Philanthropic Links Between the Chinese Diaspora and the People’s Republic of China was first published in Diaspora Philanthropy and Equitable Development in China and India in 2004 by Harvard University Global Equity Initiative. The chapter’s co-author, Nick Young, has provided a new introduction to the study, which re-examines the development of diaspora philanthropy in China.

Introduction

The four years since this essay was written have seen consolidation and development of, rather than departure from, the basic patterns it describes. However, republication provides an opportunity to discuss three factors that increasingly shape debate and action in this field: one, the impacts of China’s “rise” (and global perceptions of it) on relations between the country and its diaspora; two, increasing inequality and social exclusion within China and the questions this raises for philanthropy; three, the ongoing—yet in important ways constrained—development of philanthropy and civil society within China. This introduction will conclude by considering the way in which diverging historical experience is now reflected in distinct patterns of diaspora giving.

“Awakened giant” syndrome

Over the last few years China’s fast-forward development has attracted growing, global attention, not least because few places on earth remain entirely untouched by the economic and environmental impacts of this awakened giant. International reactions range from the overtly hostile through the pragmatic and cautiously optimistic to the frankly admiring.

One likely result of China’s growing global stature will be the winding down of development assistance programs in China funded by foreign governments. This is not necessarily the choice of those governments’ policymakers, many of whom see China’s growing global importance as all the more reason to influence, through aid programs,
the way that the nation develops. However, voters in donor countries are more inclined to reason that any fraction of their tax contributions spent on overseas aid should go to poorer countries than China, and some influential opinion makers encourage this view. Thus, the democratic axe is beginning to fall on bilateral programs. Nonetheless, in 2006, donor countries still pledged US$1.1 billion in new grants and technical assistance for China. This is not a large sum when compared to China’s gross national income or total government revenues, but there are many demands on government resources and in the future it will not be easy, especially for sub-national governments in poorer provinces, to fund the kind of programs that have benefited from international aid. Therefore, the authorities in these areas will have a clear interest in filling the gap with private philanthropy, from within China and from overseas.

Foreign government donors, however, well aware that their financial resources are limited in relation to needs, invariably emphasize the technical assistance that comes with their projects. It is not the money that counts, they say, so much as the know-how. An important question, therefore, is the extent to which China’s diaspora may be able to serve China as a future reservoir of international know-how.

A more complicated ramification of China’s rise is its psychological, cultural, and political impact on the Chinese diaspora. Among citizens of the People’s Republic itself, there is a widespread, palpable, and understandable feeling that, after 150 years of national humiliation, political turmoil, and lagging development, China is at last getting back on its feet and resuming its proper place in the world. (Indeed, such feelings are almost certainly important to continued Communist Party rule; if the economy began to fail and China began to sink back, the political edifice would come under acute pressure and may well begin to collapse). To what extent do diaspora Chinese share these feelings, and how might a sense of China’s resurgence affect their relationship with China? The answer is likely to vary significantly across diaspora communities and generations, but the question is perhaps especially pertinent among the communities within Asia, where (not counting Hong Kong and Taiwan) two out of every three diaspora Chinese live.

Malaysia, where the ethnic Chinese community of more than six million people comprise roughly a third of the total population, is a case in point. Since independence in 1957, Malaysia’s ethnic Malay, Indian and Sri Lankan, and Chinese populations have coexisted somewhat uneasily in largely separate communities (although Chinese entrepreneurs have continued to thrive, much as they did in the British colonial era, and in no small part through accommodation with the political elite). From the 1980s, China’s “reform and opening” allowed the gradual re-establishment of links that had been severed for three decades, and the early years of the 21st century have seen a veritable surge in trade, investment, and tourism between the two countries. Over the same period, Chinese language and literature courses have opened at many Malaysian tertiary education institutions, and China Studies Centers and research institutes have mushroomed.
establishing links with Chinese research and teaching institutions. According to Dr. Voon Phin Keong, Director of the Centre for Malaysian Chinese Studies in Kuala Lumpur, this was achieved with “generous support from various [Malaysian] Chinese groups and communities,” which he sees as drawing a new cultural confidence from China’s growing, global status.8

Malaysian Chinese commercial, educational, and cultural links with China are rapidly displacing ties with Taiwan which, from Malaysia’s independence until the 1980s, was the main external source of cultural reinforcement for Malaysian Chinese, through university study opportunities, publishing, and so on.9 In 2004, prominent Malaysian Chinese community leaders and captains of industry formed a Malaysian Association for the Promotion of One China, a grouping that basically endorses Beijing’s position in the cross-strait dispute with Taiwan. This alignment with Beijing can be seen as both a result of and a further contribution to the resurgent mainland’s “soft power.”

Philanthropic flows from Malaysian Chinese to China, although not systematically recorded in either country, also appear to be growing. In 2006, Koo Yuen Kim, founder and Chairman of Malaysia-based Zhongshan Perfect (which markets personal care and cosmetic products in China) was named at a ‘Charity Billboard’ event convened by the China Social Work Association, the China Philanthropy Times, and the Ministry of Civil Affairs as numbering among the “top 10 philanthropists” after the company donated a cumulative total of US$15 million (CNY 120 million) to a variety of causes. Other substantial, recent donations have come from Robert Kuok, whose business interests in mainland China include edible oil processing, Coca-Cola bottling plants, and a chain of Shangri-la and Traders hotels; and the late William Cheng (Cheng Heng Jem), Chair of The Lion Group, whose interests include 39 Parkson department stores in China, and Country Heights, which develops property in Guangdong Province. Without exception, these donations were delivered through Chinese government agencies or to charitable organizations that were established by government agencies.

However, giving to China is not confined to entrepreneurs and investors, who have a clear interest in improved government and public relations. The Sin Chew Daily Foundation, established by one of the main Chinese language newspapers in Malaysia to channel donations from its readers to individuals in need at home and abroad, is now raising nearly US$1 million a year in regular contributions to allow 8,000 children in China to complete their studies, according to the Foundation’s Senior Manager, Tong Siew Kheng.10 In addition, the Sin Chew Daily acts as the media partner of World Vision Malaysia in a “30-Hour Famine” fundraising event. In 2007, some 5,000 of the newspaper’s readers signed up for sponsored fasts, raising money for World Vision’s community development programs in China.

Here, then, diaspora philanthropy appears to be part of a process of widespread economic and social re-engagement and cultural re-identification with China, where China’s growing success may account
for this re-identification as much as the mere fact of its “opening up.”

Malaysia, however, cannot be regarded as a litmus for the entire Chinese diaspora, since historical experience has left Malaysian Chinese with a particular sense of vulnerability. (They “generally have a sense of crisis and have to fight for their rights and space,” according to Voon Phin Keong.11) Indonesia’s more than seven million ethnic Chinese have experienced a similar history of insecurity, and even more pronounced political marginalisation, enduring racial violence as recently as 1998. Diaspora communities in Europe and North America, by contrast, are very differently placed. They include many people with stronger ties and loyalties to Taiwan; they are located in more inclusive political and social systems that, especially for second and later generations, offer much more scope for integration and acculturation; and they are more exposed to the concerns, pre-eminently in the United States, of those who perceive a “China threat.” Thus, without disavowing their cultural heritage, they can in the main be expected to find the narrative of China’s cultural renaissance less alluring and, in many cases, to feel active distaste for mainland Chinese “patriotism.”

Resurgent, but not equally affluent

China’s recent development trajectory is by no means simply a success story of barreling economic growth and enhanced prosperity. National income has risen sixfold over the last 20 years but the benefits of growth have been unevenly distributed. China now ranks second only to the United States in the number of dollar billionaires, and the personal fortune of the country’s 800 richest people—each with assets worth over $100 million—more than doubled between 2006 and 2007.12 Millions of “middle class” city-dwellers now enjoy levels of personal consumption more typical of developed countries. Yet more than half of the 1.3 billion population still lives on austere incomes of just a few dollars a day and, lagging behind them, fully 300 million people live on the equivalent of less than one dollar per day, adjusted for ‘purchasing power parity.’13

In addition to the discontents generated by rising inequality in what was formerly a highly egalitarian society, China is experiencing social, demographic, and technological transformations that challenge previous cultural norms. These include mass migration and urbanization of rural people; compulsory birth control that skews sex ratios at birth and exacerbates a rapidly ageing population structure (which, in turn, strains the traditional role of the family in caring for elders); later marriage age (with more young people living independently prior to marriage) and more frequent divorce; the rapid advance of information and communication technologies, which have been embraced by government agencies and private citizens alike, but which are widely seen as bringing new problems, ranging from digital illiteracy as a new form of exclusion, to Internet gaming addiction among young people. Thus, in many ways, China is struggling at one and the same time both to complete the transition to modernization and to meet the new challenges of the modern world.
In a sense, this dizzying array of challenges offers wide horizons for philanthropic engagement: there is plenty to be done. But the scale and scope of the challenges are also daunting, especially in a context where rising inequality increasingly appears to be embedded in the current development model itself. Like aid programs funded by foreign governments, private donors are likely to find their contributions a mere drop in the bucket unless they can find strategic ways to have high impact and influence upon other actors—notably, government decision-makers.

To give a simple example: numerous international organizations and private individuals have, over the past decade, donated generously to programs that provide free or heavily subsidized cleft lip and palate surgeries for children in China or cataract surgeries for, typically, older people. Many organizations also seek to train local surgeons and build the capacity of local health systems to provide better service. These are relatively easy programs to raise funds for insofar as the surgeries bring immediate and dramatic change to the lives of individual beneficiaries. However, public policy failures in the administration and the financing of China’s health care system as a whole have been such that it is ever less capable of delivering affordable care to all those who need it—for reasons that go well beyond financial resource constraints. Hospital charges for these relatively simple surgical procedures are well above the average for Asian countries, effectively barring the majority of people who need treatment. This leaves the philanthropic organizations “running faster to stand still,” with the number of new cases each year outstripping their capacity to respond. In this context, philanthropic palliatives are open to the charge that they are propping up a bad system; although philanthropists may respond with the perfectly valid humanitarian defense that, at present, if they did not fund these services, no one else would.

The field of education raises similar quandaries. For 20 years, substantial sums were garnered from Chinese donors at home and abroad to support basic education by paying primary and junior high school expenses for children whose families could not afford to send them to school. From 2005, the central government pledged funds and introduced policies to make basic education genuinely free for low-income rural families, and it appears that the new policy has had extensive reach, despite implementation problems for cash-strapped local authorities. (It might thus be argued that philanthropy played a constructive role in filling resource gaps until such time as the state was able to pick up the bill; however, an alternative narrative is that these measures were introduced, as part of a basket of “new socialist countryside” policies, in response to a rising tide of rural unrest.) Meanwhile, philanthropic resources have shifted steadily towards senior high school and university scholarship programs to mitigate the regressive impact of introducing college tuition fees in the late 1990s, at the same time that the government embarked on an ambitious program to expand the number of tertiary education places. The number of places soon outstripped the number of job opportunities, and unemployment among new
graduates rose steeply to around 25%. It is increasingly recognized that students from poor families and ethnic minorities, even if they overcome their multiple disadvantages to gain university places, are least likely to prosper in higher education and to secure jobs afterwards. As in the case of health, philanthropic contributions often seem, at best, remedial responses to public policy decisions over which they have negligible impact.

This issue raises fundamental questions about the scope and role of philanthropy in China, and the kind of philanthropy that the government is prepared to countenance.

Managing domestic philanthropy

China’s political leadership appears committed to encouraging philanthropy—but only insofar as it can be done selectively, in ways that prevent the emergence of lobbying or advocacy groups that could challenge government policy or mobilize citizens in any form of protest. This attitude makes it hard to frame enabling or coherent policy for the not-for-profit sector as a whole. However, after a drafting process that lasted many years, new regulations on the registration and management of foundations came into effect in 2004 and, for the first time since 1949, made provision for the establishment of private, grant-making foundations. (Previously, most Chinese foundations were public fund-raising bodies created by government departments in the 1980s and 1990s, and their programs were mainly implemented by government agencies.) Since 2004, in a drive to promote giving, the Ministry of Civil Affairs has convened several large conferences to discuss and publicize charity (cishan), and in 2007 it created a charity information center and website and began to award prizes to projects deemed especially worthy (with television audiences invited to submit votes).

Senior officials appear increasingly to see charity not only as a way to mobilize funds for needy constituencies but also as a means to help building a “harmonious society,” which, in tacit recognition of the growing social and economic divides, President Hu Jintao has defined as the key social objective of his administration. Officials also readily connect philanthropy with the international discourse of corporate social responsibility, which has been taken up with alacrity in China. In sum, there appears to be growing interest in philanthropy’s potential both to legitimize private wealth and to defuse resentments in a society where most people remain relatively poor.

The sector remains small, however. The Ministry of Civil Affairs estimates that donations totaled US$1.2 billion (CNY 10 billion) in 2006, amounting to just 0.5% of GDP, compared with donations in the United States representing more than 2% of GDP. An independent estimate puts the national total much lower, at just CNY 3-4 billion <what is the dollar equivalent?>, or about 0.2% of GDP.

Nevertheless, the 2004 regulations appear to be giving rise to a new generation of foundations established by private philanthropists. A notable example is the Narada Charity Foundation endowed by a real estate developer from Zhejiang Prov-
ince, Zhou Qingzhi. To lead the operation he has brought in Xu Yongguang, former director of Project Hope, which was the most successful of the government-led foundations, having raised at least US$200 million for basic education since its founding in 1988. The Narada Foundation aims to create quality educational opportunities for the children of rural migrant workers in urban areas, who typically experience financial and social barriers to public education. In the Chinese context this is a much more adventurous initiative than Project Hope which, in effect, was little more than a funding partner for the state in extending the rural reach of compulsory elementary education. Narada’s work, by contrast, is aimed at a constituency that the state has neglected not only because of financial constraints but also through lack of clear and concerted policy. To a certain extent, therefore, the role of philanthropy here has shifted from a following to a leading role.

Thus it appears that a private philanthropic sector is beginning to develop out of models crafted and carefully controlled by the state, which retains a major stake in the sector. (Notably, public fund-raising foundations remain, de facto, the purlieu of government or of Communist Party agencies, with no sign that private citizens will be able to establish them any time soon). This process is strikingly similar to the way in which the Chinese state has gradually allowed a private business sector to develop, without relinquishing active involvement in “pillar industries.”

Meanwhile, over the last 15 years, there has been steady growth of (mostly rather small-scale) social service provider organizations and advocacy groups created by private citizens who are increasingly inclined to describe their organizations as “grassroots NGOs” (caogen feizhengfu zuzhi). Some of these have made innovative contributions in fields such as care for children with disabilities, care for the elderly, legal and personal counseling services, environmental education, rural development, and integration of rural migrants into urban communities; but it remains generally difficult for them to register and operate legally, and they are not permitted to raise funds publicly in China. Therefore, such groups are heavily dependent on personal commitment, on user charges (especially for service provider groups), and on contributions from international organizations (especially for advocacy groups).

Nevertheless, some NGOs have managed to develop working partnerships with local authorities, and most of them desire constructive relationships with government at all levels. The State Environment Protection Agency has proved willing to collaborate with environmental NGOs, and the State Council’s Leading Group for Poverty Reduction has issued documents recognizing the role of NGOs in poverty alleviation. Some of the most active government-created foundations include grassroots groups in consultations and conferences and, in some cases, agree to act as official sponsors for citizen-initiated organizations. Some, such as the China Legal Aid Foundation, have provided funding for work undertaken by smaller, grassroots groups. Moreover, China’s print media has given ample coverage to the grassroots NGOs community, both profil-
ing individual activists and organizations and exploring the overall development of the NGO sector as a new phenomenon in China.

However, many government officials regard this citizen-initiated sector with suspicion and in some cases with outright hostility; and official suspicions have heightened considerably since the 2005 “color revolutions” in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Many NGOs, especially those receiving foreign funds, have come under close surveillance from state security agents; publications reporting on the sector have been ordered to close; and some prominent civil society activists have been detained and imprisoned. Whereas, in retrospect, the early years of the new century were a time of relative flexibility and experimentation—when it seemed that the authorities, although not much interested in civic freedoms per se, were at least prepared to allow NGOs enough space to demonstrate their worth—the last two years have seen a general policy chill and contraction of political space.

This may prove to be only a temporary reversal for China’s grassroots NGOs, which continued to develop despite earlier reversals (such as the policy chill that accompanied the government campaign against Falun Gong in the late 1990s.) At this writing, the government of China is anxious to present an orderly and harmonious face to the world during the 2008 Olympics and the security services may, on conclusion of the Games, relax their surveillance and containment efforts. This, at any rate, is earnestly to be hoped, since heavy-handed efforts to restrain the social energy released by economic reform and opening risks creating precisely the kind of oppositional force that the state fears, and triggering lose-lose confrontations between government and society.

For the time being, however, the difficult operating environment that young, grassroots organizations face clearly curtails their ability to develop core competencies, achieve tangible results, and prove their worth to policy makers. It also constrains the potential of private grant-making agencies, by weakening the field of social innovators in whom to invest.

One country, many diasporas

Chinese diaspora philanthropy is too diverse to speak of a single discernible pattern, but it is possible to point to contrasting trends, rooted in different historical experience.

At one extreme, Malaysian Chinese entrepreneurs exemplify a philanthropy that appears to accept the Communist state as the unique agent of social leadership, faithfully mirroring the Communist Party’s own view. Tang Ah Chai, a community leader from the Kuala Lumpur and Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall, articulated this position in an interview:

In our society, we prefer to support fully- or semi-governmental organizations such as the China Red Cross and government-initiated activities. The social impact of NGOs is quite limited. To most Chinese Malaysians, ‘NGO’ implies a strong political color and stress on big topics such as democracy, gender equality, labor rights, and social movements. In sum, ‘NGO’ is a rather sensitive word.
Given the Government of China’s current drive to promote a carefully managed version of philanthropy, it is more than likely that the largesse of diaspora magnates and their corporations—irrespective of whether it is cynical, or generous, or a mix of the two—will grow. But it is hard to imagine this making a distinctive contribution to China’s development while it brings nothing that is new to government-endorsed programs.

Support for more independent initiatives is likely to develop among Malaysian Chinese—for it would almost certainly be unfair to characterize them as uniformly averse to sensitive issues or uncritically admiring of the Chinese authorities. Sin Chew Daily readers’ efforts in fund-raising for World Vision are perhaps, to some extent, indicative of demand for personal engagement in non-government efforts; and there is at least one example of a Christian organization largely staffed by Malaysian (and Singaporean) Chinese that implements its own small-scale rural development projects in Western China: New China Link (whose Chinese name, Huaqiao Huxie, translates as ‘Overseas Chinese Mutual Aid Association’) established in 2002.28

For the time being, however, it is easier to find examples of diaspora Chinese in Australia, in Europe, and in North America—who have lived within social and political systems with strong traditions of civic participation and intellectual freedom—giving back to China in terms of social innovation. (Hong Kong and Taiwan, as discussed in this essay, also have a distinctive bridging role.) Of course, there are those in China who see “westernized” overseas Chinese as too remote from China to understand it properly, or as promoting U.S. cultural hegemony or even signposting color revolution. However, in its efforts to overcome 150 years of national humiliation, China has sought technology transfer in many fields; and the diaspora may increasingly come to be seen as the most acceptable conduit for transferring what could be called “social technology.”

Work on AIDS furnishes some examples. American Chinese scientist David Ho, famed for his groundbreaking research in understanding the HIV virus and in developing a pharmaceutical cocktail to treat it, was also in 2003 one of the founders of a China AIDS initiative that brings together numerous Chinese and international institutions in testing, treatment, and care programs.29 The combination of Ho’s ethnicity and scientific prestige undoubtedly helped to secure the support of Chinese government agencies. American Chinese filmmaker Ruby Yang, through a China AIDS media project established in 2005, has collaborated with China’s health authorities in creating AIDS awareness television campaigns featuring Chinese sporting, film, and music celebrities, as well as directing documentaries about people and communities affected by the AIDS epidemic (most famously, Blood of Yingzhou District, which won an Academy Award in 2006).30 This is groundbreaking work in a context where acknowledgement of the epidemic, and clear communication about it, have been long-hampered by government sensitivities. Less famous but no less committed is Humphrey Wou, also American, whose China AIDS Relief Fund (established in
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2003) makes micro-grants to groups in high-risk communities—including groups of commercial sex workers and gay men—as well as to mutual support groups of HIV positive people. Wou’s contribution is significant because this field has lately become crowded with international agencies keen to boost Chinese civil society responses to AIDS, and this has led to some irresponsible grant-making and a mushrooming of opportunistic grant seekers. Wou’s distinctive contribution, achieved through frequent and lengthy trips to China and the cultivation of an extensive network of grassroots contacts, has been in finding and nurturing, but not corrupting, the real thing.

In many other fields, Chinese North Americans within not-for-profit organizations, consulting groups, think tanks, and universities are increasingly important collaborators for Chinese NGOs, government officials and researchers. For example, the Wild Flowers Institute—whose President, Hanmin Liu, is also a board member of the Kellogg Foundation—trains and mentors the Chinese NGO Community Action, which works with district governments in Chinese cities to improve, in practical ways, their responsiveness to citizens’ expressed needs. Mark Yu-Ting Chen, a senior McKinsey consultant, played a key role in establishing the Non-Profit Partners Foundation in China in 2006, which plans to work with both government foundations and grassroots organizations to build their operational capacity. Assistant Professor Miu Chung Yan of the University of British Columbia’s School of Social Work is leading a team of experts in advising the Legislative Affairs Office of China’s Ministry of Civil Affairs on the development of not-for-profit law. Yawei Liu serves as China Director of the Carter Center, which has over the last 10 years observed and advised on China’s experiments with village elections (and, more recently, on election procedures for local and national People’s Congresses). The Center’s activities include training officials, designing civic education programs, organizing seminars, and publishing Chinese language materials on political transition and democratization. Minxin Pei is Director of the China Program of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, which in 2004 established a Beijing office in collaboration with an independent Chinese think tank, the China Reform Forum, to undertake research, hold seminars, and disseminate publications on security, governance, legal reform, energy and environment. William Hsiao, a professor of Economics at Harvard University’s School of Public Health and a longstanding consultant to the World Bank, has undertaken numerous studies of health sector financing in China, in collaboration with health authorities. He is actively engaged in (and has mobilized private funding for) village level trials of cooperative insurance schemes that include mechanisms to make health service providers more accountable to patients.

As discussed in the original chapter, China has been striving to reverse the international brain drain in fields that suggest the prospect of research and development to take China’s economy up the value chain. This is harder to achieve in the social sciences, whose development in China has been severely hampered by ideological con-
But diaspora intellectuals scattered across the think tanks and universities of the developed world are widely engaged in debate and joint research with counterparts in China, and this may increasingly influence policy debates within China.

In sum, the diaspora reservoir of brains and know-how—in specific policy areas, in the building of academic and professional fields that can shape public policy generally, and in not-for-profit sector development—almost certainly has more potential impact upon China than diaspora charitable donations. But it should not be surprising that the Government of China is ambivalent about the value of the former resources—having, as it does, to contend with a world at large that is distinctly ambivalent about China’s economic rise. The government will want to control the flow, but is likely to find that increasingly difficult as business, academic, professional, and social connections multiply between the Chinese population at home and overseas.

References

1 Many thanks are due to Tina Qian, who contributed valuable research assistance, notably by undertaking a research trip (funded by APPC) to Malaysia.


3 E.g., Japan, much the largest bilateral donor to China during the 1990s, began reducing its commitments from the turn of the century. The United Kingdom is planning to phase out assistance by 2010.

4 For example, the October 16, 2003 front cover of The Economist featured a photograph of China’s Shenzhou 5 rocket launch with the cheekily provocative caption ‘Congratulations, China. So, No More Aid Then?’

5 ‘Donor countries’ here refers to those recognized as such by the OECD Development Assistance Committee. The year 1996 was the most recent year for which the committee has made statistics available. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (1996) Development Database on Aid from DAC Members: DAC online. Retrieved from http://www.oecd.org/document/33/0,2340,en_2649_34447_36661793_1_1_1_1,00.html. New commitments are likely to have since declined.

6 Chinese Malaysians are mainly descendants of poor immigrant laborers who responded to the work opportunities in 19th-century British Malaya. Some managed to establish businesses, typically starting as peddlers and then shopkeepers, accumulating capital that their sons later deployed to become wealthy magnates with wide portfolios of interests. Lynne Pan describes these merchant-entrepreneurs as “the filling in the colonial sandwich” (Pan, L. (1994) Sons of the Yellow Emperor: a History of the Chinese Diaspora (p.135). New York: Kodansha). Joe Studwell argues that their final ascent to the commanding heights of local economies across Southeast Asia was generally assisted by “nested relationships between political and economic elites,” with entrepreneurs achieving economic “godfather” status by negotiating with the political authorities to obtain licenses for monopoly (or oligopoly)


8 T. Qian, personal communication, September 8, 2007.


11 T. Qian, personal communication, September 8, 2007.


14 There is a large international literature on reform-era policy failure in the PRC’s health system. A significant, early critique came from a 1997 World Bank’s report “Financing Health Care: Issues and Options for China” (World Bank, Washington DC), but many of the problems highlighted in that report remain unresolved. For a more recent overview, see an interview with WHO China Representative, Henk Bekedam, in China Development Brief (November 2006) “You cannot fix this [health] system in three or four years” http://www.chinadevelopmentbrief.com/node/847, retrieved April 18, 2008

15 This is based on interviews with the Australian blindness prevention NGO, the Fred Hollows Foundation, as reported in China Development Brief (2000, Autumn) “Unseeing and largely unseen” http://www.chinadevelopmentbrief.com/node/207, Retrieved April 18, 2008


19 The Ford Foundation’s Pathways to Higher Education program in China has identified and is attempting to address this issue.

20 For an earlier but more detailed introduction to China’s philanthropic sector, see Young, N. (2004) Richesse Oblige and So Does the State: Philanthropy and Equity in China in Geithner, P F, Johnson P D & Chen L C (eds.) Diaspora Philanthropy and Equitable Development in China and India (pp.29-77) Harvard University: Global Equity Initiative, Asia Center.

21 For an early analysis of these regulations, see (2004, June 10). Blurred law may be better than none, China Development Brief: Retrieved on <date> from www.chinadevelopmentbrief.com/node/110. The China Development Brief website includes an English translation of the regulations.


25 Examples of publications ordered to close include China Development Brief’s English language edition, published in Beijing, and Minjian, published by a civil society research center in Zhongshan University, Guangzhou. Jailed activists include Chen Guangcheng, imprisoned for four years in 2005 after attempting to bring legal actions against Shandong Province family planning authorities over forced sterilization and late-term abortions; Wu Lihong, sentenced in 2007 by a court in Jiangsu Province to three years imprisonment on a ‘blackmail’ charge after he had for many years led a campaign to protect a local lake from chemical effluents, and Hu Jia, a veteran ‘AIDS activist’ who, at this writing, is facing subversion charges.

26 This idea is developed in Young, N. (2004) Does This Cat Catch Mice? Human Rights and Civil Society in China in Dhundale L and Andersen E A (eds) Revisiting the Role of Civil Society in the Promotion of Human Rights, (pp. 53-107) Danish Institute for Human Rights.


28 New China Link (http://www.newchinalink.org)

29 China AIDS Initiative (http://www.chinaaidsinitiative.org)

30 The China AIDS Media Project (www.chinaaidsmedia.com)

31 AIDS Relief Fund for China (www.aidsrelieffundchina.org/)


PHILANTHROPIC LINKS BETWEEN THE CHINESE DIASPORA AND THE PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

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This chapter explores philanthropic links between the Chinese diaspora and the People’s Republic of China. Drawing on published sources and on interviews with some of the protagonists, it attempts to sketch the range and nature of those links, in the context of shifting international commercial and political relations and “globalization” processes.

An undertaking of this kind is beset by several conceptual difficulties. We do not propose to examine these in detail, but it is as well to note them at the outset, and to state what positions we have chosen to take.

Firstly, what is philanthropy? Use of the term in a transnational context presupposes that it meaningfully identifies common ground in distinct historical, cultural, and religious traditions. We work with this presupposition rather than examining it. Yet it is almost immediately apparent that philanthropy often shades into or departs from self-help or mutual aid on the one hand (as, for example, in giving to or through kinship networks), and it may mesh with the pursuit of commercial or political advantage on the other (as in wealthy individuals making charitable donations with an eye toward improving government and corporate relations). We make no normative judgments about this, not least because any attempt to pronounce on what is real philanthropy would entail immersion in ethical puzzles that have plagued moral philosophers for millennia. By philanthropy, therefore, we simply refer to the private and voluntary transfer of resources (money, goods, services, knowledge, skills, or time) for the benefit of others, irrespective of either the motives of the donor or any benefits that may accrue to the donor.

Secondly, what is China? Whether we are disposed to regard it primarily as a place, a civilization, a culture, an empire, a nation, or a race, it is clear that the literal and imagined boundaries of China have shifted substantially over the centuries. Consulting an atlas to determine the present borders of the People’s Republic is not necessarily helpful, since there are those who would argue passionately that some areas within those borders—notably, Tibet—are not “really” part of China; while others (including PRC cartographers) would argue just as passionately that areas outside the borders marked on Western atlases—preeminently, Taiwan—definitely are part of China. We would prefer to avoid these debates; yet, deciding what counts as “part of China” would seem critical to deciding where its diaspora begins. Again our approach to
this is practical rather than normative. It is certainly relevant to discuss the role of Taiwan and Hong Kong, without thereby characterizing them as diasporan communities, because they do form part of a diasporan chain—having served as stepping stones for emigration farther afield, and continuing to serve as important nodes in diasporan networks. Taiwan and Hong Kong are also major sources of commercial and philanthropic investment in the Chinese mainland. On the other hand, in order to make our task more manageable in scope, we will only in passing consider the Tibetan diaspora, although this is large (proportionate to the total Tibetan population), distinctive, and in many cases deeply engaged in mobilizing philanthropic and political support for Tibetan communities in the PRC.

A third, generic issue is what we mean by diaspora and how it relates to issues of identity. Although it has a very long history, the Chinese diaspora has little in common with the Jewish diaspora that the word was originally coined to describe. In some ways it appears to have more in common with emigration, whether political or economic, from European countries; yet the assimilation of European emigrants into host communities has generally been more rapid than the assimilation of Chinese emigrants. Chinatowns around the world have at least partly preserved distinctly Chinese identities over several generations, and in places such as Southeast Asia, many people of Chinese descent still appear, in some cases after hundreds of years, to constitute discrete ethnic and cultural communities, to the extent, at least, that they are vulnerable to attack in times of social stress, as was seen in Indonesia following the Asian financial crisis of the late 1990s. In short, whether because of the inherent strength of Chinese culture, or because of the lack of receptivity of host communities, Chinese emigrants in the past have not been quick to lose their Chineseness. However, the pace of assimilation may now be growing, or set to grow, rapidly. This perhaps applies especially to Europe and North America, where the plethora of available descriptors—“American Chinese,” “Chinese American,” “American-born Chinese”—itself implies shifting and contested views of the roles that ancestry and ethnicity play in the construction of personal identities. From almost every point of view, ancestry and ethnicity are undoubtedly less important factors in the lives of Americans of Chinese descent today than they were a hundred years ago. (This, naturally, is less clearly true of more recent migrants.) Will they in due course become as irrelevant as they are to contemporary English people, who generally neither know nor care whether they descend from Saxons, Celts, or diasporan Normans, Danes, Huns, etc.? (The Scots, Welsh, and Irish care more!) A related issue is the extent to which globalization is changing the nature of international migration, and therefore of diasporas. Increased international flows of capital are beginning to be matched by increased labor flows, but new migration patterns are emerging. Despite political barriers, “economic migrants” continue to flow toward opportunities in wealthier countries with low population growth matched by economic demand for low-wage labor in service industries. But
the restructuring of the global economy has also meant the relocation of labor-intensive industries to developing countries and the growth of short-term migration on fixed labor contracts. (China already routinely exports fixed-contract labor and also uses semiskilled Chinese labor in its own overseas aid projects, such as building dams in Africa.) It is probable, therefore, that well-educated and relatively affluent populations will figure prominently in future permanent migration from China to North America and Europe, increasing the global concentration of financial and intellectual capital. Although this brain drain is in many ways a loss for China, the émigrés will be relatively well positioned to give something back to the home country in a relatively short space of time. At the same time, we are witnessing the emergence of a highly mobile international business and professional elite, many of whose members have multiple citizenship and/or homes in several countries. It is not clear whether the ethnic Chinese members of this elite can be properly regarded as part of the Chinese diaspora, but they may well include a number of significant future philanthropists.

**Historical Background**

Between 1405 and 1433, the great Ming Dynasty admiral, Zheng He, led a fleet of 300 ships and 28,000 men on seven expeditions into the seas beyond China. The imperial fleet made stops in Java, Sumatra, Thailand, Sri Lanka, India, sailing as far west as the Persian Gulf, Arabia, and East Africa, where today villagers off the coast of Kenya claim to be descendants of Zheng He’s shipwrecked sailors.1 The state-of-the-art, ninemasted, 400-foot-long ships might easily have made it to America—nearly a century before Christopher Columbus set off from Spain in his comparatively modest eighty-five-foot-long ships.

But before Admiral Zheng could supplant Columbus’s place in history, reactionaries in the Ming emperor’s court put an end to his travels, destroyed his records, dismantled his armada, and made it a capital offense to leave the country. Chinese communities abroad, they feared, could nurture plots to overthrow the emperor. The Middle Kingdom turned itself inward just as Europe’s own imperial aspirations began to rise.

While the Ming court was blind to the opportunity of a millennium, many of its subjects were not. Despite the imperial edicts forbidding foreign travel, merchants and artisans sailed for Southeast Asia, establishing the first Chinese settlements in the Philippines and Thailand. Although Chinese merchants had ventured beyond the empire before, the Chinese diaspora—now a global population of 34 million people of Chinese descent living in more than 130 countries2—was launched in earnest by Zheng He’s journeys. In the Qing dynasty, the trickle of traders that followed in Zheng He’s wake grew into a flood swollen by peasants desperate to escape overpopulation, civil war, clan conflicts, and crop failures, especially in the southeastern provinces of Guangdong and Fujian. They went to Southeast Asia, Africa, and the Americas, where cheap labor to develop and exploit raw materials for Europe’s colonial masters was in great demand. More than 2 mil-
lion people left China between 1848 and 1888. Chinese migrants to the Americas endured slavelike conditions as contract laborers in the guano fields of Peru, the sugar plantations of Cuba and Hawaii, and most famously, the gold mines and railroad camps of California. Others who went to Southeast Asia flourished as shopkeepers, artisans, and plantation owners, amassing great fortunes as middlemen between local Southeast Asians and their European colonists.

But the imperial ban on foreign travel remained in place. The Chinese government “shall request foreign governments to have those Chinese who have been abroad repatriated so that they may be executed,” declared a 1712 edict. Although the edict was rarely enforced, things did not change until the mid-nineteenth century, when the Qing emperor, weakened by conflicts with the Western powers, signed agreements such as the Burlingame Treaty with the United States in 1868, allowing Chinese to work abroad. In 1893, a new imperial edict recognized the rights of all Chinese to travel abroad freely and declared that all Chinese emigrants would be allowed to return home whenever they wished.

Chinese emigration continued to grow in the twentieth century, as social instability, war, and revolution sent streams of Chinese out of the mainland. The majority did not go far. Today, more than four out of five overseas Chinese—24 million people—live in Southeast Asia, most of them in Indonesia, Thailand, and Malaysia, where they control wealth and capital far out of proportion to their population. Chinese in Indonesia, for instance, are just 2.5 percent of the total population, yet they control 73 percent of all wealth in the country. This concentration of wealth has caused resentment and led to discriminatory laws and ethnic violence in the host countries.

Although the majority lives in Southeast Asia, North America has become the destination of choice for modern émigrés. Today, some 2.5 million Chinese live in the United States, where their numbers are growing faster than in any other region, and a million more live in Canada. Beginning in the mid-twentieth century, a new class of educated Chinese began to arrive on America’s shores. Their migration can be attributed in large part to America’s Chinese immigration policies. Educated Chinese émigrés have long enjoyed special treatment by the United States. Even as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 shut the door on poor Chinese laborers, Chinese students, many of whom had been sent by the Chinese government to master the advanced sciences and technologies of the West, continued to receive visas to study in the United States. Their numbers were such that by the 1930s most of the senior officials in Chiang Kaishek’s government had been educated in America.

The Chinese Exclusion Act was not repealed until 1943, when China and the United States became allies against Japan in World War II. A new quota was created for Chinese immigrants (albeit one that was much lower than those for Europeans). But students again received special treatment. After the Communist revolution of 1949, the U.S. Congress passed a law granting asylum to Chinese students studying in America, assuming that they
had had ties to the defeated Guomindang. This law enabled about 5,000 Chinese to stay in America permanently. Refugees from the Communist revolution were also given special permission to immigrate. Some of today’s most prominent Chinese Americans are descended from this generation of elite immigrants, many of whom came from Shanghai: entrepreneur Charles Wang, architect I. M. Pei, writer David Henry Hwang, composer Chou Wen-Chung.

The civil rights movement in the United States forced the further reform and equalization of immigration laws, granting China the same immigration quotas as other countries: 20,000 people. Preference again was given to skilled professionals—leading to an immigration wave of Chinese students, doctors, engineers, and scientists who are now comfortably integrated into America’s upper middle classes. While Communist China remained closed off to the world from 1949 through 1979, most of the 20,000 slots were taken by Chinese immigrating from Taiwan. But with the recognition of the People’s Republic in 1979, another 20,000 slots were created for immigrants from the mainland. Today, along with a new quota of 5,000 Hong Kong Chinese, some 45,000 Chinese legally immigrate to the United States every year. The actual numbers are larger since many people of Chinese descent enter the United States through quotas dedicated to Southeast Asian countries.

Chinese immigration to the United States saw its largest spike in 1989, when, in the wake of the Chinese government crackdown on protesters in Tiananmen Square, some 80,000 Chinese students studying in America were granted green cards under the Chinese Student Protection Act. Another ten thousand Chinese enter the United States as students each year. Many of them will not return to China until they have obtained green cards or U.S. citizenship. Of the 580,000 mainland Chinese who have studied abroad since 1978, only around a quarter have returned home. The numbers applying for student visas are likely to grow as China’s business and professional elites grow richer and stronger, since many parents are keen, and able to afford, to send their children overseas for high school and university education, or at least to learn English.

Meanwhile, the return of Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty in 1997 prompted many of Hong Kong’s better-off residents to apply for nationality elsewhere, buying property or investing in other countries to advance their claims to citizenship, as an “insurance policy” against heavy-handed intervention by the mainland in Hong Kong’s way of life.

But if the general trend of immigration and access to developed countries appears increasingly to favor more highly skilled, educated, and affluent people, it is also the case that many thousands of peasants each year risk their lives to be smuggled into Europe and the United States. Recent field research by Frank Pieke and others indeed suggests that the last twenty years have seen an “energization” of emigration from China, providing an “infusion of new blood into existing communities of overseas Chinese” where there is new
demand for cheap labor in Chinese-owned businesses, to replace established and now upwardly mobile immigrants. Moreover, Pieke found that many of the new, illegal immigrants are coming from areas with little or no previous history of emigration (such as western Fujian, as opposed to the traditional labor supply areas in the south of the province), and that international migration patterns are increasingly interwoven with migration within China: The departing Fujianese are being replaced by less-well-off peasants from the interior provinces. Given the dynamism and sophistication of migrant networks and the difficulties that Western governments typically experience in controlling the flow, it is likely that Chinese communities in Europe and North America will continue to be enriched by this infusion of new and hardworking blood.

The diaspora must therefore be seen as complex and multifaceted. It includes established communities with second, third, even fourth and fifth generations: Some of these are figuratively as well as literally remote from their ancestral home (as in Africa and Latin America), but others (as in Singapore and elsewhere in Asia) have retained or renewed ties with the mainland. It includes people who left China as refugees from Communism, and a newer wave of—often entrepreneurial and well-educated—émigrés who have left over the last twenty years. It includes people who are perhaps not diasporan so much as Chinese members of a global transnational class; it also includes new migrants of more modest means who continue to make their way overseas illegally.

Managing the Overseas Chinese Constituency

From wanting to bring back and execute its émigrés, the Chinese state (and aspirants to government) shifted in the late imperial and republican period to wanting to recruit them as allies in reconstruction, modernization, and nation building. In the late-nineteenth century, influential scholar-officials such as Liang Qichao (1873–1929) enjoyed some success in persuading the Qing court that overseas Chinese, especially in the flourishing communities of Southeast Asia, should be actively encouraged to return. Their capital and technical skills, he argued, would be important assets in modernizing China and defending it from Japanese expansionism. Similar concerns echoed through much of the following, turbulent century—although the turbulence in fact increased, rather than reversed, the outward flow.

Although himself favoring constitutional monarchy, Liang nonetheless helped prepare the ground for republicanism by articulating in writings that were read widely by overseas Chinese new concepts of gongmin and guomin. Both terms can be loosely translated as “citizen,” implying political rights as well as responsibilities, but emphasizing, respectively, membership of a public realm and membership of a nation. If today these seem rather anodyne ideas, at the time they signaled seismic change in a political culture that had for thousands of years attached supreme importance to continuity and social hierarchy rooted in the Confucian virtues of filial piety and loyalty to the ruler. A concept of nationhood based
on common historical identity rather than on allegiance to the emperor made possible a new kind of patriotism in which overseas Chinese could participate.

China’s first republican president, Sun Yat-sen (1866–1925), took these ideas further in the Three Principles of the People (san min zhuyi) on which he hoped to found a new China: Nationalism (minzu zhuyi), Democracy (minchuan zhuyi), and People Livelihood (minsheng zhuyi). Sun came from a relatively poor rural Guangdong family that had sent kin overseas: Two of his uncles died as contract coolies (huagong) in the 1849 California Gold Rush. From the age of thirteen, Sun himself was educated in Hawaii and Hong Kong. Before his brief stint as president in 1912, he spent sixteen years in exile in Japan, Southeast Asia, North America, and Europe, raising money from Chinese communities worldwide to support a series of abortive military actions. Overseas Chinese also returned to fight and die in these insurrections, as in the Canton (Guangdong) uprising of April 1911, which is still commemorated in Huanhuaguang by a mausoleum—built with donations from overseas Chinese—to “72 martyrs,” most of them from Chinese communities abroad. The birth of the republic was thus intimately connected—financially, politically, and in terms of the interchange of ideas—with these overseas communities.

Republicanism entailed a new construction of Chinese nationality, to confer (or, as some would argue, to impose) a common identity upon an ethnically diverse empire. The flag of the first republic comprised five stripes representing five ethnic groups then deemed to belong to the Chinese nation: Han, Muslim, Mongol, Manchu, and Tibetan. In an elaboration of this theme, the present People’s Republic embraces fifty-six officially recognized ethnic groups, although even this larger number significantly understates the diversity of the Han majority, which includes many people with mutually unintelligible spoken languages (rather like grouping Italian and Spanish people together as Latins). However, the overarching concept of huaren (Chinese people), although reflected in the current republic’s full title (Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo), is strongly associated with the cradle of Chinese civilization along the Yellow River, and thus with those of Han ethnicity. Curiously, therefore, the notion of huaren extends more naturally to Han people abroad—who are referred to in China as huaqiao (Chinese sojourners) or in the case of their descendants, as huayi (of Chinese descent)—than it does to some ethnic minority citizens of the People’s Republic. Tibetans and Uighurs, for example, would not normally count themselves as huaren.

The postimperial Chinese state can therefore be said to have a strong sense of its core émigrés still belonging in some sense to China and comprising an important constituency. The other side of this coin is a strong sense of the otherness of foreign nationalities and cultures, reflected in extremely restrictive policies for immigration into China, even for foreign spouses of nationals. Naturalization is limited by the 1980 Nationality Law to descendants of ethnic Chinese, and each year only seventy to eighty nonethnic Chinese obtain Chinese citizenship.
As the new republic descended into warlordism, Japanese incursion and invasion, and civil war, courting of the overseas Chinese constituency became divided along ideological lines. Both the Nationalist and Communist Parties sought financial and political support from the diaspora. In 1937, Sun Yat-sen’s widow, Soong Ching Ling, who sided with the Communists, established a China Defense League that took medical supplies and established “international peace hospitals” behind Chinese lines (then allied in a fragile united front of Nationalists and Communists), especially serving Mao Zedong’s Eighth Route Army and Fourth New Army. The league also set up schools and child-care centers such as the “Los Angeles Nursery,” supported by the Los Angeles Chinese community, in a loess plateau cave in Mao’s Yan’an “revolutionary base area.” Such was Soong’s prestige among Chinese overseas that she was able to elicit substantial donations for the league from prominent Chinese tycoons in the British colony of Hong Kong and farther afield.

After the Communist victory in 1949, Soong presided over a China Welfare Fund that established “children’s palaces,” kindergartens, and hospitals in Shanghai and Beijing. The fund became moribund during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), but in 1986, five years after Soong’s death, a new foundation was established in her name. As well as promoting “Soong Ching Ling thought” and managing museums dedicated to her life and work, the Soong Ching Ling Foundation today awards prizes for children’s literature and raises funds for school building and scholarship programs, notably in predominantly Muslim Ningxia Province, where it has raised CNY 10 million (USD 1.2 million) to support the education of girl children. It has also conducted nationwide antismoking campaigns in schools. Branches in Shanghai and Chongqing municipalities and in the provinces of Hainan, Shaanxi, and Henan have their own child welfare programs. These are partly funded by donations from Chinese communities overseas, through affiliated branches in Canada, Hungary, and Japan.

In 1949, the Communist party-state set up an “All-China Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese” (Qiaolian). This was one of eight Leninist “organizations of the masses,” created to oversee different constituencies: most notably, women (the All-China Women’s Federation), youth (the Youth League), and workers (the All-China Federation of Trade Unions), but also scientists, writers, artists, and cultural workers. These did not serve to represent their constituencies so much as to disseminate the party line among them and strengthen “democratic centralist” political control. Although the mass organizations broadly retain this political function, they have, over the last twenty years, shifted toward more of a social welfare and social service provider role, as state, workplace-based, and rural cooperative welfare provision has been rolled back. The Youth League, for example, established a China Youth Development Foundation whose flagship Project Hope has been highly successful in raising funds for school building and basic education scholarship programs; Youth League cadre training programs now emphasize youth and community
work as well as political education. The Women’s Federation established, in 1981, a China Children and Teenager’s Fund whose Spring Bud program supports basic education for girl children, vocational education for teenagers, and, more recently, health programs. Training for Women’s Federation cadres now generally embraces social as well as political dimensions. The Returned Overseas Chinese Federation has evolved in a similar way, but also with a strong emphasis on promoting economic and commercial ties with the overseas constituency. As originally conceived, the federation was intended to oversee and help reintegrate “returned overseas Chinese” who came back to play a role in national reconstruction. In any case, the number of returnees was far exceeded by the number who fled the revolution, and then the Cultural Revolution, for Taiwan, Hong Kong, and elsewhere. Nonetheless, several hundreds of thousands of the overseas Chinese did return to throw in their fortunes with the People’s Republic, and many of these were settled on more than eighty large farms that are still managed by the federation.21

Over the last twenty years, however, the national federation and its subnational branches22 have been more concerned not with those who have returned but in developing relationships with those who remain overseas. One aspect of this is promoting cultural exchange and mainland tourism for overseas Chinese. (The national-level federation owns a large luxury hotel on a prime site in downtown Beijing, and local branches also commonly own hotels.) More central to the federation’s work appears to be an economic department that helps potential investors identify investment opportunities. Finally, the federation has a social welfare department with a subsidiary registered in 1998, the Overseas Chinese Economic and Cultural Foundation of China, which raises money for public benefit cultural and educational programs. Over the last three years, the foundation has raised a total of CNY 500 million (USD 60.5 million), which has been spent on building 596 schools (for which local governments are required to provide 60 percent match funding) and providing scholarships for outstanding students from poor provinces in western China to attend Beijing University. The funding has come from Chinese individuals (about 300 principal donors each year) and communities in Southeast Asia, Europe, Hong Kong, and Macao. (Notwithstanding the return of these former colonies to Chinese sovereignty, federation officials still count their citizens as huaqiao.) Only a relatively small proportion of the donated funds originate from North America. Apart from these efforts by the national organization, branches in twenty-three provinces are encouraged to participate in a Qiaoxin Gongcheng (Overseas Heart project) that sets a nominal “100–1,000–10,000” target: Each province is encouraged to find donors to build 100 schools, support 1,000 additional projects (such as equipping libraries and computer rooms), and provide 10,000 scholarships.23

The main government body for mediating relationships with Chinese communities overseas and developing relevant policy is the Department for Overseas Chinese
Affairs (Qiaoban), under the direct jurisdiction of the State Council (roughly, China's equivalent of a cabinet). In common with other government departments, this has provincial- and county-level counterparts that both report upward to the central department and coordinate with other local government agencies.\textsuperscript{24} It also places staff in Chinese embassies abroad to liaise with local Chinese communities.

Over the last twenty years, the Qiaoban and other government bodies have been increasingly active in sending delegations to visit Chinese communities abroad and in hosting return visits. [According to Hungarian scholar Pál Nyíri, in 1991 a total of 381 delegations comprising 2,093,138 Diaspora Philanthropy and Equitable Development individuals were sent overseas from Guangdong Province alone, and by 1995 this had risen to 526 delegations involving 21,966 people.\textsuperscript{25} The Federation of Chinese Associations in Rome told Nyíri they had received more than 270 official Chinese delegations in 1995.] (These very high figures have to be seen in light of the fact that it is hard for Chinese people to travel overseas as private tourists, trade delegations are a highly desirable junket for officials, and sightseeing is usually a major part of the agenda.) Qiaoban offices in Fujian Province received over 500 delegations in 1998, while their counterparts in Guangdong received more than 3,000, involving no less than 270,514 visitors from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macao, and farther afield.\textsuperscript{26} (Again, these visits clearly contain an element of tourism and prominently feature sightseeing tours and visits to ancestral homes.)

At the same time, Nyíri notes, there has been an explosion in the number of publications aimed at overseas Chinese communities and produced by official mainland agencies. Guangdong and Fujian authorities together publish over 190 such magazines, newspapers, and periodicals, with a total overseas circulation topping 2 million, mostly distributed free.\textsuperscript{27} Over the last few years, mainstream Chinese media have also become internationalized through Web sites and satellite broadcasting, enabling them to reach the overseas constituency.

This drive to reach out to Chinese communities abroad appears largely calculated to secure their investment in China, and in this respect it has been highly successful. According to one official source, as much as 70 percent of China's foreign direct investment, a major motor of economic growth over the last two decades, has come from overseas Chinese.\textsuperscript{28} (In this context, the overseas Chinese rubric includes Hong Kong and Taiwan, whose transfer of labor-intensive industries to Special Economic Zones in the mainland during the 1980s was a defining feature of Deng Xiaoping’s economic reform period.) A raft of policy documents and regulations have provided, or instructed local government agencies to provide, preferential terms to overseas Chinese investors. The October 1986 Regulations on Promoting Foreign Investment laid out general principles for tax breaks, access to land for establishing factories, and employment of local labor. In 1988, Regulations for Encouraging Investment by Compatriots from Taiwan encouraged local authorities to cooperate with Taiwanese
investors in Hainan, Fujian, Guangdong, Zhejiang, and other coastal areas (Articles 2, 3). The 1990 Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Returned Overseas and Relatives of Overseas Chinese formally guaranteed the property rights of this constituency (Article 10), including inheritance rights (Article 13) and the right to receive remittances from overseas (Article 12) and ordered local governments to support their efforts to establish commercial, industrial, or agricultural ventures (Article 9). By embracing the “relatives of overseas Chinese,” not just the relatives of returnees, the law facilitates investment, through kin, of people who have not themselves returned. Further Regulations on Encouraging Investment by Overseas Chinese and Compatriots from Hong Kong and Macao, issued by the State Council in May 2001, seek to promote investment in real estate development and high-tech industries.

Although current government plans to develop China’s western provinces include urging overseas Chinese investors to relocate labor intensive industries from coastal to inland areas, it is the high-tech sector that now most exercises the official imagination. Where the 1980s and early ’90s were marked by the development of coastal export processing zones for electronics, toy, garment, and footwear industries, the new emphasis is on research and development in areas such as information technology, biotechnology, new materials technology, energy efficiency, and environmental protection. To this end, a number of science and technology parks have been established in the most economically developed provinces, with highly preferential investment terms designed to attract back Western-trained “overseas Chinese scholars.” Such people are now commonly referred to in Chinese media reports as haigui—“turtles”—to emphasise the fact that, like the highly mobile sea creatures, they eventually return to the place of their birth.

The local government of Suzhou New District (in Zhejiang Province) has been investing 3 percent of its annual revenue in establishing one such science and technology park, where haigui with registered capital of no more than USD 10,000 can enjoy rent-free office space for a first year, followed by rental for an unspecified period at 50 percent of the market price (or an option to buy at 80 percent of the market price). The startup companies enjoy a three-year tax holiday, followed by a 50 percent tax rebate for two years, and a 20 percent rebate for a further year. An “Incubator Park for Returned Scholars” in Shanghai similarly offers “eight supporting treatments,” including the use of a 10,000 square meter workshop for two years rent free or for sale at a preferential price, 50 percent tax rebates, low-interest loans from a development fund, and an undertaking that the park will cover all costs “including transport, communication, accommodation and meals . . . [during] . . . the process of project negotiation.” Beijing has established similar facilities and, according to Vice Mayor Yang Anjiang, aims to attract “6,000 or more returned scholars.” To woo them back, numerous conferences, conventions, and fairs are held: 2,000 graduates of overseas universities attended one recent such event in Guangzhou in December 2002. The Ministry for Education, mean-
while, has instructed regional educational authorities to make special provision for the children of returned scholars, including extra language coaching for those who have been schooled in English.33 (This contrasts sharply with attitudes to the children of China’s internal migrant laborers, who face considerable formal and informal barriers to state education in host communities.)

Alongside the efforts to bring back foreign-trained scientists, technicians, and business managers to stimulate new industries (with MBA degrees now much in demand), some government departments are also increasingly keen to recruit returned graduates from overseas into public administration. In 2002, the government of Liaoning made forty-two such appointments and reportedly received 120 applications from appropriately qualified haigui.34 In some sectors, however, there has been more official caution. During the 1990s, the Ford Foundation supported a number of new social science research centers in Chinese universities in the hope of bringing back overseas-trained social scientists to play a role in empirical research and public policy formulation. However, according to the Ford program officer responsible, although some of the centers flourished, “officials [were] too suspicious of internationally trained Chinese scholars to permit much participation.”35

The objects of this intense courtship are evidently not the long-established Chinese communities overseas so much as the new “scholarmigrants” who go to study, and often contrive to remain, abroad. If the available inducements indicate a sustained effort to reverse this brain drain, it is also notable that returnees are not required to make a permanent commitment to remain in China.

Article 17 of the 1990 Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Returned Overseas and Relatives of Overseas Chinese states that “returned overseas Chinese and relatives of overseas Chinese shall have the right to leave the country and settle down abroad,” and Article 13 permits them to own property abroad. The language of this law strongly suggests that although the mainland does not formally recognize dual nationality, the state is nonetheless accommodating itself to globalization by allowing its intellectual elite to become transnational. Further evidence of this trend is provided by Shanghai municipality’s decision to start providing its own permanent residence permit “green cards” to Chinese foreign nationals—many of them U.S. green card holders.36

However, significant emphasis is still placed on loyalty to China, if not to Communist ideology. According to Pál Nyíri, the national and local Qiaoban and other government departments have worked actively, and with a significant degree of success, to encourage Chinese abroad to form new professional, kinship, and common-place organizations, and Chinese government agencies have even provided funding for such groups to hold conventions.37 These intermediary organizations facilitate liaison with the Chinese community overseas in ways that are mutually beneficial. Nyíri notes that many of the leaders of the organizations manage to have photographs taken with senior Chinese leaders, and that these pictures and newspaper cuttings “are assets
of considerable importance when doing business or dealing with officials back in China.” In return for this patronage, the organizations show patriotic allegiance to the mainland on issues that are important to the Communist Party. Many, for example, organized protests at the 1998 bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade; and the People’s Daily English Web site includes dozens of stories about overseas Chinese organizations worldwide denouncing the quasi-Buddhist Falun Gong sect, against which the mainland government launched a campaign in 1999. Even more importantly, the overseas organizations are encouraged to endorse the “one China policy” and reunification with Taiwan.

Thus, in Nyíri’s view, current Chinese nationalism is quite consistent with the transnationalism of its business and intellectual elite, drawing on “a triumphalist, unificatory and mobilising myth of Chineseess as an eternal cultural condition inherited with blood and, regardless of citizenship, carrying ‘Chinese values’ such as love for the family, subordination of the individual to the collective interests, diligence, and frugality, and thus resulting in superior business results.” According to this view, the Chinese abroad are seen not as a loss to the nation but, on the contrary, as a means of strengthening the nation in a globalized world. In further support of this view, Nyíri cites an article by an anonymous “Shanghai New Migrants Research Project Team” that, he believes, was clearly written “on instructions from the Qiaoban and the Public Security Bureau.” It states that since reform and opening, people who have left mainland China to reside abroad (called “new migrants” for short) have continuously been more numerous. They are currently rising as an important force within overseas Chinese and ethnic Chinese communities. In the future, they will become a backbone of forces friendly to us in America and some other developed Western countries.38

Despite numerous requests, it was not possible for the authors of this chapter to obtain an interview with the Qiaoban, and we are in no position to judge whether senior policymakers are as sanguine about the new migrants as Nyíri’s analysis suggests. The intensive efforts to attract Chinese who study overseas back, frequently reported by the Chinese media, indicate more concern than complacency. Yet in many fields Chinese policy making is not unified or consistent, despite the appearance of monolithic government, but tends to flow in several directions at once in the effort to reconcile competing interests.39 Policy toward the diaspora appears to involve both new and old elements.

For example, two universities founded by the Qiaoban in the early years of communist rule and intended to attract students from overseas Chinese communities are still in business. The National Overseas Chinese University was established in 1960 under the patronage of then Premier Zhou Enlai. Appropriately enough, the university is located in a famous Qiaoxiang (overseas Chinese county): Quanzhou, Fujian, the ancestral home of millions of overseas Chinese. It is overseen by a board of directors consisting of prominent foreigners of Chinese origin, Hong Kong and Macao citizens, and returned overseas Chinese, and
it maintains representative offices in both Hong Kong and Macao. Since its founding, the university has educated some 60,000 students, 32,000 of whom came from outside the mainland. Today, 16,000 students are currently enrolled in degree programs, 1,600 of whom are from countries such as Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Japan, Korea, and the United States. Although overseas Chinese make up just 10 percent of students today, educating overseas Chinese—or at least paying lip service to the idea—remains central to the university’s mission. The People’s Daily dedicated a full story on its Web site to the fact that “Huaqiao University Confers Master’s Degree on 30 Macao Students in 2002.”40 And as the university’s own Web site proclaimed, today’s Overseas Chinese University continues its aim of “serving overseas Chinese, facing overseas, and facing Hong Kong and Macao.” The university has also set up a new campus near Xiamen to train overseas Chinese and foreigners in the Chinese language.

Older, and more renowned, is Guangzhou’s Jinan University. Founded in 1906, and reestablished in 1958, this was China’s first university designated for overseas Chinese. A College of Chinese Language and Culture was established to educate this student body. Today, about one-third of students at Jinan, which advertises itself on its Web site as “Best University for Overseas Chinese Students,” come from beyond the Chinese mainland, mainly Hong Kong and Macao. News reports in recent years have focused on the fact that Jinan has begun to draw more and more Hong Kong students—especially those who either cannot get places in Hong Kong universities or are hoping to pursue career opportunities on the mainland. Lower tuition fees are also a significant lure.41

These institutions no doubt act primarily in pursuit of their own institutional and commercial interests. Yet the universities’ ability to attract students from Chinese communities overseas and the strong demand among people of Chinese descent raised abroad for Chinese language training (which a host of mainland schools now compete to provide) suggest the enduring strength of the connection to the mainland that many diasporan people feel. It is hardly surprising that the Chinese government and Communist Party are active in seeking to confirm and strengthen this sense of connection, whether by encouraging people back or by encouraging them to remain loyal to China’s national interest while “sojourning” elsewhere, or both. For it would suit Beijing well if the Chinese diaspora were not a global scattering, but a cohesive community of globalized Chinese people, able to mobilize financial, political, and diplomatic forces, with Beijing at its hub.

From Remittance to Endowment: Traditions of Diaspora Philanthropy

Whether they were laundrymen subsisting on modest wages in America or wealthy Southeast Asian merchants, Chinese emigrants remembered the families and villages they left behind. Between 1929 and 1940, remittances to China averaged from $80 to $100 million a year, enough to offset Chi-
na’s balance of payments deficit and prop up entire provincial economies. The impact of such streams of cash can be easily seen in one county in Guangdong province, Taishan. For centuries, Taishanese had struggled to coax crops from the region’s rocky, hilly, alkaline soil, rarely raising enough to keep stomachs full. In the winter, the men would travel to the nearby port of Guangzhou in search of work to supplement their meager incomes. It was only a matter of time before the Taishanese moved even farther afield—to pan for gold in the mountains of California. By 1900, one in four Taishanese had lived abroad, the vast majority of them in the United States. In one district, 600 of the male population of 1,000 worked abroad. In the 1920s and 30s, one-eighth of all remittances to China were sent to Taishan families.

As a result, by the early twentieth century, the once dirt-poor county sported ostentatious two-story homes, called yang lou (foreign houses), replete with Western touches such as stained-glass windows and Doric columns. Banks, doctors’ offices, and clothing shops sprung up to cater to the county’s new rich. Taishan émigrés also brought home the latest technologies from abroad—electrical streetlights, telephone systems, and a movie theater. One prosperous Taishanese American even attempted to build a railroad connecting Taishan to Guangzhou, a project that ultimately failed.

Although charity always began at home, overseas Chinese were also generous donors to the wider community. Between 1910 and 1949, money raised from Taishanese abroad helped build at least eighty-six new elementary schools and nine middle schools in Taishan. Funds were also raised to build libraries, teachers colleges, and to renovate existing schools. As a result, 75 percent of all children attended school in Taishan. The Taishan education budget exceeded those of all its neighboring counties and trailed only the metropolis of Guangzhou in numbers of schools and teachers.

Counties built by overseas Chinese money—called Qiaoxiang (overseas Chinese counties) can be found all across Guangdong, whose émigrés traveled to the United States, and also in neighboring Fujian Province, whose émigrés landed, for the most part, in Taiwan or Southeast Asia.

One of the most generous overseas Chinese philanthropists of the twentieth century was Chen Jiageng (Tan Kah Kee), a native of Fujian who migrated to Singapore at the turn of the twentieth century and built an empire of rubber manufacturing, import/export, and rice trading that earned him a reputation as “the Henry Ford of Malaysia.” Beginning at the age of twenty, when he funded a school in his home village of Jimei, Chen donated USD 100 million—half of his personal fortune—to education projects in China. “Without progress in education,” Chen said, “there will be no flourishing industry but degradation of people’s livelihood.” In 1913, he founded the Jimei Primary School, which was run by his brother and soon famed for its high standards, drawing students from throughout the region. The school grew into a large educational complex, with an elementary and high school, a college, and a vocational training center. Today, it is a fully fledged university, offering degrees in
engineering, teaching, and business administration to about 12,000 students. Another 110 schools in twenty counties benefited from Chen’s largesse. In 1921, he also endowed Xiamen University, which today remains one of China’s top universities.

Though officially a British subject, Chen was fiercely loyal to China. He was a generous donor to Sun Yat-sen’s revolutionary activities in the 1920s. During World War II, as chairman of the Southeast Overseas Chinese General Association, he raised millions for China’s war effort. He became an ardent supporter of the Communists and on 21 September 1949 led a fifteen-member delegation of overseas Chinese to join a historic meeting of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, at which the All China Returned Overseas Chinese Federation was founded. He was appointed to serve as its first chairman. When he died in 1961, he bequeathed his remaining fortune to the nation.

One of the relatively few writers to have considered the topic of overseas (and especially American) Chinese philanthropy is John Deeney.45 He locates Chinese philanthropy in a long tradition of reciprocity and giving that draws on the Confucian ideal of benevolence (ren), reinforced by Buddhist and Taoist teachings.46 These engendered what Robert Lee, quoted by Deeney, describes as “the idea of corporate personality, not an isolated, insular self, but rather an ethos of interdependence.”47 As a result, according to Stella Shao (also quoted by Deeney),

philanthropy as such is not considered a separate and categorical concept. Asians give because of their understanding that benevolence, compassion, interdependence and basic respect for humankind are necessary ingredients to living, first in their families, then in their own ethnic communities, then in the greater society.48

Against this background, Deeney describes Chinese giving as essentially private, personal, and informal (as opposed to public and professional), starting with family and gradually extending to “institutions that support the family spirit—such as schools and churches or temples.” This certainly seems to be borne out in a preliminary overview of traditions of Chinese diaspora giving, with its progression from remitting money to relatives to social investment in communities of origin, with a special emphasis on education.

The almost invariable emphasis on education is an entirely natural extension of China’s extremely long history of respect for scholarship. The imperial bureaucracy was always a meritocracy of a kind, with positions of power, including the power to accumulate wealth, distributed in accordance with a candidate’s performance in civil service examinations. The belief that education was the way to get ahead was thus written through Chinese culture many centuries before the European Enlightenment. Understandably enough, the preoccupation remains today: Education changes fate (jiaoyu gaibian minglu) was the slogan selected by famed film director Zhang Yimou for a series of Central China Television advertisements encouraging the public to donate for school building programs in the poor western provinces. And, as can be
seen from the discussion in the preceding section, this preoccupation is today also thoroughly socialized. Advanced education, notably in science and technology, is seen as a major prerequisite for building a powerful and prosperous nation, hence the fuss over the “returned scholars”—not to mention an ambitious, ongoing program to rapidly treble the proportion of young Chinese entering tertiary education at home. Private giving for educational causes may thus be seen as a way to provide individuals with otherwise inaccessible opportunities, and as a way of helping to build the nation.

Deeney also notes, as a feature of the personal and informal nature of Chinese philanthropy, the following:

Ties of friendship and respect are all-important; once they have been established, then personal trust counts more than anything else. Hence, many generous Chinese prefer that solicitations be made through family members or close friends rather than through impersonal direct mailings. They also generally eschew formal applications, detailed reports, and accounting details as tedious, unnecessarily complex, and time-consuming, and much prefer a more informal approach. Unless there is a major donation involved, once the gift is given there is little, if any, followup expected or required.

As an example of personal and private giving, Deeney mentions a group of American Chinese doctors and dentists in Pittsburgh who travel regularly to China, without doing so under the auspices of any formal organization, to give hands-on training to Chinese counterparts. Many individuals from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia engage in similar activities.

However, when it comes to donating money rather than time, this personal and informal approach is in a sense problematic. It is a common theme of writing on many aspects of China that personal relationships and connections (guanxi) can carry more weight than formal, institutional, contractual, or legal relationships. This practice is, for example, cited as an obstacle to the establishment of the “rule of law” in a Western sense. However, too often Western critics of China simply confuse or conflate guanxi with corruption, without recognizing the complex traditions of reciprocity in which it is based, but it is a form of social capital that people more or less consciously accumulate and draw upon. It is this process that Deeney is describing when he identifies a preference for appeals that are made by a friend, an acquaintance at work, or a family member—especially if these people occupy leadership positions and will invite one into their circle of wealthy and influential colleagues. This approach is also partly due to the common practice among Chinese Americans of donating to the chosen causes of friends who gave to one’s own favourite causes—another example of the obligation of reciprocal giving.

Giving to charitable causes may thus be a means of accumulating guanxi, and one’s own guanxi may be mobilized in encouraging others to give. This is problematic...
not because it raises questions (which we decline to examine) about the authenticity of motives, but because it naturally disadvantages causes that have few contacts with or advocates among elites. Some of China’s more independent, citizen-initiated non-profit organizations have by chance happened to make personal connections with overseas Chinese donors, but these connections seem to be the exception rather than the rule.51 We also consider, in the following examples of overseas organizations that pursue philanthropy actively, establishing their own projects—largely through personal networks—rather than passively contributing to mainland-managed operations. But on the whole the overseas Chinese philanthropic market is dominated by Chinese government agencies (or government-sponsored agencies) that can afford to make personal contact with groups overseas or that are represented by government officials and through the Qiaoban.

Cementing relationships with government officials undoubtedly plays a significant role in giving to or through these agencies. Again, this raises questions of efficacy as much as motivation. Chinese government involvement in relief and charitable provision, and the attempts to recruit support from elites, is by no means new. Because of the Confucian presumption of state virtue, imperial scholar-officials were expected to play a leading role in such efforts, and bureaucrats in post-Mao China have resumed this role.52 But government dominance and direction of China’s gradually emerging “third sector,” which in many ways recalls the centralized control of the command economy, may not be the best way of enabling it to play a creative and constructive role in social provision and in “correcting market failures.” Furthermore, of particular concern is the almost complete lack of transparency in government mobilized philanthropy. It is extremely hard to determine whether the donor trust that Deeney describes as typical is justified; this is of course exacerbated by the lack of expectation for reporting and follow-up.

Present Patterns of Diaspora Giving

THE OFFICIAL NONPROFIT SECTOR

As previously noted, China’s mass organizations have over the last twenty years shifted significantly (although by no means entirely) toward a social service provider role. Over the same period, a number of new state-sponsored charitable foundations have been established. These organizations together make up an official nonprofit sector that is a manifestation of government desire to recruit “social forces” in social service funding and provision, reflecting global trends toward a reduced role for government.

In addition to this official nonprofit sector, the last twenty years have, with the increase in personal freedoms in China, seen the establishment of registered membership organizations including many small-scale, private charitable initiatives.53 The legal environment for these is, however, extremely restrictive, reflecting government concerns about social forces that it cannot control. All registered organizations must be sponsored and supervised by a “relevant” government department or Communist
Party agency. It must have office premises and start-up funds; and only one organization of each “type” (e.g., one environment protection group, one self-help group for parents of autistic children) may register at each administrative level. These provisions narrowly limit the autonomy of legal organizations and militate against the formation of genuinely grassroots community or advocacy groups. Nonetheless, over the last few years a number of more independent and NGO-like groups have formed, often with international support, in sectors such as environment protection, women’s rights, HIV/AIDS prevention, and disability.\(^5\) Their strategies for negotiating the restrictive legal environment include registering as businesses or “research centers,” attaching themselves to academic institutions, or simply ignoring the rules and relying on local goodwill and networks of strategic alliances to fend off official clampdowns. Such groups have shown potential, creativity, and courage in developing new forms of service provision and advocacy, but their prospects for growth are severely constrained by the uncertain legal environment.

We began this study with the firm expectation that the official nonprofit sector would be a major beneficiary of overseas Chinese philanthropy. In fact, this turns out to be much less the case than we had supposed. Although open to donations from any sources, the official nonprofit organizations have not, in the main, systematically targeted overseas Chinese donors; nor, typically, do they even maintain breakdowns of their funding sources—which suggests that their fund-raising operations, despite experimentation with techniques such as online giving and soliciting funds through cellphone short-text messages, is not yet particularly strategic or professionalized. However, nearly every charity and nonprofit organization that we interviewed told us that giving from overseas Chinese based in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia far outstrips giving from North American Chinese.

The China Youth Development Foundation’s Project Hope is almost certainly the most successful and professionalized fund-raising operation in China. Since 1989, it has raised more than USD 200 million for education projects whose mainstay has been primary school building and scholarships. According to Gan Dongyu, of the project’s International Department, the foundation’s aggregate donations from Chinese overseas are substantial, although it is not possible to give a precise figure for these as they are not accounted for separately. In particular, Gan says, “thousands” of Singaporeans have donated CNY 300 (USD 36.5) each in child sponsorship programs, and “tens of thousands” of Hong Kong citizens have made similar individual donations. The donations, according to Gan, have come “mostly from ordinary people with a relatively small amount of money,” generally in response to media reports on the foundation’s work.

Gan believes that Chinese-language newspaper reports were also a major factor in garnering some support in North America—combined with the fact that some of the overseas Chinese supporters had only recently left China, where the foundation’s reputation was already
established. The North American Chinese Education Foundation (NACEF), set up by Chinese students in San Francisco and linked to Chinese students associations in thirty-three American universities, began in 1998 to raise funds for Project Hope. Its contributions appeared relatively modest, however, amounting to only around USD 23,000 in the first year, as recorded by the NACEF Web site. Also in 1998, according to Gan Dongyu, a Toronto association of former Beijing residents collected around CAD 100,000 (USD 60,000) for Project Hope.

These sums are, however, dwarfed by international corporate donations to the project. It has received around USD 2 million apiece from Motorola and Coca-Cola, and smaller, but still substantial, sums from many others. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that the overseas Chinese constituency has not been targeted more systematically.

It is also worth noting that, from early on, the Youth Development Foundation was plagued by allegations of inefficient use, or outright abuse, of funds, including a protracted court case in Hong Kong, starting in 1995. The foundation was eventually vindicated, but it has since been rocked by a new round of scandals. Such events naturally have an impact on donor trust, and in the 1990s a number of Chinese organizations in overseas communities were established to raise funds for essentially rival operations, channeling the money to virtually identical projects through their own networks. One of the most successful has been the Hong Kong-based Sower’s Action, established in 1992, which now raises around HKD 17 million (USD 2.2 million) per year through public fund-raising activities that include an annual sponsored walk from Hong Kong to Guangzhou, with participants not only from Hong Kong, but also from Chinese communities in Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, and France. Sowers Action also has a supporting chapter in Vancouver.

Although the organization has a small administrative staff, all of its project identification and monitoring trips to mainland China are carried out by volunteers, who liaise directly with local education authorities. Accounts are audited pro bono by Peat Marwick. The higher standards of financial transparency have almost certainly played an important part in the group’s fund-raising success.

Perhaps learning this lesson, the mainland’s China Charity Federation (CCF) appeared keen to make financial transparency and rectitude among its hallmarks when it was founded in 1994, and it began by publishing annual audited accounts. Unlike most Chinese foundations, which have very limited endowments and rely for income on public fund-raising, the CCF tried hard to establish an endowment fund, attracting a donation of HKD 25 million (USD 3.25 million) from the Hongkong Shanghai Banking Corporation. The national-level federation, which has more than seventy affiliated foundations that each raise their own funds on the provincial, city, and county levels, has supported emergency relief work, care for orphans and older people, cancer research, and dry well digging in arid areas. In 1998, it became a member of United Way. That year, when it
raised more than CNY 600 million (USD 74 million) for flood relief—mostly from domestic Chinese sources and multinational corporations, was something of a zenith for the organization.

From the outset, the federation appointed around a dozen notable figures from the nonprofit sector in Hong Kong and Taiwan as “senior advisers” and “especially invited council directors.” These include Darwin Chen, CEO of the Hong Kong Community Chest; S. T. Chan, vice president of World Vision International China Programme; Sir Harry Fang, director of the Hong Kong Society for Rehabilitation; and Tuan Cheng Wang of Taiwan’s Buddhist Compassion (Tzu Chi) Foundation. Also appointed were a Canadian Chinese photographer, Walter Poon, and an American Chinese pianist, Kong Xiaodong. The impact of this nonmainland presence was perhaps somewhat diluted by a formal governance structure that distributed positions among well over one hundred people, including honorary presidents, senior advisers, vice presidents, specially invited council directors, and executive directors. Nevertheless, the inclusion of nonmainlanders did suggest that the overseas constituency would be targeted proactively.

The federation has indeed maintained links with a number of nonmainland Chinese organizations, notably in Hong Kong: the Hong Kong Community Chest and Hong Kong Council for Social Services, the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals, Po Leung Kuk, and Yan Oi. But these are “experience exchange” rather than funding relationships and probably owe much to the fact that the federation’s founding president, Yan Mingfu (a former vice minister of Civil Affairs), was a leading advocate of nonprofit sector development in China and showed a keen interest in Hong Kong’s model of social service delivery, which accords a prominent place to nongovernment service providers. Some funding support has come through joint programs with the World Vision International China Program, based in Hong Kong, and Oxfam Hong Kong. Malaysia’s Golden Lion Group corporation, headed by Zhong Tingsen, has contributed nearly USD 1 million for disaster relief programs. The federation has also been an implementing partner in a Smile Train program, funded with a USD 20 million donation from Chinese American Charles Wang, of Computer Associates, to provide surgery for children with cleft lips and palates. But this relationship was not initiated by CCF. Smile Train was actively seeking Chinese partners and chose CCF as the best fit. (Another American Chinese philanthropist, Huang Yongle, also donated USD 100,000 for cleft lip and cleft palate operations conducted in China by the international organization, Operation Sunrise.)

Altogether, CCF appears to have done little to reach out directly to potential overseas Chinese supporters, and in many ways the organization seems to have lost the fresh edge with which it began. In terms of transparency, too, the bright start of the CCF appears to have dimmed since the retirement, in 2002, of Yan Mingfu. The numerous calls we logged to the federation in March and April 2003 yielded more prevarication than information. According to those to whom we spoke, the federation
does not collect funds from overseas Chinese, and our informants were unwilling to disclose present sources or level of income. Shen Zhifei, international department director of the All-China Disabled Persons’ Federation (CDPF), was more forthcoming, but he immediately made clear that CDPF does not target overseas Chinese donors or receive much from them. In fact, CDPF, which was established by the government in 1988, seems barely to engage in active fund-raising at all. According to Shen: “We sometimes organize activities like sporting or cultural events [involving people with disabilities], but we never target specific groups. . . . Usually, they [donors] come to us to seek the possibility of having some cooperation.” Shen says the federation has been receiving around CNY 10 million per year from international sources, but this amount included Official Development Assistance cooperation with UNICEF and the government of Japan and grants from private foundations such as the Hong Kong–based Kadoorie Charitable Foundation. In addition, the federation has recently secured support for two largescale multiyear projects: a USD 30 million cataract surgery and blindness prevention project funded by the Lions Club International (Hong Kong Lions chapters have raised funds vigorously for this), and CNY 110 million (USD 13 million) from Hong Kong millionaire Li Kashing to establish a series of rehabilitation centers.

Li, Shen notes, has supported numerous projects through the federation, starting in the early 1990s with a rehabilitation and vocational training center in his hometown in southern Guangdong. However, according to Shen, most of the federation’s budget comes from the central government, and the level of government support has been increasing steadily over the last few years.

Li Kashing is also the principal donor to the China Disabled Persons’ Foundation, which was established in 1980 but has since been overshadowed by the much larger CDPF, of which it is now effectively a fund-raising subsidiary. In 2001 its total income was CNY 19.3 million (USD 2.3 million). Of this, CNY 13.7 million came from overseas, of which 12.2 million was donated by Li’s companies. A further CNY 1 million came from a Hong Kong tobacco company, and CNY 0.5 million came from private individuals. The funds were used to support artificial limb programs, training of teachers for the deaf, schooling for blind children, massotherapy training for blind adults, and community-based rehabilitation projects in inland and western provinces. Again, the foundation appeared to be a largely passive recipient of Li’s largesse and that of other donors. According to a spokesman, promotional activities largely consist in organization of events such as tours by a disabled person’s arts group, and fund-raising is not targeted, although the foundation “welcomes support from all sorts of donors.”

The China Children and Teenagers Fund, established by the Women’s Federation in 1981, currently raises around CNY 60 million per year, mostly from Chinese corporations but also from the general public. It has recently begun to appeal for donations through cellphone short-text messages. According to Xu Xiaoguang of the International Department, the fund
has never attempted to attract funds from overseas Chinese donors, but it is in principle interested in the possibility of doing so and is trying to build up connections through networks of overseas alumni of Xiamen and Beijing universities. But, says Xu, “We don’t have enough information or really know how to go about this.” In March 2002, the fund sent an exploratory delegation to Europe to try to make connections with international organizations, such as the World Children’s Fund, and with European Chinese communities. This foray has not yet produced significant funding results. A follow-up trip was planned for 2003 but was canceled owing to the atypical pneumonia (SARS) epidemic.

A rising star in the firmament of China’s official nonprofit sector is the Poverty Alleviation Foundation, established in 1989, but achieving little public prominence until it was reorganized in 2000 under the dynamic leadership of He Daofeng. By 2001 it had doubled its income to CNY 58.6 million (USD 7.1 million)—a success that the foundation’s 2001 Annual Report ascribed to “researching and designing our projects to lead in the market.” The trend continued over the following two years, leading to a reported income that topped CNY 100 million in 2003. Even the Soong Ching Ling Foundation, with its overseas branches and a brand name historically linked with the diaspora, seems to have been unable to capitalize on these advantages. According to Deng Hongqing of the organization’s International Department, just 1.37 percent of income came from overseas in 2002, with a further 13 percent from Hong Kong and Taiwan. Despite having this breakdown at his fingertips, Deng says the foundation does not systematically target donors overseas. This has to be seen, however, in light of the fact that as a pillar of the nation’s politicocultural patrimony, the foundation remains heavily subsidized by government, so its appointed officials have little incentive to raise funds aggressively.

This brief survey therefore suggests that the official nonprofit sector has not yet greatly exerted itself to seek funds from Chinese communities overseas. Funding that has come from these communities appears to have been received passively rather than having been actively sought. China’s universities, by contrast, evidently see private philanthropy as a critical resource for expansion and development and have been much more proactive in seeking support from Chinese abroad.

The “Go-Getting” Universities

Once solely supported by government funds, elite universities have sought to raise the extra sums they need to be truly world-class institutions by creating development and fund-raising arms modeled after those of major U.S. universities such as Harvard and Berkeley.
Since 1994, Tsinghua University, which is considered the “MIT of China,” has raised some CNY 420 million (USD 50.8 million) from private donors. Fully 70 percent of that came from donors living in Hong Kong and Taiwan, says Huang Jianhua, director of the Tsinghua University Education Foundation. Similarly, Deng Ya of the Beijing University Foundation reports that of the CNY 800 million (USD 97 million) raised since 1989, 65 percent came from Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Both universities have enjoyed a building boom. Almost all the buildings located on the eastern end of Tsinghua’s campus—gray concrete and granite behemoths lining a long, landscaped lawn, with fountains—are brand new. This section of campus is ironically nicknamed the White District (Bai Qu), white being the color historically associated with capitalists.

Tsinghua’s new library was built by Hong Kong’s Sir Run Run Shaw in 1990. Li Kashing provided a similar donation for Beida’s new library. Li Guowei (Q. W. Lee), president of Hang Seng Bank, provided funds for Tsinghua’s business school and a life sciences building. Liang Chiuju, also of Hang Seng Bank, provided the funds for the architecture school. Li Kashing pledged USD 10 million for Tsinghua’s new Information Technology park. Wu Shunde (of the Hong Kong restaurant chain, Maxim’s) provided the capital for the Design Institute and the Tsinghua Museum. The new Tsinghua gymnasium was also the gift of a Hong Kong donor, Cao Guangbiao.

According to Huang, Tsinghua vigorously courted many of its donations. The university president, he says, travels frequently to Hong Kong and Taiwan, cultivating relationships with potential donors, armed with brochures and a menu of projects for them to look over. If donors seem uninterested in the projects on offer, they are asked what they would prefer to fund and accommodations are made.

In Huang’s view, Hong Kong entrepreneurs have been generous benefactors because they believe that a donation to a top university helps to establish their reputations on the mainland. In 1997, as China prepared to resume sovereignty over Hong Kong, Tsinghua received a wave of major gifts from Hong Kong people. “They came to us,” Huang says. “They wanted to show their status as major business players in China. They want to show the central government, too.”

The sums donated by Hong Kong Chinese dwarf those from Chinese Americans. “We’re not very satisfied with what we’ve raised from the U.S.,” Huang says. However, both Tsinghua and Beijing University have registered subsidiary foundations in the United States to develop American fund-raising.

Several Chinese American entrepreneurs have established scholarships for needy or outstanding students. One donor, Ms. Xin Yuxi, a U.S. cosmetics tycoon, funds scholarships to Beijing University for the top female student from every province in China. But fund-raising among Chinese Americans has been comparatively anemic for a number of reasons, according to Huang. Most of the 10,000 or more Tsinghua alumni in the United States have not yet reached the income levels that would
enable them to endow buildings or professorships. “They are just now beginning to make money,” says Huang. The pool of established Chinese Americans with direct ties to the mainland is also relatively small, since immigration from mainland China was cut off after 1949 and only resumed after the “reform and opening” of the late 1970s. Many of today’s successful Chinese Americans trace their roots to Taiwan and are more interested in helping their island home. Others seem to be more focused on philanthropic projects in the United States. Huang believes that “Chinese Americans care more about what U.S. society thinks of them, while Hong Kong Chinese see China as their own market.” Still, he is optimistic that, as China continues to rise in the world and as mainland immigrants in the United States rise to prominence, more will donate to China.

Beijing and Tsinghua are not the only universities to have established independent foundations to raise funds abroad. Shanghai’s Jiaotong University Foundation has raised tens of millions of dollars—most from Hong Kong donors—since its establishment in 2001. Xiamen University benefits from a variety of education development foundations, whose support mainly comes from overseas Chinese and foreign enterprises, according to the university’s Web site. The Xiamen University Alumni Association of America has also been active in raising funds for their alma mater. Shanghai’s Fudan University also has an active alumni association in the United States. Recently, the organization’s northern California chapter raised scholarship funds for an orphaned student who had been accepted by Fudan University, after reading of his plight in a Chinese American paper.

Hong Kong, Taiwan, the Missing Link, and the International Bridge

It is logical for the universities to target Hong Kong and Taiwan for donations, because these parts of “Greater China” have a comparatively well-established philanthropic tradition and because, as the principal investors in China, the Hong Kong and Taiwan business communities have a strong interest in maintaining good relations with the mainland government. Donations from Hong Kong surged in the run-up to its return to Chinese sovereignty in 1997.

Probably the most prominent donor has been Hong Kong’s Li Kashing, whose Cheung Kong and Hutchison Whampoa companies have very substantial business interests on the mainland, including contracts to build deep-sea ports. In the late 1970s, Li provided a total of HKD 2 billion (USD 260 million) to build a university with a medical school and five attached teaching hospitals in his hometown of Shantou, Guangdong. On completion of the university in 1981, Li registered a foundation in Hong Kong to support a wide range of education, medical, and cultural heritage preservation projects. In 2001, the foundation made a HKD 300 million (USD 38 million) donation for development of education and health care in western China. The funds are being used to support distance learning for middle schools, college scholarships for ethnic
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minorities, an intercollege IT network, and a physician’s training program at Qinghai University. A Cheung Kong Scholars Program has provided HKD 70 million (USD 9 million) funding for academic awards and professorships in Chinese universities—with the familiar hope of attracting back Chinese scholars trained overseas. Another project, currently receiving HKD 20 million (USD 2.6 million) per year, supports the development of hospice services in twenty mainland hospitals.

Li is by no means unique among Hong Kong’s millionaires in investing part of his wealth in philanthropic projects in China. Numerous lesspublic figures do likewise, and some, like Chen Jiageng (Tan Kah Kee) before them, appear to regard their contributions as the culmination of their life’s work. For example, property developer Yu Panglin is reported to have recently invested CNY 2 billion (USD 241 million), nearly his entire fortune, in a fifty-seven-story hotel in Shenzhen, with future profits to be devoted to education projects through a local foundation that will inherit the hotel.64

Because of the culture of privacy surrounding greater China philanthropy, it is extremely hard to guess, much less calculate, how much is transferred each year from the accounts of the Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwanese superrich to development or social welfare projects on the mainland. But there can be little doubt that this far exceeds the USD 80 million or so that United Nations organizations loan or grant each year to China.65 The apparent modesty of many greater China donors is greatly compounded by the reticence of the Chinese authorities. The 1998 Public Welfare Donations Law includes two articles explicitly stating that the Department of Overseas Chinese Affairs—the Qiaoban—is the appropriate body for channeling such donations. But, as far as we were able to determine, nowhere in China are such donations publicly documented, and the Qiaoban itself has proved unwilling to discuss the subject with us. It is evident from sporadic Chinese media reports that the assistance extends well beyond the traditional Qiaoxiang counties. But the lack of any transparency in this process leaves us guessing what gifts, favors, and banquets may be involved in it, or what proportion of the funds donated may reach the intended beneficiaries. This is the most important missing link in our brief research.

Hong Kong may, however, also be serving as a bridgehead for philanthropy with a stronger tradition of public accountability and transparency. In the 1980s, a number of international NGOs began raising funds there. Prominent among them was Oxfam. In 1976, a small group of expatriates had established a fund-raising support operation in the then-British colony for Oxfam UK. This was so successful that it was soon virtually propelled into assuming an “operational” role, not just raising funds but implementing projects under its own Oxfam Hong Kong banner. Today, according to Executive Director Chong Chanyau, Oxfam has more than 60,000 regular supporters among Hong Kong’s population of 7 million, and aside from this raises at least HKD 2 million per year in an annual Trailwalker-sponsored walk that has become a major social and charitable event on Hong
Kong’s calendar. Save the Children Hong Kong similarly started out as a fund-raising exercise for its parent Save the Children UK, but in 1998, it became independent and started implementing its own projects in China. Hong Kong also provides a secure fund-raising and administrative base for the World Vision International China program, whose advertisements on subway billboards now compete with those of Médecins Sans Frontières, which has also started to raise funds in Hong Kong to support its international operations, although a Hong Kong chapter of the organization has not yet emerged. The success of these fund-raising ventures, like that of Sowers Action, shows that there is considerable demand among ordinary Chinese donors for professionalized and trustworthy charitable outlets.

Another organization that has targeted such donors is the Nature Conservancy, a U.S.-based environmental group that has been working since 1999 to protect 6.5 million acres of environmentally sensitive land in Yunnan Province. Early on, the Nature Conservancy recognized that Chinese “wealth centers” in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Southeast Asia, and the United States could be tapped to support the work in Yunnan, according to Ed Norton, senior advisor to the project. The organization has opened a Hong Kong office with a staff of three to raise awareness about biodiversity conservation in the region. In May 2002, it took a group of Hong Kong businesspeople to Yunnan to visit the conservation sites. This trip inspired the entrepreneurs, among them Peter Wang, CEO of Tristate Holdings, which manufactures the Nautica clothing line, to form a USD 2 million Asia Conservation Trust to benefit the Nature Conservancy. Similarly, the Conservancy has sought out the support of Chinese American donors. Working through staff and volunteers in communities with a high proportion of Chinese in the United States, TNC has made efforts to promote the project among Chinese American organizations and to place stories about the project in the Chinese American press. The Committee of 100, a Chinese American organization, had planned to visit the Yunnan project site this year, although the trip was canceled due to concerns about the SARS outbreak. Still, the Conservancy has raised about USD 100,000 from Chinese American donors. This has not been entirely straightforward, says Norton, since “we realized that the subject in which the Chinese American donors were most interested was education.” But the Conservancy has worked to create opportunities to support both education and environment. One donor, for instance, is supporting the construction of biogas stoves—to replace charcoal burning—in a dozen village schools. “We’re very happy with the results so far,” Norton says. “Everybody recognizes there’s a job here of developing an interest, cultivating a habit [among Overseas Chinese donors] of giving for environmental causes.”

Apart from its Hong Kong fund-raising operation, World Vision also targets Chinese communities in Canada, the United States, and Australia, looking for donors to sponsor child beneficiaries of the China program, according to the organization’s Yunnan program manager, Wang Chao. Videos and movies about World Vision’s work have been specially prepared for
and aired on Chinese-language television stations. Chinese radio stations are also targeted for fund-raising appeals. All these efforts have been very successful, Wang says.

Several international organizations, including UNICEF and the World Wide Fund for Nature, are now trying to find ways to start fund-raising operations on the Chinese mainland, with an eye particularly on the corporate sector and the relatively wealthy urban communities along China’s east coast. These ambitions are currently thwarted by legal and tax obstacles and may in the future have to contend with local protectionism from Chinese nonprofit organizations. But Hong Kong-based organizations, including well-known brands, such as Oxfam, World Vision, the Salvation Army, and Save the Children, as well as the many smaller groups established by Hong Kong Chinese, may have a special role in the future, consistent with the entrepot nature of Hong Kong’s economy, as brokers of more Westernized forms of giving with a Chinese identity.

**Chinese American Philanthropic Organizations**

Although Chinese Americans have not donated to China on the same scale as people in Hong Kong, several philanthropic organizations with a specific focus on China have emerged, along with networks of individuals who give not only money but time and care to make sure that donations reach their intended beneficiaries.

Cyrus Tang (Tang Zhongying), who left Jiangsu Province for the United States in 1950, made his fortune building a steel, scrap metal, office furniture, and pharmaceutical empire. Known collectively as Tang Industries, the company appears regularly on Forbes’s biggest private companies list. In 1995, he created the Tang Foundation, which supports traditional Chinese medicine research centers in Beijing and Chicago and has provided more than USD 7 million for school construction and scholarships for poor college students. Since 1997, some 1,300 students attending fifteen colleges nationwide have received grants of about USD 500 a year. Similarly, poor communities in twelve provinces have been beneficiaries of Tang Foundation school construction grants, says Zhang Xiaoli, a representative of the foundation’s China office. Tang visits his Jiangsu hometown about twice a year and tries to meet with scholarship recipients whenever he visits. "Mr. Tang hopes to cultivate a sense of social responsibility among the students,” says Zhang. “In exchange for their scholarships, students are asked to perform public service while they are in school.”

Another multimillion dollar fund is the China Foundation, established in 1997 by Dr. Jane Hu, an immigrant to the United States from Taiwan and a scientist who served in an appointed position in the first Bush Administration. According to Dr. Xiang Qian Dai, the foundation’s Beijing representative, Dr. Hu had retired and was looking for a way to help China when she decided to pull together her network of corporate friends to help fund health-care and education programs in China. Former president Gerald Ford is honorary chairman of the board.
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The China Foundation’s biggest project to date was to secure a USD 10 million grant from the Gates Foundation for a World Bank project to build hospitals in rural areas. The bank had allocated USD 100 million to this project but asked China to come up with matching funds, which the China Foundation stepped in to raise.

The China Foundation also organizes health conferences on the mainland and supports a smaller project to build schools in rural areas. Seven or eight schools have been built with money from individual investors.

Dr. Dai says the schools are worthier and more successful than the hospitals, simply because of Chinese values. “If a farmer gets sick, he won’t go spend money to see a doctor, but he will still do everything he can to make sure his children can go to school.” Dr. Dai says that although the foundation is run by Dr. Hu and a raft of Chinese Americans hold honorary titles in the foundation, only a very small proportion of the funds actually come from overseas Chinese. The Taiwan and Hong Kong fund-raising offices have raised very little, and Chinese Americans have not been particularly generous. The biggest individual donation came from Charles Wang—USD 100,000 for school building.

In Dai’s view, Chinese Americans have not been particularly generous for several reasons. Firstly, “Overseas Chinese with money don’t want to give because they don’t want to support the Communist government.

They’ll do business in China, but they won’t donate money.” If they do donate funds, “they see the donation as way to open doors for other business projects and investments. Taiwan people want introductions and access to leaders in exchange for their donations.” Secondly, donors are distrustful of the mainland’s reputation for corruption. They feel an investment in business is the best use of their funds. Thirdly, most mainland immigrants to the United States have not yet achieved high earnings.

In Dai’s opinion, Chinese Americans—the majority of whom still originate from Taiwan or Hong Kong—don’t yet understand China. “They don’t like the mainland,” he says. “It is easier to raise money from white people.” But he is also optimistic that the flow of funds from the United States to China would increase “because China is now very strong. Hong Kong has returned to China... many changes are coming.”

Despite Dai’s skepticism, several groups of Chinese Americans have come together to launch small-scale, hands-on efforts to tackle poverty and improve education in China. Among these is School Opportunities Across the Republic (SOAR), a San Francisco Bay–area nonprofit founded by a group of Chinese Americans in 1995 to provide scholarships to middle school and high school students living in some of China’s poorest villages. The organization has provided more than a thousand scholarships of USD 85 a year for middle school students and USD 225 a year for high school students. Forty SOAR scholarship recipients have gone on to college, to top universities such as Beijing University. “So many Chinese have gone overseas, but they haven’t forgotten their roots. To know that there are Chinese people like [the SOAR
donors], I feel very proud to be Chinese,” says Wu Yueling, a freshman at the Beijing Institute of Technology. Wu, whose mother is disabled and whose father makes about USD 25–30 a month hauling passengers on his pedicab, depended on seven years of SOAR scholarships to stay in middle school and high school. “My parents keep telling me, ‘so many people are supporting you, don’t let them down.’ I hope I can find some way to pay society back.”

SOAR relies on a base of 400 to 500 donors, all of whom come from the Bay area and have been introduced to the organization through word of mouth, says Albert Hu, president of SOAR and an immigrant from Taiwan. Many donors choose to sponsor a child for USD 85 or USD 225 per year; others donate unrestricted lump sums to the organization. Silicon Valley tycoons have provided regular annual donations of USD 25,000 (while one year a teacher donated USD 200,000). There are a few salaried coordinators in China but no paid staff in the United States, and board members—most of whom are first-generation immigrants from Taiwan—work for free. Board members undertake regular “fact-finding” missions to ensure that the money is properly spent and that the scholarship recipients are indeed receiving their money.

The Zigen Fund, founded in New York in 1988, is a similar organization that in addition to awarding scholarships helps build and refurbish rural schools, libraries, and health centers. (Zigen means “nourish the roots.”) It depends on a small base of 800 to 1,000 mostly Chinese American donors who give USD 50 to 500 per year. Although discussions are under way to expand the organization, no large-scale efforts at fundraising have been attempted, says President Bik Lam, an immigrant from Hong Kong.

Like SOAR, Zigen puts a premium on effectiveness and accountability. Board members undertake regular monitoring missions of their projects. The organization avoids working with the Chinese education authorities, preferring to seek out trustworthy local partners for projects. Lam says raising female attendance from 10 percent to 100 percent in many of their targeted villages has been one of Zigen’s greatest accomplishments.

Bridge to Asia, established in San Francisco in 1987, works at the other end of the educational scale. Since 1987, it has shipped more than 6 million English-language books to Chinese university libraries and is now working on a project to identify and supply core collections of one or two thousand volumes comprising the basic knowledge in twenty-five academic fields. One of the two cofounders was Newton Liu, a former polymer scientist who had managed to obtain a place at the University of California at Berkeley, where he was writing a doctoral dissertation on Cultural Revolution poetry. He was among the 80,000 students in the United States to be offered citizenship under the Chinese Students Protection Act of 1989. He has chosen to remain in the United States but travels to China regularly to meet the education authorities and the network of libraries that his organization supports. It is a measure of the complexity of Liu’s relationship with the two coun-
tries that Bridge to Asia casts its charitable work in the context of a strong critique of “regressive intellectual property regimes” that make advanced Western scholarship too expensive for developing countries to afford. At the same time, Liu is involved in a project to document and translate poetry carved on the barrack walls of San Francisco’s Angel Island, where Chinese immigrants were interned under the Chinese Exclusion Act.

Giving of a different kind has been facilitated by the Center for U.S.-China Arts Exchange, established in 1978 by Chou Wen-Chung. A veteran of the “Flying Tigers” during the war against Japan, Chou emigrated to the United States in 1946, and, although already a qualified civil engineer, he studied composition at the New England Conservatory. He became a renowned composer and is now Professor of Composition at Columbia University, where he established the Arts Exchange Center. In the 1980s, the center worked to make contemporary music scores and recordings available in China, collaborated in the award-winning film From Mao to Mozart, and organized a Beijing production of Death of a Salesman, directed by Arthur Miller. During the 1990s, the center oversaw a Ford Foundation–funded program to document and preserve ethnic minority art and craft in Yunnan province. This involved establishing a degree course in traditional arts at the Yunnan Minorities Institute and working with local authorities to design an ethnographic museum of ethnic minority culture in the provincial capital, Kunming.

New Philanthropist Returnees

Still other Chinese Americans have returned to China to oversee their philanthropic works in person. In 1999, Randy Yeh, the Chinese American representative for Lucent Technologies in Beijing, took early retirement and sold enough of his stock to create a foundation based in the United States. Hoping to make a difference in Beijing, where he has chosen to retire, he transferred some funds to endow a new NGO under the auspices of the China Youth Development Foundation (CYDF). Although the money has been officially donated to CYDF, Yeh says he retains control of the funds, which will be used to support four main goals: NGO capacity building, facilitation of volunteering, medical assistance for the needy, and the care of elderly and disabled.

Yeh, who was born in China and grew up in Taiwan before emigrating to the United States, says it is largely coincidental that his philanthropy is directed at China: “I just happen to be living in China.” Yet, he says, if his company had not posted him to Beijing many years ago his “giving would have been more superficial, like just giving a check.” He believes that his efforts have been easier because of his Chinese heritage. “I can go into a much deeper relationship with the people here because of a shared cultural and language background. . . . When you have a deeper relationship, it becomes a lot easier to do things here. That’s the same for business.”

Yeh’s highly personal vision of social development turns on helping others to contribute their time and goodwill as vol-
unteers in the community. But he believes that people can only give when they are ready to, and when they have a sense of personal sufficiency. Thus, his New Path Foundation does not aggressively promote volunteerism but rather seeks ways to create opportunities for those who are ready to make an effective contribution. The foundation has provided travel expenses for volunteers to visit retirement homes and residential facilities for disabled children, and it is now working on a scheme to provide advice and support services to groups of individuals wishing to establish new social service NGOs.

Another returned American Chinese philanthropist is Zhou Yuan. He spent many years living abroad working for multinational banks and now calls Shenzhen home. He founded the Phelex Foundation, registered in the United States, in 1995. Its goal is to help rural schools generate the income they need to subsidize tuition by running small, sustainable businesses, such as tea farms, pigeon coops, and vegetable gardens.

Over the past eight years, Phelex has donated some USD 3 million to rural schools. The funds come almost exclusively from foreign donors: about 20 percent from Chinese Americans and another 30 percent from Hong Kong Chinese. Fan Ying, who manages the foundation’s operations, says it is coincidental that overseas Chinese have contributed half of the funds because the organization has made no efforts to target these communities for fund-raising. In fact, the biggest donations still come from white non-Chinese foreigners from the financial world who are friends of the founder.

Typical of another new kind of returned philanthropist, albeit one who has committed time and energy rather than money, is Dr. Tan Leshan, a native of Yunnan Province. In 1987, Tan began to study for a doctorate in anthropology at Cornell University. His wife and seven-year old daughter joined him there in early 1989. Following the events in Tiananmen Square that summer, Tan’s wife and daughter applied for and received American citizenship. His daughter has since spent twelve years in American schools. Dr. Tan did not himself apply for U.S. citizenship because, he says, this would have complicated travel to and from China—and he was always quite clear that he wanted to continue to play an active role in China’s social development.67

To this day, Tan remains a green-card-holding “American permanent resident,” but most of his time is spent in China, even though this means long periods of absence from his family in the United States. Following a short stint teaching at Cornell, he took a job in 1999 as deputy China program director of Save the Children Fund (UK) in his native Yunnan, where he oversaw a program that included sensitive and ground-breaking work in areas such as HIV/AIDS prevention among sex workers and drug users and the prevention of the trafficking of women and children. In 2001, Tan moved on to become China country director of the well-known blindness prevention agency, Project Orbis International, a post he still holds.

Dr. Tan’s engagement with nonprofit public benefit work in China contrasts interestingly with the experience of his brother, Tan Leshui, a wildlife documentary filmmaker who never left Yunnan. In
the early 1990s, Tan Leshui set up his own Man and Nature Foundation in Yunnan to promote environmental awareness and nature conservation. After a few years, he was obliged to abandon this work when the government raised the capital endowment threshold for registered foundations to CNY 2 million (USD 240,000), a sum that he could not raise. This is richly illustrative of the way in which the Chinese state’s current management of the nonprofit sector constrains the creativity of some of its most public-spirited citizens. The story also shows the comparative advantage enjoyed by public-spirited Chinese people who have been empowered by their overseas experience and connections.

Tan Leshan is beginning to consider his retirement plans. He hopes to build a bamboo house in Hosai village, a poor and remote community on Yunnan’s border with Burma, and to divide his time between there and the United States. Hosai is where he spent seven years as a “sent-down youth” during the Cultural Revolution. Although now widely reviled both in China and overseas, this forcible experiment in cultural exchange did evidently kindle, in at least some hearts and minds, enduring attachments that take Chinese philanthropy beyond traditional support for kin and the ancestral home.

It was just such an experience that eventually resulted in the Candlelight Project to help rural schoolteachers. This started in 1994 with a gift of USD 3,000 from an American Chinese scholar. The money was entrusted to a friend back in China, who was asked to use it for the benefit of schoolteachers in Baoding Prefecture of Hebei Province, where the donor and his friend had both been “rusticated” during the Cultural Revolution. The project has since expanded and is now run under the auspices of the China Charity Federation with support from World Vision.

Wang Chao of World Vision is another recent émigré who found his way back to work in social development. A native of Hubei Province and graduate of Beijing University, Wang moved to Canada to study urban planning at the University of Montreal. But, after gaining Canadian citizenship and earning a Ph.D. in urban and regional development, Wang was ready to go home. “I wanted to do some work that was more related to China.” A friend recommended that he talk to World Vision. They warned him that he was overqualified for the job opening they had—as a rural development program officer in Yunnan province—but Wang took the job anyway. His Canadian boss offered to keep a job open for him for six months in case he decided to come back to Canada.

“Six months turned into three years,” Wang says, and as yet he has no plans to return to Canada. Moving to Yunnan with his wife, the urban planner found himself helping villagers build schools, introduce new crops, and learn new, more-efficient methods of farming. He says his dual identity as a Chinese and a Canadian helped him in his work. “Dealing with the government is easier because... they don't see me as a stranger, a foreigner,” he says. “We have a common language and a common experience.” A shared cultural background has enabled him to understand the points of view of cadres and the villagers, he says.
Wang is not the only expatriate of Chinese descent working for World Vision in Yunnan. Ten of World Vision’s fifty employees are ethnic Chinese from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, and North America. Most are drawn to China as much by their Christian faith as their ethnicity, Wang says. “They feel the call,” he says.

Other faith-based organizations, such as Hong Kong’s Christian Action and Jian Hua Foundation, and many smaller groups actively recruit ethnic Chinese people from Hong Kong, Singapore, and farther afield to work as volunteers on the mainland. Most secular international NGOs with established programs in China also receive frequent enquiries from young American Chinese looking for internship opportunities or volunteer work, often wishing to combine this with studying Chinese language and the chance to become better acquainted with the land their parents left. The demography of the diaspora suggests that such returnee visitors will grow steadily in number, alongside the growth of ethnic Chinese students from overseas undertaking postgraduate fieldwork in China. The numbers who manage to find suitable placements (or subjects of study) are doubtless very small by comparison with the number of those looking for career opportunities in the corporate world, but they may nonetheless play a significant role in fostering future philanthropic ties.

The number of young people going back to find their roots in China may well be swollen by some of the children now being adopted by families overseas. Over the last decade, tens of thousands of Chinese children have been adopted into European and American homes. This development has already given rise to some interesting new associational forms, as the adopting parents get together to learn Chinese, to give their children the opportunity to develop relationships with peers, to make return trips to China, and to raise funds for orphanages there. In the process, they have established several China-focused philanthropic organizations, such as the U.S.-based Half the Sky Foundation, which is growing rapidly.

Many adopted children are thus being informally schooled in philanthropy from an early age and in ways that purposefully reinforce their connection to their land of origin. Only time will tell how these new diasporan children will view their identity when they grow up, but it seems at least possible that some will choose to have an enduring relationship with China.

**Diasporan Dissidence**

By no means are all of China’s émigrés willing to help “build the Chinese nation” without revision to its political foundations. The diaspora includes thousands of people who, in the tradition of Sun Yat-sen, are essentially political exiles, such as Chinese American human rights activist Wei Jingsheng and Hong Kong–based labor rights activist, Han Dongfang. They and many like them have remained prominent critics of China’s human rights record and irritants to the Chinese government for the damage they may cause to the country’s international standing. But there is little sign that these diasporan dissidents represent a serious threat to, or a concerted
movement to overturn, the Communist government.

Perhaps of greater concern to Beijing at present is the quasi-Buddhist Falun Gong sect, whose self-proclaimed “divine” leader, Li Hongzhi, resides in the United States. But in this case, it is almost certainly not the overseas organization that worries Beijing so much as the fact that the movement evidently enjoys considerable support within China, despite a sustained campaign to crack down on it. Repressive tactics run the danger of reinforcing rather than undermining loyalty to the sect. Whether Falun Gong grows as a threat to the legitimacy of the regime is likely to depend on whether the government is able to deliver adequate social protections to the predominantly elderly “reformloser” citizens who have been its main adherents.

Another special case is that of Tibet. Since China’s reassertion of control over Tibet in 1959, well over a million Tibetans have left for India and the West, where there is widespread public sympathy for the cause of Tibetan independence. But the prospects for this seem rather remote. Perhaps for this reason, although an international lobby remains vocal and strong, some diasporan Tibetans have over the last two decades also devoted considerable energy to raising funds for development projects in ethnic Tibetan areas of the People’s Republic. Often these efforts are organized by religious leaders, who evidently retain a strong sense of ministry to their home communities. A case in point is Rinpoche Dr. Alkong Tulku. He left Tibet in 1963 and now has British nationality, serving as abbot of the Samye Ling monastic center in the valleys of Eskdalemuir, Scotland. This has become a flourishing international center of Tibetan Buddhist teaching and charitable activity. In addition to offering religious instruction and hosting retreats, it runs soup kitchens in Scottish cities and provides sheltered accommodation for people recovering from mental illness. The Eskdalemuir center has become a hub for similar but smaller facilities in numerous Western countries. In 1980, Alkong Tulku founded the Rokpa Trust to raise funds for cultural preservation, education, and social welfare projects in Tibet. By 2001, this was channeling more than USD 2 million per year to projects in Tibet, implemented through local networks and by local communities. Although he eschews Chinese government channels for delivering this assistance, Alkong Rinpoche is able to visit Tibet every year to oversee progress and identify new projects.

In 1998, another diasporan rinpoche, Namkhai Norbu, established in Rome the Association for International Solidarity with Asia. This organization has succeeded in obtaining millions of dollars from the Italian government, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, and the European Union, for a variety of health and education projects in China. Again, the government of China has acquiesced and indeed actively cooperated in the implementation of these projects.

Thus, despite the rifts between Beijing and the self-proclaimed Tibetan government in exile, some diasporan Tibetans have chosen to support community development efforts in Tibet as a direct and immediate way of improving the lives (and preserving the religion and culture) of the
people there. Their efforts are by no means an endorsement of Chinese rule in Tibet, but they do imply a pragmatic determination to engage with development processes within the existing power structure.

At present, therefore, political dissonance may be a subplot in China diaspora relations, but it is not one that significantly threatens the Beijing regime. A more central preoccupation of Beijing’s is the status of Taiwan. This remains the subject of intense diplomatic efforts, which do touch the diaspora, as one locus for the debate about independence or incorporation. But even here the trend is perhaps away from polarization, as the growing economic links between the island and the mainland generate, if not consensus, at least a strong mutual interest in achieving a harmonious relationship on some terms.

Conclusion

The economic importance of the diaspora to the Chinese state is incontestable. This makes it a constituency worth courting, and in the case of those overseas Chinese closest to the mainland whose personal fortunes are most closely interwoven with those of China, the interest is clearly reciprocated. Much contemporary diasporan philanthropy appears to be bound up with this business relationship, although still significantly influenced by the cultural imperative of investing in and honoring the place of origin.

Giving directly to government agencies, through the Department for Overseas Chinese Affairs, is far from transparent and may involve significant leakages. (The 1998 Public Welfare Donations Law, which attends mainly to the “rights of donors,” may perhaps have been a calculated attempt to address these problems.) The government-initiated official nonprofit sector appears either too disorganized or else too disadvantaged vis-à-vis the Qiaoban and the Qiaolian to realize the potential availability of income from overseas Chinese communities. Universities, which are more aggressively market driven and have the added fund-raising advantage of traditional Chinese respect for scholarship, do better, but currently they look first to wealthy Hong Kong and Taiwanese donors. This may change, however, as newer alumni prosper farther afield.

China’s independent, citizen-initiated nonprofit organizations, by contrast, seem on the whole not to have considered overseas Chinese communities as a source of funds, probably in large part because they lack access to them. If they do look overseas for funding, it is in the main to non-Chinese international organizations with representative offices in China. Yet the success of international and greater China organizations in targeting and raising funds from ethnic Chinese communities suggests that—especially among the professional classes and general public, as opposed to wealthy individual philanthropists—there could be considerable demand for transparent and effective channels of charitable giving. This development could represent a huge opportunity for emerging organizations in China.

Although government looms large in the collection of philanthropic contributions, it is also the case that active donors are quite free to explore other channels; some of the most committed establish their
own organizations, mobilizing and distributing funds through personal contacts and networks. As international contacts deepen and multiply, space and opportunities for this free-market, private philanthropy will likely grow.

Nyíri argues that China sees or attempts to co-opt its diaspora as a culturally unified group whose loyalty and patriotism—to China, rather than to the countries to which they have moved—can be retained. This view may accurately convey Chinese government thinking, yet the success of such a project evidently depends on the extent of assimilation and the extent to which diasporan people adopt the values of their host communities in core areas, such as rule of law and human rights, where the government of China is still inclined to claim a difference with Western values. The diaspora includes not only entrepreneurs and technicians in new industries, who may have a vested interest in maintaining commercial and scientific links with China, but also scholars, professionals in many fields, artists, and others, whose fortunes are not necessarily interwoven with those of the mainland. Those who retain professional, personal, and philanthropic links with China may not only draw cultural reinforcement from this contact but also serve as a bridge for the introduction of ideas and attitudes acquired outside. Cultural exchange is a two-way street.

Generational change is a critically important factor here. We were told by the Qiaolian that donations came overwhelmingly from first-generation emigrants. Their children, born and educated overseas, will certainly stand in a quite different relation to their parents’ native place, particularly those raised in North America and Europe, where societies are becoming more racially heterogeneous, making acculturation easier. The changing nature of the family as a global institution is another important factor. Chinese philanthropy is strongly associated in the first place with kinship ties and obligations, but in most societies, and particularly in the richer countries, the extended family is becoming weaker and some new family forms are emerging as second and third marriages become more common and tolerance grows for phenomena such as gay parenting and cross-cultural adoption. Migration can make relatives not only literally but also figuratively more distant. For international migrant laborers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, family bonds and loyalties may in some ways have actually been reinforced by the hostility and discrimination they encountered in host communities, but the context is utterly different for today’s American-born Chinese college graduates. Our research has been far too slender to say what kind of philanthropic patterns this may produce in relation to China. As noted, the mainland receives a flow of curious and well-intentioned young people of Chinese origin who come with some hope of getting to know, and also making some contribution, to their ancestral home. But they are almost certainly greatly outnumbered by those who are more concerned to develop their careers in the countries where they were born.

New migrants probably represent the largest future frontier for donations to China.
Undoubtedly, the Chinese state will vigorously court them as future reservoirs of intellectual and financial capital. This process is likely to result in a greater degree of transnationalism, with an international elite increasingly free to cross borders as it chooses. The consequences for philanthropy are by no means clear, except that a great deal of new wealth will certainly be created, which will provide opportunities for those with the imagination and determination to reach out for it, although China’s most needy communities will find it hardest to reach that far.

Notes


2 This is the figure given by the World Confederation of Institutes and Libraries for Overseas Chinese Studies, whose secretariat is based at Ohio University’s Dr. Shao You-Bao Overseas Chinese Documentation and Research Center (www.overseaschineseconfederation.org). The figure does not include Chinese living in Hong Kong, Macao, or Taiwan.

3 Lynn Pan, Sons of the Yellow Emperor (New York: Kodansha America, 1994).

4 Ibid., 8.


7 Poston, Encyclopedia of Population, 130–33.


10 “Chinese Scientists in Other Countries Encouraged to Return Home,” Xinhua News Service, February 15, 2003. This report puts the number of returnees at 150,000. See also, Rone Tempest, “China Tries to Woo Tech Talent Back Home,” Los Angeles Times, November 25, 2002. This report gives an earlier figure of overseas students—400,000—and says that only a quarter of these have returned.


12 J. D. Spence, The Search for Modern China (New York: W. W. Norton, 1990), 226–27, 259.


14 Minchuan zhuyi is rendered as “democracy” in translations of Sun’s work at that time. However, his view of democracy was rather more limited than that of most twenty-first-century users of the term: Like the Communists who eventually succeeded him, he tended to believe that the Chinese people were not yet ready for full enfranchisement. Democracy is nowadays more commonly rendered in Chinese as minzhu (zhuyi), which has a more categorical association with “rule by the people” than Sun’s original formulation.

16 The later nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek did however argue, with scant attention to historical fact, that these ethnic groups descended from common ancestry and had merely developed cultural differences as a result of adaptation to different environments. “That there are five peoples designated in China [i.e., Chinese, Manchus, Mongols, Tibetans, Mohammedans] is not due to difference in race or blood, but to religion and geographical environment.” Chiang Kai-shek, China’s Destiny (London: Denis Dobson, 1948), 40.

17 Hua is derived from huashan, the name of a mountain in present day Shaanxi Province, that was held sacred by the early Chinese dynasties.

18 Some Chinese ethnic minorities such as the Hakka (kejia—guest people) are also relatively easily embraced by the concept of huaren. The Hakka descend from migrants who many hundreds of years ago went south from the Yellow River area to new lands in what are now the southern provinces of China. Many of them have since emigrated farther afield and can be described as huaqiao/huayi.


20 I. Epstein, Woman in World History.

21 We are unable to determine an exact numbers of returnees. Some official Chinese sources put the figure as high as 2.2 million, but a report on the official China Internet Information Service suggests that from 1949 to 2002 a total of 1.14 million had returned.

22 Reflecting the structure of government departments and other mass organizations, the federation has a national-level organization based in Beijing, but also provincial-level and county-level branches that are connected horizontally with local governments as well as vertically with the national body.

23 The figures in this paragraph were given by Qiaolian officials during an interview with the authors (April 4, 2003).

24 China’s administrative system embraces thirty-three provinces (including the provincial-level metropolitan areas), divided into more than 2,000 counties.


26 These figures again come from Cheng and Ngok, via Nyíri.

27 Once again, the figures derive from Cheng and Ngok, via Nyíri. It is worth noting that some of China’s liveliest and most open “official journalism” appears in media originally designed for overseas consumption—such as the news magazine Huasheng Shidian (Chinese Voice & Opinion). After 1949, Soong Ching Ling was herself assigned to edit a magazine aimed at overseas readers, China Reconstructs. Political controls on Central China Television English language programming is also somewhat looser than controls on mainstream news broadcasts.


35 Stephen McGurk, personal correspondence.


38 The cited article is “Shanghai shi xin yimin yanjiu” [A Study of Shanghai’s New Migrants], which appeared in *Zhongguorenkoukexue*, no. 3, 36–41, 52 (1997).


41 “Macao Students Keen on South China Universities,” Xinhua News Service, June 12, 2002.

42 Pan, *Sons of the Yellow Emperor*, 205.


44 Ibid., 45–46.


46 See also Nick Young’s chapter on “Philanthropy and Equity in China” (Chapter 2 of this volume).


51 For example, rent on the premises of a project that cares for the children of prisoners is paid for by a Malaysian Chinese entrepreneur.
52 Again, see Nick Young’s chapter on “Philanthropy and Equity in China” (Chapter 2 of this volume).

53 According to the Ministry of Civil Affairs, by the end of 2002, China had 1,268 registered foundations, 133,000 “social organizations” (shehui tuanti, basically membership organizations), and 110,000 “people-run nonenterprise units” (minban feiqiye danwei), a category that embraces anything from not-for-profit schools to day-care centers for disabled children.

54 For examples, see the directory, 250 Chinese NGOs: Civil Society in the Making (Beijing: China Development Research Services, 2001); China Development Brief (www.chinadevelopmentbrief.org), also routinely reports on emerging, autonomous organizations.


57 “China Charity Federation,” pamphlet distributed by the China Charity Federation in Beijing in 1996.

58 Part of this funding is devoted to research and development of software applications for teaching surgical procedures.

59 Based on several meetings (by Nick Young) in 1998 with Smile Train staff in Beijing.

60 This is, of course, a highly subjective judgement, but it is based on Nick Young’s relatively sustained and close observation of China’s nonprofit sector, as founding editor (from 1995) of China Development Brief. Almost certainly, a critical issue in the eroding vibrancy of this organization was the fact that in 1998 it was obliged by its Ministry of Civil Affairs patrons (as the sponsoring government agency) to accept an intake of retrenched cadres from the ministry. These newcomers, according to one dedicated staffer who left the organization in disgust at that time (personal conversations, 1998–1999), expected all the privileges of high-ranking cadres, but had no real commitment to the CCF’s charitable ideals.


63 www.lksf.org.


65 This approximation is based on the current programs of UNDP, UNICEF, WFP, IFAD, WHO, UNAIDS, and FAO. It does not include loans from the World Bank.


67 Information on Tan Leshan comes from personal exchanges, 1999 to date.
Nicholas Young

Nick Young was born in Zambia and educated in the UK, studying philosophy at the University of Stirling and King’s College, London. He served for five years as a residential social worker in a centre for young offenders in Northampton, UK, and then spent five years in Nicaragua working as a translator and freelance writer, reporting across Central America for local publications (Barricada, Pensamientio Propio) and international media (Gemini News Service, The Scotsman).

Back in the UK from 1990-92, he contributed regular reviews to the New Statesman & Society, co-edited an environmental journal, New Ground, and worked as a researcher and policy advisor to the Rt. Hon. Ann Taylor, MP, during her term as Shadow Environment Minister, also serving as a member of the team that drafted the British Labour Party’s submission to the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development. This was followed by two years in Malawi as a stringer for the Financial Times, also contributing regularly to the BBC World Service and other publications including The Economist and Africa Confidential.

In 1995 Nick moved to China and founded China Development Brief (monthly in English, bi-monthly in Chinese), a specialist newsletter reporting on social development, international aid programs and the growth of China’s civil society. He has published numerous papers and articles on China in other journals and books, and has undertaken research and training consultancies for international aid agencies. China Development Brief’s English language edition was closed down by the Chinese authorities in 2007, and Nick was barred from re-entry to China. The Chinese magazine he founded, however, is now owned and managed by a team of Chinese writers who continue to publish.