians may feel alienated by what they perceive as Western arrogance and missionary zeal. Saul has shown convincingly the frustration felt by some Asian leaders at the perceived self-righteous moralising of Western spokespersons in debates on human security and, in particular, their right to intervene in other countries' problems (Saul, 2006).

Are we going to educate ourselves to the extent that we can converse with Chinese on their own terms, or at least meet them halfway? Or do we retain the habitual attitude that somehow they – along with Japanese, Koreans and many others – should adapt to our ways of thinking and doing? Will the rivers of culture merge, or meander along their own channels? This debate does raise an interesting point. In a possible 'clash of civilisations', or more hopefully a mutual enrichment of civilisations, what would peaceful cooperation look like? Would it be tolerance of diversity, respect for another's cultural traditions? Compromise, to work out a middle ground of easy communication? Or robust debate and even confrontation to try and achieve a new synthesis? Incidentally, I hope the UK can be at the forefront of positive developments here, especially if we can overcome the current over-riding concerns with security issues. One example of peaceful influence, for example, has been the interest shown by many thousands of UK residents in Eastern spirituality at a period when traditional church attendance has been rapidly declining.

Peace Studies, Millennium
Development Goals and Chinese HE

Poverty mitigation and conflict management need to be addressed by state agencies on the one hand, and by activist, grass-roots groups on the other. The remainder of this chapter considers what role there might be for Chinese Education Institutions (HEIs) in these areas.

It is important to recognise the central role that Chinese HE may play in the next generation in Asia. Some recent reports have estimated that if current trends continue, 90% of all the world's scientists and engineers could be Asian by the year 2010, and a rapidly growing proportion of them will be Chinese educated; although admittedly, it will still take time for China and other Asian countries to compete in certain sunrise technologies and cutting-edge research areas, as discussed in a 2006 submission to the US Congress (Wadhwa, 2006). Rapidly growing numbers of students from Korea, Vietnam and other Asian countries are choosing to study at Chinese universities; Chinese and PRC-educated young people will become increasingly influential in the media, design, medicine and other professions.

At the risk of sounding hyperbolic, Chinese HEIs will have a profound impact on Asia – even on the whole world – in the next generation; it would therefore be extremely valuable if they are transmitters of pro-social values as well as technological expertise. It will not be an easy task. One challenge is that perhaps the great majority of young people, and their families, are primarily looking for a good start in professional life and career prospects, in which value education may be seen as irrelevant or distracting. Moreover, the PRC government has a mixed agenda: on the one hand it still preaches socialist values, despite cynicism from much of the population, while on the other it is resolutely anti-religious and to some extent suspicious of all non-Marxist ideologies. However, Chinese HEIs are also rooted in a civilisation which has emphasised moral values in its education process for more than two thousand years, and which even in the past 50 tried to combine technical schooling with value formation, even if the latter has often been a crude and confrontational form of Marxism. Hopefully there will be space in the process of Chinese HE expansion for consideration of peace as well as technology, recognising that technology without the wisdom to control it is more likely to lead to destruction than well-being.

I attended a Chinese university in 1981, and have visited many of them regularly since then, thus witnessing, alongside the boom of the Chinese economy, an equally amazing transformation of Chinese intellectual and academic life (Lin & Galikowski, 1999). Several studies of Chinese HE in historical perspective trace developments from the birth of the modern sector in the early twentieth century to the first decades of the communist regime (Hartnett, 1998; Altbach & Umakoshi, 2004). In the 1960s, Chinese universities were hit by a level of repression

almost unprecedented in any part of the world: during the Cultural Revolution they were closed down for a 10-year period, during which virtually the only education or indeed intellectual activity was mind-numbing repetition of Maoist slogans. Many Chinese scholars are deeply resentful of, and embarrassed to talk about, this period which was a catastrophic loss in development opportunity.

However, the new leadership under Deng Xiaoping rapidly re-launched the sector, and by the early 1980s, Chinese campuses were again busy, and faculty were cautiously starting to rebuild links with Western universities (Pepper, 1984; Yang & Liu, 1988; Hayhoe, 1989). In the 1980s and even into the early 1990s, Chinese universities were typical of those in much of the communist world. Rigidly controlled by CCP policies, the universities' role was to produce the next generation of cadres to serve in political and economic administration, and in the development of science and technology. At the same time, limited, though vital, space was given to the preservation of China's heritage through study of archaeology, history, literature and philosophy. The standard of living of both students and staff was low, and many staff left the sector in despair when private-sector economic reforms started to succeed in the mid to late 1980s; they were rapidly overtaken in terms of income and social status by uneducated entrepreneurs. In universities in Beijing and other cities there was considerable staff resentment of poor conditions and over-intrusive political controls. This dissatisfaction was a major element in student and lecturer participation in the massive demonstrations of 1989, which in turn led to more conciliatory policies in the next few years (Rai, 1991).

Also from the 1980s, the Chinese government adopted a far-sighted policy of encouraging as many young people as possible to study overseas, especially in the USA, Japan and Europe, by providing government scholarships and encouraging private study abroad. From the mid-1990s, China realised the benefits of this policy by enticing back numerous overseas graduates, offering well-paid positions with excellent facilities at top Chinese universities. One spectacular success was the enticement of Andrew Chi-chih Yao, one of the USA's leading computer scientists, from Princeton to Qinghua university in Beijing in 2004 (French, 2005).

A massive expansion of Chinese HE has been underway since 2000, reflecting the government's ever-increasing investment funds and awareness of technological competition. Indeed it is perhaps the greatest rapid expansion of the sector globally in terms of building and facilities, numbers of students, quality of staff, and range of disciplines. Pay and reward structures are becoming increasingly commercialised, so productive staff can go shopping for positions at expanding universities, where they are rewarded by generous salary and housing packages; a downside – from many staff's point of view – is a rigorous review of

outputs, in effect a publish-or-perish regime especially in prestige institutions. In addition, university life as a whole is becoming ever more funding driven, with the encouragement of all kinds of commercial joint ventures, corporate and civic investment, and exploration of new academic disciplines.

A recent report suggests a quantitative and qualitative growth as follows: in 1990, the system was characterised by a large number of relatively small, youth-oriented, specialist universities and colleges enrolling a tiny proportion (about 2%) of the 18-22 age group. By 1997, a total of approximately 3.2 million students were enrolled in regular Higher Education (about 4% of the 18-22 age group), and numbers reached a staggering seven million by 2000 (about 10% of the cohort). Moreover in the 1990s, numerous adult education institutions and large distance learning institutions such as the China Central Radio & TV University were established and expanded. The Ministry of Education's target, including adult and distance enrolments, was 16 million enrolments by 2010 (Observatory on Borderless Higher Education, 2003, p. 1). Naturally there are serious concerns about quality during this growth spurt, partly because different institutions were supervised by different units of national and municipal government departments and subject to different quality regimes.

In recent years, the government has continued to promote education as critical to national economic success and has pursued a policy of institutional mergers and enhancement alongside the expansion of student numbers. Mention should be made of two specific national programmes, the 221 project and the 985 project. The first was a massive investment in the leading 100 universities across China, with the intention of ensuring international standards in a wide range of disciplines. This was complemented in 2005 by 985, a specialist investment programme in a handful of elite universities, evidently with the intention that they would start to rival US Ivy League and international institutions of similar standing.

A report on foreign engagement in Chinese HE argues that 'China is perhaps the world's most over-hyped, under-analysed and complex market for transnational higher education' (Observatory on Borderless Higher Education, 2003, p. 1). The major incentives for the PRC government to encourage direct foreign involvement with its HE provision are capacity, status and innovation. Chinese students probably outnumber any other nationality in the USA, Australia, the UK and several other tertiary 'markets'; the Chinese urban population has a very high savings rate, and a major target of many, perhaps most, Chinese parents is to pay for the best possible education for their children or, more likely, for their one child (Story, 2003, p. 71). Until now, the Chinese authorities have been either actively supportive or at least not opposed to young people studying overseas, but the past several years'

investment in Chinese Higher Education has probably had, among other motives, the intention to reduce the outflow of talent and cash. One way to retain the benefits of international education is to persuade foreign universities to set up programmes or even campuses in the PRC. As well as capacity, foreign universities can bring status, and quickly offer the latest international innovations in course content, technical training and other areas. Nevertheless, foreign universities have to face an uncertain, non-transparent legislative environment in the PRC, and joint ventures may be vulnerable to sudden shifts in government policy.

Too often, the 'partnership' of Chinese and Western academia has meant the attraction of Chinese students and staff to Western institutions rather than more equitable, reciprocal relations. The reason for this imbalance is not obscure: commercially driven Western universities, like many in the UK and Australia, are hungry for fee income; research-intensive institutions need top-ranking productive scholars; many institutions need teaching staff. The converse has not generally been the case. Few Westerners have studied in China, and very few speak Chinese to a standard where they could effectively work there. Also, until recently, Chinese universities could rarely pay sufficient salaries to attract foreign academics to work in China. This situation did in fact change around 2004, when a handful of leading Chinese institutions, mostly in Beijing, started to pay generous expatriate salaries and allowances for selected international faculty.

Overall, the number of non-Chinese who have had significant direct input in China itself is thus limited; although of course Western academic output, especially when available in Chinese translation, is important to China's intellectual life. Nevertheless, the international experience of Chinese scholars who have subsequently returned to China has without doubt been a tremendous boost to the current freedom of movement in the academic world within and beyond China's borders. Similarly, while Western universities have, sometimes generously, contributed to the upgrading of Chinese academia, they have until recently been rather slow to consider the implications for Western curricula of China's growing global influence. The situation is, however, changing. For example in 2006 the UK government announced a massive injection of funds into Asian Studies; while some innovative universities, for example the University of Technology of Sydney, now allow Chinese as an alternative language for doctoral programmes, and some European secondary schools offer Chinese as a standard foreign language option.

Case Study: a 'higher education link' in Peace
Studies between Nanjing and Coventry universities

To summarise the developments of the past decade, Chinese Higher Education has seen huge investment and expansion; internationalisation; commercialisation; devolution; and de-politicisation. Despite the gradual slackening of ideological controls, some disciplines remain politically sensitive, which raised the interesting question: would there be a place for Peace Studies in China, given the government's commitment to a robust national defence policy, its suspicion of grass-roots activism, and Peace Studies' links with ideologies of protest such as those of Gandhi or anti-war movements?

The British Council HEL Programme funded numerous academic exchanges between the UK and China over a 20-year period from the mid-1980s, most of which focused on technical and scientific projects. Our Centre for Peace and Reconciliation Studies (CPRS) was recipient of an HEL grant for cooperation between Coventry and Nanjing universities from 2002 to 2005, in the discipline of Peace Studies. This award followed contacts between various staff members since 2000, when cooperation was formally established between the History Department of Nanjing University and the CPRS in Coventry. From 2002, one or two Chinese lecturers each year attended advanced studies on Peace Studies in Coventry; they usually stayed for about 10 weeks, auditing the first semester classes of Coventry's MA in Peace and Reconciliation Studies programme, conducting library research, and doing fieldwork in other parts of the UK. In the same period, Coventry staff visited Nanjing, usually for 2-week periods during which they delivered lectures and seminars, and engaged with Chinese academic staff and students.

I believe there were several factors that motivated our Chinese colleagues to engage in the link. One is the history of the city of Nanjing, the site of a horrific series of massacres of World War II, which started in 1937 for the Chinese. The Japanese Imperial Army entered Nanjing, which was undefended, in autumn 1937 and initiated weeks of rape and murder which left an estimated 300,000 dead and many more traumatised. There is a disturbing commemorative museum in the city; almost all Nanjing families lost parents and grandparents. War, peace, and possibly in some cases reconciliation and memorialisation, are living issues in Nanjing.

Another factor was the personal motivation of some of the key staff involved. For example Professor Qian Chengdan, our senior collaborator, is probably China's best-known historian of Britain: he has an encyclopaedic knowledge of the long period of transition from absolute monarchy to parliamentary democracy. For him, there is an intellectually challenging parallel with Chinese evolution from Imperial days to the current 'people's democracy' and beyond. Another example is Professor Liu Cheng, who has published one of China's very few monographs on

the history and early ideology of the UK Labour Party, and serious articles on its recent foreign policy. I believe Professor Liu felt inspired and challenged to understand an alternative strand of idealistic thinking represented by thinkers in the Peace Studies tradition. Finally, it must have been quite an exciting, unconventional initiative for them and other colleagues to try to establish a brand new academic discipline within a Chinese institution.

By 2005, the Chinese researchers had made a considerable contribution to promoting Peace Studies in the PRC: they published the first Chinese translations of key texts including Rigby's *Justice and Reconciliation After the Violence*; Galtung's *Peace by Peaceful Means*; Barash and Weber's *Peace Studies Reader* and many articles. They also had papers and translations published in journals such as *Foreign Social Science*, *Journal of Nanjing University* and *Xuehai (Academia Bimestris)*; four edited volumes of *Peace Archives*; and three Peace Studies courses for both undergraduate and postgraduate students in Nanjing University. In addition, Nanjing University began to recruit postgraduates and doctoral candidates on peace research in 2004, and a new undergraduate textbook by Liu Cheng, *Hepingxue* (Peace Studies), the first of its kind in China, was published in 2006. On the UK side, our programmes were enriched by the attendance of Chinese participants, and joint research led to the book *Peace Studies in the Chinese Century* (Hunter, 2006), a number of articles, and a joint presentation at the International Peace Research Association biennial conference in 2006.

Apart from the training and research outcomes, the two universities co-hosted an International Conference on Peace Studies in Nanjing in March 2005. As a formal start-up for peace research in China, the conference received wide coverage and allowed more Chinese academics to understand the implications of Peace Studies, enormously advancing teaching and research in the area. Some 40 Chinese academics attended, including well-known figures such as Professor Zhu Xueqing from Shanghai University, alongside representatives from Chinese and international NGOs, and a dozen non-Chinese scholars. The latter included some of the best-known names in Peace Studies such as Johan Galtung and Stuart Rees, Director of the Sydney Peace Prize Foundation. Conference proceedings ranged from presentation of Chinese intellectual resources for considering peace in the Confucian tradition, to studies of contemporary issues in Latin America and South Africa.

Two objectives of the HEL Programme were capacity building and promotion of gender equality. It was probably in these two areas that our particular partnership was least effective. With regard to capacity building, Peace Studies still faces serious challenges in China, and probably the senior administration of Nanjing University saw little prospect of diverting a higher level of resources to this new and unproved discipline. Likewise, gender balance remained an issue

throughout the Programme. Of the three key staff involved in Coventry, two were men; and of all staff involved in Nanjing, only one was female as were the majority of conference participants. I believe the gender imbalance stems more from the disproportionate number of male staff overall in closely related disciplines in China, such as international relations, rather than specific obstacles against women's participation in this particular initiative. However, it would be useful to see a statistical and qualitative gender analysis of educational and career choices among young Chinese academics.

Peace researchers, and those interested in a more peaceful society generally, have sensitive issues to handle in the PRC. On the other hand, many Chinese are very expert in negotiating official sensitivities, understanding what is more or less tolerated and what is a step too far in areas like environmental protests, or investigation into corruption. At present, our experience is that the university administrators and ministries would certainly tolerate, and probably warmly welcome, many aspects of Peace Studies, such as research into historical processes of change, causes of war and transitions to peace, peace building, international aid issues and so on. It is a truism that many Chinese, perhaps almost all educated Chinese, have a deep respect for history, and regard for lessons from the past, including lessons from conflicts. In a celebrated episode in 2005, one of our leading collaborators in China, Professor Qian mentioned above, was invited to give seminars to China's top political leadership including President Jiang Zemin, on the British experience of peaceful transition from monarchy to democracy. Part of the seminar was even shown on national TV, a clear message that the CCP leadership is somehow, some day, committed to political transition, but it wants to do so with preparation and avoiding mistakes made in the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia.

The CCP leadership is necessarily committed to peace in at least two dimensions. First, it is well aware of the massive technological lead that the USA has in military affairs. Possibly the key guiding factor in Chinese foreign policy is to avoid military confrontation with the USA; while at the same time, it wants to assert its right to be a global power. Second, there are massive social problems in both rural and urban areas arising from income disparities, corruption, environmental degradation and other causes. Until 2006, in the context of unprecedented economic growth, the government managed to more or less constrain protests within limits, without excessive use of force. Many think further rounds of mass demonstration are imminent. Yet the CCP is no longer simply a brutal dictatorial regime ready and willing to deport or kill off protesters, although it might do so in extreme circumstances; the Chinese public is now much more self-confident than in earlier decades, and also the leadership is ever more sensitive to international public opinion. It has

to make every effort to negotiate a whole series of accommodations with a very diverse population.

HEIs definitely have a central role in the education of Chinese leadership. The top dozen universities still provide a large number of graduates who proceed directly to a career in civil service and political institutions. Fast-track is available especially for young people who attend the major Beijing universities. Moreover, a number of research institutes, think-tanks, and university faculty contribute to seminars and publications for the benefit of political decision-makers on a wide range of domestic and international issues. In short, the central political leadership is itself educated within, and continuously updated by, the HE sector, with a bias towards Beijing-based institutions. But the process also operates at a more local level. Provincial officials have already attended training courses in conflict resolution organised by Peace Studies staff at Nanjing University for example.

How will peace or conflict affect the achievement of MDGs in China and thus to the goals of lifting people out of poverty and ensuring access to health and education? As far as we know, the Chinese government is optimistic of attaining all or most MDGs within about 10 years (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of People's Republic of China, 2006). Admittedly that is the official aspiration, but it is one that is accepted, at least in the area of poverty reduction, by independent analysts from the World Bank Development Research Group Poverty Team (Ravallion & Chen, 2004). Two major threats to what would be an amazing success are first, the ever-present risk of military conflict, in which the USA or Japan would be the most destructive opponents, and an alliance between them the greatest possible risk to China. The second would be massive, violent social unrest which could perhaps destabilise society, for which the most probable cause would be extreme dislocation following environmental and energy collapse. If Peace Studies is able to gain a footing in key university faculties or research centres, as discussed above, it could perhaps contribute to better conflict management. I think this would be a great achievement. We may not expect the next generation of Chinese leaders to be pacifists, by any means, but at least we might hope that some of them have an awareness of pro-peace discourse, an understanding of non-military solutions to complex problems. If the next generation of Western leaders were to gain similar insights, it would be even better.

Conclusion: lessons learned from a higher education link

Peace Studies as a discipline has evolved as a trans-disciplinary, innovative area of academic life depending on its political and social contexts; and its Chinese evolution will be no exception. It faces some difficulties. First, until now Peace Studies has not had any specialist

research organisation or academic major in any Chinese university. Although Nanjing University has tried to build up a special centre for peace research, the final decision is still in question, as is its funding. Second, another problem is whether or not Peace Studies can obtain full recognition from wider academic circles. China suffered a century of humiliation by foreign powers, 'being beaten for lagging behind' as the expression goes. Many academics may believe that Peace Studies only states some ideals, but does not offer any achievable reality in a fiercely competitive world. Third, in a developing country like China, graduates majoring in Peace Studies soon encounter the fierce realities of the job market, where they may suffer compared to those with qualifications in information technology, management or engineering.

Peace Studies in the West, for example in the 1960s and 1970s, was mostly oriented towards pressurising our own governments in the field of international politics: to de-escalate the arms race, to abolish nuclear weapons, to support war resisters. A secondary orientation was to preach pacifism as a near-absolute commitment, often supported by alternative life-styles. 'As important as campaigning and demonstrating against particular wars was the creative and constructive task of articulating a vision' as one participant put it (Rigby, 2006, p. 127). By the 1990s, different priorities were apparent: a focus on ethnicity and sub-state wars, for example, and a closer connection with environmental and developmental issues.

As the discipline evolves in China, and more broadly by observing Chinese society in the coming decades, we will have much to learn. Any Chinese leadership will have to cope with the multiple stresses caused by rapid modernisation, which will surely intensify in the event of any downturn in the economy. These stresses will be much worse if the country suffers acutely from climate change and aggravation of environmental damage. Meanwhile, it will have to continue to aggressively seek energy and raw materials on the world market, to resolve disputes with Western powers, and to maintain its strategic position in the Asia-Pacific region. I am sure that careful observation will reveal much that is useful as well as, doubtless, serious errors. Overall, I see every reason to hope for a productive and positive exchange of cultural resources between China and the West, and hope that commitment to peaceful resolution of conflicts can play an important part in this process.

I would like to conclude with three observations. First, I found the HEL concept and administration was well suited to the establishment of this small-scale academic partnership. I also mostly welcome its extension into the Development Partnerships in Higher Education programme stream of funding, especially the latter's support for larger-scale projects and the greater autonomy for partner institutions in developing countries. I was, however, a little concerned that its very

explicit focus on a designated area of poverty reduction may be turn out to be too restrictive. For example in a country like China, there is evidently scope for further poverty reduction, but the UK Department for International Development itself recognises that non-Chinese agencies will have an extremely marginal role in that process compared to the vast scale of national programmes. For overall social improvement, China would probably benefit from innovations in natural or social sciences, or technology, as much as from restricted interventions in poverty reduction. Second, we came to appreciate that Chinese scholars, university administrators, publishers, local officials and others are open to new ideas. Some were quick to grasp that non-Chinese approaches to peace and conflict management, which before our programme were virtually unknown in the PRC, were worth studying, perhaps comparing with indigenous traditions. They were also alert to possible links between conflict and poverty, an understanding that hopefully is also reflected in UK official thinking so that poverty reduction strategies all explicitly incorporate conflict reduction also.

Third, participation in this link programme was a significant and rewarding experience for all the UK staff and students involved. It is easy enough through short visits to gain a superficial view of the startling progress being made in China generally, reflected for example in the new buildings and facilities available on university campuses. But by longer term association one comes to understand some of the background and complexities also: how our colleagues' lives have changed, how the past lives on in the present, their aspirations for the coming generation and so on. The PRC has already become the fourth or fifth largest economy in the world and is set to become the second within a generation. I am convinced that one of the major challenges for those of us who live alongside this process is to engage in cooperative programmes to ensure a deep, mutually beneficial and productive relationship.

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