

The Power of Culture

The Power of Culture:

Encounters between China and the United States

Edited by

Priscilla Roberts

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PREFACE

JULIA CHANG BLOCH

In 2004, twenty-one members launched the American Studies Network (ASN). Today, there are 54 member institutions and the ASN has emerged as the largest interdisciplinary academic platform, becoming China's de facto professional entity for American Studies. USCET's American Studies Network has entered its second decade, marked by the Tenth Anniversary Conference in 2013. Sixty-four universities from all over the world were represented at the Anniversary conference held at the University of Hong Kong. The growth of the ASN mirrors the ascendance of China onto the global stage, and the increasing importance of the study of the relationship between the United States and China. The ASN conference in Hong Kong examined *Transnational Currents of US-China Relations* in the broader international contexts of Asia, the Pacific, and the globe. The scholarship continued to advance through the Eleventh Annual Conference at Zhejiang University in Hangzhou, which explored *Culture and US Relations with China and the World*. China's field of American Studies is rich with diversity. Studies in history, literature, religion, politics, US-China relations, and culture, are all represented in the network today.

The ASN annual conferences have been at the heart of the development of American Studies in China for the last decade. In this time of growing uncertainty in the state of US-China relations, the study of US society and culture in China is more crucial than ever. A common thread that is remarkably evident from the two conferences comprised in this book is the impact of culture on what is often called the most important bilateral relationship in the world today. US-China relations have had their ups and downs throughout history, and they have hit a new low as a rising China seeks parity in its relations with the United States and challenges US regional and global supremacy. Despite increasing tensions, or perhaps because of them, it is ever more important to build understanding and trust, which are sorely lacking between the two countries.

The ASN conferences in Hong Kong and Zhejiang, by exploring how American and Chinese identities and relations have shifted and changed

over the years in commercial, cultural, diplomatic, political, intellectual, literary, and religious dimensions, have influenced mutual understanding of Chinese-American interactions over a period spanning more than two centuries. Papers ranged from analyses of American foreign policy to interpretations of literary traditions, including, to cite just a few representative examples, studies focusing on how gender is portrayed in fiction, the cross-cultural review of popular TV shows, and the value of international educational exchanges as a vehicle for cross-cultural understanding.

For the first time, we were pleased to see that culture dominated the discussions at both conferences. Since 2009, USCET has concentrated on this field, making steady progress in addressing what prominent Chinese America expert and former dean of Peking University's School of International Studies, Wang Jisi, perceptively identified as a deficit in American Studies in China. In a foreword to USCET's China American Studies Directory, first published in 2008, Wang wrote:

By comparison to the number of publications focusing on U.S. foreign policy and economics, Chinese scholarly works on U.S. domestic politics and society are woefully inadequate. Works on religious life, a distinctive and important part of American civilization, are rare. The lack of understanding of American politics, spiritual life, and mindset leads to misperceptions of U.S. international strategy in general and its China policy, in particular. A daunting task is how institutions and scholars of American Studies can be encouraged to look below the surface and fully grasp what is happening in the "heart" of America.

The chapters of this publication exemplify the growing sophistication of Chinese research and writing on the broader underpinnings of US culture and society, which hopefully will help reduce the risks of misperceptions and miscalculations in US-China relations.

As the founding president of the US-China Education Trust, a NGO whose mission for the past two decades has been to promote US-China relations through education and exchange, I firmly believe in the resilience of human connections, and that government-to-government relations may go up and down, but people-to-people relations endure. And there is no substitute for direct dialogue or face-to-face interaction, the hallmark of the ASN conference experience. This publication represents an impressive evolution in China's field of American Studies. Since USCET's humble beginning, the ASN annual conferences have attracted ever more prominent speakers; the research has become deeper and more focused; and our scholars have expanded opportunities in their field. I am most proud that the ASN is deeply rooted in Chinese academia and

simultaneously is American and international in its outreach. The ASN has grown into a true joint effort of Chinese and Americans interested in building an enduring US-China relationship that will serve as the engine for peace and prosperity in the twenty-first century.

I want to thank the University of Hong Kong and Zhejiang University for hosting the Tenth and Eleventh American Studies Network Conferences at their prestigious institutions. Without the support of top administrators and faculty at both universities, as well as the funding each generously provided, the meetings would not have been possible. At the University of Hong Kong, which has hosted two ASN conferences, special thanks go to Priscilla Roberts, editor of this volume, Kendall Johnson, Head of the School of Modern Languages and Cultures, Tim Gruenewald, Program Director of American Studies, and Selina Lai-Henderson of the American Studies Programme, who served as coordinators of the anniversary conference. At Zhejiang University, special thanks go to Professor Liu Guozhu, Director of the Center of American Studies and Institute of World History.

My thanks also go to our distinguished speakers who made invaluable contributions to the Tenth and Eleventh ASN conferences by sharing their insights and expertise, lending their prestige, and giving outstanding and inspiring addresses. They include:

- In Hong Kong, Mr. **James Fallows**, National Correspondent for *The Atlantic*; Dr. **Marilyn Lake**, Australian Research Council Professorial Fellow in History at the University of Melbourne; and Dr. **Shelley Fisher Fishkin**, Professor of English and Director of American Studies at Stanford University.
- Ronnie Chan, philanthropist and Chairman of Hang Lung Group Limited, deserves special mention for serving as the special dinner banquet speaker in Hong Kong.
- In Hangzhou, former **Member of the US Congress, Clifford Stearns**; Dr. **Carol Lee Hamrin**, China Specialist and Research Professor at George Mason University; and Dr. **J. Gordon Melton**, Distinguished Professor of American Religious History at Baylor University.

At the Tenth Anniversary Conference in Hong Kong, we were fortunate to be able to gather representatives from all previous ASN conference host universities and honor their contributions and support for the network. Members of the Special Delegation of ASN Conference hosts deserve recognition in this volume. They include:

- Sun Zhe, current director of the Center of US-China Relations at Tsinghua University, organized the first ASN Annual Conference when he was deputy director of the Center for American Studies at Fudan University (2004);
- Xin Qiang, Deputy Director for the Center for American Studies at Fudan University;
- Luo Hong and Liu Xiaohong, Incoming and Retiring Directors (respectively) of the American Studies Program at Yunnan University (2005);
- Priscilla Roberts and Kendall Johnson at the University of Hong Kong (2006, 2013);
- Cheng Xilin, former Director of American Studies at Sichuan University (2008);
- Liu Jianfeng, former Director of American Studies at Jiangnan University (2010);
- Liang Maoxin, Director of the Institute of American Studies and InfoUSA@NENU at Northeast Normal University (2011);
- Mei Renyi, Chair of the Center for American Studies at Beijing Foreign Studies University, which has hosted three ASN conferences (2007, 2009, 2012). Considered by many to be the dean of American Studies in China, Professor Mei has attended every ASN Conference since the beginning.

Additional thanks are due to the diverse group of scholars drawn from China and internationally, who contributed their papers to this volume, including the growing number of members of the American Studies Network.

For both the 2013 and 2014 gatherings, the US-China Education Trust received generous support from the Luce Foundation, the State Department, the US Embassy in Beijing, and the American Consulate in Hong Kong.

Last but not least, Dr. Priscilla Roberts deserves all of our thanks for her dedication to the development of American Studies in China and her assiduous and masterful editing that has produced four publications covering six ASN conferences, and brought Chinese scholarship in American Studies to the international stage.

INTRODUCTION

THE POWER OF CULTURE: ENCOUNTERS BETWEEN CHINA AND THE UNITED STATES

PRISCILLA ROBERTS

Every autumn since 2004, scholars from the American Studies Network (ASN) of China have gathered in their annual conference. The ASN, an umbrella organization bringing together academics from Chinese universities and research institutes studying the United States, often from diverse perspectives, was established that year by the US-China Education Trust. By 2015, its member institutions had expanded to fifty-four, scattered across China. Mongolia, Manchuria, Beijing and Tianjin, Shanghai, Nanjing, the wealthy coastal regions, Hainan Island, Sichuan, Xi'an, Wuhan, and Henan in the interior, Kunming in Yunnan, and South China—including Hong Kong—are all represented.¹ Conferences have shifted from institution to institution. Beijing has been a favorite venue; Shanghai, Kunming, Chengdu, Changchun, and Wuxi have all hosted conferences. Hong Kong had the honor of holding both the third meeting and the tenth anniversary conference. Most chapters in this volume are based on papers given at that tenth conference and at its successor, held at Zhejiang University in Hangzhou in 2014. A small number are written by Western scholars—some based, at least temporarily, at Chinese institutions—who attended one or the other of these conferences. The great majority, however, represent the thinking of Chinese academics and

¹ For more details, see the website of the US-China Education Trust, <http://www.uscet.org/asn-partnerships>, accessed October 4, 2015. For selections of papers delivered at earlier conferences, see Roberts, ed., *Bridging the Sino-American Divide*; Roberts, Mei, and Yan, eds., *China Views Nine-Eleven*; Roberts, ed., *Going Soft?*; and Sichuan University American Studies Research Center, *America in the Age of Globalization*.

students, some of whom have visited the United States for extended periods. They represent a broad spectrum of those working in this area today, including some of China's most senior scholars in the field; mid-career and rising young academics; and some who are still graduate students. Most chapters are meticulously conceptualized and researched, meeting very high standards of scholarship.

Each conference has been organized around one specific overarching theme. Within China, specialists in American Studies tend to fall within two broad areas, groupings that one Chinese scholar christened the "ducks" and the "chickens." Some work in fields that might be considered policy-oriented: Sino-American relations, past and present; US politics and society; international relations; military policy; law; and economics, finance, trade, and business. Some of those studying these topics also serve as advisers to officials and agencies within the Chinese governmental apparatus. Other Chinese Americanists focus more upon subjects that tend to loom large in American Studies programs in the United States and much of the Western world: literary, cultural, and film studies; and issues of class, race, ethnicity, and gender, often with a special focus upon Asian-American relations and mutual perceptions and understandings of each other. Some American Studies programs within China—those at Beijing Foreign Studies University, for example—seek to meld both approaches. The ASN conferences demonstrate the need for interdisciplinarity in American Studies, highlighting common themes that cross these boundaries and putting the various threads of American Studies in China into fruitful and stimulating dialogue with each other. One perennial preoccupation of each meeting has indeed been to debate what American Studies in China—still not a separate discipline, but usually housed within English, Foreign Language, or History departments, schools, or centers—should actually mean. The one-size-fits-all model espoused by some American academics in the past is not necessarily well suited to other contexts beyond the United States. These gatherings have been an opportunity for Chinese scholars at all levels—senior figures, established mid-career academics, bright young scholars who are just starting out, and young graduate students—to discuss at length the ideal future shape, content, nature, and purposes of American Studies within their own country or even within their own specific institutions.

Whatever the stated theme of a specific conference, in practice all have in one form or another addressed certain issues. One overriding preoccupation common to all has been to discern the nature of the Sino-American relationship and how it is likely to develop. In the past few years this subject has become ever more problematic, with an increasingly

nationalist China becoming more assertive in its dealings with both its neighbors in Asia and the United States, the world's strongest military power, with a highly visible presence in the Pacific. Chinese scholars differ in their assessments of the Sino-American relationship and its likely future, with some foreseeing further dramatic increases in China's international power and influence, a prospect many Chinese welcome, and others warning of potential brakes on China's continuing rise. Most, however, feel an overwhelming need to try to predict the future trajectory of this relationship. Chinese scholars—drawing on the recent emphasis on the non-state and informal dimensions of international relations that has become so prevalent in current approaches to diplomatic history in general—have also become very conscious of the cultural and unofficial dimensions of Sino-American relations. At every conference, a significant tranche of papers have explored this theme, often using a comparative approach in an effort to understand not just the relationship itself but also similarities and differences between China and the United States. Ever since the Harvard scholar Joseph S. Nye, Jr., popularized the concept of “soft power” as an intangible but valuable asset that could supplement and magnify a country's military and economic strength when dealing with other nations, Chinese leaders and scholars alike have been intrigued by the concept. Hu Jintao and Wen Xiaobo proclaimed their intention of boosting China's soft power—its international cultural and intellectual prestige and influence—through a range of measures designed to enhance China's image abroad, a policy continued by President Xi Jinping even as he placed far greater emphasis than his predecessors upon boosting his country's military effectiveness, presence, and reach, as well as its economic influence.² The work of the US-China Education Trust, a non-governmental organization with ties to official and non-official elites in both China and the United States, in itself, of course, represents a form of

² Xinhua, “Xi: China to Promote Cultural Soft Power” (January 1, 2014), XinhuaNet Website, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2014-01/01/c_125941955.htm, accessed October 5, 2015; Zhang Lihua, “Beijing Focuses on Soft Power” (April 28, 2014), Carnegie-Tsinghua Website, <http://carnegietsinghua.org/publications/?fa=55458>, accessed October 5, 2015; and Rory Medcalf, “Xi Jinping's Speech: More Diplomacy, Less Raw Power” (December 1, 2014), The Interpreter Website, <http://www.lowyinterpreter.org/post/2014/12/01/Xi-Jinping-speech-More-diplomacy-less-raw-power.aspx>, accessed October 5, 2015. The theme of China and soft power is covered in more detail in my “Introduction” and the chapters by Shi Yinong, Mei Renyi and Kong Xianyong, Kong Qingshan, Ma Xing, Sun Yu, and Wang Ziyuan and Wang Li, in Roberts, ed., *Going Soft?*

cultural diplomacy, and is even the subject of one chapter in the current volume. Indeed, the entire development of American Studies in China must be viewed not just as the result of individual scholars' interest in numerous aspects of the United States, but also as the product of imperatives at various levels of Chinese and—to a lesser degree—American officialdom. For many within the Chinese government, accurate understanding of the United States, how it functions and exactly how American policies are made, is an essential operating tool.

Perspectives on Sino-American Relations

Whatever their feelings toward China and the United States, virtually all agree that how the world's two greatest economic and military powers deal with each other is vitally important to the international global balance. At present, opinion is deeply divided on the relative strength of each. Colonel Liu Mingfu, a retired Chinese army officer whose views are apparently influential with President Xi Jinping, believes that it is inevitable that China will replace the United States as the global hegemon and the world's foremost military power.³ American hard-liners such as Michael Pillsbury of the Hudson Institute point to Liu's perspective as evidence that the United States needs to boost its own military spending and defense posture and strengthen its alliances around the world, in preparation for conflict with China.⁴ Thomas J. Christensen, a Princeton academic and former State Department official, is far less pessimistic. Emphasizing the internal and external challenges China faces, he highlights the fact that China is still a regional rather than global power, with serious problems, but one that is too large to ignore. He argues that the challenge for the United States and the world is to draw it into a wide range of efforts to address such transnational problems as nuclear nonproliferation, climate change and environmental policy, financial and economic instability, and peacekeeping initiatives. Unless China participates in these undertakings, Christensen argues, attempts to maintain global order are likely to be self-defeating.⁵ David Shambaugh of George Washington University takes a far darker view of China's potential situation. In a widely circulated article in the *Wall Street Journal*, in March 2015 Shambaugh argued that Communism in China was on the

³ Liu, *The China Dream*. This work was first published in Chinese in 2010. See also Edward Wong, "In China, A Colonel's Views Bolster Nationalism," *International New York Times* (October 3-4, 2015).

⁴ Pillsbury, *The Hundred-Year Marathon*.

⁵ Christensen, *The China Challenge*.

verge of collapse, and the “endgame” had already begun. Harsh current measures to crack down on dissent were, Shambaugh contended, an index of the weakness rather than strength of the existing government.⁶

Since then, such efforts to repress dissent have continued and perhaps even intensified, with five Chinese female activists arrested in April for protesting against public sexual harassment. On a much-heralded state visit to the United States in late September 2015, Xi Jinping and his wife, Peng Liyuan, addressed the United Nations on women’s rights, supposedly marking the twentieth anniversary of a major UN conference on women’s rights held in Beijing in 1995. Even this event became controversial, as advocates of women’s rights protested publicly against the imprisonment of feminist advocates and other political prisoners in China and elsewhere.⁷ Xi also pledged more aid to developing countries in Asia and Africa and to UN peacekeeping efforts, and pledged Chinese action on cyberwarfare—a notable source of tension with the United States—and climate change.⁸ Yet overall, Xi’s visit was anti-climactic. A projected Sino-American agreement on investment failed to materialize.⁹ Chinese economic growth continued to slow, as it had throughout 2015, with the stock market and foreign sales both down despite devaluation of the yuan over the summer.¹⁰ In what was effectively a response to the expansion of Chinese activity and claims in the East and South China Seas, the United States simultaneously boosted defense cooperation with other powers in Asia, including Japan, which had just jettisoned its constitutional

⁶ David Shambaugh, “The Coming Chinese Crack-up,” *Wall Street Journal* (March 6, 2015). For Shambaugh’s earlier views on China, see his book *China Goes Global*.

⁷ Somini Sengupta, “Xi Jinping Vows to ‘Reaffirm’ China’s Commitment to Women’s Rights,” *New York Times* (September 27, 2015), and “U.S. and China Jostle over Women’s Rights,” *New York Times* (September 28, 2015); and Cary Huang, “Not in My Backyard: China’s Xi Jinping Presses for Women’s Rights on World Stage but Represses Them Back Home,” *South China Morning Post* (October 4, 2015).

⁸ Jane Perlez, “Xi Jinping of China Calls for Cooperation and Partnerships in U.N. Speech,” *New York Times* (September 27, 2015); and Perlez, “Xi Promises \$2 billion to Fight Poverty Worldwide,” *International New York Times* (September 28, 2015).

⁹ Wendy Wu, “Action Needed to Back Up Pledge to Business,” *South China Morning Post* (September 30, 2015).

¹⁰ Reuters, “China Industry Profits Fall Sharply in August,” *International New York Times* (September 29, 2015); and Neil Gough and Amie Tsang, “Slowdown Extended at Factories in China,” *International New York Times* (October 2, 2015).

restrictions on deploying Japanese military forces overseas.¹¹ The US Third Fleet, based in San Diego, California, announced plans to supplement the Western Pacific naval operations of the Japan-based Seventh Fleet.¹² The Chinese media carefully left unmentioned the fact that Xi's visit to the United States was rather overshadowed by that of the far more popular and charismatic Pope Francis.¹³ Polite cordiality rather than genuine warmth set the tone. Overall, it seemed that there had been little in the way of any meeting of minds between American and Chinese officials. Despite all the pomp and circumstance, spontaneity and trust were lacking. Rather, long-time US commentators on Sino-American relations noted the decided absence of close informal contacts between Obama's advisers and members of Xi's inner circle, a marked change in the entire nature of dealings between the two countries over the past two to three decades.¹⁴

Xi Jinping's visit brought up many subjects that feature prominently in this volume: the relative strengths and weaknesses of China and the United States; strategic and economic issues; international order and organizations; human rights and the position of women; China's dealings with the media, both domestic and international; and the nature of soft power. In both China and the United States, some influential commentators argue that the United States is a power in inevitable decline. Yet—as the journalist James Fallows pointed out in his keynote address at the tenth USCET ASN conference—for decades the United States has repeatedly viewed itself and been perceived as a declining force in world affairs, prophecies that have usually proved groundless. Its economy has improved dramatically since the global meltdown of 2008, and immigrants are still entering the country in large numbers, keeping the population relatively youthful.

¹¹ Reuters, "Advanced US Carrier Docks in Japan," *South China Morning Post* (October 2, 2015).

¹² Reuters Tokyo, "US Admiral Signals Wider Role for Third Fleet in Western Pacific to Focus on Areas with 'Greatest Instability'," *South China Morning Post* (September 27, 2015).

¹³ Perlez, "A Formal Dinner, Preceded by Off-the-Cuff Comments from a Chinese Spokesman," *New York Times* (September 26, 2015), and "How the Chinese News Media is Covering Xi's Trip," *New York Times* (September 27, 2015); and Nectar Gan and Jun Mai, "Everywhere at Home but Nowhere Abroad as Xi Gets Lost in the Media Mix," *South China Morning Post* (September 30, 2015).

¹⁴ Edward Wong, "Xi Jinping's Inner Circle Offers Cold Shoulders to Western Officials," *New York Times* (September 25, 2015); and Karen Lu Huang, Nectar Gan, and Kristine Kwok, "Now for the Hard Part," *South China Morning Post* (September 30, 2015).

Despite China's eagerness to use both its wealth and its massive role on the world stage to win not just power and respect, but also admiration abroad and the ability to set the global intellectual agenda, its recent efforts to translate economic gains into international influence have proved decidedly mixed. With the exception of the United States, Japan, and Canada, most leading nations have agreed to become founding members of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank that China proposed in 2013 and launched in 2014, an institution perceived as a rival to the US-dominated World Bank and the Asian Development Bank founded by Japan in the 1960s. The One Belt One Road initiative that China has devised as a means of offering aid to countries across the Eurasian landmass and Africa is an imaginative concept that may win China friends and influence. As the United States discovered during the Cold War, however—and the lessons of China's own relationship with the Soviet Union in the 1950s confirm—generous economic aid does not always convert into political influence, and can even be self-defeating.

Xi Jinping's repeated pledges that China will never seek hegemony or domination over other powers in Asia, even as he boosts military spending and constructs Chinese-occupied artificial islands on disputed reefs in the South China Sea, have not necessarily convinced his skeptical listeners that they have nothing to fear and China poses no threat to them.¹⁵ Indeed, assertive military policies apparently intended to win China control over much of the Western Pacific have in many ways been counter-productive, driving China's neighbors to look to the United States for protection, Japan—for the first time since 1945—to authorize its military to operate outside its own territory, and the United States to affirm its intention of remaining deeply engaged in the Western Pacific. In many respects, China appears to be a power operating by late nineteenth- or early twentieth-century norms, in a twenty-first century world where ostensibly weaker neighbors have recourse to a huge array of international institutions, allies, and stratagems, governmental and non-governmental. In an effort to bolster his position, Xi Jinping has invoked an eclectic and somewhat incompatible range of cultural and historical references: the maxims of Confucius, traditional Chinese culture, the Qing empire, China's victory over Japan in World War II, Mao Zedong, and that self-sacrificing icon of Cultural Revolution propaganda, the young soldier Lei Feng. He also seeks to set somewhat puritan and unimaginative standards for art, literature, movies, architecture, and other cultural productions. In reality,

¹⁵ "Xi Jinping Promises Neighbours China Soft Power" (June 28, 2014), BBC Website, <http://www.cnbc.com/2015/04/20/>, accessed October 5, 2015.

the Chinese leader to whom Xi Jinping seems closest is not Mao Zedong but the authoritarian Nationalist president Chiang Kai-shek, a man with a deep distrust of all foreign influences, who sought to eliminate all his rivals. In Xi Jinping's ideal China, the scope for dissent or creativity is distinctly limited.¹⁶

Yet—as later chapters in this book will demonstrate—soft power is in considerable part the product of unsought admiration for a nation's cultural assets, which can include such disparate advantages as top universities, leading publishers and journals, the intellectual climate, political and social norms, popular culture in such areas as music, movies, television, and comics, and other arenas such as fashion and food. The relationship between such cultural preferences and attitudes on international affairs nonetheless remains deeply problematic. When at odds with France over foreign policy, Americans have on occasion boycotted French wines or at least rechristened French fries as more politically correct freedom fries. Equally, at times of high Sino-US tensions, Chinese have occasionally boycotted Starbucks or McDonald's, though not, it seems, for any great length of time. Chinese cuisine—however mediated and adapted to American tastes—has long been popular in the United States. The same is true of many other Western countries, which in recent years have also taken up inter alia Thai, Japanese, Vietnamese, Burmese, Korean, Indian, Ethiopian, Greek, and Middle Eastern restaurants, supplementing the Italian, French, Belgian, and East European offerings that have long been staples in many big cities. How plausibly can one argue that liking some specific feature of another nation's culture, be it Italian opera, British theater, Chinese kungfu movies, or German sausages, predisposes any individual or group to favor that country's international positions? Deng Xiaoping was notoriously fond of French croissants, but showed no particular affinity for France except insofar as this might advance China's interests. As Americans are discovering, at present many young Chinese admire American music, films, television, sports, and technology, and hope to study in the United States, but remain deeply suspicious of US foreign policies, convinced that their foremost objective is to contain China and block its international influence.¹⁷

¹⁶ For an interesting critique by a Chinese scholar of China's soft power strategy, see Xie Tao, "China's Soft Power Obsession" (April 14, 2015), *The Diplomat* online, <http://thediplomat.com/2015/04/chinas-soft-power-obsession/>, accessed October 5, 2015.

¹⁷ Chris Buckley, "Chinese Remain Wary of American Influence," *International New York Times* (September 29, 2015).

Whether competition or cooperation will characterize future relations between China and the United States remains very much an open question. Lv Qingguang of Jiangnan University offers a historical perspective on the grand strategy of the United States in East Asia. He points to the role in US thinking on Asia of realist geopolitical perspectives and also of cultural factors, including an idealistic sense of mission. Lv argues that President Barack Obama's administration, unlike those of his two predecessors, Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, regards China as an actual rather than potential rival, and has done much to stoke tensions in Asia. Yet he also notes that, despite the "deep strategic distrust" in the relationship, the Obama administration and China simultaneously each viewed the other as "a strategic partner." Urging "win-win" cooperation between the two as the best solution, Lv anticipates that for the indefinite future "the United States will remain a highly significant player in the geopolitical game in East Asia and the Western Pacific region." On a wide range of issues, strategic, economic, humanitarian, and environmental, the two nations therefore have to deal with each other. Such dilemmas are far from new, though they can take different forms. Kong Lingyu of Inner Mongolia University explores in detail the conflict between ideological antagonism and furthering US strategic interests in the China policies of the administration of the conservative Republican Ronald Reagan, US president from 1981 to 1989. Over time, pragmatic considerations of the national interest triumphed over politically driven hostility, bringing a significant rapprochement by the mid-1980s.

The rhetoric that top national leaders use in their public utterances is often extremely revealing, not just in terms of their personal predilections and style, but also in the insights it gives into their specific country's perspectives on internal and external affairs. Zhang Yuan of Luoyang Foreign Languages University notes that, when declaring war and seeking to win public and congressional support for this policy, American presidents have normally stressed three themes. They present wars as conflicts in which moral, law-abiding, and rational Americans have been forced by circumstances beyond their control to fight immoral, lawless, and irrational "others" who have put themselves beyond the pale of normality, civilization, and widely accepted standards. These wars are therefore seen as Manichean battles between good and evil. Yang Yingrun of Beijing Foreign Studies University provides insight into the origins of this tradition. She recounts how the thinking of the Puritan John Winthrop, first governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony, toward the native American population of the region changed over time. Initially friendly relations

during the period 1630-1633 soon shifted to antagonism and hostility. Growing numbers of English colonists rapidly came to covet Indian lands, justifying their occupation on the grounds that the Indians were not Christians and—as purportedly demonstrated when many died in a smallpox epidemic in 1633—did not enjoy or indeed deserve God’s favor. As relations deteriorated, native Americans were cast as the alien “other,” a threat to the interests of the Christian settlers. They were only the first of many non-Americans who would be viewed through the distorting prism of “otherness.” Of few, as several chapters in this volume will demonstrate, was this more true than the Chinese.

Detailed analyses of presidential utterances can be equally enlightening. Prof. Mei Renyi of Beijing Foreign Studies University examines in depth speeches and statements on China by President Barack Obama and his close advisers over a period of just under a year, from January to November 2014. All emphasized that the United States was not in decline; that it was determined to remain an Asia Pacific power, with a growing interest in the region; and that, while the United States wished to cooperate with China and accommodate its “peaceful rise,” Americans would not simply acquiesce in China’s unilateral extension of its power in the East and South China Seas. Mei also devoted some space to evaluations of China’s recent policies by pundits from prominent foreign policy think tanks and other leading commentators in the United States. On the whole, he found, they tended to believe that both American or Western comparative weakness and Chinese strength had been significantly exaggerated. Even so, the general American public saw China as a major threat to the United States, with almost half of respondents to one survey believing that China had already surpassed the United States economically. Echoing Zhang Yuan’s arguments, Mei contends that these overblown fears of China can best be understood in the context of long-established tendencies, dating back even to the first Puritan settlement of the North American continent, to view the world as divided between one’s own people and dangerous and threatening “others.” Chinese, in particular, have since at least the nineteenth century been portrayed as menacing though sometimes fascinating aliens.

Images can, as Mei suggests, be very significant. In recent years China has embarked on a campaign to change outside perceptions of its people, policies, and culture, a multi-faceted initiative featuring Confucius Institutes teaching not just the Chinese language but also Chinese culture; the establishment of Chinese-run foreign-language media; and Chinese accomplishments in such fields as sports, arts, and culture. Yet many Chinese experts still have serious reservations over the feasibility of

China's soft power strategy. Qiu Linguang of Beijing Foreign Studies University offers a skeptical view of China's current efforts to substitute its own cultural primacy for that of the United States. Qiu highlights the present dominance of the United States, not just in such popular areas as social media, movies, entertainment, blue jeans, and fast food, but also in "high cultural values," including such well-established liberal norms and principles as democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and good governance. These widely accepted political standards draw on traditional American beliefs and mores. Thanks to the destruction at all levels of its own traditions, both grass roots practices and high culture, the result of China's revolutionary movements and especially of the Great Cultural Revolution, China, by contrast, can no longer draw on a reservoir of well-established and familiar cultural traditions and practices. Instead, its culture has become predominantly imitative and for domestic consumption, as when China establishes Internet search engines modelled on Western counterparts, for use within China's borders. China has little that is distinctive to present to the rest of the world. Japanese manga and anime have, by contrast, enjoyed great international success, offering something different and appealing to the outside world. Qiu perhaps overstates this case: Chinese acrobats, traditional opera, sports stars, and blockbuster art exhibits have all won followings outside its borders, as have some of its modern artists and writers. But there is undoubtedly an element of truth in this analysis. Not least, perhaps, in the way in which President Xi Jinping, wishing to advance a rival socio-political vision to the "American Dream," has apparently felt compelled to borrow its very terminology for his concept of the "China Dream."

Xi Jinping also seeks to emulate the United States by developing internationally respected think tanks, institutions that help to set the global intellectual agenda, whose publications and findings are viewed with respect by scholars, policymakers, and the general public. Xi has repeatedly proclaimed his intention of ensuring that China possesses such institutions, clearly regarding these as being among the necessary and desirable trappings and accessories of the international great power China aspires to be. Indeed, he considers developing "a new type of think tank with Chinese characteristics" as essential to China's ability to compete with the United States.¹⁸ Xiao Huan, of the PLA's Luoyang Foreign Language University, gives her view of how US think tanks operate. While noting that American think tanks purport to be independent, she

¹⁸ See, for example, Cary Huang, "Think Tanks Face Hurdle in Answering Xi Jinping's Call," *South China Morning Post* (November 3, 2014).

presents them as being fundamentally tools of the US government, surreptitiously helping it “to promote democratic values and undermine the cultural security of other countries.” Xiao suggests that US think tanks were responsible for the color revolutions in Central Asia and the Arab spring, and also helped the United States to win the Cold War. Xiao even argues that Chinese faculty members who have been funded by US think tanks show a pro-American bias in their teaching and writing, which requires correction. She contends that China should establish its own think tanks which, being quasi-independent and quasi-neutral in nature, will be more effective than government agencies in promoting the official Chinese line on such media as television and the internet. Foreign non-governmental organizations, on the other hand, should be subject to strict regulation.

Xiao does suggest that Chinese think tanks need to produce more “pathbreaking and innovative research” that will win international recognition. Xiao’s chapter gives useful insight into today’s orthodox Chinese perspective on think tanks and non-governmental organizations, Chinese and foreign, including current efforts to introduce new legislation to control and regulate foreign NGOs.¹⁹ Yet China’s avowed objective of developing internationally respected think tanks to boost its soft power and global standing may be undercut by its government’s ingrained habit of harassing or arresting such institutions’ personnel when they deviate from prevailing official dictates.²⁰ Xiao’s near-complete failure to understand how American think tanks function, or indeed the workings of Western civil society in general, gives an unintentional window into the official Chinese mindset that currently prevails. So long as this outlook continues,

¹⁹ Stanley Lubman, “China Asserts More Control Over Domestic and Foreign NGOs” (June 16, 2015), *Wall Street Journal China* online, <http://blogs.wsj.com/chinarealtime/2015/06/16/china-asserts-more-control-over-foreign-and-domestic-ngos/>, accessed October 5, 2015; “Uncivil Society” (August 22, 2015), *The Economist* online, <http://www.economist.com/news/china/21661819-new-draft-law-spooks-foreign-not-profit-groups-working-china-uncivil-society>, accessed October 5, 2015; and Gared Jenser and Julia Kuperminc, “China’s Proposed Non-Governmental Organization Law: Cooperation or Coercion?” (July 2, 2015), *The Diplomat* online, <http://thediplomat.com/2015/07/chinas-proposed-non-governmental-organization-law-cooperation-or-coercion/>, accessed October 5, 2015.

²⁰ Adrian Wan, “Chinese Academy of Social Sciences is ‘infiltrated by foreign forces’: anti-graft official,” *South China Morning Post* (June 15, 2014); Cary Huang, “Chill Wind Blows through Chinese Academy of Social Sciences,” *South China Morning Post* (August 2, 2014); and Huang, “Think Tanks Face Hurdle in Answering Xi Jinping’s Call,” *South China Morning Post* (November 3, 2014).

it seems likely to undercut any Chinese move to establish credible think tanks whose findings will be treated outside China as anything more than self-serving party propaganda.

Educational Exchanges

Think tanks are just one facet of cultural diplomacy. Since at least the late nineteenth century, educational exchanges and interactions have also been significant in Western-Asian relations. Some were privately sponsored, others government-backed, and in some cases the boundaries were unclear. This was particularly the case during the Cold War, a time when the American government openly funded some programs, such as the Fulbright Fellowships and the Voice of America (VOA) radio broadcasts, but others were handled more covertly. The US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) quietly sponsored numerous cultural and educational initiatives, some of them outright political propaganda, working through quasi-independent intermediaries such as the National Committee for Free Europe, the Congress for Cultural Freedom, and the Asia Foundation.²¹ Zhang Yang of Zhejiang University explores the discreet contributions of the CIA-backed Asia Foundation to the establishment of the Chinese University of Hong Kong during the 1950s, a Chinese-language university designed to provide employment for refugee scholars from the mainland and non-Communist educational opportunities for young Chinese-speaking students from Southeast Asia as well as Hong Kong. Money for this enterprise was funneled through the quasi-independent Mencius Educational Foundation, established with American support. It seems fair to conclude that, although the commitment of Chinese scholars and the backing of the British colonial government in Hong Kong were also essential, without the financial and conceptual assistance of the Asia Foundation, the Chinese University would probably have been far slower to come into being.

Recent Sino-American educational and cultural exchanges have been far more transparent. The US government takes considerable pride in its Fulbright program, which has by now funded several hundred visits to the United States by Chinese scholars and students and a comparable number to China by their American counterparts. Three Shanghai scholars investigated how such extended stays affected participants' perceptions of

²¹ On these operations, see esp. Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper?*; Wilford, *The Mighty Wurlitzer*; and Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*.

the other country, and how much they continued to use the media of their host country after returning to their own country. On both sides, it seemed, Chinese and American, Fulbright returnees' views of their host country were significantly more favorable than those of the general population. On returning, 96 percent of Chinese respondents still made frequent use of American media, while less than 20 percent of Americans regularly consulted Chinese media sources. A second study of a far smaller sample of Chinese Fulbright scholars and students, 27 in all, discovered that the great majority enjoyed the experience and found it satisfying. They felt they gained greater understanding of the United States. Intellectually, their scholarships also proved fruitful, often broadening their research interests and enhancing their teaching and research skills. Many, however, found it difficult to build on these accomplishments once they returned to their home institutions in China. The chapter concluded by suggesting that Chinese academic institutions needed to improve their administrative procedures and methods so as to make better use of the skills and experience of such returned scholars.

In 2004, China launched its own overseas educational program, the Confucius Institutes (CIs), intended to provide university students and others beyond its borders with classes and courses on the Chinese language and culture. Funded by the Chinese Ministry of Education, at times these institutes have aroused suspicions similar to those expressed toward US and other Western cultural diplomacy initiatives and organizations during and after the Cold War: that they were purveying government-sponsored propaganda and indulging in espionage against their host countries. There have also been allegations that foreign universities hosting Confucius Institutes would face pressure from the Chinese government to censor teachers and students from speaking or writing in support of positions hostile to China, and that CI personnel would seek to police the political activities of mainland Chinese students in other countries. Ye Ying of Sichuan University describes how, in summer 2014, the American Association of University Professors issued a statement suggesting that US universities should terminate or renegotiate their contracts with the Confucius Institutes. Shortly afterwards, the University of Chicago and Penn State University allowed their contracts to lapse, following in the footsteps of other universities, including McMaster University and the Université de Sherbroke in Canada, Osaka Sangyo University in Japan, and Lyon University in France. Soon afterwards, the University of Stockholm in Sweden did likewise.

According to Ye Ying, news reports of the American actions provoked a storm of criticism in the Chinese media, with numerous suggestions that

the US media and Americans in general were strongly biased against the Confucius Institutes, which had not been warmly welcomed abroad. Seeking to discern whether these allegations were true, Ye Ying investigated a range of US mainstream media news reports on the Institutes, covering the years 2006 to 2013. She supplemented these with reports from other international media sources, drawn from a series of E-Papers published by the Ministry of Education in Taiwan. Overall, she found, mainstream American media generally took an evenhanded approach to the Confucius Institutes. They were perceived as efforts to enhance China's soft power. Reports also highlighted how they met a genuine global demand for more opportunities to learn the Chinese language, one that shrinking budgets for education in the United States and elsewhere would otherwise have left unsatisfied. The CI Program was therefore meeting a real and popular need. Media reports of concerns that the presence of the Institutes threatened academic freedom usually balanced these with statements by university administrators and others that Chinese officials and CI personnel had made no attempt to demand political concessions from partner host universities. In Ye Ying's view, the leading US media had generally been quite fair and evenhanded in covering the Confucius Institutes.

Several short essays in this focus upon educational exchange relationships. If nothing else, continuing opposition to Confucius Institutes in many host countries suggests that such educational exchange relationships are often far from easy to negotiate. The Boston-based Rick J. Arrowood and Eva I. Kampits highlight the essential role of intercultural sensitivities in establishing and administering such linkages. At present, American universities are following a global trend toward internationalization in establishing a wide variety of formal exchange programs with Chinese—and other foreign—counterparts. One pioneer was the Center of Chinese and American Studies that Nanjing University and Johns Hopkins University established in the 1980s. New York University's Shanghai program, undertaken in collaboration with East China Normal University, and Duke Kunshan University in Wuhan, are two leading examples of top American institutions that have set up full-scale overseas campuses. Nottingham University's Ningbo campus is a British equivalent. The IDEAS Centre of the London School of Economics offers a number of joint programs with overseas institutions, including a summer school on China at Peking University. Many universities are now establishing joint MA, MPhil, and PhD programs, while encouraging undergraduates to spend a semester or year at another institution.