

# Psychology at Chinese universities and in Chinese society\*

## With special reference to clinical psychology

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The following contribution gives a short introduction to Chinese psychology, history, psychological research and teaching institutions and student selection for universities. After a brief overview of the theoretical traditions and contemporary trends in general and experimental psychology it focuses in more detail on the recent developments in clinical and medical psychology. Research do-

main, academic training in clinical psychology and its applications in modern China are discussed with special reference to psychotherapy and counselling.

*Key words:* Psychology, China, clinical psychology, medical psychology, psychotherapy

In Europe we know little about Psychology in China, a country which already had its first psychological laboratories at the dawn of the 20th century (1917) at Beijing University. The communist victory and later the culture revolution relegated psychology to an obscure borderline subject. It was considered as an ideologically impregnated subject that posed a danger for the dominant state ideology. This political history and the cultural distance explain our poor knowledge of the recent developments in the field of psychological research and teaching. Nevertheless, dynamic changes are taking place in China, and the field of psychology is no exception. In the last 15 years, a revival of interest in psychology can be seen at several Chinese universities.

The second author, engaged in a cooperative project concerning the cultural influence on the relative effectiveness of coping modalities, had the opportunity in 1996 to visit six different Chinese universities or equivalent institutions, including the Chinese Academy of Science, and to teach students and staff members in semi-

nars. Together with our Chinese partners\* we try to give a short introduction to the history and the current situation of psychology at Chinese universities with special focus on clinical psychology.

## On the history of psychology in China

Modern psychology was introduced into China after the Opium War of 1840. Among the earliest scholars in contact with western psychology was Rong Hong (1828–1912). In 1847, he left China for the United States and entered a Preparatory School in Massachusetts, where he studied psychology. Yongjing Yang (1838–1898), the most influential early psychologist in China, studied psychology at Kenyon College (1854–1862), returning to China in 1862 where he taught psychology at St. John's School in Shanghai from 1878 to 1886. At the same time, he translated Joseph Haven's "Mental Philosophy" into Chinese. This book was the first translated work of western philosophical psychology in China. In 1907 the philosopher Wang Kuo-wei translated Höffding's "Outlines of psychology" (1893). This translation had considerable influence on the development of psychology in the educational sciences of colleges in China. Ten years later the first psychology lectures were held at Bei-

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jing University (1917) and in 1920 the first psychology department was founded at Nanjing Normal Higher School (Ching, 1980).

In 1921, the Chinese Psychological Society (CPS) was founded with Professor Zhang Yaoliang as first president. This also marks the birth of psychology as a profession. Since then, the discipline has developed both academically and also as a field of professional activity. In the twenties and thirties the first psychology journals were published. Nevertheless, according to Ching (1980), psychology before the founding of the People's Republic in 1949 had only a modest following, although students were sent to study the new subject both in the USA and Europe. These students made a contribution to the functional and behaviorist basis in diverse areas of physiological psychology, developmental psychology, in animal psychology and also in memory and learning psychology.

With the creation of the new state, theory, education and research had to be subordinated to dialectic materialism. The new era was on one hand, marked by a few outstanding personalities such as Pan, but also strongly influenced by the soviet psychology. During this era there was a trend to break with the western tradition which was considered idealistic and bourgeois (Ching, 1980). The main task of Chinese psychologists in this period was to learn from Soviet psychology. Many Soviet psychological works were translated and introduced into China. In the 1950s Soviet psychologists were invited to China to give lectures, and Chinese scholars were sent to the Soviet Union to study. Under the guidance of the slogan "Reforming Chinese psychology with Pavlov's theory of conditioned reflexes", Pavlov's theory was viewed as the only scientific foundation for psychology. As a result, laboratories for studying classical conditioning were established in various universities. The situation did not change until the 1960s when the relationship between China and Soviet Union had deteriorated. Petzold (1994) saw in the concept of the practice, as the instance of empirical confirmation, a distinguishing feature of the Chinese Marxist interpretation.

After the formal founding of the Institute of Psychology at the Chinese Academy of Science

in Beijing (1951), psychology entered in an active phase which lasted until the *cultural revolution*. Open to Soviet, but in some extent also to western schools of psychology, research and publications covered in particular developmental and educational psychology, but also physiological psychology. In 1965 the Chinese Psychological Society (CPS) numbered over 1000 members. This all in all promising development was brutally halted by the cultural revolution. The Institute of Psychology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (Beijing) was closed from 1969 to 1972, experimental psychology was defamed as pseudo science, and the analysis of the social classes was proclaimed as the only replacement necessary for the study of psychological phenomena (Petzold, 1987).

Only after the demise of the gang of the four in October 1976 could psychological research restart, step by step. Now, 20 years further on the Chinese Psychological Society (CPS) has over 4000 members. In the CPS there are at present 12 special committees: Developmental Psychology, Educational Psychology, Theoretical Psychology and History of Psychology, Medical Psychology, General and Experimental Psychology, Sports Psychology, Industry Psychology, Physiological Psychology, School Management Psychology, Law Psychology, Social Psychology and Psychometrics as well as 3 working committees in Psychological Popularization, Academic Activities and International Exchanges. Since 1980 CPS has been a member of the International Union of Psychological Science (IUPsyS). Apart from the CPS other professional organizations exist such as, for example, the Chinese Social Psychological Association (since 1982) and the Chinese Society of Behavioral Sciences (since 1985). All provinces have their psychological associations. For a more detailed description of the history of Chinese psychology the reader is referred to Wang (1993) and Jing (1994).

### **The psychological institutions**

Major independent psychological institutes exist at 14 universities: "Beijing University" and "Beijing Normal University" in Beijing, "East China Normal University" in Shanghai, "Hang-

zhou University" in Hangzhou, "Jilin University" in Jilin, "Nanjing Normal University" in Nanjing, "South China Normal University" in Guanzhou, "Shanxi Normal University" in Xian, "South-west Normal University" in Chongqing. These 9 universities offer, in addition to Bachelor degrees (8 Semesters), a Masters (6 semesters) and a Ph.D. (2 to 3 years). Five universities, "Hunan Normal University" in Hunan, "Middle China Normal University" in Wuhan, "Jiangxi Normal University" in Nanchang, "North-east Normal University" in Changchun, and "Qufu Normal University" in Qufu offer both Bachelor degrees and Masters. All students study full time in all of the 14 universities.

At other institutions, psychology is taught within the framework of the medical universities, above all at the Hunan Medical University in Changsha. Hunan Medical University also offers a Ph.D. program in clinical psychology. The advisor is Professor Gong Yaoxiang. It is also integrated into sociological departments, as for example at the Nankai University in Tianjin. A psychological research center has been established since 1998, and has just begun to offer a Ph.D. program. In addition, a psychological educational research center exists at every normal university, normal college and education college throughout the country. These various centers employ many psychology professors. Their teaching and research focus particularly on educational and developmental psychology.

The most important research center is the *Institute of Psychology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences* (CAS) which was founded in 1951 and whose staff now numbers more than 150, including 60 professors, associate professors and senior engineers. Its focus is on basic theoretical and experimental research as well as on cross-disciplinary studies in natural and social sciences and applied psychology. It includes 12 research sections, animal psychology, cognitive psychology, developmental psychology, learning psychology, educational psychology, perception, neuropsychology, social psychology, physiological psychology, managerial psychology, engineering psychology and medical psychology. In addition, it has four cooperation centers and open laboratories: The *Collabora-*

*tive Research Center* of the Institute of Psychology (CAS) and the University of Michigan, USA, which coordinates the cooperation between the researchers from the Institute of Psychology and University of Michigan in psychological studies, exchanges and training programs and which carries out some joint cross-cultural projects; the *Laboratory of Human Behavior and Development* which conducts research on human behavior and development involving approaches from diverse fields such as psychology, anthropology, linguistics and information science; the *Brain-Behavior Research Center* which aims to establish a multi-disciplinary scientific environment for conducting experimental research into the interactions between the brain and behavior as well as the underlying mechanisms and which facilitates academic exchange programs and cooperative projects both at home and abroad, and the *Laboratory of Information-Processing* for young scientists which provides Ph.D. students and post-doctoral scholars with SGI multimedia terminals and SUN SPARC workstation for their research in the areas of cognitive psychology, engineering psychology and neuropsychology.

The editorial department of the Institute of Psychology of the CAS publishes two quarterly journals the "Acta Psychologica Sinica" (by the Chinese Psychological Society, which also since 1964 produces "Psychological Science") and the "Journal of Development in Psychology" (by the CAS), all in Chinese with English abstracts.

### **Students and the teaching methods**

The students must pass through a highly competitive entrance exam before they can enter the university. According to the Department of Foreign Affairs of the State Education Commission of the P.R.C. (1994), the selection of the students takes into consideration a number of criteria: "The candidates should be patriotic, moral, ready to serve the socialist construction and well grounded in basic theory and have solid and systematic knowledge of their respective fields, and a good capacity for doing independent research work" (Department of Foreign

Affairs of the State Education Commission, 1994, p. 17). The State Education Commission directs the work of enrolling graduate students (masters and doctoral students) and is responsible for formulating the policies and qualifications for admission. The admission offices of various institutions are responsible for the actual Committee in each province and municipality.

Applicants for the master's degree must be distinguished undergraduates from universities or junior college graduates having graduated at least two years before and having acquired an educational level equivalent to graduates from universities. Applicants for the study for the doctoral degree must be master-degree holders or those with equivalent education. They must at the same time have recommendations from at least two associate professors or professors who are specialists in the fields concerned. The universities are authorized by the State Education Commission to examine their qualifications and organize separate examinations for their admission (Department of Foreign Affairs of the State Education Commission, 1994).

The sex distribution of students appears currently to be balanced. At the Ph. D. levels students can be found who previously completed a degree in medicine or sociology. The courses are based partly on classical textbooks, and partially on the basis of recognized course books. The modes of teaching can differ greatly from western norms. The students are expected to show much more autonomy. At the level of advanced study a considerable part of the curriculum consists in the independent reading of texts (in the lecture room) and in writing short accounts about what has been read. It is not unusual to see at these universities, classes full of students reading and writing their summaries.

### **Theoretical traditions and trends in general and experimental psychology**

From 1949, after the founding of the People's Republic of China, Marxism-Leninism was supposed to provide the bedrock and metatheoretical basis for psychology. Various psychologists attempted to bind psychology to dialectic

materialism in one way or another. An important role was played by Shu Pan (1897–1988) who as philosophy graduate of Beijing university continued his studies in the twenties in the USA (University of Indiana) and received a Ph. D. from the University of Chicago in 1927 (Yue, 1994). As dean and later president (1956) of the Nanjing university he became director of the Institute of Psychology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing (up until 1983). From 1955–1984 he was president of the Chinese Psychological Society. He considered psychology as a distinct science with roots in neurobiology and the social sciences, that possesses attributes derived from both research approaches (Pan, 1984). He developed an action theory, whose material basis was centered on the higher brain activities and which regarded psychological phenomena as concealed inner processes underlying overt practical activities. The relationship of body and mind was considered, as in Bunge's (1980) mind-body theory, analogous to the relationship of an object to its functions or movements. Personality, he described as a cognitive, emotional, intentional system whose functional processes are a result of social learning processes. The uniqueness of man lies in his highly developed brain (Yue & Shen, 1995).

Although he tried to associate principles of dialectic materialism with modern psychology and although he always insisted that Chinese psychology should not simply be an imitation of American or German research traditions, but should also develop from the cultural and social traditions of China, he was nevertheless persecuted during the cultural revolution and psychology was denounced as a pseudo science. However his teachings left their mark on numerous pupils, many of whom now work at the Chinese Academy of Science and other universities in mainland China as well as Taiwan and are outstanding psychologists in the theoretical, development and physiological fields.

Along with the development of *functional concepts*, to which Pan gave in China an incisive impetus, the behaviorist school was also represented, in part radically, for example by Zing-Yang Kuo. Gottlieb (1972) even saw in him the most extreme representative of behaviorism.

Wang (1993) gives an informative overview of the *recent developments* of Experimental and General Psychology. The research focuses on the principal domains of modern psychology such as perception, information processing, memory, language – with special attention to Chinese language and characters, cognitive strategies and knowledge representation. The present phase of psychological research is characterized by its integration into international mainstream paradigms. The major departments cooperate with researchers from other Asian, American, Australian and European countries. The Institute of Psychology of the Academy of Sciences (Beijing) represents this trend, but so also do other research and teaching institutions. As an example of a fruitful European cooperation with Chinese psychological institutes we mention the cooperation of the Institute of Psychology at the University at Göttingen in Germany (G. Luer & U. Lass) with the departments of psychology at the East China Normal University of Shanghai (Y. Fang & G. Chen) and at the University of Hangzhou (Z. M. Wang). Since 1989, they have been collaborating within the field of cognitive experimental psychology. Two joint projects funded by the Volkswagen Foundation at Hannover (Germany) are examining the effects of language on cognitive processes in German and Chinese subjects. To standardize the experiments, scientists from both sides have been invited to spend time at the respective partner institute in either China or Europe. These projects have led to several doctoral theses.

The present evolution of basic psychological research orientations mirrors the tendency towards globalisation as it can be universally observed in all scientific disciplines. This trend can also be observed in *other areas of psychological research*. Wang (1993), in his overview on present psychological research activities in China, provides information on the current developments in psychological testing and measurement, educational and school psychology, developmental psychology, managerial psychology, engineering psychology, social psychology and sports psychology, cross-cultural psychology, and in medical and clinical psychology (see also Jing, 1994 and Jing & Fu, 1995). Some of these have, according to Wang

(1993), been closely linked with the social and cultural characteristics of China, assimilating elements of cultural traditions with modern paradigms of scientific thinking, for example in the field of clinical psychology.

### **Clinical psychology and medical psychology**

Clinical psychology is currently experiencing, under the name of “medical psychology”, a significant revival, even if up to now, regular training opportunities have only been provided at relative few institutions. Lee (1996) characterized Chinese clinical psychology as an “interface between psychology and medicine” that covered physiological psychology, social and health psychology, neuropsychology and psychosomatic medicine. Clinical psychology is presently taught at six different universities.

Psychological therapy in the modern sense left only a very few traces in China before 1949. Early in the first decade of 20th century, the theory of psychoanalysis was introduced into China (Pao, 1917), and some preliminary publications on the methods of dream interpretation and free association followed in the periodical *Oriental Magazine* (Li Jichu, 1925; Xie, 1926). Additionally, the first psychological counselling offers were set up for children and adolescents (Shi, 1934; Liu, 1935), as well as for university students.

In 1933, R. Lyman, a scholar from the U.S.A. was in charge of the nerve and psychosis department in Beijing Xiehe Medical University. The therapeutic staff was complemented by some clinical psychologists, in addition to psychiatrists and social workers. At that time, according to Cheng (1983), Dai Bingheng, the first psychoanalyst in China, gave the first lectures on psychoanalysis.

From 1936, Ding Zan began research on topics of clinical psychology and gave lectures on clinical psychology in Beijing Xiehe Medical University. He published on psychological therapy, and founded psychological counselling clinics in high schools and factories (Wu, 1991), and the first psychological therapies were then offered in different cities including Nanjing and Shanghai.

The rapid development of medical/clinical psychology in China really began in the late 1970s. Alongside the traditional research on pathological psychology, it has established and developed the field of mental hygiene (including psychological therapy and counselling, stress and psychosomatic disorder) and psychometrics. More attention was from then on paid to the newly emerging research on clinical neuropsychology. The research on pathological psychology involved problems of perception (Tang, 1990), memory (Gong, 1984; Xu, 1982, 1988), thinking (Fan, 1981; Jiang, 1989). Clinical research on intelligence included the adaptation of tests (e.g. WISC) and pathology-related studies on intelligence (Tao, 1982; Wu, 1985). In the field of personality, contributions were made to assessment (MMPI, EPQ, Type A behavior pattern questionnaire, Inkblot Test), as well as clinical studies (Li, 1986).

From 1993 onwards, the *Chinese Journal of Clinical Psychology* was published with English summaries, which gives a good idea of current research topics. This scientific publication is sponsored by the Chinese Mental Health Association. A content analysis of four recent issues (1996, 1; 1997, 1, 2 and 3) containing 83 contributions show that the most frequent themes concern the category "Health Psychology" with 14.5%, followed by "Diagnostic contributions" with 13%, and "Psychopathology" with 12%. Topics such as "Neuropsychology", "Physiological aspects of mental illnesses", "Psychotherapy" of "Psychological aspects of chronic somatic illnesses and somatoform disorders" each cover around 7 to 8.5%. Other topics with lower frequencies relate to "Cognitive aspects of mental disorders", "Developmental aspects" etc.

Applying the same categories to four issues of the German journal *Zeitschrift für Klinische Psychologie* from the same period (1996, 3, 4; 1997, 1, 2) reveals a much higher rate of publications for the category "Psychotherapy" with 26%, a higher rate for "Psychological aspects of somatic illnesses and somatoform disorders" with 13%, but the same rates for diagnostic topics as in China with 13%. Furthermore it is evident that the heterogeneity of topics is lower in the German journal. Of the 15

categories covered in the Chinese publications only 10 are covered in the German journal. The reason is that in Germany publications on health psychology or on neuropsychology are usually published in specialized journals for these disciplines. Another characteristic of the Chinese clinical psychological contributions concerns the bibliographic references. Most of these refer to psychiatric (and neurological) journals, and about half to US- or other English language journals. A minority focus on mainstream discussions in clinical psychological journals with reference to such leading journals as *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, *Psychological Bulletin* or *Journal of Clinical Psychology*. Topics in child-clinical psychology are underrepresented as in German clinical psychology.

The most important *Center for Clinical Psychology* is presently the "Clinical Psychology Research Center" directed by Professor Dai Xiaoyang at the Hunan Medical University. At this institute various clinical psychological research projects are underway covering personality, health psychology and critical life event issues. Clinical psychology enjoys high prestige at this medical university of the Hunan province. Of national significance, at this clinical psychological center, is also its contribution to the development of psychodiagnostic methods. Various tests are developed here, some based on American tests adapted for China. According to the nation-wide survey by Ryan, Dai & Zheng (1994), results from those questioned indicated that in practice 80 different psychological tests are used. The frequency ranking of the applications identifies 5 intelligence tests and 3 personality tests among the 10 most common methods. The Rorschach test was ranked 26th and the TAT 30th.

### Academic training in clinical psychology

A substantial proportion of clinical psychologists, both at this center, as well as in the remainder of China, have had no academic training in psychology, but usually medical training followed by a specialization in psychiatry. Several collaborators, including Prof. Dai, who is

a psychologist, have stayed for extended periods of research at US psychological institutes and are engaged in collaborative projects with America.

A questionnaire survey, carried out recently by this institute together with the university of Hong Kong, addressed to 1434 various psychology departments, teaching and research sections, psychiatric hospitals and child health centers in all 30 provinces of China (including Beijing, Shanghai and Tianjin) with a return rate of 32%, showed that over 80% of those active in clinical psychology had their basic training in medicine (particularly psychiatry and internal medicine) and then afterwards in further education programs (from several weeks to several months) in which clinical-psychological skills (diagnostic and counselling competencies) were taught (Lee, 1996; Gong & Li, 1996). Colleagues from the Clinical Psychology Research Center at the Hunan Medical University estimated that the entire country currently has only some 100 clinical psychologists with a masters degree.

### **Applications of clinical psychology**

Various universities reported that urbanization has created a considerable need for psychological aid. Social and cultural stress arises with the transition of the country from an agrarian to an industrial society with all the consequences of the tensions between the old collectivist and the new, more individualistic, values. An eloquent witness of this transformation and the associated tendencies at the individual, couple and family level is provided by, among others, the studies on Chinese sexual behavior by Zha & Geng (1992) and by Liu, Ng Man, Zhou & Haerberle (1997). Divorce rates, for example, are rising sharply. However psychological problems also arise from material deprivation, overcrowded living conditions etc. According to Jing & Zhang (1996) China's reform and modernization has brought about great changes in many areas of society. The conflict between hereditary and global culture is leading to new problems such as the potential effects of mass media (especially T.V.) on juvenile delinquency, alcohol and drug problems,

social instability, social and psychological problems related to the one-child policy etc. Despite this need for professional psychological help, psychological help has not established itself in a broad sense, neither in the consciousness of the population nor in that of the institutions. The majority of the population still turns to traditional healing methods and seeks help in the available social network of the family or firm. Nevertheless, the tendency to offer more and more professional help can be observed, especially in city areas.

*Psychotherapy* is employed for serious mental and behavioral disorders (Mood disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorders etc.), where western methods such as cognitive behavioral therapy, systemic therapy, client-centered therapy and psychodynamic approaches dominate (Lee, 1996).

To increase their effectiveness with Chinese mentalities, some psychologists have tried to modify and adapt western therapies or have devised indigenous approaches. For example Rational Emotional Therapy was adapted to the Chinese reality as were DUMIR (Diagnostic Understanding Mediation Reeducation) based on changing the subject's cognition, Unblocked Therapy, devised by Lu (1989), and Cognitive Insight Therapy. Unblocked Therapy is based on the Chinese traditional medicine combined with modern theories of system, cybernetics and information. By talking face to face, therapists help to remove the blocks in patients' minds. Cognitive Insight Therapy follows the two principles of respectively psychoanalysis and Morita therapy; the latter advocates a policy of following natural law as devised by the Japanese Morita.

Several traditional Chinese therapy methods can be considered as complementary to scientific methods (Yang, 1997). Seven types are still in widespread use. They include:

1. Enlightenment: Showing people the right path, by gentle persuasion.
2. Emotional "counterposition": Using one feeling to balance the emotional state, for example using one (such as anger) to balance another (such as sadness).
3. Desensitization: Habituation through repetition.
4. Simulators: Considered as a treatment for

hypochondriac cases; it consists in confirming the patient's point of view to an exaggerated degree.

5. Palliation: Relaxation through reading or other diversion.
6. Qigong: This comes from two Chinese words: Qi (chi) meaning energy and gong (kung) means a skill or a practice. Qigong therefore means a skill or practice of cultivating energy. It finds various types and variants in meditation or in gymnastics such as Taichi.
7. Zhuyou: The therapist exorcises the patient through violent dance, a surprisingly effective method, distracting the patient's attention from the disease and bolstering their self confidence in overcoming the disease.

Some Chinese therapists are attempting to combine these 1000 year old traditional therapies with modern western therapies.

*Counselling* is used for less serious problems. According to the results of the above mentioned survey of the current status of clinical psychology work in China (Lee, 1996) 135 of the 475 units surveyed in the study have their own psychological counselling services, with 88,190 clients in the past year. Their problems ranged from health-related psychological problems (21.8%), and problems concerning interpersonal relationships (15.3%), to marital conflicts (8.6%) and job-related stress (6.9%) (Gong & Li, 1996).

In 1985 the "Chinese Mental Health Association" was founded, and this organization is attempting to improve the professional status of the counselling profession in China. They have developed training courses and published the magazine "Selected papers in medical psychology". They have also promoted international cooperation; in Beijing in 1991, they held the first national academic congress of psychotherapy and counselling. The Chinese Mental Health Association in 1992 formulated written regulations covering ethical standards such as professional secrecy and payment conditions for the psychological and counselling professionals who work in public health organizations, in order to unify standards for correct practice in the whole of China.

In the last decade many new psychological

centers and counselling organizations have sprung up in China, especially in the main urban centers such as Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai and Guangzhou (Canton). The university and medical hygiene organizations in these cities have established clinical out-patient departments. Counselling programs and articles giving psychological advice are now an integral part of many newspapers, and radio and television programmes. In 1988 a psychological behavioral health counselling center was established, in Beijing and in Guangzhou and during the same period the prevention center "Universal Fraternity" was founded. In Tianjin, the radio psychological counselling program "Whisper" has been extremely popular. The first "Psychological help telephone service" was opened 1987 in Tianjin, and now Beijing, Shanghai, Chengdu, Chongqing, Hangzhou, Zhengzhou, and Nanjing have similar telephone counselling services (report of the Sociological Department, Nankai University, 1994).

Certain universities have a *psychological counselling centre*, e.g., the Tongji university of Shanghai, which was founded in 1907 and which is now one of the key national universities for engineering-incorporating science, liberal arts and economic management – offers its more than 15 000 students a well equipped psychological counselling center. Various universities now have similar centres, for example, Beijing University, Fudan University in Shanghai, Zhejiang University in Hangzhou, Nankai University, Beijing Normal University. The number of counsellors is usual 2–3 in each university. They normally offer mental training for young students and give practical counselling. The counsellors invest in counselling work as well as in teaching and research. The most common problems treated concern, according to the counsellors, academic achievement, sexual problems and other interpersonal problems.

In recent years, clinical psychology has been getting more and more attention from both society and the professionals within this field. A large number of research works on theoretical study, investigations, and applications have been developed. Most of them focus on clinical and current social problems. They include themes such as the influence of modernity on mental health (Guo, 1997), the children's men-

tal hygiene (Cheng, 1997), the study of type A behavior (Che, 1997), the characteristics of cancer prone personality (Xu, 1997), the effects of Life Events and the clinical applications of family therapy.

### Other applications of psychology

*Teaching of Psychology.* Psychology has a prominent position in the training of teachers at different levels, at the normal universities. General psychology, child psychology, and educational psychology are common courses for every student. At certain universities, additional psychology courses are offered and the students can select from social psychology, management psychology, mental health, youth psychology and even consumer psychology.

Some modest beginnings in psychological teaching can also be observed at the *medical schools*. For example, at the Medical College of the Nankai University (Tianjin), psychology was a minor element of instruction for several years. In 1997 a professorship was created for improving the quality of the psychological contribution to the training of medical students.

### Outlook

The development of psychology in China is currently in an active revival phase. The fact that the International Union of Psychological Science (IUPsyS) has entrusted the 28th International Congress of Psychology for 2004 to our Beijing colleagues is a consequence of this dynamic. The psychology departments have motivated and competent professors, staff members, some with American academic training, and students at their disposal. Many departments are engaged in international collaborative projects. Some colleagues publish in prominent US-journals. Exchange with European institutes is however still in its infancy.

Hong Kong, with its strong emphasis on indigenous Chinese psychology, for example, the "Chinese Culture Connection", has already been an important stimulus for psychology in mainland China. A summer school to train mainland graduate psychology students has

been sponsored by several Hong Kong psychologists – including some professors from Taiwan – for many years. The recent integration of Hong Kong into the Peoples' Republic of China will probably not alter too much the pattern of scientific exchanges as the cooperation of psychological departments in Hong Kong with the other institutes of the P. R. C has already existed for several years.

Despite the many positive aspects of the development of psychology in China, let us not forget that it plays, in this immense country with 1.3 billion habitants, a very modest role at universities as well as in public life. In the whole of China there are currently not more than 14 psychology departments or institutes and the Psychology department of the Chinese Academy (which does have considerable resources). The Chinese Psychological Society has today 4000 members (compared to just over 1000 in 1965). Its subordinate role is a reflection of political history which allowed psychology to become reestablished only some 20 years ago after the cultural revolution. For the politics of economic development, psychology is not at the top of the political agenda.

Even if the academic selection of the students and staff members still takes political criteria into consideration, psychology, as a scientific approach to understanding human behavior and mental processes, is in China adopting international scientific standards. The second author was impressed by the intellectual openness of Chinese academic colleagues and students and by their readiness to cooperate. It is highly desirable that European psychological departments encourage this development by engaging in active cooperation with our colleagues in China.

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