

**Mobility, Community and Identity: Chinese Student/Professional Migration to the
United States since 1978 and Transnational Citizenship**

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Abstract

Between 1978 and 2002, China sent 580,000 students and scholars to study abroad. About two thirds of these students and scholars adjusted their immigrant status and became permanent residents of their residing societies, especially the United States that has received around forty to fifty percent of Chinese students abroad. This dissertation focuses on Chinese student migrants as a case of contemporary international professional migration and studies their mobility, identities, and community formation from historical and transnational perspectives. It begins with 1978 when China began its open-door and reform policies and U.S.-China relations were normalized. It examines the changing Chinese policies on migration and the increasing attention China paid to student migrants, revealing how student migrants' transnational mobility was tied to China's political and economic reforms. It then discusses how the preference for skilled and professional migrants in U.S. immigration laws developed over time and what Chinese and Asian student and professional migration revealed about post-1965 U.S. national identity and international relations. It also examines how professional migrants, with better social mobility than past generations of migrants, faced both opportunities and challenges in forming their local communities in post-1965 U.S. society. This dissertation in the end looks at the return and circular migration of Chinese student and professional migrants. It revises the conventional framework of studying immigration as a linear process and argues that for a large number of returning Chinese student migrants, citizenship is not a signifier of assimilation or of permanent settlement but a status used for transnational mobility transcending the national boundaries which define and justify citizenship. This dissertation draws from sociological, anthropological, and political science studies of recent migrants while providing historical perspective on the recent past. Its analysis is based on a wide variety of written documents in both Chinese and English, including censuses, surveys, immigration policies and laws, congressional records, government publications, media reports, immigrant organization records, as well as migrants' online discussions. Another key source is fieldwork in both China and the United States, including visits to migrants-related organizations and sixty interviews with student migrants and returnees in the two countries.

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List of Abbreviations

CAAM	Chinese American Association of Minnesota
CAAPAM	Chinese American Association of Professionals and Academics in Minnesota
CSPA	Chinese Student Protection Act of 1992
DED	deferred enforced departure
MOA	Minnesota Orchestra Association
NCCCSA	National Coordination Committee on Chinese Students Affairs
<i>QGYJ</i>	<i>Qiaowu gongzuo yanjiu</i>
<i>QLDT</i>	<i>Qiaolian dongtai</i>

Notes on Romanization and Terminologies

- Romanization of Chinese words and names: Most Chinese words have been transliterated into *pinyin*; names of Chinese and Chinese immigrants are written with the family names first and the given names followed unless they themselves use the Western order or adopts English names for daily uses.
- China: As this study focuses on post-1978 mainland China, unless specified, “China” generally refers to mainland China, and the “Chinese government” refers to the mainland Chinese government when discussed in the post-1949 context (after the founding of the P.R. China). However, when describing people or communities, the word “Chinese” indicates ethnic and cultural identity. So the term “Chinese student migrants,” while mainly referring to student migrants from mainland China in my analysis, also includes Chinese students from Taiwan, Hong Kong and around the world, and “Chinese immigrant community” refers to ethnic Chinese community with people migrating from the Mainland or other regions and embracing Chinese culture as one of their primary cultural identities.
- Chinese migration, Chinese diaspora(s): Unless I need to specify the direction of the flow of migrants (such as emigration from China after 1978), I use “migration” rather than “immigration” or “emigration” to emphasize the mobility of migrants and the process of migration (with possible return) rather than a fixed direction oriented towards one single nation-state. I also use “Chinese migration” rather than “Chinese diaspora” to avoid the latter’s unnecessary connotations of migrants’ fateful bonds with and orientation towards the homeland. Instead, I use “Chinese diasporas” when needed to emphasize the inherent diversity of migration and migrants.
- Overseas Chinese (*huqiao*), Chinese Overseas (*huaren*): Official terms used by the mainland Chinese government, “overseas Chinese” (emphasis on “Chinese”) refers to Chinese immigrants who hold permanent residence abroad but retain Chinese citizenship; “Chinese overseas” (“Chinese” as a descriptor) refers to ethnic Chinese outside of China without Chinese citizenship. The term “overseas Chinese” became popular in public and official discourses in China since the late 19th century along with the nationalist movement and the Republican Revolution (1911), and it refers to all ethnic Chinese outside of China as the late Qing and then nationalist governments allowed and encouraged dual citizenship. The mainland Chinese government started differentiating these two terms in the 1950s and no longer allows dual citizenship, but it still combines and mixes these two terms together (*huqiao huaren*) in addressing issues relating to Chinese immigrants or ethnic Chinese in general. In this study, I use “Chinese migrants” instead of “overseas Chinese,” and use “Chinese overseas” to refer to ethnic Chinese outside of China (in its broader cultural and ethnic sense, China here includes the Mainland, Taiwan,

Hong Kong, and Macao), therefore an ethnic identity regardless of the status of citizenship.

- Chinese immigrants, Chinese Americans: Under American immigration law, these two terms refer to two groups of people with different legal status. “Chinese immigrants” refer to those with lawful permanent residence status, and “Chinese Americans” refer to naturalized Chinese immigrants in the United States or American-born Chinese with birthright American citizenship. However, these two terms are often not differentiated by public media (and in many scholarly accounts) in describing the ethnic Chinese community in the United States. This study focuses on first-generation immigrants and emphasizes their community and identity formation as continuous and fluid processes rather than simply defined by their legal status. Therefore, I use “Chinese immigrants” in a broader sense, including both immigrant status holders and those who have been already naturalized as American citizens. However, when I analyze the role of legal status on immigrants’ mobility and identity (particularly in the final chapters on return migration), I specify migrants’ legal status and highlight its impact.
- Students-turned immigrants, student migrants: I use the term “students-turned immigrants” to refer to those who went abroad as students or scholars and later obtained lawful permanent residence abroad (China sent large numbers of exchange scholars to the United States after 1978, and many of them also adjusted their status and became immigrants, especially after the passage of the 1992 Chinese Student Protection Act). Students-turned immigrants are the main subjects of this study. I also use a more general term “student migrants.” It refers to students studying and then working abroad and emphasizes their mobility (or uncertainty) and complex relations with immigrant status: some migrants were in the process of immigrant status adjustment, some tried but did not succeed, and some chose to return without pursuing immigrant status. “Student migrants” include “students-turned immigrants,” and both terms are different from “overseas students,” which refer to those who went abroad to study and returned to China immediately after study.
- Returnees (*haigui*), returned student migrants, returned immigrants (*guiqiao*): The word “returnees (*haigui*)” has been a vague term used by the Chinese public generally referring to those who once studied abroad and then returned to China. There have been proposals in Chinese media and relevant official agencies on narrowing down the definition of returnees (such as specifying the length of the years of studying abroad). My study focuses on returned student migrants, particularly returned students-turned immigrants, as immigrant or citizenship status matters in returnees’ choices of return, treatment after return, and their changing identities. “Returned immigrants” (*guiqiao*) is a more general term referring to those who have obtained lawful permanent residence abroad and then returned. It has been defined by the Chinese government for the purpose of making policies on returned immigrants in general.

Introduction

In September 2006, the Migration Policy Institute (MPI), an influential think tank based in Washington, published a report titled “Immigration and America’s Future: A New Chapter.” Based on a study by an independent task force comprised of notable American policy makers and scholars, the report suggests that while the nation’s focus has recently been on illegal immigration, a larger picture of immigration should be considered: what immigration policies and system could benefit the national interests of the United States and enhance U.S. competitiveness in the twenty-first century? The report recommends that as globalization transforms the United States from a manufacturing to a knowledge-based economy, the U.S. immigration system should be simplified and redesigned to attract skilled immigrants, especially high tech workers and U.S.-educated foreign students who can compete in a new economy.¹

A similar call for recruiting skilled migrants has also been heard from countries that have been sending highly educated and skilled migrants. China is among the top nations sending the largest numbers of students to the United States (Table 1). According to China’s Ministry of Education (MOE), between 1978 and 2002, China sent 580,000 students and scholars to study abroad, and about one third of them had returned to China.² The majority of these students and scholars adjusted their immigrant

¹ Spencer Abraham, Lee Hamilton and Doris Meissner, eds., *Immigration and America’s Future: A New Chapter, Report of the Independent Task Force on Immigration and America’s Future* (Washington, D.C.: Migration Policy Institute, September 2006).

² *People’s Daily Online*, “China Has Sent 580 Thousand Students Studying Abroad,” January 28, 2003, <http://english.people daily.com.cn> (accessed January 29, 2003).

Table 1. Mainland Chinese Students in the United States, 1978-2008

Academic Year	Chinese Students	Total International Students	Percentage	Ranking among Countries of Origin
1978/79	28 ^a	263,940	-- ^b	-- ^b
1979/80	1,000	286,343	0.3	-- ^b
1980/81	2,770	311,882	0.9	27
1981/82	4,350	326,299	1.3	18
1982/83	6,230	336,985	1.8	16
1983/84	8,140	338,894	2.4	12
1984/85	10,100	342,113	3.0	11
1985/86	13,980	343,777	4.1	7
1986/87	20,030	349,609	5.7	3
1987/88	25,170	356,187	7.1	2
1988/89	29,040	366,354	7.9	1
1989/90	33,390	386,851	8.6	1
1990/91	39,600	407,529	9.7	1
1991/92	42,940	419,585	10.2	1
1992/93	45,130	438,618	10.3	1
1993/94	44,380	449,749	9.9	1
1994/95	39,403	452,635	8.7	2
1995/96	39,613	453,787	8.7	2
1996/97	42,503	457,984	9.3	2
1997/98	46,958	481,280	9.8	2
1998/99	51,001	490,933	10.4	1
1999/00	54,466	514,723	10.6	1
2000/01	59,939	547,867	10.9	1
2001/02	63,211	582,996	10.8	2
2002/03	64,757	586,323	11.0	2
2003/04	61,765	572,509	10.8	2
2004/05	62,523	565,039	11.1	2
2005/06	62,582	564,766	11.1	2
2006/07	67,723	582,984	11.6	2
2007/08	81,127	623,805	13.0	2

Sources: Institute of International Education (IIE), *Open Doors: Report on International Educational Exchange* (New York: IIE, 1978-2008).

^a This was a “base number” rather than an “extrapolated count” used in the other years. The “base number” is the actual count of students reported by country of citizenship on the survey form sent by the Institute of International Education to educational institutions. The “extrapolated count” of total international students includes the sum of the base numbers of each country and the number of international students reported by those institutions which did not specify country of origin. For countries

with a base number higher than a certain number (which varied each year, such as 90 for 1978/79 and 140 for 1980/81), their base numbers will be modified to determine their extrapolated share of the total student count. Mainland Chinese students started coming to the United States in 1978/79 after U.S-China relations were normalized in 1978 and the number of students in this first year was too small to be extrapolated.

^bThe percentage of Chinese students among total international students in 1978/79 was too low (0.01) to be listed. The rankings of China among all countries sending students to the United States during the academic years of 1978/79 and 1979/80 were too low to be indicated in the IIE reports.

status and became permanent residents of their residing societies, mainly in the United States, Canada, Australia, Japan and Western Europe.³ Realizing that the majority of these students stay abroad, China has constantly adjusted its study-abroad and immigration policies and called for student migrants' return to China and, more recently, advocated student migrants' "serving the country without the need of return."⁴ Moreover, in 2004, China created its own green card system to encourage the long-term stay of foreign experts and entrepreneurs, including eminent ethnic Chinese professionals who have been naturalized in another country.⁵ These new policies aim at encouraging Chinese migrants' participation in China's economic and technological modernization along with China's continuing rise on the global stage.

Both the MPI report and China's changing immigration policies reflect significant global trends in recent decades: the establishment of preference categories for educated and professional migrants in immigration laws and policies in both

³ Wu Kaijun, "Qian xi Meiguo de Zhongguo dalu xinyimin," *Ba gui qiao kan* 3 (2002): 50-53.

⁴ In 2001, a new Chinese policy called on mainlanders abroad to "serve the nation" (*weiguo fuwu*) without necessarily "returning to the nation" (*huiguo fuwu*). The new policy also "enumerated how students who are green card or even foreign passport holders could return to China and receive the same benefits as local Chinese in terms of job prospects, housing purchases, and schooling for their children." "*Renshibu, jiaoyubu, kejibu, gonganbu, caizhengbu guanyu yinfa 'Guanyu guli haiwai liuxue renyuan yi duozhong xingshi wei guo fuwu di rogan yijian' de tongzhi*," May 14, 2001 (*Renfa* No. 49, 2001), see its English translation: "A Number of Opinions on Encouraging Overseas Students to Provide China with Many Different Forms of Service," *Chinese Education and Society* 36, no. 2 (March/April 2003): 6-11.

⁵ Sina News, "Waiguo ren zai Zhongguo yongjiu juliu shenpi guanli banfa," August 15, 2004, <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2004-08-20/10304086859.shtml>.

receiving and sending countries, and the intensified international competition for highly educated migrants, a global “battle for brainpower” as termed and featured by *The Economist* in 2006.⁶

The MPI report and China’s policies on student migrants raise several important questions: How does migration of student and professional migrants fit into the larger frameworks of different nations’ immigration laws and policies in the past and present? How does the migration of students and professionals connect to and affect the sending and receiving societies, shape international relations, and expand transnational networks? How do recent groups of professional migrants, highly mobile with cultural and human capital, form their identities and communities in comparison with past generations of migrants?

Student and professional migrants have received little attention from immigration scholars, and the small numbers of studies on recent highly skilled migrants are often demographic sketches or policy suggestions rather than detailed studies of their community formation and identities.⁷ They also tend to emphasize that student and professional migrants possess significant social and cultural capital and therefore focus discussions on their social mobility, transnational networks, and

⁶ *The Economist*, “The Battle for Brainpower,” October 5, 2006, http://www.economist.com/surveys/displaystory.cfm?story_id=E1_SJGTRJQ.

⁷ In a remarkable collection of recent scholarship on highly skilled migrants, the editors raised similar concerns in the introduction section. Wayne A. Cornelius, Thomas J. Espenshade and Idean Salehyan, eds., *The International Migration of the Highly Skilled* (San Diego: Center for Contemporary Immigration Studies, University of California, 2001). For a few recent studies on highly skilled migrants focusing on their identity and community, see Xiang Biao, *Global "Body shopping": An Indian Labor System in the Information Technology Industry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); AnnaLee Saxenian, *Regional Advantage: Culture and Competition in Silicon Valley and Route 128* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994); Bernard P. Wong, *The Chinese in Silicon Valley: Globalization, Social Networks, and Ethnic Identity* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006). However, these studies are mainly conducted by social scientists. Historians need to join in analyzing the historical changes and significance concerning skilled migrants.

“flexible citizenship.”⁸ As a result, these studies downplay the challenges for these migrants’ local community formation and integration.⁹ In addition, studies often do not place student and professional migrants’ mobility in historical perspective, therefore missing important questions such as how these migrants are different from or similar to past generations of migrants and how to understand their mobility and identity in the contexts of the historical changes of both the sending and receiving societies.

This dissertation focuses on Chinese student migrants as a case of contemporary international professional migration. It studies their mobility, identities, and community formation from historical and transnational perspectives. It begins with 1978, the time when mainland China began its open-door and reform policies and U.S.-China relations were normalized, to show the historical context of the re-start of China’s study-abroad program and the continuous waves of student migration. It examines the changing Chinese policies on migration and migrants and the increasing attention China paid to student migrants, revealing how student migrants’ transnational mobility was tied to China’s political and economic reforms. It then discusses how the preference for skilled and professional migrants in U.S. immigration laws developed over time (especially after 1965), and what Chinese and Asian student and professional migration revealed

⁸ AnnaLee Saxenian, *Local and Global Networks of Immigrant Professionals in Silicon Valley* (Public Policy Institute of California, 2002); Committee on Science and Technology in Developing Countries, *International Mobility of S&T Professionals: Demands and Trends, Impact and Response* (Chennai: COSTED, 2001); Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *International Mobility of the Highly Skilled* (Paris: OECD, 2002); Aihwa Ong, *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999). Ong uses the term “flexible citizenship” to refer especially to “the strategies and effects of mobile managers, technocrats, and professionals seeking to both circumvent and (emphasis original) benefit from different nation-state regimes by selecting different sites for investments, work, and family relocation.” Ong, *Flexible Citizenship*, 112.

⁹ In his study of Chinese professionals in Silicon Valley, Bernard Wong poignantly argues that the globalization efforts of highly skilled and highly mobile transnational migrants do not diminish their dependence on the local community; in other words, globalization and localization go hand in hand. Wong, *The Chinese in Silicon Valley* (especially Chapter 4).

about post-1965 U.S. national identity and international relations. It also examines how professional migrants, with better social mobility than past generations of migrants, faced both opportunities and challenges in forming their local communities in post-1965 U.S. society. This dissertation in the end looks at the return and circular migration of Chinese student and professional migrants. It revises the conventional framework of studying immigration as a linear process, challenges the traditional “assimilation model,” and instead emphasizes migrants’ transnational mobility and identity. On the other hand, it emphasizes transnational mobility as based on the structures of international political economy, international relations, and the immigration laws of both the home and host societies, and it reveals the complex tensions as well as possibilities involving “transnational citizenship.”

Chinese Student Migrants and Chinese Emigration: past and present

Post-1978 Chinese student migration shows historical continuities and changes of both the movements of Chinese students studying abroad and the patterns of Chinese emigration in general. There have been five major waves of Chinese students studying in the United States since the mid-nineteenth century. The first wave started in 1872, when the late Qing government sent 100-120 young students to study in the United States as part of its Self-Strengthening Movement after China was forced to open its door after the first Opium War (1839-1841) and was faced with increasing foreign invasion and encroachment.¹⁰ However, the program was aborted in 1881 and students

¹⁰ During 1872 and 1874, 40 students per year were sent from China to the United States. The program was initiated by Yung Wing (1828-1952), who was brought by an American missionary to study in the

were recalled back to China as the program encountered fierce opposition from conservatives in the Qing government who accused the students of losing Chinese culture and identity; the recall also served as the Qing government's response to the sentiments of anti-Chinese immigrants that had surged in the United States.¹¹

The second major wave of government-sponsored Chinese students studying in the United States took off in the early twentieth century under the Boxer Indemnity Fund program, which had been set up by the U.S. government to return part of the Boxer Indemnity China needed to pay after the Boxer Rebellion (1899-1900) to finance Chinese students to study in the United States.¹² In 1909, Qinghua School was established in Beijing as the preparatory school for sending students to study in the United States. From 1909 to 1929, it sent about 1279 Chinese students to the United States with the Boxer Indemnity Fund.¹³ The number of Chinese students studying in the United States declined after 1929 due to the end of the Boxer Indemnity Fund

United States and became the first Chinese student that graduated from a U.S. university (Yale University) in 1858. Yung wrote a detailed memoir about his experiences in both China and the United States and about his efforts in establishing the study-abroad project. Yung Wing, *My Life in China and America* (New York: H. Holt and Company, 1909); also see its Chinese version: Yung, *Xi xue dong jian ji* (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1985).

¹¹ Thomas E. LaFargue, *China's First Hundred: Educational Mission Students in the United States, 1872-1881* (Pullman: State college of Washington, 1942), 38-52; Weili Ye, *Seeking Modernity in China's Name: Chinese Students in the United States, 1900-1927* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 8.

¹² In 1900, the Boxer Uprising broke out and was soon suppressed by the Eight-Country Allied Force which occupied Beijing and forced the Qing government to sign the Boxer Protocol. Under the treaty China was to pay an indemnity (also called *Genzi* Indemnity) totaling 450 million taels to fourteen countries over thirty-nine years. In 1908, the U.S. Congress passed legislation to return to China the excess money above the actually incurred by the United States to build schools in China and finance students to study in the United States, a measure aiming at cultivating pro-U.S. Chinese elites and influencing China's politics and society in the long term. Michael H. Hunt, "The American Remission of the Boxer Indemnity: Reappraisal," *Journal of Asian Studies* 31, no.3 (May 1972): 539-59.

¹³ Wang Qisheng, *Zhongguo liu xue sheng de li shi gui ji, 1872-1947* (Wuhan: Hubei jiao yu chu ban she, 1992), 19.

program, the Great Depression in the United States, the increasing regulation by the Nanjing Nationalist government, and the impending Japanese invasion.¹⁴

The third wave arose after the end of World War II. It was encouraged by the success of China's war of resistance against Japan, the temporary peaceful reconstruction in China, the close relationship between the Nationalist government and the U.S. government, as well as the threat of the impending civil war between the Nationalist Party and the Communist Party of China. With the communist takeover in 1949, the majority of the students stayed abroad, either voluntarily or forcibly as the U.S. government restrained them from returning in fear of their "assistance" of communist China. Around 4000 Chinese students and their families therefore stayed in the United States and became permanent residents.

The fourth wave of Chinese students studying in the United States mainly came from Taiwan (where the Chinese Nationalist government retreated after 1949) and Hong Kong,¹⁵ as mainland China closed its doors to most Western countries in the Capitalism camp in the Cold War context.¹⁶ From 1950 to 1980, about 80,000

¹⁴ Ibid., 27-31.

¹⁵ Besides student migrants from Taiwan and Hong Kong, there were also ethnic Chinese students coming to study in the United States after World War II from around the world, especially Southeast Asia which had hosted the majority of Chinese overseas historically and had witnessed a wave of re-migration of ethnic Chinese after World War II following the decolonization of Southeast Asian countries.

¹⁶ Few students from mainland China came to study in the United States from 1949 to 1978. P.R. China sent students to the Soviet Union and other eastern European countries before the study-abroad program stalled following the split between China and the USSR in the early 1960s and the culmination of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). It is estimated that around 38,000 Chinese received training in USSR between 1950 and 1967. Among these students in the USSR, there were 1300 scientists, 1200 instructors, 8000 technicians, 20,000 workers, and 7500 students. A total of 40,000 Chinese went abroad for study in that same period. Steward E. Fraser, "China's International, Cultural and Educational Relations: With Selected Bibliography," in *Aspects of Chinese Education*, ed. Ch'ang-tu Hu (New York: Teachers College Press, 1969), 66, quoted in David M. Lampton, Joyce A. Madancy and Kristen M. Williams, *A Relationship Restored: Trends in U.S.-China Educational Exchanges, 1978-1984* (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1986), 21.

university graduates left Taiwan to study in the United States and the majority stayed in the United States.¹⁷ This fourth wave revealed some major characteristics of postwar Chinese student migration, such as the trend of “study abroad and then stay” and the fact that international student migration became one of the most dynamic streams of postwar international migration. After the 1980s, students from Taiwan and Hong Kong continued to come to the United States but in smaller numbers, and many of them aimed at returning rather than staying in the United States.¹⁸

The fifth wave began after mainland China started open-door and reform policies in 1978. Similar to past study-abroad programs (especially the first three waves), the post-1978 movement of students studying abroad was triggered by dramatically changing international relations and the need of China for reform and modernization. The normalization of U.S.-China relations in 1979 paved the way for extensive social, cultural, and economic exchanges between the two countries. More Chinese students and scholars were estimated to have studied in the United States in the first decade after 1979 than those between 1860 and 1950 when approximately 30,000 came to the United States. In the first years after 1979, students coming to the United States comprised about 50-60 percent of all Chinese students and scholars studying

¹⁷ R. King, “Taiwan Launches New Program,” *Chronicle of Higher Education* 26 (October 1988): 27, as cited in David Zweig and Chen Changgui, *China’s Brain Drain to the United States: Views of Overseas Chinese Students and Scholars in the 1990s* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, Center for Chinese Studies, 1995), 12.

¹⁸ Since the 1980s, economic and social conditions improved in Taiwan. Along with the U.S. economic recession, the so-called “brain drain” began to reverse direction. Scholars also predicted that a similar trend would happen to mainland Chinese student migration with China’s development after the reform. Yuenchen Chiang, “Chinese Students in America in the Early Twentieth Century: Preliminary Reflections on a Research Topic,” *Chinese Studies in History* 36, no. 3 (Spring 2003): 61.

abroad.¹⁹ The study-abroad program in the first years after China's reform showed strong resemblance to those in pre-1950 eras. For example, similar to past Chinese governments, the post-1978 Chinese government initiated the study-abroad program and directed the fields for students' study, mainly science and technology that were viewed by the government as the priority and key to China's modernization.²⁰ The persistent patterns that characterized study-abroad programs before 1978 and in the early years after 1978 led China specialist David Lampton to observe in 1985 that Sino-U.S. education exchange programs were "more a renewal than a beginning."²¹

However, with the development of the study-abroad movement in the following two decades, the program and the waves of student migration proved not simply a renewal of the past but showed significant changes, especially with the fact that, in contrast with the first three waves (1872-1949), the majority of post-1978 Chinese students did not return to China. Since the mid-1980s, with self-funded study becoming the majority, most Chinese students have stayed abroad.²² By 1999, only about one

¹⁹ Lampton et al., 2, 23, 24.

²⁰ Ibid., 2, 38-39, 182-3, 187-88. Lampton mentions that the distribution of fields of study reflected both Chinese priorities and the availability of American funding (with relatively more funding for the fields of study of science and technology).

²¹ Ibid., 15, 17, 20.

²² According to the Chinese Ministry of Education, among 320,000 Chinese students and scholars going abroad from 1978 to 1999, about 50,000 were sent by the Chinese government, more than 100,000 by their respective work units, and 160,000 were self-funded. In addition, about 100,000 Chinese nationals (such as students' spouses) changed their visa status to self-funded students. Cheng Xi, "Rencai liushi yu xin yimin— qishi niandai yilai Zhongguo qianwang Riben he Ouzhou de liuxuesheng", *Huaqiao huaren lishi yanjiu* 4 (December 2000): 17-25. Self-funded study also increased and became the majority in the second and third waves of Chinese students studying abroad. However, unlike post-WWII student migration, most Chinese students in the first three waves, both state-funded and self-funded, returned to China. Wang, *Lishi guiji*, 180-191.

third of Chinese overseas students returned, and the return rate among self-funded students was only 3-4 percent.²³

This historical change of “study and stay abroad” took place in the distinct political, economic, and social contexts in mainland China after it ended the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) and started reforms. Political movements and violence in past decades, culminated in the Cultural Revolution, became a strong “push” factor for emigration once the door became open. Intellectuals and professionals, with the trauma of political persecution during the Cultural Revolution, still faced social discrimination and lower economic status in the early stage of China’s struggling economic reform.²⁴ The stiff and bureaucratic “work unit” (*danwei*) system and the lack of mobility and career opportunities also motivated educated people to leave China and stay abroad. All these factors contributed to students’ staying abroad rather than returning. Study-abroad became a means of leaving China.²⁵ The 1989 crackdown on the student democratic

²³ Zhao Hongying, “Jin yi ershi nian lai Zhongguo dalu xin yimin ruogan wenti de sikao,” *Huaqiao huaren lishi yanjiu* 4 (December 2000): 7-16. Another study points out that among returnees, 83 percent were state-sponsored students and scholars, 56.5 percent were institution-sponsored and only 3.9 percent were self-sponsored. Robyn Iredale, Fei Guo and Santi Rozario, eds., *Return Migration in the Asia Pacific* (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2003), 91.

²⁴ A popular saying in the 1980s and early 1990s was “lao ti dao gua,” which meant that people who labored with their brains (such as scientists and teachers) received lower income than manual laborers (such as factory workers and peddlers).

²⁵ The term “chu guo re” (fever of going abroad) described the surging waves of emigration, with many emigrants leaving as students. People from all walks of life, such as musicians, athletes, actors, business owners, mid-career researchers, applied for studying abroad as students visas were relatively easy to get and studying abroad (particularly as self-funded) was one of the few channels to leave China and stay abroad in the early years after the reform. For journalistic reports on this students-led fever of going abroad, see Hu Ping, *Yimin Meiguo* (Zhengzhou: Henan renmin chubanshe, 1997); Hu Ping and Zhang Shengyou, *Shijie da chuanlian* (Changsha: Hunan wenyi chubanshe, 1988). For a wonderful study on the meanings of leaving China, see Sun Wanning, *Leaving China: Media, Migration, and Transnational Imagination* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002).

demonstration at Tiananmen Square further aggravated the trend of studying and then staying abroad.²⁶

The remarkable phenomenon of the majority of contemporary Chinese students staying abroad also resulted from the changing immigration laws in the United States and other major receiving societies (such as Canada, Australia, and New Zealand where contemporary Chinese student migrants have concentrated) after World War II. In 1943, mainly because of its wartime alliance with China, the United States repealed the Chinese exclusion laws (1882-1943) to recognize the rights of Chinese immigrants for naturalization. The 1965 immigration reform abolished the race-based national origins quota system and distributed immigration quota equally among countries in the eastern hemisphere.²⁷ Other former white settler societies also changed their race-based immigration laws: Canada in 1962, Australia in 1968, and New Zealand in 1987. Furthermore, United States and these countries continued to reform their immigration laws with increasing preference for skilled and educated migrants. These legal changes cleared the legal barriers that blocked Chinese immigrants from obtaining permanent residence and citizenship in the past and paved the way for student migrants to come and stay.

Therefore, post-1978 mainland Chinese student migration is more comparable to student migration from Taiwan and Hong Kong after the 1960s than to the generations

²⁶ Here I support David Zweig and Chen Changgui's discussion of the trend of students staying abroad based on their comprehensive statistical analysis and interviews with Chinese students. As they pointed out, the 1989 Incident was a political contingency aggravating rather than initiating the trend of Chinese student staying abroad. Zweig and Chen, *China's Brain Drain to the United States*, 9, 21.

²⁷ Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 (79 Stat. 911). The 1965 Act allocated 170,000 quota slots to the countries of the Eastern Hemisphere, with a maximum of 20,000 for each country. The quota for Western Hemisphere changed later to country-specific limits: in 1976, Congress completed the logic of formal equality by imposing country quotas of 20,000 on the Western Hemisphere.

of Chinese students studying abroad before 1949. With a similar study-and-stay migration pattern, students from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and mainland China can be viewed as a type of migrants seeking better economic, educational, and social resources and opportunities outside of their native lands. In the beginning of their migration, political concerns might serve as a most important “push” factor; however, student migration from Taiwan and the Mainland have increasingly become mainly motivated by economic and social factors and their migrations were mainly voluntary and individually based. Chinese student migrants from the Mainland, Taiwan, and Hong Kong also experienced the same historical immigration reforms and the economic and cultural opportunities in post-1965 United States. They also benefited from postwar improvements in transportation and communication technologies which made their emigration journey much easier than for past generations and made staying abroad less a disruption of their ties with the homeland.

Together with student migrants from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and other regions, post-1978 Chinese student migrants have become part of the larger story of Chinese emigration and helped transform Chinese immigrant communities demographically and socially. Unlike pre-1949 generations of Chinese students studying abroad and remaining separate and distant from Chinese immigrants, contemporary student migrants converge with the larger streams of Chinese emigration and become a significant part of the immigrant community.²⁸ By the end of the 1990s, the Chinese

²⁸ Ye Weili's excellent study of Chinese students in the United States from 1900 to 1927 provides a salient example of the separation and distance between Chinese students and ethnic Chinese communities in the United States. These students held ambivalent relationships and attitudes towards their lower-class compatriots who worked and lived in ghetto-like Chinatowns. Generally speaking, students were “the

government estimated that about 300,000-400,000 Chinese students/scholars and their immediate families had become permanent residents abroad, and the largest proportion of student migrants (commonly estimated at around forty to fifty percent of the total) were staying in the United States.²⁹ On the other hand, the total number of mainland Chinese new migrants from 1978 to 2001 was estimated around 1.5 to 2 million.³⁰ Therefore, students-turned immigrants comprised around a quarter of overall mainland Chinese emigrants in the two decades after China's reform. Another estimate in 2000 noted that the overall number of students-turned immigrants from the mainland, Taiwan and Hong Kong since the 1970s should have been more than 1 million, comprising

Other in terms of class and modernity" to labor migrants, and had little contact with them on a daily basis. While some students from 1910 and 1912 were involved in "general welfare work" in helping to improve the conditions of the Chinese laborers (as the "other" distinct from themselves), they worked as reformers and outsiders of the Chinese migrant communities and their goals were ultimately to improve the image of China in America. Ye, *Seeking Modernity in China's Name*, 83-84. In contrast, the majority of contemporary student migrants themselves have become immigrants or U.S. citizens. As an organic part of the immigrant community, they increasingly realized that reforming and developing the community meant reforming and developing their own social habitat and daily life. However, there is still a profound gap between student/professional migrants and lower-class migrants. See Chapter 3.

²⁹ Liu Hong, "Explaining the Dynamics and Patterns of Chinese Migration since 1980: A Historical and Demographical Perspective," *Journal of Oriental Studies* 39, no. 1 (2005): 95-96. Liu noted that exact numbers of Chinese students studying abroad are hard to obtain, because there is no central agency in China collecting and compiling the data of student migration (there are multiple agencies such as the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Public Safety, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs). In addition, there are various kinds of students/scholars (such as state-sponsored vs. self-funded), and large numbers of people already residing outside of China adjusted their status to student visas. All these factors make it hard to collect accurate data of student migrants. As for the proportion of students in the United States, there is no exact data and I tend to follow the common estimate that around forty to fifty percent of Chinese student migrants are in the United States. Chen Xi, "Non-Remaining and Non-Retuning: The Mainland Chinese Students in Japan and Europe since the 1970s," in *Globalizing Chinese Migration: Trends in Europe and Asia*, eds. Pál Nyíri and Igor Saveliev (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2002), 158-72; Wu Kaijun, "Qian xi Meiguo de Zhongguo dalu xin yimin," 51; Zhao Hongying, "Jin yi er shi nian lai Zhongguo dalu xin yimin ruogan wenti de sikao (Reflections on the mainland Chinese new immigrants over last one to two decades)" *Huaqiao huaren lishi yanjiu* 4 (December 2000): 7-16.

³⁰ Again there is no consensus of the number of Chinese emigrants after reform. As cited in Liu's study, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs estimated in 1996 that more than 1 million originally from the PRC had obtained foreign residency; National Overseas Chinese Affairs noted 2 million; and another source (www.chinanews.com.cn) in September 2001 noted that since 1980 there had been 1.5 million Chinese citizens emigrated aboard (not including illegal immigrants). Liu categorized these migrants into four categories: students-turned migrants, chain migrants (800,000 emigrants during 1978-1991); emigrant professionals. Liu Hong, "Explaining the Dynamics and Patterns of Chinese Migration since 1980."

about 40-50 percent of the overall more than 3 million of Chinese new immigrants from the three regions at that time.³¹

As part of Chinese emigration, student migration highlights the changing patterns of Chinese emigration after World War II. First of all, together with student migration from Taiwan, Hong Kong and other regions, post-reform Chinese student migration strengthened the shift of major destinations of postwar Chinese emigration from Southeast Asian countries to industrialized societies in North America, Australasia, Western Europe, and Japan. While the latter reformed their immigration laws and increasingly recruited educated and skilled migrants as mentioned earlier, the former basically closed doors for massive Chinese immigration during the postwar decolonization and the founding of indigenous nation-states in Southeast Asia. In 1963, Asia hosted 99.6 percent of Chinese overseas; in contrast, the share dropped to 77.7 percent in 1997.³² In the early 1990s, the seven nations with fastest growth of Chinese immigrant population during 1980 and 1990 were the following: Japan (12.7%), the United States (7.1%), Canada (8.5%), West Germany (8.5%), Italy (19.7%), Spain (16.2%), and Australia (11.2%). (see Table 2 of the global distribution of Chinese overseas).³³

Student migrants also helped mark post-reform Chinese migrants as different from past generations in terms of origin. Unlike past Chinese emigrants mainly from

³¹ Luo Qi and Zeng Jianfeng, *Hai wai hua ren yu Fujian de jing ji fa zhan* (Singapore: Xinjiapo guo li da xue Dong Ya yan jiu suo, 2000), 8.

³² Laurence J.C. Ma, "Space, Place, and Transnationalism in the Chinese Diaspora," in *The Chinese Diaspora: Space, Place, Mobility, and Identity*, eds. Laurence J. C. Ma. and Carolyn Cartier (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 2003), 19.

³³ By the early 1990s, in terms of absolute number, the ten nations with largest ethnic Chinese population were: Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, Myanmar, Philippines, Cambodia, Laos, and Japan. Liu, "Explaining the Dynamics and Patterns of Chinese Migration since 1980," 94.

Table 2. Global Distribution of Chinese Overseas, 1960-1999, by thousands

	1960	1970	1980	1990	1999 ^a
World	15,385.2	19,293.8	24,654.4	31,371	34,870
Asia	14,880.1	18,342.6	22,391.4	27,664	28,000
(%)	96.7	95.1	90.8	88.2	80.3
Americas	406.6	711.2	1,557.7	2,664	5,200
(%)	2.6	3.7	6.3	8.5	14.9
Europe	15.8	112.1	525.2	589	1,000
(%)	0.1	0.6	2.1	1.9	2.9
Oceania	42.2	68.5	105.5	356	550
(%)	0.3	0.3	0.5	1.1	1.6
Africa	40.6	59.4	74.7	99	120
(%)	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3

Sources: Statistics of 1960, 1970 and 1980 are from Dudley L. Poston, Jr, Michael Xinxiang Mao, and Mei-Yu Yu, “The Global Distribution of the Overseas Chinese around 1990,” *Population and Development Review* 20, no.3 (1994): 641; statistics of 1990 are from Luo Qi and Zeng Jianfeng, *Haiwai Huren yu Fujian de jingji fazhan* (Singapore: Xinjiapo guoli daxue Dongya yanjiusuo, 2000), 3; statistics of 1999 are from Taiwan Qiaowu Weiyuanhui, *Huaqiao jingji nianjian*, 1999.

^a Statistics of 1999 do not include Hong Kong and Macao as they had been returned under China's sovereignty (Hong Kong in 1997 and Macao in 1999).

southern China (particularly Canton and Fujian provinces), post-reform Chinese emigrants are from all around the country, and student migrants highlight this historical shift. For student migrants and the chain migration they led, the majority originated from north and east China, particularly major cities such as Beijing and Shanghai. A

survey shows that among Chinese students and scholars in the United States, 52 percent were from major cities, 29.8 percent from medium-sized cities, and many from northern parts of the nation.³⁴ Accordingly, the percentage of emigrants among the local population in non-traditional regions of emigration increased: from 1982 to 1990, it increased from 1.36% to 4.51% in Beijing, from 0.46% to 4.98% in Shanghai, from 0.17% to 0.44% in Tianjin, from 0.06% to 0.18% in Liaoning, from 0.02% to 0.12% in Jilin, and from 0.05% to 0.18% in Jiangsu.³⁵ There even have been calls in recent years among returned students and scholars for labeling cities such as Beijing and Shanghai with increasing numbers of emigrants as new *qiaoxiang* (hometowns of emigrants).³⁶

Student migrants also helped transform the socio-economic characteristics of contemporary Chinese immigrants in the United States. Compared to previous generations of Chinese immigrants who were mainly labor migrants and small business owners, student migrants possess more social and cultural capital and have better economic and social mobility. According to the 1990 U.S. Census, 31% of mainland Chinese immigrants (aged 25 years or older) reported having attained college degrees, compared to 21% of Americans in general. Among the employed workers (aged 16 years or older), 29% of immigrants from the mainland held managerial or professional occupations, compared to less than a quarter of American workers in general. Median

³⁴ Luo and Zeng, *Hai wai hua ren yu Fujian*, cited in Liu Hong, “New Migrants and the Revival of Overseas Chinese Nationalism,” *Journal of Contemporary China* 14, no. 43 (May 2005): 299.

³⁵ Huang Yiping, *Economic Reform and Emigration Pressures in China* (A Report Prepared for ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, 1996), <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/bangkok/paper/china.htm>; also see Liu, “Revival of Overseas Chinese Nationalism,” 299.

³⁶ For example, I met a returnee in Beijing in 2005. He participated in local returnee associations affiliated with the Beijing municipal government and helped edit a collection of essays by government officials and returnees, including calls for categorizing Beijing as a new *qiaoxiang*. The Beijing Chapter of Association of Returned Overseas Chinese, ed., *Haigui Beijing* (Beijing, 2005).

family income was \$34,000 for immigrants from the mainland compared to \$30,000 for average American households.³⁷ On the other hand, with their economic status and social mobility, student and professional migrants have become distinct from lower-class labor migrants and illegal immigrants and contributed to the bifurcation of contemporary Chinese immigrant communities. In the 1990 census, poverty rate was 13% for immigrant families from the mainland, compared with about 10% for average American families.³⁸

Chinese Migration Policies and New Migrants: historical and global perspectives

The historical transformation of Chinese student migration, Chinese emigration, and overseas immigrant communities raises both old and new questions: What did student migration and student migrants mean to Chinese diasporas? How did the Chinese government cope with the new groups of migrants and the changing patterns of Chinese migration? How did Chinese migrants construct their community and identity in the new historical context?

Scholars from different nations and disciplines approach these questions from different perspectives. Chinese scholars have conducted valuable and detailed surveys

³⁷ The percentage of immigrants from Taiwan and Hong Kong who attained college degrees was even higher, 62% and 46% respectively; among employed workers, 47% of immigrants from Taiwan and 41% from Hong Kong held managerial positions; and the median family income for immigrants from Taiwan was \$34,000 and Hong Kong \$50,000. Min Zhou and Rebecca Kim, "Formation, Consolidation, and Diversification of the Ethnic Elite: The Case of the Chinese Immigrant Community in the United States," *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 2, no. 2 (2001): 239.

³⁸ Ibid. The poverty rates for immigrant families from Taiwan and Hong Kong were 12% and 7% respectively.

of student migrants.³⁹ However, many of these studies tend to follow the state-sanctioned and state-encouraged theme of national modernization and focus on the role of student migrants and returning students in participating in China's education, research, and economic development. Many studies are descriptive reports of these student migrants (either their success abroad as stimulating stories of ethnic pride as a Chinese or their active participation back in China).⁴⁰ A few scholars have looked at the distinct migration patterns and identities of student migrants. For example, Chen Xi points out the “non-remaining and non-returning” state of student migrants, and Li Minghuan suggests that Chinese student and scholars are a transition group different from local immigrant communities based on her fieldwork in Europe.⁴¹

Another group of scholars, mainly social scientists from China and other countries in the field of China studies, focus on student migrants as a distinct group of social and transnational mobility, transferring science, technology, and educational and economic resources between China and other countries and representing China's

³⁹ For example, Shanghai xinyimin yanjiu keti zhu, “Shanghai shi xinyimin yanjiu,” *Zhongguo renkou kexue*, no. 3 (1997): 36-41, 52. Luo Keren and Ma Zhengdong, “Shanghai xinyimin rencai qunti qianxi,” *Renkou yu jinji*, no. 4 (1997): 35-38.

⁴⁰ There are two major Chinese journals publishing Chinese scholars' and journalists' work on the study-abroad program and student migrants: *Huaqiao Huaren Lishi Yanjiu* (Overseas Chinese History Studies) and *Shenzhou Xueren* (Chinese Scholars Abroad). The former is more academic and published by the Overseas Chinese History Research Institute in Beijing (though the journal is managed by the All-China Association of Returned Chinese Migrants, or *Qiaolian*, a semi-official organization). The latter is more journalistic and published by the Ministry of Education. Both journals are more or less affiliated with the government, though the former is more research-oriented. Another good example of state-sanctioned research on the study-abroad program and student migrants is the following collection of essays: *Chuguo liuxue gongzuo yanjiuhui*, ed., *Quanguo chuguo liuxue gongzuo yanjiuhui chengli shi zhou nian jinian wenji* (Beijing: Beijing University Press, 2002).

⁴¹ Chen Xi, “Non-Remaining and Non-Returning: the Mainland Chinese Students in Japan and Europe since the 1970s,” in *Globalizing Chinese Migration: Trends in Europe and Asia*, ed. Pál Nyíri and I. R. Saveliev (Aldershot, Hampshire, England: Ashgate, 2002), 158-72. Li Minghuan, “A Group in Transition: Chinese Students and Scholars in the Netherlands,” in *Globalizing Chinese Migration*, 172-88. Chen Xi is a researcher at the Institute for Overseas Chinese History Studies at Beijing, China. Li Minghuan wrote her doctoral thesis in the Netherlands and now teaches at Xiamen University in China.

openness to and integration into the world. These efforts were best shown in a conference entitled “People on the Move—the Transnational Flow of Chinese Human Capital,” which was held during October 20-22, 2005, in Hong Kong.⁴² Many of the conference papers were political and economic analysis and policy suggestions. They provided empirical studies for the educational and economic impact of Chinese student migrants but paid less attention to their border-crossing process and community and identity construction as immigrants.⁴³

Immigration scholars (based within as well as outside of the United States) have studied student migrants as part of the broader picture of contemporary Chinese migration. They study immigration patterns of recent Chinese migration and emphasize its difference from the past. Mainly social scientists, these scholars tend to focus on the new characteristics of recent Chinese migration. For example, in his insightful introduction to an anthology of geographical studies of the Chinese diaspora, Lawrence Ma stressed that “the circumstances surrounding overseas migration of the Chinese and the economic, geographic and social consequences in host societies” dramatically changed after the 1960s. He highlighted the major differences between contemporary Chinese migration and the past, such as the changing migration laws and policies in North America and Australasia which have replaced Southeast Asia as the main

⁴² The conference was organized and sponsored by the Center on China’s Transnational Relations (CCTR) at Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST). The center’s director, Professor David Zweig, has long conducted research on Chinese students abroad and returned student migrants.

⁴³ As the conference website notes, the conference’s “broad conceptual frameworks will be drawn from migration studies, education/brain drain research, the role of human capital in national development, the role of individuals in technology transfer, and other literature that links the flow of people to broad issues of technical, economic, political and cultural development.” Therefore, the core research question is “to what extent does inbound migration affect China’s development and how does China’s outbound migration affect countries in the Asia-Pacific region?” CCTR, <http://www.cctr.ust.hk/conference/index.htm> (accessed March 18, 2009).

destination of contemporary Chinese migrants, migrants' increasingly diversified origins and cultures, their enhanced social, educational and occupational status, and their dramatic difference "from the pre-1960s sojourners in spatial preferences, cultural identities and attachments to place."⁴⁴

However, as historian Wang Gungwu cautioned, we need to ask the questions of "how new and why new" is contemporary Chinese emigration.⁴⁵ For example, we need to analyze how and why the Chinese government changed its policies on emigration and migrants along with the surging waves of recent emigration, how and why student migration and students-turned migrants became a phenomenon, rather than simply applauding new migrants and student/professional migrants' higher social and economic status and better social mobility compared to past Chinese migrants. We also need to explain how student migration became remarkable in post-1965 United States rather than before 1965.

Moreover, contemporary student migration and Chinese diasporas are also constantly changing. For example, a tide of return (Chinese students and students-

⁴⁴ Ma, "Space, Place, and Transnationalism in the Chinese Diaspora," 2, 32. Besides this anthology edited by Ma and Cartier, increasing scholarly attention to recent Chinese migrants and their new characteristics can also be seen in several other major anthologies in the field of Chinese overseas studies. Elizabeth Sinn, *The Last Half Century of Chinese Overseas* (Aberdeen, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1998); Nyíri and Saveliev, *Globalizing Chinese Migration*; Wang Ling-chi and Wang Gungwu, eds., *The Chinese Diaspora: Selected Essays* (Singapore: Times Academic, 2003). This anthology was based on a conference on the studies of Chinese diaspora convened in San Francisco in 1992, with the theme of "Luodi Shenggen: The Legal, Political, and Economic Status of Chinese in Diaspora." The conference led to the formation of the International Society for the Study of the Chinese Overseas (ISSCO) in 1992. Mette Thuno, ed. *Beyond Chinatown: New Chinese Migration and the Global Expansion of China* (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2007). This anthology was based on the fifth conference of the International Society for the Study of Chinese Overseas (ISSCO) held in Copenhagen in May 2004.

⁴⁵ Wang Gungwu, "New Migrants: How New? Why New?" in *Diasporic Chinese Ventures: The Life and Work of Wang Gungwu*, eds. Gregor Benton and Liu Hong (London: Routledge Curzon, 2004), 227-38.

turned migrants returning to China) emerged after the mid-1990s.⁴⁶ This again challenges the current dominant scholarly narrative of post-WWII Chinese diasporas, which has taken lots of efforts in documenting the historical transformation of postwar Chinese migrants from “sojourners” to “settlers.” In 1992, a milestone conference on Chinese diaspora studies convened in San Francisco with the theme of “*luodi shenggen*” (planting roots in the receiving society). However, the keynote speech by historian Wang Gungwu in that conference raised the concern that the “*luodi shenggeng*” concept may not fit the educated and middle-class students-turned migrants from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and mainland China who had returned or were uncertain about whether to return or settle down abroad.⁴⁷ Chapters 4 and 5 focus on the recent phenomenon of student migrants’ return to China. They show that a historical perspective of contemporary Chinese migration can keep us aware of the constant changes and multiple outlooks of migration and refresh our understanding of migration as a process rather than an end of people’s mobility and identity.

Another useful approach of studying Chinese student migrants and contemporary Chinese diasporas is to use the China case to discuss broader global themes such as international competition for educated/skilled migrants and the intensified interaction between migrants and sending societies in recent decades. Geographer Ronald Skeldon notes that contemporary Chinese migration represents a historical transformation from “exceptional to universal,” mainly considering a past

⁴⁶ In fact, students from Taiwan and Hong Kong already started their waves of return after the mid-1980s as mentioned earlier in this introduction.

⁴⁷ Wang, “Preface,” in *The Chinese Diaspora: Selected Essays*, vii-viii. In a later essay, Wang used the word “migranthood” to describe the uncertain and flexible identity of student migrants. Wang, “*Liuxue and Yimin: From Study to Migranthood*,” in *Beyond Chinatown*, 165-81.

when Chinese were excluded on the basis of race from countries such as the United States and a present in which Chinese migration is a significant part of larger post-1965 global migration and the integration of China in the global system. Whether pre-1965 Chinese migration was really exceptional is debatable, but Skeldon's generalization points to the important global and comparable contexts of recent Chinese migration.⁴⁸ Contemporary Chinese migration reflects the determining themes of the late capitalism that has generated increasing border-crossings of labor, capital, goods, and ideas. Student migrants have been a significant part of skilled migrants moving from developing to developed countries and then circulating across national borders. The Chinese state's increasing attention to Chinese emigrants also parallels other nation-states such as Mexico and India that have in recent decades made vigorous attempts to mobilize emigrants for national interests. My dissertation discusses these global patterns and comparative cases, in Chapter 2 (on student migration and post-1965 U.S. immigration laws) and in Chapter 5 (on transnational citizenship).

⁴⁸ Skeldon himself leaves the notion of "from exceptional to universal" open for discussion. As he states, the "end of exceptionalism" in postwar Chinese migration remains a question rather than a statement; on the other hand, "we can legitimately ask the question whether the Chinese form a very particular migrant group that is quite distinct from other migrant groups in both its patterns of movement and its types and forms of behavior." Skeldon suggests that some characteristics of Chinese migration in the nineteenth century that were conventionally seen as exceptional of the Chinese group, such as the majority being male sojourners from certain regions, were in fact parallel to some European migrants. On the other hand, Skeldon suggests that the exceptional part of Chinese migration might lie in the fact that Chinese migrants were marginalized and excluded in comparison with European migrants. Ronald Skeldon, "The Chinese Overseas: The End of Exceptionalism?" in *Beyond Chinatown: New Chinese Migration and the Global Expansion of China*, ed. Mette Thuno (Leifsgade: NIAS Press, 2007), 35-48. My perspective is that even as Chinese were singled out first to be excluded, this was far from exceptional in international immigration although it exemplified the widespread expansion of race-based discriminatory immigration laws and racial ideologies. There are a large number of studies of U.S. immigration and racial formation with Chinese migrants as one among many groups being excluded and discriminated. Some representative works include: Ronald Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore* (Boston: Back Bay Books, 1998); Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton University Press, 2004); Erika Lee, "The 'Yellow Peril' and Asian Exclusion in the Americas," *Pacific Historical Review* 76, no. 4 (2007): 537-62; Lee, "Orientalisms in the Americas: A Hemispheric Approach to Asian American History," *Journal of Asian American Studies* 8, no.3 (2005): 235-56.

Student/Professional Migrants and Integration in Post-1965 United States

In popular and scholarly accounts, educated and skilled migrants have often been viewed as rather successful and smooth in their integration into the U.S. society based on their economic status and cultural capital (such as skills and fluency in English). In the MPI report mentioned earlier, for example, the integration section focused on labor and unauthorized immigrants who lack economic resources and English language skills, and little attention was paid to skilled and educated migrants.⁴⁹

With large proportions of student and professional migrants, post-1965 Asian American communities in fact have been portrayed as a “model minority” in American media, mainly referring to their educational and economic success, hardworking and self-discipline, and family values.⁵⁰ This image and concept has been criticized by scholars (though not yet discredited in popular accounts) for its ignorance of the diversity among Asian Americans and of the bifurcation of migrants in many migrant groups, as well as for its negative impact on race relations and its embedded ideology of Asians as “perpetual foreigners.”⁵¹

On the other hand, the large numbers of students and professional Asian migrants after 1965 did transform Asian American communities and their position in and integration into the American society, especially for communities such as Chinese

⁴⁹ Abraham, Hamilton and Meissner, *Immigration and America's Future*.

⁵⁰ Among the earliest media portrayal of Asian American as a “model minority” are William Peterson, “Success Story: Japanese-American Style,” *New York Times Magazine*, January 9, 1966, 38; “Success Story of One Minority in the U.S.,” *U.S. News and World Report*, December 26, 1966, 73, as cited in Robert G. Lee, *Orientals: Asian Americans in Popular Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999), 149.

⁵¹ For example, Henry Yu, *Thinking Orientals: Migration, Contact, and Exoticism in Modern America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Lee, *Orientals*; Lucie Cheng and Philip Q. Yang, “Asians: The ‘Model Minority’ Deconstructed,” in *Ethnic Los Angeles*, eds. Roger Waldinger and Mehdi Bozorgmehr (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1996), 305-44.

Americans that were mainly comprised of labor migrants and were concentrated in Chinatowns in the past. Scholars have documented and analyzed the significant new characteristics of post-1965 Chinese communities in the United States with increasing numbers of professional migrants. For example, Hsiang-shui Chen describes the new concentration of Chinese professionals (mainly from Taiwan) in Flushing instead of in the old Chinatown in the New York City.⁵² Timothy Fong examines the development of the “first suburban Chinatown” in Monterey Park, California, revealing that the middle- and upper-class status of suburban Chinese immigrants complicated the local racial politics.⁵³ Wei Li uses the term “ethno-burb” (ethnic suburb) to emphasize the multi-ethnic suburban environment in which recent Chinese immigrants live and interact with other groups rather than being isolated in traditional Chinatowns.⁵⁴ Written mainly by sociologists, anthropologists, and geographers, these studies focus on the new characteristics and changes of Chinese immigrant communities and highlight the social mobility of new migrants rather than emphasize the historical context and significance of that social mobility and migrants’ integration in post-1965 U.S. society.

In a recent major study of post-1965 U.S. immigration, sociologists Richard Alba and Nick Lee adopt a historical perspective and compare contemporary U.S. immigration with the massive waves of immigration at the turn of the twentieth century. They challenge the popular misperception that contemporary immigrants are less

⁵² Hsiang-Shui Chen, *Chinatown No More: Taiwan immigrants in contemporary New York* (Cornell University Press, 1992).

⁵³ Timothy Fong, *First Suburban Chinatown: The Remaking of Monterey Park, California* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994).

⁵⁴ Wei Li, “Anatomy of a New Ethnic Settlement: The Chinese Ethnoburb in LA,” *Urban Studies* 35, no. 3 (1998): 479-501; Wei Li, “Building Ethnoburbia: The Emergence and Manifestation of the Chinese Ethnoburb in LA’s San Gabriel Valley,” *Journal of Asian American Studies* 2, no.1 (February 1999): 1-28.

assimilable than past waves of immigration and redefine the “American mainstream” as not fixed but constantly changing and expanding to include more non-mainstream groups over time. Their study offers a promising picture of immigrants’ integration into post-1965 U.S society with significant institutional and cultural changes such as the liberal reforms of immigration laws and the widely acclaimed ideology of multiculturalism. In their study, Asian American communities with large numbers of professionals entering mainstream American society seem to represent this encouraging direction of integration and assimilation of post-1965 U.S. immigration.⁵⁵

Student and professional migrants seem to offer a good opportunity to confirm the expanding American mainstream and the promising integration prospects. However, their integration processes are also very complex. My study of the Chinese community in Minnesota suggests that for Chinese student and professional migrants, social and economic status may stimulate their individual integration into the mainstream society such as various professional fields and cultural organizations; however, the historically embedded racial line perpetuates their “outsider” status. On the other hand, their individual mobility contributed to their lack of motivation for participation in ethnic communities and for promotion of collective interests. In this regard, post-1965 U.S. institutional reforms and cultural liberalism contributed to individual mobility of racial minorities but risked weakening their collective voice and strength. The encouragement of skilled migrants and individualism also contribute to this post-1965 immigrant culture and community identity. The integration issue becomes even more complex and

⁵⁵ Richard Alba and Victor Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream: Assimilation and Contemporary Immigration* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003).

challenging considering the tide of return and circular migration among Chinese student and professional migrants.

Return Migration: immigration framework revisited

Similar to the gradually ceding fever of student migration from Taiwan and Hong Kong after the economic development and increasing return to those two regions, increasing numbers of Chinese students and students-turned immigrants returned to China since the mid-1990s, permanently or temporarily, as China experienced remarkable and steady economic reforms and social development. Though the majority of these Chinese students are still staying abroad, the number of returnees since the mid-1990s has increased 13 percent annually. In 1990, 1593 students returned to China; the number increased to 5750 in 1995, 9121 in 2000, and 34,987 in 2005. Besides returned students and scholars, a large number of students-turned immigrants returned without settling down in China and they travel between China and the country of their immigration. A survey conducted in 2000 by China's Ministry of Education showed that of 551 overseas educated mainland Chinese who had set up enterprises in 13 industrial parks, only 44 percent resided in China on a regular basis.⁵⁶ While the United States hosts around half of all overseas Chinese students, the returning rate from the United States in the last decade has been estimated as 18.8 percent.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Zhongguo Jiaoyubu, “*Liuxue renyuan huiguo chuanye de fazhan zhuangkuang ji zhengce jianyi: liuxue renyuan huiduo chuanye baogao*, 2000, cited in Biao Xiang, “Emigration from China: A Sending Country Perspective,” *International Migration* 41, no. 3 (2003): 31.

⁵⁷ Chen Xi, “*Liuxuesheng de zhiliu yu zhongguo zhengfu de duiche*,” *Huaqiao huaren lishi yanjiu* 2 (1999): 63-76. Chen estimated that students in the U.S. comprised 53.3 percent of all the Chinese students abroad, and the return rate was 18.8 percent.

Return migration to mainland China represents the significant historical changes in the Pacific with China's economic development and rise to the global stage. It challenges the traditional framework of immigration studies that focuses on the settlement and "assimilation" of immigrants in the receiving country. It shows that immigration is never a linear process but rather concerns transnational mobility and constant identity redefinition.

Return migration is by no means a new phenomenon. In 1885, geographer E.G. Ravenstein had already noted the principle of return migration when he offered as a migration law: "Each main current of migration produces a compensating counter-current."⁵⁸ During the mass immigration of Europeans to America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, about a quarter to a third of migrants returned to Europe, and higher rates, of over 50 percent, among several groups such as Italians and Greeks.⁵⁹ Between 1900 and 1990, about 38 million immigrants were admitted into the United States, while an estimated 12 million foreign-born persons emigrated.⁶⁰ That is, around 30 out of 100 immigrants to the United States returned home.⁶¹ The U.S. Census Bureau estimated an annual emigration trend from 252,000 in 1991 to 278,000 in 1998,

⁵⁸ E. G. Ravenstein, "The Laws of Migration," *Journal of the Statistical Society of London* 48, no.2 (June 1885): 167-235. Also see George Gmelch, "Return Migration," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 9 (1980): 135-59.

⁵⁹ Mark Wyman, *Round-Trip to America: The Immigrants Return to Europe, 1880- 1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).

⁶⁰ Robert Warren and Ellen Percy Kraly, *The Elusive Exodus: Emigration from the United States*, Population Trends and Public Policy Occasional Paper No. 8 (Washington, D.C.: Population Reference Bureau, March 1985), cited in *Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 2000* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2002), 269.

⁶¹ See Table M ("Immigration and Emigration by Decades, 1901-1990), in *Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service 2000*, 269. According to the Yearbook, "the collection of statistics on emigration from the United States was discontinued in 1957; no direct measure of emigration has been available since then. Estimates compiled in this country and statistics collected in other countries indicate that emigration from the United States has increased steadily since the 1950s, exceeding 100,000 per year since 1970... These figures are consistent with U.S. historical experience."

while approximately 300,000 had been projected to emigrate annually in the 2000-2005 period.⁶²

Though emigration and return migration has been “a large and growing component of U.S. population change,” it has long been absent from the historical narrative of American immigration: as historian Mark Wyman states, “Returned immigrants rejected America, and it seems, American scholars have rejected them.”⁶³ A major reason for the “rejection” of return migration by American scholars is the conventional research framework of immigration studies that portrays a linear process for migrants from immigration to permanent settlement to naturalization and “assimilation.” U.S. claims to being a “nation of immigrants” and the powerful belief in “American exceptionalism” also describe the United States as a land of opportunity for immigrants, where immigrants achieve the “American dream” and become assimilated to the American society.⁶⁴ However, as Wyman pointed out at the end of his book *Round-Trip to America*:

⁶² *Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 2000*, 269-70. As the *Yearbook* states, “in the longer run, emigration is projected to increase steadily with the growth of the foreign-born population, finally reaching a projected annual level of more than 500,000 in the year 2100. The juxtaposition of constant in-migration with increasing emigration throughout the last 70 years of the next century yields a decline in the numerical level of annual net migration to the United States, and an even greater decline in the impact of this component relative to overall population size.” Also see the Table on p.270, “Estimates and Projections of Emigration from the United States: 1991 to 2005.”

⁶³ Wyman, *Round-Trip to America*, 4.

⁶⁴ As the historian Donna R. Gabaccia notes, “the immigrant paradigm defines a particular interpretation of American exceptionalism. It portrays the United States as the world’s first democracy and its most open frontier in the nineteenth century and as the world’s strongest industrializing economy in the twentieth.” This immigrant paradigm therefore defines the United States as “a nation of immigrants, in which incorporation of foreigners symbolizes the promise and accomplishments of American democracy.” This immigrant paradigm not only distorts historical facts (for example, the United States was only one of the many receiving countries of Italian immigrants: just under half of Italian migrants before WWI went to other European countries, and a little less than a third came to the United States, of whom half were not immigrants but sojourners returning to Italy); it also represents “the tyranny of the national” that “makes migration a significant theme mainly when it constructs nations” and therefore “transforms migrants, and their historians, into ‘nowhere men,’ occupying a historiographical nowhere

American ‘exceptionalism’, the view that the American experience has been unique and that developments in the United States were basically different from those elsewhere, is dealt a further blow by the remigration story. The United States was not a land where every immigrant came to stay; it was a country seen by many foreigners as a means rather than an end. As such, the American immigration pageant contained many scenes known elsewhere, for temporary stays as well as permanent moves have long been part of human migrations...⁶⁵

Return migration (“remigration” in Wyman’s term) therefore is a challenge to the conventional linear immigration model and reveals universal human mobility. In his comprehensive review of return migration studies, anthropologist George Gmelch defines return migrants as those who returned and resettled at their home societies.⁶⁶ Most early studies of return migration (including Wyman’s *Round-Trip to Europe*) focused mainly on labor migrants who returned and settled down back in the home society. Accordingly, the major questions addressed in these studies of return migration, as reviewed by Gmelch, included how migrants returned, how they re-adjusted to the society of origin, and how they impacted the home society.⁶⁷

In contrast, my study of return migration looks at returning migrants who are middle- and upper-class professionals, and my focus is not necessarily on the settlement of returnees back in the homeland but more on their transnational mobility (including their continuous moving back and forth) between the home society and the immigrant society. Therefore, in my study, I define return migration not as definite return but a

land.” Donna R. Gabaccia, “Is Everywhere Nowhere? Normads, Nations, and the Immigrant Paradigm of United States History,” *The Journal of American History* 86, no. 3 (December 1999): 1115-34.

⁶⁵ Wyman, 207.

⁶⁶ Gmelch, “Return Migration,” 136.

⁶⁷ Examples of these early studies reviewed by Gmelch include W.R. Bohning, *The Migration of Workers in the United Kingdom and the European Community* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972); F.Eikass, “You Can’t Go Home Again? Culture Shock and Patterns of Adaptation, Norwegian Returnees,” *Papers in Anthropology* 20 (1979): 105-16; Edward Taylor, “The Social Adjustment of Returned Migrants to Jamaica,” in Frances Henry, ed., *Ethnicity in the Americas* (The Hague: Mouton, 1976), 213-30; R. Rhoades, “From Eaves to Main Street: Return Migration and the Transformation of a Spanish Village,” *Papers in Anthropology* 20 (1979): 57-74.

constant *re-turn*— returning to the home society, re-turning to the immigrant society, continuously turning back and forth and crossing national boundaries with residences and participation in both societies. Accordingly, I am not studying returning Chinese students who returned immediately after graduation; I am focusing on returnees who obtained U.S. immigrant status and continued to travel back and forth between the United States and China. My definition of “re-turn” also differs from most transnational migration studies which assume migrants mainly residing in the receiving society and therefore analyze migrants’ engagement with the home society as an *addition to* rather than the *essence of* migrants’ daily life. This is why Peter Kivisto concludes in his comprehensive review of recent transnational migration studies literature that “transnationalism” is only a revision rather than a replacement of the assimilation model.⁶⁸

My definition of return migration therefore is similar to what geographers David Ley and Audrey Kobayashi used in studying returned Hong Kong migrants. In “Back to Hong Kong,” Ley and Kobayashi pointed out that the conventional meaning of return migration “conveys the same sense of closure and completion as the immigration–assimilation narrative.” However, “in a transnational era, movement is better described as continuous rather than completed.” Based on detailed interviews of returned Hong Kong migrants, the authors argued that return is only a phase of a life cycle that continually evolves: “Strategic switching between an economic pole in Hong Kong and

⁶⁸ Peter Kivisto, “Theorizing Transnational Immigration: A Critical Review of Current Efforts,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 24, no.4 (2001): 549-77.

a quality-of-life pole in Canada identifies each of them to be separate stations within an extended but unified social field.”⁶⁹

Emphasizing returning migrants’ personal rational choices and their transnational mobility, the study of Hong Kong returnees missed the larger social and cultural contexts and, as many current transnational studies have, largely ignored the power of nation-states in shaping the mobility and identity of transnational migrants. In addition, most studies of contemporary international and return migration, conducted mainly by non-historians, view migrants’ transnational mobility as a given rather than as historically formed and constantly changing. In my study of the return migration of Chinese student migrants, I emphasize the historical context in the late 1990s that led to the massive return migration and highlight both the mobility of migrants and the influence of nation-states, including immigration policies and citizenship laws that generate both tensions and possibilities for migrants.

Transnational Citizenship: tensions and possibilities

Citizenship is a key concept for defining and interpreting migrants’ mobility, community, and identity. In recent decades, scholars have increasingly revised the traditional concept of citizenship, which was exemplified by British sociologist T.H. Marshall as a set of rights that have been increasingly enlarged and have progressed in last three centuries from signifying civil citizenship to also including political and social

⁶⁹ David Ley and Audrey Kobayashi, “Back to Hong Kong: Return Migration or Transnational Sojourn?” *Global Networks* 5, no. 2 (2005): 111.

citizenship.⁷⁰ Instead, scholars from various disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, history, cultural studies, women's studies, and legal studies have studied citizenship as a social category and a site of negotiation and contestation, therefore focusing on people's daily lives and practices with citizenship and disclosing the exclusive characteristics of citizenship based on race, class, gender, sexuality and other socially constructed categories.⁷¹ This approach to citizenship complements studies of social histories of immigration since the 1960s in rewriting immigration history, placing migrants in the center of history, retrieving their agency in constructing their own lives, and showing the contestation on and evolution of the meaning of citizenship.⁷²

⁷⁰ T.H. Marshall, "Citizenship and Social Class," in *The Citizenship Debates*, ed. Gershon Shafir (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 93-111. For general review and collections of scholarship on citizenship, see Will Kymlicka and Wayne Norman, "Return of the Citizen: A Survey of Recent Work on Citizenship Theory," in *Theorizing Citizenship*, ed. Ronald Beiner (Albany: State University of New York, 1995), 283-322. Rogers M. Smith, *Civic Ideals: Conflicting Visions of Citizenship in U. S. History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997). The booming industry in citizenship studies also led to the founding of the interdisciplinary journal *Citizenship Studies* in 1997.

⁷¹ Representative works include Linda K. Kerber, "The Meaning of American Citizenship," *Journal of American History* 84:3 (1997): 833-54; Nancy F. Cott, "Marriage and Women's Citizenship in the United States, 1830-1934," *The American Historical Review* 103, no. 5 (December 1998): 1440-74; Candace Lewis Bredbenner, *A Nationality of Her Own: Women, Marriage, and the Law of Citizenship* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Linda K. Kerber, *No Constitutional Right to Be Ladies: Women and the Obligations of Citizenship* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998); Alexander Keyssar, *The Right to Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in the United States* (New York: Basic Books, 2000); Alice Kessler-Harris, *In Pursuit of Equity: Women, Men and the Quest for Economic Citizenship in 20th century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Michael B. Katz, *The Price of Citizenship: Redefining the American Welfare State* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2001); Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Evelyn Nakano Glenn, *Unequal Freedom: How Race and Gender Shaped American Citizenship and Labor* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002); Barbara Young Welke, *Recasting American Liberty: Gender, Race, Law, and the Railroad Revolution, 1865-1920* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Knopf, 2003); Aiwha Ong, *Flexible Citizenship: the Cultural Logics of Transnationality* (Duke and London: Duke University Press, 1999); Kunal M. Parker, "State, Citizenship, and Territory: the Legal Construction of Immigrants in Antebellum Massachusetts," *Law and History Review* 19 (2001): 583-643. As a historian, here I tend to include more historical works on citizenship than those from other disciplines.

⁷² Erika Lee, *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration during the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Aiwha Ong, *Buddha is Hiding: Refugees, Citizenship, the New America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*; Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham and London: Duke University

Immigration scholars also emphasize migrants' cultural identity and political status as two distinct dimensions of citizenship. While much of traditional social science literature viewed citizenship (with its symbol naturalization) as the sign of assimilation and shift of allegiance, recent immigration studies with transnational perspectives have redefined citizenship with "bifocality of outlooks" that characterize migrants' lives and identity.⁷³ In her study of four immigrant groups (the Salvadorans, Indians, Vietnamese, and Nigerians) in the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan region, anthropologist Caroline Brettell highlights the "bifocality of the outlooks" and the "dual sense of belonging" of the immigrants and argues that becoming a naturalized American citizen "does not necessarily alter their sense of cultural belonging, which is rooted strongly in the immutability of their place of birth."⁷⁴

The emphasis on the "bifocal outlook" of citizenship (political belonging and cultural belonging) helps rescue migrants' identity from nation-states and retrieve migrants' agency in constructing their own livelihood and identity. However, studies with this framework often tend to simply describe migrants' retention of the culture and identity of their country of origin and view migrants' identity as fixed and unaffected by their migration. Therefore, I borrow political scientist Thomas Faist's use of

Press, 1996); George J. Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Greta Gilbertson and Audrey Singer, "The Emergence of Protective Citizenship in the USA: Naturalization among Dominican Immigrants in the Post 1996 Welfare Reform Era," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 26 (2003): 25-51; David Ip, Christin Inglis and Chung Tong Wu, "Concepts of Citizenship and Identity among Recent Asian Immigrants in Australia," *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* 6 (1997): 363-84.

⁷³ The term "bifocality of outlooks" came from S. Vertovec, "Migrant Transnationalism and Modes of Transformation," *International Migration Review* 38 (2004): 970. In Soysal's term, it is the "decoupling of rights and identity." See Yasemin N. Soysal, "Citizenship and Identity: Living in Diasporas in Post-war Europe?" *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 23, no. 1 (2000): 1-15.

⁷⁴ Caroline B. Brettell, "Political Belonging and Cultural Belonging: Immigration Status, Citizenship and Identity among Four Immigrant Populations in a Southwestern City," *American Behavioral Scientist* 50, no.1 (Sept. 2006): 96.

“transnational citizenship” to emphasize migrants’ transnational ties and practices and to show how they relive and reinvent their identity rather than simply retaining the culture of the sending country or holding to one single culture.⁷⁵

Faist points out three types of immigrant cultures with different models of adaptation accordingly: the acculturation model with the assimilation perspective; the cultural-retention model based on ethnic pluralism; and the model of transnationally-induced syncretic cultures and practices.⁷⁶ Correspondingly, Faist discerns three types of citizenship. The first is national citizenship, referring to exclusive citizenship in a single nation-state which is based on the Marshallian codification of citizenship in terms of rights accorded to members of a nation-state who share a sense of belonging. The second is multicultural citizenship, indicating the recognition of multiculturalism but still placing nation-state institutions at the center in the process of conferring membership. The third is transnational citizenship, suggesting multilayered membership and emphasizing activities and identities spanning nation-state borders.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Thomas Faist, “Transnationalization in International Migration: Implications for the Study of Citizenship and Culture,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 23, no. 2 (2000): 189–222. Faist uses the concept of “transnational social space” to describe the condition/structure and context of migrants’ transnational ties and practices. In his words, “Transnational social spaces are combinations of ties, positions in networks and organizations, and networks of organizations that reach across the borders of multiple states. These spaces denote dynamic social processes, not static notions of ties and positions. Cultural, political and economic processes in transnational social spaces involve the accumulation, use and effects of various sorts of capital, their volume and convertibility: economic capital, human capital, such as educational credentials, skills and know-how, and social capital, mainly resources inherent in or transmitted through social and symbolic ties.” (p.191) Focusing on North-South migration, Faist argues that “The transnational social spaces inhabited by immigrants and refugees and immobile residents in both countries thus supplement the international space of sovereign nation-states.” (p.192) For my study, I mainly use his typology of “transnational citizenship” as challenging the two powerful frameworks of “assimilation-oriented citizenship” and “multicultural citizenship” and his insights on the “container concept of culture” as discussed later.

⁷⁶ Faist, 211-16. Faist uses the term “border-crossing expansion of social space” to describe how immigrant cultural syncretism connects to ongoing transnationalization.

⁷⁷ Faist, 202-210. Faist here uses dual state membership, including dual nationality, dual citizenship, or citizenship in one state while permanent residence status in another; here Faist kind of confines

As Faist argues, the main problem of the assimilation and cultural retention models is that they espouse “a container concept of culture,” therefore ignoring phenomena such as cultural diffusion and syncretism and constraining migrants’ identity and life in a nation-state. In contrast, the model of cultural syncretism and dual state membership views culture as fluid and dynamic across national boundaries and recognizes the increasing possibility of membership in more than one nation-state.⁷⁸ Faist’s typology of different types of citizenship and immigrant integration provides an insightful framework to critically think about citizenship and culture beyond the nation-state framework.

However, as Faist himself recognizes, the three types of citizenship he proposes are ideal types of citizenship. This concept of “transnational citizenship” is also prescriptive rather than descriptive of migrants’ real experiences with immigration and nationality laws. There is a need for detailed analysis of historical context and migrants’ real experiences with transnational citizenship, especially regarding the “dual state membership” question: while cultural syncretism is often relatively gradual and invisible (and sometimes tolerable as it is inevitable), legal identity and status spanning and crossing national boundaries is much more directly confrontational considering the existing laws and territorial borders based on nation-states.

In fact, the issue of “dual state membership” (or “dual citizenship” as more commonly discussed) already aroused tensions worldwide, both in politics and in

transnational citizenship in the legal sense as dual state membership, while my usage of transnational citizenship adopts the broader sense of citizenship with both legal status and cultural identity and highlight migrants’ own experiences with legal identity and cultural belonging)

⁷⁸ Faist, 211-16.

scholars' debates. With the number of countries authorizing or condoning multiple citizenships growing—seven of seventeen Latin American countries allowed dual citizenship in 1996, and by 2000 the number had increased to fourteen and the total number of countries in the world allowing dual citizenship directly or indirectly was about ninety-three—it led to political and public concerns in the receiving countries of “divided loyalty” and faltering immigration assimilation. For example, in Germany in 1998, the Social Democrat-Green Coalition proposed a new law to reduce the residence period of foreigners for naturalization from fifteen to eight years and to allow foreigners to retain their original nationality. This proposal triggered heated opposition from the Christian-Democratic Party and was accused of leading to “divided loyalties.”⁷⁹ In the United States, Harvard political scientist Samuel Huntington, who in the mid-1990s drew a pessimistic picture of the “clash of civilizations,” published a book titled *Who Are We* in 2004 and criticized the growing trend of dual and multiple citizenship in recent decades. He argues that “dual citizenship legitimizes dual identities and dual loyalties,” and citizenship has become “less a matter of identity and more one of utility.”⁸⁰

This study adopts Faist's usage of “transnational citizenship” to challenge the root of nation-state's claim in migrants' identity and culture and the “container” concept of national identity and culture—one of the key reasons for Huntington's

⁷⁹ The law that was finally passed in 1999 revised the original bill and granted citizenship at birth to children born in Germany to foreign parents who resided in Germany legally for at least eight years. After reaching the age of twenty three, these dual citizens are required to choose between German nationality and their parents' nationality. BBC News, “Germany Citizenship Law Passed,” May 21, 1999, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/349500.stm>; “Germany: Dual Nationality,” *Migration News* 6, no. 2 (April 1999), http://migration.ucdavis.edu/mn/more.php?id=1777_0_4_0.

⁸⁰ Samuel P. Huntington, *Who Are We?: The Challenges to America's National Identity* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004), 212.

misunderstanding of culture as fixed and based on nation-states. On the other hand, unlike Faist, I historicize the debates on “dual citizenship” in the case of Chinese migrants: I discuss the historical formation of the Chinese citizenship laws, its impact on migrants, and Chinese migrants’ varied understanding of Chinese and U.S. citizenship and of the possibility of dual citizenship. Therefore, dual citizenship is not simply a prescriptive solution as a clear-cut alternative to citizenship based on singular nation-state, but a historical category and site of negotiation itself.

I also discuss in detail how migrants live with nation-based immigration laws and strive for “transnational citizenship” with creative strategies in crossing national boundaries and retaining mobility in both societies. Borrowing from the earlier-mentioned interdisciplinary and continuously enlarging scholarship on citizenship as social practices centered on migrants’ agency, I study citizenship and immigration laws not as “law on paper” or indisputable embodiment of the sovereignty of nation-states but as “law in practice” and as sites of negotiation. I show Chinese migrants’ use of U.S. citizenship for multiple pragmatic purposes, such as economic gains, children’s education and other family needs, political shelter, and convenience in international travel. I argue that U.S. citizenship is far from the conventional understanding as a legal status indicating assimilation or loyalty but is used by migrants as a tool for transnational mobility and as a ticket for a globalized life.

Just like the two indispensable sides of a coin: While emphasizing migrants’ agency in negotiating with nation states and with immigration laws for transnational mobility, my study also highlights the nation-state system and the international political

and economic context in which migrants make their choices about citizenship and organize their activities. Therefore, in my usage, “transnational citizenship” is not post-national citizenship or “flexible” citizenship; it emphasizes the role of nation-states in setting up the context and adjusting its capacity to shape migrants’ mobility and identity.⁸¹

My study also shows the possibilities of “transnational citizenship,” particularly the cultural syncretism and its impact on migrants as well as on the sending and receiving societies. As Faist argues, the “container concept of culture” sees culture as “essentially territorial, based on a shared language and somewhat static.” It is a culture “in the sense of *a* culture, the culture of a social group.”⁸² However, along with their

⁸¹ The post-national citizenship thesis is exemplified by Soysal, *Limits of Citizenship: Migrants and Postnational Membership in Europe* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1994). Soysal argues that in the postwar era, particularly in Europe, in response to transformations affecting the contemporary politics, economies and institutions of the nation-state system, new forms of citizenship, belonging and claims have emerged and undermine the “national order of things.” The increasing intensification of transnational discourse and legal instruments that codify ‘human rights’ as a global principle has transcended “civil rights” associated with belonging in a national community, therefore recasting (national) citizenship rights as post-national human (or personhood) rights. Soysal, “Citizenship and Identity: Living in Diasporas in Post-war Europe?” I agree with Faist on his critique on post-national citizenship: on the one hand, in contemporary world there are virtually no supranational institutions conferring the status of citizenship except the European Union in a rather weak expanding form; on the other hand, we do not know exactly how universal norms and discourses shape policy and practices on the ground. As Faist points out insightfully, the post-national thesis would be more accurate if related to wider notions of membership rather than citizenship in the nation-state. See Faist, “Transnationalization in International Migration,” 206-7.

The concept of “flexible citizenship” was suggested by anthropologist Aihwa Ong (see footnote 8). Though Ong also paid attention to the adjustable capability of the nation-states in dealing with migrants’ strategies for crossing boundaries and dodging nation-state regulations, her major thesis is focusing on the flexible accumulation (exemplified by these Asian capitalists) beyond the porous national boundaries in late capitalism. In another influential book titled *Ungrounded Empire*, Ong and Nonini further discuss the “deterritorialized” modernity in late capitalism and the ungrounded empire of Chinese migrants and business enterprises. In my opinion, Ong’s thesis of “flexible citizenship,” though raising provocative questions of the transformation of citizenship in post-industrial world, applies only to a small group of super business elites with easy access to multiple passports and permanent residence and property crossing national boundaries and still missed the paramount role of nation-states in defining migrants’ position and strategies for transnational mobility in the first place (rather than simply as response to migrant’ mobility).

⁸² Faist, “Transnationalization in International Migration,” 215.

migration journeys, migrants simultaneously live in a world of two or more cultures and constantly reinvent traditions and combine them with what they have learned in the receiving society. They are not a group “uprooted” (assimilated into the receiving society) or “transplanted” (sticking to the culture of the sending society), but translated as a new culture as an organic hybrid with cultural strands from various cultures hard to differentiate any longer.⁸³ In the end of my study, I highlight the connection and interaction between migrants’ cultural syncretism and identity transformation and their social engagement and participation in the sending and receiving societies, particularly migrants’ efforts for broadening citizenship rights in China.

Methodology and Sources

International migration has been a rich field with studies from various disciplines, and scholars have called for research with interdisciplinary perspective.⁸⁴ My dissertation benefits from migration studies of various disciplines and integrates them in this case study of Chinese student and professional migrants. While recognizing skilled migrants as rational choice makers, a common approach in economic studies of migration, my research also looks at the cultural identity of the migrants and the political and legal context of their migration. Studying U.S. and Chinese government

⁸³ Faist, 215. Peter Kivisto has an excellent comprehensive review of the transnationalism literature on international migration studies and distinguishes Faist’ concept of “transnational citizenship” as a model of “translated”, different from the other two models of “uprooted” (Handlin) and “transplanted (Bodnar). Peter Kivisto, “Theorizing Transnational Immigration.

⁸⁴ Caroline B. Brettell and James F. Holyfield, eds., *Migration Theory: Talking across Disciplines* (New York and London: Routledge, 2000); Donna R. Gabaccia and Colin Wayne Leach, eds., *Immigrant Life in the U.S.: Multi-disciplinary Perspectives* (London; New York: Routledge, 2004). Peter Kivisto, “International Migration Research: Constructions, Omissions, and the Promises of Interdisciplinarity,” *Contemporary Sociology* 35, no. 3 (2006): 316-17.

policies and laws concerning migration, the key subjects in political science and legal studies, this research does not view policies and laws as static statutes or “law on paper,” nor does it view the government and the state as the dominant force determining people’s migration and daily life. Rather, the research focuses on migrants’ own interpretation of the migration policies and laws and migrants’ interaction and negotiation with governments and laws. Therefore, this study will shed new light on the identity and involvement of migrants in both the sending and receiving societies. This project also adds a critical historical dimension to studies on contemporary immigration, which have been done mainly in sociology and anthropology.

Like transnational studies in those fields, my project required fieldwork in both the United States and China. In the United States, as my research focus is on the local community formation of recent professional migrants, I interviewed thirty student and professional migrants in the Twin Cities (Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota), visited the major organizations of these new migrants, and examined their organization records. I selected these thirty interviewees from different organizations and from various professions such as the arts, academics, legal service, business, and public media. I selected the Twin Cities not simply because of the easy research access but because I intend to study a local community outside of the traditional areas of the concentration of Chinese migrants such as the Chinatowns in New York or San Francisco, which have been the subject of most studies of Chinese immigrants in the United States. As my research shows, recent Chinese student and professional migrants, with their high education and professional skills, have been different from older-generation Chinese

labor immigrants in social mobility and have chosen not to concentrate in Chinatowns. Studying a Chinese community away from older and more established Chinatowns therefore reveals the new characteristics of the community formation of new and highly skilled migrants.

I also conducted fieldwork in China in the fall and winter of 2005. I visited official and semi-official organizations dealing with immigrants and returning migrants and collected government documents and publications. I interviewed thirty returned migrants to understand their returning experiences and their participation in both the United States and China. My interviews were conducted in three major cities (Beijing, Shanghai, and Wuhan) as returned migrants have concentrated in a few such big cities. I started with informants who were introduced by friends in Minnesota and whom I purposefully selected from a variety of professions. Then I used the snow-ball strategy in recruiting more informants who turned out to well represent the three main fields of returned migrants: private business sectors, academic, and government organizations or state-run enterprise. I also recruited interviewees from the organizations and parties relating to returning migrants which I visited and participated in China (see Appendix 2 of lists of interviewees in China and the United States).⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Among interviewees in the Twin Cities, the gender ratio is generally balanced with around half of the interviewees being women (thirteen out of thirty). The gender ratio among Chinese in Minnesota in total in 2000 was that women were slightly more than half of the total population (see Chapter 3, Table 4). As for returning migrants, I have tried to balance the numbers of men and women; however, the proportion of women among returnees I interviewed was much smaller (seven women among thirty interviewees). While this proportion does not necessarily represent the exact gender ratio among returning Chinese migrants in general, it reflects both the difficulties of my finding enough female returnees during my fieldwork in China and the common observations by media and scholars that returnees were predominantly males. For example, Luo Keren, Fei Guo and Huang Ping, "China: Government Policies and Emerging Trends of Reversal of the Brain Drain," in *Return Migration in the Asia Pacific*, eds. Robyn Iredale, Fei Guo and Santi Rozario (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2003), 94-96.

Besides fieldwork visits and interviews, my dissertation is based on a wide variety of written documents in both Chinese and English languages. They include censuses, published surveys, journals of government agencies related to migration (China), government policies and laws (China and the United States), congressional records (the United States), media reports, auto-biographies, and published interviews of immigrants, and records of immigrant organizations. I also use online discussions (in Chinese) of returning student migrants, using one of the largest online communities of Chinese returnees (www.haiguinet.com), which was founded in 2003 and had a membership of more than 30,000 by the end of 2006. Its online discussions are archived and fully searchable, and in the virtual community returnees share migration stories and discuss citizenship. Such a broad range of primary sources in both English and Chinese strengthens the transnational scope and interdisciplinary nature of this dissertation.

Structure

The main body of this dissertation is divided into five chapters, following the historical and transnational journey of Chinese student migrants. Chapter 1 studies the changes of Chinese policies on migration and migrants after China's reform in 1978. It discusses the changing Chinese policies on migration and migrants at different times: the reform and rehabilitation policies from 1978 to 1984; the shifted focus during 1984 and 1989 to recruiting migrants and returned migrants for China's economic development and to emphasizing the patriotism of overseas Chinese; the passage of the 1990 Law protecting the rights and interests of migrants; and the emphasis on and

privileges granted to “new migrants” (especially student migrants) since the 1990s. These transitions revealed the Chinese government adjusting its policies on migrants constantly according to China’s economic, social, and political reforms. This chapter also discusses how market-oriented economic reform weakened the authority of the state in managing overseas Chinese affairs, how the Chinese state and Chinese scholars recognized the structural changes of post-WWII overseas Chinese communities from “sojourners” to “settlers,” and how mainland China competed with Taiwan in recruiting migrants and representing China abroad.

Chapter 2 studies how Chinese student migration fit into the U.S. immigration and demonstrated the historical transformation of the U.S. immigration regime after 1965. It focuses on two recent changes of U.S. immigration polices related to Chinese student migration. One is the Chinese Student Protection Act (CSPA) of 1992, which allowed Chinese students to stay in the United States and adjust their immigrant status in the wake of the crackdown on the democratic movements in the Tiananmen Square in 1989. The other change is the increasing demand for highly educated and skilled workers in the United States, especially with the Information Technology (IT) industry boom and economic growth in the 1990s. With the case of Chinese student migration, I argue that international student migration to the United States has always been tied to U.S. foreign relations and has reflected U.S. national interests and national identity.

Chapter 3 focuses on Chinese student and professional migrants in the Twin Cities to discuss how they formed their local communities and identities in post-1965 United States. There have been increasing numbers of Chinese student and professional

migrants in the Twin Cities in recent decades, reflecting the trend of recent Chinese skilled migrants living beyond the “Chinatowns” in major cities such as New York and San Francisco where older-generation Chinese migrants concentrated. Major questions include how the Chinese immigrant community in Minnesota (mainly students-turned professionals) evolved over time, how Chinese immigrants interacted with other racial and ethnic groups, and how they integrated into the “mainstream” American society. This chapter suggests that while they largely achieve individual mobility, as a group they lack unity and strength in the post-1965 U.S. social context, which raises profound questions about their racial and ethnic identity and consciousness and the intersection with their social and class status.

Chapters 4 and 5 focus on a recent phenomenon of student/professional migration—the increasing return migration—and accordingly the complex meanings and practices of citizenship. Chapter 4 studies the historical context of the return migration of Chinese student migrants since the mid-1990s. It looks at the changes in both China and the United States, including political economy, migration policies, and social and cultural environment that contributed to student migrants’ return to China. It argues that migration is never a linear process with a home society left behind and lost in the past; instead, the sending society is constantly changing and affecting the migration pattern and identity of migrants.

Chapter 5 uses return migration to re-conceptualize citizenship. Mainly based on interviews with returnees and the online discussions among migrants and returning migrants, this chapter highlights migrants’ own understanding of citizenship. It first

examines the dilemma of immigrant status for many returning migrants and their pragmatic usage of U.S. citizenship, revealing the social and historical context of that usage of citizenship. It then investigates the “dual nationality” debate in China and among Chinese migrants and examines how migrants identified themselves. In the end, it discusses how student migrants became a “translated group” and called for more citizenship rights in China. I argue that for a large number of returning Chinese student migrants, citizenship is not a signifier of assimilation or permanent settlement but is used strategically for transnational mobility.

Focusing on post-1978 Chinese student migration to the United States and their continued circulation, this dissertation provides a timely study of these remarkable phenomena against the backdrops of a rising China on the global stage, the changing balance between the United States and China, and the changing global political economy since the last decades of the 20th-century. It studies the political, economic, and social contexts of both China and the United States that impacted student migration while placing student migrants at the center and highlighting their efforts of negotiation with multiple nation-states for transnational mobility. While student migration and return migration are still ongoing and evolving, historical and transnational perspectives promise to help us better understand migrants’ constant border-crossings and complex identity and community formation.

Chapter 1

Transformation of Chinese Migration Policies after 1978

In May 1989, Liao Hui, Director of the Office on Overseas Chinese Affairs under the State Council of China, outlined new tasks for China's policies on migration and migrants in his report in the national conference on overseas Chinese affairs. Liao first pointed out the changing environment the Chinese government faced in dealing with overseas Chinese: the world had changed "from rivalry and conflict to communication and cooperation" with the end of the Cold War; the relationship between mainland China and Taiwan had improved in the 1980s and the tensions among Chinese abroad (pro-Beijing vs. pro-Taiwan) also eased; the majority of Chinese abroad had been naturalized and integrated into the host societies and their offspring were identifying with the residing societies rather than with China; among the second- and third-generation immigrants and among some recent first-generation migrants had emerged large numbers of professionals, entrepreneurs, and social elites, together with increasing numbers of professional organizations; the number of new migrants (ethnic Chinese who emigrated from the mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macao, and other regions such as Indochina after the 1960s) continued to grow and would become the majority of Chinese abroad.¹

Considering the new environment and the changing composition of Chinese abroad, Liao proposed two essential and correlated goals. The first and foremost was to "defend and uphold the rights and interests of migrants and their relatives" and to

¹ Liao Hui, "Zai Guowuyuan qiaowu gongzuo huiyi shang de gongzuo baogao," *QGYJ* 4 (1989): 7-14.

“support their settlement and development in the receiving society,” which would be the precondition for the second goal of engaging Chinese abroad and their relatives so they would contribute to China’s development.²

Liao’s report reflected the significant transformation of China’s migration policies from persecuting and discriminating against migrants and their relatives in China before 1978 (especially during the Cultural Revolution in 1966-1976) to engaging and embracing them after the reform. It indicated the impact of global politics and economy, such as the end of the Cold War and the increasingly globalized economy, on the formation of Chinese policies on migration and migrants. It also highlighted the significant new features of post-reform Chinese migration policies, such as the recognition of the transformation of Chinese abroad from “sojourners” to “settlers” and the increasing preference for new migrants (especially student/professional migrants).

This chapter examines how and why China’s policies on migration and migrants changed and how the post-reform Chinese state redefined its relations with emigrants. There have been very few studies on the changes of post-1978 Chinese migration policies, partly because of the limited accessibility to Chinese-language sources (especially official documents).³ This chapter delves into two official periodicals by

² Ibid., 11.

³ Official documents and publications related to overseas Chinese affairs are still guarded by the Chinese government as more or less sensitive and usually not accessible outside of China: many of them are still labeled as “internal circulation.” Chinese scholars of overseas Chinese history have realized this restriction of access to sources and increasingly questioned this policy of “circulation within the inner circle” (*neibu liutong*) of archives relating to Chinese migrants and returnees.

Among the very few studies is Mette Thuno’s valuable discussion mainly based on one of the few published collections of Chinese laws and regulations on migrants (*Qiaowu fagui wenjian huibian*, 1955-1999) [A collection of China’s laws and policies related to overseas Chinese, 1955-1999], as well as her

major Chinese government agencies managing overseas Chinese affairs: *Qiaowu gongzuo yanjiu* (later *QGYJ*) and *Qiaolian dongtai* (later *QLDT*).⁴ *QGYJ* is the official journal of the Office on Overseas Chinese Affairs at the State Council (*guowuyuan qiaoban*, later *Qiaoban*). Founded in 1985, this journal was to “spread and propagate policies on Chinese abroad” issued or planned by the central Chinese government. It also published reflections and discussions by local officers about their work with migrants and about the implementation of the policies. The other periodical, *QLDT*, is the newsletter of the All-China Association of Returned Overseas Chinese (*quanguo guiguo huaqiao lianhehui*, later *Qiaolian*). Though designed as a non-government

own interviews with a few Chinese officials in Fujian province. Mette Thuno, “Reaching Out and Incorporating Chinese Overseas: The Trans-territorial Scope of the PRC by the End of the 20th century,” *China Quarterly* 168 (2001): 910-29. Besides Thuno’s research, the very limited number of studies on post-reform Chinese policies on migration and migrants include the following: Pál Nyíri, “Expatriating is Patriotic? The Discourse on ‘New Migrants’ in the People’s Republic of China and Identity Construction among Recent Migrants from the PRC,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 27, no. 4 (October 2001): 635-53. Nyíri’s study looks at the role of the Chinese state in constructing the “new migrant” identity and is not a historical study of the changes of Chinese policies after 1978. Another study is by Wang Changbai, Wong Siu-lun and Sun Wenbin, “Haigui: A New Area of China’s Policy towards the Chinese Diaspora?” *Journal of Chinese Overseas* 2, no. 2 (November 2006): 294-309. This is a timely study addressing contemporary Chinese policies on returned student migrants (*haigui*), but it is more about describing this recent phenomenon of returned student migrants than a detailed analysis of Chinese policies. Another study focusing on contemporary Chinese migration policies is by Liu Guofu, *The Right to Leave and Return and Chinese Migration Law* (Leiden and Boston: Martinus Nijhoff, 2007). Liu is a legal scholar and his study is mainly listing legal texts (laws and regulations) and explaining their legal meanings and significance rather than being a historical examination of Chinese policies that emphasizes the changing process and the human faces within the changes.

⁴ I collected these two periodicals (*QGYJ*, 1985-2003; *QLDT*, 1978-2000) at the Qiaolian Archive in Beijing, which is supposed to hold the most complete issues of the two periodicals. The ending years of these two periodicals in my study had not been designed purposefully but rather based on their availability when I collected sources in 2005. Besides the Qiaolian Archive in Beijing, I also visited the Shanghai Municipal Library and the National Library of China to find issues of *QGYJ* that I could not locate in the Qiaolian Archive. Though the ending years of the two periodicals (2003 and 2000 respectively) are not the same and do not extend to the most recent years, my analysis basically will not be affected because in this chapter I am mainly focusing on the major transitions of Chinese policies from the late 1970s to the early 2000s.

As for the accessibility to these sources, *QLDT* is primarily available in national and local archives within the Qiaolian system. *QGYJ* can also be found in China’s main libraries such as the Shanghai Municipal Library and the National Library of China. It is now also possibly accessible via interlibrary loan at the United States (as indicated at “worldcat” on April 14, 2009, the following libraries hold certain issues of the journal: Stanford University library, Princeton University library, and University of Hong Kong library).

association, Qiaolian has been a semi-official organization led by the Communist Party of China (CPC). Hence it both helps to propagate government policies on migration and migrants and reveals (more or less) the voices of returned migrants themselves (especially those who served as officers in Qiaolian). Both *QGYJ* and *QLDT* are normally only circulated among Chinese government officials and researchers, which somehow reveals the “authentic and honest tone” of Chinese officials in central and local governments in their understanding of overseas Chinese affairs and in their reflection on their work on migration and migrants. This chapter also draws upon my visits to related organizations such as a Qiaolian office in Beijing and the Western Returned Scholars’ Association (*oumei tongxuehui*) in Beijing and Shanghai and supplements my analysis with interviews with officials in these organizations.

Reform and Rehabilitation

Post-1978 Chinese policies on migration and migrants were an essential part of China’s political and economic reforms. They directly redressed punitive policies that treated migrants, returned migrants, and their relatives as “class enemies” and which deemed “overseas relations” undermining of the stability and prosperity of the socialist state. Deng Xiaoping, the paramount leader and reformer in post-Mao China, set the changing tone by pronouncing in 1977 that “overseas relations are good” and indeed were desperately needed for China’s reform and development. Government agencies on migrants were reestablished and new institutions were created. The Commission of Overseas Chinese Affairs (*huaqiao shiwu weiyuanhui*) was reestablished at the State

Council and was renamed as the Office of Overseas Chinese Affairs (*Qiaoban*). According to China's newly promulgated 1982 Constitution, the Sixth National People's Congress set up six specialized committees, including one on overseas Chinese affairs (*huaqiao weiyuanhui*, later *Qiaoweihui*), which was formally established in 1983 as a legislative institution in charge of drafting laws regarding Chinese migrants and their relatives. The All-China Association of Returned Overseas Chinese (*Qiaolian*) also resumed its work in April 1978, and the number of its local branches had increased from around 200 before the Cultural Revolution to more than 8000 in 1988.⁵ The Association of Overseas Chinese History Studies was also founded in 1981 and soon published its newsletter, which was later changed to a well-known academic journal titled *Huaqiao huaren lishi yanjiu*.

The major task in the beginning years after reform was to correct past injustices directed at returned migrants and their relatives, including overturning unjust legal cases (*pingfan zhaimao*) and returning their confiscated houses. Considering the large numbers of victims who had been persecuted because of their direct or indirect “overseas relations,” the Chinese government redefined the category of “*qiaojuan*” (relatives of overseas Chinese): While the first official categorization of “*qiaojuan*” in 1957 only included immediate family members of overseas Chinese or returned

⁵ “Qiaolian Weiyuan Tan Gaige,” *QLDT* 4 (1988): 4-11. Liang Qinhan, “Qiaolian falu jigou de gongzuo bixu shiying gaige,” *QLDT* 5 (1988): 5.

overseas Chinese, the new definition expanded the category by adding siblings and in-laws of overseas Chinese or returnees.⁶

The new policies achieved much. In 1980, among the estimated 14,000 mishandled and unjust cases nationwide, more than 13,000 cases (94.7 percent) had been redressed. Some confiscated houses were returned to returned migrants or their relatives. The number of Chinese abroad visiting the mainland increased from 570,000 in 1978 to 800,000 in 1979. In 1979, China received donations worth 100 million RMB (*renminbi*, Chinese currency) from Chinese abroad and Chinese in Macao and Hong Kong.⁷

The reform of policies on migrants and returned migrants at this time still bore characteristics of the political context in China in the late 1970s. In a report to officials working on overseas Chinese affairs in 1980, Lin Xiude, the associate director of Qiaoban, described the three main tasks of Qiaoban in the following years by citing Deng Xiaoping's statement, i.e., uniting with overseas Chinese to "fight against hegemony internationally, strive for the unification between Taiwan and the mainland, and contribute to China's modernization."⁸

Though the redressing policies were effective, there were cases left unsettled and many house properties remained unreturned or misused. Past persecution and worries about future mistreatment led many returned Chinese migrants to seek emigration after China opened its door. Among 619 returned migrants in a resettlement

⁶ Guowuyuan Qiaoban, "Guanyu Huaqiao, Guiqiao, Huaqiao xuesheng, Guiqiao xuesheng, Qiaojuan, waiji Huaren shenfen de jieshi, 1984," in *Qiaowu fagui wenjian huibian, 1955-1999*, 153-54; Chen Zhikai, "Qiaojuan de falu□ dingyi," *QGYJ* 1 (1989): 25-26.

⁷ Lin Xiude, "Dangqian xingshi he qiaowu gongzuo de ruogan wenti," *QLDT* 11 (March 1980): 2.

⁸ Ibid., 4.

farm for returnees (*huaqiao nongchang*), 70 percent had applied for emigration or had emigrated in 1980.⁹ Another survey in 1980 of the 141 returned migrants and their relatives working in nine higher institutions in Shandong province showed that 37 (26 percent) already emigrated between 1977 and 1980. Many others planned to emigrate, and 11 already submitted applications for emigration.¹⁰ The main reasons given for their emigration were mistreatment in the past, worries for future persecution, and existing political and social discrimination as described in the following song: for returned migrants and their relatives, “there is no future in politics, no meaning in life, no promotion in career, and better to go abroad.”¹¹ Emigration of intellectuals led to a special column in *QLDT*, the newsletter of Qiaolian, discussing “the drain of intellectuals.” Qiaolian officers across China discussed the phenomenon and suggested the Chinese government adopt the strategy of recognizing emigration and encouraging return migration rather than blocking emigration. They argued that the key to the solution was to fully implement the redressing policies, enhance transparency, and pay attention to intellectuals in work and life.¹²

In the 1980s, returned overseas Chinese and their relatives continued to emigrate out of China at a remarkable rate and revealed some new characteristics of the Chinese society under transformation. Chen Zhonghan investigated the emigration in a city

⁹ “Guanyu guiqiao, qiaojuan zhong rencai wailiu wenti de taolun (III),” *QLDT* 20 (1980): 11.

¹⁰ “Shandong sheng jiu ge dazhuan yuanxiao guiqiao zhishi fenzi wailiu qingkuang he tamen ni caiqu de zuoshi,” *QLDT* 17 (1980): 4-6.

¹¹ “Guanyu guiqiao, qiaojuan zhong rencai wailiu wenti de taolun (III),” *QLDT* 20 (1980): 11. The Chinese text for this song is as following: “zhengzhi shang mei bentou, shenghuo shang mei gaotou, gongzuo shang pinshipinho mei chutou, bu ru liuluo zai waitou.”

¹² “Guanyu guiqiao, qiaojuan zhong rencai wailiu wenti de taolun (I),” *QLDT* 18 (1980): 13-15; “Guanyu guiqiao, qiaojuan zhong rencai wailiu wenti de taolun (II),” *QLDT* 19 (1980): 13-14; “Guanyu guiqiao, qiaojuan zhong rencai wailiu wenti de taolun (III),” *QLDT* 20 (1980): 10-12.

during 1980-1990 of over 700 returned migrants and their relatives, as well as the relatives of Hong Kong and Macao residents. These emigrants comprised more than 18 percent of all the returned migrants and migrants' relatives in the city. He found that they emigrated not because of lack of implementation of the redressing policies or lack of preferential treatment by the government. The five major reasons for their emigration were in fact the following: First, they feared for future changes of Chinese politics and policies. Secondly, they were worried about new discrimination, this time not because of political persecution but because of the social privilege and the preferential treatment they gained from the government for their "overseas relations," which had invited jealousy and rejection from their neighbors and co-workers. The third reason was the unjust wealth distribution. Among emigrants were some intellectuals who graduated in the 1950s and 1960s. They worked in education, health, and sciences which had been the fields with unreasonably low pay. Many of them earned lower amounts than young college graduates and private enterprise owners who emerged as prominent groups with China's reform. The fourth reason was psychological depression. Some returned migrants or relatives of overseas Chinese had been pressured by their work units to request donations from their relatives abroad and if they refused, they would fall into disfavor. The fifth reason was that many emigrants could not find suitable positions to deploy their skills and talents.¹³

Chen's findings not only revealed the legacy of past political persecution and the recent practices of requesting donations from overseas Chinese but also highlighted the profound social changes in China after ten-year reforms and new challenges to

¹³ Chen Zhonghan, "Qiaowu gongzuo mianlin de yige xin qingkuang," *QLDT* 5 (1990): 6.

migrants, including new tensions in social relations because of newly formed social privileges (people with overseas relations had become privileged groups), newly created wealth distribution system based on market and the increasing social inequality as a result (for example, civil service workers earned far less than private enterprise owners, therefore “researchers of nuclear weapons were paid less than a peddler selling eggs”), and a dysfunctional personnel system in which many talents were wasted and personal dreams could not be fulfilled. These were among the most remarkable problems in China’s social reforms after 1978 and its transition from a centrally planned economy to a market-based economy, especially in the late 1980s and early 1990s when the transition started gathering speed. This profound social and economic transformation was the backdrop of the adjustment of Chinese policies on migration and migrants in the late 1980s and the 1990s, including the 1990 Law of Protecting the Rights and Interests of Returned Overseas Chinese and Their Relatives (*guiqiao qiaojuan quanyi baohu fa*, later the 1990 Protection Law) and the debates and revisions that followed.

The 1990 Protection Law and Its Revisions

The 1990 Protection Law is the most important law since 1949 on returned migrants and migrants’ relatives (including relatives of Chinese abroad and relatives of returned migrants).¹⁴ There were very few laws specifically addressing Chinese abroad, returned migrants, and their relatives in the early decades of the PRC. Between its

¹⁴ *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo guiqiao qiaojuan quanyi baohu fa* [The 1990 Law of Protecting the Legitimate Rights and Interests of Guiqiao and Qiaojuan], Seventh National People’s Congress, Fifteenth Session, Order No. 33, September 7, 1990, as cited in *Qiaowu fagui wenjian huibian*, 1-2; also see Mao Qixiong, “Quanyifa qian tan,” *QGYJ* 6 (1990): 13-15.

founding in 1949 and the start of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, China promulgated only three laws particularly addressing *qiao* (overseas Chinese), and most related regulations were issued by various administrative branches.¹⁵ The 1990 Protection Law was therefore been applauded as a milestone in the development of China's legal system regarding migration and migrants. The 1990 Protection Law was first proposed by Qiaowehui in the National People's Congress in 1986. After five years of debates and eight revisions, the law was passed in the Seventh National People's Congress in 1990 and became effective in January 1, 1991.

With twenty-one articles, the 1990 Protection Law consolidated the redressing efforts in the last decade and wrote into law the protection of legitimate rights of returned migrants and migrants' relatives.¹⁶ The law defined "*huaqiao*" as Chinese citizens who settled abroad (usually called "overseas Chinese") and "*guiqiao*" as returned *huaqiao* who settled down in China. *Qiaojuan* was defined as the relatives in China of *huaqiao* or *guiqiao* and, following the 1984 broad definition of *qiaojuan*, it covered *huaqiao* and *guiqiao*'s spouse, parents, siblings, grandparents and grandchildren on both sides, children and their spouses, as well as other relatives with legal adoptive relationships. The law confirmed the existing policy of "no discrimination, appropriate preferential treatment" (the complete slogan in Chinese has sixteen characters in Chinese, "*yishi tongren, bude qishi, yiju tedian, shidang*

¹⁵ The three specific laws between 1949 and 1976 are "Huaqiao Shengqin Shiyong Guoyou de Huangshan Huangdi Tiaoli" (1955), "Huaqiao Touzhi yu Guoyin Huaqiao Touzhi Gongshi de Youdai Banfa" (1957), and "Huaqiao Juanzhi Xinban Xuexiao Banfa" (1957), see Mao Qixiong and Lin Xiaodong, eds., *Zhongguo qiaowu falu fagui gaishu* (Beijing: Zhongguo huaqiao chubanshe, 1994), 40-42.

¹⁶ My understanding of the 1990 law differs from that of Mette Thuno, who argues that the 1990 law was largely symbolic and lacking substance and significance. Thuno, "Reaching Out and Incorporating Chinese Overseas."

zhanggu”). The law protected the rights of returned migrants and migrants’ relatives in four main categories: the rights to participation in national politics (including the representation in the National People’s Congress and self-organization); the rights to legitimate ownership of private property (including inheritance and gifts from relatives abroad) and engagement in economic activities; the rights to educational, cultural, and health service (including preferential treatment in entering schools and employment assignment); and the rights to personal freedom and mobility (such as the right for returned migrants and their relatives to emigrate, to visit relatives and to study abroad).

The 1990 Protection Law was an overarching principle rather than practical instructions, as stated in the law itself which was followed by a more detailed “Guidelines of Implementation of the 1990 Protection Law” (*guiqiao qiaojuan quanyi baohu fa shishi banfa*).¹⁷ The law was also a reconfirmation of the rights of *qiao* which had existed before the Cultural Revolution, such as the rights to representation in the National People’s Congress. The law also had deficiencies. For example, it avoided clearly stating the right of overseas Chinese to return to settle in China.¹⁸ The law also reflected the lack of citizenship rights of ordinary Chinese. The law stated that *guiqiao* and *qiaojuan* had the right to emigrate; this right of emigration seemed to be a privilege of *guiqiao* and *qiaojuan* because no such right was proclaimed and protected for Chinese in general.¹⁹ Even now there is no statement in China’s Constitution that

¹⁷ *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo guiqiao qiaojuan quanyi baohu fa shishi banfa*, Order No. 118, July 19, 1993, as cited in *Qiaowu fagui wenjian huibian*, 2-5. This guideline of implementations of the protection law was revised in 2004; the new 2004 version of the guideline has replaced the old version and become effective since July 1, 2004.

¹⁸ The fourth article states vaguely that “The state assists in the settlement of *huaqiao* back in China.”

¹⁹ A most remarkable example is that after the June 4 incident, Chinese students were restricted in applying for studying abroad. For a certain period of time only students with relatives abroad were

clearly proclaims the right of Chinese citizens to emigrate.²⁰ Therefore, when Chen Zhikai at Qiaowehui noted that the rights and interests granted to returned migrants and their relatives had been generally unavailable to other Chinese citizens, he was quite correct.²¹ While protecting the rights and interests of returned migrants and their relatives, the 1990 Protection Law revealed the general lack of rights of ordinary Chinese citizens.

The 1990 Protection Law also demonstrated the social changes in China in the 1980s and 1990s, especially the dramatic transformation of China from a centrally planned economy to a market-oriented economy. A case in point was debate on “preferential treatment” that post-reform policies (including the 1990 law) granted to returned migrants and their relatives.

Questions about “preferential treatment” had been raised before the passage of the 1990 Protection Law. In February 1990, Chen Jian, a Qiaoban officer in Hubei Province, expressed his concerns in *QGYJ* about how to guarantee the “appropriateness” of preferential treatment of returned migrants and migrants’ relatives. He used as an example the policy that favored children of senior intellectuals who were returned migrants or migrants’ relatives: these children could gain ten extra credits in

eligible to apply and leave China. A student-turned immigrant I interviewed told me that she was frustrated by this policy and finally “created” some relationship with an overseas Chinese, and then she was able to come to the U.S.

²⁰ Liu Guofu noticed that in the current Chinese Constitution (adopted in 1982, with four amendments), there are no regulations related to Chinese citizens’ rights of leave or return to China. Liu points out that though Article 33 Clause 4 of the 2004 Amendment of the Constitution stipulates that the State should respect and safeguard human rights, “it is doubtful that the reference to ‘human rights’ includes RLR (the rights to leave and return).” Liu argues that the nature of Chinese laws regarding exit and entry administration is controlling rather than protecting RLR of Chinese citizens. Liu Guofu, *The Right to Leave and Return*, 115-19.

²¹ Chen Zhikai, “Baohufa shishi de ji ge wen ti,” *QGYJ* 5 (1990): 6.

their exams to be admitted to colleges. After the new 1984 definition that expanded the category of *qiaojuan* to include non-immediate family members, Chen pointed out, the number of applicants for this preferential treatment had skyrocketed and caused difficulties in implementing the policy.²²

While Chen was worried about the problems that the “preferential treatment” policy caused in practice, Jin Jiandong affirmed that the policy was justified and necessary. In a comment in 1991, Jin disagreed with those (including some officers working with returned migrants and their relatives) who argued that the confirmed “preferential treatment” policy in the 1990 Protection Law contradicted China’s Constitution which states that “everyone is equal.” Jin argued that what the Constitution states was that everyone was equal in the implementation process of law rather than “equal in legislation.” In other words, it was justified to adopt different laws and regulations considering different situations and different groups of people. Jin suggested that on the one hand, the 1990 Protection Law protected the rights of returned migrants and migrants’ relatives to be equal as other citizens (i.e., not to be discriminated against); on the other hand, the law specified certain rights for them based on their particular characteristics. What was most revealing was Jin’s assertion that “the notion of ‘everyone is equal’ did not mean ‘egalitarianism’ (*pingjun zhuyi*).”²³ The term *pingjun zhuyi* had been most popular in the lexicon of political discourse in post-reform

²² Chen Jian, “Shidang zhaogu ying shidang,” *QGYJ* 2 (1990): 41. Another example Chen gave was that some local governments spent large amounts of money repairing the tombs of former significant members of the Nationalist government in order to attract public attention as well as the investment of their relatives in Taiwan or abroad. Chen pointed out that this extravagant “preferential treatment” of a few “important people” could hardly be applied to all the 30 million Chinese abroad and therefore might alienate other ordinary Chinese emigrants who in fact had not opposed the Communist Party during the Communist Revolution.

²³ Jin Jiandong, “Qianlun Baohufa de pingdeng yuanze,” *QGYJ* 2 (1991): 26-27.

China, serving as an index of China's economic and political reforms and of public opinion regarding the direction of Chinese society: whether to maintain a “classless” and “equal” society or to reform to achieve an efficient and market-based economy.²⁴

The way Jin used the term here revealed the intense public debates and social and economic reforms around the 1990 Protection Law.

Most other comments on the “preferential treatment” policy in *QGYJ* sided with Jin and affirmed that the policy was necessary in China’s economic reform. Zhan Kaisheng argued that with China’s transition from a centrally planned economy to a market economy, the appropriate “preferential treatment” policy was still needed, and its fundamental goal was to “win the hearts of Chinese abroad,” or to be more direct, to win the investment of Chinese abroad. As Zhan noted, in the end of 1993, foreign investments in China reached 382 billion U.S. dollars, among which 81 percent was from ethnic Chinese-controlled capital based in Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan.²⁵ Following past practices of focusing on “significant members” among migrants, Zhan suggested that three groups could be granted priority for “preferential treatment,” including returned migrants (as compared to migrants’ relatives in China), intellectuals among returned migrants, and relatives of significant figures among Chinese abroad.²⁶

²⁴ This was the debate on “fairness” (*gongping*) and “efficiency” (*xiaolü*). The term *pingjun zhuyi* had been generally viewed by the Chinese government and media as related to the “iron bowl” and referring to “inefficiency.”

²⁵ Ethnic Chinese residents in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macao usually are not legally counted by China as *huaqiao* or *huaren* because they are not residing abroad, that is, they are still living in Chinese territories as defined by the mainland Chinese government. Nevertheless, these ethnic Chinese have been treated the same as *qiao* by the Chinese government. A large amount of the capital from Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macao were in fact controlled by ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia who had based their business in the above regions or had used these regions to transit capital to the mainland China.

²⁶ Zhan Kaisen, “Qianlun muqian de shidang zhaogu zhengce,” *QGYJ* 5 (1994): 4-7. Zhan was a member of qiaoban in Jiujiang City in Jiangxi Province.

With the deepening reform of the market economy in China, especially the dramatic reform of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) in the mid-1990s, large numbers of employees in SOE were laid off, including returned migrants and migrants' relatives. The economic reform had challenged the “preferential treatment” of returned migrants and their relatives through direct administrative actions, which had been increasingly viewed as improper state intervention in the market-oriented economy. Facing this new situation, the Chinese government reiterated the principle of “protecting the rights and interests of returned migrants and migrants’ relatives with appropriate preferential treatment,” while at the same time calling for flexible policy adjustments.²⁷ In June 1996, *QGYJ* published an article about the new situation by the Qiaoban office in Jiangsu province, which suggested that future work change its principle from simply offering returned migrants and migrants’ relatives preferential treatment to protecting their rights and interests according to the 1990 Protection Law and to assisting them in achieving independence and competitiveness in the market economy.²⁸

The changing social and economic context stimulated the revisions of the 1990 Protection Law. In October 31, 2000, the Ninth National People’s Congress approved the revisions of the law, expanding it from 22 to 30 articles. Major changes included confirming the role of both Qiaoban and Qiaolian in protecting and defending the rights of returned migrants and migrants’ relatives; strengthening legal punishments of individuals or organizations encroaching on the rights of migrants, and adding and

²⁷ “Qiaozheng gongzuo renran shi zhongyao de jichuxin gongzuo,” *QGYJ* 6 (1996): 1.

²⁸ Jiangshu qiaoban, “Xin xingshi xia qiaozheng gongzuo de renwu, kunnan he duice,” *QGYJ* 6 (1996): 26-27. For other positive comments on the “preferential treatment” policy and the 1990 law, see Deng Chao, “Shi liu zi yuanze bu guo shi,” *QGYJ* 4 (1996): 44; Tang Wang, “Yi fa hu qiao yu shidang zhaogu,” *QGYJ* 1 (1998): 37.

adjusting the content of the rights and interests of migrants (such as including a new article about social security) according to the market-oriented economic system. The revised law emphasized the role of the government in providing “needed guidance and service” rather than simple preferential treatment for returned migrants and migrants’ relatives (such as concerning their employment opportunities).²⁹

Market Economy and State Authority in Overseas Chinese Affairs

Besides the debates on the “preferential treatment” policy and the revision of the 1990 law, the market-oriented economic and social reforms also generated diversified interests and agendas of *qiao*-related government agencies. The three major Chinese official agencies managing overseas Chinese affairs are Qiaoweihui, Qiaoban and Qiaolian.³⁰ Qiaoweihui is a legislative agency under the National People’s Congress and is responsible for proposing and drafting laws related to Chinese migrants and their relatives. Qiaoban is the administrative agency directly in charge of overseas Chinese affairs. Qiaolian has been designed as a people’s organization (*renmin tuanti*) serving as a liaison between the Community Party-led government and migrants and their relatives. With China’s reform after 1978, these institutions often pursued conflicting

²⁹ The new law also included “new migrants” and encouraged them to invest in China and establish high-tech industries. Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo guiqiao qiaojuan quanyi baohufa, revised in 2000, Ninth National People’s Congress, Eighteenth Session, October 31, 2000, <http://www.gqb.gov.cn/node2/node3/node5/node9/userobject7ai1272.html> (official website of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office at State Council, accessed October 3, 2007). Also see Mao Qixiong, “Xinshiji woguo qiaowu gongzuo de falu baozhang,” *QGYJ* 1 (2001): 17-19. Mao was the associate director of the Office of Research in the Committee of Overseas Chinese Affairs in the National People’s Congress.

³⁰ There are two other political institutions related to overseas Chinese affairs: the Committee on Affairs related to Fellow Chinese in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao under the Chinese National Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) and the Zhigong Party (with membership traditionally comprised of returned migrants and relatives of migrants). However, these two institutions were not as active and influential as the other three agencies.

policies. For example, Qiaowehui had started discussing the proposal for the 1990 Protection Law in 1986 and submitted a draft of the law after six revisions to Qiaoban in 1987.³¹ The proposal encountered different opinions from top Qiaoban officials and was suspended.³² In 1990, Qiaowehui changed its original plan of having Qiaoban submit the proposal to the National People's Congress and instead submitted directly by itself the eighth edition of the proposed 1990 law, which passed and became effective in January 1991. The story of this complex legislative process was written by a member of Qiaowehui and was published in the newsletter of Qiaolian rather than the journal of Qiaoban, which further revealed the gaps among these institutions.³³

While theoretically designed as a people's organization and comprising a significant number of returned intellectuals among its membership, Qiaolian had developed its own voice along with China's reforms and showed inclination to gain more autonomy from the administrative state dominated by the Communist Party of China. Calls for Qiaolian's reform started soon after 1978. Commenting on the emigration of large numbers of intellectuals in the late 1970s, Zhang Shuzheng suggested building Qiaoban as an effective agency to redress past wrongdoings and reforming Qiaoban to be an organization based on people rather than simply following

³¹ The legislative process in China has been influenced by China's political system which to a large degree granted the administrative branch (led by the Communist Party) the most power and influence in designing and approving laws, therefore to a large degree driving the legislative body (NPC) to the rubber-stamp status.

³² Yang Zhengyan, “‘Guiqiao qiaojuan quanyi baohu fa’ dansheng ji,” *QLDT* 10 (1990): 3-6. Yang was a member of the Qiaowehui. According to him, Qiaowehui received two official responses from Qiaoban regarding the proposal. One was in 1987; it stated that the law was not suitable at that time considering the difficulties in carrying out and implementing the proposed protection law such as returning legal private house property completely (both ownership right and the right to use) to returned migrants and their relatives. The other response was in 1989, stating that Qiaoban had different opinions on the articles of the proposed law.

³³ Ibid.

the direction of the government, and he suggested both agencies work together to change the “emigration of returned migrants” to “return migration of overseas Chinese.”³⁴

In March 1983, members of Qiaolian and of Huaqiao Lishi Xuehui (the Association of Overseas Chinese History Studies) met to discuss how to improve the work of Qiaolian in the new historical context with China’s reform. The editor of *Zhongguo jianshe* (China’s development) commented that Qiaolian as a people’s organization should further liberate itself and take more bold steps in reform. Scholars from the Association of Overseas Chinese History Studies criticized the still-conservative leadership of the association and called on the association to publish more research work without fearing political risks. Bi Suowang, an officer from the Association of Chinese Writers (*Zhongguo Zuojia Xiehui*), again wished that Qiaolian would become a truly people-based organization.³⁵

In the newsletter of Qiaolian (i.e., *QLDT*), there had been a special column on “Qiaolian and Reform” since 1988. In April 1988, the newsletter published heated discussions among commissioners of Qiaolian in the third national conference of Qiaolian regarding Qiaolian’s reform. Discussants emphasized the separation of Qiaolian from the government and the independence of Qiaolian from Qiaoban. As some commissioners from Guangdong province argued, the relationship between the Communist Party and people in the past had been “as harmonious as fish and water,” while at present it had become one “as detached as oil and water.” They also argued that

³⁴ Zhang Shuzhen, “Rencai wailiu wenti de wojian,” *QLDT* 19 (1980): 13.

³⁵ “Qiaolian de xuanchuan gongzuo keyi gengyou zuowei,” *QLDT* 3 (1983): 12-16.

Qiaolian should be separated from the government and return to its role as a people-based instead of government-managed organization. Qiaolian should gain independence from Qiaoban and be equal rather than submissive to Qiaoban. Qiaolian should fight for its autonomy. To gain independence and autonomy, commissioners also suggested that Qiaolian set up its own business enterprises to support itself financially.³⁶

Similar arguments and suggestions had been frequently raised in *QLDT* from 1988 to 1990. In May 1988, Lai Puguang criticized Qiaolian for having become an administrative institution and a bureaucratic agency. He recommended that Qiaolian's officers be elected from among returned migrants and their relatives instead of being appointed by local communist party leaders and government officials. Qiaolian also needed to recruit individual members rather than members based on work units or institutions (therefore giving more voice to individuals). Qiaolian could also set up social clubs to better receive and serve returned migrants and their relatives.³⁷ In January 1990, Mai Guochang again stated that along with China's political reform, the reform of Qiaolian was inevitable, and the most urgent issue was to "straighten out the relationship between Qiaolian and other agencies" in order to gain its independence and autonomy as a people-based organization.³⁸

Compared to the intense discussions and requests for independence and autonomy of Qiaolian in the 1980s, there had been much less voices on Qiaolian's reform in the 1990s in its newsletter *QLDT*. A reasonable explanation is that the quest for Qiaolian's autonomy had taken place in the liberal social environment and strident

³⁶ "Qiaolian weiyuan tan gaige," *QLDT* 4 (1988): 4-11.

³⁷ Lai Puguang, "Wo dui qiaolian gaige de yijian," *QLDT* 5 (1988): 3-4.

³⁸ Mai Guochang, "Lishun guanxi shi dangwu zhiji," *QLDT* 1 (1990): 3.

political and social reforms in the 1980s. The 1989 crackdown by the Chinese government on democratic demonstrations largely halted the autonomy quest; in the following decade, such quests had been marginalized and the focus of Qiaolian had been shifted to China's economic reform and to the task of working with "new migrants."

Compared to Qiaowehui and Qiaolian, Qiaoban seemed to be in a powerful and dominant position. However, China's economic and social reforms had also challenged Qiaoban's authority. In 1993, Qiaoban officers in Qingdao City at Sandong province wrote that in the earliest years after China's reform, the local Qiaoban office in his city supervised and managed issues involving over 60-70 percent of visiting overseas Chinese migrants or ethnic Chinese. The situation then changed. Many visitors were received by the work units of their relatives. Many Chinese abroad engaged in business with their partners in China directly, and they did not contact Qiaoban unless required and Qiaoban could hardly track their coming and leaving. The article noted that working on overseas Chinese affairs had become "*shehui hua*" (society-based rather than government-monopolized). The officers seemed quite positive about this change, which according to them indicated that people no longer considered "overseas relations and the contact with Chinese abroad" harmful but rather tried to take advantage of overseas relations for their own interests or for the benefit of their work units. "Overall it is a good sign and provides good social environment for us officers dealing with overseas Chinese affairs," the article stated.³⁹

³⁹ Qingdao Qiaoban, "Dui qiaowu gongzuo mianlin xin xingsi xin qingkuang xin tedian de ji dian renshi," *QGYJ* 2 (1993): 33-35.

The idea of *shehui hua* in fact had been quite popular and had been generally accepted by Qiaoban officials. In March 1993, Wang Qiushi commented on the “historical transition of working on overseas Chinese.” As he claimed, “[T]here has come a phase of broadly society-based working on overseas Chinese... Officers in Qiaoban should be open-minded and go beyond provincialism, as working on overseas Chinese is not an exclusive privilege of a single agency.”⁴⁰ In 1994, a Qiaoban officer in Hainan province argued that with China’s deepening reforms, “it is an inevitable trend toward broadening the base of working on overseas Chinese to the larger society.” Therefore, Qiaoban should welcome this trend without fear of losing its leadership in dealing with overseas Chinese affairs. As he stated, “Qiaoban needs to adjust its role from being a controller (“popo”) to a facilitator and a reasonable manager.”⁴¹ In 1995, a Qiaoban officer in Shanghai affirmed the importance of *shehui hua* and suggested close cooperation among the three main government agencies (Qiaowehui, Qiaoban and Qiaolian).

On the other hand, concerns among Qiaoban officers about Qiaoban’s role in the new social context had not disappeared. In 1996, Tang Wang’s comment was published in *QGYJ*. Under the title “Questioning *Shehui hua* of Working on Overseas Chinese,” Tang argued that relying on the society in general in managing overseas Chinese affairs was different from the concept of “*shehui hua*,” which Tang suspected would negate the special function of government agencies related to overseas Chinese affairs and lead to the tendency of anarchism (*wuzhengfu zhuyi*). Tang argued that government agencies

⁴⁰ Wang Qiushi, “Qiaowu gong zuo de lishi xinzuanzhe— qian tan qiaowu gongzu shehuihua,” *QGYJ* 3 (1993): 12-13.

⁴¹ Ma Feng, “Xin xingshi xia zhengfu qiaowu bumen de juese xuanze,” *QGYJ* 3 (1994): 12-13.

should assert their real authority in managing overseas Chinese affairs.⁴² Tang's contention of the government's authority belied Chinese officials' uneasiness of losing power in handling overseas Chinese issues during China's reform.

The divergence and even conflicts among different government agencies related to overseas Chinese affairs revealed the impact of the profound economic reform in China after 1978, which contributed to a new social system with plural and multi-layer interests groups that was different from the social landscape of past Chinese society with a centrally planned economy. Individual citizens and individual work units had their own interests to pursue and had the opportunity to pursue them. Qiaolian itself had also established its own business enterprises in order to gain self-efficiency and independence. Economic reform had therefore challenged state control and state intervention and had weakened the authority of the state (here particularly Qiaoban as the representative of the government).

“Honoring” Student and Professional Migrants

Along with China's market-oriented economic reform, China faced the pressing needs of importing advanced science and technology and integrating China into the global economy and community. Highlighted in Liao Hui's speech in 1989 and included in the revisions of the 1990 Protection Law in 2000, new migrants, especially student/professional migrants, were honored and became the focus of China's policies on migration and migrants.

⁴² Tang Wang, “Qiaowu gongzuo shehuihua zhi yi,” *QGYJ* 1 (1996): 42. Tang's article was first published on *Shenzhen qiaobao* on July 12, 1995.

The term “*xin yimin*” (new migrants) began to appear in official documents in the mid-1980s and since then has been frequently used by Chinese officials and in China’s mass media.⁴³ In 1988, Luo Jianwen from Qiaoban called for improving the work centered on new migrants in the United States. Luo used the term “new migrants” to refer to Chinese who emigrated to the United States from mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macao, as well as those from Indochina after the early 1960s. As for new migrants from the mainland, according to Luo, though a small number of them opposed the Chinese government, the majority remained attached to the mainland and supported China’s reform. Luo suggested the Chinese government sympathize with the hardship these new migrants experienced during their settling down in the United States, avoid requesting their donation or contribution to their hometown in China, take care of their relatives in China, and study their social status and political attitudes before their emigration in order to engage them more effectively.⁴⁴

The June 4 Tiananmen Incident contributed to the new policies by creating a significant number of “new migrants.”⁴⁵ After the June 4 Incident, most countries where Chinese students and scholars concentrated (mainly western industrialized nations) passed laws and executive orders to permit the legal status adjustment and permanent settlement of Chinese students and scholars. In the United States, President George H.

⁴³ According to Yang Chuxiao, the term was first used in official documents in 1986. Yang Chuxiao, “Cong hawai Huaqiao shehui de zhuti bianhua kan Zhongguo qiaowu zhengce de xin dongxiang,” *Shehui kexue* 11 (2002): 58-62. In *QGYJ*, Zhang Jianqin’s article in 1986 may be the first one clearly using the term “*xin yimin*,” by which Zhang referred to migrants from Hong Kong, Taiwan and the mainland after the U.S. immigration reform in 1965. Zhang Jianqin, “Meiguo huaqiao, huaren xintai, teidian qianxi ji weilai zhi zhanwang,” *QGYJ* 3 (1986): 23-27.

⁴⁴ Luo Jianwen, “Bu shi shiji de kaizhan zai Mei xinyimin gongzuo,” *QGYJ* 2 (1988): 17-19.

⁴⁵ Liao Hui’s report was delivered before the June 4 Tiananmen Incident, indicating that Chinese policies on Chinese abroad had taken shape before the Incident.

W. Bush's Executive Order 12711 and then the Chinese Student Protection Act of 1992 enabled 40,000-60,000 Chinese students and scholars and their immediate family members to adjust their immigrant status and settle in the United States. While criticizing western countries for “hijacking Chinese talents,” the Chinese government had to recognize the fact that the majority of Chinese students did not return (most by their own will).⁴⁶ The Chinese government also had to adjust its policies to engage and recruit these overseas students and students-turned immigrants, especially as they became concerned about China’s technological innovation, economic growth, and the competition of mainland China with Taiwan.

With large numbers of Chinese students and scholars adjusting their immigrant status in the early 1990s, Chinese officials began to emphasize the importance of students-turned immigrants and the significance of new migrants as compared with older-generation migrants in advancing China’s national interests. In 1995, Qiaoban officials wrote about Chinese “*xin yimin*” in the United States and used that term to refer foremost to Chinese students and scholars who had studied and then stayed in the United States with their family members.⁴⁷ In 1996, a group of students at the China Foreign Affairs University, who were trained to be future Chinese consuls and diplomats to work on issues related to Chinese abroad, discussed issues regarding new

⁴⁶ *QGYJ* had published many reports and surveys about how many students stayed abroad and why they did not return. For example, Wu Hongqing, “Dui liuju Meiguo de dalu liuxuesheng de fenxi yu sikao,” *QGYJ* 2 (1993): 26-28. For the perspective of students of why they stayed in the U.S., see Zweig and Chen, *China's Brain Drain to the United States*.

⁴⁷ New migrants referred to “Chinese students and scholars (state-sponsored or self-dependent) who studied and then stayed in the U.S., together with their family members, and a small number of illegal immigrants who obtained green cards, and other people who stayed in the U.S. for various reasons.” New migrants therefore “include two groups of people: student-turned immigrants and legal family-sponsored immigrants.” Zhongguo Guowuyuan Qiaoban Guowai Ershi Yichu, “Meiguo Huaren xin yimin gongzuo chutan,” *QGYJ* 5 (1995): 20-22.

migrants. They reached a consensus that highly educated migrants, especially students-turned immigrants, should be the focus of China's policies on new migrants.⁴⁸

The new focus on “*xin yimin*” had been officially recognized and encouraged in the 1995 Pronouncement on Improving the Work on New Migrants. The Pronouncement included new migrants in the traditional framework of China's policies related to overseas Chinese affairs. While recognizing that among new migrants were people with different levels of education and different levels of living standard, the Pronouncement highlighted highly educated students-turned immigrants as a bridge between China and other countries regarding economic cooperation and the exchanges of modern science and technology.⁴⁹

The change of focus to the new migrants had also affected China's domestic policies on returnees and widened the gap between older-generation returned migrants and recent migrants and their relatives in China. As the director of a district Qiaolian in Beijing remarked during my interview with him, the shifting attention to new migrants since the 1990s (especially in the late 1990s) by both the central and local governments “had resulted in psychological tensions among older-generation returned migrants,” most of whom returned to China from Southeast Asia in the 1950s and 1960s and had retired with the need of attention and care. Many of them came to Qiaolian expressing their concerns about the inefficient attention and reduced gatherings held by Qiaolian

⁴⁸ Chen Guangmin, “Ye shuo *xin yimin*,” *QGYJ* 4 (1996): 33-34.

⁴⁹ Zhongguo Waijiaobu, “Guanyu jiaqiang *xin yimin gongzuo de yijian*.” It was first announced in 1995 by Waijiaobu (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) to Chinese consuls abroad and was then forwarded by Qiaoban at the State Council to local-level *qiaoban* in the same year.

for them. “We differentiate ‘new migrants’ from ‘old migrants’ in our work, which may not be a good idea,” the director confessed.⁵⁰

The contrast between older-generation migrants and new migrants was most noticeable in the two ceremonies held in Beijing in 2005. One was the 55th anniversary ceremony of the Municipal Qiaolian at Beijing. It was attended mainly by older-generation returned migrants.⁵¹ Directed by the municipal government, the ceremony appraised the “glorious past” of Qiaolian and highlighted the traditional theme of “loving the home country” and “belonging to the home country” (see Figures 1 and 2). In contrast, an awards ceremony for outstanding returned students and entrepreneurs in the Zhongguancun High Tech Park in Beijing appeared to be much more informal and personal, with a number of award-winners holding their awards on the stage and a crowd of young people standing close to the stage and grasping the glorious moment (see Figure 3). Unlike the emphasis on “belonging” and “patriotism” in the Qiaolian ceremony, opportunities and individual achievement were applauded and highlighted in the setting for new migrants and particularly students-turned immigrants.

⁵⁰ Feng, interview by author, October 10, 2005. Feng was the director of a district Qiaolian in Beijing.

⁵¹ I was the only young person among the group of attendants around me, and I guess that was partly the reason why the person videotaping the ceremony had focused the limelight on me for a long while.



Figure 1. *The 55th Anniversary Ceremony of the Municipal Qiaolian at Beijing*. September 29, 2005. Government officials (on the stage) and Qiaolian members stood up singing the national anthem of China.



Figure 2. *Older-generation Returned Migrants Attending the 55th Anniversary Ceremony of the Municipal Qiaolian at Beijing*. September 29, 2005. People chatted in the lobby before the ceremony. Most attendees were seniors. The four Chinese characters (*tian xia gui xin*) on the third scroll at the upper left means “people from all over the world pay respect and hold the desire of belonging (to the Central Kingdom)”



Figure 3. *An Awards Ceremony for Returned Students and Entrepreneurs*, September 13, 2005. Beijing.

Embracing Migrants and Migrants' Local Integration

One significant pattern of post-1978 Chinese policies on migrants, as indicated in Liao Hui's speech in 1989, was the Chinese government's awareness of the structural change of post-WWII Chinese emigrants from sojourners to settlers and its cautious strategies in addressing that change and embracing Chinese abroad.

In fact, Chinese officials working on overseas Chinese affairs had noticed and discussed the structural changes of overseas Chinese communities soon after China's reform. In 1982, Wang Xuemin compared today's overseas Chinese communities to those of twenty years before. The majority of Chinese migrants had obtained citizenship from their receiving countries, and their political and economic status had improved tremendously. Organizations of Chinese abroad were also mainly managed by Chinese with citizenship of the residing countries rather than of China, and the second- and third-generation Chinese migrants had localized and lost their ability to speak the Chinese language. While recognizing the structural change of overseas Chinese communities, Wang's writing still reflected the viewpoint of the Chinese government immediately after the reform: Wang emphasized how to encourage Chinese abroad to love their home country and hometown and how to improve the work on the second-, third- and fourth-generations of Chinese migrants.⁵²

Liao's speech in fact initially targeted and attempted to adjust the government's practices in the 1980s that focusing on the contribution of Chinese abroad to China's

⁵² Wang Xuemin, "Huqiao, waiji huaren shehui jiegou de bianhua," *QGYJ* 3 (1985): 29-31. Wang's article was written in 1982 and published in 1985, the year when *QGYJ* was established.

modernization.⁵³ Beginning in the mid-1980s, with the majority of past unjust cases redressed, the Chinese government began focusing on recruiting overseas Chinese and returned migrants into economic development and importing investment and advanced technology from abroad. In 1985, a national conference on issues about overseas Chinese and returned migrants was co-organized by Qiaowehui at National People's Congress (NPC), Qiaoban at State Council, and Qiaolian. The major topics of the conference were development of township enterprises (*xiangzheng qiye*, including those created and funded by returned migrants and their relatives) in the hometowns of overseas Chinese, enriching returned migrants and their relatives, and creating a new phase of work on overseas Chinese and returned migrants.

The emphasis on involving overseas Chinese and returned migrants in China's economic development was reiterated by Li Pu, a commissioner of Qiaowehui, in his speech in a meeting among *qiao*-related officials in Hebei province. Li cited his observation of the successful importation of investment and economic growth in Xinhui Country in Guangdong (Canton) and proclaimed that there would be “no fast economic development without *qiao*” (*wu qiao bu kuai*).⁵⁴

Therefore, in the 1980s, the Chinese government expected Chinese abroad to be “patriotic” and aimed at arousing their patriotism, though it might not be explicit in official propaganda. According to the associate director of Qiaoban, the principle of

⁵³ Liao, “gongzuo baogao.”

⁵⁴ Li Pu, “Li Pu tan haiwai guanxi shi hao dongxi,” *QGYJ* 4 (1986): 7-9.

work on overseas Chinese could be summarized in 16 words, among which “loving the home country and the home town” (*ai guo ai xiang*) came first.⁵⁵

The principle of “patriotism” and emphasis on capitalizing on overseas Chinese in importing investment and technology led to the alienation of migrants from China and to the gap between migrants and government officials. Wang Jingye, an officer in Qiaoban, noticed the lack of attention of Chinese officials to new migrants in the United States. He explained that some officers were biased in viewing new migrants as “being addicted to luxury and comfort and abandoning the home country” and could not understand the necessity of helping them settle down in the receiving society.⁵⁶ Xiong Chanliang, a relatively new member of Qiaoban, raised concerns based on his visit to Australia. According to his observation, many Chinese in Australia understood the principle of Chinese policies on Chinese abroad as “requesting money and assistance for the economic development in mainland China” and “taking advantage of Chinese abroad rather than serving them.” Xiong suggested that the top priority of Chinese policies on Chinese abroad should be serving them and assisting their long-term settlement and development in receiving societies.⁵⁷

Beginning in the late 1980s, the Chinese government started adjusting its policies on Chinese abroad from simply emphasizing their “patriotism” and their

⁵⁵ “Lin Shuinong tongzhi tan zengqiang huaqiao guannian,” A special issue on working on hometown and clan journals of overseas Chinese (I), *QLDT* (November 1985):5. The sixteen words are “ai guo ai xiang, tuan jie hu xiang, you hao xiang chu, chang qi sheng cun” (love home country and hometown, united and mutual assistance, friendly coexistence and long-term settlement in receiving countries). In his talk, Lin also reminded that the Chinese government and media should be cautious in reports and propaganda about the investment or donation of Chinese abroad (especially those from Southeast Asia), so that the receiving country would not suspect their loyalty.

⁵⁶ Wang Jingye, “Meiguo xinyimin gongzuo de chubu yanjiu,” *QGYJ* (1989/1990): 10.

⁵⁷ Xiong Changliang, “Haiwai Huaren gongzuo de liang ge jianyi” (Two Suggestions on Working on Chinese Abroad), *QGYJ* 3 (1987): 8-9.

investment in China to highlighting the service the Chinese government would provide for them and the various platforms they could use to contribute to China's development. The new guidelines proposed by Liao Hui in 1989 not only recognized the structural changes of overseas Chinese communities but formalized Chinese policies based on these changes and confirmed the principle that the Chinese government should improve services for migrants for their long-term settlement and development in the receiving societies.

This principle had also been advocated by Chinese scholars. Huang Songzhan, a scholar in the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies at Jinan University, wrote about the new tasks and strategies of China's dealing with overseas Chinese affairs.⁵⁸ According to Huang, there had been four trends within overseas Chinese communities. The first was "*waiqun*": while past generations preferred to return to China, most recent migrants had determined to emigrate for the long term and had not hesitated in changing their nationality. The second trend was "planting roots" abroad, especially among immigrants' descendants. The third trend was the increasing mobility of Chinese worldwide, and the forth trend was the emergence of worldwide associations and networks of Chinese abroad. Huang argued that the priority of China's work on Chinese abroad in this new historical context should enhance their settlement and development in their residing societies. Huang particularly noted that contemporary relationship between Chinese abroad and China had no longer been one between

⁵⁸ Jinan University is a higher education institution designed particularly for students from overseas Chinese families. Its predecessor was Jinan School which was founded in 1906 in Nanjing. Its mission is to educate students from overseas Chinese families and conduct research on overseas Chinese issues, which have been continued from the nationalist government during 1912-1949 to the communist government after 1949.

“subjects/sojourners and home country” but one among “relatives” (with the same origin but different allegiances). Mutual benefit should be the principle for China’s economic cooperation with Chinese abroad, Huang argued.⁵⁹

Why was there such a consensus among Chinese officials and scholars on the structural changes of overseas Chinese communities from *luoye guigeng* (finally returning to the home country) to *luodi shenggeng* (planting roots in the receiving society)? Why did the Chinese government now recognize and indeed encourage the localization of Chinese abroad? First of all, the localization of the majority of Chinese abroad instead of maintaining the Chinese nationality or returning to China had long been a remarkable fact that the Chinese government could not ignore and deny. Secondly, encouraging the localization of Chinese abroad fit the long-time strategy of the Chinese government of engaging Chinese abroad for its interests in foreign relations and economic benefit. Since the beginning of its launching the one-nationality policy in the 1950s, the Chinese government had been most cautious about enlisting the support of Chinese abroad while at the same time upholding its precarious relationships with neighboring states where large numbers of ethnic Chinese resided. With China’s reform since 1978, China again was in desperate need of foreign investment, and Chinese abroad had been the main source of China’s foreign investment.⁶⁰ This again led to the “loyalty question” of ethnic Chinese in the host societies (especially in Southeast Asia). In the early 1990s, some Southeast Asian countries such as Indonesia and the Philippines expressed concerns about the investments in China of their nationals with

⁵⁹ Huang Songzan, “Xin de guoji xingshi xia woguo qiaowu gongzuo de xin renwu he xin duice,” *QGYJ*, no. 1 (1991): 10-13.

⁶⁰ See footnote 25.

Chinese origin and viewed them as harming “the national interests and economic development.” As a response, in 1993, Qiaoban, the Central Committee of Propaganda (*zhongyang xuanchuanbu*) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs together reissued their Pronouncement in 1991 that forbade public announcements and reports of the investment of ethnic Chinese from Southeast Asia. The 1991 Pronouncement clarified the difference between *huaqiao* (overseas Chinese) and *huaren* (Chinese overseas) and affirmed that the emphasis in China’s broadcasts on Chinese abroad should be on their long-term settlement and integration in the receiving societies.⁶¹

Another reason for the consensus on the localization of overseas Chinese communities among Chinese officials and scholars was their changing perspectives and strategies regarding Chinese abroad. Facing the changing international context in the 1980s and 1990s that increasingly emphasized economic cooperation and competition rather than open arms conflict, as mentioned earlier in Liao Hui’s 1989 speech, the Chinese government had frequently called for maintaining a friendly force outside of China to benefit China’s foreign relations and economic development. In addition, some open-minded Chinese officials and scholars also understood the real needs of Chinese migrants as well as the significance of multiculturalism and interracial interaction in the contemporary world. In 1987, Zhang Jianqin, an officer in Qiaoban, noted the achievements of Chinese Americans in science, business, and political activism,

⁶¹ “Guowuyuan Qiaoban deng liuge bumen guanyu sheji huaqiao, waiji huaren xuanchuan zhong ruogan guiding de tongzhi” [The 1991 pronouncement of a few regulations in public broadcast concerning huaqiao and huaren by Qiaoban and other five ministries), August 9, 1991; Zhongguo Guowuyuan Qiaoban, Zhongyang Duiwai Xuanchuan Xiaozu, Waijiaobu guanyu chongshen bu de gongkai xuanchuan Dongnanya huaqiao huaren lai Hua touzi qingkuang de tongzhi [The restatement of the restriction in public broadcast of Investment of overseas Chinese and Chinese overseas from Southeast Asia), January 17, 1993, in *Qiaowu fagui wenjian huibian*, 302-4.

especially new migrants' integration into the "mainstream American society." At the same time, Zhang cautioned about the surge of conservatism and racial prejudice against Asian Americans in the mid-1980s and called for the unity of Chinese Americans in the United States. Zhang also mentioned an incident of conflict between Chinese Americans and blacks in 1985 in Washington D.C.⁶² Noting some Chinese Americans' racial prejudice against blacks as a result of internalized racial ideology of white Americans, Chen called on Chinese Americans to change their racial stereotypes and unite with other racial and ethnic groups in the United States.⁶³

Another Qiaoban officer named Lu Haibin wrote about Chinese-language education abroad and the localization of overseas Chinese communities. Though worried about the declining Chinese-language education abroad and the disinterest of many younger generations of Chinese in the Chinese language and Chinese culture, Lu argued that the Chinese government should strictly differentiate spreading Chinese culture from propagating patriotism, and that the aim of Chinese language education was to improve the local settlement and development of Chinese abroad. As he stated, "as a historical product, most countries in the world are now comprised of multiracial and multi-ethnic groups. Multiculturalism is necessary for historical development." As overseas Chinese communities had witnessed profound changes, Chen continued, "[W]e should not view Chinese-language education as the tool of binding Chinese

⁶² The incident started with a conflict between a Chinese restaurant owner and his black customers. The Chinese restaurant was located in the Southeast of Washington D.C. where poor blacks concentrated. Its owner Chen Changhong ended a quarrel with a black customer by driving him away with a gun. This led to a massive protest by black Americans in front of the restaurant who charged Chen with exploiting and disrespecting blacks and requested the removal of Chen's business out of the area.

⁶³ Zhang Jianqing, "Qunian Meiguo huaren shehui de xi yu you," *QGYJ* 3 (1987): 26-28.

abroad with China but instead view it as the need for their settlement and development in the local society.” “We need to advance their natural assimilation (*zhiran tonghua*) and ethnic integration (*minzhu ronghe*), and at the same time we support their striving for their rights to obtaining education of the language of the country of their origin,” Chen suggested.⁶⁴

In another comment after the Wen Ho Lee case in 1999, Lu Haibin again reminded other Chinese officials about the sensitiveness of dealing with overseas Chinese affairs.⁶⁵ Lu emphasized two directions for working on Chinese abroad: keeping a long-term friendly force internationally and improving the development of Chinese abroad in the local society. Lu further suggested three strategies for achieving these goals: encouraging the localization of Chinese abroad, highlighting in broadcasts the contributions Chinese abroad made to not only China but to their host societies, and enhancing cultural compatibility between Chinese and other ethnic groups.⁶⁶

With all of these discussions on the structural changes of overseas Chinese communities and on the localization of Chinese abroad, a question had been inevitably and frequently raised among Chinese officials working on “*qiao*”: Is the term “*huaqiao*” still applicable to describing Chinese abroad? If not, how to justify the existence of all these government agencies and all their work on the so-called “*qiao*”? In *QGYJ*, these

⁶⁴ Lu Haibin, “Shi tan huawen jiaoyu zhi weiji, xianzhuang yu duice,” *QGYJ* 4 (1987): 13-14.

⁶⁵ Wen Ho Lee is a Taiwan-born Chinese American scientist who worked for the Los Alamos National Laboratory. In December 1999, Lee was wrongfully charged by the U.S. government for stealing secrets about U.S. nuclear arsenal for the People’s Republic of China and was held without bail in solitary confinement for 278 days. With lack of evidence, the U.S government could only charge him with improper handling of restricted data, one of the original 59 indictment counts. Lee received 1.6 million USD from the U.S. federal government and several media companies involved in unfair reportage of the case as well as an apology from Federal judge James A. Parker for the “unfair manner” when he was held in custody. Many observers of the case believed that Lee was singled out because of his Chinese heritage.

⁶⁶ Lu Haibin, “Cong ‘Li Wenhe An’ kan qiaowu gongzuo de ‘mingan’ wenti,” *QGYJ* 6 (1999): 40-41.

questions had been raised and discussed frequently among officials and scholars, who had attempted to rephrase the term “*huaqiao*” along with the increasing numbers of new migrants and had tended to revitalize the meaning of “*qiao*” by emphasizing it as a racial/ethnic category.

The term “*huaqiao*” did not appear until the late 19th-century and had been widely used by nationalists in the Republican Revolution in the early 20th-century. It became enshrined in the nationalist discourse with Sun Yat-sen’s well-known statement that “*huaqiao* are the mother of China’s Republican Revolution” (*huaqiao nai geming zhi mu*).⁶⁷ The term referred to all ethnic Chinese abroad (including migrants and their foreign-born descendants, no matter whether they possessed nationalities of other countries).⁶⁸ This comprehensive categorization of “*huaqiao*” had been inherited by the People’s Republic of China until 1955, when it promulgated the one-nationality policy and differentiated *huaqiao* (Chinese emigrants retaining the Chinese nationality) from *huaren* (ethnic Chinese with nationality of another country). Since then, on the one hand the Chinese government had emphasized the differences between *huaqiao* and *huaren*; on the other hand the term “*huaqiao*” had been continuously used and related government agencies such as Qiaoban and Qiaolian had continued to exist (though dysfunctional during the Cultural Revolution), which had caused a dilemma in Chinese

⁶⁷ Wang Gungwu, “The Origins of Hua-ch’iao,” in *Community and Nation: China, Southeast Asia and Australia*, ed. Wang Gungwu (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1992), 1-10.

⁶⁸ The usage of “*huaqiao*” during the Republican era (1912-1949) had been a continuation of official ideology and policies of the late Qing government that regarded all Chinese abroad as Chinese subjects, though the Qing government had not adopted a single specified term such as “*huaqiao*” but instead used various terms such as “*qiaomin*” and “*huamin*.” The nationality laws of the Republic of China basically followed the 1909 Nationality Law of the Qing government that established the blood-based “*jus sanguine*” principle.

policies on Chinese abroad and continuously led to the conflicts between China and neighboring Southeast Asian countries.

After China's reform in 1978, the dilemma again surfaced. The Chinese government persisted in the mission of recruiting Chinese migrants and their relatives into the national cause of China's "Four Modernization," while it also had to realize the structural changes of overseas Chinese communities. As the associate director of Qiaoban addressed the China News Services (*zhongxinshe*, the second largest Chinese news agency primarily serving Chinese abroad) in 1985, Chinese officials and reporters should always update their understanding of the new situation and new policies regarding overseas Chinese, and they need to reinforce their "consciousness of *huaqiao*" (*huaqiao yishi*).⁶⁹ Though the associate director had noted the new environment for working on overseas Chinese and emphasized the service of the Chinese government, it is most revealing here to see how senior Chinese officials continued to use and in fact reinforced the concept of "*huaqiao*."

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, *QGYJ* had frequently published discussions on the meanings of *huaqiao*, *huaren*, and *huayi*. Most of these discussions confirmed that *huaqiao* was a logical concept still applicable to the present (especially considering the large numbers of new migrants), and that the difference between *huaqiao* and *huaren* was important and suitable for describing the historical changes of overseas Chinese communities.⁷⁰ Among these discussions was a tendency of Chinese scholars and

⁶⁹ "Lin Shuilong tongzhi tan zhengqiang huaqiao guanlian," 4-8.

⁷⁰ For example, Rao Shangdong, "Haiwai huaren mingcheng de jizhong shuofa," *QGYJ* 5 (1995): 37-38; Yang Shan, "'Huaqiao' yu 'Huaren' chenghu shi kexue de gailian," *QGYJ* 1 (1996): 42; Zhang Liangru,

officials to identify the *huaqiao* question in the new historical environment as one of racial and ethnic identity. In 1987, *QGYJ* published an article written by Chen Bisheng, a renowned scholar of overseas Chinese history at Xiamen University. Chen disagreed with past Chinese intellectuals about their theorization of the *huaqiao* question, including the popular notions that the *huaqiao* question was one about Chinese colonization or one about nationality.⁷¹ Chen argued that the essence of the *huaqiao* question was about ethnicity (*minzhu wenti*). According to Chen, the change of Chinese migrants' nationality did not mean they lost their Chineseness, and issues concerning *huaqiao* should be understood as the relations between *huaqiao* as a distinct ethnic group and other racial and ethnic groups.⁷²

The argument of *huaqiao* as an ethnic category seems to have been well received by Chinese officials. In 1996, a Qiaoban officer wrote about the benefits of adopting an ethnic (*minzu*) framework as a “modern perspective” (*xiandai yishi*) in studying and handling overseas Chinese affairs. “We have been used to very carefully emphasizing the difference between *huaqiao* and *huaren*— after all we should be careful about such ‘sensitive’ issues,” the officer stated. However, “when we cautiously translate ‘*waiji huaren*’ into ‘ethnic Chinese with foreign nationalities,’ they are calling

⁷¹ “‘Huaqiao’ yu ‘Huaren’ chenu de benzhi shi minzu wenti,” *QGYJ* 2 (1996): 42; Tang Wang, “Wu jiang ‘Huaqiao’ ‘Huaren’ hunwei yitan,” *QGYJ* 5 (1998): 33.

⁷² The theory that the *huaqiao* question was one about Chinese colonization was best illustrated in Liang Qichao, “Zhongguo zhimin ba da weiren zhuan,” *Xin min cong bao*, no. 63 (1905): 81-88; and Li Changfu, *Zhongguo zhimin shi* (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1938). The theory of *huaqiao* as a question of nationality was best articulated in Qiu Hanping, *Huaqiao wen ti* (Shanghai: Shangwu yingshuguan, 1936).

⁷² Chen Bisheng, “Huaqiao de shizhi shi minzu wenti,” *QGYJ* 3 (1987): 14-15. This article was originally published in 1986 in a scholarly journal *Nanyang Wentí* sponsored by Xiamen University. Chen’s argument was further elaborated in Chen Bisheng, ed., *Nanyang huaqiao shi* (Nanchang: Jiangxi renmin chubanshe, 1989).

themselves ‘Chinese Americans’ or ‘Australian Chinese’ without hesitation.” The officer continued by stating that “ethnic consciousness (*minzhu yishi*), ethnic perspective (*minzu guanglian*), and ethnic identity (*minzu rentonggan*) have led to our sharing fate with Chinese abroad and our fellow Chinese in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao.” The officer further argued that in the new historical context, work on overseas Chinese issues should not be limited to the group of *huaqiao* (Chinese migrants maintaining the Chinese nationality) but extend to all ethnic Chinese, and that there was nothing to worry about that some years later there would be no need for the work on overseas Chinese.⁷³

It is clear that for both Chinese scholars and officials, an ethnic perspective on the traditional concept of *huaqiao* seemed to be a “modern” perspective that suited the new historical context and the structural changes of overseas Chinese communities. However, Chinese scholars and officials were utilizing the ethnic perspective (a seemingly internationally accepted framework in the contemporary world) with remarkable “Chinese characteristics” (*Zhongguo teshe*). It is a framework reinforcing the old concept of “*huaqiao*” that emphasizes the bond between Chinese abroad and China.

In fact, this ethnic perspective is not new but rather had been prevalent in the late Qing policies on overseas Chinese and in the formulation of China’s first nationality law. China’s first nationality law in 1909 had established the principle of *jus sanguine*, which defined Chinese based on their racial (“blood”) and ethnic origin. This principle had been inherited by Chinese governments after the Qing dynasty (the

⁷³ Jun Jie, “Cong ‘Huayi’ yici xiangdao de,” *QGYJ* 4 (1996): 42-43.

Beijing government, the nationalist government, and the early-stage communist government) and remained in place until 1955 when the one-nationality policy was promulgated by the People's Republic of China. (The Taiwan government has continued the *jus sanguine* principle to date.) The difference between the present ethnic framework and the past *jus sanguine* principle is that in the past, Chinese abroad were not recognized as losing their Chinese nationality, and therefore “once a Chinese, forever a Chinese.” Nationality, race and ethnicity were combined into one unchanging entity; while at present, nationality and ethnicity are not necessarily one identical entity, and to a large degree the ethnic perspective has been reinvented and reinforced to compensate for the variance (deviance) of nationality to build up a national identity.

The continuous and intense usage of the terms of “*huaqiao*” and “*huaren*” by the Chinese government and Chinese scholars had been criticized by scholars based outside of China. For example, Wang Gungwu, a leading scholar of Chinese migration history and himself a second-generation Chinese emigrant, points out that the problematic term of *huaqiao* and the ambiguous use of the mixed term of *huaqiao-huaren* risked inheriting the traditional nationalist discourse of “*huaqiao*” that bound all those of Chinese descent to China and ignored the diversity among overseas Chinese communities and their needs in the residing societies.⁷⁴ On the other hand, China-based scholars had defended the continuing usage of the term “*huaqiao*” and the combination

⁷⁴ Wang Gungwu, “Upgrading the Migrant: Neither Huaqiao Nor Huaren,” in Elizabeth Sinn, ed., *The Last Half Century of the Chinese Overseas: Comparative Perspective* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1998), 15-28.

of the terms of “*huaqiao*” and “*huaren*.⁷⁵ This variance revealed the powerful influence of nationalist discourse on scholarship and the difficulties of bridging scholarship in different national contexts.

Claiming National Identity, Redefining Chineseness

While the relationship between the mainland government and the Nationalist government at Taiwan has improved since the 1980s, as Liao Hui mentioned in his report, both sides have long competed to win over Chinese abroad for domestic development and international influence. They have also competed in labeling themselves as the “center” of the Chinese world and representing China. On the other hand, both sides have faced challenges from the Taiwan independence movement which became strong in the 1980s. The mainland Chinese government has accordingly adjusted its policies on Chinese migration and migrants.

The 1980s generally witnessed improvement in the relationship between mainland China and Taiwan. Both societies were under dramatic political and social transformation in the 1980s. While mainland China started its reform and open-door policies after the Cultural Revolution, the Taiwan government under the leadership of Chiang Ching-kuo ended the martial law and opened space for subsequent political and social reforms. For the first time in more than three decades, people in Taiwan were allowed to travel across the strait to visit the mainland for business, pleasure, and family

⁷⁵ For example, some of the most well-known Chinese scholars of overseas Chinese studies still widely use the term “*huaqiao*” and the combination of the terms “*huaqiao*” and “*huaren*” in their writings. For example, Zhuang Guotu, *Huaqiao huaren yu Zhongguo de guanxi* (Guangzhou: Guangdong jiaoyu chubanshe, 2001). Wu Qianjin, *Guojia guanxi zhong de huaqiao huaren he huazu* (Beijing: Xinhua chubanshe, 2003).

reunions. Cross-strait flows of capital and goods had taken off in a much faster pace in the 1980s and 1990s. Beyond the Taiwan Strait and in the larger overseas Chinese world, however, mainland China found itself in a much more alienated position as compared to the nationalist government in Taiwan that had a more solid standing and wider influence abroad.⁷⁶ There were two main reasons for this imbalance: one is that the nationalist government in Taiwan had inherited the solid ties between Chinese abroad and the nationalist government of the Republican era (1912-1949); secondly, the domestic political upheaval and intense foreign relations of mainland China since the late 1950s had largely cut ties between the mainland and Chinese abroad.

In 1981, Dong Yinchu, the chairman of Qiaolian at Shanghai, visited the United States and published his observation of Chinese communities in the United States. According to Dong, while most traditional Chinese American organizations generally identified with Taiwan, there were still opportunities for the mainland. Dong categorized Chinese American organizations into three groups: the traditional significant associations such as the Chinese Consolidated Benevolence Association (*zhonghua gongsuo*), clan- or hometown-based organizations, and organizations of American-born Chinese. Dong cautioned that the Taiwan government had spared no

⁷⁶ As a mainland Chinese consul in Los Angeles observed in 1990, Taiwan had more influence on ethnic Chinese in the U.S. and was better rooted in Chinese American communities than the mainland China. While it was the mainland Chinese government instead of Taiwan that set up formal diplomatic relations with the U.S., up to the year of 1990, the Taiwan government had a liaison office headquartered in Washington D.C. as well as 12 local branch offices across the U.S., as compared to the mainland China which had an embassy in Washington D.C. and only 5 consulates in the U.S.. An Wenbin, “Renqing haiwai huaren shehui xianshi, zuohao hauqiao huaren gongzuo,” *QLDT* 6 (1990): 18-24.

efforts in approaching Chinese in the United States, and the mainland needed to compete with Taiwan in working on these various types of Chinese associations.⁷⁷

Dong suggested that the mainland Chinese government encourage more correspondence and contact between Chinese abroad and their relatives in China, invite Chinese migrants to visit China, set up more broadcast stations abroad, and encourage Chinese consuls to work more closely with overseas Chinese students to prevent them from being recruited by the Taiwan government. He also noted that the Taiwan government did not prohibit dual citizenship and therefore had no concerns in working on Chinese abroad. Dong suggested that the mainland could adjust its one-nationality policy, applying it mainly to Chinese in Southeast Asia where the nationality issue had been historically most sensitive while making the nationality policy more flexible in Europe and America. With more discussions on the dual-nationality question in Chapter 5, here it is interesting to see that the nationality question did not resurge suddenly in the mid-1990s with the increasing numbers of new migrants (especially calls from student migrants) but rather had been raised in the beginning of China's reform. The official one-nationality policy had been constantly contested in China, even from within the Chinese government.

Competition between mainland China and Taiwan was also intense in Southeast Asia, the traditional region of the greatest concentration of Chinese migrants and their descendants. In 1988, an officer in Qiaoban warned about Taiwan's efforts there. He cautioned that Taiwan had become increasingly attentive to Thailand and had invested

⁷⁷ Dong Yinchu, “Guanyu Meiguo Huaqiao Huaren de yixie qingkuang he dui qiaowu gognzuo de jianyi,” *QLDT* 4 (1982): 15-27. This article was originally published in *Qiaowu Zhubao* which was published by *Qiaoban* in Shanghai.

in 161 projects in 1987, with over 500 million U.S. dollars, the second largest of foreign investments in Thailand. The Taiwan government also courted significant ethnic Chinese leaders and invited Chinese-language instructors in Thailand to visit Taiwan. The Qiaoban officer suggested that the mainland Chinese government improve its work on the four million “economically strong and socially respectable” Chinese in Thailand, who comprised nine percent of Thailand’s total population. This would not only contribute to the strategic development of China’s coast economies but also exert positive influence on China’s overseas policies in the whole Southeast Asian region.⁷⁸

In the 1990s, several changes led to new challenges to the mainland Chinese government regarding its policies on Chinese abroad. One change was the strategic adjustment of Taiwan’s policies on Chinese abroad. Another challenge was the June 4 crack down on the Tiananmen democratic demonstration by the mainland Chinese government which left significant impact on the relationship between mainland China and the world (including Chinese abroad). A third challenge was the Taiwan independence movement that had gained more momentum after the late 1980s.

In 1992, *QGYJ* published a study of the new trends of Taiwan’s policies on Chinese abroad since the late 1980s. The study noted that in 1989, the Taiwan government replaced 238 diplomats at various levels in 98 overseas offices with new, young, and professional diplomats; the replacement rate was as remarkable as 40 percent. The Taiwan government also ruled in November 1991 that all Taiwan diplomats could begin to actively engage mainland Chinese diplomats (while in the past such engagement was seen as improper and was restricted) and should strive for

⁷⁸ Zhang Longzhong, “You shili, you diwei de Taihua shehui,” *QGYJ* 4 (1988): 29-30.

presence wherever mainland Chinese diplomats were invited in public events. The Taiwan government increasingly used trade and economic benefits to court Chinese abroad. It also expanded its overseas cultural activities and Chinese-language educational efforts and strengthened its propaganda abroad via radio, television stations, and newspapers. The study pointed out three major reasons for these new policies. One was the new strategy of “flexible diplomacy” (*tanxing waijiao*) adopted by the Taiwan government in the late 1980s;⁷⁹ the second reason was the structural changes of overseas Chinese communities and the improvement of mainland China-Taiwan relationships; the third reason was the international political and economic context in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when “international communism movement witnessed its hardest moment” and the world economy witnessed recession.⁸⁰

In 1990, An Wenbin, the deputy consul at China’s consulate in Los Angeles, wrote an article about competition from the Taiwan government and the impact of the June 4 Incident. He described Taiwan’s “flexible diplomacy” and its efforts to create opportunities for co-appearance of mainland Chinese and Taiwan officials. While following the general “one-China” principle, An suggested, the Chinese government could also be flexible in countering Taiwan’s “flexible diplomacy.” If both the mainland and Taiwan were invited for a public event in the United States, the Chinese

⁷⁹ “Tanxing waijiao” was a strategic adjustment of Taiwan’s diplomatic relations after Lee Teng-hui succeeded Chiang Ching-kuo in 1988. It is different from past Taiwan’s diplomacy that was based on the “one China principle” (the Republic of China in Taiwan instead of the People’s Republic of China) and identifying allies and enemies based on this political ideology. For example, Taiwan would not side with or build up ties with countries that had official diplomatic relations with the mainland China). In contrast, the strategy of “tanxing waijiao” since the late 1980s emphasized seeking opportunities to build up relations with any country or parties that would enhance economic interests and international status of Taiwan. The new policy largely abandoned the “one China principle” and instead advocated more international space for Taiwan itself.

⁸⁰ Xu Yousheng and Wu Hongqing, “Taiwan jinqi qiaowu gongzuo qianxi,” *QGYJ* 4 (1992): 41-43.

government could strive for the best option that only mainland Chinese diplomats were invited, but it could not give up two other less-ideal options: one was that both the mainland and Taiwan were invited but the former rather than the latter officially represented China; and the least desired option was that both parties were present but neither one was to be introduced to the public, and both parties “left after a peaceful and quiet meal.” An also suggested that the Chinese government take advantage of its official diplomatic relations with the United States to strengthen its status in the United States, and the Chinese government could also highlight the mainland as the “root” of Chinese abroad to win them over.⁸¹ It is apparent that there had been intense competition between the mainland Chinese government and the Taiwan government regarding who represented China, politically and culturally.

An Wenbin also discussed the impact of the June 4 Incident on the attitudes of Chinese abroad towards the mainland Chinese government. He admitted that the Incident had driven many Chinese abroad back to the image they had in the past that identified the Chinese communist regime as totalitarian and repressive. While the negative economic impact of the Incident would not last long as Chinese abroad still needed to do business with China, the political impact of the Incident was “deep and wide among Chinese abroad.” An continued that “[W]e could not eradicate this negative impact in one or two days. We need a long time to gradually reduce that impact and we need to fully anticipate this situation.” An suggested the mainland

⁸¹ An Wenbin, “Renqing haiwai Huaren shehui xianshi.”

Chinese government improve its services for Chinese migrants as one of the ways to redress the negative legacy of the Incident.⁸²

To regain confidence and sympathy of Chinese abroad with the mainland China after the June 4 Incident, the Chinese government reiterated its policy of embracing the broad overseas Chinese communities, including even those who participated in protests against the mainland Chinese government during the June 4 Incident. In 1996, an editorial of *QGYJ* emphasized that the Chinese government should unite with the majority of Chinese migrants and understand and respect their choice of settling abroad, including former students as well as illegal immigrants who already obtained legal permanent residence abroad. Even for those migrants (mainly students) “who once made political mistakes but who were no longer against China’s Constitution and laws, we also unite with them.”⁸³

Another important reason for China’s emphasis on a larger unity with migrants abroad was the Chinese government’s need in the 1990s to counter the Taiwan independence movement and its impact on overseas Chinese communities. The Taiwan independence movement had gained momentum since the 1980s along with Taiwan’s political and social reforms.⁸⁴ In 1988, Lee Teng-hui succeeded Chiang Ching-kuo in leading the Nationalist Party (KMT). Lee himself is a native Taiwanese advocating

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ “Zhongshi dui xin yimin de gongzuo,” *QGYJ* 1 (1996): 1. Chen Haoqi, a Chinese consul in New York, also called for uniting with Chinese student migrants who had benefited from the June 4 Incident and had applied for permanent residence abroad, so that the Chinese government would not “leave them to Taiwan.” Chen Haoqi, “Zhishi xinyimin shulue,” *QGYJ* 5 (1996): 35-36.

⁸⁴ Chiang Ching-kuo brought substantial numbers of native “Taiwanese” into the ruling Nationalist Party (KMT) and into the government in the 1980s. By the time of Chiang’s death in 1988, Taiwanese constituted about 67 percent of the KMT’s membership. David M. Lampton, *Same Bed, Different Dreams: Managing U.S.-China Relations 1989-2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 100.

Taiwan's independence. Under his leadership, Taiwan developed a multiparty political system, and the principle rival to the KMT has been the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) which wrote into its charter in 1986 a commitment to the island's independence. The Taiwan independence movement became a key issue in relations between the mainland and Taiwan in the 1990s and intensified tensions in the Taiwan Strait which were highlighted in 1995 with Lee Teng-hui's visit to the United States and then the following Taiwan Strait missile confrontation in 1995-1996.⁸⁵

Xiong Changliang, a Qiaoban officer, made clear the tensions caused by the Taiwan Independence movement and their impact on migrants in his article published in *QGYJ* in 1996. Xiong noted that Li's visit to the United States had aroused tensions among Chinese in the United States. There were conflicts between the unification camp (*tong pai*) and the separatist camp (*du pai*), and both camps had attempted to recruit new migrants. For Xiong, mainland Chinese new migrants (especially students-turned immigrants) cared about China and "identified their roots with China." As Xiong stated,

"Though some of them have different political orientations, they support our one-China policy and oppose the Taiwan separatist movement... They are cautious about political involvement and understand the power of their vote. They are keen in politics and active in socialization. They know how to protect their rights with American law and live comfortably in the American mainstream society... they have gained wide attention and favor from Chinese communities as well as the mainstream American society. They supported China's pursuit of the Most-Favored-Nation status, protested against the false report in the CBS television network (here it refers to Connie Chung's report on May 19, 2004 regarding "future spies" among ordinary Chinese citizens in the U.S.), opposed Lee Deng-hui's visit to the U.S., organized the celebration ceremony of China's National Day... all these showed their overall power and had helped promote the integration of Chinese into the American society and Chinese participation in American politics..."⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Lampton, *Same Bed, Different Dreams*, 99-109.

⁸⁶ Xiong Changliang, "Fuwu wei xian, zhongdian tu po— Meiguo huaren xin yimin gongzuo zai tan," *QGYJ* 1 (1996): 23-25.

It is clear that Chinese migrants (here “new migrants” in particular) have been understood in relation to the mainland Chinese government’s relations with Taiwan and mainland China’s foreign relations in general.⁸⁷ Chinese migrants have been perceived by the mainland Chinese government as a valuable asset abroad opposing the Taiwan independence movement, assisting China’s national unification, and enhancing China’s national interests more broadly on the international stage. In another article published in *QGYJ*, Chinese migrants were claimed to be an important tool for “people’s diplomacy” (*minjian waijiao*), which could help “reduce U.S. misunderstanding of China’s economic growth and military modernization... weaken the influence of Taiwan lobbyists and of U.S. politicians who are pro-Taiwan and anti-mainland China... and improve Sino-U.S. relations.”⁸⁸

The mainland Chinese government and the Taiwan nationalist government had been competing with each other for the legitimacy of representing China; with the resurgence of the Taiwan independence movement in the 1990s, however, the concept of “China” has become more complicated and has been questioned by advocates of Taiwan independence. The mainland Chinese government adjusted its policies in the 1990s from requesting patriotism of Chinese abroad (i.e., loyal to mainland China) to advocating the revival of the Chinese nation, with hopes of broadening the base of sympathizers and countering the Taiwan independence movement. Therefore, there had been a general shift of mainland China’s policies on Chinese abroad from competing for

⁸⁷ In fact, it has been a tradition of Chinese policies on migration and migrants to be subject to China’s foreign relations. Chen Xi, *Qiaowu yu waijiao guanxi yanjiu: Zhongguo fangqi “shuangchong guoji” de huigu yu fanshi* (Beijing: Zhongguo huaqiao chubanshe, 2005).

⁸⁸ Wu Gang, “Minjian waijiao da you ke wei—dui jiu shi niandai Zhong Mei guanxi he wo zai Mei qiaowu gongzuo de yidian kanfa,” *QGYJ* 5 (1996): 42-43.

their “political loyalty” to competing for their “cultural loyalty.” This shift was a result of the changing relations between the mainland and Taiwan governments and of the changing political context in the 1990s such as the surge of the Taiwan independence movement. It was also a result of the structural changes of overseas Chinese communities, with the fading influence of political regimes across the Taiwan Strait on Chinese abroad and the increasing integration of Chinese migrants (old and new) into the receiving societies.

While mainland China and Taiwan had competed for the legitimacy of “representing China” and for the role of “the center” of the Chinese world, historical changes and contingencies had mocked this discourse of “the center” claimed by nation-states. To a certain degree, leaving aside its political controversy, the Taiwan independence movement was a sign of a disruption of this discourse of “the center” pursued by both the mainland Chinese government and the nationalist Taiwan government.

China’s nationalist discourse of “the center” had also been criticized by overseas Chinese intellectuals. Largely stimulated by the June 4 Incident, a group of well-known overseas Chinese intellectuals published a collection of articles reflecting on the meaning of Chineseness and challenging “the claims of political leadership to be the ultimate authority in a matter as significant as Chineseness.”⁸⁹ Leo Ou-fan Lee noted that the exodus of a significant number of Chinese intellectuals after the June 4 Incident indicated a new discourse to “‘decenter’ the oppressive political culture of the party.”

⁸⁹ Tu Wei-ming, ed., *The Living Tree: The Changing Meaning of Being Chinese Today* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994): viii.

Drawing upon his own diaspora journey and cultural experience in the United States, Lee argued that for a diaspora Chinese, a seemingly marginal position outside of the “Central Country” in fact rendered benefits: “It is only on this marginal ground that I feel psychologically *secure* and even culturally privileged” (Italics original). As Lee stated, “the old national argument, based on territorial and ideological grounds, of a single China represented by a single government gradually loses its relevance.” With increasing internationalization and intermixing of economies and cultures, “the old spatial matrix of center and periphery no longer has much validity.”⁹⁰

In his contribution to the collection that was titled “Cultural China: The Periphery as The Center,” Tu Wei-ming pointed out that the massive exodus of many Chinese intellectuals from the mainland since 1978 clearly showed that “the civilization-state has lost much of its grip on the Chinese intelligentsia,” and the June 4 Incident “may have irreversibly severed the emotional attachment of the diaspora Chinese to the homeland.” Instead of recognizing a geopolitical center of China, Tu expanded the concept of “cultural China” to three symbolic universes: the first consists of mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore; the second consists of overseas Chinese communities; and the third refers to people culturally and intellectually engaging China regardless of ethnicity and profession.⁹¹ Though seemingly a little too broad and ideal, Tu’s conceptualization of “three symbolic universe” struck the

⁹⁰ Lee Ou-fan Lee, “On the Margins of the Chinese Discourse: Some Personal Thoughts on the Cultural Meaning of the Periphery,” in Tu Wei-ming, *The Living Tree*, 222,231,238. Lee came to study in the U.S. in the 1960s and specialized in modern Chinese literature. He had taught in American universities such as Princeton, Indiana, Chicago and Harvard. He is now teaching in Chinese University of Hong Kong.

⁹¹ Tu Wei-ming, “Cultural China: The Periphery as the Center,” in *The Living Tree*, 13-14; 24. Tu came to study in the U.S. in the 1960s and has long been the director of the Harvard Yenching Institute.

nation/state-based discourse of “the center” that the mainland China and Taiwan had striven for.⁹²

Chinese policies on migration and migrants after 1978 have experienced significant transformation in response to domestic reforms as well as to the changing global political economy. With its reform and open-door policies and the pressing needs of overseas investment and advanced science and technology, China changed its policies from condemning “overseas relations” and persecuting returned migrants and their relatives in China to confirming and protecting their rights and actively recruiting Chinese abroad for China’s modernization. In the 1990s, the Chinese government further moved to emphasizing the local integration of Chinese abroad and encouraging their contribution to China without the need to return to China. It was both a response to the fact that post-WWII Chinese migrants were mainly settlers rather than sojourners and a strategy of the state to redesign policies to engage Chinese abroad and encourage their participation in China’s modernization in various and flexible ways. These policy adjustments also took place in the global contexts of the end of the Cold War, the increasingly globalized economy, and the need of China to integrate into the global community with Chinese abroad as bridges and intermediaries. Competing with the Taiwan nationalist government and facing the challenge of the Taiwan independence

⁹² Wang Gungwu, a leading scholar of Chinese migration history, also pointed out the multiple layered Chinese cultural centers among overseas Chinese in the 20th -century. He asserted that “during the past half century, secondary cultural centers have emerged in Hong Kong and Taiwan, and there is even the possibility of tertiary centers forming.” See Wang, “Cultural Centers for the Chinese Overseas,” in Gregor Benton and Hong Liu, eds., *Diasporic Chinese Ventures: The Life and Work of Wang Gungwu* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2004), 210-26.

movement, China also broadened its appeal to Chinese abroad for “cultural loyalty” rather than “political loyalty” and strove to assert itself as the center of the Chinese world, which was nevertheless not uncontested by Chinese abroad.

Along with these changes of Chinese policies, new migrants, especially the group of student/professional migrants, have become the primary focus of the Chinese government. They have been honored and privileged for the social and cultural capital they possess and they are expected to contribute to China’s economic and social reforms. Similar preference systems for these highly educated migrants could also be seen in receiving societies. The following chapter looks at how Chinese student migrants (and international students and professional migrants in general) fit into the post-1965 U.S. immigration system, embody the historical transformation of US immigration policies, and reveal U.S. national interests and national identity.

Chapter 2

Chinese Student Migration and Post-1965 U.S. Immigration

International student migration to the United States has always reflected U.S. national interests and national identity.¹ After 1965, visa adjustments for Chinese students in particular and international students in general highlighted the changes in U.S. immigration policy that would increasingly privilege highly educated and skilled migrants. This chapter focuses on two recent changes in U.S. policy related to Chinese student migrants. One is the Chinese Student Protection Act (CSPA) of 1992, which allowed Chinese students to stay in the United States and adjust their immigrant status in the wake of the Tiananmen Incident in 1989. This law became a watershed for about 40,000-60,000 mainland Chinese students and scholars and their immediate families to adjust their status and become American immigrants. The other change is the increasing demand for highly educated and skilled workers in the United States, especially with the Information Technology (IT) industry boom and economic growth in the 1990s. There has been increasing U.S. legislation preferring and recruiting students/skilled migrants since the 1990s (such as the creation of the H-1B “specialty occupation” visa in 1990).

¹ International students comprised an important yet largely ignored part of the U.S. immigration history, and international student migration has been often ignored in immigration studies. Emphasizing a “destined” process from immigration in the beginning to settlement and naturalization in the end, traditional immigration literature hardly included international students (not emigrants in the beginning and no necessary settlement in the end) among its main subjects for study. Instead, international students have been mainly studied in the fields of international educational and cultural exchanges. Though recent immigration debates and reforms (such as H-1B visas which I will address in this chapter) have aroused scholarly attention to students-turned migrants, no migration studies have seriously focused on student migration, placed it in historical context, and examined it in the context of both U.S. economic interests and foreign relations to demonstrate U.S. immigration patterns and U.S. national identity.

Chinese students have become one of the most drafted pools for highly skilled immigrants.

Shaped by and shaping U.S. immigration laws, international student migration revealed U.S. national interests and national identity. Similar to past U.S. policies emphasizing the benefits U.S.-educated Chinese students could bring to U.S.-China relations and U.S. influence on China, the CSPA of 1992 showed the self-assumed role of the U.S. as the “beacon of hope” for the free world at the end of the Cold War, rescuing Chinese students from the repressive communist regime and saving them for China’s future democratic movement. On the other hand, the creation of the H-1B visa and the efforts of recruiting international students into the U.S. workforce demonstrated a remarkable pattern of post-1965 U.S. immigration that increasingly leaned towards a system preferring skilled migrants. These two aspects, one indicating ideological superiority and the other emphasizing practical economic interests, complemented each other and displayed the historical legacy of a combination of exceptionalism and pragmatism in the formation of the U.S. national identity.

This chapter is divided into three sections. It first reviews how the United States became the major destination for international students along with its growing power in the early twentieth century and how the 1965 U.S. immigration reform impacted the flow of international student migration, particularly the migration of Chinese and other Asian students and professionals. The second section focuses on the CSPA of 1992, examining how it was passed, how U.S. policy makers perceived Chinese students and identified U.S. national interests, and how Chinese students themselves understood the

situation and actively participated in the legislative process. The third section studies the increasing legislation since the 1990s that emphasized U.S. economic and technological leadership and recruited highly skilled migrants and how it reflected the larger trend among other nation-states of favoring student/skilled migrants with a carefully designed selective immigration system.

Student Migration, U.S. Foreign Relations and U.S. Immigration: from the early 20th century to 1965

International student migration to the United States has always been tied to U.S. foreign relations and has reflected U.S. national interests and national identity. Along with its ascendancy as a world power in the early 20th century, the U.S. replaced Europe (especially Germany) after WWI to become the most important destination for international students. In 1922, there were 8,357 international students in the United States. Among them 2,506 were from Asia, 1,425 from Latin America, and 1,379 from Europe.² It was also a time of burgeoning government and nongovernment initiatives for advancing international educational and cultural exchanges. The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace funded the creation of the Institute of International Education (IIE) in 1919 and as its director, Stephen P. Duggan, asserted in 1920: “The institute believes that it is as essential for Americans to know of the difficulties and

² W. Reginald Wheeler, Henry H. King and Alexander B. Davidson, eds., *The Foreign Student in America* (New York: Association Press, 1925), xvi, cited in Whitney Walton, “Internationalism and the Junior Year Abroad: American Students in France in the 1920s and 1930s,” *Diplomatic History* 29, no. 2 (April 2005): 259.

problems of other countries as for the people of other countries to know something about us, in order that international good-will may be realized.”³

The ties between student migration and foreign relations can be best seen in the Boxer Indemnity Scholarship Program, through which the U.S. government returned part of its share of the reparations China was fined after the Boxer Uprising (1899-1901) to fund Chinese students to study in the United States. About thirteen hundred Chinese students were sent to study in the United States via this program between 1909 and 1929. As Michael Hunt pointed out, this Boxer Indemnity Scholarship Program was conducted by the U.S. government to promote American-directed reform in China and to gain advantage in competing with other powers.⁴ As a statement in a *Daily Consular and Trade Report* made clear:

Chinese students will be studying American institutions, making American friends, and coming back here to favor America for China in its foreign relations. Talk about a Chinese alliance! The return of the indemnity was the most profitable work Uncle Sam did... They will form a force in our favor so strong that no other government or trade element of Europe can compete with it.⁵

International students in the early 20th century were also framed in the U.S. immigration regime that took its form at the federal level only after the late 19th century. Based on their class status and diplomatic value, international students were often exempted from exclusionary immigration laws such as the 1882 Chinese Exclusion

³ Walton, “Internationalism and the Junior Year Abroad,” 261.

⁴ Michael H. Hunt, “The American Remission of the Boxer Indemnity: Reappraisal,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 31, no.3 (May 1972): 539-59.

⁵ Frank G. Carpenter quoted in “The Awakening of China,” *Daily Consular and Trade Reports*, no. 3636 (November 15, 1909): 8-9, cited in Hunt, 558.

Act.⁶ However, racial ideology and racialized immigration laws barred Asian migrants from immigration to and naturalization in the United States. The racially discriminatory immigration laws also placed international students into different groups and under different government supervision according to their race and national origins. According to the Immigration Act of 1917 and following amendments (particularly the Immigration Act of 1924),⁷ foreign students born in countries restricted by the national origins quota (European, South African and Oriental countries) or born of races ineligible to U.S. citizenship should obtain a non-quota student visa to enter the United States under Section 4 (e) of the 1924 Act. They should possess a Certificate of Admission from an American educational institution which was registered on an accredited list maintained by the Bureau of Immigration at Washington and available for reference at all U.S. consulates. In comparison, any young person of the white race from the Western Hemisphere could enter under 4 (c) of the 1924 Act without regard to the quota and without a Certificate of Admission to a given university, since an alien

⁶ The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 (22 Stat. L. 58). The 1882 Act barred Chinese laborers from entering the US and denied all Chinese the right to naturalization and citizenship. While excluding Chinese laborers, the Exclusion Act exempted certain groups of Chinese (such as diplomats and students) and allowed their entering the US. For detailed analysis of the Exclusion Act and the exclusion era, see Erika Lee, *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration during the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

⁷ The Immigration Act of 1917 imposed a literacy test on immigrants and set up a Asiatic Barred Zone to ban immigration from Asia (except Japan and the Philippines). The Immigration Act of 1924, also known as the National Origins Act, limited annual European immigration to 2 percent of the number of people from that country living in the United States in 1890 (therefore restricting immigration from Southern and Eastern European nationalities that had only small populations in the US in 1890). The 1924 Act also practically barred all Asians from entering the United States. The 1924 Immigration Act differentiated the two categories (immigrant vs. nonimmigrant). For some unexplained reasons or simply confusion, international students were included in the category of immigrants, though their stay in the United States was clearly identified in law as temporary rather than permanent. See Ruth C. Mitchell, "Foreign Students and the Immigration Laws of the United States," *Bulletin* (Institute of International Education at New York), serial 11, no. 1 (1930): 5-30. Mitchell's contemporary observation was focusing on the impact of U.S. immigration acts on international education. For analysis of the general historical impact of restricting U.S. immigration acts at this time, see Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*.

eligible to citizenship born in a quota exempt country “is non-quota by reason of his birthplace and retain this non-quota status regardless of the purpose of his journey to the United States.”⁸

The differences between 4 (e) students (those from restricted or excluded countries) and 4 (c) students (those from non-restricted countries) also included that the former were subject to government supervision while the latter not. Of the 9,000 foreign students in the United States in the 1920s, around half (5449) were from countries restricted by the Immigration Act of 1924 and therefore subject to government supervision. The responsibility of supervising 4(e) students was shared by the Visa Student Division of the Bureau of Immigration and receiving universities, and the latter were expected to report regularly on 4(e) students to make sure they maintained student status. Universities also needed to report the name of the steamer and the date of departure when each 4(e) student actually left the United States. The Bureau of Immigration also forbade 4(e) students to engage in compensatory employment and did not permit their status to change without their leaving the country.⁹ In a word, the contrast between 4 (e) and 4(c) students based on their racial and national origins was conspicuous and stark.

International student migration to the United States after World War II also unfolded in the changing context of both U.S. foreign relations and the U.S. immigration system. Cold War politics after World War II restructured the flow of

⁸ Mitchell, “Foreign Students and the Immigration Laws of the United States,” 5-30.

⁹ Ibid. There was another group of foreign students not required to present a Certificate of Admission in advance. They were citizens of islands under the jurisdiction of the United States (including Guam, the Philippine Islands, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and American Samoa) and therefore were held to be “non-aliens.”

international students toward the two superpowers of the Soviet Union and the United States. Competition between the two camps for international youth encouraged deeper involvement of governments in international student exchanges. The United States passed the Fulbright Act of 1946 and the Information and Education Exchange Act of 1948. According to an article in the *Foreign Affairs* journal in 1952 that was titled “Foreign Students in America,” during the academic year 1951-1952, there were 30,462 foreign students from 126 countries enrolled in 1,354 institutions of higher education in the United States. Among them were 11,304 from the U.S. neighbors in the Americas, 10,952 from Asia and the Near East, and 7,220 from Europe. The reeducation programs of the Department of State and the Department of Army had also led to large numbers of students from the U.S. occupied areas of Germany, Japan and Austria.¹⁰

The *Foreign Affairs* article further discussed the concerns of U.S. foreign relations in the programs of international students’ study in the United States. “Effectively carried out,” the author stated, “the process of student exchange could provide them [the sending countries] with a steady flow of individuals whose experiences in the United States have not only led them to like and respect us but have fitted them to play a constructive role in the development of their own nations.” The author was cautious about domestic discrimination that might leave a negative impression on foreign students and therefore offer communist countries the advantage of having “a steady stream of youngsters returning from the United States embittered by humiliating experiences of discrimination.” The author suggested two solutions. One was to send non-white students “to those parts of the country where they are least likely

¹⁰ John W. Gardner, “The Foreign Student in America,” *Foreign Affairs* 30, no.4 (July 1952): 638.

to encounter difficulties.” The other solution was that “in so far as possible... arranging to have them placed in a social setting in which they can count on being accepted as normal participants in community life.”¹¹

The alliance between the United States and China during World War II contributed to the revocation of the Chinese Exclusion Act. China was allotted a quota of 105 immigrants annually and Chinese immigrants were now eligible for U.S. citizenship. The quick end of China’s Civil War (1946-48) and the U.S. position against the newly established Chinese communist state led to successive emergency acts in the United States to allow around 5,000 Chinese students to stay and obtain permanent residence status. This group of Chinese students became the first generation of Chinese American professionals and intellectuals in the United States and pioneered in many ways for the following generations of Chinese students staying in the United States. With a continued special relationship between the United States and the Nationalist government at Taiwan, large numbers of Chinese students came to study in the United States from Taiwan in the decades after 1949, and many of them stayed in the United States.¹²

The flow of Chinese students coming to the United States after World War II also took place along with the changing U.S. immigration laws and reflected a larger trend of increasing numbers of students/professionals from Asia migrating to the United

¹¹ Ibid., 637-50.

¹² The wave of students from Taiwan to the U.S. can be seen from the following doggerel circulating on the campus of Taiwan University in the 1960s and the 1970s: “Come, come, come, come to Taiwan University. Go, go, go, go to America,” cited in Yuenchen Chiang, “Chinese Students in America in the Early Twentieth Century: Preliminary Reflections on a Research Topic,” *Chinese Studies in History* 36, no. 3 (Spring 2003): 60.

States. Postwar U.S. immigration laws were characterized with explicit statements of preference for skilled migrants. The Displaced Persons Act of 1948, for example, provided for the admission of 202,000 Europeans refugees over two years. It required that 30 percent of the refugees comprise agricultural workers and that second preference should be given to professional or highly skilled persons. This was “an important move that introduced into immigration policy the idea that American economic preferences should determine the selection of immigrants.”¹³

In 1952, the McCarran-Walter Act replaced the Immigration Act of 1917 as the nation’s foundational immigration law.¹⁴ It retained the national origins quota system established in 1924 but eliminated the race-based immigration and naturalization principle. The law required that the first preference (at least one half of each country’s quota) go to persons with specialized skills deemed in short supply in the United States. The other fifty percent of the quota was left for relatives of U.S. citizens and permanent residents. Others could come only if the quotas for the first three preferences were not filled. While skilled migrants had been singled out in the past (such as the 1948 Displaced Persons Act) for quota visas, the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act was “the largest such set-aside in a major immigration law and the first one to focus on immigrants with high levels of education and technical training.”¹⁵

¹³ Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, 236.

¹⁴ Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 (66 Stat. 163).

¹⁵ Margaret L. Usdansky and Thomas J. Espenshade, “The Evolution of U.S. Policy towards Employment Based Immigrants and Temporary Workers: the H1B Debate in Historical Perspective,” in Wayne A. Cornelius, Thomas J. Espenshade and Idean Salehyan, eds., *The International Migration of the Highly Skilled* (San Diego: Center for Contemporary Immigration Studies, University of California Press, 2001), 35.

The Hart-Cellar Act of 1965 abolished the national origins quota system, which helped to define the law in public narratives as a progressive measure.¹⁶ The 1965 Act raised the annual ceiling on immigration to 290,000 and allocated 170,000 quota slots to the countries of the Eastern Hemisphere, with a maximum of 20,000 for each country.¹⁷ With primary preference to family-based immigration (about 74 percent of the annual quota and immediate family members without a cap), the 1965 Act allocated 20 percent of the annual quota to employment-based immigration.¹⁸ Unlike the situation after the passage of the 1952 Immigration Act, most of the employment-based visas established under the 1965 law were used.¹⁹

The changing U.S. immigration laws after World War II led to remarkable waves of skilled workers and professionals immigrating to the United States as well as increasing numbers of international students staying and adjusting immigrant status in the United States. As a scholar of foreign student education and migration observed in the early 1970s, “[W]hen the U.S. changed its immigration law in 1965 from one of discrimination based mainly on national origins to one of discrimination based among

¹⁶ Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 (79 Stat. 911). Recently scholars have begun to unpack the complex meanings and impact of the 1965 Act and criticized its conservative dimensions such as the imposition of quotas on Western Hemisphere immigration. For example, Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, 258-64.

¹⁷ In the 1965 Act, the Western Hemisphere received an annual quota of 120,000 without country-specific numerical limits and without preferences. The quota for Western Hemisphere changed later to be country-specific limits: in 1976, the Congress completed the logic of formal equality by imposing country quotas of 20,000 on the Western Hemisphere.

¹⁸ The 1965 Immigration Act set up a system of seven preferences. The preference went first, to unmarried adult children of citizens (no more than 20 percent); second, to spouses and unmarried children of lawfully resident aliens (20 percent); third, to professionals, scientists and artists of “exceptional ability” (10 percent); fourth, to married adult children of citizens (10 percent); fifth, to brothers and sisters of citizens (24 percent); sixth, to skilled and unskilled workers deemed in short supply in the U.S. (10 percent); and seventh, to refugees (6 percent).

¹⁹ Usdansky and Espenshade, “The Evolution of U.S. Policy,” 42.

other criteria, on skill, concern about brain drain was heightened.”²⁰ According to a U.S. House committee report, “of the 7,913 scientists, engineers and physicians immigrating to the United States from the developing countries in 1967, 3,772 or 48 percent were people who had originally entered the United States as students.”²¹ The percentage of high-level (professional, technical and kindred workers) to total immigrants entering the United States had also increased dramatically—from approximately 1 percent circa 1900 to somewhere between 10 percent and 22 percent in the early 1970s.²²

The changing U.S. immigration laws also triggered a surge of Asian students’ status adjustment and of massive migration of Asian professionals to the United States, which reflected the legacy of past discriminatory laws on Asian migrants and the complex meaning of the immigration reform for contemporary Asian immigrants. There had been a flood of visa adjustments among Asian students after the 1965 immigration reform, which was not surprising because Asian migration had been restricted before 1965 and student visas had become an effective alternative for Asians to gain access to the United States.²³ In comparison, visa adjustments were not prevalent among students from the United Kingdom or from Latin American nations because there was a large quota for the United Kingdom and there were no numerical limits for migration from

²⁰ Robert G. Myers, *Education and Emigration: Study Abroad and the Migration of Human Resources* (New York: McKay, 1972), 1.

²¹ U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Government Operations, *Scientific Brain Drain from the Developing Countries*, 90 Cong., 2 sess., H.R. 1215, Report No. 23, March 28, 1968, 7, cited in Myers, 6.

²² Myers, 37.

²³ Though the 1952 Immigration Act abolished the race-based immigration and naturalization policies, it also created an “Asia Pacific Triangle,” which was a global race quota aimed at restricting Asian immigration into the United States. Persons of Asian descent born or residing anywhere in the world could immigrate only under the Asia-Pacific quotas of one hundred per country, with an overall Asian-Pacific quota of 2000. The total did not include the Chinese quota of 105 or the Japanese quota of 185. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, 236-37.

Latin American countries.²⁴ At the same time, Asian migration through the employment-based preference increased remarkably after the 1965 immigration reform and further led to massive family-based chain migration, an unintended consequence of the 1965 Immigration Act which in fact had aimed to maintain the then racial and ethnic makeup of the United States based on a family-based immigration system. The proportion of high-level immigrants among Asians after 1965 increased rapidly from less than 10 percent in 1965 to almost 30 percent in 1967.²⁵ In 1969, immigrants entering under occupational preferences comprised 20.8 percent of China's total (here China referred to Taiwan, as emigration was restricted in mainland China before its reform in 1978), 45 percent of India's, 23.2 percent of South Korea's, and 42.3 percent of the Philippines'. In 1971, Asians accounted for two-thirds of the physicians admitted as immigrants into the United States.²⁶

The large numbers of student/professional migrants from Asia contributed to the demographic and social changes of Asian American communities. Since the 1960s, an image of “model minority” of Asian Americans was constructed and popularized to portray Asian Americans (particularly Chinese and Japanese Americans) as hard working and self-reliant and as the role model for other American minority groups. Scholars have criticized this concept of “model minority” for its underlying orientalist ideology (Asian Americans were still attached to and valued by their racial origins and were portrayed as “the other” rather than “us”) and its misleading nature (alienating

²⁴ Myers, 79-80.

²⁵ Ibid., 38.

²⁶ Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, 262. By the mid-1980s occupational migration from Asia decreased relative to migration under the family preference categories.

Asian Americans from other minority groups and ignoring the large population of unskilled and poor Asian Americans).²⁷

The occupational preference that was institutionalized and systematized in the postwar U.S. immigration regime established patterns that continued to grow in importance in the following decades. It has been an essential precursor to increasing efforts of recruiting highly educated and skilled migrants in the 1990s. Student migration had been also tied to U.S. foreign policies and foreign relations. These two elements complemented each other and together reflected the U.S. national interests and national identity.

The Chinese Student Protection Act of 1992 and Its Significance

The Chinese Student Protection Act (CSPA) was signed into law in 1992 by President George H.W. Bush to allow Chinese nationals in the United States (especially students and scholars) to stay and adjust their immigrant status, unless conditions in China after the crackdown on the Tiananmen democratic demonstration in June 1989 were certified by the president as having improved and no longer posed a danger to students' return to China. It was a watershed for Chinese student migration and around

²⁷ For example, Henry Yu pointed out that “the model minority story is a legacy of the Oriental Problem... The Exotication of Orientals belies an obsession with America, not Asia... everything said about Asian Americans revolves around a definition of America that cannot find a sensible place for them without exoticizing them,” in Henry Yu, *Thinking Orientals: Migration, Contact, and Exoticism in Modern America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001): 190. Also see Robert Lee, *Orientals: Asian Americans in Popular Culture* (Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1999). Lee discussed “model minority” as one of the six faces of the Oriental (Asian Americans) in American popular culture: the pollutant, the coolie, the deviant, the yellow peril, the model minority and the gook. While Asian American scholars have discussed in detail the cultural representation and social impact of the stereotype of “model minority,” more attention can be paid to the impact of immigration laws on the changing composition of Asian immigrants and to the role of student/skilled migrants in contemporary Asian American communities.

40,000-60,000 Chinese students and scholars and their families adjusted their immigrant status. The legislation of CSPA was a complex process and highlighted the impact of U.S. foreign relations on U.S. immigration and the role of international students in fulfilling the self-assumed role of the United States as the “leader of the free world.”

The CSPA legislation was an intense negotiation process between the executive and legislative branches. Two days after the Tiananmen Incident on June 4, 1989, the Bush Administration directed the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to extend deferred enforced departure (DED) to Chinese nationals in the United States for one year (in other words, no involuntary return to China). However, this program attracted a very small number of students because its inadequacy was obvious in two key respects. First, it required applicants to publicly declare their unwillingness to return to China which would threaten the well-being of any student eventually returning to China. Secondly, applying for DED would relinquish permanently students’ then lawful status without the ability in the future to adjust their status.²⁸ Emphasizing the well-being of Chinese students and aiming to punish the Beijing regime, Congress passed the Emergency Chinese Immigration Relief Act of 1989. Based on the bill (H. 2712) introduced by Representative Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), the Relief Act waived the two year home residency requirement of Chinese students and provided that any PRC national in lawful status on June 5, 1989, would continue in legal status for purpose of adjustment of status.²⁹

²⁸ John D. Griffin, “The Chinese Student Protection Act and ‘Enhanced Consideration’ For PRC Nationals: Legitimizing Foreign Policy while Averting False Positives in Asylum Law,” 66 *University of Colorado Law Review* 1105 (Fall 1995): 1113.

²⁹ “Emergency Chinese Immigration Relief Act of 1989,” 101st Congress, 1st Session, June 21, 1989.

Concerned with U.S. foreign relations with Beijing, President Bush pocket vetoed the Relief Act and instead issued Executive Order 12711 which further extended DED until January 1, 1994, waved the two year home residence requirement, and allowed Chinese nationals in lawful status on or after June 5, 1989 to adjust immigrant status. Concerned about the end of the DED in 1994 and about the uncertainty of the administrative order, Congress continued debating the issue. Based on a bill (S. 1216) introduced by Senator Thomas Slate Gordon (R-WA), Congress passed the CSPA in 1992 with wide support which was finally signed into law by President Bush less than a month before his reelection bid failed. The CSPA granted benefits of status adjustment to those who were covered by the Executive Order 12,711 and who had been in the United States between June 5, 1989, and April 11, 1990, and had since continuously resided in the United States without returning to China for more than ninety days. Immigrant visas would be immediately available for application in the year after July 1, 1993, and the number of successful applicants would be counted under the Chinese immigration quota and be offset in later years with 1,000 per year.³⁰

The tensions between the White House and Congress had been largely focusing on which party should retain control of foreign policy. While the Relief Act of 1989 had gained support in both chambers of Congress, President Bush pocket vetoed the Act considering the pressure from Beijing and striving “to preserve [his] ability to manage foreign relations.”³¹ Congressional debates also involved the question of managing foreign relations. As Representative Jack Brooks (D-TX) pointed out in his opposition

³⁰ Griffin, 1113-21.

³¹ Ibid., 1115.

to the president's veto of the Relief Act, "[T]he debate focuses on whether the relief should be granted by legislative action by the Congress or by administrative action by the executive branch."³² Another Representative, Gus Yatron (D- PA), criticized the Bush administration for "kowtowing" to the Chinese government by sending secret missions not long after the Tiananmen massacre. Even though the president had issued an executive order waiving the return requirement of Chinese students, Yatron questioned that "who is to say that the administration will not unilaterally revoke the waiver sometime in the future to placate Beijing." Yatron called on other Congress members to override the president's veto to "send a message to the Beijing government and to the White House that the Congress has a very different view of the situation in China."³³

Therefore, both the White House and Congress largely based their policies towards Chinese students on considerations of foreign relations, and their negotiation with each other and the result clearly demonstrated the grip of U.S. foreign policies on immigration and, in this case, international student migration.³⁴ While the Bush administration was more concerned with immediate political and economic risks of antagonizing the Beijing government after the Tiananmen Incident, Congress focused more on the assumed role of the United States as the best representative and the strongest defender of democracy and freedom. Throughout the legislative process, law

³² U.S. Congress, House, "Emergency Chinese Immigration Relief Act of 1989," 136 *Congressional Record*, H 45, 101st Congress, 2nd Session, January 24, 1990.

³³ U.S. Congress, House, "Emergency Chinese Immigration Relief Act of 1989," 136 *Congressional Record*, H 46, 101st Congress, 2nd Session, January 24, 1990. The Senate in the end failed by four votes to override the veto.

³⁴ Griffin, 1110-29.

makers frequently utilized the language of the United States being “the hope of the world” to justify the need of and to bolster support for their student protection bills. In a congressional hearing in 1989 regarding the bill of H.2712 that waived the home residency requirement and allowed Chinese students to adjust immigrant status, Representative Pelosi who introduced the bill described the possible danger Chinese students would face in returning to China: “[T]he mere fact that these nationals have spent time in the U.S., the leading democratic force in the world, makes them the target of suspicion of prodemocracy involvement.”³⁵ Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA) argued that protecting Chinese students and allowing them to stay would show the U.S. support for the Chinese democratic movement and that “[W]e cannot allow the democracy movement in China to be handicapped by an inflexible immigration policy.” Boxer concluded her statement by citing a paragraph from a letter written by one of her constituents who had been in China since the protests:

“Chinese people stop me in the street (underlining original) now and beg me not to let America, Americans forget. We were, and are, their role model. They gained their courage from their knowledge of American history... try to find a way to let the people of China know we have not forgotten them, and that we will remember their hopes and, their efforts, and most of all, their sacrifice...”³⁶

Citing the words of her constituent, Boxer was highlighting the legitimacy and moral obligation of the United States in supporting democratic movements in China and rescuing Chinese students from the repressive communist regime. A flexible and proper student migration policy would demonstrate the firm position of the United States and

³⁵ U.S. Congress, House, Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees, and International Law, *Immigration Status of Chinese Nationals Currently in the U.S.* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1989), 29.

³⁶ Ibid., 60-61.

prove the United States as the role model of democracy and freedom. Similar to past Chinese student migration (in this case particularly parallel to the retention of Chinese students after Chinese communists took power in 1949), Chinese students and student migration had been weighed in the U.S.-China relations and were used to exert the influence of the United States on China and to prove the nobleness of the United States itself.

In the debates on the senate floor after President Bush's veto of H.2712, Senator Paul Simon (D-IL) emphasized the negative impact of the president's veto on the role of the United States in the world. He argued that the veto was a mistake "both in terms of guaranteeing freedom to the Chinese students... and in terms of what it signals to the rest of the world." Simon continued: "We have been an inspiration to the rest of the world for freedom, and we ought to continue to be an inspiration for freedom." Simon connected Chinese student protests with other democratic movements in Eastern Europe and stressed that the legislation was more than just protecting students. Rather, "[T]his is a signal to the world, this is a signal to the people in China, and I want to send that signal that is a signal of freedom. I want that signal to be heard around the world."³⁷

In September 1992, when the bill of S.1216 was revised and concurred in both chambers of Congress and showed great prospect of being signed into law, Senator Gorton made most explicit the "deeper purpose" of the CSPA: it was to help spread U.S.-modeled capitalism after the Cold War:

Since that extraordinary year of 1989, when communism failed universally as a serious political experiment, the world's countries have begun to institute free market policies.

³⁷ U.S. Congress, Senate, "Emergency Chinese Immigration Relief Act," 135 *Congressional Record*, S352, 101st Congress, 2nd Session, January 25, 1990.

The process has been wrenchingly slow and ponderous, for most of these governments have no free market tradition or history on which to draw. Their citizenry simply do not know what capitalism looks like...³⁸

For U.S. legislators, the purpose of the CSPA was to pressure the Chinese government to guarantee students' safety and reform for democracy and, if Chinese students did get the chance to return to China later, they were expected to transplant U.S. free market to their native country and lead China to the modern world. The same expectation applied to other countries after the Cold War. With this core ideology of U.S. foreign policy—"democratic capitalism"³⁹—the CSPA and Chinese students had become instruments for political and economic reforms in China with the United States as the model.

In fact, along with the debates on the CSPA, there were also congressional discussions on immigration policies regarding Hong Kong, which in the wake of the Tiananmen Incident had witnessed declining public confidence in its future with the scheduled sovereignty transfer back to China in 1997 and which had experienced a mounting wave of emigration.⁴⁰ While the British had refused to loosen its immigration and naturalization policies to grant the right of abode to 3.4 million Hong Kong

³⁸ U.S. Congress, Senate, "Chinese Students Protection Act," 138 *Congressional Record*, S14955, 102nd Congress, 2nd Session, September 23, 1992.

³⁹ Jie Chen, *Ideology in U.S. Foreign Policy: Case Studies in U.S. China Policy* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1992); Griffin, 1118.

⁴⁰ After the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration about Hong Kong's reversion to China in 1997, there had been a gathering wave of emigration out of Hong Kong. The number of emigrants rose from 22,400 in 1980 to 30,000 in 1987, and kept an annual average of over 1 percent of its total population emigrating to Canada, the U.S., Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, the UK and other destinations. The 1989 Tiananmen Incident was a great blow to popular confidence of the 1997 transition in Hong Kong. The emigration number in 1990 doubled than that in last year, jumped to 66,000 in 1992 and hovered at this level till 1994, after which the outflow subsided. See Wong Xiu-lun, "Deciding to Stay, Deciding to Move, Deciding not to decide," in Gary G. Hamilton, ed., *Cosmopolitan Capitalists: Hong Kong and the Chinese Diaspora at the end of the Twentieth Century* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999): 136.

residents who were their colonial subjects, U.S. legislators found it a good opportunity to demonstrate their openness and to prove the superiority of American democracy and freedom. In the same House hearing that considered the Relief Act of 1989, a bill (H.R. 2726) was discussed which proposed to treat Hong Kong as a separate foreign state rather than a colony when creating numerical limitations on immigration.⁴¹ As the bill's introducer Representative Norman Mineta (D-CA) stated, the bill testified to the United States's "openness as a diverse—in terms of the diversity of this great country." The fact that "Great Britain is not willing to assume that responsibility to their own colonies," according to Mineta, added "even more credit to us."⁴²

In his comments on the Hong Kong provisions, Representative John Edward Porter (R-IL) highlighted Hong Kong as an example of "democratic capitalism" that the United States valued. In his words, Hong Kong was "an economic miracle and an example of capitalism like none other on earth... Hong Kong immigrants would add immeasurably to our society. For who best knows about freedom and democracy and the threat of tyranny than the people of Hong Kong."⁴³ As Porter declared, "this country [the United States] is the beacon of hope for people in the world. It seems to me that the potential human rights abuses in Hong Kong have to be countenanced by America and that we ought to take the leadership to provide a greater opportunity for people to leave Hong Kong... and not wait on Great Britain."⁴⁴

⁴¹ U.S. Congress, House, "Treatment of Hong Kong as a Separate Foreign State," H.R. 2726, 101st Congress, 1st Session, 1989.

⁴² U.S. Congress, House, *Immigration Status of Chinese Nationals Currently in the U.S.*, 86.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 48-49.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 86.

While the U.S. Congress and the White House were debating and negotiating the legal status of Chinese students, Chinese students were not simply onlookers but actively participated in the legislative process and tried to shape the legislation and gained their own voice in the laws. Chinese students actively contacted Congress members, updated them about conditions in China, and communicated with them about the possible impact of proposed laws on students and their families. For example, in 1989, Chinese students at Texas A&M University sent to Representative Joe Barton (R-TX) a written statement analyzing the virtues and drawbacks of two bills relating to Chinese students. One was Pelosi's H.R. 2712, which according to students would remove the physical danger the Chinese students might face if returning to China, waive the two year home residency requirement, and as a human rights law might be easier to pass. However, the bill "only involve[s] J-1 visa holders" and left "all the harshest immigration process to the Chinese students." The other bill of S.1209 (introduced by Gorton in 1989) completely offered students "choices whether to go back or stay" and encouraged Chinese students to participate in the democratic movement without worrying about their safety. However, this generous law might face more difficulties in passing.⁴⁵

Chinese students had resisted the DED (deferred enforced departure) program directed by the Immigration and Naturalization Service. As stated in a congressional hearing by Han Lianchao, a member of the Association of Chinese Students and Scholars at Yale University, with the DED program Chinese students would not only

⁴⁵ A memo to Representative Barton by Chinese students at Texas A&M University, in *Immigration Status of Chinese Nationals Currently in the U.S.*, 84.

“lose legal status, they would also be required to make a statement which would endanger them further in the eyes of the Chinese government.” Political asylum was not a desirable or a workable option either. It would endanger students and their families because seeking asylum was viewed by the Chinese government as treason against the country. Furthermore, as Han pointed out, “the logistics and expense of handling 73,000 individual asylum cases for Chinese nationals illustrate the inefficiency of this approach.”⁴⁶

Chinese students strived to make their own choices on their legal status and have their own say on whether to return or not. In July 1989, a survey on Chinese students’ attitudes and plans about their legal status and “stay or return” was conducted by the Harvard Chinese Student Association on behalf of the National Coordination Committee on Chinese Students Affairs (NCCCSA).⁴⁷ Six hundred questionnaires were sent out to Chinese students nationwide and five hundred and ninety of them were completed and received, a remarkable return rate partly revealing the attention the recipients (and Chinese students in general) had paid to this issue. Though the survey might have been impacted by the attitude and intension of the survey conductors concerning what questions were asked and how the questions were framed, the responses of Chinese students still quite clearly indicated their general thinking about the situation and about their own choices for the future.

⁴⁶ Han Lianchao, quote in *Immigration Status of Chinese Nationals Currently in the U.S.*, 145-52.

⁴⁷ This survey was introduced by a Chinese student at Harvard University during the House hearings and included in *Immigration Status of Chinese Nationals Currently in the U.S.*, 201-8. Considering the time the survey was conducted, apparently it had been designed to collect Chinese students’ opinions about the important issues of “return or stay” and legal status.

Consistent with the general composition of Chinese students and scholars in the United States at that time, the majority (86.1 percent) of respondents of the survey were “J” visa holders (exchange scholars) and therefore subject to the two-year home residency requirement.⁴⁸ When asked about any plan to apply for the DED program, only 5.8 percent of respondents answered “Yes,” and the majority (77.8 percent) clearly replied “No.” Students seemed to well understand the real-world power structure of policymaking concerning their legal status in the United States. When asked “from a practical point of view, who is most capable of making such a decision [about returning to China],” 21.2 percent of respondents answered “Myself” while 77.7 percent replied with “U.S. government.”⁴⁹ However, students were confident about their own judgment and were determined to have their own choice. When asked “[W]ho can make the best judgment about the situation in China,” 88.7 percent of respondents replied with “Myself.” As for the question, “[I]n your opinion, who should make the decision about your returning to China,” 91.1 percent of respondents gave the same answer—“Myself.” Presenting this survey to the House Committee on Chinese nationals’ immigration status, Zhao Haiqing, a student from Harvard University and a member of the Governing Council of the NCCCSA, concluded that “from the survey, we can say... at

⁴⁸ According to INS estimates on July 20, 1989, approximately 32,000 of the 40,000 Chinese students in the U.S. were “J” visa holders (exchange scholars). According to the educational agreement between China and the U.S. (largely to retain Chinese talents and prevent “brain drain”), these exchange scholars had to return to China for at least two years before they could apply for coming to the U.S. again.

⁴⁹ J1 visa holders (exchange scholars) and F1 visa holders (students) tended to have some different reactions to this question because J1 visa holders were subject to the two year home country residence requirement and therefore more likely subject to U.S. government policies than F1 visa holders who had no obligation of the two year home residency requirement and were relatively free to make their own choices of returning or staying. Therefore, 19.1 percent of J1 visa holders answered the question with “myself,” compared to 356.7 percent of F1 visa holders giving that answer.

some point, I think it is fair that we should have the choice to decide whether we should settle here or to return home.”⁵⁰

The CSPA not only involved Chinese students but Chinese nationals in general in the United States. In fact, among the 80,000 Chinese beneficiaries of the CSPA, about half were students and their families and the other half or less were non-students. During the legislative process, whether to extend the CSPA to non-students and how far it could be extended had been questioned and debated. These legislative debates, together with the legal cases to be mentioned later, showed the active engagement with immigration laws by migrants on the one hand and the ambiguous but stringent power of the U.S. immigration regime on the other hand.

Among the testimonies at the congressional hearing of the 1989 Relief Act was a statement by Howard Hom, who was an immigration attorney at the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Associations (CCBA, the most traditional and prominent Chinese immigrant organization) in Los Angeles. Hom’s statement was endorsed by CCBA as well as the Chinese Welfare Council at Los Angeles and could be viewed as representing Chinese immigrants in general. As Hom remarked, “[E]veryone has been talking about the courageous students... how about those who are not students and who do not have any pending applications?” In Hom’s opinion, “if this country really wants to send a message to the PRC and really show its compassion, any remedy that Congress may create must be broad enough to cover all Chinese nationals in this country, whether here under J-1 exchange visas or F-1 student visas or B-2 visitor visas.” Utilizing the democratic values the United States had identified and prided itself

⁵⁰ U.S. Congress, House, *Immigration Status of Chinese Nationals Currently in the U.S.*, 200.

with, Hom argued that “[I]f we are selective to the point of being elitist, then we would be sending the wrong message regarding our own democratic ideals.”⁵¹

Perhaps partly due to this charge of possible elitism, the U.S. government did extend the benefits of the DED program, Executive Order 12711, and the 1992 CSPA to all eligible Chinese nationals in the U.S. who were in the U.S. between June 5, 1989 and April 11, 1990 and had since resided in the United States without returning to China more than 90 days. However, addressing concerns of U.S. immigration officials, the CSPA was revised in its later stage to exclude “criminals, Communist Party members, and those likely to become a public charge.”⁵²

While largely following the Executive Order and covering Chinese nationals who had met the residence requirement,⁵³ the CSPA was ambiguous about what conventional legal exclusionary provisions should be waived for Chinese nationals. It exempted Chinese nationals from several standard immigration provisions in the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1952, such as labor certification and documentation requirements, the per-country numerical limits, and the exclusion from status adjustment of those whose legal status had lapsed.⁵⁴ However, the CSPA did not specify whether a Chinese national should be exempted from Article 245 of the 1952 Act that barred status adjustment of aliens who entered the United States without inspection. This grey space had been utilized by many Chinese nationals who had entered the United States without inspection (“illegal immigrants” as defined by law) to

⁵¹ Howard Hom, quotes in the *Immigration Status of Chinese Nationals Currently in the U.S.*, 190-95.

⁵² U.S. Congress, Senate, 138 *Congressional Record*, S. 6824, 102nd Congress, 2nd Session, May 21, 1992.

⁵³ CSPA §2 (b).

⁵⁴ CSPA §2 (a) (2-5)

apply for immigrant status adjustment, though their applications had often been denied by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS, whose major tasks regarding immigration and naturalization were transferred after 2003 to the current United States Citizenship and Immigration Service or USCIS), and the denials were often further affirmed by the courts to which they appealed.⁵⁵

On the other hand, Executive Order 12711 in 1990 had granted Chinese nationals deferred enforced departure status until Jan 1, 1994 regardless of their legal status in the United States and had directed the INS to guarantee their travel across borders of other nations (not more than two months) and reentry to the United States in the same status they had on departure. Following the Executive Order, many Chinese nationals who had entered the United States without inspection applied for the “advance parole” status to visit China and then to reenter the United States with that inspected

⁵⁵ For example, Lin Qi-zhuo was a P.R. China national who entered the U.S. in 1987 by crossing U.S.-Mexican border without inspection and had since resided in the U.S. On August 9, 1993, Lin filed an application for Advance Parole to allow him to return to the U.S. after a two-month trip to the PRC. His application was soon denied by INS on the grounds that he entered the U.S. without inspection. On September 21, 1993, Lin filed an application to Register Permanent Residence of Adjustment Status and was again denied for the same reason. Lin filed the suit in the District Court for the District of Columbia and the Court upheld the INS decision by arguing that CSPA did not cover Chinese nationals entering the U.S. without inspection and the INS Cable No. 5 constituted a valid agency rule. Lin later appealed to the Circuit Court for the District of Columbia which still upheld the lower court’s decision. In another case, Pan came to the U.S. by crossing the border between Canada and Vermont without inspection. He applied for status adjustment on August 1, 1993, but was denied by INS. He then filed the suit in December 1993 and challenged the INS regulation (8 C.F.R.245.9 (b) (6) was inconsistent with the CSPA and the denial by INS was improper. The court ruled that while Congress’ intent in adopting the CSPA remained unclear, the INS’ construction of the statute in § 245.9(b)(6) and the agency’s reliance on that regulation when denying plaintiff’s status adjustment application were reasonable and merit judicial deference. In another similar case, Tang applied for adjustment of status on June 30, 1993. The INS denied her application on the ground that she entered the United States without inspection. The Court upheld this decision and argued that CSPA was clear and did not waive the inspection requirement. See *Lin v. Meissner*, 855 F.Supp. 4, (D.D.C.,1994), *Qi-Zhuo v. Meissner*, 70 F.3d 136 (C.A.D.C.1995), *Pan v. Reno*, 879 F.Supp. 18 (S.D.N.Y.1995), *Tang v. Reno*, 77 F.3d 1194 (C.A. 9 [Cal.] 1996).

and admissible status. They then applied for status adjustment under the CSPA.⁵⁶ On August 13, the INS attempted to close this loophole by stipulating that requests for “advance parole” could be granted only based on bona fide evidence of emergent or humanitarian need and not to be granted for “the sole purpose of qualifying for CSPA benefits.” In addition, in the interpretation of the INS, the Executive Order 12711 would not permit an entry without inspection (EWI) to be “paroled” upon reentry into the United States because “in order to reenter in a status, a Chinese national had to have first entered in and maintained a status. Since an EWI never entered in a status ... reentry as directed by the Executive Order is not possible.”⁵⁷

While these INS regulations and the impact of the CSPA on non-students are not the main subjects of this chapter, they show that student migration and non-student migration were in fact tied to each other, and that the U.S. immigration regime possessed a double-sided mask of inclusion and exclusion. Mainly targeting student migrants who were obviously highly educated and skilled, U.S. immigration legislators and policy makers were at the same time cautious about letting other “undesirable” immigrants sneak in. They set up the filter and tried to exclude “illegal aliens” who were most likely less skilled and in lower-class status. In fact, Chinese students themselves had been aware of their value as highly skilled immigrants and had

⁵⁶ For example, Yueng initially entered the U.S. without inspection. But he later obtained the Advance Parole status and reentered the U.S. twice with inspection and admission. While his first application for status adjustment was denied, INS later granted him the permanent resident status based on his Advance Parole status. Yueng filed action to the Court for an award of attorney’s fees incurred in past applications. The Court upheld the inspection requirement and ruled that both the Attorney General’s position and the INS’s initial denial of Yeung’s status adjustment application were reasonable based his initial entry without inspection (and not verifying enough evidence of later status of Advance Parole) and therefore an award of fees was inappropriate. See *Yeung v. Reno*, 868 F.Supp. 53, 58 (S.D.N.Y.1994).

⁵⁷ INS Cable # 5, 245-C/HQ 739.3-C (Aug. 13, 1993), quoted in 70 *Interpreter Releases* 1095 (Aug. 23, 1993).

tactically highlighted it in their appeal to the legislature. When Han Lianchao testified in the House Committee in 1989 and argued against the administrative DED program and the proposal of granting students political asylum, he reminded U.S. legislators that “frustration with these approaches—not to mention fear for their lives—may drive a highly educated and desirable class of immigrants to seek protection elsewhere. This is clearly a loss to American economic and political interests.”⁵⁸

Han’s reminder pointed out an important but implicit message embedded in the CSPA, that is, a full awareness among U.S. legislators of the value of these highly educated Chinese students for U.S. society and an increasing demand for such educated and skilled migrants for the U.S. economy in the 1990s. In fact, CSPA was passed around the same time that the United States passed the Immigration Act of 1990, which incorporated the Hong Kong bill mentioned earlier and created the H1-B visa (“specialty occupation”) to attract and recruit highly skilled workers.⁵⁹ Though hidden in the humanitarian and ideological claims of the CSPA legislation, the yearning for highly educated and skilled migrants had been heard on occasions in the statements of some candid legislators. As Senator Gorton stated, while the CSPA would grant Chinese students permanent residence status in the United States, “we could count ourselves fortunate if these talented young people became Americans.”⁶⁰ Legislators

⁵⁸ Han Lianchao, quote in *Immigration Status of Chinese Nationals Currently in the U.S.*, 148.

⁵⁹ Immigration Act of 1990, P. L. 101-649 (104 Stat. 4978). The Hong Kong provisions established a separate immigrant visa quota for Hong Kong, increasing the quota from 5,000 to 10,000. The provisions also offered deferred visa to Hong Kong immigrants, which could be used since the issuing date until January 2002, rather than the normal four-month deadline, thus providing an insured emigration for Hong Kong migrants in order to prevent an immediate exodus because of the 1997 transition. The provisions also launched a new investor visa program to attract potential Hong Kong investor migrants.

⁶⁰ U.S. Congress, Senate, “Chinese Students Protection Act,” 138 *Congressional Record*, S.14954, 102nd Congress, 2nd Session, September 23, 1992.

were more outspoken regarding enlarging the immigration quota for Hong Kong migrants. As Representative Porter argued, “[W]hile we do not seek to drain the colony, if they must leave, the U.S. ought to be smart enough to welcome them... The U.S. ought to be smart enough to know that if that tragedy takes place (drain of talents from Hong Kong), these are exactly the kind of people that we need here in the U.S.”⁶¹

H-1B Debates, Student Migrants and the Global “Battle for Brainpower”⁶²

H-1B and student migration

In the 1990s, the U.S. economy recovered from recession and experienced a decade-long economic boom. Fast growing and changing industries, especially the IT industry, not only boosted the U.S. economy, but also engendered a high demand for skilled professionals. The decade also witnessed a wave of global restructuring of capitalism, as multinational corporations transferred manufacturing and processing work to other nations with weaker regulatory environments and companies increasingly contracted out work or hired contingent labor to work on specific projects.⁶³ Maintaining access to a large pool of readily available highly skilled international workers was deemed important, along with an increasing appeal of temporary rather than permanent admissions of these foreign workers.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Representative Porter, quote in *Immigration Status of Chinese Nationals Currently in the U.S.*, 48-49.

⁶² *The Economist*, “The Battle for Brainpower: A Survey of Talent,” October 5, 2006.

http://www.economist.com/surveys/displaystory.cfm?story_id=E1_SJGTRJQ.

⁶³ Joe R. Feagin and Michael P. Smith, “Cities and the New International Division of Labor,” in *The Capitalist City: Global Restructuring and Community Politics*, eds. Michael P. Smith and Joe R. Feagin, (Oxford and New York: B. Blackwell, 1987), 3-34. Peter Dicken, *Global Shift: The Internationalization of Economic Activity* (New York: Guilford Press, 1992).

⁶⁴ Susan Martin, B. Lindsay Lowell and Philip Martin, “U.S. Immigration Policy: Admission of High Skilled Workers,” *Georgetown Immigration Law Journal* 16, no. 3 (Spring 2002): 626. Michael P. Smith,

The Immigration Act of 1990 responded to this rising demand for skilled workers by increasing the number of both economic-based immigrants and nonimmigrant visa categories.⁶⁵ As the first comprehensive reform of legal immigration after the 1965 immigration reform, the 1990 Act substantially increased overall immigration, setting a flexible worldwide cap of around 700,000 immigrants annually during fiscal years 1992-1993 and then around 675,000 per year thereafter. The act raised the quota for employment-based visas to 140,000 with a higher share of visas to highly skilled workers (110,000 visas).⁶⁶ The number of employment-based preferences also grew from two to five.⁶⁷

One of the most significant and controversial changes of the 1990 Act was the creation of a new non-immigrant category, the H-1B visa, for workers in specialty occupations who held at least a bachelor's degree or its equivalent in their field.⁶⁸ The introduction of the H-1B visa in 1990 also established the "dual intent" clause for temporary foreign workers to stay either temporarily or permanently. While initially the

"The New High-Tech Braceros: Who Is the Employer? What Is the Problem?" in *Foreign Temporary Workers in America: Policies that Benefit the U.S. Economy*, ed. B. Lindsay Lowell (Westport, Connecticut: Quorum, 1999), 119-47.

⁶⁵ Immigration Act of 1990, 101 P. L. 649 (104 Stat. 4978).

⁶⁶ Prior to Immigration Act of 1990, 27,000 visas were set aside for highly skilled immigrants and their family members, and 27,000 to unskilled workers and their family members. Beginning in 1992, approximately 110,000 visas were made available to highly skilled immigrants and only 10,000 to unskilled workers, see Dudley L. Poston, Jr. and Hua Luo, "Chinese Student and Labor Migration to the United States: Trends and Policies since the 1980s," *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* 16, no. 3 (2007): 346.

⁶⁷ The five categories include priority workers, professional or highly skilled immigrants, skilled workers/professionals/other workers, special immigrants, employment-creation immigrants.

⁶⁸ A specialty occupation under the 1990 Act is one that requires the practical and theoretical application of specialized knowledge and attainment of at least a bachelor's degree in the specified specialty. Skilled workers had long been admitted under an H visa that was created in the Immigration Act of 1952. Originally the visa required that the job a foreign worker filled be temporary and the foreigner established the intent to go home. The 1970 Immigration Amendment removed the requirement for certain foreign workers (such as those hired by U.S. universities and research institutions) of returning to their home countries before entering the U.S. again and applying for permanent residency.

H program was conceived as “a mechanism for tapping into a labor pool of temporary foreign workers to meet bottlenecks in the supply of U.S. workers in particular occupations,” the 1990 Act “streamlined the procedure by which employers gained access to skilled foreign labor” with a simplified “specialty occupation” clause and increased dramatically the number of foreign workers that U.S. employers could recruit for as long as six years.⁶⁹

To protect U.S. workers, the 1990 Act also imposed an annual cap of 65,000 for H-1B visas and hardened the requirement for a labor certification that U.S. employers needed to meet before hiring foreign workers.⁷⁰ The numerical cap was intended to “dampen escalating demand for foreign workers and encourage internal market adjustments that are in the best long-term competitive interests of the U.S. economy” (e.g., increased training, better wages and working conditions, new technologies, or innovative production strategies).⁷¹ In September 1997, for the first time the annual 65,000 ceiling for H-1B workers was reached.

Primarily pressured by the IT industry, the U.S. Congress has raised the H-1B cap twice since 1998. In October 1998, the American Competitiveness and Workforce Improvement Act (ACWIA) was passed in Congress and then signed into law. Under ACWIA, the annual ceiling for H-1B visa (petitions valid for initial employment) increased from 65,000 to 115,000 in 1999 and 2000 and then be reduced to 107,500 in

⁶⁹ Jacqueline Hagan and Susana McCollum, “Skill Level and Employer Use of Foreign Specialty Workers,” in B. Lindsay Lowell, ed., *Foreign Temporary Workers in America*, 149.

⁷⁰ Prior to 1990, U.S. nonimmigrant policy contained no legislated ceilings for nonimmigrant workers—if one alien or ten thousand could prove their eligibility, they were admitted. The 1990 Immigration Act, however, broke that pattern by imposing a 65,000 ceiling on the number of H1B petitions to be issued in a single year.

⁷¹ Martin, Lowell and Martin, “U.S. Immigration Policy,” 629.

2001 and 65,000 in 2002 and beyond. The new law also included new worker protections for so-called H-1B dependent firms which had a certain percentage (15 percent or more) of their workforce possessing H-1B visas. The law also required that H-1B workers receive the same fringe benefits as U.S. workers and the application fees for H-1B visas be used for training of displaced U.S. workers and for scholarships for lower-income U.S. students.⁷² In October 2000, Congress again reached a last-minute agreement in passing the American Competitiveness in the Twenty-First Century Act, which gave the high-tech industry virtually everything it wanted. The 2000 Act raised the cap to 195,000 for the fiscal years of 2001, 2002 and 2003 and thereafter reduced it to 65,000. Among other changes were the exemption from the new ceiling all H-1B visa applicants who work for universities and nonprofit research facilities and the provisions that aimed to eliminate the backlog of H-1B petitions and to start with a clean slate.⁷³

The two major national groups applying for and possessing H-1B visa status have been Indians and Chinese. According to the INS yearbook of 2001, Indians and Chinese were the top two countries of H-1B beneficiaries. Among the total 331,206 approved applicants, China comprised 8 percent (27,331), second to India which comprised 49 percent (161,561).⁷⁴ It is no coincidence that China and India have also

⁷² American Competitiveness and Workforce Improvement Act of 1998, 105 P.L. 277 (112 Stat. 2681), particularly Division C, title IV.

⁷³ The American Competitiveness in the Twenty-First Century Act of 2000, 106 P.L. 313 (114 Stat. 1251).

⁷⁴ In fiscal year 2000, approximately 49 percent and 9 percent of beneficiaries were from India and China. While India has been the country with the largest share of H-1B visa recipients, China as the second also had beneficiaries far outnumbering those from other countries. In the 2001 INS yearbook, the next three countries after India and China were Canada (12,726, 4 percent), Philippines (10,389, 3 percent), and the UK (9,682, 3 percent). Also reflecting the large demand of information technology industry for skilled workers, 44 percent of Chinese beneficiaries are in computer-related fields, and in the case of India it is 85 percent. See U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, *Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 2001* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2003), 135 (Table G).

been among the top nations that sent the largest numbers of students to the United States in recent decades. In 2000-2001, Chinese students (59,939) were the largest group among international students in the United States, followed by Indian students (54,664).⁷⁵ In fact, a significant number of H-1B visa holders were formerly international students in the United States. A study of 4200 H-1B visa holders in the United States in February 2000 showed that among these temporary skilled workers (again around half from India and 9 percent from China), about 23 percent previously held a student visa.⁷⁶ Among international scholars (China again being the top sending nation in past years),⁷⁷ the percentage of H-1B holders had also grown steadily in the last decade. From 1994/95 to 2004/05, international scholars holding H-1B visas had increased from 16 percent to 37.4 percent.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Institute of International Education (IIE) Network, "Leading Countries of Origins for International Students," *Open Door*, 2001, <http://opendoors.iienetwork.org/?p=31670>. In fact, India and China have remained the top two nations sending most students to the U.S. since 2000/01 (India has surpassed China and ranked first after 2001/02). The numbers of students from India for academic years 2001/02, 2002/03, 2003/04, 2004/05, 2005/06, 2006/07, and 2007/08 were 66,836; 74,603; 79,736; 80,466; 76,503; 83,833, and 94,563 respectively. The numbers of Chinese students in those academic years were: 63,211; 64,757; 61,765; 62,523; 62,582; 67,723, and 81,127 respectively. See IIE Network, "Open Doors Data Tables," *Open Doors*, 2001-2008, <http://opendoors.iienetwork.org/page/28633;/jsessionid=35312hpwem8bu> <http://opendoors.iienetwork.org/page/28633;/jsessionid=5mat8m55rv3cd>

⁷⁶ Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *Trends in International Migration: Continuous Reporting System on Migration*, Annual Report, 2001, 96. In fact, as mentioned earlier, Asian students and professionals had been active in adjusting their legal status to immigrant status (after 1990 to H-1B status first and then to immigrant status). Visa adjusters, primarily students or temporary workers, represented two-thirds of Asian engineers who entered on occupational visas from 1988 to 1990. See Wilawan Kanjanapan, "The Immigration of Asian Professionals to the U.S., 1988-1990," *International Migration Review* 29, no.1 (1995):7-32.

⁷⁷ China has been the top nation sending international scholars to the U.S. Far more than the second country (usually the South Korea), China sent more than 10,000 scholars every year. In 2001/02, China sent 15,624 scholars who comprised 18.2 percent of all international scholars in the U.S. IIE, "International Scholars: Leading countries of origin," *Open Doors*, 2002, <http://opendoors.iienetwork.org/?p=25199>.

⁷⁸ IIE Network, "International Scholars: Visa, Gender, and Primary Function, 1993/94-2004/05," *Open Doors 2005*, <http://opendoors.iienetwork.org/?p=69723>. The percentage of H-1B visa holders among international scholars in 1993/94 was 17.8 and then 16 in 1994/95, and since then the number grew steadily. The percentage of women among international scholars also increased steadily 25 percent in 1993/94 to 33.5 percent in 2004/05. In fact, the proportion of women among international students had

International students and students-turned H-1B visa holders have increasingly become important sources of U.S. employment-based immigration. In 1995, a CRS (Congressional Research Service) study of INS data on employment-based admissions found that 14.4 percent of those admissions were foreign students and their accompanying immediate family members. Another 43 percent of those admissions were H-1Bs and their immediate family members, among whom of course were many people who had adjusted from student visa status. This study also found that the number of H visa workers adjusting to permanent residence status had increased from 7,244 in the fiscal year of 1988 to 24,223 in 1994, with a growth of more than 225 percent in six years which was partly due to the newly created “dual intent” clause in the Immigration Act of 1990.⁷⁹

There have been heated debates on the impact of increasing numbers of H-1B workers on the U.S. labor market and the U.S. economy, though most discussions have focused on the welfare of U.S. workers and the U.S. economy.⁸⁰ Some scholars moved

also grown steadily during 1976/77 and 2004/05, increasing from 30.8 percent to 44.4 percent. At the same time, the proportion of married international students also increased steadily though slowly, from 73.7 percent in 1976/77 to 85.4 percent in 2004/05 (mainly around 80 percent). IIE Network, “International Students: Personal and Academic Characteristics, 1976-2005,” *Open Doors*, 2005, <http://opendoors.iienetwork.org/?p=70951>.

The increasing percentage of women among international scholars and students corresponded to the larger trend of post-1965 U.S. immigration with increasing proportion of women and an increasing balance of gender ratio, while the increasing proportion of married students may help explain the increasing number of international students chose to stay in the U.S. and adjusted their immigrant status.

⁷⁹ Ruth Ellen Wasem, “Nonimmigrant Pathways to Permanent Residence,” *CRS Memorandum* (Sept 1995), cited in Wasem, “Immigration: Legislative Issues on Nonimmigrant Professional Specialty (H-1B) Workers,” *CRS Report to Congress*, RL30498, updated on August 23, 2007, <http://digital.library.unt.edu/govdocs/crs/permalink/meta-crs-1824:1> (last accessed June 9, 2009).

⁸⁰ It is impossible to list these numerous debates on H-1B workers in various social sectors such as media, government and academia. Here I just listed two remarkable and enlightening examples of scholarly discussions and debates on H-1B program. One is Lowell’s *Foreign Temporary Workers in America*. This is a project directed by the U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform in an attempt to get the most updated information on H-1B visas. The Commission was mandated by Congress in the Immigration Act of 1990 and delivered its final report in Sept 1997, which included recommendations on non-immigrants

beyond U.S.-based policy and economic analysis and discussed the conditions of foreign workers and the significance of the H-1B program for the global political economy. A few scholars dubbed the H-1B temporary worker program as a “high-tech bracero” program, pointing out the instability and functionality of this program and the dilemma it revealed of the volatile and exploitative character of global capitalism.⁸¹ Some scholars also studied the international migration of high-tech professionals in a world system framework. For example, Xiang Biao examined the mechanism of the worldwide flow of Indian IT workers, revealing their networks and identity while highlighting the imbalanced world political economic structure that directed the flow of skilled migrants. In his analysis, the structure of the international flow of Indian IT professionals largely corresponded to the world system described by Immanuel Wallerstein: the United States occupied the core, countries like Australia were the semi-periphery, and India with its exported skilled workers was at the periphery, unprivileged and displaced.⁸² Scholars adopting a “world system” perspective also often integrated dependency theories and discussed the issue of “brain drain”— the migration of the highly educated and skilled from developing to developed countries.⁸³

discussed in the final chapter of this volume. The other examples is Cornelius, Espenshade and Salehyan, eds., *The International Migration of the Highly Skilled*.

⁸¹ For examples, see Smith, “The New High-Tech Braceros;” and Cornelius and Espenshade, “The International Migration of the Highly Skilled,” in *The International Migration of the Highly Skilled*, eds., Cornelius, Espenshade and Salehyan, 3-19.

⁸² Xiang Biao, “Indian Information Technology Professionals World System: The Nation and the Transnation in Individuals’ Migration Strategies,” in *State/ Nation/ Transnation: Perspective on Transnationalism in the Asia-Pacific*, eds. Brenda S.A. Yeoh and Katie Willis (London: Routledge, 2004), 176; Xiang Biao, *Global "Body shopping": An Indian Labor System in the Information Technology Industry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

⁸³ For example, Paul Ong, Lucie Cheng, and Leslie Evans, “Migration of Highly Educated Asians and Global Dynamics,” *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* 1, no. 3-4 (1992): 543-67.

Debates also directly targeted international student migrants, especially regarding their status adjustment from student to H-1B and then to permanent immigrant status. Some policy makers viewed such status adjustment as natural and positive and argued that it was foolish to educate these talented young people only to leave them for foreign competitors. Others considered this “F-1 to H-1B to LPR (lawful permanent residence)” pathway as an abuse of the temporary nonimmigrant status. During the 104th Congress (1995-1997), fearing that such status adjustment would circumvent the U.S. immigration laws and procedures that protected U.S. workers from being displaced, some lawmakers proposed that foreign students and foreign temporary workers return home for two years before they could return to and apply for residency in the United States. This proposal was circulated in the Senate but met with strong opposition from the educational and business communities.⁸⁴ On the other hand, foreign students have been continuously favored in Congressional decisions regarding their immigrant status in the United States. In 2005, the Consolidated Appropriations Act (signed into law on December 8, 2004) exempted individuals who received a master’s or higher education degree from a U.S. university from the annual H-1B statutory cap (up to 20,000).⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Wasem, “Immigration: Legislative Issues on Nonimmigrant Professional Specialty (H-1B) Workers,” 10-12.

⁸⁵ Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2005, 108 P. L. 447 (118 Stat. 2809). In fact, this proposal of exemption had been raised many times before 2005. For example, during the 106th Congress when the American Competitiveness in the Twenty-First Century Act of 2000 was passed, several other bills were introduced regarding the exemption of certain advanced degree holders. For example, the New Workers for Economic Growth Act (S.1440/H.R.2698) introduced by Senator Phil Gramm and Representative Dave Dreier proposed that H-1B applicants who had at least a master’s degree and earn at least \$60,000 would not have counted toward the ceiling of H-1B admission. Representative David Wu introduced H.R. 3508 which would have increased the H-1B visa cap by 65,000 annually through 2002 for those with master’s or PhD degrees, provided the employers establish scholarship funds. During the 108th Congress,

After 9/11: “Secure borders, open doors”

The terrorist attack on the United States on September 11, 2001 transformed the United States and U.S. immigration, including student migration (especially considering the fact that terrorists entered the United States with student visas). In the name of fighting terrorism and securing the border and homeland security, the United States passed the Patriot Act in October 2001.⁸⁶ The U.S. government also started the student-tracking system (the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System, or SEVIS), which tracks foreign students once in the United States to verify that they are pursuing their intended courses of study at certified institutions. SEVIS allows U.S. embassy and consular officers to electronically verify the validity of the visa application documents of international students and exchange scholars. On September 1, 2004, a \$100 nonrefundable fee was charged to students to help defray the cost of the SEVIS program.⁸⁷ The U.S. government also enhanced the Visas Mantis Program, which started in 1998 and targeted students studying a subject covered by the Technology Alert List to prevent the export of sensitive goods, technology, and information. A

Representative Lamar Smith introduced H.R. 4166 on April 2004 which would amended immigration laws to exempt up to 20,000 aliens holding a master's or higher degree from the H-1B cap in any fiscal year. See Wasem, "Immigration: Legislative Issues on Nonimmigrant Professional Specialty (H-1B) Workers," 18-27.

⁸⁶ 107 P. L. 56, Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (PATRIOT) Act of 2001 (115 Stat. 272). The Patriot Act was passed 45 days after the 9/11 attack. Despite wide criticism of circumventing civil liberties, the Patriot Act was revised (based on the House reauthorization bill that kept most of the act's initial language and provisions) and reauthorized by President Bush in 2005.

⁸⁷ The predecessor to SEVIS was CIPRIS (Coordinated Responsibility Act Interagency Partnerships Regulating International Students), which was created by 104 P.L. 208, the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (110 Stat. 3009-546). Also see National Academies, *Policy Implications of International Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Scholars in the United States* (Washington, DC: National Academies Press, 2005), 68.

Visas Condor program was added in 2002 targeting nationals of U.S.-designated state sponsors of terrorism.⁸⁸

All these security measures led to closer scrutiny and longer times for international students' visa processing and contributed to a popular concern that the United States was not welcoming international students and foreigners. A direct result was the decreasing growth rate of international students enrolled in U.S. institutions of higher education after 2001. Around the end of the 1990s, the number of international students grew at an annual rate between 4.8 and 6.4 percent and comprised 3.8-4.3 percent of total students enrolled in U.S. institutions of higher education. The growth rate in the academic year of 2002/03 dropped to 0.6 percent and then went negative, though the decrease became smaller as time passed (-2.4 percent at 2003/4, -1.3 percent at 2004/5; -0.05 percent at 2005/6). The percentage of international students among the total students pursuing higher education in the United States also dropped (4.3 percent at 2003/4; 4.0 percent at 2004/5; 3.9 percent at 2005/6).⁸⁹

The declining growth of international students in the United States aroused deep concerns among U.S. educational and business communities about technological innovation and leadership of the United States in the world. In 2005, the National Academies issued a report on the policy implications of international graduate students and postdoctoral scholars in the United States.⁹⁰ The report noticed that changes in visa

⁸⁸ Countries designated section 306 in 2005: Iran, Syria, Libya, Cuba, North Korea, and Sudan. See U.S. Department of State, "Special Visa Processing Procedures—Travelers from State Sponsors of Terrorism," http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/info/info_1300.html

⁸⁹ IIE Network, "Report on International Educational Exchange: International Student and Total U.S. Enrollment," *Open Doors*, 2005, <http://opendoors.iienetwork.org/?p=69692>.

⁹⁰ National Academies. *Policy Implications of International Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Scholars in the United States*. This report was approved by the Governing Board of the National Research

and immigration policies since 9/11 had adversely affected every stage of the visa-application process for international students and that the international sentiment regarding U.S. immigration policies had been a lingering problem for the recruitment of international students and scholars. On the other hand, the report pointed out that these recent problems in fact coincided with a broader trend even prior to 9/11, that is, the strong desire of other nations to strengthen their educational and research capacity and compete with the United States in attracting and recruiting international students and scholars. The U.S. share of international students of the world's total higher-education enrollment in fact decreased from 36.7 percent in 1970 to 30.2 percent in 1995.⁹¹ The U.S. share of international students of all international students studying abroad worldwide also dropped from 25.3 percent in 2000 to 21.6 percent in 2004.⁹²

The report of the National Academies emphasized the importance of international students and scholars for the United States, arguing that they contribute to the U.S. society "not only academically and economically, but also by fostering the global and cultural knowledge and understanding necessary for effective U.S. leadership, competitiveness, and security." If the United States is to maintain overall leadership in Science and Engineering enterprises, the report argued, "visa and immigration policies should provide clear procedures that do not unnecessarily hinder the flow of international graduate students and postdoctoral scholars." The report

Council, whose members are drawn from the Councils of the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Engineering, and the Institute of Medicine. The research was conducted by the Committee on Science, Engineering, and Public Policy (COSEPUP) at the National Academies which was entitled as "Advisers to the Nation on Science, Engineering, and Medicine."

⁹¹ National Academies, 2005, 14.

⁹² Jeanne Batalova, "The 'Brain Gain' Race Begins with Foreign Students," *Migration Information Source*, Migration Policy Institute, January 2007, <http://www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/display.cfm?id=571>

recommended that new nonimmigrant visa categories be created for doctoral level graduate students and postdoctoral scholars and be exempted from the 214 (b) clause of the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1952, i.e., applicants must prove their residence in their home country and establish an intent to return. Furthermore, if the United States wants to retain the best students, the report suggested, procedures for change of immigrant status should be clarified and streamlined.⁹³

These recommendations were endorsed and reiterated in another report by the National Academies in 2007.⁹⁴ The study was requested by Congress and drafted by a pre-eminent committee comprised of presidents of major U.S. universities, Nobel laureates, CEOs of Fortune 100 corporations, and former presidential appointees. Entitled “Rising Above the Gathering Storm,” the report expressed a sense of crisis among U.S. educators and policy makers regarding the challenges the United States faced in a world where “advanced knowledge is widespread and low-cost labor is readily available” and where “the U.S. advantages in the marketplace and in science and technology have begun to erode.” Among the four main themes of the study was “develop, recruit and retain top students, scientists and engineers from both the United States and abroad.” As an example of the significance of international students and professionals for the U.S. high-tech industry and economy, the report cited the findings of a study by AnnaLee Saxenian, a scholar of immigrant professionals and regional/global economies at the University of California-Berkeley: by the end of the 1990s, Chinese and Indian engineers were running 29 percent of Silicon Valley’s

⁹³ National Academies, 2005, 1-11.

⁹⁴ National Academies, *Rising Above the Gathering Storm: Energizing and Employing America for A Brighter Economic Future* (Washington, DC: National Academies Press, 2007).

technology businesses; by 2000, these companies collectively accounted for more than \$19.5 billion in sales and 72,839 jobs.⁹⁵ The report also proposed a new skilled-based immigration system and suggested that doctoral-level education and science and engineering skills should substantially raise an applicant's chance and priority in obtaining U.S. citizenship.⁹⁶

The declining growth rate of international students in the United States after 9/11 and the deep concern about U.S. competitiveness in the global economy propelled the U.S. government to adopt a strategy of "secure borders, open doors," a complex and nuanced juxtaposition of two distinct attitudes and policies of U.S. immigration and gate-keeping. In August 2004, Secretary of State Colin Powell cabled all U.S. diplomatic and consular posts regarding the State Department's Non-Immigrant Travel Initiative (NITI). The initiative sought to streamline the security advisory opinion (SAO) process and to respond to issues related to courtesy and processing at ports of entry, as well as a range of visa and security policy issues. In the cable, Powell described "secure borders, open doors" as one of the most important goals of the State Department as well as of the nation, a vision of the United States with "robust and effective measures to safeguard national security that is still able to open its doors to the exchange of people, ideas and goods that has helped make this nation great." It was no mistake, Powell stressed, that the "secure borders" part came first because "we can have no freedom without security." On the other hand, Powell called on U.S. consuls to assist in maintaining the "open doors," especially for students, patients, and the business

⁹⁵ AnnaLee Saxenian, "Brain Circulation: How High-Skill Immigration Makes Everyone Better Off," *The Brookings Review* 20, no. 1 (2002): 28-31, cited in National Academies, 2007, 176.

⁹⁶ National Academies, 2007, 177.

community.⁹⁷ The explicit reference to these few priority groups in Powell's cable again indicates that the door of the U.S. is not open to everyone but rather to those closely tied to U.S. national and economic interests.

In a statement in October 2004 by Maura Harty, Assistant Secretary of State for consular affairs, international students and academic exchanges were directly linked to U.S. national interests because of their significance for securing the competitiveness and leadership of the United States in the world; in other words, U.S. security has been assumed to be tied with and based on its leadership in the world. Harty reiterated the policy of "secure borders and open doors" and declared that "we don't want to lose even one international student":

The loss of even one qualified student to another nation is one too many. When a student goes elsewhere, we haven't lost only the student. We have lost his or her parents, who have clearly decided to spend their money elsewhere. We have very likely lost younger siblings, who will follow in the footsteps of an older brother or sister. Most important to me, though, we have lost the chance for a student to see the wonders of America through his or her own eyes, rather than through the prism of a foreign news-media outlet that may be biased. When a student grows up and becomes a social, civic, political, or perhaps religious leader at home, we want that leader to have had the quintessential experience of life on an American college or university campus. A young person's positive experience in America strengthens and enriches our nation. And we are informed every day in what we do by our desire to welcome those students to our shores.⁹⁸

Here again we see the emphasis of the U.S. government on the role of international students in extending and benefiting U.S. foreign relations, as discussed in the last section. The Assistant Secretary also did not forget the direct economic benefits international students would bring to the United States during their study—an

⁹⁷ Collin Powell, "Cable: Non-immigrant Travel Initiative," cited in *Open Doors*, IIE Network Online, August 2004, <http://opendoors.iienetwork.org/?p=51868>

⁹⁸ Maura Harty, "We don't Want to Lose Even One International Student," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 8, 2004, B10 (editorial). Also at <http://opendoors.iienetwork.org/?p=51867>.

estimated revenue of about \$13 billion annually for the U.S. economy. In her statement, Harty also stressed the importance of international students for maintaining U.S. competitiveness in the world, though she dismissed the heated disputes and complex process of student migrants' immigrant status adjustment. Harty's statement demonstrates the combination of foreign relations and economic interests in U.S. policies towards international student migration and shows what the U.S. government has been trying to highlight.

The 2007 Points System Proposal and the Global “War for Talents”

In fact, the principle and the goal of “secure borders and open doors” regarding student migration has been central in the numerous immigration proposals in the United States after 9/11. On the one hand, public tensions and debates surrounding illegal immigration have been intense and frequent; on the other hand, the concern about the competitiveness of the United States has been constant and has accumulated momentum in public and legislation.

In 2005, the Migration Policy Institute (MPI), an influential think tank based in Washington D.C., convened an independent task force comprised of prominent policymakers and scholars to examine the challenges posed by immigration. Its report in the following year, entitled *“Immigration and America’s Future: A New Chapter,”* argues that while the nation’s focus has recently been on illegal immigration, a larger picture of immigration should be considered about what immigration policies and system could benefit the national interests of the United States and enhance U.S.

competitiveness in the 21st century. The task force proposed a redesigned U.S. immigration system to attract “the immigrants the United States wants and needs.” The new system would regulate migration through three streams: temporary, provisional, and permanent. The newly added provisional migration would allow employers to recruit workers for permanent jobs who might eventually be interested in permanent immigration and would act “as a tool to attract the best and brightest at all skill levels, many of whom are shopping for the best offer in a competitive international marketplace.” The new system would also streamline family reunification in a timely manner and increase employment-based immigration, with a new type of visa (strategic growth visas) to help the United States compete more effectively for international talent.⁹⁹

This MPI study indicated a significant trend in the thinking of U.S. immigration lawmakers and scholars that was highlighted in the 2007 Congress and White House proposals for a historic transformation of the U.S. immigration regime: changing from a system dominated by family-based immigration to one with increasing emphasis on employment-based immigration and with a new merit-based immigration system (points system). On May 9, 2007, Senator Harry Reid (D-NV) introduced a bill (S.1348) to provide for comprehensive immigration reform. The bill addressed key issues such as the enforcement of immigration laws, creating a new temporary worker program, and setting unauthorized immigrants on a path to legal status. However, what made the bill most distinctive was its provision of reallocating permanent immigration visas. The bill

⁹⁹ Spencer Abraham, Lee Hamilton and Doris M. Meissner, eds., *Immigration and America's Future: A New Chapter, Report of the Independent Task Force on Immigration and America's Future* (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2006), 35-41.

would eliminate the family-based immigration categories for adult children and siblings, and sponsorship of parents would be limited by a numerical cap. Accordingly, employment-based immigration visas would be increased and reformed into a new points system. According to this new system, potential immigrants would be evaluated and admitted based on the points they earn for occupation and work experience, age, educational attainment, English ability, as well as a limited number of points for being the adult children or siblings of U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents.¹⁰⁰

On the House side, Representative Luis Gutierrez (D-IL) and Jeff Flake (R-AZ) introduced the Security Through Regularized Immigration and a Vibrant Economy (STRIVE) Act in March 2007. The Strive Act would increase employment-based visas from 140,000 to 290,000 per year and exempt certain individuals (such as foreign graduate students in technology and engineering fields) from those numerical limits. The Strive Act would also boost the nonimmigrant H-1B visa cap from 65,000 to 115,000 and keep existing exemptions for those who have earned advanced degrees in the United States. At the same time, a plan raised by the White House would also increase employment-based visas from 14,000 to 700,000. Similar to the Senate bill, the White House plan would eliminate diversity visas and the preference categories for siblings and adult children of U.S. citizens and convert employment-based immigration to a points system, in which categories such as employment, education, skills, English

¹⁰⁰ The Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2007 (S. 1348), 110th Congress, 1st Session, May 9, 2007.

proficiency, and civic ties to the United States would assist immigrants' gaining entry to the United States.¹⁰¹

Though encountering opposition from various political and social groups and becoming suspended in Congress,¹⁰² the proposed merit-based points system represents a global trend of "opening doors" to immigrants who are most desired, especially highly skilled professionals (including student migrants). U.S. policy makers and scholars have frequently cited the points system adopted in other countries: Canada launched the first points-assessment system in 1967, Australia in 1989, New Zealand in 1991, the United Kingdom in 2001, and the Czech Republic in 2003.¹⁰³

With transnational mobility and sought-after skills, international students have been increasingly favored in many countries' points systems. Australia made it easier in 1999 for foreign students of Australian universities to adjust to permanent resident status, who would gain extra points for their local degree. Since 2001, foreign students have also been allowed to apply for permanent residency without work experience or

¹⁰¹ The STRIVE ACT (H.R. 1645), 110th Congress, 1st Session, March 22, 2007; Dawn Konet and Julia Gelatt, "Congress and White House Release Competing Proposals for Immigration Reform," *Migration Information Source*, Migration Policy Institute, April 16, 2007, <http://www.migrationinformation.org/USFocus/display.cfm?ID=595>.

¹⁰² The bill that included the points system proposal was attacked from all fronts. Conservatives criticized it for legalizing illegal immigrants and lacking enforcement of law guarding national borders. Labor advocates opposed the temporary guest worker program. Immigrant advocacy groups argued that the bill placed too many overall restrictions on immigrants seeking legalization and citizenship. As for the points system proposal, social groups on the left criticized it for dividing families and drastically changing U.S. immigration tradition. Employers were dissatisfied with the bill, claiming that it would not remedy the labor shortage of the U.S. economy and that it would "take the hiring decision out of [employers'] hands and place it in the hands of the federal government." They also argued that a merit-based system favoring skilled workers would result in labor shortage in certain industries, especially those in need of lower skilled workers. See Aaron Matteo Terrazas, Dawn Konet, and Julia Gelatt, "Senate Immigration Bill, Attacked from All Sides, Gains Second Chance," *Migration Information Source*, Migration Policy Institute, June 15, 2007. <http://www.migrationinformation.org/USFocus/display.cfm?ID=607>.

¹⁰³ For examples, National Academies, 2007, 178-79; Demetrios G. Papademetriou, "Selecting Economic Stream Immigrants through Points Systems," *Migration Information Source*, Migration Policy Institute, May 2007, <http://www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/display.cfm?id=602>.

being sponsored by an Australian employer and without having to return to their home country to apply. Between 2002 and 2003, about 8,000 permanent resident permits were issued to former students, and the number had doubled to about 16,000 between 2004 and 2005.¹⁰⁴ The United Kingdom introduced the Science and Engineering Graduates Scheme (SEGS) and the Fresh Talent— Working in Scotland Scheme (FTWISS) in 2004 and 2005 to retain non European Economic Area (EEA) foreign students after graduation.¹⁰⁵ In France, a new law in 2006 also facilitated the stay of foreign students after graduation.¹⁰⁶

Besides their impact on the economy, the increasingly popular points systems worldwide also have profound political significance. This has been argued most explicit by Demetrios G. Papademetriou, the president of the MPI, who has advocated U.S. immigration reforms (such as the proposed points system) to enhance U.S. competitiveness. According to Papademetriou, points systems can “inspire public confidence by *appearing* to use universal, data-driven, and objective selection criteria to advance clearly defined and easily understandable economic and labor market objectives” (emphasis mine). Papademetriou added that a points system can also convey

¹⁰⁴ Lisong Liu, “International Students,” *Dictionary of Transnational History*, edited by Akira Iriye and Pierre-Yves Saunier, Palgrave Macmillan Series of Transnational History (Basingstoke [England]: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 585-86; Jeanne Batalova, “The ‘Brain Gain’ Race Begins with Foreign Students.”

¹⁰⁵ Under SEGS, foreign students with a graduate degree in any field, and foreign students with an undergraduate degree in physics, math, or engineering, can stay in the UK for up to 12 months to engage in any employment (including self-employment). They are further allowed to apply for permanent residency under one of the four skilled-labor schemes. FTWIIS aims to encourage non-EEA students to settle in Scotland by allowing eligible foreign students to work for up to two years with no work permit from the Home Office. Similar to SEGS participants, they are allowed to apply for a permanent residence permit under existing skilled-labor schemes. See Batalova, “The ‘Brain gain’ Race.”

¹⁰⁶ Batalova, “The ‘Brain Gain’ Race”; Kara Murphy, “France’s New Law: Control Immigration Flows, Court the Highly Skilled,” *Migration Information Source*, Migration Policy Institute, November 2006, <http://www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/display.cfm?ID=486>.

to the public that “the government is being proactive in anticipating needs and manipulating entries in ways that put national economic interests first; that is, that the government, rather than employers or immigrant families, is in charge of what is arguably the most important function of the immigration system.”¹⁰⁷

Papademetriou’s statement obscures another fundamental role of a points system: It is the instrument for nation-states to reestablish their authority and power in designing and manipulating immigration policies as they face the erosion of their power by increasingly transnational corporations and migrants. In this sense, a points system is a strategy of nation-states to retain their own power in the name of “national” interests, a strategy in the name of utilizing universal, objective, and equal standards to select potential immigrants. In the center of the points system is the power of the nation-state, just as Nicolas Sarkozy (then France’s interior minister who was elected as its President in 2007) argued for the passage of the new immigration law in France in July 2006, “selective immigration... is the expression of France’s sovereignty.”¹⁰⁸

Papademetriou encouraged wider adoption of points systems in various countries and offered it as an effective prescription for those states that had previously closed their doors to immigration. As he stated, these countries “need a way to get out of the ‘no immigration’ traps... opening themselves to high-skilled immigrants, and doing so in ways that put the government in charge, is seen as a way to mitigate adverse popular reactions to immigration.”¹⁰⁹ The shift to the points system reflects a historical irony: while discrimination against immigrants based on race and national origins had

¹⁰⁷ Papademetriou, “Selecting Economic Stream Immigrants.”

¹⁰⁸ Kara Murphy, “France’s New Law.”

¹⁰⁹ Papademetriou, “Selecting Economic Stream Immigrants.”

become unacceptable by international norms and had been abolished in most countries in past decades, new discriminatory immigration systems increasingly based on skills and class have begun to take their place.¹¹⁰

This chapter has examined how Chinese student migration fits into U.S. immigration history and revealed the historical transformation of post-1965 U.S. immigration. An important turning point for Chinese student migration to the United States was the Chinese Students Protection Act (CSPA) of 1992. On the one hand, the CSPA revealed the self-assumed role of the United States as the “beacon of hope” for the free world defending democracy and freedom, here particularly in the end of the Cold War when the United States claimed its ideological superiority and attempted to spread the U.S.-modeled “democratic capitalism.” On the other hand, the CSPA had an implicitly pragmatic function of recruiting large numbers of highly educated and skilled migrants into the U.S. workforce. This economic nationalism was also illustrated and fulfilled by the increasing preference for employment-based immigration in post-1965 U.S. legislation, such as the creation of the H-1B “specialty occupation” visa in 1990 and the congressional proposals in 2007 for a profound transformation of U.S. immigration system from one based on family-sponsored immigration to a merit-based points system primarily favoring employment, skills, and education. After 9/11, the U.S. policy of

¹¹⁰ Wayne A. Cornelius and Thomas J. Espenshade made a similar comment in their introductory article to the collection of articles on the international migration of the highly skilled: “The steady expansion of visa allotments for high-tech immigrants to the U.S. is just one element of an emerging legal regime that facilitates the international mobility of the highly skilled, even while the legal and bureaucratic barriers to low-skilled migration are preserved or even strengthened.” Cornelius, Thomas and Salehyan, eds., *The International Migration of the Highly Skilled*, 6.

“secure borders and open doors” revealed the dilemma of U.S. gate-keeping on the one hand, and on the other hand it highlighted the significance of international student migrants for U.S. national interests.

While student/professional migrants have been wooed and recruited by the preference system of post-1965 U.S. immigration, whether they could be accepted into the U.S. mainstream society once they passed the immigration customs (for many, after their staying in the U.S. for many years already and with only a legal paper indicating status adjustment) was another issue. With their social and cultural capital, did Chinese student/professional migrants find it easy to get accepted and integrate into American society? How did these recent migrants interact with older-generation migrants and lower-class and labor migrants? How did they face and engage the multi-racial and multi-ethnic U.S. society? The next chapter turns to these questions by focusing on a new migrant community in the Twin Cities (Minneapolis and St. Paul) at Minnesota.

Chapter 3

“Entering the American Mainstream”? Chinese New Immigrant Community in the Twin Cities, Minnesota

On December 11, 2005, the Chinese American Association of Minnesota (CAAM), the main Chinese American organization in Minnesota, held its thirty-eighth anniversary in a local Chinese restaurant. Weiming Lu, one of the founding members of CAAM and a renowned city planner, addressed the meeting with the title “Deepening Our Roots in Minnesota.” Lu noted that in recent decades, the Chinese community in Minnesota had grown in numbers and diversity and had enjoyed a better financial standing compared to many other immigrant groups. However, Lu cautioned, the Chinese community still faced a few major challenges: Still largely invisible in the local society, how could it engage more with the mainstream society? With increasing numbers of organizations, how could it gain strength rather than grow apart? Deeply impacted by U.S.-China relations, how could it promote better understanding between China and the United States? And could it teach future generations to appreciate and preserve their Chinese cultural heritage?¹

Lu’s speech indicated several important trends of post-1965 Chinese new immigrants, including student/professional migrants, in the United States. The title he chose—“deepening our roots in Minnesota”—indicated a historical transformation of the post-WWII Chinese immigrant community in the United States from “returning to roots after sojourning” (*luoye guigeng*) to “staying and planting roots in the residing

¹ Weiming Lu, “Deepening Our Roots in Minnesota,” December 11, 2005.

society” (*luodi shenggen*).² The increasing diversity of new migrants also posed new challenges to the unity of the Chinese community. The increasing numbers of student/professional migrants, though possessing better economic and social status than past generations of labor migrants, still faced the challenges of improving the visibility of the Chinese community in the United States, effectively engaging and integrating into the local society, and retaining their ethnic and cultural identity.

This chapter examines the community and identity formation of student/professional migrants in the Twin Cities as a case study of new migrants’ integration into post-1965 U.S. society. While initial questions were focusing on post-1978 mainland Chinese student migrants, my analysis has been broadened to include earlier waves of student/professional migrants from Taiwan and Hong Kong to demonstrate different generations of student migrants and the impact of historical contexts on their identities. My analysis also covers the whole Chinese community in Minnesota, as new migrants have been the majority of Chinese in Minnesota and part of my key questions were what role student/professional migrants played in the Chinese community and how the Chinese community as a whole looked like in terms of its integration into post-1965 U.S. society.

² In 1992, a milestone conference on the studies of the Chinese diaspora convened in San Francisco, with the theme “*Luodi Shenggen*: The Legal, Political, and Economic Status of Chinese in Diaspora.” The conference led to the formation of the International Society for the Study of the Chinese Overseas (ISSCO). Also resulting from the conference was a major collection of essays on the Chinese diaspora: L. Ling-chi Wang and Wang Gungwu, eds., *The Chinese Diaspora: Selected Essays* (Singapore: Times Academic, 2003). For discussions on the historical transition from “*luoye guigen*” to “*luodi shenggen*,” also see L. Ling-chi Wang, “Roots and the Changing Identity of the Chinese in the U.S.,” in Tu Weiming, ed., *The Living Tree: The Changing Meaning of Being Chinese Today* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 185-212.

Scholars have studied the new characteristics of post-WWII Chinese immigrant communities in the United States.³ Noticing that new immigrants include increasing numbers of professionals with skills and capital, scholars investigate their new residential patterns and community life. For example, Hsiang-shui Chen describes the new concentration of Chinese professionals (mainly from Taiwan) who chose to live in Flushing instead of in the old Chinatown in the New York City.⁴ Timothy Fong examines the development of the “first suburban Chinatown” in Monterey Park, California, and discusses how the middle- and upper-class status of suburban Chinese immigrants complicated the local racial politics.⁵ Wei Li uses the term “ethno-burb” (ethnic suburb) to emphasize the multi-ethnic suburban environment in which recent Chinese immigrants live and interact with other groups rather than being isolated in traditional Chinatowns.⁶ Examining the new suburban communities of recent Chinese immigrants, these studies focus on states such as California and New York that historically have had the largest Chinese immigrant populations and have been closely studied. As studies from sociological, anthropological or geographical perspectives, they also mainly look at present social structure and patterns without paying enough

³ An illuminating review of the changes of postwar Chinese communities and accordingly the shifting Chinese American studies (though focusing on scholarship from World War II to the 1980s) is Wing Chung Ng, “Scholarship on Post-WWII Chinese Societies in North America: A Thematic Discussion,” *Chinese America: History and Perspectives* 6 (1992): 177-210. Ng points out six thematic changes in Chinese American communities: legislation and Chinese demography; community structure, social organizations and leadership; economic life and performance; political participation in the host country; assimilation and the state of Chinese ethnicity; and the China factor.

⁴ Hsiang-Shui Chen, *Chinatown No More: Taiwan Immigrants in Contemporary New York* (Cornell University Press, 1992).

⁵ Timothy Fong, *First Suburban Chinatown: The Remaking of Monterey Park, California* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994).

⁶ Wei Li, “Anatomy of a New Ethnic Settlement: The Chinese Ethnoburb in LA,” *Urban Studies* 35, no. 3 (1998): 479-501; Wei Li, “Building Ethnoburbia: The Emergence and Manifestation of the Chinese Ethnoburb in LA’s San Gabriel Valley,” *Journal of Asian American Studies* 2, no. 1 (February 1999): 1-28.

attention to the historical continuities and transformations between the past and the present.⁷ My study purposefully focuses on the Twin Cities at Minnesota, a locale without traditional Chinatowns but with surging numbers of new immigrants in recent decades (more demographic information later in this chapter).⁸ My analysis also emphasizes the historical formation of immigrants' community and identity.

Studying whether and how Chinese new immigrants entered the “mainstream” American society, this chapter also engages scholars’ discussions on immigrants’ “assimilation” and race and ethnic relations in post-1965 United States. In recent decades, the “assimilation model” has been widely criticized and revised to emphasize the resilience of ethnic identities and cultures and to debunk the problematic core of “Americanization.” Among the major revisions is Richard Alba and Nick Nee’s *Remaking the American Mainstream*, in which they redefine the “American mainstream” as not fixed but constantly changing and expanding to include more non-mainstream groups over time.⁹ Unlike their emphasis on the mainstream’s capacity of expansion and their reliance mainly on hard data such as immigrants and their

⁷ An exception is Huping Ling’s historical study of the Chinese community in St. Louis, Missouri, which will be discussed later in this chapter. Huping Ling, *Chinese St. Louis: From Enclave to Cultural Community* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2004).

⁸ While focusing on the Twin Cities (Minneapolis and St. Paul), my discussions often expand to the Chinese population in Minnesota in general. On the one hand, detailed statistics of the Chinese community are often available at the state level; on the other hand, Chinese immigrants in Minnesota do concentrate in the metro areas of the Twin Cities and major Chinese organizations such as CAAM and CAAAPAM are all located in the Twin Cities. According to the U.S. Census 2000, among the Chinese in Minnesota (15,484 to 18,622, excluding Taiwanese), 62 percent were living in either Hennepin or Ramsey county (9,634 to 11,425), and Minneapolis had the largest share at 2,369 to 2,822. A similar trend was seen among the Asian population in Minnesota: over half of the Asian population in Minnesota lived in five cities in the Twin Cities region: St. Paul, Minneapolis, Brooklyn Park, Bloomington, and Eagan, in that order. Gail Carlson, *Asians in Minnesota, 2000* (Minnesota Planning State Demographic Center, March 2002), <http://www.demography.state.mn.us/DownloadFiles/pdf/AsiansMN2000.pdf> (last accessed March 19, 2009).

⁹ Richard Alba and Nick Lee, eds. *Remaking the American Mainstream: Assimilation and Contemporary Immigration* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003), 11-12.

children's educational attainment, residential patterns, and interracial marriage rates (in fact their analysis mainly refers to second-generation integration), my study is based on interviews with first-generation immigrants and focuses on their personal stories and community activities to see how immigrants identified themselves and whether they felt they had been accepted by the mainstream American society.

In fact, the general literature on immigrants' integration into American society has assumed that professional immigrants with education and skills enter the American "mainstream" rather smoothly.¹⁰ In Alba and Nee's analysis, Asian American professionals are described as having been well integrated into the American society and are a sign of the potential of the expanding American "mainstream" to include even non-white minority groups.¹¹ While the Chinese community in Minnesota (the majority being professionals) seems to offer a good case of well-off immigrants' smooth integration into the American society with individual mobility and with choices of individual identity, it turns out to be much more complex. Relying on individual mobility rather than group identity, Chinese student/professional immigrants in the Twin Cities tended to *disappear* individually into the local society without a strong and sufficient collective voice.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section briefly reviews the historical development of the Chinese community in the Twin Cities, showing its

¹⁰Alba and Lee differentiate two main streams of contemporary immigrants into the U.S. labor market: traditional labor immigrants and human-capital immigrants, and noted that "[H]uman-capital immigrants have been less a focus of research than traditional labor migrants in part because they tend to assimilate economically and culturally within a relatively short time after their arrival." Traditional labor immigrants, in contrast, tend to "clump together in visible ethnic communities and economies. Researchers have thus concentrated on them in discussing their problems of assimilation." Alba and Lee, *Remaking the American Mainstream*, 230-2.

¹¹ Alba and Lee, *Remaking the American Mainstream*.

increasing diversity after 1965 and highlighting the different generations of student/professional migrants. The second section looks at how Chinese student/professional migrants identified and positioned themselves in the multi-ethnic American society, especially concerning the image of “model minority” and considering the local context of the Twin Cities where the largest Asian communities are Southeast Asians and the driving force of Minnesota immigrant experiences has been refugees. The third section focuses on a significant episode of the Chinese community’s engagement with the local American society—its commemoration of World War II in 1995, particularly the protest against the Minnesota Orchestra’s playing “Requiem, Hiroshima”—to show how the Chinese community, led by student/professional migrants, challenged the ignorance of the American public about their history and asserted their Asian/American identity.

An Increasingly Diverse Chinese Community and Student/Professional Migrants

Chinese immigration began in the mid-1870s after Chinese migrants in the West Coast were increasingly faced with racial and social discrimination and moved eastward for survival and better opportunities. By 1885, there were about 100 Chinese immigrants in Minnesota, mainly male workers from Canton and concentrated in downtown areas.¹² During the Chinese exclusion era (1882-1943), the Chinese population in Minnesota witnessed a modest growth. By 1920, approximately 500 Chinese were living in the state, with 300 residing in Minneapolis and St. Paul.¹³

¹² Sherri Gebert Fuller, *Chinese in Minnesota* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2004), 3.
¹³ Fuller, *Chinese in Minnesota*, 28.

The Chinese community in Minnesota grew tremendously in the decades after World War II, both in numbers and in diversity. In 1950, a directory of the Chinese American Club (an organization primarily for the local Chinese business community) showed that there were about 100 Chinese families residing in the Twin Cities area, and the number of Chinese in Minnesota between the 1940s and 1960s increased to around 1,270.¹⁴ The reasons for this growth included not only population growth among second generations but also the growing numbers of newcomers after the United States repealed the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1943 and allowed Chinese to immigrate and naturalize to be American citizens.¹⁵ Another important reason for the Chinese population growth in Minnesota was the coming of Chinese students. The first Chinese students came to study at the University of Minnesota in 1914, although the majority of Chinese students before World War II returned to China. During the immediate postwar years, 300-400 Chinese students enrolled in the university.¹⁶ After the Chinese Civil War (1946-49), the Chinese Communist Party took over the mainland and U.S.-China relations were severed, and many Chinese students stayed in the United States rather than returned to China. They were later joined by continuous waves of Chinese students

¹⁴ Fuller, *Chinese in Minnesota*, 46; Stone Yu, “60-Plus Years of Service: A Brief History of the Chinese American Association of Minnesota (CAAM),” 1997. Yu is a former president of CAAM, and he compiled this article as part of the commemoration for the 30th anniversary of CAAM’s incorporation commissioned in 1997 by the CAAM’s Presidents Committee. Yu noted in his article that in 1950, the Chinese population in Minnesota was 720; however, the number given by Fuller seems to be more reasonable considering the growth after World War II. I am grateful to Charles Lee (a former CAAM president in the 1980s) for forwarding me this article.

¹⁵ For example, the Chinese Exclusion Repeal Act in 1943 repealed past Chinese exclusion laws and allowed Chinese immigration with a quota of 105 per year (later increased to 20,000 under the 1965 Immigration Act); the Amendment to the War Brides Act in 1947 allowed approximately 8,000 Chinese women to enter the United States before it expired on December 30, 1949. Fuller, *Chinese in Minnesota*, 41; Erika Lee, *At America’s Gates: Chinese Immigration during the Exclusion Era* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 245-6.

¹⁶ Fuller, *Chinese in Minnesota*, 52.

from Taiwan and Hong Kong and around the world, even as mainland China closed its door for students' studying in western industrialized countries. In 1970, a joint directory of the American Chinese Council of Minnesota (formerly the Chinese American Club) and the Chinese Student Association of Minnesota listed 212 families in the Residents sections and 257 families in the Students section (many families were listed in both sections).¹⁷

By the 1950s and 1960s, the Chinese immigrant community was comprised of three main groups: first-generation immigrant workers and small business owners, students-turned immigrants, and second-generation Chinese Americans. By 1970, the Chinese population in Minnesota had increased to about 2400. Among them, 50 percent were under 18 years of age, and about 30 percent were born between the 1960s and 1970s. The proportion (30 percent) of professionals among Chinese in Minnesota was higher than in the nation (18 percent).¹⁸ This high percentage reflected the many second generation Chinese who had gained college education and entered professional fields as well as to the large population of student migrants.

In the 1970s and 1980s, new waves of immigrants further diversified the Chinese community. The 1965 Immigration Act removed the race-based national origins quota system which had long been restricting Chinese and other Asian groups from immigrating to the United States.¹⁹ Chinese immigrants now were allowed to enter the United States under the new immigration system which gave preference to family re-unification and skilled migrants, and most of them came from Taiwan and Hong

¹⁷ Yu, "60-Plus Years of Service."

¹⁸ Fuller, *Chinese in Minnesota*, 57.

¹⁹ Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 (79 Stat. 911). Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, 239-64.

Kong.²⁰ The reforms of mainland China since the late 1970s permitted Chinese emigration and encouraged students' studying abroad, which again transformed the outlook of the Chinese community in the United States and in Minnesota. The University of Minnesota in fact has long hosted the largest number of Chinese students in North America.²¹ The annual mainland Chinese migration to Minnesota increased steadily, with an annual number of around 90-150 in the 1980s to around 200-500 in the 1990s and then around 400-700 in the 2000s (Table 3). The highest rate of immigration took place in 1993 with 911 immigrants, indicating a similar national trend around this time when large numbers of students applied for permanent residence after the CSPA allowed them to stay.²²

With migration continuing, the Chinese population in Minnesota grew tremendously after 1965 and nearly doubled every decade. The population grew to 4000

²⁰ Chinese immigrants were allocated a quota of 20,000 every year. Later in 1981, Taiwan was given a separate quota of 20,000. Hong Kong, as a British colony before 1997, also had a separate quota which increased from 200 in the beginning to 5,000 in 1986, and then to 20,000 in 1995 mainly because of the rising concerns of the uncertainty of Hong Kong after its sovereignty transition from Britain to mainland China. Chin Kim, "The U.S. Immigration Act of 1990 and Its Hong Kong Provisions," in *Legal Forum Nationality Passport and 1997*, ed. J. Arthur McInnis (Hong Kong: Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong and the Faculty of Law of the University of Hong Kong, 1991), 69-82. There was also re-migration of ethnic Chinese from Southeast Asia, Latin America or other regions. For example, In the 1970s, in the wake of the Vietnam War, large numbers of ethnic Chinese came to the United States from Southeast Asia as refugees. For example, a sizeable proportion of the 4500 Vietnamese population in Minnesota in the 1970s were actually ethnic Chinese. Fuller, *Chinese in Minnesota*, 65. However, these ethnic Chinese from Southeast Asia were not counted as Chinese in U.S. censuses and most of them had already naturalized in their former residing countries and therefore remained little ties with China and rarely identified with China.

²¹ According to a 1999 report of the China Center at the University of Minnesota, the university received the first mainland Chinese scholar in July 1929 after mainland China's reforms, and the number increased to 16 by December 1979, the third largest among U.S. campuses. Up to 1999 the University had hosted more than 2100 mainland Chinese scholars. In recent years the number of mainland Chinese students and scholars has been constantly more than 1200 and considered to be "the largest Chinese community on a university campus in North America." China Center, "Celebrating Twenty Years of Exchange, 1979-1999," *China Center Newsletter*, Fall 1999. <http://www.chinacenter.umn.edu/news/newsletter/> (last accessed March 19, 2009)

²² For the 1992 Chinese Student Protection Act, see the last chapter "Chinese Student Migration and Post-1965 U.S. Immigration."

Table 3. Numbers of Immigrants from P.R. China to Minnesota, 1982-2008

Year	Number	Year	Number	Year	Number
1982	145	1991	188	2000	505
1983	108	1992	282	2001	643
1984	104	1993	911	2002	704
1985	101	1994	448	2003	386
1986	110	1995	212	2004	469
1987	91	1996	344	2005	675
1988	129	1997	265	2006	654
1989	122	1998	270	2007	585
1990	135	1999	256	2008	586

Source: Minnesota State Demographic Center, "Immigrants to Minnesota by Region and Selected Country of Birth," <http://www.demography.state.mn.us/resource.html?Id=18679>.

in 1980 and then 9000 in 1990. The 2000 U.S. Census showed the total Chinese population in Minnesota was around 16000, while native Taiwanese, who were counted in a separate category, numbered between 576 and 631.²³ Similar to the national picture, the gender ratio of Chinese community in Minnesota was balanced, with women comprising a slight majority (around 52 percent in Minnesota as well as nationwide). The median age of Chinese immigrants in Minnesota was 31, the same as in the United States, and the average family size of 3 in Minnesota was also the same as nationwide. The foreign-born population among Chinese in Minnesota (72.5 percent) was similar to

²³ Fuller, *Chinese in Minnesota*, 65, 73, 76.

the ratio of the foreign-born among Chinese in the United States (70.6 percent). Chinese in Minnesota had a higher proportion of immigrants with higher education degrees than that nationwide (63.5 percent vs. 48 percent), and their median family income was also higher than that nationwide (\$63,897 vs. \$60,058), figures that reflect the high proportion of students-turned immigrants in this population (Tables 4 and 5).

Table 4. General Demographics of Chinese in Minnesota, 2000

	Chinese in Minnesota		Minnesota	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Population	16,060	0.3	4,919,479	100
Male	7,697	47.9	2,435,631	49.5
Female	8,363	52.1	2,483,848	50.5
Population 25 years +	9,955		3,164,345	
High school graduate or higher	8,521	85.6	2,783,000	87.9
Bachelor's degree or higher	6,322	63.5	868,082	27.4
Foreign born	11,642	72.5	260,463	5.3
Speaking a language other than English at home	12,025	74.9	389,988	7.9
Individual below poverty level	1,530	9.5	380,476	7.7
Median family income in 1999 (dollars)	63,897		56,874	
Average family size	3		3	
Median age	31		35	

Source: Compiled from the U.S. Census Bureau (2000), *Profile of Selected Population Group: Chinese alone, Minnesota*, Summary File 2 (SF 2) and Summary File 4 (SF 4). Retrieved from <http://factfinder.census.gov/>.

Table 5. General Demographics of Chinese in the United States, 2000

	Chinese in the U.S.		U.S.	
	Number	Percent-age	Number	Percent-age
Population	2,432,585	8.6	281,421,906	100
Male	1,176,913	48.3	138,053,563	49.1
Female	1,255,672	51.7	143,368,343	50.9
Population 25 years +	1,662,423		182,211,639	
High school graduate or higher	1,280,259	77.1	146,496,014	80.4
Bachelor's degree or higher	798,828	48.0	44,462,605	24.4
Foreign born	1,716,682	70.6	31,107,889	11.1
Speaking a language other than English at home	1,943,644	79.9	46,951,595	16.7
Individual below poverty level	320,577	13.2	33,899,812	12.4
Median family income in 1999 (dollars)	60,058		50,046	
Average family size	3		3	
Median age	35		35	

Source: Compiled from the U.S. Census Bureau (2000), *Profile of Selected Population Group: Chinese alone, the United States*, Summary File 2 (SF 2) and Summary File 4 (SF 4). Retrieved from <http://factfinder.census.gov/>.

Unlike the pre-WWII Chinese immigrant community of male migrants from Southern China working in laundry and restaurant businesses, migration to Minnesota (and in the United States in general) was remarkably diverse. An increasingly gender-balanced immigrant community was formed, with occupations ranging from restaurant owners to independent artists to professional workers to high-tech industry entrepreneurs. Migrants came not just from Canton but across mainland China, as well as from Taiwan, Hong Kong, Southeast Asia, and all over the world.

This led to a mixture of immigrant groups with various backgrounds and multiple identities. The gap among Chinese immigrants of different origins, dialects, and social status remained large. Unlike pre-1965 Chinese immigrants who usually came from the Guangdong region and spoke Cantonese, recent migrants came from across the country and usually spoke Mandarin. Illustrating this diversity is Qu who came from mainland China in the early 1980s, obtained his Ph.D. in the University of Minnesota, and then worked in a St. Paul-based transnational conglomerate corporation. Among his neighbors were two Chinese families who were restaurant owners. They spoke Cantonese while Qu spoke Mandarin. Finding it hard to communicate, Qu and his neighbors always turned to English for conversation. Qu admitted that though living so close, he and his Chinese neighbors had little communication with each other than short daily greetings. “After all, we have very little common language,” Qu said, referring to not only the language but the different occupations and social backgrounds they had.²⁴

While the gap between student/professional migrants and labor migrants and small business owners remained large, students-turned immigrants were also diverse.

²⁴ Qu, interview by author, February 11, 2008.

Qu recalled that in the early 1990s, he joined in a Chinese choir in Minnesota that was founded by professional immigrants coming to the United States in the 1950s and 1960s, who were mainly from Taiwan and Hong Kong and more attached to the Republic of China in Taiwan rather than the mainland China. Qu soon found out the choir's reserve of songs were mainly those produced and popular in the 1930s and 1940s under Republican China which was distant from his own lifetime. Qu and some other mainland Chinese migrants then founded a different choir practicing songs that were popular in the 1970s and 1980s, which bore significant marks of the communist eras and of the dramatic cultural transformation during China's reform since the late 1970s. They soon discovered the difficulties of recruiting more recent migrants who came to the United States after the 1990s and were fond of very different songs (such as pop music from Taiwan, Hong Kong and western countries).²⁵

The continuing waves of new migrants and changing generations of student migrants transformed the dynamic and patterns of Chinese immigrant organizations in the Twin Cities. Before World War II, Chinese community organizations in Minnesota were mainly kinship and merchant associations.²⁶ With increasing numbers of students and students-turned migrants in the Twin Cities after World War II, student and professional networks and organizations arose to prominence. In 1965, the initial meeting of current CAAM (Chinese American Association of Minnesota) was held and

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ The largest organizations, the Ong Leong Chinese Merchants Association and the Hip Sing Association, were associated with their national organizations based in the coastal states. In the 1920s and 1930s, these nationally based associations, often conceived by the local government as Tongs engendering gang crimes, were suppressed and gradually faded out. Fuller, *Chinese in Minnesota*, 21-24.

the six founding members were all professional workers or student organization leaders.²⁷ In order to bridge the gap between the professional and business groups, they diligently reached out to business owners to solicit their involvement and support. In 1967, the first formal membership meeting was held (the organization was renamed CAAM in 1971) and local businessman Stanley Chong was elected as the president of the organization.²⁸ However, as time passed by, tensions arose because of their different interests: the business group was more interested in commercial success while professionals emphasized scholarship, career development and other social and cultural functions. In the early 1970s, businessmen finally broke away from CAAM and formed their own Chinese Chamber of Commerce.²⁹

With continuing waves of student migrants from Taiwan and Hong Kong, professional and cultural organizations continue to emerge. For example, in 1992, the Chinese American Association of Professionals and Academics in Minnesota (CAAPAM) was founded as an organization of professionals mainly from Taiwan (though most of them were not native Taiwanese but had origins in mainland China). CAAPAM held annual conferences inviting established Chinese immigrant

²⁷ The six founding members and their occupation at that time were as following: Di Chen (a research scientist at Honeywell Research), David S Lo (research scientist at Univac), Weiming Lu (Minneapolis City Planner), Fred Hsiao (Madsen Construction Company), Jie Chang Soong (Civil Engineering professor at the University of Minnesota), and Shaohsiung Huang (Chair of Minnesota Chinese Students' Association).

²⁸ Chen, "Early History of Chinese American Association of Minnesota." Chong became a lifetime supporter and sponsor of CAAM. He set up a college sponsorship fellowship in CAAM. The late Chong was honored as Chinese Minnesotan of Note by the Chinese Heritage Foundation in Minnesota.

²⁹ Sarah Mason, "The Chinese," in *They Chose Minnesota: A Survey of the State's Ethnic Groups*, ed. June D. Holmquist (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1981), 540; also in Fuller, *Chinese in Minnesota*, 59-60.

professionals to address various issues concerning China, the United States, and Chinese Americans.

The large numbers of student/professional migrants from mainland China after 1978 led to the surging numbers of new social and professional organizations. Up to 2008, there were more than forty organizations and institutions in the Chinese community in Minnesota, including various dance schools, language schools, community newspapers in both Chinese and English, various professional societies, heritage foundations, as well as a website focusing on Chinese in Minnesota (see Figure 4). Compared to Chinese community organizations a few decades ago, new immigrants' organizations were mainly based on professional ties and social networks rather than on kinship or business affiliations.³⁰

Figure 4. A List of Major Chinese Immigrant Organizations in Minnesota, June 2008

American Academy of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine 美国中医学院
Association of Minnesota Chinese Physicians (AMCP) 明州华人医生协会
Chinese American Association of Minnesota (CAAM) 明州中美联谊会
CAAM/Chinese Dance Theater (CAAM/CDT) 中美舞蹈学校
Chinese American Business Association of Minnesota (CABAM) 明州华工商协会
Chinese American Ballroom Dance Association (CABDA) 中美交谊舞协会
Chinese American Information Storage Society (CAISS-MN) 华美信息存储协会-明州分会
Chinese Culture Center (3C) 中国文化中心
China Heritage Foundation (CHF) 传龙基金会
Chinese Hospitality Center 华夏之家
China Insight 中国展望
Chinese Senior Citizen Society 明州安老协会

³⁰ There are also a few organizations of new migrants based on the origins of migrants, such as Minnesota Sichuan-Chongqing Association and Northeastern Folks Friendship Association. However, they are more like a cultural community celebrating and enjoying the food and culture of the hometown rather than an exclusive community based on the origin of migrants and defining the social identity and mobility of migrants. The wide variety of such organizations (which are usually organized at provincial or regional level rather than at county or village level) testifies the diversity of the origins of new migrants in recent decades compared to the majority of migrants in the past coming mainly from Southern China.

Chinese Social Service Center 华人社会服务中心
China Tribune 华兴报
Huaxia Times 华夏时报
Hua Sheng Music Center 华声音乐中心
Hunanese Association of Minnesota 明州湖南同乡会
Jiaotong University Alumni Association of Minnesota 明州交大校友会
ForDanSa 明州交谊舞中心
Friendship Association of Chinese Students and Scholars (FACSS) 明大学生学者联谊会
Minhua Central School 明华中心学校
Minhua Chorus 明华合唱团
Minhua.org 明华网
Minnesota Chinese Dance Theater (MCDT) 明华舞蹈团
Minnesota China Academy 明华 MCA 实验学校
Minnesota Chinese IT Association (MN-CITA) 明州华人信息技术协会
MinnesotaChinese.com 明州华人网
Minnesota Jiang-Zhe Association 明州江浙同乡会
Minnesota Duowei Times 明州多维时报
Minnesota Shanghai Club (Prep.) 明尼苏达上海俱乐部（筹备）
MN Chinese Day Care & Learning Center 明州中文幼儿园
Minnesota Sichuan-Chongqing Association 四川重庆同乡会
North America Chinese Opera and Folk Arts Club 北美曲苑
Northeastern Folks Friendship Association (NFFA) 东北同乡会
Peking University Alumni Association of Minnesota (PKUAA-MN) 明州北大校友会
Shandong Friendship Association of North America 北美山东同乡会
ShannXi Folks Association 陕西同乡会
Tsinghua Alumni Association of Minnesota (TAA-MN) 明州清华校友会
Twin City Chinese Dance Theater (TCCDC) 双城中华舞蹈中心
University of Minnesota China Center 明大中国中心
United States-China BUSINESS Connection 美中商务关系协会
United States - China Peoples Friendship Association of Minnesota (USCPFA-MN) 明州美中人民友好协会
Zhejiang University Alumni Association of Minnesota 明州浙大校友会

Source: Adopted from the list of sponsors of China Earthquake Relief Concert, June 15, 2008, published on http://www.minnesotachinese.com/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic_id=2878&forum=2

Along with the increasing diversity, there has been a lack of cohesion and unity among the Chinese community in Minnesota. First of all, with increasing numbers of organizations, there have been intense competitions for the limited resources and the difficulties of cooperation with each other for the best interest of the community. As a

former director of a Chinese dance theater commented, the several dance theaters in the Twin Cities, with similar-level artistic attainments, have been basically competing with each other for the same small market of the Chinese community rather than performing and competing in the larger society.³¹ In another instance, more than thirty Chinese organizations co-sponsored the Chinese New Year's Party in 2008. Though a good attempt of connecting different organizations for a collective celebration, the program was criticized by many audiences for lack of coordination and for sacrificing quality of the show with the awkward arrangement of inserting all the organizations' programs on the stage.³²

The result is the lack of a united voice and a strong or effective self-representation to the larger U.S. society. As Pang recalled, once her dance theater invited the mayor of St. Paul to a dance performance. The Mayor declined, stating that he did not know which Chinese organization he should attend because there were so many Chinese organizations in the Twin Cities. With regret, Pang noted the sharp contrast with other ethnic groups such as the Hmong community which was well organized and easy to be identified by political leaders.³³ This lack of political prowess

³¹ Pang, interview by author, February 24, 2008.

³² On the blog of Minhua, an online Chinese community, there were comments from attendees of the New Year's Party criticizing the lack of consistent quality of the show because of juxtaposing all groups, including those with low-quality performance but "just try to put themselves on the stage." Such comments had aroused debates on the blog on how to improve the quality of similar-type of community events. Xuesong and others, postings to the Minhua blog, February 14, 2008, http://minhua.com/modules.php?name=mhzzsections&file=mhc_article&artid=953.

³³ Pang, interview by author, February 24, 2008. On the one hand, Pang's view shows how Chinese immigrants observed other ethnic groups and reflected on the community building among Chinese. On the other hand, her observation of the Hmong community does not necessarily reflect the complex reality of the Hmong community which also includes divisions and tensions among different groups and generations. A good study of Hmong communities in the Midwest is Chia Youyee Vang, "*Reconstructing Community in Diaspora: Narratives of Hmong American/Refugee Resistance and Human Agency*" (Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 2006).

and strong representation in the U.S. society of the Chinese community has long concerned community leaders such as Weiming Lu, as mentioned in the beginning of this chapter. Starting in 2007, Lu and a few other founding members of CAAM have tried to unite the community by calling on leaders of different organizations to work with each other and organize a Coordination Committee. This community-united effort, while encouraging, has been moving slowly.³⁴

Many Chinese immigrants attributed the disunity of the Chinese community to the characteristics of Chinese culture, expressed in the saying that “Chinese are always like a spread of loose sands.” A former president of CAAM noted that Chinese, rather than strengthening existing organizations, always tended to set up more new organizations.³⁵ From the immigration perspective, however, disunity is a logical consequence of the diverse migrations of the Chinese, along with class, age, gender and nationality influences on identity of each migrant and each migrant group. Not unlike other immigration groups, “who they are,” “where they are from,” “when they come,” and “why they come” are all significant factors setting up the course of Chinese immigration and migrants’ community and identity formation.

Individual Mobility and Racial/Ethnic Identity: student migrants as “model minorities”

“Model minority” is a label/image increasingly popular in the United States since the 1960s, referring to Asian Americans (especially groups like Chinese and

³⁴ Supporting my research from the beginning, Lu had invited me to attend several Chinese community leaders’ meetings, including the first one in 2006 which took place at the Minneapolis Foundation and was taped for historical record.

³⁵ Jiang, interview by author, February 14, 2008.

Japanese) as disciplined, self-sufficient, family-oriented, and successful in education and profession. This “model minority” image on the one hand conceals existing problems among Asian Americans that comprised various ethnic groups and classes still in need of financial aid and social support and, on the other hand, distances and alienates Asian Americans from other minority groups (especially African Americans).³⁶

Chinese in Minnesota are mainly middle-class professionals (including both student/professional migrants and native-born highly educated Chinese Americans). They have been faring better than average Americans, and their living standard has been even higher than average Chinese Americans nationwide (Tables 4 and 5). With a much larger proportion of people with higher education degrees, Chinese in Minnesota easily fit within Americans’ view of them as “model minorities. Among Chinese Americans in Minnesota, 63.5 percent had Bachelor’s degrees or higher, compared to 27.4 percent among average Minnesotans, 24.4 percent among average Americans, and 48 percent among Chinese Americans nationwide. Accordingly, the majority of Chinese in Minnesota (59.6 percent) were professional workers, and the most popular fields included computer, education, life/physical/social science and healthcare/technical (Table 6).

³⁶ Henry Yu, *Thinking Orientals: Migration, Contact, and Exoticism in Modern America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Robert Lee, *Orientals: Asian Americans in Popular Culture* (Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1999).

Table 6. Occupations of Chinese in Minnesota, 16 Years and Older

	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
Chinese in Minnesota, 16 years and older	4,513	4,032	8,545	100
Management/professional/related occupations	2,812	2,279	5,091	59.6
Management/business/financial operations	727	581	1,308	15.3
Management	508	332	840	9.8
Top executives	69	25	94	1.1
Business and financial occupations	219	249	468	5.5
Professional and related occupations	2,085	1,698	3,783	44.3
Computer and mathematical	670	529	1,199	14.0
Architecture and engineering	335	99	434	5.1
Life/physical/social science	358	315	673	7.9
Community and social service	17	33	50	0.6
Legal	30	20	50	0.6
Education/training/library	414	404	818	9.6
Arts/design/entertainment/sports/media	48	54	102	1.2
Healthcare and technical	213	244	457	5.3
Service occupations	761	712	1,473	17.2
Sales and office occupations	420	642	1,062	12.4
Farming/fishing/forestry occupations	5	11	16	0.1
Construction/extraction/maintenance occupations	138	27	165	1.9
Production/transportation/material moving occupations	377	361	738	8.6

Source: Compiled from the U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 4 (SF4), Table PCT86: Sex by Occupation for the Employed Civilian Population 16 Years and Over [253] - Universe: Employed civilian population 16 years and over (Chinese alone). Retrieved from <http://factfinder.census.gov/>.

Typical of this group is Jiang who migrated to Hong Kong with his family during World War II and then studied electronic engineering in England. He was recruited by an American radio equipment company in 1967, part of the “brain drain” of British engineers flowing to the United States in the 1960s.³⁷ After half a year, Jiang joined in a large corporation that had recruited increasing numbers of skilled workers from Asia in recent decades, especially Chinese and Indian students-turned migrants. Though Jiang only obtained a master’s degree, he had been often called by his American co-workers as “Dr. Jiang.” Jiang had tried correcting this mistake but in vain. “They just viewed all Asian professionals as doctors and as technically superior,” Jiang explained and laughed. He immediately continued, “[I]t created a stereotype. Everyone is a doctor or engineer, then as a manager you are not good.” Jiang had been one of the very few Chinese Americans that ended up with a middle rank management position in the company.³⁸

Jiang’s experience reflects the complex feelings of mainstream and especially white Americans who both “admire” and include Asian immigrants (for their technical skills and competence) and fear and exclude them (e.g. from management positions and policy-making circles). Reactions from another immigrant Zha suggests how the immigrants themselves perceive and respond to this image based on their own understanding of the American society and on their own social and economic status.

Zha came to study in the United States in the early 1990s from mainland China and then worked in a large bank as a skilled IT technician. After several years he

³⁷ Jiang was told by the U.S. consular in England that at that time there were around 100 similar cases every day of engineers applying for emigration from Britain to the United States.

³⁸ Jiang, interview by author, February 14, 2008.

became a project manager, which he realized might be the highest position he could achieve in that company. Capable of finishing his work in less time than required and having a flexible schedule, he started investing extra energy in other enterprises, engaging in several business and cultural projects in China, as well as actively participating in the local community as a converted Christian. While active in the local community, Zha seemed to well understand his position as a Chinese immigrant in the United States, especially in Minnesota where immigration from China is relatively small and new.

Here in Minnesota Americans have not yet seen you as a threat... so here is different from the coasts. In California, Asians have reached a dominant status, so that Americans felt they were threatened on their employment opportunities. Here in Midwest, Americans may still welcome this diversity, but at the same time they do not see you as part of them... so [as a migrant] you can have your opinion, but you may be cautious in your daily business, that is, you may not raise a sensitive topic or question... like politics, international relations, or interracial relations... I don't need to emphasize [myself] and let Americans fear and think I am strange or I am a threat... I don't need to boast that I can do better than them...concerning technology, I can definitely do better than they do, and they may think that I am an exception among foreigners... I just let them keep that perception and keep thinking that I am not a threat... I don't need to arouse them to say that all Chinese can do better than them, or that Chinese products are of better price. I don't need to talk about these issues. I can avoid these questions and try to find common ground with them...³⁹

Here Zha emphasized how Minnesota was different from the coastal states with traditionally large numbers of Chinese and Asian immigrants: on the one hand, Asian immigration to Minnesota had not been large enough to “threaten” the welfare of the natives (especially native laborers) and had been viewed or portrayed as a welcoming sign of diversity and multiculturalism; on the other hand, the local society was keeping Asian immigrants in distance, and immigrants were not accepted as part of the local community and instead remained “foreigners.” It was an ambiguous local balance that

³⁹ Zha, interview by author, May 1, 2005.

provided some *independent* space for migrants' individual advancement rather than an *interdependent* environment for migrants' close interaction with and strong integration into the local society. Accordingly, professional migrants such as Zha found a strategy of exploring this available *individual* space and striving for *individual* mobility (in his own words, "let them view us as exceptional.") Apparently, local context affected migrants' identities and integration patterns; here particularly in Minnesota, a "model minority" image had been used by professional migrants as a practical strategy for individual career advancement and for the peace of mind in their daily lives.

Zha's statement also demonstrates how migrant position themselves beyond the American racial paradigm. Scholars have analyzed the "model minority" image of Chinese and Asian Americans and its significance for the American racial paradigm.⁴⁰ However, these studies often assume the white-black racial diagram/grid and discuss the position of Chinese and Asian Americans based on these two poles.⁴¹ In fact, first-generation immigrants do not necessarily understand or position themselves within this racial framework. Zha stressed the identity of being a "foreigner," and he mentioned "international relations" and "Chinese products" as among the first factors under his consideration that would potentially affect his position in the United States. To him, a better self-description might be "model foreigner" (or exceptional foreigner" in his words). To a large degree, such a "foreigner" identity and mentality sheltered him from

⁴⁰ For examples, Min Zhou, "Are Asian Americans Becoming White?" *Contexts* 3, no. 1(2004): 29-37; Lucie Cheng and Philip Q. Yang, "Asians: The 'Model Minority' Deconstructed," in *Ethnic Los Angeles*, eds. Roger Waldinger and Mehdi Bozorgmehr (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1996), 305-44.

⁴¹ Some scholars of American race and ethnicity have grown cautious about this paramount black-white paradigm. A representative collection of studies challenging this paradigm is Nancy Foner and George Fredrickson, eds., *Not Just Black and White* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2004).

the anxiety of being confined within the discriminatory American racial paradigm; on the other hand, ironically, they help perpetuate their “forever foreigner” status in the American racial discourse.

Dodging direct conflict in racial politics and reluctant to claim a racial identity, professional immigrants tend to ignore negative repercussions of race if they themselves are not affected directly, which in turn shapes their community vision and social activism. Jiang, as mentioned earlier, had been active in Chinese community activities (as a former president and a board member of the CAAM) and had participated in local minority affairs committees. Interestingly, he believed that Chinese immigrants in Minnesota should not be viewed as a minority group since they were more educated and financially better off than many other minority groups such as the Southeast Asian refugees. Similar to Zha, Jiang was also extremely cautious about invoking sensitive topics such as racial identity. As a middle-rank manager and senior employee of his company, Jiang had been asked to mentor many new Chinese immigrant employees. As he advised these young immigrants, “... don’t invite trouble... don’t claim yourself as a minority in front of others... don’t make others dislike you...” As an experienced community leader, Jiang seemed practical and cautious in dealing with the complex racial question and tended to emphasize Chinese migrants’ “model minority” status as an acceptable position in the American society.⁴²

Zha and Jiang’s attitudes towards the “model minority” image and American racial relations also reflected the profound historical changes of post-1965 U.S. society. On the one hand, the 1965 immigration reform and the civil rights movements in the

⁴² Jiang, interview by author, February 14, 2008.

1960s and 1970s largely removed state-sponsored discrimination against racial minorities; on the other hand, increasing social mobility in post-1965 U.S. society contributed to many migrants' emphasis on individual mobility rather than group efforts and collective identity. Neo-conservatism further promoted and confirmed individualism in the 1980s, encouraging a retreat from the ideals of community and government investment and reliance on economic individualism and personal identity.⁴³

This tendency towards individual mobility was particularly remarkable among highly skilled migrants, who migrated to the United States just as U.S. economy was restructured from mass-production industry to information and service industries and who possessed more social and cultural capital and enjoyed better social mobility than past or present labor migrants with fewer skills.⁴⁴

The tension between individual mobility and community unity was noticed by Bu, a former president of the Chinese American Academic and Professional Association in Minnesota (CAAPAM). Bu commented that Chinese professional migrants seemed too focused on individual issues such as career development and children's education, while community involvement was not their priority. Since 1992, CAAPAM has organized annual conferences inviting successful Chinese American professionals in

⁴³ In Minnesota, Emmett Carson, former president of the Minneapolis Foundation, noted that the larger context of Minnesota's rightward turn both in politics and religion had been one of the reasons for recent lukewarm attitudes of Minnesotans towards immigration. A study of the Humphrey Institute of Public Policy at the University of Minnesota also emphasized the rise of evangelical Christianity that "tends to see social problems best solved not by government but by individual acceptance of Jesus." Steve Berg, "Is Minnesota Still Nice?" *Star Tribune*, February 13, 2005, Metro Edition, sec. 1AA.

⁴⁴ Another significant example of the impact of post-1965 U.S. society on professionals and middle-class minorities is the black community. With individual mobility and opportunities, many black Americans were able to "enter the mainstream" and many of these upper- and middle-class black Americans moved out of urban enclaves of black communities. Scholars such as William Wilson argued that this contributed to the bogging-down of African American communities in general and to the formation of an underclass in particular. William Julius Wilson, *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, The Underclass, and Public Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

various fields to speak on topics designed to be interesting and easy to understand for Chinese immigrants in various fields, such as China's economic development, U.S.-China relations, Chinese medicine and health, and Chinese professionals' career development in the United States. As Bu recalled, the most difficult part of organizing the conference was to find interested audience. Each year there were usually about no more than 60 attendees, a quite low number considering the totally more than ten thousand Chinese Americans in the Twin Cities.⁴⁵ Bu noted that most people set priorities on sending children to dance schools or piano lessons or on having their own vacations rather than coming for the conference. For those people who did come (usually invited by friends via personal phone calls), even though they found the conference very interesting, they rarely came again later.⁴⁶

Focused on individual mobility, professional migrants did not feel the strong need for collective efforts and unity. While in the past immigrants clustered in Chinatowns for economic resources, career opportunities, and essential social support,⁴⁷ contemporary Chinese professional migrants started their American experiences by directly participating in the mainstream American labor and social systems (for

⁴⁵ Bu, interview by author, February 15, 2008. In addition, the monthly seminars were attended by only about 20 people. CAAPAM leadership had expressed concerns about this lack of attendees even though they had tried various means to reach out the community. In 1999, the then CAAPAM president Jichen Lin wrote in the CAAPAM newsletter: "... the CAAPAM leadership has attempted to communicate with the membership of this organization through a number of methods, including this newsletter, the email network, and a number of all-member and community-wide mailings... there has been a seemingly unending series of challenges when we intended to attract as many attendees as possible to our monthly programs." Jichen Lin, "From the President," *CAAPAM Newsletter* 2, no.2 (August 1999).

⁴⁶ Bu, interview by author, February 15, 2008.

⁴⁷ Of course, there are large numbers of contemporary Chinese immigrants (especially family-sponsored or labor migrants) who still concentrate in Chinatowns and rely on resources and networks in Chinatowns. Sociologist Min Zhou studied the New York Chinatown and argued that it has been revived with the new immigration and has become an important source for immigrants' livelihood and economic vitality. Min Zhou, *Chinatown: The Socioeconomic Potential of an Urban Enclave* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992).

students-turned migrants, they started with the American academic system) and possessed substantial social mobility. Chinese communities therefore became a leisure space for their cultural identity rather than an economic basis for meeting daily needs and social identity.⁴⁸ For example, Wei came from mainland China in the early 1990s for doctoral studies in humanities in the United States and then became a college professor. As she said, she had been busy with advancing her own professional career in most of the years of her staying in the United States. The Chinese community had no role in this process; or in her own words, “usually the most important for your career path has nothing to do with your acquaintance with other Chinese.” With her career established, she started to feel that it would be good to find a few Chinese to chat with in Chinese. Even then, she added, “it is not everyone speaking Chinese that I can chat with,” including many other professional migrants with whom she could talk for no more than a few sentences, as they were in very different fields and did not share her personal interests and worldviews.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ The historian Huping Ling makes similar observation in her case study of contemporary Chinese communities in St. Louis, Missouri. Ling identifies that Chinese community, which was also mainly comprised of professional workers, as a “cultural community.” Ling argues that contemporary Chinese communities such as that in St. Louis witnessed a historical transition from “ethnic enclave” to “cultural community,” which has no clear physical boundaries from the larger U.S. society. Ling suggests that the concept of “cultural community” helps us better understand migrants’ cultural identity: “a cultural community does not form to meet economic needs (i.e. for mutual aid); rather, it forms to meet people’s psychological needs (ie for a cultural and ethnic identity).” Ling also uses this concept of “cultural community” to emphasize two other new patterns of Chinese immigrants’ integration (especially professional migrants) into the U.S. society: Chinese professional migrants no longer have tight links with the Chinese ethnic community, and they “have reached a certain stage of assimilation and acculturation.” Huping Ling, *Chinese St. Louis: From Enclave to Cultural Community* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2004), 12-16. While recognizing the fact that many professional migrants did enter the mainstream labor market and demonstrate certain integration into the mainstream society, I stress that with individual mobility, contemporary professional migrants tend to form individuals-based cultural communities and therefore risk losing unity and collective voice which directly or indirectly hinders their integration into the U.S. society where race and ethnicity still play a critical role of defining identity and social status.

⁴⁹ Wei, interview by author, February 6, 2008.

With general economic security and pride in self-sufficiency, Chinese professional immigrants also lacked the motivation for reaching out for more public resources. According to Song, head of a nonprofit organization assisting the growth of minority business in the Twin Cities, Chinese migrants attended the meetings of her organization less often than Asian Indians and Latino Americans. Song received many emails and e-newsletters from other local minority organizations such as the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and the black Chamber of Commerce, and she got invitations to the Hmong Chamber of Commerce. However, she did not see many Chinese business organizations that active.⁵⁰ “Many of us are immigrants. So we try to be self-sufficient and don’t want to use any resources... [but] you need to build networks by yourself.” Many Chinese did not want to “beg favor (*qiu ren*) from somebody else,” Song said, “but it is not begging for favor, because it is part of business, networking, and building relationships.”⁵¹

Despite their reputation as “model minorities,” Chinese in Minnesota are polarized by class. This risk of bipolarization was clear in the U.S. Census 2000. While the poverty rate of Americans nationally was 12.4 percent, the poverty rate of Chinese immigrants and Chinese Americans was 13.2 percent, even though their median family income was higher than that of Americans in general. This polarization was even more

⁵⁰ Song mentioned that she knew a few active business members in the Chinese communities such as Fred Hsiao, who came to the United States as a student in the 1950s and became a successful manufacturing entrepreneur. In 2002 Hsiao cooperated with younger professionals such as Charles Lee in founding the Chinese American Business Association of Minnesota (CABAM). Except a few individual Chinese businessmen such as Hsiao, however, Song observed that the Chinese business community had not been very active and her interaction with the Chinese business community had been less than with other minority groups.

⁵¹ Song, interview by author, February 26, 2008.

conspicuous in Minnesota. While the median family income of Chinese immigrants and Chinese Americans in Minnesota was higher than that of Chinese in the United States, the poverty rate of Chinese immigrants and Chinese Americans in Minnesota was 9.5 percent, exceeding the poverty rate of all Minnesotans (7.7 percent) by 1.8 percent compared to the national gap which was only 0.8 percent (Tables 4 and 5).

These lower-income Chinese migrants remained invisible and largely ignored. Agencies for these lower-income migrants were few and services limited. The only social service organization, Chinese Social Service Center, was only established in 1999. It was based on volunteer work and lacked financial and human resources. Its founder, Wendy Mui, came to the United States in 1975 from Hong Kong and was already in her fifties when starting the center. A former restaurant owner herself, she knew what the lives of Chinese restaurant workers were like: similar to their predecessors, most of them were peasants from the countryside of Canton and then came to the United States as family-sponsored immigrants or labor immigrants. Believing in a better life in the United States, they worked hard in restaurants from 9 AM to 11 PM, with rare contact with the outside world. Under high pressure and lacking entertainment, many of them smoked and gambled. As Mui noted, there had been few social service organizations in the Chinese community in Minnesota compared to many such organizations in places like San Francisco and New York. The Minnesota state government did not offer much support either and had rather focused on groups with higher rates of poverty, such as Hmong, Cambodian and Vietnamese immigrants. The government did not know there were still poor Chinese immigrants

and Mui asked “how can these poor migrants let the government know they are poor if they do not even know how to fill in relevant forms in English?” Unlike other Chinese migrants who got their Ph.D. and had no difficulties in adapting to the United States and living a good life, Mui emphasized, these migrants were still struggling to survive.⁵²

As a “model minority,” Chinese professional migrants also lacked interest in interacting with other ethnic groups, including other Asian immigrant groups. This lack of connection and communication directly reduced Chinese migrants’ visibility, strength and integration into the U.S. society, especially in the Minnesota context.

In Minnesota, the racial/ethnic landscape has been different from the national one.⁵³ Nationally Chinese (excluding Taiwanese) have been the largest ethnic group among Asian Americans, making up 23.1 percent according to the U.S. Census 2000; together with Filipinos and Asian Indians (the second and third largest respectively), these three groups represented 58 percent of the Asian population in the United States in 2000. In comparison, in Minnesota in 2000, more than half of the Asian population were Southeast Asians who usually came as refugees after the Vietnam War. Among them were Hmong (41,800 to 45,443) and Vietnamese (18,824 to 20,570), the two largest groups of Asian population in Minnesota, while Chinese (excluding Taiwanese)

⁵² Wendy Mui, interview by author, February 21, 2008.

⁵³ Here I am referring to the specific racial/ethnic composition in Minnesota in recent decades rather than the century-long historical shift of racial/ethnic composition of immigrants. In fact, the long-term shift of migrants’ origin in Minnesota had changed in accord with the national trend: the majority of post-1965 migrants came from Asia and Latin America as compared to immigrants before 1965 that were mainly from Europe. In Minnesota, the top ten nations of origin in 1910 were Sweden, Norway, Germany, Canada, Austria, Finland, Poland, Ireland, Russia, and England. In 2000 the top ten homelands were Mexico, Laos, Vietnam, Canada, Korea, Somalia, India, Thailand, China, and Germany. See the League of Women Voters of Minnesota Education Fund , “Immigration in Minnesota: Challenges and Opportunities,” December 2002, <http://www.lwvmin.org/EdFund/ImmigrationInMinnesota.asp>.

were only 11 percent of the total Asian population (15,484 to 18,622).⁵⁴ In addition, Chinese among the total population of Minnesota in 2000 was only 0.3 percent, much lower than the proportion of Chinese in the total U.S. population which was 8.6 percent (see table 2).

Besides Hmong and other Southeast Asian refugees, Minnesota also received large numbers of refugees from Africa, former Soviet Republics, and Yugoslavia. Minnesota is home to the largest Somali refugee population in the United States (9300 in the year of 2000) and hosted one of the largest Liberian populations (at least 3,000) in the country. The Hmong population is the second largest in the United States after California, and St. Paul is the largest urban concentration of Hmong in the world.⁵⁵ It is estimated that in recent years, refugees and asylum-seekers have accounted for between one-fourth and one-half of Minnesota's annual number of new immigrants, much higher than the percentage of refugees among the total immigrant population in the United States (about 8 percent in 2004).⁵⁶

This high proportion of refugee populations in Minnesota has left a profound imprint on Minnesota immigrant communities. Public attention and government policies have been largely oriented towards these refugees with urgent need for resettlement and

⁵⁴ These racial/ethnic categories were discussed here as single race and group designations used in the U.S. Census 2000. Gail Carlson, "Asians in Minnesota, 2000" (St. Paul: Minnesota Planning, State Demographic Center, March 2002),

http://www.capm.state.mn.us/census/publications/Minnesota%20Planning_Asians%20in%20Minnesota%202000.pdf.

⁵⁵ Phil Davies, "In a Flashback to the Early 20th Century, Immigrants from All Over the World Are Settling in the District, And Not Just in Its Inner Cities," *Fedgazetee*, September 2004, <http://minneapolised.org/pubs/fedgaz/04-09/change.cfm>; The Minneapolis Foundation, *Immigration in Minnesota: Discovering Common Ground* (Minneapolis, MN: The Minneapolis Foundation, 2004), 12, 14.

⁵⁶ Office of the Legislative Auditor (Minnesota), "Economic Impact of Immigrants," May 2006, <http://www.auditor.leg.state.mn.us/ped/pedrep/ecoimpact.pdf>.

integration. For example, the *St Paul Pioneer Press*, a major metropolitan newspaper, commissioned a poll in 2000 as part of a seven-week immigration series called “The New Face of Minnesota.” The polls led to a broader survey and study by the Knight-Ridder Foundation which was later published in November 2000. Not surprisingly, four major groups were chosen for the survey: Hmong, Somalis, Russians and Hispanics/Latinos.⁵⁷

Major Minnesota non-profit organizations also focused energy on issues regarding these major refugee populations. During 2004-2005, the Minneapolis Foundation chose immigration as the focus of its Minnesota Meeting, a well-established town-hall type of public forum. Titled “Discovering Common Ground: Shaping a State Agenda on Immigration,” the Minneapolis Foundation chose one representative each from the Latino, Somali and Hmong communities to discuss with three state economic, education and public health officials in the key panel discussion.⁵⁸

The International Institute of Minnesota (IIM), a major social service agency in Minnesota established in 1919 to address issues relating to the foreign-born population, has also strengthened its mission on helping displaced immigrants adjusting to the new society. It has been focusing on assisting refugee communities such as the Hmong and Somali refugees, and major projects include English classes, refugee resettlement programs, refugee mentoring programs, employment services, and so on. Direct social service to the Chinese population has been limited because Chinese immigrants are

⁵⁷ “Speaking for Themselves: A Survey of Hispanic, Hmong, Russian, and Somali Immigrants in Minneapolis-Saint Paul,” Wilder Research Center (St. Paul, MN), November 2000, http://www.wilder.org/fileadmin/user_upload/research/immigrantsurvey11-2000.pdf.

⁵⁸ I attended this meeting in 2005. See more information about this meeting and other Minnesota Meetings at <http://minnesotameeting.tmfportal.org/Entry.aspx?ID=350>.

generally better off. In addition, as Director of IIM John Borden said, the Chinese community is “tiny, tiny, tiny here in Minnesota.”⁵⁹

Therefore, the “model minority” stereotype makes the Chinese population in Minnesota seem smaller than it is and makes real existing problems invisible even to those dedicated to providing services to immigrant communities. One of the primary and crucial steps to move out of this shadow of negligible “model minority,” therefore, is to reach beyond the “tiny” Chinese population and join in the larger Asian community to build up a “critical mass” for a stronger representation of both Chinese community and the larger Asian community.

The small percentage of overall Asian population in Minnesota and the changing public attitudes towards immigration in Minnesota also called for such a “critical mass” and the unity and consolidation of Asian Americans. According to the Census 2000, even though the Asian population in the 1990s had grown faster in Minnesota than in the United States in general (almost doubled, from 76,952 in 1990 to 139,032 in 2000), the proportion of Asians in Minnesota was still lower than the ratio of Asians nationwide (2.8 percent vs. 3.6 percent).⁶⁰ The overall foreign-born share of Minnesota population, though growing 130 percent compared to the growth rate of 57 percent nationally, was also only 5.3 percent, much lower than the share of 11.1 percent nationwide.⁶¹ On the other hand, the rapid growth of immigration in the 1990s had

⁵⁹ John Borden, interview by author, February 6, 2008.

⁶⁰ Nationally the Asian population grew by about 1.5 times, increasing from 6,908,638 in 1990 to 10,019,410 in 2000, based on single race, one Asian group category. Carlson, “Asians in Minnesota, 2000.”

⁶¹ Migration Policy Institute Data Hub, “Number of Foreign Born by State: 1990, 2000, 2006” (Minnesota: “Fact Sheet on the Foreign Born of Minnesota”) Migration Policy Institute, <http://www.migrationinformation.org/datahub/acscensus.cfm#>. Minnesota’s 1990-2000 rate of growth in

aroused resentment and resistance among native residents in Minnesota against immigrants. According to a study by the Humphrey Public Policy Institute at the University of Minnesota in 2004, public attitudes in Minnesota towards immigrants had been ambiguous, perceiving increased immigration as draining resources from public schools and other services and viewing immigrants as reluctant to integrate into the local society. While people still welcomed the notion of “Minnesota nice” (generally referring to a Midwest-type of politeness and kindness to other people, including newcomers), below the surface there was “clear resentment” and misconception about newcomers’ reliance on welfare or lack of assimilation.⁶²

There have been efforts among Asian Americans in Minnesota since the 1960s to build up a pan-Asian community to promote the rights and interests of Asian Americans. Echoing the high point of the 1960s protests against the Vietnam War and the civil rights movements, second-generation Chinese and Japanese (many of them students in the University of Minnesota) established Asian American Alliance (AAA), the first local pan-Asian student organization promoting ethnic consciousness among the second-generation in the immigrant community and uniting with black and Hispanic students against the war. In 1977, members of AAA formed the Minnesota Asian

its immigrant population was the 12th highest among the states, see “Economic Impact of Immigrants.” In addition, according to the U.S. Census 2000, Minnesota has become a little-of-everything state. There was a balance among all four major communities of color: blacks, 4 percent; Asians and Hispanics, 3 percent each; and Indians, 1 percent. David Peterson, “Diversity Here Is Modest, But Finely Balanced; State Can Make a few Specific Boasts, but It Benefits from Its Overall Mix, Experts Say,” *Star Tribune*, April 3, 2001, sec. 1B.

⁶² Stan Greenberg, Anna Greenberg and Julie Hootkin, *The Changing Shape of Minnesota: Reinvigorating Community and Government in the New Minnesota* (Washington, D.C.: Greenberg, Quinlan, and Rosner Research, Inc., 2004), 29-31, http://www.gqrr.com/articles/1264/852_Changing%20Shape%20of%20 Minnesota.pdf. According to the study, Minnesotans were lukewarm toward immigrants. The survey showed a warm, favorable rating of 36 percent with a cool, unfavorable rating of 28 percent. Metro Minnesotans were generally more favorable towards immigrants than rural Minnesotans. Also see Steve Berg, “Is Minnesota Still Nice?”

American Project (MAAP), the first pan-Asian community organization, to promote affirmative action, civil rights and legal services for the Asian community. While MAAP members dispersed in 1984, a new pan-Asian American grass-roots organization called the Minnesota Asian American Coalition (MAAC) was formed to advocate the creation of a state council to advise the governor and legislators on issues pertaining to Asian Pacific Americans. Established in 1985, Council on Asian-Pacific Minnesotans (CAPM) had had more than 30 groups under its umbrella in the early 1990s.⁶³

Many other Asian American organizations have been created and various social and cultural events were organized to serve the needs of the fast growing Asian community in Minnesota, which increased from 8,000 in 1980 to 78,000 in 1990.⁶⁴ Founded in 1991, the Asian American Renaissance supports and develops Asian American arts and artists and strives to enlighten Minnesotans on Pan-Asian culture. Another pan-Asian arts organization, Theater Mu, was founded in 1992 and became well-known for its unique blending of Asian and western artistic forms in the expression of Asian and Asian American stories and music. Sponsored by the State Council on Asian-Pacific Minnesotans and run by the Asian American Renaissance, an annual Asian American Festival started from 1997 (renamed as Dragon Festival in 2003) to foster community unity and enhance the visibility of Asian Americans in Minnesota. There also have been efforts among Asian Americans to push for the build-

⁶³ Fuller, *Chinese in Minnesota*, 55, 62-4,

⁶⁴ Ibid., 64.

up of a pan-Asian community center since the late 1990s, though this proposal remains far from realization.⁶⁵

Stimulated by the larger civil rights movements after World War II, the Asian American identity was invented and constructed largely for the purpose of political empowerment instead of being based on any inherent and cohesive identity among Asian Americans. It has been a struggle to maintain this identity in the face of diversity. In addition, in Minnesota a remarkably deep gap between educated and skilled migrants (such as Chinese, Japanese, Indian and Korean professionals) and the refugee and lower-class immigrant population challenges the identity.

To create a pan-Asian community requires Chinese immigrants in Minnesota to transcend their ethnic and cultural identity and class-based boundaries and to embrace a broader inter-ethnic and cross-class perspective and sympathy. It is not an easy task. Qu was invited to watch the play *One Hundred Men's Wife* produced by Theatre Mu in 2007. This play was about the migration story of the first Chinese woman in Minnesota. “While the story was interesting, the performance looked funny,” Zhang recalled. The playwright was a Korean, and there were at least one or two Korean performers in the play. “None [is] like us Chinese, though it is a story about Chinese...Therefore it looked strange,” Qu said, bursting into laughter during the interview.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Jennifer Ehrlich, “Vietnamese Work to Build Center, Asian Community Also Trying to Build Community Base,” *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, October 25, 1998, sec. 4B. Based on my interviews with some Chinese community leaders, there were many reasons for the suspension of the proposal for the Pan-Asian Center, including lack of financial support, no effective leadership, and lack of strong networks and motivation among various Asian American groups to push together for this project.

⁶⁶ Qu, interview by author, February 11, 2008.

In social and cultural events, Chinese migrants often found it difficult to mix and engage with other ethnic groups. Bao is an active young leader in the Chinese community. He noted that community events had been organized mainly within the Chinese community rather than reaching out to other ethnic groups or to the mainstream. As a board member of several major Chinese immigrant organizations, Bao admitted that during their board meetings and events planning, they “never thought about nor talked about” engaging other ethnic groups. Bao recalled that while some Chinese organizations did participate in local Asian American festivals, such as joining in the dragon boat race during the annual Dragon Festival, “we did not take part in it in the way that we would in a Chinese event.” The dragon boat race should have been our Chinese most traditional ceremony, Bao said, “but the Dragon Festival here was organized not by Chinese but by Asians... maybe by Vietnamese or Hmong...not by us Chinese.” With a Chinese American woman being elected as the president of the festival preparation committee in the year of 2008, Bao expected more participation of Chinese in this cultural event.⁶⁷

Bao’s comments revealed the delicate issues of Chinese migrants’ interaction with other Asian groups and with the pan-Asian community: Chinese migrants tended to draw a distinct line between themselves and other Asian groups, and their Chinese identity was distinct from the Asian identity and remained foremost. Their sense of distinction may derive from their ethnic and cultural pride as a Chinese (with its risk of Sino-centrism and arrogance). There was also an issue of leadership involved: better-off

⁶⁷ Bao, interview by author, February 26, 2008.

Chinese migrants did not like to work “under” others, especially those from Southeast Asian with a lower social and economic status.

Some Chinese student/professional immigrants have realized the important need to engage and collaborate with other Asian American groups. Understanding the importance of outreach for the Chinese community, they have tried to encourage and promote this pan-Asian community and inter-ethnic collaboration. Ange Huang, a student migrant coming from Taiwan in the 1980s, established Asian Media Access in 1992 to use media arts and technology to promote the interests of Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) communities in Minnesota. She had strived to enhance Asian American and Pacific Islanders’ better access to the mainstream society rather than just focus on the Chinese American community. One of her most ambitious projects is Asian Pacific American Community Network (APACoMNet). This media network will support various Asian languages from Chinese, Hmong, Korean all the way to Hindi, so that when news are released on the internet or broadcast on television, they will be translated right away to all different kinds of languages. Various Asian immigrant groups will therefore know at the same time what is happening in the community. As Huang envisions, this network on cable television will be especially helpful to many Southeast Asian refugees who are not literate even in their own languages and rely on audio or video communications.⁶⁸ While Huang’s project held

⁶⁸ Huang, interview by author, March 7, 2008. For more information about this project, see Asian Media Access website: <http://www.amamedia.org/>. At the day of my interview, I also attended a meeting between directors of service centers of different ethnic groups in Minnesota (such as Native Americans, Korean Americans, Chinese Americans, Asian Indians) and a local community foundation granting funds for community development. This meeting was organized by Huang as a step of enhancing inter-ethnic collaboration and gaining more resources for minority groups.

promise of connecting Chinese to other Asians, the next section illustrates how Chinese assert an American identity by defining their relationships with other Asians in complex ways.

The “Requiem, Hiroshima” Controversy and Asserting Chinese/American Identity

One of the most dramatic moments of Chinese in Minnesota engaging the local society was the Chinese community’s protest in 1995 against the Minnesota Orchestra for playing “Requiem, Hiroshima” without fully presenting the history of Chinese and other Asians’ sacrifice and loss during Japan’s invasion in World War II. The protest demonstrated the significant impact of historical memories on the identity of Chinese in the United States, and it became a moment when the Chinese community became most visible in forcefully asserting its Chinese/American identity. It was also one of the few times when most Chinese immigrant groups were mobilized and united, though different approaches to and understanding of the protest also attested the wide diversity within the Chinese community and the remaining challenges for Chinese immigrants to integrate into American society.

The protest against the Minnesota Orchestra started in February 1995 when the new Minnesota Orchestra director Eiji Oue, a native of Hiroshima, announced plans to play the “Requiem” to commemorate Japanese victims of the Atomic Bomb. KaiMay Yuan Terry, a Hong Kong-born immigrant who came to the United States as an undergraduate student in 1958 and then became a small business owner and community activist in the Twin Cities, was one of the first Chinese immigrants that paid attention to

the plan and responded to it. She heard Oue's plan in his interview with the Minnesota Public Radio (MPR). Born in Hong Kong and still clearly remembering the harsh years of Japanese occupation, KaiMay felt the need to tell the other side of the story: the war atrocities Japan brought to Asian people before the bomb. In her first letter to Oue, KaiMay began by welcoming his coming to Minnesota, then recalled her own experience as a small girl at the war time and the long-lasting horrible memories. She continued, “[W]hat I would expect from the cultural leader of our community is sensitivity and courage to acknowledge the horror and suffering which Japan wantonly brought upon the Asian people as you conduct the Hiroshima musical piece. Let us mourn for them as well.”⁶⁹

KaiMay also wrote to other directors of the Minnesota Orchestra Association (MOA), including the chair of its board Nicki Carpenter. KaiMay suggested that when the Hiroshima piece was being played, “there will be communication to the audience either through program notes, comments from the Music Director or other means of Japan’s historical role towards its Asian neighbors before and during World War II. A message of ‘no more nuclear war’ does not address Japan’s responsibilities for its Asian war crimes.” As KaiMay noted, “[M]any of us Asians are absolutely delighted that we’ll have such an exciting director. The real issue is that there should be historical

⁶⁹ KaiMay Terry, letter to Oue, February 22, 1995. As KaiMay recalled, Oue called her after receiving the letter, and he said that his intention of playing that music was apolitical, a reply KaiMay thought was not satisfactory considering the need for addressing the full history of the war. KaiMay Terry, interview by author, February 16, 2008.

integrity and fairness when a cultural institution such as the Minnesota Orchestra takes on the task of reopening a people’s wound that has never healed.”⁷⁰

In their letters of reply, Nicki and other MOA board members expressed their appreciation of KaiMay’s attention and promised careful consideration of her concern. MaryAnn Feldman, the editor of MOA publication *Showcase*, also replied with sympathy and mentioned the possibility of including an article in the *Showcase* to explain that episode of Asian history. While receiving these “sympathetic letters” from MOA, KaiMay also sought support from her friends (both Chinese and other Asian Americans) to keep the letter writing campaign going because she was aware that “after all, we are asking the Orchestra to ‘offend’ or ‘embarrass’ their new music director.”⁷¹

On June 26, 1995, a letter to MOA was coauthored by three main Asian American organizations in Minnesota: the Organization of Chinese Americans of Minnesota (OCA-Minnesota), Japanese American Citizen League (JACL), and the Minnesota Organization of Korean Americans (MOKA). They requested that in connection with its planned performance of “Requiem, Hiroshima,” MOA include in its program notes the historical context of the dropping of atomic bombs in Japan to clarify Japan’s aggression against other Asian peoples as well as the United States. The letter pointed out that unlike Germany that had been forced to accept responsibility for World War II and the Holocaust, Japan had never fully apologized for its war crimes in Asia. “Without an adequate historical context, Americans of Asian descents are concerned

⁷⁰ KaiMay Terry, letter to Nicki Carpenter, February 22, 1995.

⁷¹ KaiMay Terry, letter to Jinmahn Kim, July 17, 1995. Kim had been active in Korean and Asian American communities. He was the chair of Asian American Chamber of Commerce and Minnesota Korean Chamber of Commerce. He was also a member of the State Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotan and a former president of the Minnesota Korean Association.

that while the horrors suffered by those Japanese killed by atomic bombs are remembered, the sufferings of the multitudes of others at the hands of the Japanese military will be forgotten or trivialized.”⁷² Facing the influx of complaining letters, MOA promised to give a formal answer in August.

This protest in the Twin Cities took place in complex international and national contexts. The year of 1995 was the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II when commemorations of the war were being held all over the world. At the same time, the Japanese government’s persistent ambiguity regarding its responsibility for the war had aroused protests in Asian countries such as China and Korea. Tensions increased with the so-called Japanese history textbook controversies: since the early 1980s, Japanese government-approved history textbooks had been edited to downplay or evade its aggression in Asia during World War II (such as replacing the word “invade” with the more neutral word “enter” and changing “Nanjing Massacre” to “Nanjing Occupation” in the 1982 history book revision).⁷³ With the 50th anniversary of the end of the war approaching, the Japanese government also highlighted its loss during the war and increased its critique of the dropping of the Atomic Bomb by the United States. Some Japanese officials even compared the dropping of the atomic bomb on Japanese cities Hiroshima and Nagasaki to the Jewish Holocaust.⁷⁴

⁷² OCA-MN, JACL, and MOKA, letter to MOA, June 26, 1995.

⁷³ Xinhua Online, “Riben lishi jiaokeshu wenti de youlai” (The origin of the Japanese history textbooks controversies), April 6, 2005, http://big5.xinhuanet.com/gate/big5/news.xinhuanet.com/world/2005-04/06/content_2792071.htm.

⁷⁴ Jim Parsons, “‘Requiem, Hiroshima’ Protested: Asian American Group Raises Discord over Orchestra Concert,” *Star Tribune*, Sept 6, 1995, sec. 01 A.

The revisionist attitude of the Japanese government, along with public and scholarly debates within the United States regarding the role of the Atomic Bomb, also aroused tensions in the American public. The tensions culminated in the Enola Gay controversy during 1994-1995. The Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C. had planned to exhibit the plane, named Enola Gay, that had dropped the atomic bomb, together with related images and texts about the bombing. The plan aroused wide discontent, especially among World War II veterans who viewed the exhibition as delegitimizing the use of atomic bomb as well as their sacrifices during the war. Under enormous public pressure, the exhibition was cancelled and directors of that program at Smithsonian resigned.⁷⁵

Tensions around the role of the atomic bomb and around the attitudes of the Japanese government were also felt in the Twin Cities. In 1995, there were a series of events in the Twin Cities relating to the atomic bombing of Japan and involving Japanese officials and organizations. For example, in July, Mayor Takashi Hiraoka of Hiroshima visited the Lyndale Park Rock Garden in Minneapolis where each year a Twin Cities group gathers to mark the bombing of Hiroshima and to pray for peace; in August, the Nagasaki Symphony Orchestra performed in St. Paul; and in September, there was an art exhibit in Macalester College at St Paul of two murals by Japanese artists about the bombing of Hiroshima.⁷⁶ These activities, including the proposed

⁷⁵ For discussions on the Enola Gay controversy, see Edward Linenthal and Tom Engelhardt, eds., *History Wars: The Enola Gay and Other Battles for the American Past* (New York: Metropolitan, 1996); Lisa Yoneyama, “For Transformative Knowledge and Postnationalist Public Spheres: The Smithsonian Enola Gay Controversy,” in *Perilous Memories: The Asia-Pacific War(s)*, eds. Takashi Fujitani, Geoffrey M. White and Lisa Yoneyama (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 323-46.

⁷⁶ Chuck Haga, “Twin Cities, Nagasaki Remember War, Celebrate Peace,” *Star Tribune*, July 9, 1995, sec. 01B. The Twin Cities have had long-time relationships with Japanese cities. St. Paul and Nagasaki

performance of “Hiroshima-Requiem,” had been viewed by local Chinese Americans and other Asian American groups as increasing efforts by the Japanese government or individual Japanese to depict Japan as a victim of the war without acknowledging its aggression in Asia. Besides the letter campaign against MOA, Chinese communities in Minnesota also collaborated in August 1995 in holding a commemoration to celebrate the 50th anniversary of China’s victory against Japanese invasion and to protest against the revisionist attitudes of the Japanese government. The commemoration united all Chinese organizations in the Twin Cities and was very successful. With a keynote speech and lively cultural performances, it attracted over 1000 people and was covered in detail on local newspapers.⁷⁷

On August 1, 1995, MOA announced its formal decision to uphold its plan of playing “Hiroshima, Requiem,” which MOA argued was apolitical. MOA did mention that in its program notes it would add a brief footnote describing the dropping of the atomic bomb “as a means to bring an end to WWII—an era that brought unprecedented suffering to the world and saw Japan as an aggressor in Asia.”⁷⁸ While some Chinese Americans tended to accept this decision, the majority were dismayed at the shortness and simplicity of the proposed note and the reluctance of MOA in fully addressing the related historical context. As KaiMay wrote to the president of MOA, the issue was not

became sister cities in 1955, the first between American and Asian cities. The Nagasaki Symphony Orchestra performance was a part of the series of observances marking St. Paul’s connection with Nagasaki. However, the sensitive timing of 1995 and the intensity of events in the Twin Cities involving Japanese commemoration of World War II led to the concerns of Chinese Americans and other Asian American communities.

⁷⁷ Jim Parsons, “A Culture Mourns Its Own: Program Marks Chinese Suffering,” *Star Tribune*, August 11, 1995, sec.01 B; T. Keung Hui, “St. Paul Event Seeks to Keep Alive Memory of Japan’s War on China: 26 Million Civilians Perished in Conflict,” *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, August 14, 1995, sec. 2D.

⁷⁸ Nicki Carpenter, letter to the three Asian American organizations (OCA-MN, JACL, MOKA), August 1, 1995. Carpenter was the chair of the MOA board.

about the musical piece but about MOA's policy being "apolitical." MOA had committed a political decision when it chose to perform "Requiem, Hiroshima" in the 50th anniversary of World War II, KaiMay argued. Without full historical context, the music would "invite the audience to mourn for the dead in Hiroshima, while ignoring the over 20 million civilians and military—Chinese, Koreans, other Asians *and* the American armed forces who perished as a result of Japanese aggression."⁷⁹ (Italics original)

In August, a "Coalition to Preserve the Truth of Japanese Aggression in WWII" (later Coalition) was established to continue the protest. It initially comprised four Chinese American organizations that tried to negotiate with MOA to purchase a one page ad in MOA's publication *Showcase* for a historical essay on World War II in Asia, a proposal rejected by MOA. The coalition then decided to turn to public media for support.⁸⁰ The two major local papers, *Star Tribune* in Minneapolis and *St Paul Pioneer Press*, started reporting the controversy in detail.⁸¹ Public debates ensued. Eric Friesen, host of "The Music Room" from the local KSJN radio station, wrote to the *Star Tribune* arguing that the issue was not about historical accuracy and balance but about artistic freedom.⁸² One week later, two "letters from readers" refuted Friesen's comment. One letter argued that since MOA chose to present a work named "Requiem, Hiroshima" in

⁷⁹ KaiMay Yuan Terry, letter to Hyslop, August 29, 1995.

⁸⁰ KaiMay Yuan Terry recalled in one of her letters to MOA that she had tried to keep this debate from the media in the beginning, but was forced to turn to media for support. Also, in her first letter to Oue, KaiMay noted in the end that she had thought about sending the letter to newspaper but then decided to send it personally, which she thought might be more appropriate. So KaiMay turned to public media largely because of the unsatisfying response from MOA.

⁸¹ Jim Parsons, "'Requiem, Hiroshima' Protested"; Michael Fleming, "'Requiem, Hiroshima' Embroils Orchestra in Political Controversy: Groups Thinks Japan's Aggression is Ignored," *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, September 7, 1995, sec. 3B.

⁸² Eric Friesen, "Orchestra Was Right to Resist Call for Hiroshima 'Balance,'" *Star Tribune*, September 10, 1995, sec. 21 A.

the midst of the 50th anniversary of World War II, it would be nonsense to pretend that it was not political. It deserved to “be discussed as such, openly by the whole community,” and MOA could not wrap itself in immunity by crying “artistic freedom.” The other letter, written by a member of the Coalition, argued that art could be the most powerful voice in the political arena, and the portrayal of Japan as the victim of WWII was inappropriate until Japan had owned up to its infamous past.⁸³

As a skilled writer, KaiMay wrote frequently for local newspapers to express her own opinions and fellow Chinese/Asian American’s concerns about the forgotten war in Asia.⁸⁴ Another important strategy that KaiMay and the Coalition adopted was to enlist American veterans’ support.⁸⁵ KaiMay actively contacted Minnesota veterans associations such as the 1st Marine Division and the American Legion and Disabled American Veterans, who then helped spread her message to other veterans associations. KaiMay showed her political keenness in securing veterans’ support. After being invited to speak at a gathering of the 1st Marine Division-Minnesota chapter, she wrote to Kale Danberg who was the Secretary and Editor-Publisher of the newsletter of that veterans’ association and who later became a strong ally of KaiMay during the protest. In her letter, KaiMay addressed the concerns of some veterans she met regarding the political characteristics of the protest. “I believe 1st Division by law meant continuing a tradition of the armed forces to not take sides with either the Republican or the

⁸³ Walter Graff and Sing Lo, “Letters from Readers,” *Star Tribune*, September 18, 1995, sec. 14A.

⁸⁴ KaiMay Yuan Terry, “Asians Remember the Record of Atrocities All Too Well,” *Star Tribune*, April 9, 1995, sec. 19A; KaiMay Yuan Terry, “Letter,” *Asian Pages*, January 1-14, 1995, sec. 6.

⁸⁵ This strategy possibly came from the earlier controversies such as the one involving Enola Gay when veterans showed their strong opinions and strong voices. KaiMay also mentioned in one of her letters to a friend that she was once asked by her Journalist friend whether there had been any voice from the veterans sector regarding the protest against MOA. This reminder might also lead to KaiMay and the Coalition’s outreach towards veterans.

Democratic Party or the 3rd party in party politics,” KaiMay clarified. However, the Coalition’s protest was not about taking a partisan side but engaging democracy and historical integrity: “*It’ll be downright undemocratic to forbid your members not to speak out as responsible citizens* when you recognize that a very important chapter of American history is being MISREPRESEN-TEATED through ignoring a big chunk of it.”⁸⁶ (italics and capitalization original) KaiMay’s acute understanding of American democracy and her skillfully tying it with specific historical events in which veterans participated contributed to a strong alliance between the Coalition and veterans’ association.

Another significant strategy of the Coalition was to unite with various Asian American groups. Having suffered tremendously during the Japanese occupation and having long been a strong voice against Japan’s postwar revisionism, Korean Americans had taken an active role in the Coalition. Byong Moon Kim, director of the Korean-American Today and Tomorrow Center, wrote a detailed report analyzing the central issues of this controversy. He argued against MOA’s claim that “Requiem, Hiroshima” was apolitical or a sign of artistic freedom, and he pointed out that the issue at stake had relevance to not just Asian-Americans but all Americans.⁸⁷

With the protest targeting the war crimes committed by Japan, the Coalition had to confront the delicate issue of discord while seeking unity among Asian Americans. As the protest was carried forward, Paul Gam, the president of the Organization of Chinese Americans-Minnesota chapter, raised his concern that the issue could cause

⁸⁶ KaiMay Yuan Terry, letter to Kale Danberg, September 6, 1995.

⁸⁷ Byong Moon Kim, undated article.

tremendous divisiveness among Asian communities, pitting one group against the other. “As a minority group in the United States, we cannot afford to be divided,” Gam cautioned, pointing out various critical issues Asian Americans needed to face as a consolidated group: the anti-immigration sentiments and anti-Asian violence, elimination of federal benefits to legally immigrated citizens, and alleged upper-end quotas against Asians in admissions to colleges and universities. “We have to find common ground and work together. We must not be divided,” Gam said.⁸⁸

Other leaders of the Chinese community were fully aware of this complexity. KaiMay emphasized that this protest was not anti-Japan or anti-Japanese but was a request for telling the true story and upholding historical integrity. She knew that there was no way to differentiate these two groups of people (Chinese and Japanese) in the racial taxonomy of the United States as “we are of the same race.”⁸⁹ In her very first letter in February to the Minnesota Orchestra’s new Japanese director, she noted that “it was then a racist world. Without the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the millions of Asians who died from Japanese aggression would not have provoked the atom bomb response.” “But you and I are both Asians and neither of us has caused the atrocities of World War II,” KaiMay continued and hoped Oue could have the sensitivity and courage to acknowledge the sufferings Japan brought to Asian people when he conducted “Requiem, Hiroshima.”⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Suzanne Sigmund, “Asian Community Strives for Harmonious Note with Minnesota Orchestra,” *Asian Pages*, December 1-14, 1995, sec. 12.

⁸⁹ KaiMay Yuan Terry, undated personal note.

⁹⁰ KaiMay Yuan Terry, letter to Eiji Oue, February 22, 1995. Unfortunately I did not find responses from Oue (to this letter or other letters KaiMay wrote to him) in KaiMay’s personal collection. As KaiMay had attempted to save all the correspondences, it was most likely that Oue did not write back (though he did

This emphasis on historical integrity, which KaiMay and the Coalition had been persistently emphasizing throughout the protest, seems to be the right path for inter-ethnic understanding, reconciliation, and future coalition. With the same belief and hope, some Japanese Americans and their organizations had participated in the commemorations of World War II and called for historical truth and integrity. The Japanese American Citizens League had joined with the Chinese and Korean American organizations in requesting MOA to address the historical context of dropping the atomic bomb. In the Chinese commemoration of World War II in August, one local Japanese American woman participated as one of the speakers, apologizing to all victims of Japanese aggression on behalf of Japanese people. In the end of November, as the Coalition had voted for a public vigil during MOA's performance of "Requiem, Hiroshima," two Japanese American women in the Twin Cities wrote an open letter to fellow Asians, apologizing for Japan's aggression against Asian people during the war. "We completely agree with Asian communities regarding the necessity to teach our younger generations our past war history," they noted and hoped for reconciliation.⁹¹ Tomiko Kohjiba, the composer of "Requiem, Hiroshima," arranged for a private meeting with KaiMay during her attendance at the final performance of her music, and admitted that her education did not expose her to Japan's war time behavior in Asia. According to KaiMay, they had a "friendly and earnest talk," and Ms. Kohjiba "felt that

call her after receiving the first letter and explained his apolitical stance), possibly to avoid further controversy.

⁹¹ Yuko Okumura and Akiko Tsutsui, letter to Asian communities in Minnesota, November 30, 1995.

Japanese schools should begin to teach Japanese youth about what actually happened during World War II.”⁹²

Up to mid-November, the Coalition had grown from four Chinese organizations to seventeen organizations in total, including three Korean American organizations, one Malaysian American organization, and three veterans associations. On November 10, the Coalition voted to hold a candlelight vigil during the performance of “Requiem, Hiroshima” on November 29, 30 and 31. Soon after this decision was announced, MOA approached the Coalition and requested a meeting.⁹³ Several days later, MOA sent in a revised program note titled “Release of Ignorance,” with a full paragraph detailing the historical context of Japanese aggression and war crimes against Asian people and acknowledging the ignorance of MOA initially about this Asian history.

After receiving the new program note, KaiMay and the Coalition expressed their appreciation of this position change. The vigil, however, had been called and would be continued. Nevertheless, the Coalition acknowledged and appreciated the positive change of MOA in its advertisement of the vigil in local newspapers and in its open letter to concertgoers. Now the vigil was not for protest but for commemoration and public education. On November 29, with below-zero temperatures, around 200 people

⁹² KaiMay Yuan Terry, letter to Lee Knopp, December 1995.

⁹³ At this time, there appeared different opinions among community leaders regarding whether to accept this request of meeting or not. Some leaders, including KaiMay, decided not to accept the invitation, while some other community leaders met with MOA leaders, connected with sympathetic MOA board members (including a Chinese American business woman), and presented their personal stories during World War II in order to persuade MOA to revise its program notes. While these two different approaches seemed to have caused tensions among some Chinese American community leaders, most community leaders and members I interviewed commented that this divergence was just difference in approaches rather than in principles.

peacefully gathered outside the concern hall, carrying placards and candles, handing out leaflets and moving quietly in a neat and tight circle.⁹⁴

With the success of the protest, the Coalition was disbanded after the vigil. However, to continue promoting historical integrity, community activists continued to give close attention to Japanese revisionism and to events relating to World War II in Asia. In 1997, KaiMay and other Chinese Americans (such as history professor Yuehim Tam at Macalester College) established the Minnesota chapter of the Global Alliance of Preserving WWII History in Asia. In 1998, KaiMay led efforts to bring Iris Chang, a renowned young Chinese American woman and author of the *New York Times* bestseller *Rape of Nanking*, to speak in the prestigious Westminster Forum in Minneapolis. Another significant effort at commemorating World War II in Asia was the six-year project of *Hun Qiao* (Bridge of Souls), a concert presented by the Chamber Music Society of Minnesota and Asian communities with commissioned works from four composers (Chinese, Japanese, Korean and American) and featuring renowned cellist Yo Yo Ma. With its world premiere in the Ordway Center in St. Paul in May 2001, *Hun Qiao* commemorated all victims during World War II in Asia and served as a bridge for both remembrance and reconciliation.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ Michael Fleming, "'Hiroshima' Performance Proves Anticlimactic," *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, November 30, 1995, sec. 7D; Thomas Morley, "Minnesota Orchestra Concert Greeted by Candlelight Vigil," *Asian American Press*, December 8, 1995, 1.

⁹⁵ Michael Anthony, "'Bridge of Souls' Concert Is for Asian Reconciliation," *Star Tribune*, June 1, 2001, sec. 04B. I appreciate Weiming Lu for his generous advice on the history and purpose of this concert project. Lu was one of the key leaders commissioning this significant memorial concert. For detailed account of this project, see Weiming Lu Papers at the Minnesota Historical Society, Catalog ID No. 6594828, Location No. 141.D.3.7B, Box 10; Location No. 141.D.3.8F, Box 11; Location No. 141.D.3.9B, Box 12.

The 1995 commemorations and the protest against MOA were important for the Chinese community and identity formation. It was one of the few moments when various Chinese organizations with widely different interests and backgrounds were bound together for a common cause. Migrants from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and mainland China joined in the commemorations and the protest.⁹⁶ While the commemorations and the protest were mainly led by immigrants from Hong Kong and Taiwan who came to the United States earlier, recent mainland Chinese migrants and their organizations played an active role and became better known to the community.

Another distinct characteristic of the commemorations and the protest was the leading role of professionals and elites. On the one hand, their active participation and leadership showed the historical development of post-1965 Chinese community with large numbers of educated and professional migrants and with better social and cultural resources. Professional migrants also demonstrated their remarkable skills and capability of maneuvering resources in the mainstream society, such as drawing support from mainstream media, networking with veterans' association, engaging local music societies (such as the Chamber Music Society of Minnesota), and recruiting artists and talents from various ethnic backgrounds worldwide (such as the successful *Hun Qiao* concert). On the other hand, the professionals-led commemorations and protests showed the lack of involvement by lower-class immigrants, revealing the gap among migrants based on class and educational backgrounds as well as the fact that homeland politics

⁹⁶ The native Taiwanese association (Taiwan *Tongxianghui*) did not identify with China and did not participate. American-born Chinese did not take an active role individually (though the Organization of Chinese Americans kind of a representative of them) in the commemorations and protest partly because of their small numbers in the Chinese population, the gap between them and Chinese immigrants, and their general unfamiliarity with Asian history.

was not necessarily interesting and pertinent to ordinary immigrants' daily life and identity.

Even among the elites and leaders of the protest, there were a wide variety of attitudes and approaches. Some wanted to uncover Japan's war crimes and fight without negotiation; others, relatively modest, wanted to find solutions by negotiating with various institutions (including MOA) and by combining both "remembrance and reconciliation" through cultural channels such as the *Hun Qiao* concert. Notable too were the doubts of the Organization of Chinese Americans about the protest's impact. These diverse approaches reflected the different understandings of Chinese immigrants and Chinese Americans of their ethnic and cultural identity, attesting again to the inherent diversity among the Chinese community.

The most significant impact of the commemorations and the protest, however, was the education of the American public about the forgotten and neglected history of World War II in Asia. Through this effective public education, Chinese and other Asian Americans had strongly reasserted their Asian/American identity. As KaiMay noted in her initial letter to the chair of the MOA board, while most Americans were not interested in Asian history, many of survivors of the war and their children were now living in the United States as American citizens. The request to historicize the dropping of the atomic bomb in Japan was not the result of long-held political ethnic animosities but a need for MOA to demonstrate historical integrity and fairness when facing a people's wounds.⁹⁷ Then, after almost-one-year letter writing campaign, public debates and Coalition meetings, MOA, one of the most established mainstream American

⁹⁷ KaiMay Terry, letter to Nicki Carpenter, February 22, 1995.

cultural institutions in Minnesota, acknowledged its initial ignorance and addressed the full historical context. As stated in its “Release from Ignorance”:

The protesting letters and eloquent commentaries of these objectors, and the moving words of our brave war veterans, have catapulted us out of our overwhelmingly Western outlook and helped us to grasp how fierce an aggressor was the militaristic Japanese empire of the earlier decades of this century. Except for a vague awareness, we did not know about that “other Holocaust”—the 22 million Chinese (some estimates run millions higher) sacrificed in the seven-year occupation of Nanking beginning in 1931 with the Japanese invasion and peaking with the acts of terror launched in Nanjing in Dec 1937. Nor did we grasp the atrocities committed against the Koreans or until the admission was made in March 1992, the practice of providing “comfort women” Korean, Chinese and Taiwanese women who were not prostitutes—for Japanese soldiers. The controversy generated in anticipation of the sorrowful work has shunted us out of our ignorance.⁹⁸

In her personal letter to KaiMay two years later, MaryAnn Feldman, the editor of the *Showcase* who wrote “release from ignorance” and who had been sympathetic to the concerns of Chinese/Asian Americans throughout the protest, recalled the controversy and noted that “what really gives me anguish is to realize how ignorant we are. How did all this elude me until you opened up this segment of history that happened in my own time?”⁹⁹ (emphasis original) For Karl Reichert, Director of Public Relations of MOA, the turnout of this controversy would be very positive in the long run for the orchestra. “It opens many doors,” he commented, “[I]t’s been a very good education process for us. Now we have to continue listening, meeting, understand and getting to know our diverse community.”¹⁰⁰

About two months after the candlelight vigil, KaiMay wrote to Edward Farmer, professor of Chinese history at the University of Minnesota. KaiMay recalled that in the spring of 2005, Farmer expressed his concern about how the letter writing campaigns

⁹⁸ MOA, “Release from Ignorance,” *Showcase*, December 1995, 18.

⁹⁹ MaryAnn Feldman, letter to KaiMay, November 26, 1997.

¹⁰⁰ Sigmund, “Asian Community Strives.”

and protests would finally play out. “Well, look back,” KaiMay stated, “I feel that it has been positive from several points of view”:

First, we've raised the consciousness of the general public via the Minnesota Orchestra “controversy” about the other forgotten “Asian Holocaust.” Second, we've taken a firm stand with an established institution in town on an important issue and our voice was heard. Third, Minnesota Orchestra's new, more balanced and accurate program notes for Requiem Hiroshima will be on record for the orchestral world for years to come. Lastly, our Japanese American friends understand why we're clamoring for truth. All along, the issue was successfully focused on the need for historical truth, not half truths whether it's music, books or lectures.¹⁰¹

KaiMay’s letter fully expressed the major purposes of the whole campaigns and protests: restore historical integrity, get voices heard and, most importantly, educate the American public about the forgotten and neglected Asian history. Why was such education of the American public of Asian history important, and why should Chinese/Asian Americans be active in such issues? In an editorial article KaiMay wrote to *St. Paul Pioneer Press* as a guest columnist in 1998, she connected the education of the American public about forgotten Asian history with the profound identity question of Asian Americans in the United States, including not just the first generation but later generations. In the article, KaiMay introduced the 1997 *New York Times* bestseller, *Rape of Nanking* written by Iris Chang, and called for public reflection on modern history. She noted that the struggle of Asian Americans to have their voices heard “ha[s] been years in the making.” For many years, “first-generation immigrants carried the torch of remembrance in their native tongues and in primarily ethnic settings. Through the years, the nature of remembrance has evolved to reflect the second generation’s experience as citizens of the United States.” KaiMay then cited both local and national activities organized by Chinese Americans as protesting against the

¹⁰¹ KaiMay Yuan Terry, letter to Ted Farmer, January 17, 1996.

American public's distorted understanding of history, including the 1996 protest against MOA's playing "Requiem, Hiroshima" and the efforts of the nationwide Alliance for Preserving History of World War II in Asia. What did this burst of Chinese-American activism mean, KaiMay asked. The reason was, as she argued,

[T]oday's Chinese-Americans feel a deeper sense of belonging to America than previous generations. We are asking for the American public and government to listen to our story... Our aspiration is no different from the Jewish immigrants from Europe who found courage to face the 'unconfrontable' and urged Americans in their adopted country and the rest of the world to do the same...¹⁰²

Here KaiMay was pointing out a significant change of Chinese immigration to the United States: While most Chinese immigrants of earlier generations tended to finally return to China, recent Chinese immigrants have determined to plant their roots in the United States and have felt a strong need of getting themselves understood by the American public, not just their lives in the United States after immigration but what happened in the past in their home country. While most discussions, among scholars and in the general public, of claiming the voice and recovering the history of Chinese immigrants in the United States have been focusing on immigrants' marginalization in the American society or on exclusion or restriction during their immigration, the 1995 protest demonstrated that the history of the country of origin, even not directly related to immigrant experiences, should be covered and understood by the American public in order to establish a more historical and respectable identity of immigrants in the United States.

¹⁰² KaiMay Terry, "Doing What is Right: Rape of Nanking Calls from History for Modern-Day Reckoning," *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, February 7, 1998, sec. 17A.

Therefore, for Asian Americans, both “Asian” and “American” need to be reflected on and be fully understood rather than just emphasizing the “American” part and viewing “Asian” as a prefix indicating cultural origin or an imposed racial category. “Asian” here means Asian history, including various national histories and complex relationships. Recognizing and understanding Asian history without neglect and distortion is an important way of recognizing the existence and identity of Asian Americans (with various national and ethnic groups) in the United States.

This sympathetic and undistorted understanding of Asian history is not only important for first-generation immigrants who very likely maintain strong ties with the country of origin but also for second- or later-generations of Asian Americans who need to be differentiated from the country and the people they most likely have little or no contact and attachment with. The Japanese American Citizens League made this clear in the letter that it wrote together with the Chinese and Korean American organizations and sent to MOA in June, 1995. While joining the other two organizations in requesting MOA to add historical context about Japan’s aggression during World War II, the Japanese American Citizens League stressed its position in an additional paragraph that concluded the letter:

Finally, the members of the Japanese American community desire to emphasize that many served and died in the struggle against totalitarianism during WWII. Americans of Japanese ancestry have never supported the military expansionism of the Japanese government of that era. Further, such differentiation helps place into proper perspective Japanese Americans’ sacrifice for America in the war and their experience in the U.S., especially during the Internment.¹⁰³

¹⁰³ OCA-MN, JACL, and MOKA, letter to MOA, June 26, 1995. While here the Japanese American Citizens League aimed to emphasize the difference between Japanese Americans and Japan, scholars have found complex relationships between Japanese American communities and the empire building of Japan. See Eiichiro Azuma, *Between Two Empires: Race, History, And Transnationalism In Japanese America* (Oxford University Press, 2005).

Overall, the protest led by Chinese immigrants against MOA's playing "Requiem, Hiroshima" without historical context showed not only the impact of historical memory on the Chinese community but also the importance of educating the American public of Chinese and Asian history for reasserting their Chinese/Asian/American identity in the United States. It is indeed a good comparison when KaiMay referred to the Jewish success of engraving the "Holocaust" deeply into American public consciousness and its significance for the livelihood and identity of Jewish immigrants in the United States. On the one hand, it shows that Chinese/Asian Americans have realized the importance of placing their histories deep in the public consciousness of the United States, of which they are now an inseparable and organic part. On the other hand, it reflects the existing gap, unfortunately still profound, between the Jewish and Asian experiences as being understood and accepted by the American public.¹⁰⁴

This chapter has studied Chinese new immigrants (especially student/professional migrants) in the Twin Cities at Minnesota as a case study of post-1965 immigrants' integration into American society. It demonstrates the historical development of the Chinese community, highlighting its increasing diversity and at the same time its lack of unity and voice in the mainstream society. With the majority being professionals, the Chinese community in the Twin Cities has been perceived by the local public and has tended to present itself as a "model minority" which conceals its existing social problems such as high poverty rates. It also distanced Chinese immigrants from other

¹⁰⁴ KaiMay Yuan Terry, interview by author, February 16, 2008.

ethnic groups and hindered the formation of a pan-Asian community with a critical mass to influence local politics and social affairs. The last part of the chapter focused on Chinese immigrants' commemorations of the end of World War II in 1995, particularly their protest against the MOA's playing "Requiem, Hiroshima." This event illustrates both the limitations of the community unity and consolidation and the efforts of Chinese immigrants in upholding their collective memory and asserting their Asian/American identity in the United States.

Unfolding in the Midwest context, the community and identity formation of Chinese immigrants in Minnesota has significance for our understanding of Chinese American and Asian American experiences at large. While the Midwest has been long viewed as a "vast banana wasteland" that Asian Americans left, this study demonstrates the salient historical development of Chinese communities in this region as an essential and important part of Asian American history.¹⁰⁵ It also shows how international students and professional immigrants are building communities in new settings outside the traditional coastal areas.

This chapter sheds new light on post-1965 U.S. immigration and race relations. With the historical transformation of post-1965 U.S. immigration in general and Chinese immigrants in particular, the Minnesota Chinese community provides an exemplar case to examine the characteristics of contemporary Chinese immigration,

¹⁰⁵ My thinking here benefits from Erika Lee's survey of Asian American Studies in the Midwest. Erika Lee, "A Survey of Asian American Studies in the Midwest," *Journal of Asian American Studies* (forthcoming). As Lee notes, the Midwest's Chinese immigrant communities have largely remained out of public and scholarly attention and have been marginalized in narratives of Chinese and Asian American experiences in the United States, which have been predominated by Chinese experiences in the two coasts. There is a critical need for an "East of California" approach to discover the multiple origins and outlooks of Chinese/Asian American experiences and to further redefine the cannons and existing models of Asian American studies and American immigration studies.

such as the impact of the large numbers of recent professional immigrants and new immigrants' community formation outside of traditional Chinatowns. This chapter documents that migrants' identity and community building should be understood in the local context as racial formation and ethnic relations may be distinct from one place to another and migrants' experiences in the coasts may not apply to migrants in other regions. With Minnesota (and the Midwest in general) a historically-formed white-dominant community with minority groups lacking "a critical mass," this study shows Chinese professional migrants understood the local race relations and adjusted their strategies (such as reinvented the image of "model minority") accordingly. The Minnesota case also offers a valuable microcosm of new mixtures emerging in post-1965 U.S. immigration, such as the large numbers of both well-off professional immigrants and lower-class Southeast Asian refugees. It shows race, ethnicity, and class intersecting with each other to define the interactions among these different immigrant groups and it reveals the complexities and difficulties of forming a pan-Asian American community and identity in post-1965 U.S. society.

This chapter also highlights the dilemma between individual mobility and ethnic community in post-1965 U.S. immigration. It differs from most immigration studies that assume the integration of professional immigrants into the American society is smooth with their economic resources and social mobility. While recognizing the fact that many professional immigrants did enter the mainstream labor market and find some integration into the mainstream society, I argue that with individual mobility, professional immigrants tended to form individual-based cultural communities and

risked losing group unity and collective voice, which directly or indirectly hindered their integration into the U.S. society where race and ethnicity still play a critical integrative role. I also argue that post-1965 U.S. liberal reforms (such as the 1965 Immigration Act and the various Civil Rights acts in the 1960s and 1970s) have been a double-edged sword: while the reforms have largely removed state-sponsored racial discrimination and have enhanced individual equality before law, they also diminished the need for group solidarity and identity, especially among professional immigrants experiencing individual mobility. While Alba and Nee emphasize post-1965 institutional and cultural changes (such as the legal reforms and the popular ideology of multiculturalism) and argue for the progressive expansion and inclusiveness of the “American mainstream,” I caution about the other side of the post-1965 liberal reform and argue that individual mobility does not necessarily lead to full incorporation if it undermines group unity and political and social representation, especially in localities where the minority group only has a small population.

While this chapter focuses on the integration of Chinese new immigrants into American society, settling in the United States is not the only choice or the most desired choice for all Chinese immigrants, especially student/professional migrants who possess remarkable social and cultural capital and constantly navigate in a transnational space including both the United States and China and even other regions and societies. In addition, the changing historical contexts matter in migrants’ migration patterns and identity formation. Different generations of student migrants, with their different experiences in different times, often hold distinct ideas and expectations of where to

stay and how to live. For earlier generations such as Weiming Lu and KaiMay Terry Yuan who came to the United States in the 1950s and 1960s, returning to mainland China or Taiwan or Hong Kong may not have been an option or the best choice; for mainland student migrants who came to the United States in the 1970s and 1980s with traumatic experiences during the Cultural Revolution, returning to China may hardly be their desire. However, for mainland Chinese students who came of age after China's reform and came to the United States after the early 1990s, when China witnessed remarkable economic development and social transformation, staying in the United States may not be the only choice or the best one. Since the mid-1990s, increasing numbers of mainland Chinese students and students-turned immigrants have returned to China, permanently or temporarily. It is towards this remarkable phenomenon of return migration and towards returning migrants that the following two chapters turn.

Chapter 4

The Tide of Return: “Not Just a Concept of Location, But a Concept of Time”

Beginning in the mid-1990s, with steady economic reforms and social development in China, increasing numbers of Chinese students and students-turned immigrants returned to China, permanently or temporarily. According to China’s Ministry of Education (MOE), between 1978 and 2002, China sent 580,000 students and scholars to study abroad, and more than 150,000 had returned to China.¹ The number of returnees increased 13 percent annually after 1995. In 1990, 1593 students returned to China; the number increased to 5750 in 1995, 9121 in 2000, and 34,987 in 2005 (Table 7).² Besides returned students and scholars, a large number of students-turned immigrants

¹ *People’s Daily Online*, “China Has Sent 580 Thousand Students Studying Abroad,” January 28, 2003, <http://english.people.com.cn> (accessed January 29, 2003).

² Somehow the absolute numbers of returnees every year and its steady and remarkable increase since the mid-1990s reflect the “fever of return” better than the changing percentages of returnees among Chinese students abroad do, as the percentages have been subject to various factors (such as the shifting Chinese emigration policies) and have been confusing. For example, while the return rate of 1978 was 29 percent (with 248 returnees among 860 students/scholars sent abroad), it reduced to 8 percent in 1979 because China increased the number of students sent abroad tremendously that year (with 2124 students/scholars sent abroad and 162 returning). After the 1989 Tiananmen Incident, a normal return rate should have been lower than those in past years. Instead, the return rate in 1990 (54 percent) and 1991 (71 percent) were among the highest of the return rates of Chinese students since 1978. One major reason was that China restricted students’ going abroad around the 1989 Incident (more than 4000 annually during 1985, 1986 and 1987; 3786 in 1988; 3329 in 1989; 2950 in 1990; 2900 in 1991). The number of students studying abroad rose again in 1992 and since then has increased steadily and quickly (6540 in 1992; 10,742 in 1993; around 20,000 between 1994 and 1999; 38,989 in 2000; 83,973 in 2001; and around 120,000 between 2002 and 2005). The increasing total numbers of students abroad again reduced the return rate (range from 14 to 42 percent between 1995 and 2005). Besides the changing Chinese study-abroad policies, another factor contributing to the confusing and not-so-useful return rate was how the statistics regarding returnees were collected. As many returnees (especially those who were not sponsored by the government and therefore not obliged to return) did not report to the government about their return, the numbers of returnees reported by the government very likely were much less than the actual ones. This discrepancy is more likely after the mid-1980s after self-dependent students have become the majority of Chinese students studying abroad. In addition, with large numbers of students/scholars abroad being sponsored by the Chinese government and obliged to return in the 1980s, the return rates in the 1980s was generally high. Therefore, it is not surprising to see the return rates in the 1990s and early 2000s were lower than those in the 1980s, which however did not necessarily deny the “fever of return” in the 1990s and early 2000s.

returned without settling down in China; they travelled between China and the country of their immigration. A survey conducted in 2000 by MOE showed that of 551 overseas educated mainland Chinese who had set up enterprises in 13 industrial parks, only 44 percent resided in China on a regular basis.³

Table 7. Numbers of Returned Mainland Chinese Students, 1978-2007

Year	Number	Year	Number	Year	Number
1978	248	1992	3,611	2001	12,243
1980	162	1993	5,128	2002	17,945
1985	1,424	1994	4,230	2003	20,152
1986	1,388	1995	5,750	2004	24,726
1987	1,605	1996	6,570	2005	34,987
1988	3,000	1997	7,130	2006	42,000
1989	1,753	1998	7,379	2007	44,000
1990	1,593	1999	7,748		
1991	2,069	2000	9,121		

Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China, *Zhongguo tongji nianjian* (Beijing: Zhongguo tongji chubanshe, 2008), 780.

The United States has been the major destination for Chinese students studying abroad after China's reform and it hosts around half of all overseas Chinese students.

³ Zhongguo Jiaoyubu, *Liuxue renyuan huiguo chuangye de fazhan zhuangkuang ji zhengce jianyi: liuxue renyuan huiduo chuangye baogao*,” 2000, quoted in Xiang Biao, “Emigration from China: A Sending Country Perspective,” *International Migration* 41, no. 3 (2003): 31.

The return rate from the United States in the last decade has been estimated as 18.8 percent.⁴ Returnees have concentrated in major cities like Beijing and Shanghai; most returnees hold higher education degrees. A survey of returnees in Shanghai in the late 1990s showed that more than 90 percent of respondents held master or doctoral degrees. The first five most popular countries where returnees came from were the United States, Japan, Britain, France and Australia. About 72.4 percent of respondents had working experiences overseas. The average number of years working overseas was 4.36, with the longest being 14 years.⁵ Most returnees chose to work in business and private-owned enterprises or in public enterprises such as universities and research institutions. A small number of returnees worked in government. A survey of returnees in Shenzhen in Guangdong province in 2000 showed that returnees in business comprised 61.4 percent of all returnees, those in public institutions 27.2 percent, while those in government only 5 percent.⁶

This chapter examines the historical context that led to the increasing return migration of Chinese students and students-turned immigrants after the mid-1990s. Conventional immigration studies have focused on the receiving society and the “assimilation” of immigrants into the receiving society while downplaying the sending

⁴ There is no exact number of how many student migrants returned from the U.S. However, it is reported that among the 160,000 officially-sponsored students in the U.S. from 1978 to 1998, about 30,000 returned (18.8 percent). J. Li and D. Liu, “Analysis of Demand for Foreign Education in China”, *Consumer Demands and Economy* 5 (1999): 20-28, quoted in Iredale, Guo and Rozario, eds., *Return Migration in the Asia Pacific*, 92. Also see Chen Xi, “Liuxuesheng de zhiliu yu Zhongguo zhengfu de duiche,” *Huaqiao huaren lishi yanjiu* 2 (1999): 63-76. Chen estimated that students in the U.S. comprised 53.3 percent of all the Chinese students abroad, and the return rate was 18.8 percent.

⁵ Luo, Fei and Huang, “China: Government Policies and Emerging Trends of Reversal of the Brain Drain,” 95-96.

⁶ Lin Zhuji, “Shenzhen xila liuxue renyuan huiguo chuangye de shijian yu shikao,” *Qiaolian dongtai* 8 (2000): 20-22.

society and ignoring migrants' return migration. This narrative is not only rooted in the nation-state framework (in fact only the receiving state) but it also relies on an ahistorical perspective. It portrays the receiving society in the present and future tense while assigning the sending society to the past as unchanging and undesirable, and as fading from immigrants' life and identity. This chapter instead highlights historical changes in both the receiving and the sending societies (the United States and China respectively) and argues that the sending society has been constantly changing, renewing the relationships with migrants, and affecting their migration choices and identity.

The United States: Still the “heaven” for immigrants?

In the late 1990s, socioeconomic changes in the United States contributed to the return migration of Chinese students and students-turned immigrants. The most remarkable and relevant change was the slowdown of the U.S. economy, especially the burst of the dot-com industry bubble. The first eight months of 2001 saw more than 350,000 high-tech workers, mostly in the IT (Information Technology) industry, laid off, and the figure climbed to 600,000 by November of that year.⁷ The downturn of the IT industry especially affected Indian and Chinese professionals who were the major sources of high tech workers, notably in the Silicon Valley.⁸ The massive layoff and high rate of unemployment directly affected high-tech workers' immigrant status

⁷ CBS Marketwatch, “Landscape Shifts for Laid-off Foreigners,” August 31, 2001; *Los Angeles Times*, “U.S. Tech Firms Abusing Visa Program, Critics Say,” November 21, 2001, quoted in Xiang Biao, *Global "Body Shopping,"* 1.

⁸ Xiang Biao, *Global "Body Shopping."*

adjustment which was based on their continued employment. Furthermore, since the late 1990s, the gap grew even larger between the soaring numbers of temporary work visas (H-1B) and the stringent small quota of employment-based green cards. While the number of H-1B visa holders in the United States grew to 710,000 in 2002, the permanent immigration system could absorb only 25,000 H-1B workers and their families.⁹ Again, this gap between the number of temporary work visas and the quota for immigrant status adjustment impacted Indians and Chinese most, since they have been the two largest groups of H-1B holders.¹⁰ In addition, the newly tightened homeland security system after the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States also complicated the background check of immigration applicants.¹¹ The inefficient immigration quota and the prolonged process of immigration application affected Chinese student migrants not only in the IT industry but in other fields in general.

In an online posting on the Haiguinet on April 30, 2004, a Chinese student migrant asked an online friend for advice on whether he should return to China or wait for a U.S. green card. Compared to the past, he complained, “nowadays it is lucky even to keep a job, and the company has no intention at all to sponsor me a green card. Even

⁹ B. Lindsay Lowell, “H-1B Temporary Workers: Estimating the Population,” *Center for Comparative Immigration Studies Working Papers*, No. 12, May 1, 2000, 14, 16, <http://repositories.cdlib.org/ccis/papers/wrkg12>.

¹⁰ According to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), Indians and Chinese are the top two countries of H-1B beneficiaries. Among the total 331,206 approved applicants, China comprised 9 percent (27,331), second to India which comprised 49 percent (161,561). 44 percent of Chinese beneficiaries were in computer-related fields, and in the case of India it was 85 percent. “Table G,” *Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 2001* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2003), 135.

¹¹ The terrorist attacks also had an immediate impact on the amount of H-1B applications. According to the INS, “[W]hile the number of H-1B petitions filed increased by 14 percent in 2001 over 2000, applications filed were down by 9 percent in the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2001 in relation to the same period in 2000. In September, the number filed was down 46 percent below the level of September 2000.” *Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 2001*, 134.

when the company does, I have to wait for quite a few years.” In this case, the migrant asked, “[I]s it worth continuing to wait for a green card?”¹² With 2078 hits (indicating the message had been read 2078 times), this migrant’s concern were echoed widely online among Chinese student migrants. The economic downturn did not just impact those who had not obtained immigrant status. For many students-turned immigrants, securing a satisfying job in the United States also became more difficult. On April 28, 2004, a male migrant asked for advice on whether filing an I-131 form for a reentry permit would help him reenter the United States as a green card holder working in China. A respondent replied that the reentry permit was useful but did not help if one stayed for more than 2-3 years in China. “What can I do,” the returnee complained, “I have a family (in the United States) to raise and could not find a decent job in the United States now.”¹³

In another online discussion on October 7, 2005, a migrant predicted a possible upcoming economic crisis in the United States and argued that “to put it straight, it is most stupid in this era to sacrifice a number of years of youth for a green card.” The author urged other migrants to “do the right thing (here referring to returning to China) according to the right time.”¹⁴ This posting aroused a heated discussion on Haiguinet and was sympathized with by most respondents. A respondent agreed on the current financial problems in the United States and commented on the U.S. war in Iraq: “I don’t

¹² Johnson, posting to Haiguinet, April 30, 2004, <http://www.haiguinet.com/bbs/viewtopic.php?p=424025&highlight=#424025>. According to the posting, the author was most likely a man.

¹³ TurtleCreek, posting to Haiguinet main forum, April 28, 2004, <http://www.haiguinet.com/bbs/viewtopic.php?p=423320&highlight=#423320>

¹⁴ Bulabula, posting to Haiguinet, October 7, 2005, <http://www.haiguinet.com/forum/viewtopic.php?p=869785&highlight=%E7%B2%97%E4%BF%97%E5%9C%B0%E8%AF%B4#869785>

know what's in Bush's mind. Without the war in Iraq, the deficit will not be that large.”¹⁵ Another respondent added more thoughts in English:

Agree! I talked with some top economists here [in the U.S.], the current situation in USA is that the middle class has shranked a lot, the S&P 500 will not be able to see the growth rate as before, and there are more risks, however. Sounds bad, right? So even our long-term investment plan models have to be changed.

...Here, many people are working at the base of the pyramids. Without GC or citizenship, there are always worries about the possible layoff and some unstable factors. Even with GC or citizenship, still some other worries ... In general, in the past, engineers or scientific careers are deemed to be stable, but no longer the case. Due to outsource, dropped market demand, fast tech changes, and more and more young students came to the already shranked market. Unfortunately, these are the pool of Chinese and Indians... ☺ ... Just my 2 cents from USA. Choose as what you like... ;-)¹⁶

This online discussion shows the various social and economic changes in the United States that had concerned Chinese student migrants with or without immigrant status. What is most interesting is how the respondent described the position of Chinese (and Indian) migrants in the hierarchy of the U.S. workforce— “at the base of the pyramids.” It demonstrates migrants’ awareness of their vulnerability, even as high-tech professionals, in a restructuring U.S. economy and in the restrictive U.S. immigration system. Xiang Biao’s study of Indian high-tech workers shows that a body-shopping system was prevalent, in which Indian high-tech workers (especially those trained in India) were transferred and manipulated by placement agents across national boundaries to provide a large reserve of temporary workers for the transient and huge labor demands of the IT industry, thus “marching mobile labor to volatile capital” and

¹⁵ Parisparis, posting to Haiguinet, October 7, 2005,
<http://www.haiguinet.com/forum/viewtopic.php?p=869929>.

¹⁶ Pbird, posting to Haiguinet, October 7, 2005,
<http://www.haiguinet.com/forum/viewtopic.php?p=869863>. Haiguinet uses Chinese as the interface and most postings are in Chinese. However, many members often wrote in a mixture of Chinese and English words or simply in English, revealing their higher education backgrounds and familiarity with both languages and cultures.

demonstrating the exploitative nature of global capitalism and the New Economy.¹⁷ In the case of Chinese migrants, although there was no such institutionalized body-shopping system and most Chinese high-tech workers were student migrants educated in the United States, there was still a sense of vulnerability and a tension between migrants and the changing and hierarchical U.S. labor market that had encouraged many Chinese student migrants to return to China or to think about returning.

The economic downturn in the late 1990s and the difficulties of immigrant status adjustment in the United States pushed some Chinese student migrants to return.¹⁸ However, the return migration could not materialize without changes in the other end of the migration, in the sending society.

China: “It’s not the same China that we are returning to”

If socioeconomic changes Chinese student migrants observed in the United States led them to rethink the idea of staying in the United States, social and economic developments in China after the mid-1990s shifted the question from “whether to stay” to “whether to return” to China and how to make the return migration a reality.

The wave of return migration arose along with China’s reinvigorated reform after 1992. After a period of leadership debates about the direction of China’s reform following the Tiananmen Incident in 1989, Deng Xiaoping toured southern China in 1992. His renowned “Southern Tour Speech” (*nanxun jianghua*) confirmed and

¹⁷ Xiang Biao, *Global “Body Shopping.”*

¹⁸ Compared to online discussions, interviewees did not talk much about a lack of opportunities in the United States as one of their reasons of going back to the United States. This has much to do with the “face” issue as they may consider that as losing face. This somehow reveals the advantage of online discussions compared to on-spot interviews—more direct and more frank.

propelled the market-oriented economic reform. China has maintained an annual GDP growth rate of around 9 percent since the early 1990s; even during the deflation period of 1998-2002, the rate was 7.8 percent, the fastest growth rate in the world at that time.¹⁹ Rapid economic and social reforms created numerous business opportunities and new social space for overseas Chinese students and students-turned immigrants. In 2001, *Newsweek* observed that while the 1989 Tiananmen Incident had accelerated the exodus of tens of thousands of Chinese talents out of China, “now the trend is reversing.” While politics and protest are still taboo, China now offers “more personal freedoms and economic opportunities than ever before.” Attracted by an increasingly open economy, Chinese migrants overseas are returning to “become driving forces in academia and government, banking and the Internet.” *Newsweek* told a story about a group of Chinese students in the 1999 Harvard Business School class. Among the 12 mainland Chinese (including a few who left after the Tiananmen Incident), 6 had returned to China. Shao Yibo, China’s former national math champion, in 1999 started a Chinese version of the Internet auction giant eBay. Zhang Wei, a buoyant young woman who dreamed of becoming China’s analogue to American talk-show host Oprah Winfrey, worked in Rupert Murdoch’s News Corp. in Beijing and at the same time pursued her Oprah dream. Once a week, she “hosted a popular talk show on Beijing TV that takes on such daring topics as AIDS, drug abuse and – yes– Internet dating.”²⁰

¹⁹ Justin Yifu Lin, “Is China’s Growth Real and Sustainable?” *China Center for Economic Research (CCER) Working Papers*, Beijing University, no. E2004003, February 26, 2004.
<http://www.ccer.edu.cn/download/3024-1.pdf>.

²⁰ Brook Larmer, “Home At Last,” *Newsweek*, July 31, 2000, 32.

Economic reform and development enhanced research facilities and provided more entrepreneurial opportunities for returned Chinese students and students-turned immigrants. One of my interview subjects, Pan, came to the United States in 1985, obtained his doctoral degree in 1990 and taught at a reputable American university before entering the biomedical industry. While he was a naturalized American citizen with a comfortable life in the United States, Pan felt that his dream had not been fulfilled and that he could only realize it in the fast developing China. He returned to China in 2000 to be enlisted in the “One Hundred Scholars Program” (*bairen jihua*) in the Chinese Academy of Science.²¹ At the same time, he was running a biomedical company in the Zhangjiang high-tech park in Shanghai (see Figures 5 and 6). When I interviewed him in his office, he told me that his return was right in time with China’s economic development. In the past “there was no good environment in China for advanced study of biomedicine and for the biomedical industry.”²²

²¹ This program was started in 1994 by the Chinese Academy of Science (CAS) to attract talented young Chinese scholars (mainly from overseas) to become the leaders of their respective fields and enhance China’s scientific research and technological innovation. The program funded selected scholars with 2 million RMB (\$250,000) for their research. As of 2004, the program had supported 1069 scholars, of which 702 were returnees. Li Daqin, “Zhongkeyuan Bairen Jihua, shinian dazhao jingzhi pinpai,” People’s Daily Online, December 28, 2004, <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/keji/1059/3083492.html>.

²² Pan, interview by author, August 1, 2005.



Figure 5. The Zhangjiang Overseas Science Park



Figure 6. A Corner of the Zhangjiang Overseas Science Park

Pan's entrepreneurial undertaking as a returned scholar has been common among returned Chinese students and students-turned immigrants, as described by Ma, another returnee I interviewed in China. Ma called it the "third path" (*di santiao lu*) for

Chinese intellectuals after China's social and economic reforms in 1978. Ma came to the United States in the 1980s as a visiting scholar and then pursued her doctoral degree in sociology. She founded a consulting company and set up offices in both the United States and China, and she and her husband now mainly stay in their home-office in Beijing. I was introduced to Ma by a mutual friend and met her when she was giving a talk at Tsinghua University in Beijing. Ma talked about her experiences in the United States and her entrepreneurship in China. She encouraged the audience (mostly students) to liberate their thinking in the reform era. As she told the audience, in the past Chinese intellectuals normally took roles as either teachers or mandarins (as stated in the idiom of "*xue er you zhe shi*," which means "take official positions if one excels in studies"), now intellectuals could choose to become entrepreneurs and navigate the sea of market economy (*xiahai*).²³

The late 1990s in China also witnessed increasing research funds and an improved living standard for returnees. Professor Huang worked in a research institute in Beijing from 1997 to 1998 before he went to the United States to study geography and regional economic development. He obtained his doctoral degree in 2001 and taught in an American university for two years. Rather than staying in the United States and applying for a green card, he returned to teach at Beijing University. According to him, 1998 was the year with dramatic changes: the government increased research grants and stipends for instructors and researchers. In his field, he told me, one could previously only apply for 50,000 to 60,000 RMB (about 6,200-7,500 USD) for a research project. After 1997 and 1998, one could be granted 250,000 RMB (about

²³ Ma, interview by author, November 15, 2005.

32,000 USD) for a project. At the time of my interview, Professor Huang was working on three projects and his annual earnings reached 200,000 RMB (25,000 USD). Though this yearly income was not comparable at face value to his salary of 40-60,000 USD as an assistant professor in the United States, its real value was nothing less and in fact was even more, considering the relatively low living cost in China as well as the various benefits he enjoyed (such as subsidies for housing and transportation from the university). Professor Huang just bought a new spacious house. He told me that a few days earlier he had talked on the phone with his friends who stayed in the United States. He told them: “if you don’t return because you still think that the living standard in China is lower than that in the United States, you are absolutely wrong.”²⁴

The ample research sources and socioeconomic opportunities for returnees have been largely a result of changes in Chinese government policies towards overseas students and student-turned immigrants since the 1990s. As noted by David Zweig who studies overseas Chinese students and China’s study-abroad program, the Chinese government’s attitudes towards mainlanders who studied abroad without returning to China underwent a sea change in the 1990s.²⁵ In the late 1980s, Chinese government officials had been concerned with a “brain drain” (loss of Chinese students and talents to other countries), and the Tiananmen Incident led conservative Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leaders to see overseas students and scholars who marched in protest in the West as class enemies (*jieji diren*). However, after Deng’s southern tour and with his famous calling on overseas students to return to assist China’s modernization, policies

²⁴ Huang, interview by author, September 14, 2005.

²⁵ David Zweig, Chung Siu Fung and Han Donglin, “Redefining the ‘Brain Drain’: China’s ‘Diaspora Option,’” *Science, Technology & Society* 13, no. 1 (2008): 1-33.

towards overseas students and scholars liberalized considerably. In 1992, the government publicized its official twelve-word slogan on returnee policy, i.e., “support overseas studies, encourage returning to China, and freedom to come and go” (*zhi-chi chu-guo, gu-li hui-guo, lai-qu zi-you*). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also started at the end of 2000 to issue long-term, multiple entry visas to overseas students and scholars so they could travel back and forth easily. In 2001, the Chinese government again adjusted its policies and encouraged overseas students and migrants to contribute to the development of China in a more flexible way. The new policy called on mainlanders abroad to “serve the nation” (*weiguo fuwu*) without necessarily “returning to the nation” (*huiguo fuwu*). The new policy also “enumerated how students who are green card or even foreign passport holders could return to China and receive the same benefits as local Chinese in terms of job prospects, housing purchases, and schooling for their children.”²⁶

The Chinese government also launched a variety of programs and provided funds for recruiting overseas student migrants. In 1997, the government established the “spring light project” (*chunhui jihua*) to encourage and facilitate the return of overseas students and scholars. In December 1998, the Ministry of Education and sixty-three Chinese universities jointly published a series of advertisements in the overseas editions of *Renmin Ribao* (*People’s Daily*) and *Guangming Ribao* (*Guangming Daily*) offering employment for 148 specially-appointed (*te-pin*) professors, mainly targeting Chinese

²⁶ *Renshibu, jiaoyubu, kejibu, gonganbu, caizhengbu* *guanyu yinfa “Guanyu guli haiwai liuxue renyuan yi duozhong xingshi wei guo fuwu di rogan yijian” de tongzhi*, May 14, 2001 (*Renfa* No. 49, 2001). Also see its English translation: “A Number of Opinions on Encouraging Overseas Students to Provide China with Many Different Forms of Service,” *Chinese Education and Society* 36, no. 2 (March/April 2003): 6-11.

scholars remaining abroad. The Ministry of Education also appropriated special funds ranging from 600 million to 1.8 billion RMB to Beijing University, Qinghua University and a few other elite universities to raise the salary of their faculty (including hiring and paying returnees) and develop themselves to “world-class” universities. In November 2000, the Ministry of Education began a program inviting people to return during their summer vacation and paid them as much as five times their overseas salaries.²⁷ The government also helped establish high-tech and business parks with favorable tax policies or low-interest loan policies for returnees. By 2003, there were 110 business parks across China with 6,000 enterprises, and the majority of those enterprises were run by returnees.²⁸ The proactive role of Chinese government in reaching out for Chinese student migrants was not fruitless. A survey of 185 returnees in Shanghai shows that about half of them were aware of the government incentive programs, and, in fact, people with more than five years experience abroad (thus very likely students-turned immigrants) were more likely to know about the programs.²⁹

Besides the favorable policies towards returning talents, the Chinese government also took positive, though cautious, actions to reform its migration policies. Inside China, the growth of market economy has both stimulated and become dependent on the

²⁷ Stanley Rosen and David Zweig, “Transnational Capital: Valuing Academic Returnees in a Globalizing China,” Center on China’s Transnational Relations, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, <http://www.cctr.ust.hk/articles/pdf/transnational.pdf>; Zweig, “Redefining the ‘Brain Drain.’”

²⁸ Xinhuanet, August 16, 2004, cited in David Zweig, Willfried Vanbonacker, Chung Siu Fung and Stanley Rosen, “Reverse Migration and Regional Integration: Entrepreneurs and Scientists in PRC,” Center on China’s Transnational Relations (CCTR) Working Papers, no. 6, April 2005.

<http://www.cctr.ust.hk/articles/pdf/WorkingPaper6.pdf>.

²⁹ Luo, Fei and Huang, “China: Government Policies and Emerging Trends of Reversal of the Brain Drain,” 100.

flow of labor,³⁰ thus placing challenges on the restrictive migration policies under the notorious household registration (*hukou*) system. Consequently, the administrative control upon internal migration has been “reformed, relaxed and localized, giving rise to increased mobility of the population in general and of rural laborers in particular.”³¹ Since 1997 and especially after 2001, there have been so-called “deep reforms” of the household registration system, with various schemes in some provinces and cities permitting permanent migration and permanent residence of migrants, though the major target migrants are the needed (especially highly skilled) labor and the rich.³²

With the increasing economic, social and cultural exchanges between China and other countries, the number of Chinese applying for passports and visiting abroad has increased tremendously in the past decade. According to Chinese officials, China issued more than 4.8 million passports in 2004, while before 1978 the annual figure on average was only 17,000.³³ The Chinese government has reconstructed its passport laws and simplified the border exit and entry policies in order to meet the increasing demands of Chinese citizens going abroad. In April 29, 2006, China passed the first passport law in the history of the People’s Republic of China(effective on Jan 1, 2007) to standardize and facilitate the procedure of passport application. It is considered a constitutional right of citizens to go abroad, and Chinese citizens do not need to present invitation

³⁰ Tamara Jacka, “My Life as a Migrant Worker: Women in Rural-Urban Migration in Contemporary China,” *Intersection: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context* 4 (September 2000), http://wwwsshe.murdoch.edu.au/intersections/issue4/tamara_intro.html.

³¹ Wang Fei-ling, *China’s Household Registration (Hukou) System: Discrimination and Reforms*, Prepared Statement, Roundtable before the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, 109th Congress, 1st Session (September 2, 2005), 30.

³² Ibid.

³³ *People’s Daily Online*, “China Drafts Passport Law to Standardize Passport Application,” December 25, 2005, http://english.people.com.cn/200512/25/eng20051225_230637.html.

letters from abroad to apply for a passport, though they still need to state the reasons and purposes of their going abroad. The new law also shortens the time limit for public security authorities to deal with passport applications so that applicants can receive their passports in fifteen days after submitting applications.³⁴ Official records have also shown that the number of Chinese citizens going abroad has increased continuously. China counted more than 302 million entries and exits in 2005, including around 40 million foreigners and 262 million Chinese citizens. The number of Chinese citizens crossing national boundaries had increased 8.42 percent from 2004.³⁵ A sculpture by a Chinese artist vividly showed the changes and excitement of the newly gained freedom of going and visiting abroad by ordinary Chinese citizens, including peasants who could hardly dream of going abroad before the 1990s.³⁶ (see Figure 7)

³⁴ *China Daily*, “China's First Passport Law Comes into Effect,” December 30, 2006, <http://www.china.org.cn/english/government/194422.htm>.

³⁵ Xinhua News Agency, “China Simplifies Border Entry, Exit Formalities,” December 21, 2006, <http://www.china.org.cn/english/travel/193378.htm>.

³⁶ Mr. Lei Yixin was the Director of the Sculpture Institute in Hunan Province at the time of our meeting. He was invited (initially contacted by a prominent local Chinese immigrant in the Twin Cities who visited China) to attend the International Stone Carving Symposium in St. Paul, May-June 2006. He showed electronic copies of a series of his sculptures (including this one) in a power point presentation in a farewell party where I met him. The party was sponsored by the Minnesota Chapter of U.S.-China Friendship Association and was attended by local Chinese Americans. Mr. Lei was also contacted by the Sculpture Committee of Martin Luther King Square during his stay in Minnesota (again, through the introduction by local Chinese Americans) and was later selected by the Committee to sculpt a stone statue of Martin Luther King, which was scheduled to be unveiled in the Martin Luther King Square in Washington in 2008. Mr. Lei’s experience is a vivid example of the expanding cultural and social exchanges between China and the United States and of the important role Chinese immigrants in the United States played in the exchanges.



Figure 7. “Leaving the Country”
Source: Sculpture by Chinese artist Lei Yixin, 1999.

The changing Chinese migration policies and the increasing economic opportunities in China can be best seen in Zhang’s experiences. Zhang was among the earliest groups of students going abroad after China’s reform. He came to the United States in 1985 without thinking about the possibility of returning to China. As he said, after the Cultural Revolution, people just wanted to leave and never return to China. Zhang recalled that at the time when he applied for studying abroad, he had to send applications to numerous offices to get numerous stamps for the approval of his application. Even the Residents’ Committee (*juweihui*) of the neighborhood could “determine your fate by refusing to give you the required stamp.” Zhang’s younger sister, who also applied for studying in the United States in the same year, experienced extreme difficulties in obtaining those stamps. Partly because of this painful experience, she never returned to China in the past twenty years after she left. In the United States, Zhang always had a nightmare that once he returned to China, Chinese police would no

longer let him leave China. However, since his first return to China in 2000, he “had never had such a dream any more.” Zhang found that now China is “much better than before, with little personal hassling (from the government).” Zhang’s returning trajectory demonstrates well the historical changes in both the United States and China in the late 1990s. He graduated in the early 1990s in the United States and easily found a well-paid job in the Motorola Company. As he recalled, finding a job was easy at that time. His immigrant status adjustment was also smooth because of the high labor demands in the United States. In the late 1990s, Zhang joined an IT company run by a Chinese American in California. Then the IT bubble burst and his company began layoffs, shrinking from 100 to a few more than 10 employees. Allured by economic opportunities in China, his company then relocated to China in 2000.³⁷

Another returnee I interviewed in Beijing did not think about returning to China either when he left for the United States. Gao participated in the Tiananmen student democratic demonstrations in 1989. He left China in 1990, when “Deng Xiaoping had not delivered his Southern Tour Speech, and the situation in China at that time was quite depressing.” Gao studied film-making in the United States and made a short movie which won him an award and facilitated his green card application. Believing in the potential that China’s reform held for the media industry and realizing that few Chinese film directors had ever entered the mainstream U.S. film industry, Gao accepted an offer from China and returned to Beijing after he obtained his American green card in 1996. A relatively early returnee, he witnessed numerous and profound changes in China and was still excited years later when I interviewed him. Gao was now

³⁷ Zhang, interview by author, July 20, 2005.

working as the director of one of the largest private media corporations in China. It had been quite difficult to find a time in his tight schedule for an interview. Finally, we found a Friday afternoon and had a two-and-a-half-hour conversation (a rare relaxation time for Gao as he joked) in the conference room of his office building. His company is located by the busy third ring of Beijing and occupies two large adjacent buildings. During my interview, I asked Gao about his return in China and how he “re-localized” himself in China, a word I used to see how he has identified himself with and adapted to the sending society. Gao became interested in this word. “It is not the same China that we are returning to,” Gao said,

The concept of “re-localize” you used is quite interesting. But in fact, for us... (there are) different time periods: the time when we went abroad, the time when we were abroad, the time when we came back, and the time of the present. This is not just a matter of location; this is not just a concept of location, but a concept of the changing time... China at present and China before are totally two Chinas. So you cannot say this is the same location... This is the key. So if you think you are returning to (something)... then in the beginning of your returning you already have a fixed and presupposed concept, thinking that China is just like that. Indeed, even the China when I came back (in 1997) had been so different from the China at this time.³⁸

Describing the changes in his own field—media— Gao used three English words in a row: “this industry is in the process of capitalizing, industrializing, and privatizing.” Compared to the traditional role of media in China as a tool of state ideology, Gao emphasized that these changes definitely meant something. Though Gao did not explain in detail the changes in the media industry, he pointed out that the privatization in China has also been most dynamic in other fields (such as private schools) and this is the “essence of issues now in China.” Gao’s insights seem to be confirmed by recent changes in China’s Constitution regarding private property rights.

³⁸ Gao, interview by author, October 15, 2005.

In 2004, China amended its Constitution to enshrine private property rights, though not without intense opposition from left-wing politicians and intellectuals.³⁹ In March 2007, the National People's Congress further passed the property rights law, which stipulates that “the property right of the state, the collective, the individual and other legal holders is protected by law, and no units or individuals may infringe upon it.”⁴⁰ It was the first time that “equal protection to state and private properties has been enshrined in a Chinese law.”⁴¹ According to *The Economist*, the new property rights law, although not without limitations, is a “breakthrough” and may lead to China’s “next revolution.”⁴²

“Rising China” and Changes in Migrant Identity

The fast developing economy and the changing Chinese society has had an immense impact on the identity of Chinese student migrants and returnees. A first sign of the impact is the growing national and ethnic pride of Chinese student migrants. When I interviewed Gao in October 2005, China’s second manned Shenzhou-VI

³⁹ The Fourth Amendment of PRC Constitution, 10th National People's Congress (NPC), 2nd Session, March 14, 2004. Provision 6 of the Amendment revised Article 13 of the Constitution from “[T]he State protects the right of citizens to own lawfully earned income, savings, houses and other lawful property” and “[T]he State protects according to law the right of citizens to inherit private property” to the following: “Citizens' lawful private property is inviolable. The State, in accordance with law, protects the rights of citizens to private property and to its inheritance. The State may, in the public interest and in accordance with law, expropriate or requisition private property for its use and shall make compensation for the private property expropriated or requisitioned.”

<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/constitution/constitution.html>; http://english.gov.cn/2005-08/05/content_20813.htm.

⁴⁰ Property Rights Law of PRC, 10th NPC, 5th Session, March 16, 2007, http://www.law-lib.com/law/law_view.asp?id=193400.

⁴¹ *People's Daily Online*, “China's Top Legislature Adopts Landmark Property Law,” March 16, 2007, http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200703/16/eng20070316_358242.html.

⁴² *The Economist*, “China's Next Revolution,” March 10, 2007, http://economist.com/opinion/displaystory.cfm?story_id=E1_RRTVDSV. PBS also notes that the law was to safeguard “assets of China's growing middle class” and “strengthen protection for private businesses, a sector that accounts for 65 percent of China's gross national product.” *PBS Online*, “Socialist China Passed Private Property Law,” News Hour, March 16, 2007, http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/asia/jan-june07/china_03-16.html.

spacecraft had recently successfully accomplished its planned experiment in space and had been covered intensively by China's media filled with national pride.⁴³ Gao remembered his excitement and pride in watching the news and repeated in saying that "now China is really developed." Ironically, the year 2005 also witnessed the deadly Hurricane Katrina causing devastation along the U.S. Gulf Coast. Gao compared the success of China's space experiment with the chaos and mismanagement in the United States during the hurricane catastrophe. For him, the United States is not necessarily a land of safety and prosperity, while a changing and prospering China is worth returning to and being proud of it.⁴⁴

National and ethnic pride also shows itself when returnees saw a close link between the economic boom and the rise of China and their own career opportunities. In Gao's words, "China now is respected widely in the world because of its vigorous economy. The world needs market, Americans need market. The access (to the market) is here (China), the market is here." "Nowadays when I go to the Wall Street," Gao told me, "people will respect me and view me as if the key to China's wealth was held in my hands." This respect and dignity, Gao emphasized, can never be obtained if he were living in the United States as a minority.⁴⁵ Similar words also came from Ye whom I met in a returnee club in Beijing. Ye went to study in Canada in 1988 and obtained his green card after the 1989 Tiananmen Incident. He obtained his Canadian citizenship in 1993 and stayed in Vancouver before he returned to Beijing in 2002. In fact, he had

⁴³ *People's Daily Online*, "Shenzhou-VI Spacecraft Returns home," October 17, 2005, http://english.people.com.cn/200510/17/eng20051017_214689.html

⁴⁴ Gao, interview by author, October 15, 2005.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

already started flying back and forth in 1995 before he and his wife fully returned and settled down in Beijing. As he remarked, “now China has developed and has a huge market. Westerners have to pay attention to us. They now respect you exactly because they see China has developed.” Though he had obtained Canadian citizenship, Ye still viewed himself as Chinese and drew a distinct line between Chinese (us) and westerners. For him, China’s development had directly affected his own career, and the American company he was working with in Beijing viewed him as a great asset.⁴⁶

While expressing strong ethnic pride as Chinese, returning student migrants did not blindly identify with the “patriotism” the Chinese government used to label returned student migrants. Pan said to me in the beginning of my interview that “serving the country,” the slogan of the Chinese government, was too vague. “We are not returning for the propagated ‘repay our motherland’ (baoguo); we are coming back for our broad social connections, our emotional attachment, as well as the increasing opportunities back in China.”⁴⁷ Sun came to study music in the United States in 1986. He returned to China in 1994 and founded the Paige Movie and TV Program Company. In his opinion, it is stupid to label one’s return as “patriotic,” especially considering the political ideology of that term. “I can say I love my country. But this kind of patriotism has nothing to do with politics. Loving one’s country is a feeling of peoplehood and of ethnic identity (*minzhu qingjie*), especially for those who once stayed abroad and who are more likely to be patriotic because the strength of their own country provides support for each individual abroad.” As Sun said, he had not returned out of

⁴⁶ Ye, interview by author, October 16, 2005.

⁴⁷ Pan, interview by author, August 1, 2005.

“patriotism” but had made a natural choice based on his own wish to be “doing something.” Though he could make a good living in the United States, he found that he would have more opportunities in China than in the United States, considering the fact that he was working on issues related to culture.⁴⁸

China’s social changes and economic development since the 1990s had also changed the understanding of Chinese students and student migrants of “going abroad” and the “American dream.” In 1988, journalists Hu Ping and Zhang Shengyou wrote a report on the surging waves of Chinese students’ going abroad in the 1980s (many of them were former “Red-Guards” during the Cultural Revolution).⁴⁹ The report won a national journalism award for documenting this historical wave of emigration from China. In 1996, Hu Ping wrote another report, pointing out that while the wave of Chinese going abroad was still going on, the fever of going abroad in the 1990s was just one among continually-emerging new exciting fevers in China: the fever of establishing and joining business corporations, the fever of real estate, the fever of speculating stocks (*chaogu*), the fever of studying *I Ching* (“Books of Changes,” ancient Chinese texts describing a system of cosmology and philosophy emphasizing balance and change), the fever of *Qigong* (a Chinese way of meditation to accumulate energy for health), the fever of re-adoration of Chairman Mao, the fever of the Olympics and China’s application for hosting the Olympics, the fever of football, the fever of tourism, and so on.⁵⁰ Chinese immigrants abroad who visited China, according to a female writer who had spent a year in the United States, no longer necessarily received admiration or

⁴⁸ Chen Yanni, ed., *Meiguo zhi hou*, vol. 1 (Beijing: Zuojia chubanshe, 2000), 92.

⁴⁹ Hu Ping and Zhang Shengyou, *Shijie da chuanlian* (Changsha: Hunan wenyi chubanshe, 1988).

⁵⁰ Hu Ping, *Yimin Meiguo* (Zhengzhou: Henan renmin chubanshe, 1997), 105.

“jealousy” from people staying in China. The writer noted instead that with China’s economic and social development, Chinese abroad are now perceived with three *qi* (characteristics). First, they are in rustic and outdated dress (*tu qi*) compared to the constantly changing fashion in Chinese cities. Secondly, they spend money in a modest and even “stingy” way (*xiao qi*) compared to the “generosity” of many middle- and upper-class Chinese. Thirdly, they talk in a language with mixed Chinese and foreign accents and vocabulary (*yang qi*), which is no longer viewed as that fashionable after China has become increasingly integrated into the international society and more and more Chinese gained access to the world.⁵¹

The increasingly diversified domestic society, the unprecedented economic and social opportunities in China, together with the influx of returnees from abroad, contributed to the changes of the motivation of Chinese students’ going abroad. As a Hong Kong monthly journal reported in 2001,

The “return-to-China heat” wave has caused the “American dream” to fade rapidly among young Chinese, who are now casting their eyes toward their motherland. As far as Chinese young people are concerned, the purpose of going abroad to study is no longer “to stay and live abroad”; it has now become a process strengthening one’s own competitiveness. Today, the “new concept” of studying abroad is to complete one’s studies and go back to one’s opportunity-filled motherland where one can make use of one’s abilities and pursue one’s own success values. The “China opportunity theory” has apparently become a new trend among the new generation of young Chinese.⁵²

Compared with the development and opportunities in China, the United States has been viewed by many Chinese student migrants not as a “land of opportunity” but a “land without change.” A common example given by returnees is that whenever they

⁵¹ Zhang Aiping, *Meiguo meng Zhongguo qing* (Beijing: Zhongguo wenlian chubanshe, 1997), 192-200.

⁵² Gao Shanbei, “‘Zhongguo jihui lun’ yu liuxuesheng ‘huigui re,’” *Jingbao yuekan*, July 2001, 72-73. Also see its English translation: “The ‘China Opportunity Theory’ and the Overseas Students’ ‘Return-to-China Heat,’ *Chinese Education and Society* 36, no.2 (March/April 2003): 84-87.

came back to the United States, they found the stop sign in their neighborhood exactly the same place without any change, while whenever they went back to China, they could hardly recognize an old street because it had been constantly under construction with new buildings rising up. This sense of “lack of change” in the receiving society belies the traditional framework in American immigration studies that portrays the United States as the “land of opportunities” and the sending society as unchanging and disappearing from migrants’ lives.⁵³

For some student migrants who observed the U.S. society more critically, the unchanging U.S. society in fact meant an “institutionalized life” rather than an “American dream.” As Gao, the returnee mentioned earlier who emphasized return as a concept of time rather than location, described his observation of the United States in the following terms:

“Life in America is institutionalized. Once you enter this institution, you became part of it... you just need to follow the certain life pattern... you know that if you do this, then you get that... This may make an immigrant feel secure and also feel hard to give up what he already had.”

Zhang remarked that China is now developing so fast that many new migrants “feel a dilemma [of whether to return or stay] and feel uneasy to just stay in the United States [while missing opportunities in China].”⁵⁴

⁵³ On the other hand, this sense of seeing no changes in the United States among migrants may also reveal the detachment of Chinese student migrants from American society and the “lack of opportunities” for these immigrants as a minority to enter the “mainstream” U.S. society to affect public policies and initiate social changes.

⁵⁴ Gao, interview by author, October 15, 2005.

This chapter has examined the historical changes in both the United States and China that led to the increasing return migration of Chinese students and students-turned immigrants. It argues that the socioeconomic changes of the United States since the late 1990s (such as the economic downturn and the hardship of immigrant status adjustment) have led many Chinese student migrants to rethink the idea of staying in the United States. At the same time, the “rising China” has bolstered the ethnic pride of Chinese student migrants and led to the surge of their return migration. It is therefore not the simple push-pull model in conventional immigration studies that emphasizes a linear immigration process with the sending society pushing at the beginning and the receiving one pulling at the end; instead, it is a dynamic process with both societies frequently changing, and exercising changing pushes and pulls, and with the sending society constantly transforming and renewing its relationships with emigrants, which impacts their migration patterns and identity.

Just as immigration is never a linear process, migrants’ return is hardly a decision or action once for all but is based on careful calculation of the benefits and risks of return for their career development, economic gains, family interests, among other things. Furthermore, returning migrants have to navigate the legal complexities regarding their immigrant status, nationality, and citizenship, which have been traditionally reserved as the terrain of nation-states. The following chapter will address these issues by focusing on the meanings of citizenship to returning migrants for their transnational mobility and identity.

Chapter 5

Return Migration and Transnational Citizenship

In an online posting on Haiguinet on March 31, 2006, a man sought advice on whether he should return to China or not. He was working in Silicon Valley with an annual salary of 80,000- 90,000 USD. A company in the Zhangjiang high-tech park in Shanghai offered him a middle-rank manager position. The offer was attractive: 400-500,000 RMB (about 50-63,000 USD, thus very high compared to the local salary level) plus many pre-paid options. An immediate online reply commented on the importance of U.S. citizenship in guaranteeing the returnee's salary level. "If you are not an American citizen, with that high salary, I guess it will be embarrassing in one year, because people in China can also do your work. Why should you be paid that high? ... Thus, better get an American citizenship before returning."¹

In another online posting, a returnee talked about his experience of reentering the United States via the Los Angeles airport in late 2004 after attending a meeting of returnees in Guangzhou, Southern China. At that time he had had his green card for four months, and the immigration officer at the airport repeatedly asked him questions about how long he had stayed in China, for what reason, and what he was doing in the United States. "This really frightened me," he recalled. To secure his green card and possibly apply for U.S. citizenship later, he was considering buying some real estate in the United States, as suggested by his friends.²

¹ Babyblue, posting to Haiguinet, March 31, 2006, <http://www.haiguinet.com/bbs/viewtopic.php?p=944036>.

² Pbird, posting to Haiguinet, August 1, 2005, <http://www.haiguinet.com/forum/viewtopic.php?p=837075>.

These two accounts of returning migrants illustrate the complexity of return and the role of citizenship in migrants' decision to return as well as their lives after return. Citizenship is not a simple paper that indicates one's legal status; it is closely tied to returning migrants' value in the global labor market hierarchy and to their ability to cross national boundaries. Many migrants were entangled with both U.S. and Chinese citizenship at the same time, requiring returning migrants to negotiate their transnational mobility and identity.

In recent years, immigration scholars have increasingly revised the traditional concept of citizenship. As Christian Joppke points out, immigration has challenged and changed the liberal post-war orthodoxy of citizenship as codified by T. H. Marshall, in which citizenship is viewed as a process of the enlargement of rights in a rather homogeneous western society. "The movement of people across states revealed that citizenship is not only a set of rights, but also a mechanism of closure that sharply demarcates the boundaries of states."³ Scholars from various disciplines have also moved from a narrow focus on citizenship as a static legal status to studying citizenship as a site of negotiation and social practices of migrants in their daily lives.⁴

This chapter argues that for a large number of returning Chinese student migrants, citizenship is not a signifier of assimilation or of permanent settlement but a

³ Christian Joppke, "How Immigration Is Changing Citizenship: A Comparative View," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22, no.4 (1999): 629.

⁴ For example, Aihwa Ong, *Buddha is Hiding: Refugees, Citizenship, the New America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Erika Lee, *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration during the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); George J. Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Kunal M. Parker, "State, Citizenship, and Territory: the Legal Construction of Immigrants in Antebellum Massachusetts," *Law and History Review* 19 (2001): 583-643; Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996). For a more comprehensive list of major works on citizenship studies in history and other disciplines, see footnotes 70, 71, and 72 in the "Introduction" of the dissertation.

status used for transnational mobility and the crossing of the national boundaries which define and justify citizenship. This chapter first examines the dilemma of immigrant status for many returning migrants and their pragmatic usage of U.S. citizenship. It then investigates the “dual nationality” debate in China and among Chinese migrants. In the end, it discusses how student migrants became a “translated group” and called for more citizenship rights in China.

Why U.S. Citizenship: “instrumental citizenship” for transnational mobility⁵

Traditional studies on immigration emphasize the adaptation of immigrants to the receiving society and study naturalization as a signifier of assimilation. Scholars have also called for more investigation of the various social institutions that affected migrants’ choice of naturalization. For example, in his analysis of the 1980 U.S. census, Philip Q. Yang argued that the propensity of migrants to naturalize was in fact influenced by a wide variety of factors, such as their age and marital status, the political, economic, social and geographical contexts of the sending country, and the ethnic community of the receiving society.⁶ Other works point to the impact of changing immigration laws, migrants’ desire for political participation and welfare benefits in the host society, their traditional cultural understanding of citizenship, and their need for

⁵ I borrow the term “instrumental citizenship” from Ip, Inglis and Wu’s study of recent Asian immigrants (from China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Japan and the Philippines) in Australia. Ip and his associates pointed out that for considerable numbers of these immigrants, their decisions of whether to acquire Australian citizenship were large based on practical and instrumental considerations of citizenship such as political participation and welfare benefits, political protection of freedom and security, and economic and educational benefits. David Ip, Christin Inglis and Chung Tong Wu, “Concepts of Citizenship and Identity among Recent Asian Immigrants in Australia,” *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* 6 (1997): 374, 379.

⁶ Philip Q. Yang, “Explaining Immigrant Naturalization,” *International Migration Review* 28, no.3 (1994): 449-77.

international travel and business.⁷ Immigrants' choice of citizenship, therefore, is often based on careful calculation of the costs and benefits of naturalization.

An important reason for returning Chinese migrants to apply for U.S. citizenship is the advantageous position of a U.S. citizen in the global labor market. Besides the online advice quoted in the beginning that highlighted the necessity of U.S. citizenship to justify a high salary, a more vivid example is my interview with a returnee in Shanghai. Zhang returned to China in 2001 and worked as a senior manager for an American company in the Zhangjiang high-tech park. His company had 400 employees; among them, 15-20 people had passports of another country, and 20-30 persons had overseas experiences. Zhang included in the latter category both people who once studied in the U.S. but did not obtain U.S. citizenship and those who obtained immigrant status or citizenship of a country other than the U.S. (such as Canada). As he said, for the same position in his company, the salary of these Canadian immigrants was about 1.5 to 2 times higher than local people, while the salary for employees like him with U.S. citizenship was 4 times the local package. Zhang told the story of a talented Chinese who first worked in the headquarters of his company in the United States and then was sent back to China before obtaining American immigrant status or citizenship. Soon, the managers of the company lowered his salary because they assumed (subconsciously and unanimously, as Zhang said) that this man could not easily go back to the U.S. again and therefore was not worth the American-level payment. Zhang stressed that in his own case, his U.S. citizenship, and his family still in the U.S.,

⁷ Examples include Greta Gilbertson and Audrey Singer, "The Emergence of Protective Citizenship in the USA: Naturalization among Dominican Immigrants in the Post 1996 Welfare Reform Era," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 26 (2003): 25-51; Ip, Inglis and Wu, "Concepts of Citizenship and Identity"; Aiwha Ong, *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality* (Duke and London: Duke University Press, 1999).

ensured his mobility back and forth between the United States and China and helped him bargain for an ideal payment package. He called this a “potential,” a “tension” (here he referred to a manageable force), which in fact not only included advantageous payment but his “confidence level.”⁸

Zhang’s case illustrates the role of U.S. citizenship in bargaining for a privileged economic status or for a so-called “expatriate compensation package” which is usually far better than local-level payments.⁹ In recent years, there has been a trend among foreign companies in China to localize its workforce and tighten expatriate packages to contain casts, even though the demands for expatriates and talent remain high.¹⁰ According to the Study of China Expatriate Compensation and Benefits in 2006 by the Hewitt Associates, the world’s leading human resources (HR) outsourcing and consulting services provider and the largest HR consulting firm in China, 55 percent of the companies participating in the study reported they had a formal localization plan in place, up from 46 percent in 2005.¹¹ In another study titled “managing returnees,” Hewitt reported on how companies managed returnee’s pay (here Hewitt defined returnees as those who had studied or worked abroad but returned and settled down in

⁸ Zhang, interview by author, July 20, 2005.

⁹ An expatriate here means an employee assigned to work abroad for a period of time. An expatriate compensation package usually was designed to match the regular salary level in the country that the employee was sent from as well as covering various relocation costs. A traditional expatriate compensation package therefore generally consists of the following items: base salary; benefits such as housing, insurance, children’s schooling, bonus, spouse support, home trips, transportation, etc; bonus; expatriate premiums such as COLA (Cost of Living Allowance) and foreign-service premiums. For expatriates from developed countries to developing countries, this expatriate compensation package often means remarkable contrast with the local payment level. For many returning Chinese student migrants, it had been most ideal to be sent back as an “expat.”

¹⁰ Danish Trade Council in China, *HR-Issues in China*, June 2005, 50, www.dtcchina.um.dk/NR/rdonlyres/0447E1CF-98F4-42E2-AE35-3E683A66B0AD/0/HRissuesinChina.pdf (accessed May 29, 2007).

¹¹ Hewitt Associates, “Study of China Expatriate Compensation and Benefits,” December 14, 2006, <http://www.hewittassociates.com/Intl/AP/en-CN/AboutHewitt/Newsroom/PressReleases/2006/dec-14-06.aspx> (accessed May 29, 2007).

China; this definition basically refers to those returned students who had not obtained immigrant status or citizenship of the country where they had studied or worked).

According to this study, among the companies surveyed in 2003, 40 percent simply based the compensation package for returnees on the local employee structure, 50 percent adopted some kind of hybrid packages, while only about 10 percent used an expatriate design. The report further noted that in recent years, returnees had found it difficult to secure the pay levels of the past.¹²

Among expatriates, those with western nationalities dominated the top positions and their salary levels were far higher than those of local employees or returning Chinese students who did not change their citizenship. According to the 2005 Hewitt study, westerners formed the highest percentage of top executives in the survey (54 percent), and the highest percentage of expatriates at the managerial level were either westerners (29 percent) or China-hired foreigners (27 percent).¹³ Another Hewitt study in 2004 shows that while the salary level for senior expatriates ranged between \$160,000 and \$320,000, compensation packages for China-hired foreigners dropped 20-30 percent below expatriate pay and mainland Chinese returnees (most likely without western nationalities) were 60 percent below.¹⁴ As a result, for many returning Chinese student migrants from the United States, obtaining U.S. citizenship and retaining a base in the United States (therefore likely to be hired in the United States rather than in

¹²Hewitt Associates, “Managing ‘Returnees,’” May 10, 2004, <http://www.cbiz.cn/news/printable.asp?id=2082> (accessed May 29, 2007).

¹³ Hewitt Associates, “Hewitt Associates Releases Latest China Expatriate Compensation Study,” December 6, 2005, <http://www.hewittassociates.com/Intl/AP/en-CN/AboutHewitt/Newsroom/PressReleases/2005/dec-06-05.aspx> (accessed December 3, 2006).

¹⁴ The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), *China Hand Chapter 8 Human Resources*. August Main Report, August 2004, cited in Danish Trade Council in China, *HR-Issues in China*, 53.

China), as Zhang did, have played a critical role in getting assigned an advantageous compensation package.

Scholars have discussed the impact of the market and capitalism in transforming the traditional meaning of “citizenship.” Luin Goldring talks about a form of “market membership,” referring to the practice of legitimizing one’s membership rights in a neoliberal regime based on one’s market position (such as remittances, investment and consumption).¹⁵ Aihwa Ong also discusses how neoliberalism transformed the U.S. citizenship and led to the differentiation between “worthy” citizens and “unworthy citizens” according to their economic status and contribution.¹⁶ A look at returning migrants reveals the capitalization of U.S. citizenship outside of the United States based on its privilege in the unequal international labor market.

As professionals who frequently traveled internationally, returning Chinese student migrants also considered the advantage of naturalization and a U.S. passport to be the free access it gave them to most other countries. Almost all my interviewees in China gave the convenience of international travel with a U.S. passport as one of the foremost reasons for applying for U.S. citizenship.

¹⁵ Luin Goldring, “The Mexican State and Transmigrant Organizations: Negotiating the Boundaries of Membership and Participation,” *Latin American Research Review* 37, no. 3 (2002): 55-99. Goldring analyzes the recent reform of Mexican nationality law that granted Mexican emigrants “the property rights of nationals without the political rights of citizens.” Goldring argues that this membership is “limited and symbolic” and indicates a “market membership.” “Political membership is defined in terms of market-readiness, that is, remittances, investment, and consumption. This offer of membership depends on transmigrants’ affective ties and nationalist sentiments to mobilize and maintain financial contributions and remittances, but it provides no formal mechanisms for political participation or representation.” See also David Fitzgerald, “Rethinking Emigrant Citizenship,” *New York University Law Review* 81 (April 2006): 90-116.

¹⁶ In *Flexible Citizenship and Buddha is Hiding*, Ong discusses how American neoliberalism transformed citizenship in the age of pragmatic consideration about productivity and profits. She points out that “[T]he neoliberal discourse that increasingly defines citizenship in economic terms, by insisting that citizenship is the civic duty of individuals to reduce their burden on society and to build up their human capital, becomes a vital supplemental to the classic liberal rights-based definition of citizenship.” Ong, *Buddha is Hiding*, 14.

On December 19, 2006, a Haiguinet member posted an article that had been widely distributed on the Internet.¹⁷ The article listed the numbers of visa-exempt countries for different passports.¹⁸ The United States is among the highest ranking among the 83 countries listed: U.S. citizens can enter about 130 countries or territories without the need to apply for an entry visa. In contrast, Chinese passport holders can only enjoy this visa-exempt privilege in around 18 countries, better only than passport holders from North Korea, Pakistan, Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan. The posting immediately aroused complaints among the online Haiguinet members about the difficulties in traveling internationally with Chinese passports. While it is hard to trace the original source of this passport ranking, a check with online official sources (the State Department of the United States and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China) shows that the statistics of the posting are generally accurate.¹⁹

¹⁷ Qiruanbayin, posting to Haiguinet, December 19, 2006, www.haiguinet.com/bbs/viewtopic.php?p=1059670.

¹⁸ This article had been posted widely on the internet, not just among Chinese community abroad but also on the website of China's official news agency www.xinhuanet.cn (in its "Discussion Forum"). As many other internet postings, it did not note the original source, though my scrutiny of relevant official sources show that it was generally correct. In another posting on Haiguinet, the author disagreed with the number cited in the above posting of visa-exempt countries for China and instead listed more than 50 countries that do not require visas for Chinese citizens. This respondent possibly was referring to the list I checked with the P.R. China Embassy in South Korea which included Chinese with all kinds of passports. Chinese passports are designed in four categories: passport for diplomats (*waijiao huzhao*), passport for government officials (*gongwu huzhao*), passport for common use (*putong huzhao*), and passport for residents in HK and Macau Special Administrative Regions (*tequ huzhao*). Passport for common use again consists of two types of passports: one is issued for business related to public affairs (*yin gong putong huzhao*), the other for personal issues (*yin shi putong huzhao*). This confusing passport system has been criticized widely, especially its differentiation between the "public"/official and the "private"/individual and its commonly-seen discrimination and restriction against the latter. *China Youth Daily*, "Zhongguo huzhao zhaoyu guoji ganga, yi xilie huzhao gaige tuichu" (Chinese passport was embarrassing, a series of reforms are pending), April 1, 2002, http://news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2002-04/01/content_338847.htm.

¹⁹ According to the U.S. State Department, among the more than 200 countries or territories listed, around 82 countries required visa for the entry of U.S. citizens, while around 130 countries do not ask for visa for U.S. citizens to enter ("no visa needed for tourist/business stay ranging from 30 days to a few months"), http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/brochures_brochures_1229.html#d (accessed May 30, 2007); As for China, I found on the website of Chinese Embassy in the Republic of Korea a list of countries that exempt visas for Chinese passport holders. There were fifty five countries in total in the list. However, the majority of them only exempt visas for Chinese diplomats or government officials (*waijiao huzhao* or

The differences between Chinese and U.S. citizenship (or more exactly, Chinese and U.S. “passports”) should be understood in a larger social and historical context. In his study of the historical development of the passport, John Torpey argues that the “invention of the passport” illuminates the “institutionalization of the idea of the ‘nation-state’ and its efforts of regulating people’s movements.” The ability of nation-states to “embrace” their subjects and to differentiate between nationals and non-nationals had largely depended on the “creation of documents that make the relevant differences knowable and thus enforceable.”²⁰ Here we can add that the function of a nation-state’s passport has been shaped by the imbalanced international system in which the European and American states enjoy greater privilege in gaining access to the major regions (and resources) of the world.

In the case of the United States, its rise to the status of a superpower after World War II and its impact worldwide expanded the reach of its passport: the eagle passport became an enviable golden pass with access to most of the world. In the case of China, its marginalization in the world stage since the mid-19th century, its late formation of a modern state and the lack of a powerful home state or effective diplomatic protection for Chinese abroad all led to the disadvantageous position of Chinese passport holders outside China. During the exclusion era (1882-1943), most Chinese were barred from entering the United States. After World War II, and during the Cold War, mainland

gongwu huzhao). Only twenty countries exempt visas for Chinese citizens holding common passports but using them for public purposes (*yi gong putong huzhao*). Five countries exempt visas for Chinese tourists in groups (who deal with border-crossing paperwork via travel agencies rather than individually). The only country exempts Chinese citizens with common passport without condition: San Marino, the microstate completely surrounded by Italy. Embassy of the P.R. China in the Republic of Korea, “Tong Zhongguo hu mian qianzheng de guojia,”

http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/ce/cekor/chn/lsqz/l_sqz_l_sqz_12/t229559.htm# (accessed March 21, 2009).

²⁰ John Torpey, *The Invention of the Passport: Surveillance, Citizenship and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 1.

China became a communist country which again rendered Chinese passports unacceptable in most other countries. Though Chinese citizens regained access to the world with China's reform and development after 1978, the Cold War legacy, the less well-off economic status and lack of desirable skills of many potential Chinese migrants, and the stereotype of Chinese as illegal immigrants have all contributed to the difficulties of Chinese passport holders in their free entry to other countries.

The unequal position of Chinese and U.S. passports in the world system led returning Chinese migrants to prefer U.S. citizenship since it guaranteed transnational mobility. On the other hand, some student migrants were not content with this privilege of U.S. citizenship and became aware of the larger historical context that produced it. In an online discussion following the topic on visa-exempt status of different countries, a Haiguinet member talked about the acceptance of a Chinese passport in different countries.²¹ According to him/her, a Chinese passport works well in entering Southeast Asian and the Middle East countries, though it may cause trouble for those working in the United States and conducting business with the countries of "the same type as the United States" that require visas for Chinese citizens to enter. "After all, the world is divided into a few camps," the author noted. "How many Canadians care to go to Vietnam and the Philippines? How many Americans are willing to go to any place in the Middle East? Nobody goes even if these countries exempt visas for citizens of the United States and Canada." These camps of countries are not all divided by economy, the author argued, because many countries in the Middle East have high living standards, and some cities in China and Southeast Asia have obtained economic

²¹ Bulabula, posting to Haiguinet, December 20, 2006, www.haiguinet.com/bbs/viewtopic.php?p=1060991.

achievements comparable to those in the so-called developed countries. The major reason is still the “ideological difference,” the author reminded other online members.²²

Besides economic gains and international travel, many returning migrants also based their applications for U.S. citizenship on careful consideration of family interests and children’s education. In a family story told by a man on Haiguinet, his wife insisted on staying in the United States. The man was 32 years old, the wife 30, and they had a lovely six-month-old child. They had had U.S. green cards for two and a half years. The man was offered a position back in China. The dilemma was that “we have not yet obtained American citizenship.” As the man described it,

My wife likes life in America and does not want to give it up. She also hopes our child can be educated in the U.S. But she said clearly that we cannot be apart from each other more than half a year, and the child has to be with her. I had thought about bringing our child back to China. It is cheap to hire a babysitter, and our parents are willing to help. But my wife does not want to be away from the child. My wife and I have a very good relationship. She said that if we can still get citizenship after returning, she will decide to return with me. With her background, it should not be difficult for her to find a job in China. Otherwise, she suggested that I think it over whether I should return. Either way we have to be together.²³

As this family story shows, U.S. citizenship has played a significant role in Chinese student migrants’ choice of returning, and it has been largely considered for its use in guaranteeing the family reunion in the United States and the high quality of education for children. This story also illustrates that in Chinese student migrant families women have played a crucial role in making the choice of returning or not and applying for U.S. citizenship or not as well as in planning for children’s education.

²² This author stated at the end of his posting that he thought the visa issue was not a major reason for many Chinese student migrants’ changing to another citizenship, which as he argued was in fact driven by some unrespectable and pragmatic motivations (here he possibly referred to the desire for material comfort). However, based on my interviews, I think the convenience for international travel is one of the main reasons for many Chinese student migrants’ applying for U.S. citizenship.

²³ Huibuhui, posting to Haiguinet, September 1, 2006, <http://www.haiguinet.com/forum/viewtopic.php?p=1012021&highlight=#1012021>.

Sometimes tensions arose between men and women concerning whether to return to China without U.S. citizenship and women showed strong determination in standing for the best interests of children's education. When the man in Silicon Valley sought advice on returning to Shanghai, as discussed above, a popular online female member (who most probably was staying in the United States according to her online postings) suggested that if the man had already changed his passport, he should definitely return; otherwise, he needed to think it over. (Note here that she referred to changing "passport" rather than "being naturalized" or "obtaining citizenship"; this implies migrants' strategic understanding of U.S. citizenship. Another respondent followed up that either a U.S. passport or a green card was fine because the man might not find it necessary to keep American legal status after returning to China and having a good life in China; otherwise he could still use his green card to return to the United States in one or two years if he could not adjust to Chinese society. The female member responded immediately: "[O]ne can go back to enjoy life in China. How about children?" She mentioned the problematic educational system in contemporary China and its negative impact on children's development. In a following message, she mocked male returnees for their neglect of family issues like children's education in their decision to return and in their choice of citizenship: "What to say about you men... who ever cared about this kind of things?"²⁴

Among the returning males and females I interviewed in China, there were those who did not view U.S. education as perfect or superior to China's educational system

²⁴ Hawalanubojue , posting to Haiguinet, March 31, 2006, <http://www.haiguinet.com/bbs/viewtopic.php?p=943790>. It is worth mentioning here that the online ID Hawala-nübojue, if translated into English, means Havana Countess, an interesting ID at least revealing the ID holder's preference for a non-Chinese outlook online.

and who in fact placed their children in Chinese schools.²⁵ However, it has been most common to hear Chinese student migrants, in fact both returnees and non-returnees, talk about the education of their children as one of their main reasons for their naturalization as U.S. citizens and for maintaining U.S. immigrant status or staying in the United States.

For some returning migrants, U.S. citizenship also served as a shelter protecting them from political uncertainty in mainland China. These returnees have been concerned with China's problematic legal system and the rule of the Communist Party of China (CPC). In a posting on October 26, 2005, an author asked whether a green card or citizenship was better for a returnee. An immediate reply remarked: "Let me say it again. Get the eagle passport whenever possible. The Party-Mother (*dang ma*)²⁶ will bring herself in front of you, and killing a person does not even need a trial." In contrast, with the eagle passport, "the worst situation is to stay in prison for two years and then to be deported out of China."²⁷

Though a significant motivation, political protection was not mentioned by student migrants as frequently as other reasons like economic gains and children's education. This is understandable because the majority of returnees have been pursuing opportunities in economic, social, or cultural fields rather than engaging in political activities which are still sensitive and restricted in China. As an online member pointed

²⁵ Many returnees also placed their children in costly international schools where English was used in classrooms. The business of international schools has been booming in China in recent years.

²⁶ Party-Mother (*dang ma*) may be a term originated from a popular song endorsed by the Communist Party of China—"Da ah, wo qin'ai de mama" (The Great Party, Our Dear Mother).

²⁷ Qiruanbayin, posting to Haiguinet, October 26, 2005, <http://www.haiguinet.com/bbs/viewtopic.php?p=876976&highlight=%E5%85%9A%E5%A6%88#876976>. It should be noted that the legal system of China had developed since the reform. The phenomenon of "killing a person does not need a court ruling" may still exist, but it should not be generalized as representing current Chinese legal system.

out in a discussion about whether a returning migrant should apply for U.S. citizenship: “He (the returnee) does not go back to practice *lun zhi* (referring to *Falungong*, my note), so it does not matter what passport he is holding.”²⁸ In fact, for many democratic activists outside of China, as Zeng Huiyan reported, they preferred not to apply for U.S. citizenship in the hope that they could legitimately engage with Chinese politics as “authentic” Chinese citizens.²⁹ Decisions about application for U.S. citizenship have been closely connected with homeland politics instead of signifying a complete settlement or assimilation into the receiving country.

The need for political protection through a foreign passport has also seemed to wane among Chinese student migrants along with China’s reform. Since 1978, China has shifted its focus from political movements or ideological persecution to economic development. The Communist Party of China has also sought to reconstruct itself (in the official slogan popular in the early 2000s, “*yu shi ju jing*”, which means “develop along with the changing time”). It has enlarged its membership by recruiting private business owners who belonged to the category of “capitalists” in past political movements and further wrote into its Constitution the clause of “private property protection” in 2007. With politics largely distant from people’s daily life and with social status mainly based on wealth rather than political or ideological labels, few returnees envisioned an imminent political persecution by the state, so obtaining the citizenship of another country seemed to be unnecessary. In the words of Wang whom I interviewed in China, “if you are rich, it is the same wherever you stay.” Wang worked for foreign companies

²⁸ Bulabula, posting to Haiguinet, March 31, 2006,
<http://www.haiguinet.com/bbs/viewtopic.php?p=943763>.

²⁹ Zeng Huiyan, “Weishengme 1/3 zai Mei huaren bu shengqing gongmin” (Why 1/3 Chinese in America Have not Applied for U.S. Citizenship), *The World Journal Weekly (Shijie Zhoubao)*, January 16, 2005; also see <http://www.ncn.org/asp/zwginfo/da-KAY.asp?ID=61782&ad=1/16/2005> (accessed May 4, 2005).

in China in the 1990s and was among those with the highest income in China. She came to study for an MBA degree in the United States in 2000. During the Christmas holiday in 2001, she brought her children and husband to the United States with the intention of settling down in the United States. However, after careful comparison between the United States and China, she gave up the idea of immigrating to the United States and instead returned to China and founded her own company.³⁰

As discussed above, U.S. citizenship has been used by many returning Chinese student migrants for economic gains, international travel convenience, family interests (like children's education), and shelter from political uncertainty in China. However, obtaining U.S. citizenship is not an overnight transition; it is a wait of five years after being granted lawful permanent resident status (LPR, or a green card). Applicants must stay in the United States for at least half of the five years and must not leave the United States for more than one year at a time. For many returning migrants, maintaining their green cards and accumulating the required time of duration of residing in the United States has been a big challenge (or "headache" as migrants called it).

For returning Chinese migrants, the online Haiguinet community has been a wonderful space for them to share their experiences and their strategies for maintaining immigrant status and transnational mobility. Returnees, potential returnees, and non-returnees from various countries (the United States, Canada, China, and so on) gathered in this virtual community to discuss issues related to return. There they exchanged information and strategies and shared happiness and sorrows.

An example of advice on how to deal with U.S. immigration laws and maintain immigrant status is a posting written by Zhang Zherui who came to study in the United

³⁰ Wang, interview by author, November 28, 2005.

States in 1985 and later founded his immigration law firm in the United States. Zhang pointed out a few major points that returnees needed to consider to maintain permanent residence while residing outside the United States: paying tax to the U.S. Internal Revenue Service, keeping an American address, keeping real estate in the United States rather than selling it, keeping U.S. credit cards and driver's license, getting certificates of work and duration of the employment, and maintaining bank accounts in the United States. If returnees were employed by a non-U.S. employer abroad, they should collect legal documents explaining the justification for staying out of the United States for a long term.³¹

While this posting offered formal legal advice, there are many more tips and suggestions on Haiguinet by ordinary student migrants based on their encounters with U.S. immigration officers. For example, on July 31, 2005, a returnee asked for advice on a citizenship application.³² In a few months she or he would have met the requirement of five years in the United States after obtaining lawful permanent residence status. Having stayed in the United States for about three years, she or he mainly stayed in China in the most recent two years, returned to the United States every three months, and stayed in the United States for only about a week. She or he was worried that immigration officers might ask tough questions about her/his absence from the United States. A respondent replied that based on her/his own partner's experience (traveling between China and the United States for about 20 times in three years), there

³¹ Zhang Zherui, "Yongyou lüka hou zhengyang keyi nyju haiwai you bus hi jongjiu jumin?" This article was originally written by Zhang on August 9, 2004, and then was forwarded to and posted on Haiguinet on December 10, 2004, <http://www.haiguinet.com/bbs/viewtopic.php?p=762315&highlight=...>

³² Xiaohuo, posting to Haiguinet, July 31, 2005, <http://www.haiguinet.com/bbs/viewtopic.php?t=836705&start=0&postdays=0&postorder=desc&highlight=&treeview=1&sid=5aea0344f8ab5cdbd69874f6c3b2c555>

should be little problem in the inquirer's citizenship application. However, the "name check" process by the Federal Bureau of Intelligence (FBI) after the September 11 terrorist attacks had become extremely slow. The respondent had even written to the House Representative of her or his state and was told to "wait patiently."

The respondent also offered tips on how to make citizenship application easier: "It is simple, just let immigration officer believe that you as a U.S. resident are 'permanent' (resident) as well as 'pledging your death to be loyal to the United States.'" The respondent placed the words of "permanent" and "pledging your death to be loyal to the United States" in quotation marks possibly to emphasize the importance of these legal requirements. He might also have used these legal terms in a satirical tone. After all, how can one prove oneself as a "permanent" resident when one is mainly staying in China, and how to prove in a few minutes in front of the immigration officer that one is "loyal" to the United States? The best proof, the respondent continued, is to have real estate in the United States or "leave wife and kids in the U.S...."³³

Returning migrants not only prepared legal documents to maintain their immigrant status and transnational mobility, they also found ways to deal with immigration officers face to face when questioned about their absence from the United States. As there is no stamp of the exit date by U.S. border security officers, many returning migrants could obscure the exact length of their absence from the United States. On Haiguinet, migrants discussed this strategy in direct and indirect ways. For example, on October 28, 2003, a returning green card holder asked for advice about

³³ Hanye, posting to Haiguinet, July 31, 2005, <http://www.haiguinet.com/forum/viewtopic.php?p=836881>.

how often he should return to the United States to maintain his green card.³⁴ A respondent replied that he had to stay at least six months in the United States each year; otherwise, he might take some risks (of being refused reentry). The respondent continued: “But you know that there is no record when you leave the United States. I am not telling you to lie, but you know what I mean.”³⁵ Considering the lack of privacy on the Internet, many online members with the same concern of maintaining their green cards decided to form offline groups and communicate with each other via email to share more detailed information and strategies.³⁶ Email technology provided immigrants with new opportunities for sharing information and negotiating with immigration laws and immigration bureaucrats.

For a returned lawyer I interviewed in Shanghai, the overstay of many returning immigrants outside the United States for more than 6 months a year, or their “lies” to immigration officers about the time they spent abroad, is not illegal but a “violation within the limit of law.” Tang came to study law in the United States in 1990, right after the 1989 Tiananmen Incident when he felt “the future of China was unclear.” Impressed by China’s remarkable development after Deng Xiaoping’s Southern Tour in 1992, Tang returned to Shanghai and opened a law firm. His wife had been naturalized as a U.S. citizen and stayed in the United States. Tang returned to the United States regularly. In his opinion, U.S. immigration officers knew that “many people are violating the immigration laws,” and in the future “the immigration law may be adjusted

³⁴ Risky, posting to Haiguinet, October 28, 2003,
<http://www.haiguinet.com/forum/viewtopic.php?p=160138&treeview=1>.

³⁵ Capitan, posting to Haiguinet, October 28, 2003,
<http://www.haiguinet.com/bbs/viewtopic.php?p=160213>.

³⁶ For example, a posting about a newly formed “Green Cards Keeping Group” via email had been read 1228 times and many online members immediately requested to be added to the group. Greenturtle, posting to Haiguinet, June 4, 2003, <http://www.haiguinet.com/bbs/viewtopic.php?p=100935>.

to be more flexible in this regard.” Tang recalled that once he was asked by an immigration officer what he was doing in China, and he replied that he had some business there. Immediately he was escorted to a small room for further investigation. Familiar with American society and culture, Tang now added that he was helping U.S. companies make money abroad. “That was another story,” the immigration officer told him, as “American immigration laws did not permit green card holders to engage business abroad for a long term except working for American companies.” After that incident, Tang learned to reply to immigration officer with standard answers like “well, I went to China for some minor family issues” or “just a business trip.”³⁷

With his wife already naturalized as a U.S. citizen, Tang in fact did not worry about his green card: “Immigration officers can take away my green card, but three months later I can get a green card again because of my wife’s U.S. citizenship.” As Tang said, this is a strategy many returning migrants adopted to maintain their immigrant status and transnational mobility, that is, “let wife get naturalized.” This strategy of “one family, two nationalities” (as compared by many returnees to China’s “one country, two systems”) has been quite popular among returning Chinese migrants. Though this strategy usually places women (wives) in the role of waiting for U.S. citizenship in the United States as a backup for men’s returning and mobility, it differs from the “reinvented” patriarchal family structure described by anthropologist Aihwa Ong when wives of Hong Kong entrepreneurs were left in the United States while their husbands enjoyed economic success and social privileges (including extramarital

³⁷ Tang, interview by author, July 27, 2005.

affairs) in Asia.³⁸ For Chinese student migrant families, usually both the man and the woman are highly-educated professionals and are independent. The “one family, two nationalities” is a family strategy rather than an unequal family structure with men’s will imposed upon women or with men’s interests above women’s. The “one family, two nationalities” is a strategy used by both men and women to maximize their transnational mobility as well as social mobility in different national contexts. Hu returned with a green card to teach in a notable university in Shanghai while her husband naturalized and had followed her back to China and worked as a businessman. For Hu, a green card was better than U.S. citizenship because her Chinese citizenship could help her apply for research grants in China that are usually not available to foreigners.³⁹

Other strategies discussed online among returnees were more extreme. For example, some returning migrants claimed loss of their Chinese passports when applying for U.S. citizenship in order to avoid the check by immigration officers of their exit and entry records on the Chinese passport. Interestingly, some returning migrants

³⁸ The practice of “leaving wives in America” of contemporary Chinese migrants is in sharp contrast with past patterns of male Chinese migrants sojourning abroad while leaving wives and families at homeland. Scholars have noticed this remarkable change and offered various interpretations of the current practice. For example, Aihwa Ong studied Hong Kong entrepreneurs and their families who migrated to the United States and Canada during Hong Kong’s transition of sovereignty from Great Britain back to China. The male business elites later returned to Asia for business while leaving their wives and children abroad. Ong argued that these transnational migrants reconstructed a traditional (“premodern”) Asian-style gender hierarchy in which women were dominated by men. Ong, *Flexible Citizenship*, 110-38. Also focusing on the unequal gender relations, Sau-ling Ong offered a more complex picture of the identity of the “astronaut wives.” Discussing the attempts of the protagonists in two novels “to survive betrayal by Confucian patriarchy and negotiate a viable identity for themselves as Chinese women in North America,” Wong analyzed women’s life and identity as a contested site rather than a simple reflection of the traditional Confucianism values and patriarchal culture. Wong’s study therefore goes beyond Ong’s analysis that focuses on the male dominance and presents a more delicate picture of “left-at-home” women migrants’ livelihood and identity. Sau-ling Cynthia Wong, “Astronaut Wives” and ‘Little Dragons’: Identity Negotiations by Diasporic Chinese Women in Two Popular Novels of the 1980s,” in *The Chinese Diaspora: Selected Essays*, eds. Wang Ling-Chi and Wang Gungwu (Singapore: Times Academic, 2003), 133-51.

³⁹ Hu, interview by author, August 17, 2005.

made false claims of the loss and then applied to the Chinese government for new ones before they obtained their U.S. citizenship. This time it was used to deal with Chinese citizenship law, as China does not allow dual nationality and one's passport has to be forfeited upon naturalization in another country. Returnees therefore were able to keep one Chinese passport so that they could use it to enter China without the need of applying for a Chinese visa. In either case, passports had been used for transnational mobility rather than affirming membership in a nation-state.

The negotiation between immigrants and immigration laws and nation-states, as well as the vigor and determination of immigrants striving for transnational mobility, are not new in immigration history.⁴⁰ What is remarkable about the case of Chinese student migrants may be the new communication and transportation technologies that have enhanced their transnational mobility and offered innovative tools for mobility. On the other hand, these well-off and highly mobile student and professional migrants are not exempted from nation-state regulations. They also need to struggle to create their transnational space.

The pressure on returnees with U.S. immigrant status to apply for U.S. citizenship also reveals the distinction between U.S. lawful permanent residents and U.S. citizens. It has often been discussed that U.S. lawful permanent residents enjoy most of the rights of citizens with only a few exceptions, such as the right to vote and to be elected for public office.⁴¹ However, most discussions have focused on the rights of

⁴⁰ For example, in the case of Chinese migrants in the past, Erika Lee described vividly how Chinese immigrants strove for their mobility and citizenship rights even during the exclusion era. Erika Lee, *At America's Gates*.

⁴¹ As political scientist T. Alexander Aleinikoff notes, there were few differences of benefits between U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents until in the mid-1990s, when the new resident alien card requirement in 1995, the welfare reform in 1996, the growing anti-immigrant rhetoric, among other reasons, concerned immigrants and encouraged a dramatically increasing numbers of immigrants to apply

lawful permanent residents inside the United States and there has been little attention to the possibility and practices of migrants' leaving the United States and to their rights outside of the United States. In fact, the differences between permanent residents (still an "alien") and citizens become more explicit and distinct outside of the United States: even the immigrants' right of reentry into the United States becomes vulnerable. In other words, while permanent residents to a large degree enjoy benefits similar to citizens', the boundaries between citizen and permanent residents are salient once migrants step outside the state-designated territories. Therefore, immigration laws bind immigrants to the nation-state territory, while citizenship provides a possible platform for immigrants to cross national territorial boundaries. While the latter shows the irony and dilemma of the concept of citizenship, the former reveals the resolution and power of nation-states in reconstructing and claiming "citizens-to-be" based on their territories and boundaries. This process of framing immigrants is what Donald Nonini called the "localization of disciplinary subjects" by nation-states.⁴² Ironically, citizenship in turn has been used by migrants to de-localize nation-state boundaries and gain transnational mobility.

It is worthwhile to note here the difference in the meanings of "naturalization" in English and in Chinese. While in English a migrant is to be "naturalized" to become a citizen of the receiving society, the literal translation of "naturalization" in Chinese is "guihua", which keeps the passive tone of "being" naturalized or assimilated. However,

for citizenship. T. Alexander Aleinikoff, "Between Principles and Politics: U.S. Citizenship Policy," in *From Migrants to Citizens: Membership in a Changing World*, eds. T. Alexander Aleinikoff and Douglas Klusmeyer (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2000), 130-31.

⁴² Donald M. Nonini, "Situated Identities, Positioned Imaginaries: Transnational Traversals and Reversals by Malaysian Chinese," in *Ungrounded Empire: the Cultural Politics of Chinese Transnationalism*, eds. Aihwa Ong and Donald Nonini (Routledge, New York, 1997), 203-27.

“*guihua*” is seldom used by Chinese student migrants and Chinese migrants in general. The most common word used is “*ruji*”, which literally means “entering the register or joining the nationality.” This in fact shows how migrants placed themselves as *subjects* that manage the issue of nationality rather than *objects* to be “naturalized.”⁴³ For the students, what matters is nationality rather than naturalization.

While *ruji* indicated migrants’ active participation in obtaining the citizenship of the receiving society, student migrants showed strong discontent of “automatically losing Chinese citizenship” once they obtained a foreign citizenship as ordained by Chinese citizenship law. This leads to the significance of an ongoing “dual nationality” debate.

The “Dual Nationality” Controversy and Migrants’ Interpretation of Citizenship⁴⁴

To achieve transnational mobility, returning Chinese student migrants needed to deal with not only U.S. immigration laws but also Chinese migration policies and citizenship laws. According to the Chinese nationality law, one automatically gives up his/her Chinese nationality once acquiring the nationality of another country, and he or she is to be treated as a foreigner. This “single-nationality” law led to many Chinese migrants’ complaints about needing to apply for a Chinese visa to return to China and the many restrictions on living and working opportunities in China.

⁴³ In their study of Asian migrants in Australia, Ip, Inglis and Wu also note that migrants most likely used the word of “*ruji*.” In their analysis, “*ruji*” shows migrants’ emphasis on the change of nationality rather than the change of citizenship. Ip, Inglis and Wu, “Concepts of Citizenship and Identity,” 379.

⁴⁴ Generally, “nationality” refers to state membership and “citizenship” refers to “a member’s rights and duties within the national polity.” M. Feldblum and D. Klusmeyer, “Immigrants and Citizenship Today: A Comparative Perspective,” *Research Perspectives on Migration* 2, no. 2 (1999): 2-3.

The meanings of citizenship and the implementation of citizenship laws vary considerably in different national contexts. Studies of citizenship and immigration, however, have usually focused on the receiving society and neglected the impact of the sending society on migrants' understanding and choices of citizenship. This lack of attention to "emigrant citizenship," as David Fitzgerald suggested, may be caused by the fact that "the dominant organs of international academia are located in the countries of immigration."⁴⁵ However, the trend of "dual nationality" or "dual citizenship" adopted by increasing numbers of nations in the last decade has caught scholars' attention. While seven of seventeen Latin American countries allowed dual citizenship in 1996, by 2000 the number had increased to fourteen and the total number of countries in the world allowing dual citizenship directly or indirectly by 2000 was about ninety-three. In Europe, the European Union revised the "1963 Convention on Reduction of Cases of Multiple Nationality and Military Obligations in Cases of Multiple Nationality" and passed the 1993 Second Protocol permitting individuals to possess dual nationality. The 1997 European Convention on Nationality accepted multiple nationalities and recognized the rights of people with dual nationality. In Asia, the Republic of the Philippines passed a new nationality law in 2003 (Republican Act No.9225) to allow dual citizenship, and 3.5 million Philippine emigrants regained their Philippine citizenship, allowing them to vote and to be elected for public office (except those serving in foreign governments or military service).⁴⁶ In 2004, a new Indian Nationality Law allowed dual citizenship of Indian emigrants in sixteen western

⁴⁵ David Fitzgerald, "Rethinking Emigrant Citizenship," *New York University Law Review* 81 (April 2006): 90.

⁴⁶The Republic of the Philippines, Citizenship Retention and Re-acquisition Act of 2003 (Rep. Act No. 9225). See more information about "dual citizenship" on the official website of the Republic of the Philippines: <http://www.gov.ph/faqs/dualcitizenship.asp>.

developed nations. In 2005, India extended dual citizenship to all Indians who left India after 1950 as long as the receiving country also allowed dual citizenship.⁴⁷

Public debates on and scholarly attention to this trend of “dual nationality” have largely focused on its impact on the immigrant society and on the integration (or “loyalty”) of migrants in the immigrant society. In Germany in 1998, the Social Democrat-Green Coalition proposed a new law to reduce the residence period of foreigners for naturalization from fifteen to eight years and to allow foreigners to retain their original nationality. This proposal triggered heated opposition from the Christian-Democratic Party and was accused of leading to “divided loyalties.” The law that was finally passed in 1999 revised the original bill and granted citizenship at birth to children born in Germany to foreign parents who had resided in Germany legally for at least eight years. After reaching the age of twenty three, these dual citizens are required to choose between German nationality and their parents’ nationality.⁴⁸ In the United States, the late Harvard political scientist Samuel Huntington decried the “contamination” of U.S. culture and society by the large numbers of Hispanic immigrants (especially Mexicans) and denounced the “erosion” of “unique” American citizenship by dual citizenship. “Dual citizenship legitimizes dual identities and dual loyalties... citizenship becomes less a matter of identity and more one of utility,” Huntington argued. While dual citizenship benefited both migrants and the countries they came from, “whether it serves the interests of the United States is uncertain.”⁴⁹

⁴⁷ BBC News Online, “India to Extend Dual Citizenship,” *South Asia News*, January 7, 2005, http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/south_asia/4154445.stm.

⁴⁸ BBC News Online, “Germany Citizenship Law Passed,” *World News*, May 21, 1999, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/349500.stm>; “Germany: Dual Nationality,” *Migration News* 6, no.2 (April 1999), http://migration.ucdavis.edu/mn/more.php?id=1777_0_4_0.

⁴⁹ Samuel P. Huntington, *Who Are We?: The Challenges to America’s National Identity* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004), 210-12.

The first Chinese Nationality Law was launched in 1909 by the late Qing government for the purpose of retaining its Chinese subjects abroad, after it became known that the Dutch were to allow Chinese in the Netherlands East Indies to become Dutch subjects. The law was based on the principle of *jus sanguinis*.⁵⁰ Though conceding that the Chinese in the Netherlands East Indies could become Dutch subjects, the law assured that these Dutch subjects were still Chinese subjects whenever they returned to China, and Chinese nationality could be passed on to all persons abroad born of Chinese parents.⁵¹ This principle of *jus sanguinis* was continued in the Nationality Laws of the Republic of China (first in mainland and then in Taiwan after 1949). However, to improve diplomatic relations with neighboring states in Southeast Asia which only recently gained independence and were concerned about the allegiance of large numbers of ethnic Chinese in their territories, the People's Republic of China signed a treaty with Indonesia in 1955 declaring that Chinese could only have one nationality, and overseas Chinese needed to choose either Chinese nationality or the nationality of the residing country.⁵² After the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), the 1980 Nationality Law reaffirmed this “one nationality” policy. Moreover, the ninth article of the new Nationality Law regulated that “Any Chinese national who has settled abroad and who has been naturalized as a foreign national or has acquired foreign nationality of his own free will shall automatically lose Chinese nationality.”⁵³

⁵⁰ *jus sanguinis* is a rule that a child's citizenship is determined by its parents' citizenship. The other major rule of citizenship acquisition is *jus soli*, which provides that the citizenship of a child is determined by the place of its birth (*Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*, retrieved March 22, 2009).

⁵¹ Wang Gungwu, “The Origins of Hua-Ch’iao,” in *Community and Nation: China, Southeast Asia and Australia*, ed. Wang Gungwu (Kensington, Australia: Allen and Unwin, 1992), 7.

⁵² Chen Xi, *Qiaowu yu waijiao guanxi yanjiu: Zhongguo fangqi “shuangchong guoji” de huigu yu fanshi* (Beijing: Huaqiao chubanshe, 2005).

⁵³ Nationality Law of the People's Republic of China, Fifth National People's Congress, Third Session, Order No. 8, 1980. <http://english.people.com.cn/94487/94489/94588/6449657.html>

Calls for dual citizenship began in the late 1990s. In the second session of the ninth National People's Political Consultative Conference (NPPCC) in 1999, twelve representatives signed and submitted a bill (No. 2172) calling for revoking the one-nationality law.⁵⁴ Similar bills (No. 0222 and No. 0320) were again submitted in 2004 in the second session of the tenth NPPCC and suggested revising the 1980 Nationality Law so that Chinese citizens who have obtained foreign citizenship could decide whether to retain or renounce Chinese citizenship.⁵⁵

More appeals came from Chinese abroad. In 2000, the Canada-China Business Association and *The China Canada News (Zhonghua daobao)* together conducted a survey about “whether mainland Chinese migrants should be able to regain dual citizenship.” All 102 replies supported dual citizenship.⁵⁶ Another online survey conducted by the Canadian Mandarin Chinese Association and Toronto Information Harbor (*duolunduo xinxigang*) in 2003 had been cited and distributed more widely. This survey took eighteen days with participation of 1,888 Chinese abroad. 92.6 percent of these informants agreed that the Chinese government should allow dual citizenship for

⁵⁴ Chen Duo and others, “Guanyu jianyi chexiao ‘bu chenren Zhongguo gongmin juyou shuangchong guoji’ guiding de jianyi an,” in *Jingwai huaren guoji wenti taolun ji*, ed. Zhou Nanjing (Hong Kong: Hong Kong shehui kexue chubanshe, 2005), 175-76.

⁵⁵ Huang Yinghui, “Guanyu jianyi xiugai ‘Zhonghuarenminguoheguo guoji fa’ xiangguan tiaokuan, you xuanzhe duiying chengren shuangchong guoji de jianyi,” in *Jingwai huaren guojin wenti taolun ji*, ed. Zhou Nanjing (Hong Kong: Hong Kong shehui kexue chubanshe, 2005), 241-43; Han Fangming, “Guanyu tanxin chuli guoji wenti, chujin haiwai liuxue renyuan weiguo fuwu de jianyi an,” in *Jingwai huaren guojin wenti taolun ji*, ed. Zhou Nanjing (Hong Kong: Hong Kong shehui kexue chubanshe, 2005), 246-50. These two bills more focused on students-turned immigrants and suggested that the single-nationality law hindered their return to China and their contribution to China’s modernization. In contrast, the bill in 1999 (No. 2712) stressed the “desire” of the large numbers of new migrants to retain Chinese citizenship and the need of new as well as old migrants for protection of the Chinese government when they were discriminated in their residing societies, particularly in Southeast Asia. This 1999 bill was raised after the 1998 massive anti-Chinese riots in Indonesia.

⁵⁶ Xu Lifan, “Jianada Zhongguo Shanghui guanyu huifu shuangchong guoji de taolun zhongshu,” in *Jingwai huaren guojin wenti taolun ji*, ed. Zhou Nanjing (Hong Kong: Hong Kong shehui kexue chubanshe, 2005), 205-6. Among the 102 respondents (via fax), 12 (12%) were at the age of 20-30, 60 (59%) were at the age of 30-45, and 30 (29%) were at the age of 45 or older.

Chinese migrants in countries that also allow dual citizenship. This survey was reported to Ms. Chen Yujie, Director of the Office of Affairs of Overseas Chinese in the State Council (*Qiaoban*), when she visited Canada in 2003.⁵⁷

In June 2004, a seminar was held in Paris titled “The 21st Century China: Chinese students abroad and exchanges between China and other countries.” Representatives of Chinese student migrants in Europe met leaders of the National People’s Congress and the Association of China’s Overseas Exchanges. These representatives expressed their support for dual citizenship of student migrants abroad.⁵⁸

In his visit to New Zealand in November 2004, Luo Haocai, Vice-Chairman of the NPPCC and President of the Zhi-gong Party (one of the eight minor political parties in China besides the Communist Party), also appealed to by local Chinese migrants supporting dual citizenship.⁵⁹ Besides directly expressing concerns to political leaders, Chinese migrants also advocated for dual citizenship in overseas Chinese-language newspapers. Discussions on dual citizenship were even more lively in digital media (like debates in the Phoenix TV Station based in Hong Kong) and in various online forums.⁶⁰

Facing the call for dual citizenship both in and outside of China, the Chinese government took a precarious position. In 1999, the bill (No. 2172) submitted by the twelve committee members of NPPCC was forwarded to the Ministry of Public Safety (*Gonganbu*) which responded by stating that the one-nationality policy was based on

⁵⁷ Meiguo shijie xinwen wang, “Jia qiaowang shang jinxing shuangchong guoji wenti minyi diaocha,” in *Jingwai huaren guoji wenti taolun ji*, ed. Zhou Nanjing (Hong Kong: Hong Kong shehui kexue chubanshe, 2005), 196-97.

⁵⁸ Wang Huiyao, “Shuangchong guoji, huiguo qianzheng, lüka,” in *Jingwai huaren guoji wenti taolun ji*, ed. Zhou Nanjing (Hong Kong: Hong Kong shehui kexue chubanshe, 2005), 179.

⁵⁹ Huang Jianming, “Xingxilan qiaobao chenshu huqiu shuangchong guoji,” in *Jingwai Huaren Guojin Wenti Taolun Ji*, ed. Zhou Nanjing (Hong Kong: Hong Kong shehui kexue chubanshe, 2005), 207-8.

⁶⁰ Zhou, *Jingwai Huaren Guojin Wenti Taolun Ji*, 1.

historical wisdom dealing with China's relations with Southeast Asian countries and still “applied to China's current situation and fundamental national interests.”⁶¹ On the other hand, the government clearly was concerned about attracting highly skilled and wealthy Chinese migrants for China's economic and technological development. New policies were launched in a few big cities. In November 2001, proposals for Chinese “green cards” were discussed in a meeting of the Ministry of Public Safety. Soon after large cities like Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou launched their “green card” policies. Unlike American green cards that indicate permanent residency, these newly created Chinese green cards are just a residency permit for foreign citizens (including returned Chinese migrants with foreign passports) to live one to five years and to enjoy the benefit of “one visa, multiple entry.”⁶²

On Aug 15, 2004, with approval from the State Council, the Minister of Public Safety and the Minister of Foreign Affairs co-signed the “Policy regarding the Approval and Management of Foreigners Residing Permanently in China.”⁶³ According to the policy, three types of foreigners are eligible for applying for permanent residence in China: investors with at least \$500,000 investment in China, extraordinarily talented professionals or intellectuals, and immediate family members of Chinese citizens or permanent residents. On December 28, 2004, Liu Yanhua, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Science and Technology, discussed the possibility of following India's dual nationality law to attract overseas Chinese talents. Liu's talk was immediately

⁶¹Zhongguo Gonganbu, “Gonganbu dui zhengxie 2172 hao ti'an de dafu,” in *Jingwai huaren guoji wenti taolun ji*, ed. Zhou Nanjing (Hong Kong: Hong Kong shehui kexue chubanshe, 2005), 177-78

⁶²Sina News, “Zhongguo shishi luka zhidu,” <http://news.sina.com.cn/z/chaluka/index.shtml>; <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2004-08-26/00433495071s.shtml>.

⁶³Xinhua Online, “Waiguoren zai Zhongguo yongjiu juliu shengpi guanli banfa,” http://news.xinhuanet.com/zhengfu/2004-08/20/content_1835486.htm.

publicized and was interpreted by the Chinese public as Chinese government's plan of starting the dual nationality law. The Chinese government soon clarified that there was no such plan.⁶⁴

Unlike the public assumption in China that Chinese new migrants ("xin yimin", referring to those emigrants leaving China after the reform in the late 1970s) had always tended to support "dual nationality," new migrants had expressed various opinions on the desirability of "dual nationality."

In 2003, the first year after the online Haiguinet was founded, there were only five entries about dual nationality, perhaps because the website was new and had not yet attracted enough attention from Chinese student migrants and returning migrants. The first posting called for support of dual nationality. The posting stated that numerous returnees had had troubles with their legal status: while green card holders needed to come to the United States every half a year to maintain their green cards, naturalized U.S. citizens lost their Chinese citizenship and encountered hassles like the need to apply for Chinese entry visa to return to China and the restrictions on foreigners who stayed and worked in China. The author pasted the complete text of the 1999 Bill (No. 2172) for dual nationality and called on other returnees to advocate dual nationality together.⁶⁵

The founder of Haiguinet immediately replied and supported this message.⁶⁶ Another senior online member followed with his concerns and doubts. One of his

⁶⁴ Shen Yi, "Guojia Kejibu guanyuan cheng shuangchong guoji xiycin keji rencai shi wuchuan," *Jing bao*, December 30, 2004, <http://news.163.com/41230/4/18QSEF630001124T.html>.

⁶⁵ Aiguo, posting to Haiguinet, April 13, 2003, <http://www.haiguinet.com/forum/viewtopic.php?p=78708&highlight=%E5%8F%8C%E9%87%8D%E5%9B%BD%E7%B1%8D#78708>.

⁶⁶ Langxie, posting to Haiguinet, April 13, 2003, <http://www.haiguinet.com/forum/viewtopic.php?p=78743&&sid=1a592993aad4f3e84aaef4c75ccd2300>.

concerns was possible taxation by the Chinese government if the returnee retained her/his Chinese nationality. The other concern he had was that “if there were any jurisdictional conflicts concerning returnees, will we choose to be an American or a Chinese citizen?”⁶⁷ This migrant obviously did not trust the Chinese government, as he later added that the Chinese government had spared nothing in punishing Chinese citizens. He argued that it was better to only keep a Chinese green card because one could turn to a U.S. consul for protection in case of getting into any trouble in China.⁶⁸

This migrant’s distrust of the Chinese government was echoed in another online posting. Forwarded from a well-known online forum of Chinese migrants in Canada (www.51.ca), the posting doubted the practicability of dual nationality in China considering China’s political structure.⁶⁹ The author referred to the many incidents of persecution of ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia in the second half of the twentieth century and pointed out the Chinese government’s indifference and hesitance to intervene. The author asked, “[W]ith the principle of “stability as the supreme command,”⁷⁰ how can you expect Chinese government proceed with the dual nationality issue?” Nationality was “a serious political matter,” as the author cited the words of

⁶⁷ Bulahbulah, posting to Haiguinet, April 13, 2003, <http://www.haiguinet.com/forum/viewtopic.php?p=78908>.

⁶⁸ Bulahbulah, posting to Haiguinet, April 13, 2003, <http://www.haiguinet.com/forum/viewtopic.php?p=79137>.

⁶⁹ Shuangren zhengtou, posting to Haiguinet, <http://www.haiguinet.com/forum/viewtopic.php?p=173010&highlight=%E5%8F%8C%E9%87%8D%E5%9B%BD%E7%B1%8D#173010>. This essay was originally written by Li Zhu and was first posted to www.51.ca on November 11, 2003. Li Zhu, “Huaren yimin panwang yongyou shuangchong guoji yixiang qinyuan,” in *Jingwai huaren guoji wenti taolun ji*, ed. Zhou Nanjing (Hong Kong: Hong Kong shehui kexue chubanshe, 2005), 472-73.

⁷⁰ In Chinese this term is “*wending yadao yiqie*”. This is a political slogan in post-1978 China. The Chinese Communist Party and the government have used it to refer to the lessons of the turbulent political movements in China before 1978 (especially the Cultural Revolution), therefore emphasizing the necessity of stability of post-1978 Chinese society for the central aim and task of economic development. On the other hand, with increasing inequality after the economic reform and with severing social problems like corruption, the party state uses this slogan to illegitimate public discontent and curtail political and social movements.

Chinese officials. Facing any change or reform, the author pointed out, China's rulers would first consider the political risk and the national security. Therefore, “[H]ow can they tolerate millions of ‘Chinese’ with foreign nationality and complex background entering China and being mixed with ordinary Chinese?”⁷¹

Interestingly, the author also argued that dual nationality was a selfish request by migrants. The author questioned advocates of dual nationality: “In the past, you ‘emigrated’ with your whole family as well as all your savings without even looking back for a last time; now you found it hard to earn money from foreigners and wanted to ‘return for career in China.’” The author also feared that calling for dual nationality by Chinese new migrants would leave a negative impression on Canadian mainstream society. According to the author, Canada recognizes dual nationality and advocates multiculturalism, which proves the “inclusiveness of a democratic society.” “Democratic societies also emphasize more on the loyalty and assimilation (of migrants). As long as you have already been ‘married’ over (*jia*) to this society, you need to be earnest and down-to-earth. Canada will not mistreat anybody, unless you are totally at odds with this society.” The author concluded by saying that migrants’ hope of dual nationality was just their own wish and was hardly feasible.⁷²

What is most interesting here is how this author (most likely an immigrant in Canada) viewed Canadian society and the position of immigrants in Canada. This perception of Canada as a “democratic” and “multicultural” society without mistreatment of anybody is in accordance with what I discussed in the earlier chapter of the positive image held by many Chinese student migrants of the United States and

⁷¹ Li Zhu, “Huaren yimin panwang yongyou shuangchong guoji yixiang qinyuan.”

⁷² Ibid.

Canada as a “classless” society without serious racial discrimination. Here the author emphasized the need of “assimilation” of immigrants into the “multicultural” and “democratic” society. The metaphor the author used revealed how he/she viewed the position of immigrants in the receiving society. “*Jia*” was used in Chinese to refer specifically to women’s being married out to live in their husbands’ houses. The author therefore compared immigrants to married-out women who shifted their loyalty to the men in the new household— for immigrants, loyalty shifted to the receiving nation-states. Therefore, for these immigrants, dual nationality was not necessary or desirable.

However, issues of women’s “being married out” have never been simple, nor were the issues of migrants’ identity and loyalty. The “loyalty question” had been the most debated question on Haiguinet. In 2004, with Chinese new policies on returning migrants (such as the new green card policy) and with more members joining in the Haiguinet, discussions on dual nationality increased considerably from five to twenty-seven entries. Discussions were more varied. For example, one comment argued for “dual nationality” and viewed it as a token of China’s basic obligation as a nation for its own people and as the responsibility of China’s new leadership, when Hu Jintao replaced Jiang Zemin in 2003 as the new president of China.⁷³ Another comment noted that with “dual nationality,” democratic activists might return to China and the Communist Party of China would definitely forbid “dual nationality” to prevent any

⁷³ Woaifangfang, posting to Haiguinet, September 18, 2004,
<http://www.haiguinet.com/forum/viewtopic.php?p=746735&highlight=%E5%8F%8C%E9%87%8D%E5%9B%BD%E7%B1%8D#746735>.

revolution.⁷⁴ Another comment joked that the best way was to rescind nation-states and the nationality system in the world all together.⁷⁵

The toughest question was raised in the following post: “When you swear in the naturalization ceremony, do you mean what you said? To which side do you bear your allegiance? If there is really a war between China and the country where you acquired your citizenship, to which country will you point your gun?”⁷⁶ The author concluded with the metaphor of “one husband with two wives” to imply the immorality of migrants’ loyalty to two nations. But some disagreed and stated that there was nothing wrong in being loyal to both nations if they were not against each other.⁷⁷ The author of the original post seemed irritated by this response and restated his/her belief in the wholehearted loyalty to one single nation. He/she noted that many of his/her friends who came to the United States around 1992 now had China-born sons reaching the age of military service (thus the possibility of fighting against Chinese if the United States and China enter war with each other). S/he also expressed concerns about the lost Chinese identity of second or third kids were born in the United States, “whose affection for China was far less than the first kid born in China.” The author recalled that in a New Year’s Eve party, the second son of one friend claimed himself as not a Chinese (but an American). “At that time I really did not know what to say.”⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Gaoguan, posting to Haiguinet, September 18, 2004,
<http://www.haiguinet.com/forum/viewtopic.php?p=746801>.

⁷⁵ Babyblue, posting to Haiguinet, September 18, 2004,
<http://www.haiguinet.com/forum/viewtopic.php?p=746744>.

⁷⁶ Dingzhi, posting to Haiguinet, September 18, 2004,
<http://www.haiguinet.com/bbs/viewtopic.php?p=746889&highlight=%E5%8F%8C%E9%87%8D%E5%9B%BD%E7%B1%8D#746889>.

⁷⁷ Smalleagle, posting to Haiguinet, September 18, 2004,
<http://www.haiguinet.com/forum/viewtopic.php?p=746898>.

⁷⁸ Dingzhi, posting to Haiguinet, September 20, 2004,
<http://www.haiguinet.com/forum/viewtopic.php?p=747359>.

This author's emphasis on Chinese identity and interpretation of "nationality" as a true loyalty to a single nation-state was not without sympathizers in the online community. Another respondent to the above "loyalty question" argued:

How can nationality be like a credit card, in the sense that it does not matter having one or two cards, or that more cards, more convenience?! China is my pride and is unique to me. How can another nation be in the same position as my home country? How ridiculous is that? Foreign system is not necessarily the best, and as Chinese we should have our own national and ethnic pride and style.⁷⁹

For some Chinese student migrants, their transnational mobility seemed to offer another alternative to the "loyalty question." A returned male migrant, who had been known as a high-ranking corporation manager in Southern China, followed the discussion by saying that the loyalty question was "a legitimate question, but the answer does not have to be that 'painful.'" "When your parents fight each other," he suggested, "the best way to deal with it is to go away."⁸⁰ Anpuruo, the "principle of the online returnees community," detached the nationality issue from the loyalty question. As he argued, "it is not that a big deal to wink at the 'dual citizenship' issue. Just consider it is some convenience governments provide for people to travel."⁸¹

The "dual nationality" issue seemed to have not aroused much discussion on the Haiguinet in 2005 when there were only 8 relevant entries. In 2006, discussions increased to about 41 entries, though many of the entries were scattered and short comments. That year migrants expressed their distrust and discontent with the Chinese

⁷⁹ Xiayutian, posting to Haiguinet, December 6, 2004, <http://www.haiguinet.com/forum/viewtopic.php?p=761430>. Unlike most other follow-up postings that were during September or October, this posting was written in December, revealing the emotion-stirring impact of issues relating to "dual citizenship" and identity on Chinese migrants.

⁸⁰ Jlink, posting to Haiguinet, September 18, 2004, <http://www.haiguinet.com/forum/viewtopic.php?p=746916>. This posting was written in clear English, revealing the author's good educational background and frequent use of English.

⁸¹ Anpuruo, posting to Haiguinet, September 18, 2004, <http://www.haiguinet.com/forum/viewtopic.php?p=746919>.

government's attempts at recruiting "talents" deemed profitable for China. In December 2005, an online member forwarded to the Haiguinet a news report of the speech of the deputy minister of the Department of Science and Technology which, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, in fact took place in late 2004.⁸² The same report had been posted on Haiguinet in December 2004, when it cited the deputy minister's statement of the possibility of China's adoption of a dual nationality law: "We are now thinking about following the example of India and offer dual citizenship status to some excellent overseas talents to eliminate any hassle they may encounter in their investment and career back in China."⁸³ The immediate response questioned: "But what is their definition of 'talented'? Prominent? Affluent? Or rich and famous?"⁸⁴ Perhaps missed by online members, this report was posted online again in January 2006. This time there were more responses than in 2004. A different online member again picked up the deputy minister's use of "talent" and found it problematic. Quoting the words of "some excellent overseas talents," the commentator asked: "Who said that everyone is equal before law?"⁸⁵ Adding to this critique, another commentator pointed out that U.S. visas were also granted to preferred groups of people and the United States did not want ordinary people either. "It is same everywhere," the commentator remarked.⁸⁶

⁸² Master98, posting to Haiguinet, December 21, 2005, <http://www.haiguinet.com/forum/viewtopic.php?p=898000&highlight=%E5%8F%8C%E9%87%8D%E5%9B%BD%E7%B1%8D#898000>.

⁸³ Anpuruo, posting to Haiguinet, December 29, 2004, <http://www.haiguinet.com/forum/viewtopic.php?p=765771&highlight=%E5%8F%8C%E9%87%8D%E5%9B%BD%E7%B1%8D#765771>.

⁸⁴ Ceo/cfo, posting to Haiguinet, December 29, 2004, <http://www.haiguinet.com/bbs/viewtopic.php?p=765771&highlight=%E5%8F%8C%E9%87%8D%E5%9B%BD%E7%B1%8D#765771>.

⁸⁵ Zhouguoluguo, posting to Haiguinet, January 12, 2006, <http://www.haiguinet.com/forum/viewtopic.php?p=905459>.

⁸⁶ Antares, posting to Haiguinet, January 12, 2006, <http://www.haiguinet.com/forum/viewtopic.php?p=905468>.

Chinese student migrants do not share a single perspective on “dual nationality.” Among student migrants there had been a significant distrust of the Chinese government for issues like the deficient Chinese legal system, the government’s impotence in protecting Chinese abroad, and the government’s discriminatory policies in recruiting new migrants. The complex attitudes of Chinese student migrants and returnees towards the “dual nationality” proposal revealed their own interpretation of China’s nationality laws and policies rather than simply following the state ideology or policies. This is similar to the case of Mexican migrants who showed much indifference towards the new “dual citizenship” policies adopted and propagated by the Mexican government after 1996.⁸⁷

The “dual nationality” issue had raised the “loyalty question” for migrants. There seem to be three types of identities of Chinese student migrants and returnees. One is embracing the host society and emphasizing integration and assimilation into the new home, as seen in the posting that used the metaphor of “*jia*” (a woman being married out and shifting her loyalty to her husband’s family). The second type of identity is maintaining Chinese nationality and maintaining the loyalty to China, as seen in the argument against the “immorality” of “a marriage of a man with two wives.” Interestingly, both metaphors utilized deeply gendered marital images to refer to the relationship between migrants and nation-states. The third type of identity is more practical and flexible. It emphasizes migrants’ capability of making their own choices. For migrants and returnees with the third type of identity, nationality is little more a paper for convenience and mobility.

⁸⁷ Fitzgerald, “Rethinking Emigrant Citizenship.”

Of course, these three types of identities are just for the convenience of analysis and are never fixed and exclusive. Many migrants, while striving for integration into the receiving society, also emphasized retaining their social and cultural ties with the home society; while many migrants, determined to keep their Chinese nationality, also actively engaged in the host society and developed social and cultural networks in the host society. In this sense, I am using the third type to emphasize migrants' flexible identity. Except for a small number of extremists in the first two categories, it is safe to say that the majority of migrants hold more or less flexible identities. This is also obvious among my interviewees in China. Having been naturalized as an American citizen, Zhu returned to teach in a Chinese university and helped found a high tech park for returning Chinese students. He told me that one major reason for his naturalization was for the convenience of international travel. When asked by his friends about his naturalization, Zhu always used the metaphor of "white shirt and blue shirt" to refer to Chinese citizenship and American citizenship, which for him were not that different.⁸⁸ For Zhang, a returnee working in an American company in Shanghai, his naturalization as a U.S. citizen had left little impression on him. For him, obtaining a U.S. green card was a milestone in his life because a green card allowed him to work and stay in the United States. In contrast, he had had no excitement at all when applying for U.S. citizenship, which according to him was simply "a matter of time." When he swore the oath during the naturalization ceremony, as he recalled, he did not think about being loyal to the U.S. government, nor to the Chinese government. "All I wanted is to be a law-abiding civilian and what I hope for is freedom," he said. In fact, Zhang preferred to view himself as a "foreigner" in both societies: "In China, I consider myself as a

⁸⁸ Zhu, interview by author, June 14, 2005.

foreigner and hope that the Chinese government does not bother me with things like ‘spiritual education.’ While in the United States, I view myself as a Chinese because most of my friends are Chinese and I am living in a Chinese community.”⁸⁹

Wang Gungwu, the leading scholar of the history of Chinese abroad, has noted interesting differences between the older-generation Chinese emigrants and contemporary Chinese new migrants in their attitudes towards nationality and their feelings for the home country. The older-generation Chinese migrants cherished their Chinese nationality and found it emotionally hard to change their passports. In comparison, contemporary Chinese young migrants have had no hesitation and even rushed in applying for citizenship of other countries.⁹⁰

Wang’s insightful observation leads us to reflect on the historical changes that had shaped Chinese migrants’ understanding of citizenship and the seemingly declining impact of nation-states on people’s identity. There was a generational difference among Chinese and Chinese migrants regarding their perception of Chinese citizenship or nationality. The generations brought up before or around the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949 had always had strong emotional attachments with the independence and self-strengthening of China, while the generations born in the 1960s and 1970s had been brought up with a critical reflection on the past decades (especially the Cultural Revolution era) and had strong motivations for leaving China and experiencing the world outside of China. As a returnee told me, her generation unlike former generations, thinks more practically (about the convenience of international travel) rather than caring about retaining Chinese nationality. In addition, after crossing

⁸⁹ Zhang, interview by author, July 20, 2005.

⁹⁰ Wang, “New Migrants,” 227-38. Professor Wang also talked with me about this issue in a conference on migration in Binghamton University at New York which we both attended in 2005.

national borders and living in another country, she remarked, it seemed unnecessary to “be too stringent on the nationality question.”⁹¹ The pragmatic usage of “nationality” or “citizenship” is not just remarkable among recent Chinese migrants but common among other national groups. Nationality becomes only *one among many* choices and resources for migrants in this increasingly connected world to form their identity and achieve their mobility.

“A Translated Group”: calling for citizenship rights in China

Challenging the traditional assimilation model, immigration scholars have paid attention to the role of migrants in forming their own identities and have complicated the concept of citizenship. For example, anthropologist Caroline Brettell studies four groups of recent immigrants (Salvadoran, Indian, Vietnamese, and Nigerian immigrants) in the Dallas–Fort Worth metropolitan area and points out the bifocality of citizenship— citizenship as political belonging (rights) and citizenship as cultural belonging (identity).⁹² She emphasizes migrants’ insistence on their political and social rights in the immigrant society while retaining cultural identity from their country of origin. While highlighting the agency of migrants in resisting assimilation and constructing their own identities, studies like Brettell’s have mainly focused on the *retention* of cultural identity of migrants in the receiving society. However, with constant linkages in both the receiving and sending societies, migrants not only retained the culture of their home society but also *renewed* and *reinvented* their relationship and identification with the home society.

⁹¹ Hu, interview by author, August 17, 2005.

⁹² Caroline B. Brettell, “Political Belonging and Cultural Belonging.”

I borrow the framework of political scientist Thomas Faist in reconceptualizing citizenship and culture of transnational migrants.⁹³ Faist develops a concept of “border-crossing expansion of social space” as “a third and somewhat apocryphal gospel in addition to the canonical theories of immigrant assimilation and ethnic pluralism which have overemphasized the container aspects of politics and culture.”⁹⁴ According to Faist, each model of immigrant adaptation mentioned above corresponds to a distinct understanding of citizenship: Assimilation corresponds to a unitary national citizenship, ethnic pluralism to multicultural citizenship, and both of them “treat immigrant adaptation exclusively in the realm of a nation-state devoid of significant transnational ties that the people in the respective places and spaces entertain.” In contrast, the model of “border-crossing expansion of social space” corresponds to “enriching individual and collective identities to dual citizenship and dual nationality.” These models of immigrant adaptation and citizenship again correspond to three different views of immigrant cultures: The acculturation thesis with the assimilation model, cultural retention with ethnic pluralism, and “the emergence of syncretist cultural practices and meanings as suggested by the concept of border-crossing expansion of social space.” Therefore, instead of portraying immigrants as “the uprooted” (Handlin) or “the

⁹³ Thomas Faist, “Transnationalization in International Migration.”

⁹⁴ Ibid. Faist defines “border crossing social spaces” or “transnational social spaces” as “combinations of ties, positions in networks and organizations, and networks of organizations that reach across the borders of multiple states. These spaces denote dynamic social processes, not static notions of ties and positions. Cultural, political and economic processes in transnational social spaces involve the accumulation, use and effects of various sorts of capital, their volume and convertibility: economic capital, human capital, such as educational credentials, skills and know-how, and social capital, mainly resources inherent in or transmitted through social and symbolic ties.” “The transnational social spaces inhabited by immigrants and refugees and immobile residents in both countries thus supplement the international space of sovereign nation-states.” Faist, “Transnationalization in International Migration,” 191-92.

transplanted” (Bodnar),⁹⁵ Faist proposes the idea of “translated people,” arguing that “[M]igrants are continually engaged in translating languages, cultures, norms, and social and symbolic ties.” In other words, “transnational migrants forge their sense of identity and their community, not out of a loss or mere replication, but as something that is at once new and familiar – a bricolage constructed of cultural elements from both the homeland and the receiving nation.”⁹⁶

Chinese student migrants, especially those that returned to China or kept moving between China and the United States are such a “translated group.” Their identity and life style can hardly be categorized as simply Chinese or American but a combination of both. Their education in both China and the United States also contributed to their comparative perspective of both Chinese culture and American culture and to their unique understanding of their own identity. Pan obtained his Ph.D. in the United States, acquired U.S. citizenship and then returned to Shanghai and founded his company. As he stated,

We (Chinese student migrants) have our own and independent perspective, which is not the same as that of Americans, nor the same as that of Chinese... (We) comprise a (special) group with our educational background and social status. What we learned in the later stage of our formative years (referring to studying and living in the United States), such as democracy and freedom, are close (essential) to western culture, while our understanding of peoplehood (*minzhu*), religion and belief are profoundly influenced by Chinese culture. Therefore, we have a unique way of thinking, a combination of the strength of both the East and the West.⁹⁷

The way of Chinese student migrants being transformed and their re-engagement with Chinese society as a “translated” group can also be seen in the following statement by one of the most popular returnees in the online returnee

⁹⁵ Oscar Handlin, *The Uprooted* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, and Company, 1973); John Bodnar, *The Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in Urban America* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1985).

⁹⁶ Peter Kivisto, “Theorizing Transnational Immigration,” 568.

⁹⁷ Pan, interview by author, August 1, 2005.

community. Anpuruo, the “principle” of the online community mentioned earlier, has been writing a novel and published it on Haiguinet. Based on his own returning experiences, the novel tells a story of how a returned student migrant experienced Chinese society. The novel caused a sensation among returnees. Some in the Haiguinet community and in the media industry suggested Anpuruo should revise the novel into a television drama. In his online reply to this suggestion, Anpuruo described how Chinese student migrants and returnees had changed over time (as reflected in the novel) and what challenges he might face in revising the novel to a television drama to be publicized in China:

We do not praise anything, nor criticize anything, nor try to convey some lofty ideas. It is neither revolutionary romanticism (*gemin langman zhuyi*) nor revolutionary realism (*gemin xianshi zhuyi*). I don’t know what is our “zhuyi” (-ism). If we have to be labeled with some “zhuyi”, we are “xiangle zhuyi” (hedonism), “baijin zhuyi”(adoring wealth and crazily pursuing profit), “shiyong zhuyi” (pragmatism, An-pu-ruo uses this to refer to the “white cat or black cat theory,” the famous slogan created by Deng Xiaoping advocating that China’s reform after the 1970s should be based on practical matters rather than ideological debates on the difference between socialism and capitalism), “nalai zhuyi” (learning from other cultures, adopting their good parts but discarding the bad according to one’s own needs), “xuqin zhuyi” (insincerity which had been labeled as a characteristic of the bourgeoisie in past Chinese political movements), “geren zhuyi” (individualism), and “yinxiong zhuyi” (believing in individual efforts and heroism). Though these are not the “zhuxuanlu” (main melody), they are not *fandong da duchao* (anti-revolutionary poisons). These things are now quite popular in Chinese society which has just proceeded to be a *xiaokang* (generally well-off) society, and these things have followers among young people. But they may not be favored by those who are in charge of state ideology...⁹⁸

Anpuruo’s humorous and vivid portrayal of Chinese student migrants demonstrates how they were transformed with their experiences of education and living abroad. He appropriated many popular phrases in the past decades of Chinese Communist Revolution and political movements (such as *gemin langman zhuyi*, *gemin xianshi zhuyi*, *fandong da duchao*) to highlight the profound transformation of Chinese

⁹⁸ Anpuruo, posting to Haiguinet, August 7, 2005,
<http://www.haiguinet.com/bbs/viewtopic.php?p=840690&highlight=%E5%9B%9E+%E5%9B%BD+%E8%AE%AD+%E7%81%AB+%E8%AE%BO#840690>.

student migrants and the Chinese society in general. Disillusioned with communist propaganda and the ideological debate on socialism and capitalism, recent Chinese student migrants have often based their life and identity on their individualistic thinking rather than on the propagated “national cause.” This “translated” identity of Chinese student migrants and returning migrants, not without sympathizers and followers in post-reform China, challenged the party state and may indicate some new direction of China’s economic and social reforms.

Chinese student migrants and returnees also compared the meanings of citizenship in the United States and in China and called for more citizenship rights in China. After the Chinese government launched the new Chinese green card policy on August 15, 2004, Zhang Daqin wrote an article comparing Chinese and American green cards. The article was posted on October 2004 in the Shanghai Legal Consultation Forum (www.shlaw.com.cn) and was later posted on the Haiguinet.⁹⁹ Zhang was born to a peasant family in Guangdong Province and had studied diplomacy and law for his Bachelor’s Degree in Beijing. He later came to the United States and earned his law degree from Brigham Young University in 2004. He then joined a law firm (the Kirton & McConkie) in Salt Lake City, Utah and dealt with immigration and international business cases, including assisting the registration of Chinese companies in the United States. Zhang is a licensed lawyer in both China and the United States, which is quite common in recent years among returning Chinese migrants practicing law. Though

⁹⁹ Zhang Daqin, “Zhongguo luka he Meiguo luka de bijiao,” October 1, 2004, <http://www.shlaw.com.cn/ReadNews.asp?NewsID=979> (there were already 2480 reads of this article at the time of my last access online, March 22, 2009); also posting on Haiguinet, July 7, 2006, <http://www.haiguinet.com/forum/viewtopic.php?p=987934&highlight=%E4%B8%AD%E5%9B%BD%E7%BB%BF%E5%8D%A1%E5%92%8C%E7%BE%8E%E5%9B%BD%E7%BB%BF%E5%8D%A1%E7%9A%84%E6%AF%94%E8%BE%83#987934>.

Zhang himself might have not returned to or based his work in China, apparently he has had close ties with China and has been among the group of Chinese professionals navigating space across the Pacific. He is a member of the legal consultant committee of the Entrepreneurs Association (*Qiyejia xiehui*) at Guangdong Province, and he has written extensively for Chinese legal journals, newspapers and popular websites.

Zhang's article compared Chinese green cards with their U.S. counterpart in regards to functions, goals, categories, application requirements, costs and maintenance. In the beginning, Zhang pointed out that China's green card system was a system China borrowed from advanced capitalist countries, hoping to create "a 'jade' of capitalism used to enhance the 'stone' of socialism." While socialism had been often portrayed as absolutely superior to capitalism in China's political propaganda (although more so in the past than present), here Zhang reversed the comparison, indicating how Chinese student migrants' understanding of socialism and capitalism was different from the orthodox state ideology.

What is most interesting is how Zhang commented on citizenship rights in China. Zhang noted that some Chinese complaint that Chinese green cards offered more rights to foreigners than to Chinese citizens and that foreigners enjoyed an "ultra-citizen treatment" in China.¹⁰⁰ Indeed, Zhang argued, "it is not that we gave too many rights to foreigners but that we gave too little rights to our own citizens."

When had our people been really the master of their own country? When ever did our government recognize "sovereignty in people" (*zhuquan zai min*), and the ideals of "by

¹⁰⁰ Here "foreigners" refer to people with a citizenship other than Chinese citizenship, including those who were of Chinese origin but were naturalized or born with non-Chinese citizenship. For these foreigners granted Chinese green cards (who were most likely either rich or prominent in their professions according to the qualification requirement of Chinese green cards), the Chinese government provides them much convenience in living and working in China such as free movement in China, which is in contrast to the fact that the movement of ordinary Chinese citizens is still largely restrained by China's registration system.

the people, of the people, and for the people” (*minzhi, minsheng, minxiang*). Don’t you see that the one-child requirement, the temporary residence permit (*zhanzhu zheng*) and the various campaigns in the name of counteracting prostitution and illegal business (*shao huang da fei*) had harassed and scared people to unrest? The household registration system (*hukou*), the pass to border cities (*bianjing zheng*), regional discrimination, the gap between cities and the countryside had let hundreds of millions of citizens fall to the status of strangers in their own land. When ever did you see our public servant (*gongpu*) bully foreigners? Those who cried under bludgeon had been poor ordinary Chinese.¹⁰¹

Zhang continued to explain that without sufficient rights, few foreigners would like to come to invest in China which would affect China’s economic development. However, granting too much favor to foreigners will leave Chinese citizens at a disadvantage, and talented Chinese will have no choice but to emigrate. It will become a vicious circle and lead to the “double crisis” of Chinese talents: a severe drain of talents on one hand, and a grave waste of talents inside China on the other hand.

As an immigration lawyer, Zhang is very familiar with U.S. immigration history and immigration laws. He noted that the United States is different from China: The United States was founded by immigrants and immigration has affected the interest of every American. In his opinion, American immigration laws have been based on both idealism and pragmatism. The idealism is seen in the inclusion and tolerance in the United States of various cultures, languages and belief systems, including wealthy and knowledgeable elites as well as refugees and asylum-seekers. As for pragmatism, Zhang used as examples the Chinese exclusion laws and the internment of Japanese immigrants during World War II. On the whole, Zhang remarked that the U.S. immigration system is a mature system after its two hundred years of development, with both principles and flexibility. The U.S. green card system is a natural product of the historical development of American immigration policies. In the end of the article, after

¹⁰¹ Zhang Daqin, “Zhongguo luka he Meiguo luka de bijiao.”

detailed comparison of Chinese and U.S. green cards, Zhang wished that with the new green card policy, with more international exchanges and with more import of technology and capital from abroad, “China could also import more ideas of human rights and humanitarianism, and the ruling class should be modest in exerting power and should treat Chinese citizens with dignity.” Zhang also urged Chinese citizens to be more determined and active in fighting for their own citizenship rights.

Zhang is representative of Chinese student migrants who became observant of the differences between the United States and China and used the United States as an example for enhancing citizenship rights in China. On the other hand, Zhang’s comments reveal some characteristics of Chinese student migrants’ perception of the United States and in a related manner their identification with China. Apparently Zhang had drawn a quite positive picture of the United States and used it as a role model for China’s political and social development, which seems to be a general pattern among Chinese student migrants in their perception of the United States. At the same time, Chinese student migrants seemed to accept and legitimize the role of nation-states in regulating national politics and people’s lives. In his comments on U.S. immigration laws and system, Zhang described the Chinese exclusion laws and internment of Japanese Americans during World War II as “pragmatism” (rather than “racism”) and praised the “maturity” of the U.S. immigration system with both “principle” and “flexibility.” Though Zhang might well understand the above two cases as racist and discriminatory, he chose to categorize them as examples of a nation-state’s flexibility and capability (in a positive tone) of regulating immigration. Accordingly, Zhang emphasized in his article that while the new Chinese green card policy targeted talented

and profitable foreigners, it is “rational and acceptable” based on its national interests (including the population pressure) and should not be criticized by other countries. Interestingly, Chinese student migrants’ attention to and advocate for more citizenship rights in China (claiming rights from the state) seemed to coexist with their support for the role of nation-states in regulating national life in the name of enhancing national interests. How these two dimensions of the identity of Chinese student migrants will affect their engagement with China remains to be seen.

Besides Zhang’s comments, there have been many other posts on the Haiguinet advocating citizenship rights in China. The Haiguinet has been a forum and outlet for Chinese student migrants and returnees to express their discontent with the insufficient citizenship rights in China and to call for social and political reforms. For example, on July 21, 2006, a young Chinese immigrant named Jiang Guobin committed suicide in Canada. Jiang graduated from Tsinghua University in China and got his first doctoral degree in nuclear physics from Purdue University in the United States. After returning to China for a short time, Jiang migrated to Canada to reunite with his wife and earned another doctoral degree in chemical engineering from the University of Toronto. The reason for his suicide, according to his friends, was the hardship Jiang experienced in finding a proper position in the tight job market in Canada at that time. This tragedy led to heated discussions among Chinese immigrants, including the online Haiguinet community. On Aug 4, 2006, a related report about the situation of Chinese skilled migrants in Canada was forwarded from another online news forum and was posted on the Haiguinet. It immediately led to heated discussions. With sympathy, a returnee who returned from the United States to teach in Tsinghua University in Beijing analyzed the

reasons for emigration of mainland Chinese professionals. Though his remarks somehow simplified the contrast between China and other countries (Canada in particular), he had tried to point to the root of the problem—insufficient citizenship rights in China:

If Chinese passport was as useful as the Canadian one, half of Chinese skilled migrants wouldn't emigrate. If Chinese government was as good as Canadian government in keeping promises, a quarter of immigrants wouldn't emigrate. If China included the protection of private property in its Constitution as Canada did, one eighth of skilled migrants wouldn't emigrate. If the social security service in China was as good as that in Canada, the one eighth left wouldn't leave either...¹⁰²

Compared to migrants' calling on the Internet for political reforms and for citizenship rights in China, returnees' advocacy for social changes inside China has been more complicated and subtle, as seen in the following example of a returnee in academia.¹⁰³ Lu is among those who entered college in the first years after the Cultural Revolution. As he said, he had been "deeply impacted by the enlightenment and democratic movements in the 1980s" which helped cultivate his "awareness of social responsibility." Lu came to the United States in 1990 and earned his doctoral degree in political science in 2004. Lu returned to China to teach in a reputable university. He was satisfied with the fact that he could fulfill his dream to be a "public intellectual" engaging directly with the home society and writing about all aspects of the society, which according to him would have been hard to accomplish if he had stayed in the United States.

What had been most frustrating for Lu, however, was the predominant role of the Chinese state in Chinese academia. As he said, the Chinese government has been promoting natural sciences and technological innovation while putting yokes on the

¹⁰² Gongfuwang, posting to Haiguinet, August 5, 2006, <http://www.haiguinet.com/bbs/viewtopic.php?p=1000888&highlight=#1000888>.

¹⁰³ Lu, interview by author, July 1, 2005.

humanities and social sciences studies. The state has confined scholars of humanities and social sciences in the ivory tower and marginalized them in public space. In addition, projects in the humanities and social sciences that follow the direction mapped out by the government are more likely to be funded, and these projects can be counted when a junior faculty is to be considered for tenure. Moreover, the Chinese government has designated certain journals which can be counted for tenure. Some scholars were not satisfied with these state-affiliated journals and tried to found their own, but they could not get the license for establishing new journals. Therefore, they could only join together to publish their writings in books, which unfortunately cannot be counted for tenure.

Frustrated rather than despairing, Lu adopted new strategies. “We cannot act as radical as in the 1980s,” he said, referring to the political and social movements that finally led to the June 4 Massacre in 1989. “We are now mature, and we need to relocate ourselves in this (current) context...We learned how to deal with the state, such as making use of a group of powerful people against other groups.” Borrowing Foucault’s theories, Lu continued, “we have to play the games... we need to play with strategy. The institution is not a seamless iron barrel. We can use this part against that part.” Lu’s strategy seems to be common among many other returned student migrants who had formed a unique identity based on their education and living experiences in and outside of China and who had learned to “play the games” with the Chinese state to defend citizenship rights (including their own individual rights) practically but effectively.

This chapter has analyzed the major reasons for returning migrants' applications for U.S. citizenship and has argued that citizenship had been used by Chinese student migrants for transnational mobility rather than for permanent settlement and "assimilation" in the United States. Facing the growing debates on "dual citizenship," as advocated by student and professional migrants and their sympathizers in China (including returning migrants), the Chinese government struggled between past and present and took a cautious position in maintaining the one-nationality law while adjusting its immigration policies to grant more benefits and convenience to returning student migrants. At the same time, navigating between China and the United States, Chinese student migrants and returning migrants are not simply retaining the culture of their home society but rather reinventing their cultural identity based on their transnational life journey. Comparing citizenship rights in the United States and in China, these "translated" migrants constitute a potential political force advocating and enlarging citizenship rights in China.

Epilogue

The year of 2008 was destined to be a significant year for China and Chinese overseas, full of pride and promises as well as tensions and anxieties. The grandeur of China's hosting the Olympics, with its marvelous sporting triumph, boosted national and ethnic pride both in and outside of China. While Chinese abroad celebrated and enjoyed this unprecedented national pride, tensions arose with the unrest in Tibet in March 2008 and the following worldwide protests by activists advocating the independence of Tibet. The world-round relay of the Olympics torch was accompanied by numerous marches and protests, and on a few occasions the torch was almost taken away by protesters. At the same time, many Chinese overseas took to the streets to protect the torch relay. Many of these Chinese overseas were new immigrants from mainland China, especially students-turned immigrants, who took pride in the achievements of mainland China's reforms and its increasing presence on the world stage and viewed the protests as a humiliation of China as a nation.

The global economic crisis breaking out in 2008 further dramatized the growing global influence of China and along with it both the opportunities and challenges for Chinese overseas. With the United States embattled with its worst economic downturn in three decades and Europe and Japan embroiled in the deepest postwar recessions, China had been portrayed and pursued as a key player and the hope for the world economy recovery with its huge foreign exchange reserve (the largest in the world) and a continuing impressive GDP growth rate (forecast as 6.5% in 2009 by World Bank)

backed by a vast domestic market.¹ The G20 summit in London in April 2009 was even described by western observers as a G2 summit between U.S. President Barrack Obama and Chinese President Hu Jintao.² China's continuous growing economy, described by World Bank as “a relative bright spot in an otherwise gloomy economy,”³ continued to draw student migrants to return. China’s economic expansion have also provided opportunities for Chinese business expansion in the world, with which naturally come not only increasing investment, capital, goods, but also laborers, business owners, families, cultural intermediaries, and educational institutions. However, accompanying this economic expansion and increasing migration were also risks of Chinese new migrants being labeled as “neocolonialists” or even viewed as a new round of “yellow peril.”⁴

All these dramas of changing global geopolitics and global economy encourage us to think about Chinese student migration, return migration, and Chinese migration at large in historical and global perspectives. Student migrants are products of China’s reforms, directly linked with China’s efforts of seeking modern science and technology and of integrating into the global economy. Student migrants also embody the social and cultural transformation of China after reform and serve as bridges between China

¹ At the end of March 2009, China’s foreign exchange reserves reached 1.95 trillion USD, and it had long been the largest foreign holder of U.S. treasury securities (744.2 billion UDS in February 2009). Xinhua News Agency, “China’s Foreign Reserves Hit \$1.95 Trillion at End of March,” *China Daily Online*, April 11, 2009, http://chinadaily.cn/china/2009-04/11/content_7668745.htm; U.S Department of Treasury/Federal Reserve Board, “Major Foreign Holders of Treasury Securities,” April 15, 2009, <http://www.ustreas.gov/tic/mfh.txt>. China’s GDP growth rate in 2009 was expected by the Chinese government to be 8%, while it was forecast by World Bank to be 6.5% in 2009, which will be still one of the fastest in the world though it dropped from double-digit growth rates in past two decades in China. *The Economist*, “How China Sees the World,” March 21, 2009, 13; *The Economist*, “A Time for Muscle-Flexing,” March 21, 2009, 27-29.

² C. Fred Bergsten, “A Partnership of Equals,” *Foreign Affairs* 87, no. 4 (July/August 2008): 57-69. Bergsten is the director of Peterson Institute for International Economics.

³ *The Economist*, ““A Time for Muscle-Flexing,” 29.

⁴ *The Economist*, “The New Colonialists,” May 13, 2008, http://www.economist.com/opinion/displaystory.cfm?story_id=10853534.

and other societies, facilitating China's integration into the global community. As a returnee noted in his interview, new migrants, especially student migrants who have entered various professions in the United States, helped build up unprecedentedly thicker linkages between China and the United States, therefore strengthening U.S.-China relations and rendering them less vulnerable as in the past.⁵ There are reasons for optimism that these student migrants would serve as cultural intermediaries and continue bridging the gap between China and other societies, and that many of them, as shown in this study, after observing and living in other social systems, obtained a critical comparative perspective, reexamined Chinese society, and strived for further political and social reforms and for broader citizenship rights in China.

Student migrants' own identities and livelihood have also been deeply impacted by the transformation of China. In the last three decades, China has been transformed from a closed-door communist state to a market-oriented economic giant (now the third largest economy in the world) and socially and culturally diverse society, gradually asserting its newly found power and prestige in the world. This has profound impacts on student migrants, not only on their migration patterns (as seen in return migration) but also on their identities and community formation. Migrants take pride in their ethnic and cultural identity and view a rising China as enhancing their status in the receiving societies and benefiting their career opportunities. At the same time, however, conflicting views about China in the West determine that the reception and integration of Chinese overseas into the receiving societies (especially new migrants with more

⁵ Pei, interview by author. June 2005.

direct contacts and attachments with China) is to be nothing but complicated and contentious.⁶

Chinese student migration has also been an important stream of international migration in post-WWII world, representing a remarkable trend of increasing preference for highly educated and skilled migrants in immigration policies and the intensified global competition for talents. With the backdrop of global economic restructuring from industrial to knowledge-based economies with increasingly “flexible accumulation” of global capitalism,⁷ student migration not only represents the privileges and transnational mobility of highly educated and professional migrants but also indicates the power of nation-states in selecting migrants and defining whom to be included as worthy citizens. This increasingly popular but not totally new trend of “nations by design” has far-reaching impacts on international student migration and international migration in general.⁸

⁶ Against the backdrops of the global economic recession in 2008, the increasing presence of China on the global stage, and the promising U.S.-China relations with the new Obama administration, a survey conducted by the Committee of 100 (a national organization of Chinese American leaders) in January 2009, however, did not provide an upbeat message. It showed that among the general American population, 45% believed Asian Americans were more loyal to their countries of ancestry than to the United States, up from 37% in the committee’s 2001 survey. And only approximately 56% of the surveyed general American population believed Chinese Americans would support the United States in military or economic conflicts. The Committee of 100, “2009 National Survey: Public Attitudes towards Chinese and Asian Americans,” April 20, 2009, <http://survey.committee100.org/2009/>.

⁷ In her analysis of transnational Hong Kong business elites, Anthropologist Aihwa Ong describes “flexible accumulation” as “the endless capacity to dodge state regulations, spin human relations across space, and find ever new niches to exploit... the expressions of a habitus that is finely tuned to the turbulence of late capitalism.” Ong, *Flexible Citizenship*, 135.

⁸ Immigration scholar Aristide R. Zolberg used the term “a nation by design” as the title of his recent book: *A Nation by Design: Immigration Policy in the Fashioning of America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press , 2006). In this book, he challenges the traditional view of American immigration policy “as a single historical line weaving between openness and restriction at different points in time.” Instead, he argues that immigration policies have “involved from the outset a combination of disparate elements designed to facilitate or even stimulate the entry of immigrants deemed valuable while deterring those considered undesirable, and occasionally even going beyond this to rid the nation of populations already in its midst” (p19). Here the term can also help us understand how international students and skilled migrants were included in the historical construction of U.S. immigration laws and policies.

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Appendix 1. A Note on the Web-based Sources Used in This Study

Web-based sources in general have aroused increasing attention from researchers and librarians. A most notable example is the Library of Congress' efforts of selecting and preserving web archives. In 2000, a multidisciplinary team of library staff was formed to study methods of "evaluate, select, collect, catalogue, provide access to and preserve" web-based primary sources for future generations of researchers. The Library has developed thematic Web archives on such topics as the United States National Elections of 2000, 2002, and 2004, the Iraq War, and the events of September 11 (<http://www.loc.gov/webcapture/>). Furthermore, in July 2003, the Library of Congress and the national libraries of Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Iceland, Italy, Norway, Sweden, the British Library (UK), and the Internet Archive (USA) formed the International Internet Preservation Consortium to collaborate in preserving Internet content (<http://netpreserve.org/about/index.php>).

Online sources, particularly blogs and chat room discussion, prove to be useful for immigrant studies and comprise one of the major primary sources for my study (especially the chapters on return migration). Haiguinet (www.haiguinet.com) is one of the largest online Chinese returnees' communities. Founded in 2003, haiguinet had a membership of more than 30,000 in late 2006. It was founded by returning migrants in business and the high-tech industry to share concerns about returning to China and to exchange information for business opportunities. This online community started with a main forum (*haigui luntan*) for returnees to discuss business projects and various issues regarding returning to China. With roaring membership and increasingly diverse discussions, the returnee community developed various sub-forums, including a returnees' teahouse (*haigui chaguan*) and a returnees' bar (*haigui jiuba*) which addressed more informal and practical issues in which returnees were interested, such as how to retain immigrant status (green cards) and how one felt about China after returning. These sub forums soon became the most popular among returnees. Unlike many other online forums, Haiguinet has all its postings since its start in 2003 archived and fully searchable and therefore provides rich and invaluable sources for the study of returning migrants.

Online forums and discussions are a new type of source that offers researchers both challenges and opportunities. The major concern, of course, is the difficulty in identifying the original source and the authors of online postings (as they are often under pseudonym or unnamed) and assuring the reliability of the resources. This requires researchers to carefully evaluate online sources and analyze important questions such as who is the sponsor of the resources and website, what is the potential biases and hidden agenda of the author and sponsor of the resource, who is the intended audience, what is the site's purpose, is the information presented accurate and the website regularly updated, how are sources documented, and so on. (Munger and Campbell, 2002) These challenges, fortunately, can be met in my study of the Haiguinet which has a rather specific and relatively identifiable participants and audience (returning highly educated Chinese migrants).

On the other hand, the opportunities web-based sources provide for researchers are also obvious. Because of the universality of the Internet (which also led to the difficulties of validation of the sources), it allows previously marginalized voices to be

heard (Munger and Campbell, 2002). Web-based sources, particularly online discussions, also offer previous venues for researchers that are usually not available in traditional print sources, such as the valuable clue of readership as indicated by the numbers of “hits” and the less filtered live discussions among individual subjects under study.

The free online space and the translocal and transnational online community also offer unique opportunities for studying transnational diasporic communities, especially regarding community and identity formation. For example, Kim-An Lieberman studies the diasporic Vietnamese democratic activism on the Internet and argues that the Internet served as a tool of imagination and empowerment for change and had affected individual identity. Emily Ignacio conducts a more ground-level study by following the online debates on the *soc.culture.filipino* newsgroup. For her, online debates and chats are valuable in studying the process of identity formation and how members of the diaspora negotiated the meaning of Filipino identity with people in the Philippines and vice versa. In her opinion, the Internet meeting places can offer something local meeting places cannot—“the ability for sustained and efficient dialogue about local and global phenomena, and the possibility for transnational community among multiple members of a diaspora.” Yuan Shu studies the roles of the two web-based Chinese-language networks (the Chinese News Digest before the mid-1990s and the Chinese Media Net in the late 1990s) in informing Chinese professionals and shaping their transnational communities in the United States at different historic junctures. Shu shows that the Internet and the web-based Chinese-language networks had not only served as a medium of communication for these professionals to negotiate their political power and cultural spaces in the United States but had cultivated and performed a sense of Chineseness (Lieberman, 2003; Ignacio, 2003; Shu, 2003).

My study of the online returnees’ community benefits from the role of the Internet as a new and unique medium for Chinese returnees to negotiate their community and identity. I use online discussions to examine how returnees (and non-returnees) discussed issues about returning such as the reasons for their returning and how they identified themselves, especially regarding their immigrant status and citizenship. During my interviews, I found many returning migrants did not feel comfortable in talking in front of others about their legal status and related complicated issues, such as how to retain immigrant status legally or illegally. However, the online forums offered them an opportunity of raising questions and sharing strategies because they generally did not need to worry about their real identity to be disclosed.

I searched the fully archived online discussions at Haiguinet with the following five key words in three years (2003-2006) and tracked down entries including these key words. The result for “green card” (*luka*) was 254 entries; “naturalization” (*ruji*), 61 entries; “immigration” (*yimin*), 432 entries; “citizenship” (*gongmin*), 180 entries; and “dual citizenship” (*shuangcong guoji*), 81 entries. Unable to discuss all the entries in detail, I selected those clusters of discussions when a topic was initiated and then followed by comments from various online members. In this way I can recover migrants’ lively conversation, grasp the spirit of the returnee community, and reveal the complexity of migrants’ transnational life and identity.

A few special characteristics of the Haiguinet community and its online archives are worth mentioning and help justify the way I used it for my analysis. First of all, as

noted above, all the online discussions and posts are archived and fully searchable. Therefore, these online discussions are not ephemeral or isolated but can be printed out and examined in their own contexts. In this sense, these online discussions are not very different from traditional print documents, while at the same time they possess something traditional media does not usually have, that is, first-hand and live conversations among people on the ground level.

Secondly, unlike many other online forums and chat rooms, the Haiguinet community appeared both online and in real life. This online community has organized its real-life associations, including a business elites' club and many local clubs of returnees in Chinese cities like Beijing and Shanghai. The Haiguinet community has also formed its own delegation to participate in the annual Returned Overseas Students Fair (*liu jiao hui*) in Guangzhou in southern China, which has been organized by the Guangzhou municipal government but has gained attention from Chinese student migrants worldwide. Therefore, this online community is not totally virtual or mythical but is largely identifiable. In some sense, it is similar to the returnees' club I participated in in Beijing which also has its own website and has used it to announce events and share ideas. However, the Haiguinet community is far larger and truly transnational. It has more than 30,000 registered members who are located all over the world.

The last point to be mentioned is about censorship. Did the Chinese government monitor this online community and did people feel free to post there, especially considering that some of its members are identifiable? According to its founder, this online forum is one of the few overseas websites that have not been blocked by the mainland Chinese government from access to the Chinese public. This offers both an advantage and a disadvantage for my research. The advantage is that this online forum is truly transnational because it connected Chinese in China and Chinese migrants out of China. The disadvantage, however, is that to retain its access to the mainland Chinese public, the forum has been self-censored. The managing team of the website has regulated politically sensitive words and discussions (such as those criticizing the Chinese Communist Party) are deleted. However, as seen from my quotes and analysis later, there have been indeed harsh criticisms of the Chinese government and passionate advocacy for citizenship rights in China on this online forum. Thus, this precarious online forum both shows the strategies returning migrants used to maintain this valuable online space and reveals how much tolerance the Chinese state has had with this online community of returning migrants (or maybe more accurately the incapability of the Chinese state in monitoring the potent and powerful Internet).

Appendix 2. Lists of Interviewees in China and the United States

Note: This oral history project had been approved by the Human Subjects Committee at the University of Minnesota: IRB Approval Number 0412P65759. To protect informants' privacy, only pseudonyms are used here and in the text, unless the person is a public figure and her or his statements, writings, and speeches are public information (specified as "real name" in the following lists). The places of interviews (Beijing, Shanghai, and Wuhan) are also not identified in order to better protect interviewees' privacy. Unless specified, these interviewees directly came to the United States as non-government-sponsored students for graduate training (mainly in Ph.D. programs) and then either worked in the United States or returned to China after graduation.

RETURNEES INTERVIEWED IN CHINA

Name	Gender	Time of Coming to the U.S.	Time of Returning to China	Legal Status	Occupation in China
Dong	M	Late 1990s (family-sponsored immigration)	2004	Lawful Permanent Resident(LPR)	Freelance photographer
Duan	M	1991	2000	LPR	Private entrepreneur in the IT industry
Fang	M	1993 (with his Ph.D. degree earned in Canada)	2003	Canadian citizen	Professor and entrepreneur in the pharmaceutical industry
Gao	M	1990	1996	LPR	Manager at a private company in the media industry
Guan	M	1996	2005	No immigrant status	Professor of agricultural sciences
Hou	F	2000	2002	No immigrant status	Partner at a private legal consulting company

Hu	F	1991	1997	LPR	Professor of pharmaceutical sciences
Huang	M	1998	2003	No immigrant status	Professor of social sciences
Huai	M	1982-1983 1986-1988 (as a visiting scholar)	1983, 1988	No immigrant status	Professor of natural sciences
Ji	M	2000	2003	No immigrant status	Legislator
Lei	F	Mid-1980s (She migrated with her father who was a visiting scholar. She studied and then stayed in the United States.)	2005	U.S. citizen	Expatriate in an American company in China
Lu	M	1990	2004	Canadian permanent resident status (expired)	Professor of humanities
Ma	F	1981 (She came as a visiting scholar in 1981 and again in 1985, then enrolled in a Ph.D. program in 1987.)	1992	LPR	Researcher and founder of a private consulting company
Mao	M	1981 (He came as a visiting scholar, earned his Ph.D.	1984, 1990	No immigrant status	Professor of natural sciences

		degree and then returned in 1984. He came as a visiting scholar again in 1988 and returned in 1990.)			
Mu	F	1987	1999	U.S. citizen	Manager at a private company in the biomedical industry
Pan	M	1985	2002	U.S. citizen	Professor and entrepreneur in the medical industry
Pei	M	1990	2002	U.S. citizen	Professor of information sciences and college administrator
Qian	M	1995	2001	LPR	Manager at a state-owned enterprise
Qin	M	1988, 1989 (as a visiting scholar)	1989	No immigrant status	Administrator in a government organization
Shao	M	1992	1995	No immigrant status	Private restaurateur
Su	F	1996 (She studied in Australia from 1989 to 1993 and earned her Ph.D. degree. She was a postdoctoral fellow in the U.S. from	2000	Canadian citizen	Private entrepreneur in the medical industry

		1993 to 1995 and then worked in a Canadian research institute from 1996 to 2000.)			
Tang	M	1990	1995	LPR	Founder of a private law firm
Wang	F	1999	2001	No immigrant status	Private entrepreneur
Wen	M	1993	2003	U.S. citizen	Manager at a state-owned enterprise
Xiang	M	1985	1996	LPR	Professor of social sciences and college administrator
Yang	M	1989	1996	No immigrant status	Professor of social sciences
Ye	M	1990s (He arrived at Canada in 1988 to study and then worked in Vancouver for ten years. He started traveling back and forth between China and Canada since 1995. He also lived in Boston for three years in the 1990s.)	2002	Canadian citizen	Employee in an American company in China
Zhai	M	1997	2003	No immigrant status	Employee in a private company

Zhang	M	1985	2000	U.S. citizen	Senior manager in a small-scale Chinese-American-owned private IT company in China
Zhou	M	1994	2005	LPR	Professor of humanities

MIGRANTS INTERVIEWED IN THE UNITED STATES

Name	Gender	Time of Coming to the U.S.	Region of Last Residence	Family Origin or Remigration Path (other than directly coming to the United States to study)	Occupation in the United States
Bao	M	1994	Mainland China	He remigrated as a postdoctoral fellow with a Ph.D. degree earned in the U.K.	Scientist in a college; immigrant organization leader
Bu	M	1978	Taiwan	Family origin in mainland China	Researcher in a private company
Chu	F	2001	Mainland China	She remigrated from Canada with graduate training there and with Canadian citizenship	Employee (non-faculty position) in a college
Dai	M	Early 1980s	Mainland China		Lawyer
Du	M	1984	Mainland China		Entrepreneur

Feng	F	1985	Mainland China	She joined her husband in Canada in 1983 who was a visiting scholar. They then moved to the U.S. together.	Employee in a private clinic
Fu	M	Second generation	Mainland China	Parents came to the U.S. from mainland China in the 1950s and opened a Chinese restaurant.	Restaurateur
Gong	M	2000	Mainland China	He came to the U.S. as a postdoctoral fellow.	Researcher in the state government
Hang	M	1985	Mainland		Academia: administrator
Hao	F	1994	Mainland	She came as a visiting musician and then stayed.	Musician
Hua	F	1957	Brazil	Family moved to Hong Kong in 1949 and then to Brazil in 1951. She came to the U.S. alone, studied, and then stayed.	School teacher
Huang, Ange (real name)	F	1986	Taiwan	Family left mainland China in the 1940s	Founder of Asian Media Access, a media-based community advocacy organization
Jiang	M	1967	U.K.	He was born in Hong Kong and studied and worked in the U.K. before he was recruited by an American company.	Middle-rank manager at a private company; community leader

Jin	M	1980	Mainland	Family-sponsored immigration	Community leader
Lu, Wei-ming (real name)	M	1953	Taiwan	Family left mainland China in 1949.	City planner, community leader
Luo	F	1980	Vietnam	Grandparents migrated to Vietnam from mainland China in the early 20 th century.	Employed in a private company, also family-run business
Mui, Wendy (real name)	F	1975	Hong Kong	Family-sponsored immigration	Restaurateur, Director of the Minnesota Chinese Service Center
Nan	F	1970s	Hong Kong		Realtor
Ou	M	Mid-1980s	Mainland		Researcher in a private company
Pang	F	1994	Mainland	She visited her child who was studying in the U.S. and then stayed to guide a local immigrant arts organization.	Artist, immigrant arts organization leader
Qiu	M	1995	Mainland		Professor of natural sciences
Song	F	1972	Hong Kong		Director of a non-profit organization
Terry, KaiMay Yuan (real name)	F	1958	Hong Kong		Small business owner, community activist and leader

Wei	F	1991	Mainland China		Professor of humanities
Yi	M	1997	Mainland China		Accountant
Yong	M	1989	Mainland China		Professor of natural sciences
Yue	M	Mid-1960s	Hong Kong	He studied and taught in the United States. He then returned to teach in Hong Kong before coming back again to the United States to teach.	Professor of humanities
Zha	M	1992	Mainland China		Project manager in a private company; founder of a local company with close networks with China
Zhi	F	1980s	Mainland China		Employee in the state government
Zhong	M	1964	Mainland China		Engineer, entrepreneur and community leader