AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Title: Values and Considerations in Education-Related Choices: A Descriptive Study of PRC Chinese Graduate Students at a Northwest U.S. University.

Abstract Approved: ________________________________

Karl Jake Nice

The purpose of this descriptive study was to explore PRC Chinese graduate student perceptions of their education-related choices at a U.S. university, and to assess the values and considerations underlying these choices. The objectives of the study were to: (a) explore and discover how students perceived and described education in their lives; (b) discover and describe how they perceived problems in important educational relationships and events; and (c) to assess the presence and influence of Chinese traditional values upon their behaviors within, and attitudes toward these relationships and events.

One to three hour open-ended interviews were conducted with nine male and four female PRC graduate students/scholars. The ethnographic interview methodology was theoretically based on Symbolic Interactionism and Relational Theory; and descriptive and cultural theme analyses were used to analyze the data. Descriptive themes within elicited consultant descriptions were analyzed for the presence and influence of Chinese traditional value orientations.

The findings revealed that PRC graduate student consultant expectations, perceptions, relationships and behaviors in education-related university contexts at a northwestern U.S. university appeared to be heavily influenced by the presence of enculturated (C1) traditional value orientations. These influential C1 value orientations were: (a) the Confucian ideal Chinese family model for the educational institution, (b) the importance of the father-teacher as the model of social behavior, and the teaching of morality, (c)
collective identity, duty and responsibility, (d) the preservation of social harmony, (e) face considerations, (f) indirection, (g) inaction and non-action. In addition, the findings suggested that misattributed C1 role expectations of superordination and subordination contributed to PRC student compliancy and powerlessness, making them particularly susceptible to intercultural misunderstanding or mistreatment by perceived powerful superiors (major professors) in C2 university domains.
VALUES AND CONSIDERATIONS
IN EDUCATION-RELATED CHOICES: A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY
OF PRC CHINESE GRADUATE STUDENTS
AT A
NORTHWEST U.S. UNIVERSITY

by

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VALUES AND CONSIDERATIONS IN EDUCATION-RELATED CHOICES: A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF PRC CHINESE GRADUATE STUDENTS AT A NORTHWEST U.S. UNIVERSITY

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

For incoming Chinese students at U.S. universities, the complexity of educational choice considerations may be compounded in second culture (C2) educational domains which are greatly different from those in their first culture (C1). For example, they are confronted with different world-view and value-driven role expectations for the individual, the group, for students, instructors and administrators. New C2 institutional bureaucratic structures, time frames and schedules, finances and services may be completely incomprehensible to them. In addition, there may be unfamiliar C2 expectations of appropriate socio-linguistic competencies within specific educational domains. Moreover, in Chinese culture the concept of individual, free choice as experienced by American students, is completely unknown to students. In Chinese educational institutions, from pre-school through university graduate school Ph.D. programs, there are few, if any, individual educational choices ever given to students.

So, what are the considerations (fears? traumas? dilemmas?) underlying the myriad of educational choices which may face the new PRC graduate student? One consultant related that his Chinese friend's new U.S. university professor ("father-teacher") said to him, "It would be unethical for me to tell you what to choose for your Ph.D. thesis. You have to choose for yourself. There are hundreds of possible topics. I can't help you. Pick one." "Well," related my consultant, "this guy went around for six months without
any help. He never was able to finish. I don't know what happened to him...and he was a very bright guy -- one of the best in his field in China." For the American graduate student choice consideration of this kind and at this level is very difficult. For the new Chinese graduate student, it is first, incomprehensible; and second, almost impossible. PRC Chinese students have many acculturation difficulties which constrain timely or successful completion of their graduation requirements. Cultural world view differences may not be imagined or perceived by university faculty and staff.

Indeed, there are perhaps no international students less understood by U.S. university instructors, international education counselors and advisors, or by fellow American students, than foreign-born Chinese students studying at U.S. institutions. Language and communication barriers have hurt the advising relationship between students and advisors (Hung,1986); and foreign-born Chinese students have found social integration (even with American-born Chinese) very difficult because of deficient English communicative competencies and vast cultural differences (Cheng, 1989; Lou, 1989; Tsai, 1986). Between 1979 and 1987 approximately 63,000 students and scholars came from the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) to study in U.S. universities, 50% of whom were from Beijing, Shanghai and Guandong (Chou, 1989). All these students grew up attending "traditional Chinese schools, which remained unchanged for two thousand years; and the American schools of today are different in every way imaginable" (Hsu, 1987: 92).

Many Chinese students who have come to study at universities in the United States may have found little understanding of, or appreciation for their cultural traditions, values, or political pressures from university affiliated personnel, as illustrated by the following typical, ethnocentric verbal statement overheard by this researcher:

"I don't know why we don't get a better response from the Chinese students to our [Culture Day] functions. They're so disorganized, its a wonder they can accomplish anything. And they stay to themselves so much. They're impossible to work with. They smile and say "yes" they're going to do something, and it never gets done. They say they'll come to our planning meetings, and they don't show up. The PRC group is the worst. We mail them invitations to meetings and social functions
and they don't show up. They leave everything till the last minute, and then do everything in a crisis. Why don't they plan ahead?"

--A university "Culture Day" committee member (Buys, 1986)

An understanding of Chinese culture and traditional values with regard to the preservation of social harmony, collective and reflexive identity, public and private levels of appropriate disclosure, face considerations, indirection, strategic non-action, and the delicate socio-political position in which PRC students find themselves on U.S. college campuses, would help the above quoted speaker to understand why time, caution, and often complex intra-cultural and inter-cultural considerations are required for what might seem to American university personnel to be the simplest of choices, actions, or responses.

American schools have, through ignorance and ethnocentric or xenophobic biases, promoted negative stereotypes of the Chinese people, which have served to perpetuate cross-cultural and inter-cultural misunderstandings, according to Francis Hsu (1987:102). This researcher has observed misunderstanding and criticisms of Chinese students for not talking to professors or requesting help or advisement from advisors; when actually, the students have perceived restricted access to, or unavailability of those same advisors (noted also by Hung, 1986). Other criticisms often heard are that Chinese students have actively chosen to stay to themselves and not socialize with native-English speakers or that they don't even bother to learn English but instead prefer to live in ethnocentric groups and only speak Chinese. Other criticisms are that they switch major departments outside their training only because assistantships are available or that they transfer out only for the purpose of joining friends at other universities. Inter-cultural communication difficulties are compounded by attitudes of university instructors and personnel who have little knowledge of the complexity of what they assume to be simple choices and considerations for Chinese students. Attitudes such as these have contributed to unequal and limited access to a broad range of opportunities for educational or financial benefit and/or career advancement for Chinese university students, despite
the popular perception of their successful academic achievement as an ethnic minority group (Bannai, 1980).

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to describe PRC student perceptions of education related choices which they are making or have made during their tenures of study in the United States, and to assess the values and considerations underlying these choices. The study is not based upon the bias of a culture-bound western cognitive paradigm of decision-making theory. It is based upon the students' own elicited world-views -- their own perceptions and concepts of education related contexts.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this exploratory, ethnographic study include but are not limited to the following: (a) To discover how education related contexts (both physical and cognitive) are perceived and defined; (b) to discover and describe which inter-cultural or cross-cultural communicative events within these education related contexts have required the students' most careful and attentive consideration of appropriate actions, reactions, behaviors, or responses to or within these events; and (c) to assess the presence and influence of Chinese traditional values within or upon these considerations.

Any perceptions, hypotheses, or definitions will be those which originate from within the study group's own world-views, and it will be the objectively written description of this gathered intersubjective data (corrected and cross-verified by other consultants) which will comprise the categorically organized results of this study in Chapter IV.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

It is hoped that through a greater understanding of the complexity of educational choice and decision-making contexts confronting PRC Chinese students, the cross-cultural knowledge and understanding of U.S. university officials, advisors, student service personnel, and instructors may be
increased in order to be more helpful to Chinese university students and to be more sensitive to their personal, social, and curricular needs as international students in the university community.

RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Because of the PRC's long closure to the west there is a general lack of knowledge regarding Chinese culture in the United States. Accordingly, there is very little documented research regarding Chinese students in American universities.

It is only recently that China ended a thirty-year period of isolation (1949-1979), at which time students were allowed again to study abroad. A vivid historical account of the three-year transition (1976-79) out of China's isolated ten-year "loss of consciousness" (the Cultural Revolution, 1966-76), wherein the atmosphere of university student life resumed in Beijing is chronicled by Fraser (1980). With Deng's 1979 announcement of the Four Modernizations (Agriculture, Science, Technology, and Defense), Chinese student emigration to U.S. universities reached 63,000 by 1986 (Chou, 1989).

From 1979 to 1989, thousands of PRC students -- mostly men -- were being trained in U.S. universities -- predominantly in engineering, science, business, and agriculture. They began arriving for study in the U.S. with increasing numbers beginning primarily in 1981. The majority of students have not returned (Chou, 1989), constituting a huge brain-drain on the PRC (Deng, 1990). It is hoped that this study may help inform American culture-bound assumptions by documenting PRC Chinese students' realities and descriptions in their own terms.

RESEARCH SETTING

The research setting is Northwest University (NWU), situated in the Northwest United States. The university predominates in the fields of the Natural Sciences. By 1991, there were a large number of PRC Chinese graduate students attending the university.
THE SAMPLE

The study sample is composed of mainland (PRC) Chinese graduate students who have attended Northwest University during the period of 1985 - 1991. Nine men and four women between the ages of 26 and 50 were interviewed. They were M.S. and Ph.D. graduate students or visiting scholars predominantly studying in the fields of engineering, agriculture, and the natural sciences. All had studied for and received their bachelor's degrees in China prior to their arrival at NWU.

ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY

It is assumed that: (a) the research methodology is grounded on an accepted theoretical base -- that of symbolic interactionism and relational theory; (b) Spradley's developmental research sequence (and the research instrument -- the ethnographic interview) is a valid and reliable model; (c) the research setting and study group is typical of other university graduate school domains, and other like groups of PRC graduate students within the same time period (1985-91); (d) inferences from findings may be generalized to apply to other PRC students in similar settings or groups; and that (e) the anonymity of consultants must be guaranteed.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study is limited by: (a) allowable access to and within domain settings, as these will be determined by the Chinese consultants through friendship connections which are necessary for appropriate character reference and trust before reliable and acceptable levels of disclosure can take place; (b) the inevitability of the researcher's own bias and ignorance, as a product of his own culture, with a different cognitive and behavioral worldview; (c) the inevitable bias of the researcher's personal effect upon individual consultants, coming as a member of a different culture -- an outsider -- and the nature of their elicited disclosures, which might be couched very differently to their own extended family members, spouses, or fellow PRC student peers under different circumstances; (d) the disclosure
levels of the consultants, which cannot be pre-determined exactly, due to their own personal, socio-political, or cultural constraints; (e) the limited financial resources of the researcher, with no outside funding help or assistance of any kind; and, (f) the limited time of the researcher, who has a wife and two children, and is responsible with his wife for the management of a language institute.
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Three literature areas relative to the thesis topic have been chosen as appropriate background for the discussion below. They are: a) Chinese Traditional Values and Education; b) PRC Chinese International Students at U. S. Universities (1979-1991); and c) Ethnographic Research Methodology. The first two sections of this chapter are intended to be a survey of what has been studied about Chinese traditional values with respect to the education related choice considerations of Chinese PRC students in the United States. The last section is intended to be a survey of ethnographic research methodology in general, and in particular, the ethnographic interview method.

Some ethnographers have felt that a researcher's personal experience with or pre-knowledge of the study group's culture may place the risk of cultural bias in the face of objectivity (Agar, 1980; Leach, 1982; Lofland & Lofland, 1984; Spradley, 1979). They caution that if the researcher is not particularly careful hypotheses may be formed based on former or secondary research from outside the culture of the study group rather than from primary research data gained as a participant from inside the culture. On the other hand, Arensberg and Niehoff (1964:46) have pointed out that "whoever wishes to do a good job of working with people of another culture should master their system of beliefs, or at least such parts of it with which his work is concerned." Because a considerable body of knowledge already exists which identifies Chinese traditional values, this researcher, in agreement with Arensberg and Niehoff, and for the purposes of this study, has selected Chinese Traditional Values and Education as a necessary secondary research base. For this study it is crucial to have a knowledge of the study group's traditional belief systems before attempting data acquisition, because it is necessary to respectfully accessing member-consultants of the Chinese community. Personal experience and pre-knowledge of the study culture with the awareness of cultural bias places the cautious researcher in a better position to understand and relate comfortably with consultants.
In order to discuss education in China, we must be familiar with the traditional values which have molded it. Traditional Chinese cultural values have been identified as social morality, social harmony, cooperation, collective duty, formality (indirectness), detachment, self-restraint, reserve (control of emotions), social hierarchy, age veneration, unity and balance with nature, and continuity with the past (Hsu, 1987).

The traditions of Ancestor Worship, Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism have woven the fabric of Chinese social structures, and designed the patterns of Chinese social interaction throughout the last 2,500 years. Ancestor Worship gave birth to the severe first duty to parents -- the practice of filial piety or, Xiao -- which involved the veneration of old age, the continuity of the family (Baker, 1979:104), and the reinforcement of large kinship lineage groups, associations, and guilds. Buddhism fostered the widespread beliefs in spirits, fairies, heaven and hell; and from the Buddhist concept of reincarnation has come the belief in continuity down through time. From Taoism are drawn the values of the practicality of the continuous here and now, the never ending circles of relativism; and the cycles of man and nature in harmony with each other. These have imbued Chinese social interaction with the characteristics of balance, tolerance, patience, forbearance, and cooperation with nature rather than conquest over it. But more than any others, traditional Confucian social ethics, values, and a strict social hierarchy have determined not only Chinese behavioral norms, but the shape of Chinese social structures as well -- including schools and universities. And these social norms and structures have been based upon the Confucian model of the ideal Chinese family (Baker, 1979; Freedman, 1979; Wolf, 1978).

Confucian Philosophy

Confucian philosophy, echoing down through the ages from the politically chaotic Eastern Chou Dynasty in 500 B.C., defines a human being only in relationship to others. A person's identity is therefore, socially located within an interactive context. The Five Cardinal Relations (wu lun) were given the most importance in Confucian hierarchy and were between:
a) Emperor and subject; b) father and son; c) elder brother and younger brother; d) husband and wife; and e) friend and friend. There was a hierarchical code of behavior within each (li), which stipulated rights and duties for each person, giving wide parameters of choice and authority to the senior (Bond, 1986:217). Harmony and social order were insured through each member's diligent fulfillment of his or her role. The state flourished if the Emperor ruled justly and the subjects served loyally. The harmony of society was disrupted if one failed to follow the proper role behavior. Relational choices and decisions in the extended family could be very complex.

Reminiscent of E. T. Hall's (1984:44-77) descriptions of "polychronic time," and "high-context messages" in intra-cultural interactions which might feature tacit or explicit deference to age, generation or sex, the complexity of choice considerations in selecting appropriate actions in social contexts is such that:

a given individual could be enmeshed in a variety of relationships at a particular moment in the life cycle. So, a man could be subject to his sovereign, father to his son, son to his father, husband to his wife, and young friend to his elder friend. From an individual perspective, this tapestry of dualities may seem unmanageable, as it may call forth seemingly incompatible patterns of behavior of superordination and subordination from the same person. (Bond, 1986:216)

With such hierarchical complexity, adaptability and manageability -- not consistency -- become the central issues for managing Chinese relationships, not only in the consideration of existing friends and family, but in the character assessment of potential new friends as well (Bond, 1986:216).

Confucius believed that national and local social harmony depended upon the harmony and ethics of the individual family unit and that all social structures (at all levels) should be modeled after it. If social ethics and appropriate conduct were clearly defined and enforced at each social level, the family, the village, the county, the province, and the country would all enjoy harmony and peace. Therefore, in the ideal family, members' status and roles were strictly defined according to age, generation and sex. Duties, obligations and reciprocity expectations of each member to another were
clearly delineated. Harmony, honor, and keeping face were the rewards of correct conduct in accordance with this strict code of social ethics; and disharmony, dishonor, or losing face, the result of deviating from it (Hsu, 1987, Lin, 1935, Tsai 1986).

To understand the nature of any social relationships or institutions in China -- including schools, the nature of education, teachers, and students -- we must understand the impact of traditions. Confucian social ethics have bound together for over 2000 years not only the Chinese family, but all of Chinese society as well -- a population which now totals almost 1.2 billion people. Not so much as one written civil law as westerners might recognize them [with the exception of the Ching Codes] was ever written in China until the 1960's (McNeil-Leher, 1984a)! The power of the Confucian legacy over time may be deduced from a Chinese newspaper description of obstacles to social change in rural China:

...old habits and influences and social opinion limit and dictate people's thinking and action. Everyone seems to be acting not out of his own will or needs, but out of desperation for acceptance among relatives, neighbors and all. The same relatives and neighbors, meanwhile, dare not do anything not hitherto accepted by others, if just to avoid gossip. Thus everyone fears everyone else. This is so-called pressure of public or social opinion. (Renmin Ribao : 1964)

This Chinese interpretation of social behavior is a modern reflection of the legacy of Confucian social norms. Over 20 years later (1987-88), this writer's own experience living at a Beijing university for one year would support the accuracy of its description of Chinese social interaction, for the most, part within the context of one Chinese university community. In China -- especially urban centers like Beijing -- there is no privacy. One lives, works, shops, and sleeps within one's very densely populated work unit community -- which has a wall around it, the gates of which are locked at night. There are strict social mores, norms and expectations. Everyone can observe everyone else very easily. One's identity and good character derives from the group identity of which one is a part. There is a strict hierarchy of groups. Each group has a "father-leader." The character of the group is judged by the "good behavior" of its members. Any individual action brings
judgment upon that individual and the whole group by the father-leader within it. All members are affected. "Good individual behavior" brings praise upon the whole group from above. "Bad individual behavior" brings punishment upon the whole group from above. The fear of making a mistake or breaking a rule in word or deed -- thereby bringing punishment upon the group -- serves as a most efficient "social glue," holding the fabric of society together. No one acts without the group concensus. One frequently hears Chinese people repeat to foreigners:

Things move slowly in China. You just have to wait. Don't move too fast and make a mistake and get into trouble. Be very cautious. If you are going to do something on your own, don't tell anyone about it. If you do, you will get them into trouble too. It's better to just be patient and wait. (Buys, 1988: 7)

This researcher was advised with these words many times by Chinese friends and students within the university domain.

Education and Confucian Values

Approximately 2,000 years ago, Wu ti, emperor of the Han Dynasty, organized the first colleges of Confucian classics from which scholar-officials were chosen for government posts based on their scholarship in the classics. Confucianism became the official state philosophy, espousing harmony between human society and the universe, between men in political posts of influence and power (Freedman, 1979).

American education nurtures individual identity, self expression and a thirst for knowledge. Chinese education, on the other hand, is embued with Confucian social ethics (Hsu, 1987). There is a strict delineation of role hierarchy and behavioral code. The venerated teacher-father (like father to son) is expected to teach morality, right behavior, group identity and conformity. Teaching knowledge is expected to be a secondary concern. In traditional Chinese education, individual learning rates and abilities, for example, were not considered important until they were recently introduced by western missionary educators in the late 1800's and early 1900's (Hsu, 1987).
It is admitted that Communist education, with its inherent Marxist, Leninist, and Maoist socialist ideologies supporting rapid modernization in China, have not only influenced educational policies, but structures, curricula, and morality focus in lessons as well (Burke, 1980). However, Confucian traditions continue to dominate modern classroom pedagogy from grade school through college levels. In fact, the modern Chinese educational system has given birth to a new socialist society, while at the same time perpetuating Confucian tradition:

Both traditional and socialist philosophies stressed that education should support progress towards the ultimate aim of a utopian commonwealth by emphasizing citizenship training and the duty of individuals to work selflessly for collective welfare. The dominant ethic influencing Chinese education, "service to the people," derives from these philosophical origins. (Burke, 1980)

From her study of continuity and change in the PRC, Burke (1980) notes that the very term "education" continues to be defined either as Confucian moral instruction or ethical guidelines for correct social behavior; so that today a combination of traditional, Marxist, Leninist and Maoist ideologies regarding moral and political education are infused through every educational institution.

**Women and Education: Opportunity and Access**

The researcher of this study must be prepared to recognize and distinguish C1 and C2 culturally determined gender issues or themes as they may emerge in the research. Since this is a study of both Chinese men and women graduate students in U.S. higher education, it is anticipated that gender issues in education may be integral to the consideration of inter-cultural communication, choices and decisions and that they may impact the research in this study. Therefore, a knowledge base is deemed prudent. However, there is a void of cross-cultural studies or information on this subject as it inter-culturally impacts PRC graduate students in the United States.
The past and present role-gendering of women out of traditional male educational domains in China is well documented. Things have changed dramatically for women in China since the 1950's and early 1960's when Mao and the communist government took up the equality of women as one of their major causes by forbidding forced marriage, child marriage and bride-price and by allowing women equal voices in collective decision making. There was no formal education in China from 1966-1972. Higher education entrance was based largely on political qualification rather than academic, and it was not until 1978 that national entrance examinations were reopened. And what about women in education after the Cultural Revolution?

In 1986 in China, 75% of all Chinese college graduates were men. Some universities had deliberately enrolled more men than women and even lowered the acceptable grade on entrance exams for them so that women with high scores were rejected, while men with low scores were accepted. In engineering fields, women held lower academic degrees. The proportion of men to women in all technical fields was over 2 to 1, but at the rank of engineer there were four times as many men; and at the higher ranks of senior engineer, research associate, and full professor there were seven and a half men to women (China Reconstructs, March, 1986).

Traditionally, women in China have had neither the opportunity for nor the access to education. From 500 B.C. until the twentieth century, Confucian patriarchal ideology has been a major determinant of the inferior status of women in China. Education in China was traditionally for males only. It was not until the rebellions of the late 1800's and the May 4th Movement early in the 1900's that equality for women began to gather strength, so that any women at all -- and then, only the very wealthy -- would enter schools and colleges (Hsu, 1987; Tsai, 1986).

Confucian social ethics, mores, norms and expectations dictated that a woman was to be obedient without question to her husband, her husband's parents, all elders, and to all men. Obedience and deference to men were primary virtues (Johnson, 1975). The eldest male was socially responsible for all women in the family, and all were subservient to him. The good ruler, leader, or teacher should be like a father. His subjects or students should be like children. In exchange for their obedience he should provide them with a model of right behavior and moral perfection. Women were considered as
children. They were valued mainly for their ability to provide sons, care for children, and manage domestic maintenance work unquestioningly. For any other purposes women were considered liabilities. They were too expensive to raise and keep, and they married out of the family (Wolf, 1975).

Negative Gender Stereotypes: Women and Education

In order to understand the gender roles of single, married, or pregnant women in education, either as F-2 or J-2 (visa dependants), F-1 or J-1 (students or teachers), it is necessary to be prepared with a knowledge base of past and recent history. Modern Chinese women students may regard or be regarded either by their Chinese male family members or by Chinese professors and Chinese peers within the U.S. university community, in very traditional ways. Or they may transfer traditional first culture (C1) educational or behavioral gender values, beliefs, or expectations upon second culture (C2) educational counterparts, such as professors, instructors, administrators, or fellow students. Gendering in education must be addressed.

From ancient times in China, negative gender stereotypes regarding women have persisted into the present. These traditional stereotypes have helped to perpetuate the patriarchal social structures of Chinese society for 2500 years. For instance, in the sixteenth century Chinese philosopher-sages (all men) considered womanly characteristics to include timidity, irresponsibility, frivolousness, and limited moral capacity (Handlin, 1975). The domains of knowledge, carrying high status and prestige were reserved for men only. Collective male response to feminist self-assertiveness when it did occur was quiet anxiety and the increased repression of women's individual or cooperative attempts at self-betterment. Thus, not only were women long held to be mentally and morally incapable of any kind of scholarly study or serious endeavors outside the home, they were prevented from such endeavors by social norms and severe accompanying sanctions.

Recent research has indicated that underlying the repression of women in Chinese society is the male notion that women are inferior to men in many ways. The notion that a woman by nature of her biology is dangerous and polluting to men is one which has serious consequences to the development of healthy self-esteem for women (Ahern, 1975). This notion
would seem to tacitly support the inferior status of women wherever men and women relate together -- in the family, in schools, in the workplace, or in government policy and decision making arenas. A consequence of the widespread belief in this notion is that men remain the "gatekeepers" -- the bosses, managers, or decision-makers of upward mobility for women in these areas, including education.

The Acceptance of Women in Education

During the Ching Dynasty (which ended in 1911 with the establishment of the Republic by Sun Yat Sen), the social, educational, and political equality of women with men was not only considered a radical idea but was socially unthinkable (Handlin, 1975). In the late nineteenth century, the first universities had been established by the Canadian and U.S. Ecumenical Church Mission Boards, bringing western models of higher education to China (Hsu, 1987). The most notable of these was Yenching University, now known as Peking University in Beijing. During the period of Nationalism women became heroines and martyrs -- not for the cause of women -- but, most notably, by distinguishing themselves through higher education and active leadership in the revolution (Rankin, 1975). Sun Yen-Chu (1985) notes that of particular interest for the establishment of higher education for women--and one of the strongest examples of western educational reform for women--was the establishment of Peking Women's Higher Normal School and its successor, Peking Women's Normal University. It was the first and only women's university supported by the government in the 1920's. Its graduates were a hopeful and determined group of new Chinese females who were strong political and social activist reformers in the 1920's (Sun, Yen-Chu, 1985). These Chinese women -- especially the writers of the 1920's and 1930's -- repudiated the traditional treatment of women as depersonalized objects by proclaiming their right to love freely and independently of traditional Confucian norms. Feuerwerker (1975) has noted this time as one of the greatest academic and intellectual flowerings of women authors in Chinese history, with a profusion of published works on such topics as romantic and sexual love, the feelings of
women, the oppression of peasant women, factory girls, abuse from oppressive fathers, unwanted pregnancy, and freedom of choice.

The status of women in China has changed dramatically in the twentieth century. Before Mao's Liberation of China in 1949 women had been largely regarded as the possessions of their husband's family; but since, they have come to be regarded as their own agents, sharing in community decision-making, labor organization, and civic affairs. As they grow up, young women today anticipate making an economic contribution to the family, no longer allowing their parents to determine the whole direction of their lives (Davin, 1975). However, recent studies have found that traditional negative male attitudes about women have contributed to general distance from, as well as distrust, fear, and denigration of, women in the workplace as well as in the home (Topley, 1975). These attitudes extend into schools and universities as well, and it is widely felt that a woman's sexual nature might have adverse effects upon the intellectual capacity of her husband if not insuring his failure in education (Johnson, 1975).

CHINESE (PRC) GRADUATE STUDENTS AT U.S. UNIVERSITIES (1979-91)

Few formal studies have focused on Chinese students at U.S. universities. Few studies of PRC students at U.S. universities exist; however, studies of HK and ROC student groups are applicable to this study of PRC students due to their common and shared Chinese cultural backgrounds. Discussion of these studies are included in the review of literature below. In addition to dissertation and comparative studies, ethnographic works, and journal articles, I have also included brief references to important works necessary to understand C2 educational contexts in U.S. universities. Since this study proposes to look at choice considerations of PRC graduate students coming to the U.S. from Chinese colleges and universities from 1985 to 1991, some awareness of the C1 educational context from which they have come is advisable.
Cultural Considerations

For the Chinese student in the U.S. with family back home, pressures and adjustment problems have been the subjects of only a few recent studies. Most of these are not with PRC students exclusively, but with "Chinese" students (meaning from Taiwan (ROC), and Hong Kong (HK). After the Chinese Liberation by Mao in 1949, access to U.S. study only became available to PRC students following Deng Xiaoping's solidification of power and subsequent reversal of foreign study policy in 1979 (Time, Jan. 1, 1979); therefore, exclusive studies of any kind with PRC students in the U.S. to date are scant. As the numbers of PRC students in the U.S. have skyrocketed between 1981 and 1990 (Chou, 1989; NWSU-OIE, 1991), studies such as Liu's study of The Influence of Communication Apprehension and Communication Competence on Chinese Students' Adjustment in Two Universities of Ohio (1989) have begun to appear. Liu, in his quantitative study of 160 Chinese students, concluded that students who were highly communicatively competent perceived fewer academic and social problems than those who were less competent, and that only the length of study stay and marital status were related to major adjustment difficulties and communicative competence. The longer students stayed, the fewer acculturation difficulties they experienced, and the more communicatively competent they became. Single students reported more adjustment problems and lower communicative competence. Liu went no further to understand these interesting differences between single and married students. Time would be a given variable which would naturally reflect change and reflect most naturally some kind of improvement in communicative competencies. However, interaction opportunity provided by the community or the university (Hobbs, 1982) was found to be a major variable in the reporting of social satisfaction, inferring communicative competence apprehension may result more from a lack of experience, rather than from a lack of time only.

There have been several acculturation and adjustment studies which have concurred that the most difficult problems for PRC, ROC, and HK Chinese students result from deficiencies in English listening and spoken discourse skills, sociolinguistic and cultural skills, social support networks,

Gilman (1982) found in her study of an early 1979 to 1981 group of 40 PRC graduate students and scholars that their limited English listening comprehension and spoken discourse competence seriously handicapped their academic work and their social interaction with Americans, and their ability to read newspapers and attend cultural events, causing them to feel excluded. Mahdavi (1982) also notes in a study of the same period that Chinese students found making friends with Americans to be extremely difficult. On the other hand, in a later group of students, a survey of levels of satisfaction with college life and education in three universities in San Diego--Yao (1988) concluded that Chinese students were generally satisfied with their college friendships. It may be that Chinese students in more recent years are pre-oriented to American culture and the English language more efficiently before coming to the U.S. which would seem to reflect Yao's conclusion above; however Hobbs (1982) pointed out very early that satisfaction in Chinese student interaction with Americans was not so much an issue of pre-orientation and training as it was a result of particular U.S. living situations and the efforts of community or university groups to provide inter-cultural interaction opportunities.

From an American-Chinese comparative study, Ma Chen Lung (1987) points out that Americans rely upon explicit communication codes and are less susceptible to the influence of communicative contexts. Americans look for the main meaning in only what is precisely stated verbally. Many researchers have agreed (Bond, 1986; Hall, 1966; Hsu, 1987; Lin, 1935) that Chinese rely upon implicit communication codes, depending heavily upon the communicative and related social context for interpretation and meaning; looking for the main meaning in what is not stated verbally. The related comparative cultural attribute distinction between American "directness" (explicitly) and Chinese "indirectness" (implicitly) is also agreed to be a constraint to cross-cultural understanding and successful inter-cultural communication (Bond, 1986; Hsu, 1987).

Another study has looked at Chinese students' use of university counseling services and found that PRC students in particular have not perceived them as important to their academic success (Chang Sheue Mei,
Several studies have documented the help-seeking choices of Chinese students not to avail themselves of university academic or psychological counseling services (Chang, 1988; Hsiao, 1984; Kao, 1987). Chinese students having psychological or career problems have been found to be much more likely to seek assistance from friends or relatives than from potential helpers of any other kind, or from professional counselors. Locus of control may be strongly related to Chinese attitudes regarding self-disclosure (openness) and responsibility (Hsiao, 1984).

Although many similarities are shared, differences between ROC and PRC student groups have been noted by several researchers. Differences in perceptions of education (Chang, 1983; Li Shiun Yvonne, 1983) have been noted. Chang found that ROC students regard the general purpose of education to be consumption; whereas, PRC students have considered it more to be an investment -- reflecting the extreme socio-economic differences of the two countries. Also, PRC students have voiced their educational mission in the political terms of returning to build China. In contrast, Taiwan (ROC) students have been found to be more pre-occupied with "personal interests (salary and job opportunity) when selecting their fields of study," suggesting that "self-actualization rather than political commitment may be the new mission for ROC Chinese intellectuals" (Liu, 1985). Socio-economic differences are noted in Kao's study of perceived adjustment problems by the two groups. PRC students experienced financial aid as one of their two most severe problem areas, while ROC students did not (Kao, 1987).

Chinese students tacitly experience filial, familial, and wider social pressures as well as explicit financial, governmental, and political reciprocity expectations (Hsu, 1987; Tsai, 1986). These impact the student and come from father, family, extended family, financial sponsors, work unit, living community, and from the government cadres who oversee the student's conduct abroad (Tsai, 1986). A student must succeed, perform politely as a model to others, and return the favor of these opportunities in an intricate web of reciprocity little understood by Americans (Bond, 1986). Every decision of consequence requires the consideration of appearance to and effect upon all other family members and associates who could hear about it or be affected in any remote way. Choosing an action is a reflection of one's
identity (face) which is determined not by oneself, but by one's reference groups. If a person loses "face" he or she can lose his or her identity, which is the inclusion in those groups (Shih, 1988). Thus, no action is safer than the wrong action, because the latter might be catastrophic (Hsu, 1987). Situational diagnosis and character assessment of potential friends and associates is crucial and takes much time and observation. Throughout Chinese history there have been good reasons not to trust "outsiders." There is an old Chinese saying: "Close to home we rely only upon our parents; away from home, we rely only upon our friends" (Liu Xingwu, 1986).

Traditionally, there has been tremendous pressure due to social and cultural reciprocity obligations for sojourners to go abroad, get rich, and return to China to take a Chinese bride, support parents, repay debts, die and be buried in one's hometown (Purcell, 1965). In his study of Chinese in America, Tsai (1986) categorizes Chinese into three groups: a) Sojourners, b) American-born citizens, and c) student-immigrants. With student immigrants, most of his research is with ROC students prior to 1978 and the opening of China after the cessation of the Cultural Revolution.

Chinese overseas sojourner history (Fitzgerald, 1965, 1972, 1973; Grattan, 1963; Mackie, 1976; Purcell, 1965) and its accompanying traditional values (Purcell, 1965) may be important considerations for the study of foreign-born Chinese students at U.S. universities. These students usually arrive as U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service "F-1" or "J-1" Non-immigrant Student Visa holders. Traditionally, Chinese emigrees left China to find a better life or strike it rich in the gold fields of other countries. But, there were constraints to their leaving, both traditional Chinese religious and political beliefs, as well as the complete lack of any support from the Chinese government once they had left China. Ancestor worship, family loyalty, and fear of retribution from the government (being looked on as deserters) were major constraints as well, so:

...generally speaking, no Chinese [left] his home not intending to return. His hope [was] always to come back rich, to die and be buried where his ancestors [were] buried. (Purcell, 1965:30)
Liu (1985) asserts that young Chinese are turning away from this kind of dutiful sojourner mentality and are seeking "self-actualization" opportunities elsewhere due to limited opportunities in China. Qi (1989) notes further that there are dramatic changes in basic Chinese core values taking place due to China's modernization and movement from an agrarian to an industrial society and nation. Cultural diffusion is occuring, contributing to a shift in general thinking -- from absolutism to relativism. He asserts that there is a shift from collective identity to individual identity, which in turn is contributing to more materialistic incentive and privatism, including the advocacy of individual rights and democratic ideals. He concludes from confirmation by his six case study PRC graduate student consultants that today in China young people seem only to want to make money and acquire expensive material items (Qi, 1989).

Another current factor which contradicts traditional sojourner mentality is the widespread discouragement from U.S. Chinese students' family members and relatives back home in China of their ever returning to the PRC. This has become more intense after the crack-down and subsequent widespread persecution of all participants in the Chinese pro-democracy student demonstration of June 4, 1989, at Tien Anmen Square (Deng, 1990).

The US. education system is a powerful assimilation tool. Speaking of native-born post-Liberation (1949) Chinese students in the U.S. prior to the 1980's (most of whom were from Hong Kong and Taiwan), Tsai says, "In short, education is indoctrination and the young Chinese who learned American history and values became as American as their classmates" (1986:190). Perhaps many Chinese students might consider Tsai's statement too simplistic, or argue that the times have changed, and that in the 1980's and 1990's just learning American history and values doesn't make them "as American as their classmates," or provide them with equal opportunities or choices.

**Chinese Cultural Attributes**

Francis Hsu (1987) has suggested several important Chinese cultural attributes which stem from the father-son dyad in Chinese tradition and which heavily infuse other social organizations with their inherent social
manifestations. They are *continuity, inclusiveness, authority* and *asextasy*. To date, there are no studies of these attributes reflected in the literature survey of PRC or "Chinese" students studying in the United States; however, since these attributes may prove to be important to this study, or the future research of others, they are included in this discussion.

Briefly, *continuity*, in the Chinese sense, is described as the desire to be part of an unbroken chain of events in relationship with others. *Inclusiveness* is the strong proclivity for group membership and group identity. *Asexuality* is basically the condition of non-association with sexual identity in any public places. In the Chinese language even, there exist no personal pronouns to express gender differences (Hsu, 1987; Serrie, 1986). *Authority* is defined as the attributed or personal power which commands and enforces the obedience of others, stemming from the belief of the legitimacy of obeying such commands, and of a superior's right to issue them. Hofstede's (1983) "Individuality-Collectivism," and "Power Distance" studies with Chinese from three different cultural groups -- Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan -- parallel Hsu's hypotheses of inclusiveness and authority. Bond's (1986) discussion of Hofstede's study includes mention of subsequent corroboration of confidence by Chong, Cragin, and Scherling (1983) with three groups in the PRC, all measuring similarly to Hofstede's three groups--highly collective and moderately high in power distance. What is especially interesting is Bond's reaction and conclusion about change or constancy of values:

> The similarity of positions strengthens our confidence in generalizing results relevant to these dimensions across Chinese cultures in different places....[These findings] give us greater assurance when applying data from Chinese samples outside the PRC to predict and explain the behavior of Chinese inside the PRC. Another point of critical importance is the fact that Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan are all developing countries, industrialized and prosperous in comparison with the rest of South-east Asia and China. That certain fundamental Chinese values have remained intact throughout this modernization process suggests that they will likewise prove resistant to change as the Peoples Republic of China develops. (1986, 228-9)
A question arises, does Hsu's authority concept and Hofstede's power-distance equation operate in Chinese student communities in the U.S. as well? Serrie (1986) has also observed the widespread presence of these attributes (if we may equate Hsu's with Hofstede's) in Chinese business procedures; but as yet there has been no direct study of either concept with Chinese students in U.S. universities.

**PRC Students at Northwest University**

According to an advisor in NWU's Office of International Education, the office is not aware of any studies with PRC students at the university nor of any in-office studies of PRC student demographics which have been conducted, other than annual tallies of numbers by sex, school, and department (1991, June). There have been, to date, no specific studies on the subject of education related choice perceptions/considerations of PRC or "Chinese" students anywhere in the literature. There is a void of research on PRC student experiences in U.S. universities and at NWU.

**ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH**

Ethnographic research is the study of world-view and meaning systems or the relationship existing in any particular culture between its cosmology and its social behavioral norms (Traweek, 1982). Rather than being holistic (seeking to understand the interrelationships of complex meaning systems which comprise the many matrices of the overall culture), current ethnographic research is usually focused upon a particular domain setting or to a thematic orientation such as Deroche's (1982) study of macroeconomic policy as it impacts microsocial processes amid the impact of industrial development in a Nova Scotia village in which she examined records and reports, collected genealogical data, conducted a sample survey, and employed the instruments of informal interviews and participant observation.

There are many theories or concepts of culture. Kaplan and Manners (1972:3) note that Kroeber and Kluckhohn's exhaustive review found more than a hundred definitions. The main distinction which makes the particular one quoted here appropriate to ethnographic studies is its
distinction between outsiders and insiders of any group, who can observe the same event but assign different interpretations and meaning (value) to it. The same speech event can be perceived cross-culturally as drastically different by two different groups using their own cultural experience to interpret and evaluate what they see occurring. Socio-linguistic behavioral codes may differ widely, resulting in confusion, misperception, misunderstanding, and even conflict due to lack of knowledge of the other's intent, motivation, or expectation, which is always the difficulty with cross-cultural outsider, or "etic" comparative studies. "Emic" studies are those which observe and describe a culture from the inside (as it appears to those within it), in the native terms of the members (Harris: 1964). Meaning and meaning systems are culturally relative.

The concepts of cultural relativism and cultural comparison seem diametrically opposed, but Kaplan and Manners (1972) note that they cannot help but both be relevant and useful, for researchers must inevitably call on cognitive categories of their own for the sake of descriptive elucidation. Grounded on the concept of cultural relativism, cultural investigation may assume an "emic" approach or an "etic" approach (Kaplan & Manners, 1972). The "emic" approach will be adopted for this study, as it best fits the task of describing the conceptual categories of the educational lives of the participant members of the university graduate student culture. It is anticipated that inter-cultural socio-linguistic behavioral confusion, misunderstanding, and conflict can be avoided if the researcher is not entirely an "outsider" to the study-group, if both researcher and consultants are well versed in the same language, and if researcher and consultants understand clearly each other's intent, motivation, and expectation at the outset.

Theoretical Bases

Rather than being explained in terms of what they are, theories are explained pragmatically in terms of what they do, according to Kaplan and Manners (1972:12), who have concluded that: "A precise definition of theory has so far eluded even those scientists and philosophers of science who are directly concerned with the clarification of such matters." But a concept of
culture must ground any theoretical considerations. Frake (1977: 6-7) explains part of his concept of culture this way:

Culture does not provide a cognitive map, but rather a set of principles for map making and navigation. Different cultures are like different schools of navigation designed to cope with different terrains and seas. (Spradley, 1979:7)

Frake (1964:112) describes the inductive nature of simultaneous data collection, validation, and description -- the things ethnographic researchers do. Let us now follow his description of "what" is done and then consider "why" it is done:

In doing fieldwork, ethnographers make cultural inferences from three sources: 1) from what people say; 2) from the way people act; and 3) from the artifacts people use. At first each cultural inference is only a hypothesis about what people know. These hypotheses must be tested over and over again until the ethnographer becomes relatively certain that people share a particular system of cultural meanings. None of the sources for making inferences -- behavior, speech, artifacts -- are foolproof, but together they can lead to an adequate cultural description. And we can evaluate the adequacy of the description by the ability of a stranger to the culture (who may be the ethnographer) to use the ethnography's statements as instructions for appropriately anticipating the scenes of the society. (Spradley, 1979:8)

The ethnographer is looking for sets of principles or cultural values which determine the mechanics of social behavior. Where members of two different schools of cultural values converge to experience an event together (whether it be a sociolinguistic event or the consideration of choices in the mutual resolution of a required decision), there can be two completely different perceptions of the dimensions, "meaning", or complexity of the event. The study of meaning and meaning systems is essential to understanding how choices are perceived, considered and made by a particular group in a particular domain. According to Spradley (1979), ethnography implies: a) a theory of culture; b) a theory of semantics (meaning) and human behavior; and c) a theory of communication.
Relational theory combines these three. We shall look now at each of them separately.

A Theory of Culture

Concepts/theories of culture have evolved from the notion that there exist evolutionary stages of cultural development to a "form of science which was motivated by the desire to understand phenomena for their own sake..." (Hatch, 1973:48) and eventually has taken into account the essential ingredients of culturally relative meaning systems—the meanings which are defined by those in a particular group. The great pioneers of this twentieth century cultural relativism -- Boas, Sapir, Radcliff-Brown, Malinowski, Margaret Mead -- have lead research toward greater respect for the dignity of all peoples, and a greater appreciation for relative differences. With understanding of and appreciation and respect for the traditions and values of other cultures, researchers have drifted away from ethnocentric, judgmental accounts which have been cluttered with evaluative and dichotomous comparisons. James Spradley's concept/theory of culture is adopted for the purposes of this study. As an ethnographer, Spradley leaves his definition of culture open to include the communication systems of language and shared meanings.

The Theory of Symbolic Interactionism

As a theory of meaning and human behavior, the theory of Symbolic Interactionism is derived in part from the works of social psychologists G.H. Mead, Herbert Blumer, Sheldon Stryker (Woolwine, 1988), and Edelman (Du Preez, 1988). Also, the sociologist, Erving Goffman has been recognized widely by Blumer and many others for being one of its pioneer researchers. Goffman's focus has been the contextual constraints upon one-to-one interaction. His works reflect concern with the problems of justice and power and their impact on ordinary people. "Goffman observes how norms, external and internal resources influence face to face interactions" (Williams, 1986:352). Symbolic interactionism is well established as a theoretical base and relational framework for ethnographic research methods, having been
used in many Ph.D. studies recently (Du Preez, 1988; Linkous, 1989; Westheimer, 1989; Zhang, 1987). People behave according to the meaning they attribute toward other people's actions; not toward the actions themselves. They don't react to things, they react to the meanings of things. As Spradley (1976:6) elucidates, "Culture, as a shared system of meanings, is learned, revised, maintained, and defined in the context of people interacting." And so, Symbolic Interactionism attempts to describe human behavior in terms of meanings. Three hypotheses upon which this theory rests are identified by Blumer:

a. Human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them.
b. Meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows.
c. Meanings are handled in and modified through, an interpretive process used by the person dealing with the things he encounters. (from Spradley, 1979:6)

Goffman maintains the principle that conversation can only be analyzed as socially situated behavior, constrained by the contextual ritual and management strategies common to our everyday lives (Birckhead, 1986).

The Theory of Ethnographic Semantics

The cultural knowledge of any consultant is not just bits of information; rather it is knowledge which is organized into categories which are related systematically to the culture as a whole (Spradley, 1979:93). Employing methods of analysis which lead to the discovery of the organization of this cultural knowledge is the ethnographer's goal. Ethnographic analysis is in fact, the search for the relationships of the pieces of a culture which are conceptualized by the consultants themselves. Most often this internal organization remains tacitly outside the awareness of the consultants, requiring the ethnographer to devise the means to discover it. Ethnographic semantics is the understanding of cultural meaning systems. The theory assumes two premises:
a. Both explicit and tacit cultural knowledge can be understood, and
b. tacit knowledge can be inferred from what people say (language); from watching what they do (behavior); and from studying the things they use (artifacts or tools).
(Spradley, 1979:5)

Relational Theory

Ethnographic research and analytical methods lead to the discovery of cultural meanings and are grounded on recognized and sound theoretical bases. Relational theory has evolved naturally out of the general theory of symbolic interactionism, originating from the works of Cooly, Mead, Thomas, Blumer, Frake, and Reed (Spradley, 1979:6). Human consciousness is taken to be an interior hypothesis testing ground of "dialectical composition," wherein address and response with others, and constructs such as meaning, objects, and interactions are described as deriving from this process (Singer, 1984:Int). Combining the preceding accepted theories, Relational Theory hypothesizes that:

a. Cultural meaning systems are encoded in symbols.
b. Language is the primary symbol system that encodes cultural meaning in every society. Language can be used to talk about all other encoded symbols.
c. The meaning of any symbol is its relationship to other symbols in a particular culture.
d. The task (methodology) is to decode cultural symbols and identify the underlying coding rules. This can be accomplished by discovering the relationships among cultural symbols. (Spradley, 1979, p.6)

Relational theory, then, is firmly grounded upon an accepted theory or concept of culture (Spradley, 1979), the widely accepted and currently used theory of symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969; Frake, 1977; Linkous, 1989; Zhang, 1987); and the theory of ethnographic semantics (Spradley, 1979). The ethnographic research methodology applied in this study -- specifically, the ethnographic interview -- is based upon these theories.
ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Francis Bacon (1620) described what we now call qualitative research methods (and inductive reasoning) most simply and eloquently in his *Novum Organum*. He explained that the researcher can arrive at general principles or axioms derived or inferred from the context of relatedness of single units of naturally observable and experiential phenomena; thereby providing the observer with a field, within which is discerned a greater understanding of forms and their symbiotic functions. Harmonics of this paraphrase of Bacon's definition echo through the historical evolution and current definitions of ethnographic research theory and methods.

Honey (1988) observes that from its early twentieth century developmental applications in the field of cultural anthropology as seen in the works of Sapir, Malinowski, and Boaz, ethnographic research methods have become widely used today; not only in anthropology, but in the social sciences as well. Ethnographic methods began to appear only recently in education related research in the late 1960's and early 1970's (Honey, 1988), and have since gained respected popularity as a means to evaluate and understand such things as student and teacher performance and behavioral interactions in classroom settings (Bernard, 1988:272). Therefore, having come only recently into the field of educational research, ethnographic research theory and methods may be unfamiliar to many. For this reason, this section of Chapter II has been slightly expanded in the interest of providing clear definitions.

Research Goals

The exploration, discovery and description of the cultural meaning system by which people organize their behavior and interpret their experience is the main goal of ethnography. The foundation of meaning systems in every culture are formed by linguistic symbols with which people are able to communicate about all the other symbols in their culture. The ethnographic interview is one means for gathering a sample of linguistic symbols. Lofland and Lofland (1984: 13) point out that "many social situations can be directly apprehended only through intensive interviewing,"
and that "rather than being a poor substitute for participant observation, intensive interviewing is frequently the method of choice." As I have stated above, this will be the principle and most appropriate instrument for data gathering--whether intensive or informal-- with the other instruments being used as secondary and supportive wherever appropriate and possible.

Regarding the nature and purpose of ethnography and the collection of communicative data:

An adequate ethnography is here considered to include the culturally significant arrangement of productive statements about the relevant relationships obtained among locally defined categories and contexts (of objects and events) within a given social matrix. These nonarbitrarily ordered statements should comprise, essentially, a cultural grammar (Frake, 1962a; Goodenough, 1957a). In such an ethnography, the emphasis is placed on the interpretation, evaluation, and selection of alternative statements about a particular set of cultural activities within a given range of social contexts. This in turn leads to the critical examination of intracultural relations and ethnotheoretical models. (Conklin, 1955; Goodenough, M.S., in Hymes, 1964)

Validity and Reliability

With respect to validity and reliability, Taylor (1969:27) suggests that for gathering cultural data it is most beneficial to use multiple informants of differing ages and sexes "to test the internal consistency of a particular informant's testimony." Also, because there is a constant need to clarify, inquire, reiterate, confirm, and test the informant's information, "intensive interview studies may involve repeated and prolonged contact between researchers and informants" (Lofland, 1984:13), for the purpose of further inquiry, or reliability testing. As stated many times above, the ethnographic research interview is guided by the skillful ethnographer to elucidate meaning and domain through the use of descriptive, structural and contrast questions, while during the same interview testing the validity of the questions, and cross-checking answers for reliability and repeating the process down through time. "Demonstrable intracultural validity for statements of covert and abstracted relationships should be based on prior analysis of
particular and generalized occurrences in the ethnographic record (Lounsbury, 1955, pp.163-4; 1956; cf, Morris 1946)" (Conklin in Hymes, 1964:12-25). Criteria for evaluating the adequacy [reliability] of ethnographic statements with reference to the cultural phenomena described, include: (a) productivity (in terms of appropriate anticipation if not actual prediction), (b) replicability or testability, and (c) economy (Conklin in Hymes, 1964:12-25).

Research Problems

As many researchers have concurred, ethnographic objectivity is in fact, the careful reporting of the intersubjective objectivity of the participants in the culture (Agar, 1980; Bernard, 1988; Hymes, 1964; Lofland & Lofland, 1984; Spradley, 1979). The ethnographer must be particularly wary of injecting personal bias or prejudice into the data. Four Chinese scholars mentored by Radcliffe-Brown/Malinowski between 1934 and 1949 (Lin Yueh-Hwa, Martin C. Yang, Francis L.K. Hsu, and Fei Hsiao-Tung) have each been criticized for violating the principle of objectivity as defined above (Leach, 1982:125-127). Hsu, Leach maintains, produced a cultural monograph--West Town--in which he allowed his own private familiarities and prejudices as a Chinese to distort the work, claiming "Chinese" universality for the description without mention of the quite different nationality characteristics of the Min Chia people in Tali-fu, Yunnan Province (p.126). Lin Yueh-hwa, says Leach, wrote his cultural description in novel form for anonymity's sake, losing the credibility of authenticity; while Martin Yang distanced himself in time and proximity so far away from the actual events that his characters are entirely depersonalized and seem like cardboard caricatures. Fei Xiao Tung, he claims, spent only two months of field work on Peasant Life in China, depending heavily on prior knowledge of his home town district to compose the work (p.127). Cautioning the ethnographer against cultural bias and risking the loss of objectivity, Leach further comments that,

...fieldwork in a cultural context of which you already have intimate first-hand experience seems to be much more difficult than fieldwork which is approached from the naive viewpoint of a total stranger. When anthropologists study facets of their own society their vision seems to become distorted by prejudices
which derive from private rather than public experience (Leach:124).

**Ethnographic Analysis**

Many researchers agree (Bernard, 1988; Lofland & Lofland, 1984; Pelto, 1970; Spradley, 1979; Taylor, 1969) that "...if it is our determined intent to understand the thinking of a particular group, then the entire analysis of their experience should be founded upon their own concepts, not ours; and that their categorization of behavior is the only correct one to adopt in the most accurate description of their culture" (Pelto, 1970:250). In qualitative research of this kind, the ethnographer does not start with hypotheses. This would be antithetical to the accepted theoretical and methodological guideline of cultural relativism. Hypotheses:

...must grow from an understanding of the group...you can't specify the questions you're going to ask when you move into the community; you don't know how to ask questions yet. You can't define a sample; you don't even know what the range of social types is or which ones are relevant to the topics you're interested in. (Agar, 1980:69)

Barratt (1984:7) explains the theoretical grounding of such a cultural description:

Most [researchers] subscribe to what is known as cultural relativism, and they also attempt to achieve a subjective understanding of the societies they study. **Cultural relativism** is the belief that any particular set of customs, values, and moral precepts are relative to a specific cultural tradition, and that they can only be understood and evaluated within that particular milieu.

**Subjective understanding** is the means whereby researchers try to understand other cultures from the inside point of view while trying consciously to eliminate any ethnocentric bias or comparison to the researcher's own culture (Barratt, 1984:8). Considering cultural relativism then, as a methodological principle rather than an ideological stance (Kaplan & Manners, 1972:7), it provides guiding parameters within which the
researcher may gather and record the inter-subjective meanings and meaning systems as expressed by the informant group as well as validate, analyze, and test the reliability of cultural data.

Pelto (1970), Barratt (1980), and Spradley (1979) agree that several types of data analyses are guided by the principle of cultural relativism and are appropriately applied in varying degree to the understanding of cultural meaning. Domain analysis is a technique, or search, by which the researcher can locate larger units (i.e., cover terms) of cultural knowledge through the discovery of shared similarities with smaller included units (i.e., included terms) and is one strategy for the discovery of meaning systems. Taxonomic analysis is the search for contrast sets of meanings within these domains in order to determine their more definitive inner structure (Spradley, 1979:94). Componential analysis is another means of investigating the ways in which people compartmentalize and classify their experiences through language. Native terms and definitions and their whole range of cultural meanings are investigated. States Taylor (1969:50), "That different cultures do this differently is well-known to anthropologists, and componential analysis is a method of exploring these differences."

Spradley (1979:94) explains that theme analysis seeks to describe the relationships among domains and explain how they are related to the culture in its entirety. Through cultural theme analysis, the ethnographer is able to identify cultural similarities from information given by many different informants, even though individuals may represent deviations of standard norms. Challenges to the validity of theme analysis on account of intracultural variation are easily refuted by Agar (1980), and it is generally well acknowledged and accepted within the social sciences that within any cultural group there will be variation and diversity of temperament, belief, and conformity to standard ideological and behavioral norms (Barratt, 1984:154-182), so intra-cultural variation is to be expected.

The present study will make appropriate use of the above analytical methods to discover and understand education-related choice considerations of the Chinese student study group, however, cultural theme analysis will be the main analytical instrument.
Consultants

Spradley discusses three ways knowledge has been gained with the help of members of a culture group: a) by first categorizing the members into types and then using them as subjects, i.e., guinea pigs whereby hypotheses are tested in controlled experiments and the outcomes of these tests are measured, b) by considering the members as respondents whose responses are analyzed in the same manner as the first case, and c) by considering them to be informants to help the researcher discover by their own explanations how they organize their behavior (Spradley, 1979). It is in this last sense that the term informant has often been used recently; however use of this term has not been received comfortably due to the association with the terms "tattle-tale," "snitch," and "spy." The most appropriate term at this writing is consultant.

Ethics

Rynkiewich and Spradley (1976) discuss fieldwork cases in ethical conflicts and dilemmas which are worthy of an ethnographer's careful consideration, such as that of social scientists working as spies for government sponsors related by Boas in 1919, or the question of the proper role and responsibility of the researcher when discovering personal, social, or institutional injustice or violence or when permission to continue research is denied by a government body.

Should researchers accept contracts containing secrecy clauses? How does the investigator enter people's lives as a researcher and friend, and then break off later to go publish intimate details of their personal lives? Which details do you withhold? The most fundamental ethical question researchers must raise, suggests Laura Nadar, is "Why have I chosen to study what I am studying?" (Rynkiewich & Spradley, 1976).

Fundamental to the protection of client-consultants, social scientists have maintained that:

under conditions of economic and/or political oppression of some populations by other populations, the protection of the less
powerful may demand that knowledge about them not be made available to the more powerful. (Lofland & Lofland, 1984:18)

A code of ethics among professionals has evolved as a result of many tragedies and dilemmas experienced by researchers and suffered by those who have been cultural consultants, informants, or subjects of study. Many ethical responsibilities of researchers earlier outlined by Arensberg and Neihoff (1964) have been adopted by the Society for Applied Anthropology (SfAA), which has invited its professional membership to be bound by the SfAA 1983 "Statement on Professional and Ethical Responsibilities" (See Appendix A). Special attention is given to the following points regarding the people being studied, and the research sponsors (van Willigen, 1986:52):

a. Disclosure of research goals,
b. Voluntary participation,
c. Informed participation,
d. Research and publication confidentiality maintained,
e. Disclosure of reasonable and legal confidentiality limits,
f. Disclosure of any significant risk resulting from research activities,
g. Respect for community and individual dignity, integrity, and worth supersede any actions requested by a sponsor, if they threaten survival of the group in any way;
h. Accurate reporting of colleagues' contributions, and
i. Accurate research work.

Interview Techniques

Ethnographers use one or more of the following research techniques to inductively gather descriptive data which is field based, the analysis from which they can adequately predict or realistically anticipate aspects of the cultural scene (Frake, 1977; Pelto, 1970; Spradley, 1979).

Often, anthropologists have found it impossible to ask a pre-set sequence of questions in any kind of a scheduled manner, finding that this formality has dried up the source of information; and they have generally found that informal conversations have yielded more reliable information (Taylor, 1969:27). Favoring guided, open interviews, Agar (1980) has adamantly stated his opposition to the "control" nature of the structured
interview, which places the "subjects" at a disadvantage as to time, place, and organizational format. He points out that with most research the social scientist has complete control of the interaction. This is the deductive traditional approach, which considers the informant out of context--similar to a laboratory control situation for the sake of standardization--which forces the behavior of the subjects into the same uniformity framework (Agar, 1980).

Ethnographic interviews on the other hand, whether informal or formal, do not place the researcher in a controlling position. And they are guided by the skillful ethnographer to elucidate meaning and domain through the use of descriptive, structural and contrast questions, while during the same interview testing the validity of the questions, and cross-checking answers for reliability. Because the present study is involved primarily with cognitive domains, the ethnographic interview will be the principle data gathering method used.

**Participant Observation**

Another technique of ethnographic research is participant observation. Claiming that participant observation is not really a method at all, but rather, a strategy for facilitating the collection of both quantitative and qualitative field data, Bernard (1988:148-51), defines participant observation as the establishment of rapport in a new community and:

learning to act so that people go about their business as usual when you show up; and removing yourself every day from cultural immersion so you can intellectualize what you've learned, put in into perspective, and write about it convincingly; reducing reactivity (the condition of altered behavior when people are aware someone is studying them). Participant observation also gives the researcher contextual understanding to formulate pertinent questions and have confidence in the meaning of collected cultural facts. The meaning of observations is understood better, and the internal and the external validity of what is learned in interviews is extended. It is also possible to collect both quantitative and qualitative interview data from a representative sample of a population.
Lofland and Lofland (1984:13) have observed that interviewing always involves observation. Taylor points out that participant observation "is time consuming, and it does not reveal some things which, for one reason or another, the ethnographer does not have the opportunity to observe" (1969:26). For this reason, other effective techniques such as interviews must also be used to gather data. Regarding the search for ideas and attitudes as cultural traits, he adds that ideas:

...cannot be observed but must be inferred from behavior and artifacts. We do not observe the ideas of others. Yet we are compelled to suppose that behaviors and artifacts are consequences of ideas or something like them within individuals. For this reason it seems useful to think of the observable phenomena as empirical indicators of customs (Taylor, 1969:11).

From carefully observed and analyzed phenomena, cultural meanings, traditions, customs, ideas, attitudes, and values may be inferred and tested. Therefore, the skills of a participant observer are particularly important in that the researcher personally becomes the experiential instrument for both data collection and analysis (especially while interviewing). Learning the language, building explicit awareness, increasing memory retention and recall, maintaining naivete, and building writing skills are all important for this precise reason (Bernard, 1988: 152-162).
CHAPTER III: RESEARCH DESIGN

METHODOLOGY

Many researchers agree (Agar, 1980; Bernard, 1988; Lofland & Lofland, 1984; Spradley, 1979) that methods used in ethnographic research may vary depending on the orientation of the study. Because this topic is cognitive and limited in some respects to an historical time frame (1985-91), the ethnographic interview has been selected as the most appropriate data gathering method. The method is supported by participant observation, the use of key informants, ethnographic record documents, field notes (descriptive, analytical, and methodological) and transcriptions of the notes. A personal diary and time log are also kept.

Pelto (1970: 254) comments that, "The more specific a research plan, the more likely it is that the researcher finds the realities of the field situation incompatible with his stated research aims." With due respect to the importance of Pelto's cautionary remarks, the ethnographic research methodology used in this research design will follow a developmental and systematic research sequence for data collection as Spradley suggests (1979:iv). Ethnographic analysis of original research data will be conducted in order to discover and understand cultural themes and tacit cultural values underlying education related choice considerations of the students. A brief contrast of ethnographic research techniques with standard quantitative research procedures is necessary at this point for further clarity.

Ethnography is different from the standard social science research sequence in that in place of separate distinct stages, there is a constant feedback and revision from one stage to another. Conklin asserts, "In actual field situations, recording activities, analytic operations, and evaluative procedures (in short, the application of ethnographic technique, method, and theory) can, and I think should, be combined. The improvement and constant adjustment of field recording is, in fact, dependent upon simultaneous analysis and evaluation" (Conklin in Hymes, 1964). Many other anthropologists (Lofland & Lofland, Pelto, Bernard and Spradley) agree that the tasks normally associated with social science research listed below must all proceed simultaneously:
1. Selecting the problem.
2. Formulating hypotheses.
3. Collecting data.
4. Data analysis.
5. Writing up the results.

Since the above do indeed proceed simultaneously, the research tasks take on a different configuration than normally associated with a systematic sequence; nevertheless, they are systematic, but developmental. The sequence is as follows:

1. Location of informants.

2. Ethnographic interviews guided to elucidate domain, world view and cultural meaning systems; and to include triangulation questions for reliability--descriptive, structural, and contrast--at different points in time.

3. Recorded interviews where possible with transcriptions.

4. Ethnographic record compilation -- field-notes, observations, impressions, research decisions.

5. Ethnographic analysis -- which may include one or a combination of appropriately selected analytical methods to discover meanings and meaning systems (Domain, Taxonomic, and Componential Analyses), or to discover cultural themes (Theme Analysis).

RESEARCH TASKS

This researcher will adhere as closely as possible to the steps in Spradley's (1979) research model listed below:

1. Locating Informants.
2. Interviewing informants.
4. Asking descriptive questions.
5. Analyzing ethnographic interviews.
6. Making domain analyses.
7. Asking structural Questions.
8. Making taxonomic analyses.
9. Asking contrast questions.
10. Making componential analyses.
11. Discovering cultural themes.
12. Writing the ethnography.

THE ETHNOGRAPHER

Bernard (1988:52) has mentioned that as a participant observer where possible the ethnographic researcher "becomes the instrument for both data collection and analysis through [his or her] own experience." The ethnographer observes as a participant in either interviews or in the informant's particular domains and devises ways to analyze and understand.

KEY CONSULTANTS

Pelto (1970:98) reminds the researcher that, "A fieldworker's most important informants [consultants] are frequently persons who occupy specialized positions in the local society." This study relies upon a high degree of trust between myself and my consultants. It is important that they be knowledgeable about many others to help provide access, to serve as accurate translators, and to provide cultural understanding about the cultural/topical dimensions as well. "Key" consultants were members of the university PRC Chinese student-scholar community who were able to provide the above described assistance in the research.

Thirteen consultants were interviewed between two and five times each, for a total of at least three hours. Consultants were interviewed in domains identified by them as most comfortable, sometimes in their homes, or out of public arenas, to insure against the necessity of public face answers, others' idle gossip, or possible factional association, and for the purpose of elucidating private-face, reliable disclosure.
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Quality data need not necessarily be obtained through immersive participant observation and interviewing over a period of years. Because of the limitations of this study, time was one of several constraints on this research project. Bernard states:

Much applied research is done on a scale of from one to three months. This can yield reliable results, even on sensitive topics, when the ethnographer already speaks the language, and especially if he or she has done previous, basic research with the people or organization that is the focus of the applied project. (Bernard, 1988:149)

Such was the case with this researcher and the proposed study. The research and analysis was conducted from July, 1991, through early March, 1992. Analysis and writing the description was written during March and April, 1992, and the completed dissertation was submitted May 26, 1992. Familiarity with the Chinese culture and language contributed to the adherence to a realistic time schedule, successful community access, and the location of and rapport with key consultants.

TOPICS EXPLORED WITH CONSULTANTS

Individual perceptions of challenging, frustrating or confusing social situations as well as cultural concepts and values were examined through the interview process. Some of the education related topics and related cultural values which were explored follow below.

Education Related Choices

2. Teacher-student roles and relationships.
3. Choosing schools and majors.
4. Why NWU? Considerations? Other choices?
5. Ways students get permission, money, jobs, visas.
6. Processes to leave China and come to the United States.
7. Changing schools and majors.
Changing programs.
10. Saving money.
11. Getting wife or a grandmother here after birth of baby.

Chinese Traditional C1 Values and Considerations in C2 Education-Related Contexts

1. Inaction, wrong and right actions.
2. Deference to age, sex, role and title.
3. Maintaining, saving and losing face.
4. Public and private face.
5. Emotional restraint, reserve, and balance of control.
6. Modesty.
7. Levels of self-disclosure.
8. Notoriety or excessive attention.
9. Collective duty and group inclusiveness.
10. Indirect (formal) responses/direct responses.
11. Hierarchical relationships/inequality.
12. Formality and informality.
13. Proxemics & enclosed space.
15. Preserving harmony.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONING

The first axiom of the ethnographic interview format is that in the beginning the ethnographer doesn't know what questions to ask because meaningful, pertinent and valid questions and answers must inevitably emerge from the informant's experience, and from his own frames of cultural reference and meaning. Discovering the right questions to ask in most cases can be accomplished by asking general descriptive questions, such as, "Tell me about your school in China -- can you describe a typical class day?" The descriptive answer, then, will provide a net of meanings or matrix of relationships from which descriptions of smaller parts of the whole can be elicited. Generally, five types of strategic descriptive questions will be used to elucidate particular domains and question further the nature of
smaller, more specific functional, physical, cognitive, or temporal domains. Ethnographers refer to these as:

1. Grand-tour questions.
2. Mini-tour questions.
3. Example questions.
4. Experience questions.
5. Hypothetical interaction questions.

If the ethnographer is an eager learner, then the interview will almost become a real tour in person -- first through the informant's whole house, so to speak, then back for "mini-tours" -- through each room one-at-a-time and then to specific areas in the rooms to ask for process or functional definitions about what occurs in those areas, such as, "What is usually discussed here in this area?" or, "What do people do here?" or, "How are these used?" Cognitive domains will be explored in this way also.

**Mini-tour questions** will deal with smaller units of experience, such as, "When you visit a professor's office what things do you usually do?" **Example questions** will be used to further elucidate and clarify terms, such as, "Can you give me an example of when you feel embarrassed talking to your instructor?" Personal **experience questions** often tend to be too broad to answer easily, but will be useful for more exacting inquiry well into the topic area, such as, "What was your experience like the last time you spoke to your major advisor?" **Hypothetical questions** will further reveal both explicit and tacit meanings and values systems, such as, "If you were asked to work overtime for three months to do your professor's research, how would you feel?" **Typical question** inquiries will be used to elicit behavioral norm information, such as, "What are typical things other Chinese students might say or do in that situation?"

Basically, **descriptive questions** will be the foundation of the ethnographic interview. **Domain questions**, **compositional questions**, and **structural questions** will be used, respectively, to understand cover terms and included terms, different ways of doing something or parts of a whole, or the order of steps in a process. Cultural norms, expectations and values will be inferred from asking the client how he or she would or could do something, or for asking for the anticipated steps of a protocol or process. For
clarification and verification, **contrast questions** (How is x similar to, or different from y?) will be used for question validation, or for obtaining more explicit definitions, such as, "Does Professor X treat male research assistants the same as he treats female research assistants, or differently?" **Repeated questions** will be used with the same informant and with different informants (triangulation) down through time for both validity and reliability testing.

These, then, are the basic elements of the interview instrument and will be used developmentally, progressively, and situationally to meet the objectives of the study.

**QUESTIONNAIRES**

It is generally agreed among researchers that a sample questionnaire or list of interview questions is not appropriate or possible at the outset of a research project but "can only be developed after one has entered the culture to analyze it in its own terms; the questions must arise out of the culture itself" (Spradley, 1979:235). This is developmental.

**INTERVIEW RECONSTRUCTION AND TRANSCRIPTION**

In interviews of this kind where there is political and professional liability involved, it is generally agreed that a tape recorder is not used, especially on initial, warm up interviews, as it is a distraction and constraint to comfortable disclosure. Interviews were, however, reconstructed from interview notes and transcribed in full as soon as possible following the interviews. Participant observation notes, and interview notes (method, descriptive and analytical), were kept and incorporated into the transcriptions. In addition, a personal diary and time log were kept.

**ANALYSIS**

Cultural theme analysis of data gathered in formal and informal interviews, and from observations, were used to compile the completed study (cultural description).
Describing characteristics of Apache culture, Morris Opler first introduced the notion of cultural theme. Cultural patterns, he reasoned, could be better understood through the identification of repetitious themes. Opler defined a theme as:

a postulate or position, declared or implied, and usually controlling behavior or stimulating activity, which is tacitly approved or openly promoted in a society (1945: 198).

Themes are thought of as the common threads which bind a culture together into an integrated whole, rather than existing as segmented pieces of unrelated customs and traditions.

Ruth Benedict (1934) applied theme analysis in her assessment of Kwakiutl and Pueblo cultures. She realized a larger contiguity for each culture, within which, systems of meaning were related and interpreted.

Many other researchers have used theme analysis to identify and describe particular cultural scenes or domains with particular cultural groups. Cultural themes can be tacit or explicit. Themes are cognitive principles or symbols woven together by significant or meaningful relationships.

Themes may be explicitly evident in often referred to expressions, saying, proverbs, or mottos -- familiar western examples of which might be, "a stitch in time saves nine," or "a penny saved is a penny earned." But most cultural axioms, principles, or themes are tacitly imbedded in the subconscious, and expressed as taken for granted, commonly accepted ways of knowing, interpreting, describing or behaving. For example, Americans will often use phrases similar to, "don't waste your time with that," reflecting an enculturated world-view value which considers time a commodity -- to be saved, spent, or wasted. Another example might be the phrase, "so, what's your point?" implying an assumed pre-set linear goal value orientation rather than a goal-emergent, or process value orientation.

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY VERIFICATION

Testing for validity and reliability are also considered part of the simultaneous research-analysis process and occur as systematically designed procedures within the format of informal or intensive interviews. Pelto
(1970:41) defines validity as "the degree to which scientific observations actually measure or record what they purport to measure." Reliability, he states, refers to the "repeatability, including intersubjective replicability of scientific observations..." (1970:41). Widely recognized among ethnographers (Frake, 1964; Pelto, 1970; Spradley, 1979), the following processes will be used in this study as validity and reliability verifiers within the interviews themselves:

1. Repeated descriptive, structural, and contrast questions, at different points in time.
2. Triangulated interview questions (repeated) with different informants, and at different times.
3. Reliability verification by indigenous group members to see if the description is a realistic and possible understanding of topical/cultural contexts which might accurately anticipate or predict the same topical/cultural contexts in the future.
4. Intersubjective agreement in linguistic information (interviews), behavior (participant observation), and artifacts (obtained and included in the ethnographic record).

RETROSPECTIVE CRITIQUE OF THE METHODOLOGY

It is believed that the nature of the ethnographic methodology, and the question form, resulted in deeper and richer cultural information than would have been possible with a different research method. Also, the success in attaining high levels of disclosure was probably due, in part, to meeting with the consultants away from their work domains, in a comfortable place of their choosing.

Another positive factor, as was indicated by all the consultants, was the absence of a tape recorder during interviews. Consultants felt that due to face considerations and possible socio-political consequences, a tape recorder would have reduced the descriptions to quotable "public face" answers. Such answers would contain no conflicts, criticisms, or offenses that might, conceivably, be construed by others in a future context.
The researcher's familiarity with and friendship character reference in the PRC community, and previous research and teaching experience in Beijing, helped consultants feel understood regarding Chinese culture. Also, use of a small amount of putong hua (Chinese words) helped put consultants at ease. The purpose and intent was clearly explained to the consultants prior to the interview and proved to lend support to the project.

In the beginning, the question format of the first pilot interviews included too many discretely ordered and short-answer questions. A list of approximately 60 questions were attempted -- and failed. During research interviews, "grand-tour" questions were used, followed by "mini-tour" questions if further information was needed. This worked well and the descriptions eventually covered many questions previously identified on the list, above. But, the interesting data are imbedded in a kind of "stream of consciousness" answer. This very fact enabled the researcher to be aware of and to begin to understand the cognitive and socio-linguistic variables of Chinese students' English discourse patterns.

Often no more than five to ten questions were asked to obtain very detailed information which contained a wealth of descriptive and cultural themes.

There were five "grand-tour" questions:

Can you remember where and when you first realized that education was important to you, and describe the reasons and people who influenced you the most to be a scientist or a scholar?

What are all the things (or the processes) Chinese students have to do to come and study at a university such as NWU in the United States? What were the things you had to do?

When you first came to the U.S. for graduate study, did you find that this university system was very different than your Chinese university system? Can you describe in what ways they are different?

How are Chinese teachers different from American Teachers?

Can you describe some of the difficulties or problems you have had with your professors here at NWU?
These leading questions were supplemented by "mini-tour" questions which elicited more information about cognitive or physical domains. Different types of elicitation questions were used in the interviews: (a) descriptive questions (i.e., can you describe what it was like to...); (b) experiential questions (i.e., can you give me an example from your own experience of how loyalty to a professor can make it more difficult for you?); (c) domain questions (i.e., are there different kinds of teachers? students? rulers?); and, (d) structural questions (i.e., what are the different steps, ways, or tasks involved in getting a visa). It was found that these were most helpful. The five "main-tour" questions were asked of all consultants, if possible.

Researcher behavior during the interview sessions included writing feverishly during all the interviews, trying to look up a good part of the time without looking at what was being written, in order to be an attentive listener. Interview length varied with most being about two to two and one-half hours. Interviews were conducted with some consultants many times, with others only once.

The interview notes were transcribed as soon as possible following the interviews, with descriptive observations, methods, and analytical notes as well. Interview reconstruction and transcriptions from the interview notes and observations took an average of four to six hours per one hour of interview time. This was a handwritten draft from which a typed copy was made. Typing took approximately the same time as the interview time -- from one to three hours per interview. New hypotheses and questions would inevitably occur during the typing, which would lengthen the time. Countless hours were spent in reviewing, thinking about, and analyzing the descriptive data. In most cases, the transcription was corrected or edited by the consultant in a final interview meeting.

Descriptions were then analyzed for repetitive themes, and the themes coded and re-assembled in theme categories. The emergent Chinese cultural value themes were identified within the descriptive data categories and assembled within this chapter.

From beginning to end, the research process took seven months. There were problems encountered in selection of consultants and in
scheduling interviews. As mentioned earlier, 17 initial consultants were scheduled. Three were "not able to be scheduled due to work and family conflicts," after several attempts to meet. It can only be assumed that they were reticent to disclose any information to prurient inquiry from a stranger. One consultant responded with such a low level of disclosure and high degree of indirection so as to render the interview devoid of useable data.

One major constraint to the methodology became evident: the researcher's skills and expertise in questioning, listening, remembering and writing -- all simultaneously. The researcher became better with time and practice.
CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to explore and understand PRC graduate students' perceptions of education-related choices which they are making or have made during their tenures of study in the United States, and to assess the values and considerations underlying these choices. Specifically, the objectives were: (a) To explore and discover how PRC students perceive and describe education in their lives; (b) to discover how they perceive and describe problems in important educational relationships and events; and (c) to assess the presence and influence of Chinese traditional values upon their behaviors within, and attitudes toward these relationships and events.

The study was not based upon the bias of a culture-bound western cognitive paradigm of decision-making theory, but rather upon the students' own elicited perceptions and concepts of education-related contexts. The methodology of the study allowed for individual variations of knowledge, awareness and human experience, as well as variations in English communicative competency. Familiarity and disclosure comfort levels with the interviewer undoubtedly affected variations in responses to some degree. The graduate student consultants' descriptions contained both tacit and explicit perceptions, definitions, and valuations of their educational life experiences at Northwest University (NWU). The complete interview transcriptions were filled with descriptive cross-cultural comparisons and personal experiences.

This chapter includes the findings of the research project. Results will be prefaced with a presentation of a description of the sample. Then, the results will be organized around the following eight themes: (a) The ideal Chinese family as the model for the educational institution; (b) the Confucian scholar-official tradition and the teaching of morality over knowledge; (c) Chinese collective identity; (d) the preservation of social harmony and face considerations; (e) indirection; (f) action, inaction, and non-action; (g) problems within student-professor relationships; and (h) perceptions of mistreatment. The chapter will conclude with a summary of the findings.
DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE

The assistance of four key consultants was essential to the success of this research project. Because disclosure of personal information depended upon knowledge of and familiarity with the interviewer, these key consultants provided introductions and character references which, ultimately, allowed collection of the data.

Of the initial 17 individuals who consented to be interviewed (12 men and five women), the responses of four were guarded to such an extent to not yield significant insight into their education-related decisions. However, that they chose not to reveal their opinion is, in itself, revealing. As has been noted elsewhere (Hsu, 1979), it is consistent with Chinese cultural tradition -- for the preservation of social harmony and the concept of public face -- for individuals to be guarded against those whose characters are unknown or unreferenced. Also, resignation for fear of political reprisals, for "mistakes," or "getting into trouble" is understandable under the real and present observation of Chinese government representatives on campus.

The remaining 13 consultants ranged in age from 29 to 50 years of age. There were nine men and four women in the sample, and all but one were married. All but two had a child. There was a fairly even distribution of the sample by place of birth, by family background, and by years in the U.S. studying. One interesting finding related to the sex of their child (see the tables, below).

Table I
Consultants, by age and gender.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>age</th>
<th>26-30</th>
<th>31-35</th>
<th>36-40</th>
<th>41-45</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table II
Sex of the child, by gender of consultant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>boy</th>
<th>girl</th>
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<th>n=</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>n=9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>n=4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition, all consultants were assessed to have high communicative competency levels which allowed relatively easy communication of ideas. Now let us discuss the cultural values discovered within the descriptive data. We will begin by examining the traditional ideal Chinese family as the model for the educational institution.
Confucius believed that all social structures, and every level within, should be modeled after the family. All institutions, especially universities, have been structured according to this design (Baker, 1979; Hsu, 1987; Lin, 1937; Tsai, 1986). A strict hierarchy of social role behavior in the family was the model for all behavior within these institutions (Baker, 1979; Hsu, 1987; Wolf, 1978).

The major cultural dyad was father and son, with strict reciprocity obligations between the two. These included the father's responsibility to provide an education (moral and ethical), and in turn, the son was obligated to learn and be successful. Obedience without question by the son was required. The son was to listen and obey. The father (or the eldest male) made all the decisions. In the absence of the father, the eldest male assumed the head of the household. Traditionally, women were of little value and subordinate to all males in the household. The strict role hierarchy of the ideal Chinese family was adopted as the model for each level within a school or college. The presence of this role hierarchy, with its inherent values as revealed in the descriptive data, will be presented below.

Consultant descriptions were rich with allusions to the "family" nature of their own Chinese college educational experiences, and how different it is in the United States. Consultants described how "their class" of "19--" (in college in China) was "just like a family." All consultants explicitly described the structure and organization of their college lives in China in terms of the family. They lived, ate, slept, studied, played, and took exams together -- collectively and communally -- separated only by sex. They described the social role hierarchy among students and teachers in Chinese colleges with the same responsibilities and duties found in the "ideal Chinese family," with the "father-teacher" (often the department Chair) as the head. Most consultants said they had held these same cultural role expectations during their graduate study, and for their American "father-teacher-major professor" relationship at NWU when they first arrived.
Presented below are the themes which surfaced in the descriptive data regarding the role expectations and duties within the traditional Chinese family, along with the parallel role expectations graduate students held for students and teachers in C1 and C2 university settings.

Lack of Individual Choice and Decision Making

Older individuals (parents, teachers and brothers) make the decisions for younger individuals. Ms. L was describing that her parents had "suggested" that she and her husband not send money back to China and that her parents were very content to see them succeed in school. Tacitly, she revealed the reciprocity obligation and expectation between parents and children, reiterating what most of the consultants stated about traditional parental decision making:

In the Chinese way, whatever parents decide is good. Most Chinese respect and follow their parents. Their parents support them so they can be successful.

Mr. M told me that educational decisions are largely determined by parents through the provision of "teaching" or "advising" (which is taken to be "orders," and never to be questioned) as the children are raised. Transmission of traditional values is evident from parents to children in Mr. M's family background, and is shaped by historical-political events. He quoted traditional sayings, describing the ineffectiveness of the individual to change his situation in life, as well as the burden of responsibility placed upon the son to maintain face by succeeding, and thus bring honor to the family or to lose face by failing, and thus bring shame to his father, son and grandsons to come:

My father was a high school principal -- well educated. He joined the Guomendong with Jiang Kaishek. I remember my father saying to me, "You are different, therefore you cannot be like other people." That was because my grandfather was well educated and a big landlord....he was shot when the communists took over in 1949. So the son must reflect the father, and the father is reflected in the son. My parents said that I, along with
my brother and two sisters, must study science or technology...that I could not even wish to be a writer or a poet or an artist.

Mr. M's parents designed his career direction for him. He cited the cultural axiom which subordinates individuals (both his parents and himself) to the forces of nature and events:

There is a Chinese saying, "History (events) makes the heroes, heroes do not make history." I wanted to be an artist. I designed that Tien Anmen Massacre T-shirt, did you know? You know, there is a Chinese saying, "Da long Tao ca." It means, "Big wave throws sand grains." The implication is that one person cannot go against the wave of history...you know...events. So I am a scientist. I chose my major because I thought it would be useful for my country. Now the Chinese students change their majors to follow the U.S. job market. They came to stay.

The Eldest Male Assumes the Father-teacher Role

Mr. G explained that he was expected to assume the guiding father-role in his family, due to the absence of his father and older brother. Mr. G didn't help his younger siblings, and evidence of the father-teacher role expectation for the eldest male present in the family emerged in his expression of guilt over what he did not do:

In Chinese history the father is the most influential figure. He is shamed if the son is not successful. I didn't do much to help my brother and sister -- yes, I have a little sister five years younger, and a little brother eight years younger...they didn't do very well, and I was the top student in our county. I really feel guilty because my older brother -- the eldest son -- was away in military service at the time, and I was the one available to help them, but I didn't...I am still trying to help them better their education....

In Confucian philosophy, the father is the teacher and model of correct behavior. All consultants alluded to their father-teacher who "advised" them of their future careers. Family hierarchy is evident in the obligation of the eldest male to assume the father-teacher role. But in the absence of the father, the eldest son assumes the duties. "Advice" from the eldest male in the
absence of the father is considered to be the same as an imperative command. Ms. K, whose absentee father only visited once a year, said:

My older brother [the eldest] was the best influence on me. He was really like a father to me. I entered college for him. He was working at a factory at an electrical plant -- his college major was electrical engineering. He would always tell me that I had to get an education. The students and teachers always liked me, but I didn't study very hard. But my exam scores were always good. I'm working on [a job] in the [department].

Mr. E described his fearful acceptance, over time, of the role his parents had chosen for him. Both parents served as strong role-models and were highly assertive in "guiding" him into a teaching career. It is important to keep in mind that a "suggestion," or "advice" from an elder male or father, or from both parents was traditionally considered to be an imperative, and in Mr. E's case, we can see this Confucian axiom expressed in the parents behavior, leaving no individual choice or individual self-direction to the son:

In college my parents asked me, "Do you want to be a teacher?" I told them I was so scared, I could never stand up in front of people and do that...actually I was terrified to do that! My mom is an excellent teacher! She teaches chemistry -- students just love her teaching -- she's fantastic, my dad is too -- but not as good as my mom. They both said I should teach. Well I was terrible before, not like now. I was so shy. When I would speak in front of anyone my lips would shake, my legs would shake and my voice would...go away. They said I should teach anyway.

Graduate student parents still plan to determine the direction of their child's life. Eleven of my thirteen consultants had one child. They all told me that they would "advise" their child carefully. One mother, Ms. J, identified the word "advise" as being how she and her husband, as parents, will approve, disapprove, or "guide" the future direction of their son. She said, "...he will choose for himself...but we will advise...." She told me about the naming of their son, which not only reflected their expectations of the importance of morality first and knowledge (academic or scientific study) second, but also the strong "advisement" they planned to provide:
We named our son...from my husband's family. [second name] is his generation name, and it means "ordinary person with everyone." [third name] means "do something great!" Or you can say they mean together, "be with all the people, yet accomplish great things...whatever he decides to be! He will choose [what he wants to do]...but we will advise....

Paternal Dependency and Familial Obligation

All consultant descriptions contained traditional themes of paternal superordinance and/or eldest male influence in decision making. In addition, the traditional expectation of familial obligation to assist family and close friends, as well as the dependency and reliance on family, extended family, and close friends can be seen in consultant responses, when they were asked why they came to study at NWU. They answered that they came because they had a family member, relative, or family friend here. One consultant indicated that he had a "far away uncle" who was employed at NWU from whom he expected assistance. Mr. H's older brother was already at NWU, and helped him with all the details of application procedure, visa procurement, and served as the "go-between," introducing him to his own major professor and department.

Ms. J described that she had chosen her particular field because of her father's "teaching." She used the same phrase echoed by other consultants -- "My father was a wonderful teacher." He was the greatest influence in planning her direction into a science career:

I was born in a family of well educated people...my father was a chemist, and we lived in [South] China...my father was a wonderful teacher. He always told me that knowledge is power...from the time I was very young he told me stories about famous scientists from the west like Einstein, Newton, and musicians like Bach and Beethoven, and he told me about western history and literature. He had graduated from Beijing University in 1953. My mother taught history in high school. She is in the other room now with the baby. She retired five years ago...she's 62 years old now...my father died last May...about a year ago.
Mr. G had a .5 Graduate Teaching Assistant (GRA) position through his student life here, beginning his first term. His department was well funded by government grants and he indicated he was pleased to be part of a project research team, where he didn't have to do an independent project of his own choice or device. He chose one of three projects offered to him which were part of the joint effort. In effect, he was provided with his project, with very little choice. The major decisions were already determined for him, much like in Chinese colleges. He described his experience as a graduate student glowingly. Also, the last two sentences indicate his strong social conscience and acquired sense of moral reciprocity:

What were my biggest difficulties when I came in 1986? Actually, I got a lot of help from NWU. I really didn't have too many problems. I got a $1,000 interest-free loan through the department and I paid it back in three months. I got a .5 RA from the beginning. I worked on classes and grades at first and I never felt compelled to work at anything else by giving up class-work or studies. I don't want any free money! That's not the way I'm supposed to live!

Parents provide the education; therefore, the son is obligated to succeed. A sense of duty was expressed by many consultants. Mr. H echoes this reciprocity tradition, but implies that his parents expect little from him; so he has no obligation to them. Mr. H is the youngest of all the consultants and was the most recent of all to come to the United States just before June 4, 1989. I asked if he had borrowed a lot to come here and was going to repay it soon. He answered, also commenting in the last sentence on his responsibility to his wife's parents who provided (paid for) most of his airfare and preliminary costs to come to the U.S. for his education. If they provide, he is obligated to be successful:

Well, I heard other Chinese students borrowed a lot in China to come here. They work very hard to try to pay it back as soon as possible and don't buy a car [or anything extra]. My parents understand we don't have very much money...my wife's parents borrowed from their friends and paid for about 60% to 70% of my airfare here, and my wife paid about 15%. I am not responsible to her parents' friends...they are obligated to repay
them. I am responsible and obligated to her parents to succeed in my studies.

Mr. H told me he would like a son, stating that their first child was a girl. He was from a peasant-farmer family in the countryside, and his statement was reminiscent of the modified one-child policy. He had also mentioned that in his family there was no money to educate his two sisters -- only the males (his brother and himself), a patriarchal, Confucian notion.

Cultural Differences In the U.S. -- Freedom of Choice and Self-Direction

Consultants all said that they found the U.S. university system to be very different than the Chinese system of education. Ms. K stated that she felt cross-cultural knowledge was very important for U.S. teachers to have in order to help them understand how difficult it is for Chinese students to adjust to a new system and pedagogical differences here. Chinese cultural role expectations emerged in the consultant descriptions as they contrasted the American system of education with the Chinese system. Ms. K stated some of the differences, not the least of which is a single "father-teacher" (professor) figure, to which all Chinese students look for advisement and academic decision-making:

[University] teachers should really be aware of how we [PRC Chinese] are different though. We are taught in China that you should only listen to the lectures. No questions are permitted. Chinese teachers allow you enough time on tests to really answer the questions from what you know. Here [in the U.S.] students are allowed to ask questions, but everything is rush, rush, rush, on tests and the terms are so short! In China we have only one professor, but here you have a whole committee, which is new to us.

Choice Considerations and Self-Direction

Many of the consultants mentioned, in one form or another, the difficulty of understanding how to cope with individual freedom of choice and direction in determining their own courses of study or research. Mr. M
told me that initially, Chinese graduate students don't know how to consider choices and make decisions for themselves:

Chinese children aren't raised like American children. Chinese parents don't let them make their own decisions...they always tell them what they should do. The children grow up being taught to seek the advice of others for what they should do. Graduate students are the same way. They come here and ask their professors, "What should I do for my degree?" In Chinese schools the student expects to ask his professor what he should do, and the professor tells him...the teacher is like a father giving him all kinds of advice, even on who he should marry...he really gets involved in the personal life of the student; this is the way it is [in China]...everybody gets lots of advice from others, but here (NWU), advice means something else!

Use your own best judgment! Be responsible for yourself! Choose your own direction! Be independent! You must choose, decide, and determine your direction for yourself! These phrases are incomprehensible to PRC Chinese graduate students in their first year or two on campus, according to several consultants. They have never determined their own directions alone, if even allowed to at all. The elders of their identity groups -- their work units, their departments, their classes, their teams -- have always made the decisions and determined directions for them. Mr. C was describing his first year of "being lost and not understanding anything," when he said:

Here [at NWU], most [American] professors don't see relationships with their grad students as personal at all. They say "You have to think for yourself! You have to decide for yourself which is the best direction for your study." This sounds crazy to most Chinese students. How do they know what direction to take when their professor is supposed to know everything and they are not supposed to know very much? Well, I didn't think for myself! What I learned here (at NWU) is useless for me. I should have changed my major.

Mr. C offered this "advice" to U.S. university professors and personnel:

In order to be more helpful to Chinese students, professors should invite the students to meet and help them write out a
program and study plan for their terms here. The quarter system is so fast and confusing at first. They are not prepared to go so fast. And they should explain how the system works here, in other words, how to cope with so many choices and the freedom to choose their own directions. This individual freedom of choice and direction is not understood at all by students who have always had their choices made for them, or assigned to them. It is not in their thinking.

In Mr. C's description above, individual freedom of choice and direction in the U.S. university is contrasted with the Chinese system in which there are few choices for students. Mr. M contrasted the two systems, also mentioning the lack of choices within the collective uniformity of Chinese university study programs. There was the expectation of and dependency upon elders to make all the decisions for the students. He emphasized the closeness, the collective identity, collective space, communal living, and "family" quality of his strong, support peer cohort "class of 1980":

Well, when I started my program here it was really confusing. In China for example, my 1980 class had 50 people in it, all with the same major. We would all study separately, but live and sleep together in the same dorm. We lived together and ate together in the same dining hall. We all shared the same classroom during the day, and from morning until night we were constantly together. In the American system, on the other hand, there is more freedom to choose your own course of study. One guy takes 15 credits, and the guy next to him takes 9 credits. Nobody has exactly the same program, but in China as I told you, there were 50 of us who took exactly the same program, the same credits, the same classes, the same times, the same professors, and the same tests.

In the U.S., Mr. M was alone and was expected to make all C2 decisions and choices by himself.

In China, classes and academic programs are chosen for students. They have no choice in the matter. All students have the same program. It was Mr. D's perception that American students had a wide knowledge of many subjects, while Chinese students were trained to have a deep knowledge of their major area. He offered a typically polite and balanced, but indirectly
stated, opinion that American students in general do not discipline themselves very well to focus narrowly as specialists:

American tests cover class lecture material, but in China they only cover the textbooks. I was really surprised -- they take so many classes in other fields -- for Chemistry students back in China -- we are only allowed to take chemistry classes. But American students are exposed to a lot of other department's classes. They do have an advantage on the other hand, because they have a lot of flexibility to find a job--they can combine their knowledge to fit a diverse number of jobs. In China it's hard to get a job other than in a very narrow area of your major.

As illustrated by consultant descriptions, decisions and "guidance" are provided by the "father-teacher" professor. Consultants mentioned that when they came to this U.S. university, they looked to this figure to provide them with decisions and directions regarding academic and career choices, of which they had not the least bit of understanding.

The Father-Teacher -- Student Relationship

At this point, let us examine consultants' comparative (Chinese-U.S.) descriptions of the primary academic relationship within the department "family" -- that of the "father-teacher" professor, and the student. Mr. M's definition below of a university department is, in fact, an echo of the Confucian ideal family as the model for all social structures, including schools and colleges. A good university department should be very personal and like a family, Mr. M told me. The good professor should take a personal interest in the life of his student. Having just completed his Ph.D. studies, he commented about his educational life at this U.S. university:

I was lucky [here at NWU] -- I had a good professor and a good department, like a family -- it was small and everybody knew each other.

Mr. C, who had also just finished his Ph.D. studies at NWU, explained that PRC students have been taught in China that their relationship with one
"father-teacher" professor is the most important relationship in their academic career and should be handled with extreme care, and that they bring this expectation with them when they come to study in the United States. The professor is their superior, and they are subordinate. He can assure their success or their failure. Their loyalty should be to this one professor, and never be betrayed. Students and professors consider that the verbal promise is everything, and keep mental records of these promises, never forgetting them. Students must never lose their own face for they would bring embarrassment and loss of face to their professor also. He said that here at NWU, generally speaking, Chinese students didn't get much help from their American professors. He continued to contrast traditional Chinese (C1) student-teacher obligation expectations modeled after the Confucian ideal, with his own and other PRC student experiences in the U.S. (C2) university setting:

You must find that Chinese students are eager to talk with you, because most Americans show very little interest in Chinese students. Well, in Chinese Society everything is based on a person's word of honor. All promises or agreements -- even expectations -- are remembered. But the verbal promise is everything. There are a lot of communications problems.

His comment regarding verbal promises pertains to such informal and non-committal U.S. professor-comments, such as, "Sure, I'll be glad to help you with that...give me a call anytime!" He defined the role and duties of the student to the teacher, which parallel those of the son to the father in the traditional Chinese family:

When Chinese students first come to study here they have been trained to be loyal to their particular professor. They can't betray the professor, they can't reflect him in a negative light in any way. This will be losing face for him and in so doing will bring discredit upon them also. They expect a very personal relationship with their professor -- almost like a father as well as a teacher. They place him on a pedestal. They place him on a pedestal of superior knowledge. They don't know anything and he is supposed to know everything.
Mr. C went on to explain how his misattribution of Chinese student expectations -- namely, loyalty, face maintenance, and reciprocity obligation -- created a self-projected behavioral trap from which he could not extricate himself:

One guy came and got an M.A. in [a closely related major I could have easily switched to], and then quit and got a great job with an oil company. But I had a strong sense of obligation -- I felt I couldn't switch my major from [my major] to something useful. I saw an ad for jobs with the British Petroleum Company -- there was a good job paying lots of money...but no, I had to finish [my obsolete major]! I felt I couldn't switch because my department and the profs here had invested in me -- they got my IAP-66 for me, they gave me an assistantship, and I had to produce for them...I felt I should repay them for what they had done...and my professor too.

He explained that he was attributing Chinese cultural role expectations and behavioral interpretations to his American professors and consequently expecting them to respond with "Chinese professor" behavior. This misattribution of Chinese characteristics was the proclivity of most Chinese students when they came to study here in the United States, he told me, commenting on his own relationship with "his professor":

...there was a real lack of communication and understanding between us. I was making assumptions which would have been true in China, but not here -- they probably wouldn't have cared a bit if I had switched.

He continued to explain the trap wherein Chinese students must first gain trust, and work hard at whatever demeaning tasks are assigned without complaint, in order to prove loyalty to the teacher. Then, if they "pass the test," the teacher agrees to take them on as "his" student. Finally, the student is obligated to repay the teacher by learning. By being successful during the learning (getting good grades), and after, by getting a good position, he brings honor to his teacher. The student's life is entirely in the hands of the teacher. The student is in great fear of displeasing the teacher, who makes all the decisions for the student. The student makes no decisions about his course of
study. It depends upon the judgement of the teacher, and in the case of the university system, it is the department head usually who assigns them their job position after graduation. So loyalty must be proven to the teacher, and the department chair. Explaining that this is still widespread currently in the Chinese higher educational system, Mr. C went on to illustrate these cultural role descriptions with a traditional story:

In China for example this goes too far. The teacher is powerful. A student is just like a slave...like...OK...I'm yours, use me however you want...I will prove to you I'm a loyal servant. So it's just like a test of loyalty.

It's like the haircutter in China. If you want to learn to cut hair, then you make an agreement -- he is the teacher and you are the student...so you hang around for three years and study, watch, observe, listen, sweep hair, clean everything, and if you prove to be loyal then he will accept you as his student and teach you how to cut somebody's hair! You gain trust, prove loyalty, then learn from the teacher. At first, you just be the teacher's slave. Through the 50's and 60's in China it was almost the same in China in universities.

Father-Teacher (Professor) Omniscience

Ms. L explained one traditional expectation of teachers held by students in China. She said:

In China we thought the teachers were always right, but here (in the U.S.), teachers aren't that way.

Teachers are expected to have all the answers. Asking questions is also a face consideration, and assumes the student has not been paying attention, or that the teacher's explanation is not good. Traditionally speaking, to ask questions is to lose face (respect) for self, or for the professor. Graduate students preparing to be teachers, therefore, are expected to study and be prepared to have all the answers -- to be omniscient. Mr. M's answer of how a professor could lose face confirms the expectation of omniscience, and was similar to the answers given by other consultants:
[When] an American professor says, "I don't know," [he] loses respect from his students. We expect a Chinese teacher to have all the answers.

**Traditional Student Obligations**

First, if the teacher agrees to teach the student, the student is obligated to learn. Mr. M explained that he had to please two professors here -- his major professor, and the professor he worked for (the one who provided his assistantship). He was thankful for the opportunity to excel and work with such helpful and "nice guys," and reiterated again his contempt for haughty superiors:

I wanted to be a success, I was really motivated. You know we [Chinese] think we have to please 1) the major professor first, and 2) the financial sponsor or the prof who provides the assistantship -- he is like a "father-teacher." He provides the education and we are bound to learn and be successful. I appreciate so much the opportunity I got here...I wanted to be the best, I didn't want to waste my time...I was really motivated to learn. I can't stand anybody looking down on me -- like my home Department Chair in China, and like another high-up Chinese guy here....

I received nearly the same answer when I asked Mr. G how he planned to pay back the assistantship grant money that was being given to him to do his own research, which was actually part of an overall project. Reflecting his comfort with team collective identity, he said that he enjoyed being part of a project group, and that his responsibility was to learn well and be successful:

How am I going to repay all of this? What are my obligations? I repay them by doing well on the research I'm doing...I got three or four choices of which research I wanted to do within our grant, and I chose the one I wanted. By succeeding in my own work the whole project benefits. My research is a part of the project.
Mr. H offered essentially the same perceptions of reciprocity obligations between major professor and student -- if the professor agrees to teach, the student must work hard, be loyal, be pleasant, and be successful by getting A's.

Just as with the Confucian ideal family, wherein the father or eldest male's omniscience, superiority and imperative "suggestions" are not to be questioned, but obeyed, the consultants concurred that whatever the professor (Chinese or American) suggests, the Chinese graduate student will do. The American professor may have no idea that the Chinese student may interpret, as an order, his poorly thought out "in the shower this morning" idea, or idle suggestion. The student may go spend three months researching the professor's "...well, maybe you ought to look at this theory...uh...I'm a little late for lunch right now" suggestion. As one consultant related to me, "the student takes him like a father and listens carefully, and does what he suggests." For the PRC graduate student, the traditional C1 father-son/teacher-student dyad is projected onto the C2 educational institution, and onto the people identified with that institution.

THE CONFUCIAN SCHOLAR-OFFICIAL TRADITION
AND THE TEACHING OF MORALITY OVER KNOWLEDGE

In the Han Dynasty, 2000 years ago, the first colleges were inaugurated to train male scholar-officials for government appointment based on scholastic achievement in the study of the Confucian classics. The purpose for establishing schools was two fold: first, to provide scholar-officials to maintain social structuring and govern, and, second, to model and teach correct social behavior and morality to the masses. Patriarchal Confucianism became the official state philosophy and established the tradition of male college teachers teaching primarily morality and social behavior and, secondarily, knowledge. The best (men only) were chosen for high offices (Freedman, 1979). The best scholars became the highest officials. Thus, every father wanted his son to be a scholar. Two of my male consultants from peasant-farmer families stated that there was enough money to send the boys to college, but not the girls, suggesting the continuity of these patriarchal values. Teaching Confucian as well as subsequent scholarly classics was the means to this end, subordinating the importance of the teaching of particular
knowledge areas. Thus, history, science, the arts and literature were all secondary, serving only as illustrative and exemplary vehicles to reinforce harmonious social cohesion.

Morality as the only major purpose for education was not evident in the descriptive data, but consultant descriptions yielded the presence of two main cognitive principles: (a) education (becoming a scholar) is the way to a high position, and (b) the teacher is the model of moral behavior and of knowledge. The descriptive data revealed that all the consultants valued graduate study as the path to a "high position," some mentioning college educated leaders such as Zhou En Lai and Sun Yat Sen as role models. Several consultants mentioned an education was the "only way" they could get a good position. Several others cited and identified the Confucian saying, "A good scholar makes an official" as part of their belief systems.

Today in China, scientists are employed by the government in the same way that officials of the Confucian schools were appointed to government posts. Ms. L said she chose a science scholarship, stating the principles of the scholar-official school as the way to a good life and high office:

My mother and father encouraged me...they said an education is the most important thing of all...they hoped I would get more education. They only had a high school education. If you are a good scholar, then you get a high position and good pay, and if you are a man you get a good girl, good pay, good office. We have an old saying, Wan ban jieh xia pin, Wei yu du shou gao. This means "Ten thousand things belong to the lower levels, only education and study are of high importance." Chinese parents hope their daughters or sons become [scientists], [officers], or get [high positions] to make a surplus of money.

**Education -- Motives and Definitions**

The way to a high position of influence is through scholarship hard work and diligence, according to the Confucian scholar-official tradition. But the application of this principle in a strange country with few human, financial, or material resources means sacrifice, loneliness and depression. Mr. M told me again that it was the motivation of having a better life for
himself and his family that enabled him to make it. Only through hard work and education could he succeed in making a better life. By getting a high position that paid well and also by working with an exciting team of researchers, thereby sustaining his own interests of achievement with a team, he could satisfy both their financial needs and his self-actualizing needs to become an influential scientist in the United States. The purpose? So he could ultimately go back to change China for the better -- to serve the people. To be an excellent and influential scholar-scientist in order to get a high paying position in order to introduce the correct morality to the people is exactly the prescription for a Confucian scholar-official. But in Mr. M's case, the social morality, he said, would be democracy.

I asked consultants to tell me why education was important to them, who told them, or where they were and what they were doing when they first realized it was important. Descriptions contained the same formula for success -- the old Confucian scholar-official traditions of scholarship as the way to attain a high position, and the curricular criteria for quality teaching: first, the teaching and modeling of correct morality and social values, and second, having all the answers (the knowledge). Almost all consultants described their professors first in terms of their caring and moral life, and secondly in terms of their expertise. For example, Mr. F's response contained the themes of saving face for the family, getting a high position, and attaining high social status.

Who told me education was important? Well, It's kind of Chinese tradition. The intellectuals and scholars think that they are higher than farmers...that it is noble to pursue knowledge, so they expect their kids to also be intellectuals. If they're not then they are ashamed of their kids. Maybe people will think that their kids are not smart...Confucius said you have to study hard and learn a lot to get a high position. The saying literally means, learn excellent become administrator. It means, "a good scholar will make an official." This is a Confucian doctrine. Of course, this was criticized in the Cultural Revolution, but most people are still influenced by this philosophy. You will be shamed if you don't go to college, and bring shame to your family. My family was very proud of me for going abroad to the U.S. to study. Sure, they were disappointed in my older brother who is now a machinery technician in a factory.
Mr. G was the second son. He stated that his father was stern, but a wonderful teacher -- of correct behavior first, and knowledge second -- and that a scholar was what Chinese parents wanted their children to be:

Education was important because the family -- parents -- want you to be an excellent scholar...this is Chinese tradition. They give you examples from history when you're growing up. Although the Cultural Revolution was happening at the time during my upbringing (where teachers were being persecuted) this was still widely supported as the common tradition consensus. My father was the most influential person in my life about education, but my mother was too. Actually, I didn't have much trouble with learning -- my family and I had no conflicts in this at all because I was always the number one student or in the top three in my class. But I was a "naughty" kid and my father was always having trouble with me.

Social morality over knowledge was a strong part of his father's teaching, and because he was a "naughty" child, his father physically punished him a lot. He said his father was the most influential person in his life, and was such a good teacher. So his father was a moral teacher first, and a knowledge teacher second. Echoing another consultant's observation -- that the father is reflected in the son -- Mr. G said that in Chinese society the father is shamed if the son is not successful. Also he stated that he felt guilty for not helping his younger brother and sister more with their educations, as was expected of him.

My father was first a primary school teacher because he was one of the best educated...he had a high school education...of course this is different than a U.S. high school education, much more extensive. He taught me that I must always be a strong pillar-support beam, or "strong contributor" to society. My father is such a good teacher. He said the most important thing I will always remember. He said, "You can think about this question for the rest of your life, 'What kind of person do I want to be?'"...you know...do I want to be a thief? Or something else? This always kept me thinking "Am I doing right?" I love him a lot...he spent a lot of time with me...of course I hated him at the time because he beat me a lot with his belt, the soles of his shoe,
or other things. Thinking back I really appreciated his being such a stern father. I needed it...of course he overdid it sometimes and beat me too much. But the idea of "child abuse" is a difficult term to apply...this is common in Chinese culture for fathers to be stern.

Mr. A gave me many answers to my question, "Where and when did you first think that education would be important for your life?" To an American his answer might appear as very indirect, to a Chinese, they might be precise. His descriptive answer included information about the starvation and suffering of his parents and family, his wish to climb out of poverty and suffering by means of education, his father's wish ("thinking") that he might become a great scholar someday, a hero figure who was a great leader by being an expert planner and strategist, and the village shaman's prediction that he would be outstanding. The scholar-official tradition (if one studies well, one can be a leader) is the strongest theme in his aspirations to become a leader:

You know, my Father suffered a lot. To a Chinese, an education means a high position in the social hierarchy. My father thought maybe I would become a great scholar. When I was young I was weak. I was bullied a lot by the other kids. Do you know the game of Chess? I love the Chinese hero who was not a warrior but could command an army without fighting, because he could plan and strategize. An expert planner has to know dialectics, a rich body of knowledge, geography, human relations, psychology, economics...in primary school I had a friend who felt he was born very lucky -- he had lots of "5's" -- there is a belief in the number five...the number five is lucky. Well, he bragged to me about his "5's." I was nine years old. His life was worse than mine. He failed to enter college, but we are still friends...we call each other brothers...and I still visit him. My family was so poor that at one point I considered marrying to help out my family -- I was trying to help economically. Well...when I was very young, the village shaman predicted I would be an outstanding man. That's why I have tried so hard. I still have regrets. Confucius would say a sage (scholar) is the best leader. A gentleman would be respected first in morality without any knowledge. A fool would be respected over a villain because he has no ability to do too many bad things or hurt people intentionally. Well, you can control and be a leader...if you study well you can excel. This is one way. Another way to excel
is to be toady...that means kiss ass...manipulate people...but the easiest way to become a leader is to have a "back-door connection..." that is, if your father is a high official. This is the easiest way to get ahead! The Chinese culture produces hypocrites because the social expectation is set so high and the possible achievement level is so low.

Again the theme of alleviation of suffering (and starvation) through education came from Mr. B, with the realization that he could excel by hard work with his mind rather than with his hands because of his physical weakness:

When we were in [X Province] for the first six months we ate corn and potatoes. For the second half year just potatoes. My job was farmer...no electricity, we cut trees and wood to cook and keep warm. From 1971 to 1973, during the Cultural Revolution, my father went to work with my mother in the factory, and I went to high school. Actually I lost a lot of education in 1966 -- I was in high school. Life was so hard in the countryside, I could not get enough to eat, and I was weak I couldn't carry my own share...I was only in the fifth grade education level, and I was 18 years old. It was during this time that I realized that education was important. It was when I could not carry enough wood for my own use/share, and the others needed someone to calculate the weights of the loads instead...I realized I could earn my way by being smarter than everyone else in math. This was the startling moment when my life changed...I realized that education would ease my suffering. I always remember this time as the reason I must work hard.

Mr. D's pursuit of a college education was due to a strong influence from his intellectual friends to continue as a member of their friendship group and as a means to get more money by getting a paid position when he had finished. The peasant-farmer parents of Mr. H had also impressed upon him that a scholar gets a good position, so he must have an education. He also stated that there was no money in his family for the education of his two sisters:

My parents were peasant-farmers. My father had an elementary education, and my mother had none. They fully understood the
importance of education. They said, "If you want a good position, you must have an education." My older brother -- he's three years older -- became the first college student ever in my family. It's very rare for two college students in one family. My parents are very proud! I have two sisters: three years younger and four years younger. There's no money for their education; so they can't go to college.

It is clear that education is viewed as valuable by those who were interviewed because of its impact on an individual's future position. To attend a U.S. school was a great status symbol, for which all the family could be very proud. It provided a social elevation such as obtained by the leaders. The encouragement and pride of parents for their foreign graduate study or work at universities in the U.S. was related by all consultants:

It's pretty accepted that for young people to study abroad is something for their parents to be proud of...in recent Chinese history this is what Chinese leaders have done -- Deng Xiaoping went to France, and Premier Zhou En Lai to Paris, too -- to get a Western education; many others went to the Soviet Union, so going abroad to get an education is a step up in status...in life.

Along with the status importance of an education abroad comes the added collective pressure upon the student to be successful and maintain face, aspects of which are discussed in later sections. However, it is important to note the relationship between this pressure for continued success, and the increased pressure on the student to not only perform well academically, but to have "correct" behavior, particularly with teachers. Consultants described their expectations of the teacher as a traditional moral and behavioral role-model. And they described the need for continued moral training in the university for the promotion of social cohesion and the collective good, rather than for the preservation of individual rights. Teachers were seen by consultants as being instrumental in the teaching and exemplification of social ethics and morality. Let us examine a few descriptive examples.
Expectations of Social Morality in Education

Also evident in the consultants' responses was the expectation that it is the teacher's duty to teach morality in some form and to serve as a model of correct social behavior, in addition to being an authority in a particular area of knowledge. We had just been discussing the amount of crime and the disintegration of the family in America. Mr. M said he thought that U.S. university teachers should be free to be teachers of good morality and healthy values to help cure these social ills:

Well, I was thinking about the teachers. The U.S. doesn't give the teachers the freedom to teach values. This is OK in one respect but not in another. In protecting the rights of the individual, students don't get direction in social values, values necessary for a healthy society.

Mr. G was asked if he was interested in getting a good job here in the U.S. and getting paid a large salary, or was he interested in returning to China to help with the reconstruction of its society. Remembering his father's moral guidance, he stated, indirectly, that social morality was more important to him than getting a great job in the United States. His stated motive for education was to achieve a respected position through scholarship and become a professor for the purpose of returning to China to work in politics for the good of Chinese society, perhaps combining communist and capitalist social theory, and democracy:

It's good to work and get paid good money and enjoy life, but on the other hand, I keep coming back to my father's question, "What kind of person do I want to be?" Really in the bottom of my heart I think that communism has some good things -- they teach to work for the good of the community, rather than just for the individual. I was the luckiest -- compared to others; I was given talents and skills, and I want to use them to help others.

Mr. H talked about the importance of assessing the moral character of the faculty by talking with [seeking advice from] other Chinese students, and also for the selection of new research situations, departments, or schools:
Before applying [to a new department] we must know things about the professor...like...Is he fair to Chinese students? Is he fair to them? Does he have a good personality? What is his research area? Does he have a good research reputation?

Mr. E proudly defined, in relationship terms, his criteria for having achieved success as a teacher. In order of importance, they were: (a) being accepted, (b) gaining face (respect) from other colleagues and staff by caring about them (being willing to help them), and lastly, (c) from having acquired superior knowledge. Although he values knowledge highly, he listed morality first, and knowledge second.

Consultants mentioned repeatedly that morality, diligence, honesty (good character) were the major criteria to look for in a good teacher and an outstanding graduate student. They considered, secondly, that the teacher should know everything about his subject and that the student should aspire to know everything too. Teaching assistants should study hard, because their students would expect them to have all the answers.

I asked Ms. L why she was chosen, as an outstanding student, to come to study in the United States. She said, "I was chosen...because I am a hard worker, and I am very honest." In China, Ms. L's Director "advised" her about what kind of a student she should be in the United States:

My Director in China told me when you go [to NWU in America], you must work hard, study, be nice to your co-workers, always do something good, don't let American people look down on you or they will look down on Chinese people, and don't play. Your purpose is to work hard, and don't do something wrong.

One evening, Mr. M handed me a cartoon from an American-Chinese newspaper which humorously described the widely held Chinese cultural expectations of "the teacher." He started chuckling, and leaned toward me with his hand held out:

Here, I clipped this cartoon for you. I was thinking about your research about student perceptions of teachers, and this pretty well illustrates what Chinese teachers are supposed to be. He is supposed to be a moral example (more important than what he knows is how he behaves with others). A teacher is only a
human being, but he's supposed to be perfect: have utmost patience, be law-abiding, know everything on his subject, lead a simple life, and be like a father to his students. In the cartoon picture the two guys in the truck are hauling off a car for parking in the wrong place, and one recognizes the owner as his old elementary school teacher. "Who would have ever thought he'd break the law?" he says.

COLLECTIVE IDENTITY, DUTY AND RESPONSIBILITY

Identified as a traditional Chinese cultural value (Hsu, 1979), the self is defined only in relationship to others. Linguistically speaking, most of my consultants rarely answered my conditional questions with the first person subject pronoun, "I." The repeated and universal (thematic) use of the collective first person plural "we" by consultants within the interviews in answer to specific and repeated third-person-singular subject directed questions was indicative of their identification not only with other Chinese, but in most cases their identification with a sense of time honored and accepted historical custom and appropriate social behavior. For example, several times I asked consultants the question, "Why didn't you tell your professor you were unhappy in your work?" Frequently, they would answer my question this way (with the inclusion of a cultural behavior axiom or "cultural theme marker"): "We have an old Chinese saying that will help you understand why we feel it is not polite to do this..."

Collective identity (in terms of duty and responsibility) was expressed in consultant worries about the consequences of their actions or words (should they be reported by government agents) to their fellow Chinese students here, to their friends and family "back home in China." Collective identity was identified in consultant considerations of face (respect). Any action of theirs would be viewed as representative of their group or associates, be they students, their department, their professor, their family, their nationality, or their country. For example, consultants revealed their collective identification with others when they said, "...if we get bad grades, the professor will think Chinese students are not competent." Or, "Because he had a bad experience several years ago with a Chinese student, maybe he wouldn't hire me." Or, "We want him [our professor (singular)] to have a
good view of Chinese students, so we must do well in our studies." Or, "We
don't want to get bad grades because it makes our professor [singular] and
department [singular] look bad.

Consultants' collective identity, responsibility, and duty thematically
reappeared in many descriptions as "...fear for others, if I make a mistake."
Consultants expressed fears of saying something "wrong," which might "get
others into trouble," "lose face" for their professor, their department, family,
nationality or country, or for having "the wrong views," or "for not being
successful."

Mr. M had just received his Ph.D degree when I spoke with him. He
described the different chronological cohort groups of PRC students who had
come to study here. These cohort groups as described, mark the evolution of
collective identity over time in terms of value change. With the first two
groups there was a dedication to China which has now become self-dedication
in the last group:

There are two categories of students. One is government
sponsored, and the other is private sponsored. There have been
three distinctly different groups of Chinese who came to study
here. The first group was from 1980 to 1986. They were
government sponsored students with enough money for two
years living and tuition. They followed Chinese government
rules very carefully. They didn't work, make money, and they
didn't change. They were outstanding students who planned to
go back to China and transfer their knowledge and new
technology. The second wave of students came between 1986
and 1989. Some of them were government sponsored, but many
were self supported, but they were sponsored by a U.S. friend.
The third was the Chu guo ré, or, "go-abroad-wave" of students.

Mr. D wanted to meet with me in my office for our two interviews. We
drank tea and chatted in the late evening. He told me that this year the
change was very dramatic among students who had come here since the June
4th, 1989, demonstration in Beijing, and that there had been demonstrations
in Shanghai at the same time. He said:

The Chinese students who have come here are different. The
first group -- Mr. M's group -- their ideology is already
formed...they still keep the same thoughts...and they're more conservative; the second group (1985-89) is another generation with pretty moderate thinking; and then there's another group that came after the June 4th Incident. They are like another generation.

Mr. D explained that the United States attracted China's very best students:

About people coming here. It's really an epidemic -- "To Get Out of China!" The best -- the top -- Chinese students come to U.S. schools and probably also European schools, but the students who go to Canada or Australia are not as highly qualified...they are accepted at universities there more easily, too...a lot of Chinese students just go to learn English or another language, not to get a higher education in addition.

His perception was that the latest group was very materialistic, and represented a different ideology than his earlier group. He begins with the theme of suffering and persecution from the government:

About the latest group of Chinese students...they really suffered from the government reprisals after the Tien Anmen Square incident...some of them say they didn't get any benefit from the June 4th demonstration...only persecution, so they resent those students who took part. A lot of them just want to come here because they've heard about how you can make a lot of money here. They just come here to look for a girlfriend or a boyfriend, and they're more material minded. They just want to get a green card, make money. They don't care about political changes in China too much.

Adding to the information about the most recent group, Mr. G also commented about the degree of secret caution and fear of "getting into trouble," which they may bring with them:

I think maybe the new students who suffered the backlash after the Tien Anmen Square came here and really hate China -- we older students remember before the massacre -- the ten years of openness and opportunities from 1978 to 1988. That was an OK time in China. It is harder now. Did you talk with any visiting scholars who have come here since June of 1989? I think maybe
they are pretty afraid, so they’re especially careful about what they say.

Mr. D, who was from a large Chinese city, related that he had no family or friendship connections, no money, and that many students had to apply to schools that could give them an assistantship, hoping then to transfer to another school once they were here. He only relied on friends to help him change money to pay for the TOEFL with U.S. currency. We can observe considerable self-reliance in his individual initiative, which may indicate a shift away from the collective identity and the total reliance on others to actuate one's future. This was certainly self-assertiveness and struggle to actuate one's future through individual initiative, and was common behavior among my consultants, most of whom had to struggle valiantly to get out of China. They strategized carefully on their own regarding permissions, passports, university admission, visas and finances, to first get out of China, and then to stay in the United States:

Well, I applied to several U.S. schools. I didn't get any help from my friends or contacts and I didn't know anybody here. I went the [X City] Library and looked in The Directory of American Colleges. The only way I could get here was with an assistantship. U.S. colleges required either TOEFL or GRE scores. I tried very hard to get the money (U.S.$26.00 at that time) to take the TOEFL. My friends knew some Americans, and I got some money changed to U.S. currency. I didn't do very well on the test -- I only got 550 then. The GRE cost $50 and is very hard, and this was required by many U.S. colleges, but NWU didn't require it so I applied to NWU.

Mr. H, a graduate student entering his third year is one of the "new generation" of Chinese students (described by older students who came earlier) who arrived in the U.S. shortly before the Tien Anmen Square Incident of June 4, 1989. Mr. H, whose wife and child were also here, kept referring back to his financial worries throughout the entire interview. I began by asking him how his studies were going, and his first response was financial, not academic. Consistent with the materialistic values of this chronological "third" group of PRC students to which Mr. H belonged (given by consultants belonging to the previous group, 1983 to 1989 approximately),
his main concern was financing his education, and preparing for a lucrative future in the U.S. job market. His attitudes may also indicate a shift away from collective duty and responsibility to return to China with his education to help "serve the people," as suggested by Burke (1980), and Qi (1989). I learned later that he was finally successful in securing a .5 GRA. He explained his financial strategy (department transfers) without reference to loyalty or obligation to primary people or sources:

Currently I have a .5 RA till my M.S. defense is finished...then it goes to a .15 probably. My wife is looking for a job, and it's pretty scary...I'm trying to transfer to another department where I can get a better RA position. My wife had a great baby-sitting job...she was working thirty five to forty hours per week for $4.75 per hour, and it was even increased to $5.22 per hour this year...this is the best pay in town for baby-sitting! But the mother is home more now and so that's been reduced to only fifteen hours per week...my wife has a job as a seamstress at a dry-cleaning place right now...my daughter is [X] years old, and my wife takes her to work with her at the babysitting job...If I can't get a .5 position then it will be very difficult for us to survive! She has applied for a laundry presser job, and for a direct care for older people position.

[When I first came here] my major prof said he would give me a .15 assistantship. He was very kind. When I arrived he gave me a .25 instead! But his first impression was that my English [pronunciation] was bad....My priorities now are for my wife to get a job, for me to get a higher FTE, and most important for me this year is to improve my English pronunciation...if she doesn't get a job I'll ask my major professor to raise my FTE. Most Chinese students went to Reno to make money [during the Summer]. Most work sixteen hours per day as money-changers.

In the above description, acculturative value shift is perhaps evident in Mr. H's lack of dependency on any collective assistance, and in his self-directed entertainment of strategic alternatives.

On the other hand, indications of collective identity, duty and responsibility to wife and children, extended family, parents, and younger siblings, were evident in consultant descriptions of attempts to help financially and materially, or the intent to do so in the future. Consultants
described their own prudence, thrift and frugality and their forbearance and sacrifice in the conservation of resources.

Suffering and Sacrifice for the Family's Future

I met with over half of my consultants in their rented apartments. Typically, possessions displayed in living rooms were neat, but sparse. There were few material possessions other than necessary furniture. All apartments visited had color televisions. A family grouping of pictures or a family portrait on the wall served as living room focal points in six of the apartments. Few decorations were placed on the walls. In one apartment living room, the only thing on the walls was a centrally located, large three-by-six-foot butcher paper crayon drawing by the couple's four year-old boy, signed by all his day-care teachers, "Happy Birthday, We love you, [name]."

Several consultants revealed that students abroad are obligated to bring or send gifts home. These are costly, and take all the money students can conserve. Mr. C explained his financial situation as a government sponsored student for the first two years he was here:

The Chinese Government gave me $360 per month, and I got a two bedroom apartment with another Chinese guy for $250 per month ($125 for me). Clothes? Well the government gave me money for clothes, and I brought clothes from China. What did I do to save money? Well, if you're abroad you're really obligated to bring home to your family back in China five things -- color TV, sewing machine, stereo, camera, and a watch. So I was saving money for these things to take back.

Several consultants mentioned that the wide variety of choices which Americans take for granted as consumers are not only confusing to PRC Chinese students, but that there is actually no choice at all, for they are obligated to select the cheapest in order to conserve for family needs and obligations. Fairly typical of ways in which PRC students save money were explained by Mr. M. I asked him, "What were the ways?" He told me:

I bought a used garage sale bike for $12, and a color TV for $15. They are the first things to get for learning English and for
transportation. Of course now, I've bought a computer, which is absolutely necessary.

I got an apartment on 12th street for $55 per month. My food cost me about $50 per month, and I ate a lot of noodles. The first year my government stipend was $360, so I saved $200 every month. I never traveled unless I could hitch a free ride with someone else who was going somewhere. I never ate out, went out for coffee, or spent money on theaters or movies. I ate sandwiches and noodles. I bought the cheapest bread -- white bread -- spread one side with strawberry jam and peanut butter, put two or three pieces of baloney on the other side, and that was what I had for lunch every day for two years. Every evening I went home for one hour to eat dinner. I made a big bowl of rice and a big bowl of chicken with cabbage -- I don't drink much milk, never did -- and I would go home for dinner, warm up the rice and chicken and eat it. It...lasted for three or four days.

I wanted to get my wife and son here. After one and a half years I got my wife here, and my son stayed with my mother in China. I never bought anything new, only things used from the thrift shops and at garage sales for the first two years. After that with my assistantship I was making about $500 per month. Before my wife got here I bought a $500 car to impress her when she got here. I knew how to drive tractors in China, so I was familiar with driving.

But consultants also expressed personal emotional and mental costs to this kind of extended forbearance and sacrifice. All consultants described the isolation, separation anxiety, loneliness, stress, worry and depression amid such frugality and sacrifice in one form or another, saying that these were common for most PRC students.

Collective Orientation, and the Absence of Collective Support

Isolation and loneliness in the absence of family and friendship (collective) identity support groups posed a problem for some PRC students who were here in the U.S. alone. Mr. M told me again that it was because of the motivation of having a better life, and the memory of bitter history that
enabled him to make it. Only through hard work and education could he succeed in making a better life. He said:

I studied alone...most Chinese students study alone. You couldn't find many Chinese students in your classes...there were only a total of fifty on campus at that time. We think also that to think and study alone is much more efficient. As a new student here, life was extremely lonesome and hard. I left my wife and young son in China, and when I went home to sleep each night, I would lie on the bed and wonder, what is my wife doing now? My son...what does he look like...why am I doing this? For what? Ultimately I knew that I wanted to have a better life, and that it would only happen through hard work and my education; so I should work especially hard and not get too depressed. I never doubted that I could succeed. I always knew I could do it. But it was lonely and depressing; we didn't go out to bars or restaurants, and we had no family to visit. It was lonely.

Some graduate students do not want to stay in the United States. Ms. J was a graduate student at NWU. She was in her final year of Ph.D. studies, as was her husband, and had just given birth to a beautiful baby two weeks before I visited their apartment for our interview. Her mother had come to help with the baby, while they both continued their graduate studies without a break. She spoke about how hard it was to be a non-resident alien in a foreign country. She described her separation, loneliness, and isolation away from her husband, who was on the other side of the U.S. during her first three years; her separation from other student compatriots from China; and her social isolation from not understanding English, or American cultural customs. She had "had enough," and wanted to go back to China as soon as possible. She used the indirect wording of "maybe" to imply probable intent:

In 1983 I got a scholarship from the government to go to [a country], and I studied there for three years. I got my M.S. in [a field]. It was very hard to be separated from my husband! We wrote every three or four days. I couldn't concentrate on my studies, and it was very, very lonely. In 1983 there weren't too many Chinese students here -- China had just opened its doors. I couldn't understand anything in English, but it wasn't as difficult compared to being separated from my husband for all that time!
For Chinese graduate students at NWU, trying to function without the familiar support systems of China made their lives more complicated and depressing.

Collective identity with all PRC Chinese and with country are also illustrated below in Mr. M's statement of his long term goals, and his intent to return to China. Collective identity as evident in consultant descriptions extended beyond family and extended family to include Chinese friends, cohort groups, ancestry and nationality. One of the burning questions in the minds of all my consultants was, "Would it be possible to return to China, and when?" It is especially a big question for graduate students. Twelve of my thirteen consultants interviewed concurred overtly that they definitely intended to return to China. Mr. M reminded me that this is the required "public face" response for all non-resident aliens who are J or F student-visa holders [as a condition of entry by the U.S. INS]. Toward the end of the interview I asked all my consultants again if they were going back to China. None responded with the direct answer, "Yes," without explaining their dilemma. There was more disclosure this time, however. They all agreed that it was a very complicated consideration. They expressed a variety of reasons for returning. Among these were: to take back democratic ideals and change China, to take care of aging parents, or to join family and friends in their home country. Most consultants felt "out of place" in the U.S., even after having been here in graduate school for five to seven years. Several mentioned that they and their spouses were divided on the question, but all agreed that they intended to return to China later, after the political climate in China had changed. Many expressed anxiety for their future when President Bush's order permitting those who had graduated to stay until 1994 expired. All, however, identified collectively with China as their "home" country, and collectively with the Chinese people. Ms. L responded to my question this way:

I really miss my sisters and my mother and father...when I first got here and I finished my six months funding period, my institute sent many letters saying, "You coming back NOW?" I said, "Not now but later; I'm Chinese you know, so there's no doubt." They took my name off the Institute list (fired me, no
work unit now, no house, no job)...sooner or later we plan to go back to China. We want to learn democracy and freedom and take it back to China. Things are very difficult in China now, so we'll go back later...We have a good house situation right now in China...we don't worry in China. My husband works for a [his work unit] and is here with me. He worries about losing his house and job if he stays here too long...it's complicated for us...if he goes back to China it will make my studies very hard. And if he takes our son back it will be hard. But if I work hard and struggle, "risk" is not pain but happiness.

Mr. M said that when he first came to NWU, the decision to return was very simple:

I left my wife and son in China because I knew that I would come back to China. I just wanted an MA degree and then to return...it was very simple. I had no more considerations of family at that point. My decision to stay permanently in the United States only occurred after the Tien Anmen Square Massacre in 1989.

His wife and son came from China to join him after his first two years. Collectively identifying himself by ancestry and country, he paradoxically explained later to me his rationale for extending his temporary employment stay on an H-1 visa (good for an additional six years) in the United States:

I'm not forgetting I'm a Chinese, and I'm always wanting to do something good for my country...but its not worth going back right now. I will develop very good position here in the U.S., then go back to China to exert my influence. If I go back now, they may put me in jail. I want to be a success in this country -- a short term goal -- to be an outstanding scientist in my field. My long term goal is to return or at least to help to change China. There are many many like me who want to be successful and then exert influence in China...to make it a better country.

He explained the dilemma for many who could have applied for political asylum because they would be punished if they returned to China, due to
their support of the Student Democratic Movement in June of 1989:

Most Chinese will not apply for political asylum even though they could do it...they'll go for a visa change, the permanent residency if they can, because they don't want to disturb their possible future with China when they return -- this is still in the back of everyone's minds...like my case, for example.

Collective Assistance -- "Back-Door" Favors and Connections

Related to collective identity and responsibility is the notion of exchanging favors or the receipt of favors from extended family members or friends in higher positions. Mr. C explained that there was another way to be "appointed" or to "qualify" for an academic or professional position -- that is, through the "back door" -- via a family member or friend who would "arrange" it. Scholarship was the way to be appointed to a high position. Education was the only way he could change the circumstances of his suffering and his bitter life. He said that he realized this when he was sent to a mining camp to break rocks as collective punishment for his father's "mistake" during the Cultural Revolution, and it was during this time that he dreamed of attaining a high position, or becoming famous. And the only way to do this was by learning a lot -- he had to be accepted in school if his life was to change. This is how he got into college, and to the United States:

Well, after two years I was still sitting there breaking rocks, and I realized this was going nowhere even though I had advanced in my position and I was running around doing some procurement of materials...well at that time there were very few colleges in China -- they had all been shut down except for a few. Then in 1972 Deng said more colleges should open and they selected students based on political qualifications...and I heard that unless you could demonstrate superior academic qualifications...one story I heard was that one guy wrote his application letter in five languages...you didn't have a chance. Well, I didn't even have any books to learn from. I asked my friend who was working at the mine...his father was a well known high school teacher...if he could get me a couple of books -- math books. So he brought me two algebra books. I wasn't interested in literature..like it was just bullshit and kids who were interested in literature,
poetry, and the classics were nerds...this was in [a northern city] when I was [a kid]. We were like wild kids then. But I was really interested in mechanical things. So, with nobody to help me, I read and studied every day from the algebra books in the evening after working at the mine. I tried studying English but it was too difficult so I gave it up. I fantasized that someday I could become famous, or I could become an inventor, or be somebody important and that I would have to learn a lot of knowledge.

Mr. C had to depend upon his father, and he, in turn, had to depend upon his network of friends to help him help his son, as we shall see below. There is a related Chinese saying Mr. A told me: At home we depend upon our parents; away from home we depend upon our friends. My consultants agreed that a "back door connection" is one of the most used methods for getting access to opportunities, or getting a "favor," or a "chance" to compete for positions because competition is so keen, and opportunities so rare. If you know someone on the inside who can "do you a favor," or a high-up official who can "arrange" things for you, you will succeed. This is how it is done in China, they told me. There are too many brilliant top students, and too few scholarships awarded. There are only so many college scholarships or positions awarded a work unit in the first place. My consultants described their experiences and familiarity with "back door connections and favors." Many said that it was through a back door connection that they received their only chance to be considered by their work units (ministries, colleges, factories, etc.) for study abroad. I asked Mr. C what was meant by "chance." He said:

Your only opportunity. There were only a limited number of college positions per work unit allowed, and you had to be recommended for the qualifying exam by your work unit. Our mine had 5,000 workers, and only eight students would be recommended to take the exam. Now, there were a couple of ways you could be recommended: (a) you could be very loud and political, criticizing everybody for everything contrary to party view, writing criticisms and posting them, being a political leader -- taking the party line and vocalizing it so you'd be recognized as a celebrity; or (b) you could be recommended by favors from people in high places -- like the good ol' boy system
here -- back door connections. Well, the head manager of the mine was a friend of my father's and always admired him, so I was "selected" as one of the eight who could take the qualifying exam. Only three of the eight passed and were accepted to be students in the Department of Geology at [a South China] University. I was one of the three.

A "friendship connection" with a person high up at NWU was also his great "chance" to come to the United States:

A professor from NWU was in China; he is very well-known in China. I worked in the field with him as his interpreter, and he sent me the IAP-66 form to secure a J-1 visa which was good for two years. My plan was to come and study for two years and return because I felt patriotic and felt a responsibility to help China.

The student's father-teacher (professor) figure is expected to "pull strings," or use "back-door" connections to help his best students in China -- "just like a family." Mr. M related that even after six years studying in the U.S. at NWU, he still expected his professor to serve as a back door connection to arrange a job for him with a professional friend of his in a U.S. company somewhere. Other consultants assumed the same. Mr. M thought his professor could just do this for him over the telephone, like a father might for his son:

You know, with me, I expected my professor to help me find a job. I talked with him frankly (we have a good relationship), and I asked if he could call some of his friends and arrange a job for me, or arrange interviews for me, but he said no, I had to do that on my own, but if they contacted him he would give me a high recommendation. Very different than China! [There], your professor is like your father, and will help you in all aspects of life -- advice, counsel, but not in the United States. You graduate, and your relationship is over, and he has others to help!
Collective orientation was seen also in the formation of a new PRC identity group for mutual assistance on the NWU campus. Chinese students traditionally look for help from each other (family or friends) -- *Away from home, we depend upon our friends.* My consultants were all very proud of the PRC Chinese Association formed with a constitution and by-laws, mentioned earlier by Mr. M:

Well, we had strong feelings, and we talked a lot about whether we should try to assimilate, and everybody thought it was very difficult, and that we should also develop our own Chinese social networks so we could help each-other.

Mr. G was very proud of the Association, too, adding that it served a real need in orienting new PRC students to their second culture. He illustrated his description with a few examples of his early culture shock:

I don't know if you've noticed but here [at NWU] the Chinese community is a more friendly and united community than in most other places -- like [names of other towns and cities]. They are envious of our tight community. The Association of Chinese Students and Scholars tries to take care of new students when they come -- we give them an orientation, help them to find living accommodations and a temporary home stay...[this] has been a wonderful opportunity to visit a real American family, because they seldom have a chance to visit one again. The first impression really is a strong one. When I came here and first stayed with my family, I was shocked! The conveniences like hot water, electrical appliances, showers, and the high tech PC computers really shocked me. Of course we don't have these back home. And so much room for everyone.

Mr. G's reflection of culture shock included the novelty and strangeness of the private ownership of so many material things, and also the notion of "private ownership" of space *per person* (versus collective space).
Collective Ownership vs. Private Ownership

Collective identity orientation is well illustrated in another description of collective space, materials and property, and the difficulty in understanding the notion of "private ownership" of these within "public" educational community domains. Ms. L stated that in her lab at NWU, everyone acts like they "own" their own work spaces, and materials which are provided by the university for their research work. She told me when she first came she had a hard time understanding what was "someone else's stuff," and "someone else's space." In China, she said, nobody really "owned" anything. Materials and resources belonged to everybody in the department for their work. Private space, private property, and private ownership of resources provided to the department by the university for the use of the department were difficult for her to understand. She gave an example of a confrontation with a colleague in her lab:

I'm an experimental research assistant in the [name] Department. I'm not used to personal "ownership" of laboratory equipment, after all, the lab equipment all comes from the same financial source, so it should be available for all to use and share. I got into a very delicate situation where I got some supplies for another researcher because I knew where they were and he didn't. He needed them and I found them and brought them to him, and then he was angry and told me it was not my place to even know where they were stored, since they were in an area which was part of his project...not my project. That's the last time I'll help him with anything!

Collective Accountability and Punishment

One of the most striking illustrations of collective identity with family, by association or by proximity, is the principle of collective accountability and collective punishment. Mr. B related the Chinese principle upon which was based his own father's persecution, serving as a central axiom of caution to
him and all other PRC Chinese:

...if a father was punished he was considered guilty, lost face...and if one should be punished then the whole family and relatives would be punished too...there's an old Chinese saying, Jou lien (all connected) zhou zhu (all extended families too). This saying applies only to punishment, and everybody knows what it means...its very sad.

Collective identity was also observed in interview answers to be the "we" in answer to questions like, "what will you do?" The answer often started with, "We usually like to..." meaning our family, or chronological group of Chinese students, or we Chinese.

In summary, descriptive evidence of collective identity emerged within responsibilities and duties to friends and families, and in the notion of collective availability and public "ownership" of space and material resources within education-related domains. It appeared also within the descriptive themes of collective social responsibility and punishment, themes which will be addressed at greater length with respect to social harmony and face considerations below.

PRESERVATION OF SOCIAL HARMONY AND FACE CONSIDERATIONS

In the Confucian sense, the preservation of social harmony was the foremost goal of society. Avoiding arguments or disagreements in public were a necessity in order to maintain the mutual respect of all. Politeness and courtesy were paramount lest the spoken word or angry action cause trouble, embarrassment, or discontent. A strict hierarchy of social role behavior in the family was the model for achieving harmony in all other social structures in the society (Baker, 1979; Hsu, 1987; Wolf, 1978).

The concept of social harmony depends upon strict adherence to behavioral codes and also within those codes, upon the consideration of effect on others, and reflexive effect from others in either a positive or negative light. The collective reflection of one's face in public constitutes the respect in which one is held at large -- one's reputation. "Public face" is also held to be
the appropriate level of disclosure necessary to retain social harmony for all, and at the same time disclose very little or personal about one's self. The self-protective conventions of courteous indirection (formality) in public discourse -- written, spoken, or symbolic gestures -- are used for these reasons.

Consultants related the importance of "public face" (limited levels of disclosure) behavior. They also related the inappropriateness of sharing anything personal (private face) or unpleasant beyond their families. The descriptive data revealed the importance of public face communicative behavior strategies to avoid loss of face to self, to family, friends, or to the academic department. These strategies were indirection, avoidance, diversion, and omission. Fears were expressed associated with levels of unpleasant or negative disclosure in public. These fears included the fear of losing face for the potential defamation of another's character, which might result in public disturbance and the fracturing of social harmony.

According to my consultants, a degree of indirection (formal distance) is maintained publicly, within which face is preserved for everyone. Criticisms, negative judgements, or things unpleasant are not particularized or aimed specifically at anyone. By protecting face for everyone in public, social harmony is preserved. Ideally, then, there should be no public argument, disagreement, unrest, or discontent, and in the traditional sense, all under heaven is kept in balance. In this respect, social harmony is dependent upon maintaining and saving face, that is, upon the collective and reflexive consideration of face (respect). My consultants were in general agreement that most PRC Chinese students carefully avoid argument or disagreement of any kind, especially in public. Politeness and courtesy are necessary to preserve harmony in society, they said.

In China, people have to live with each other, Mr. C explained. He elaborated further about the necessity of preserving harmony due to the non-mobility and density of Chinese community life in his home province in China:

All the villagers are making their living in a very close space with other people. You have to be polite and considerate -- you have to learn to live with each other. You are with them all
your life...born, live, work, and play with the same group of people and you live your whole life with them...it's not like the U.S. where there's so much space and everybody has so much room to be by themselves...where people move around a lot.

Two examples were provided by Mr. A in which Chinese people feel that face (respect) is lost in the eyes of others for disturbing the social harmony of the greater group:

We Chinese like to meet individually with friends. We don't talk about the others with them. In this way we preserve harmony with all of the group. If two people argue at a party, for example, then we are all hurt. It brings disharmony to us all...or if you criticize someone else to me, then I will think you talk too much...like gossip...this is not a good character reference. We don't like argument or disagreement.

Ms. L described her perceptions about the difference between PRC and ROC women and in addition the importance of preserving "public face" or "harmonious feelings in society." She explained why it is not appropriate to divulge any kinds of difficulties or private problems to others, especially to professors or other superiors. She said:

PRC women are different than Taiwan women; they are more independent and stronger...Chinese don't cry...we're very strong. If you can't control your emotions and let your loss of control be seen by others you will lose their respect...so we always cry "private face" -- when we're alone. We keep our unhappiness to ourselves...we do not spoil another person's day. To get angry or to lose your temper...this is the same thing...you lose balance...lose control...lose respect from others...lose face. This is why we don't show or share our emotions in society. We don't want to disturb others with bad words or acts. We say and do things with "public face" [to keep all relations pleasant].

Equally important, several consultants said, is the necessity of preserving or maintaining balance (control), and their own face (respect) in the eyes of all, lest embarrassment or insult to someone else (originating with their words or
actions, or somehow remotely associated with them), might cause them to "get into trouble," and suffer punishment.

**Losing Face and The Fear of Punishment**

Collective responsibility, blame and punishment are expected of any participants in any action which disturbs the harmony of others, and my consultants all expressed caution regarding participation which might result in public embarrassment, disagreement, or argument. The preservation of "public face," meaning "positive public appearance" is extremely important, because all consultants remembered punishments suffered by themselves and/or their parents or extended family members for "making trouble," or "making a mistake" (particularizing a judgement about a person, event, or ideology) during the Cultural Revolution, or even recently. Memories of losing face, and either fear of humiliation or of punishment, were vivid in the minds of my PRC graduate student consultants.

Mr. D talked about his past in China during the Cultural Revolution, and the humiliation of losing face for not having worked hard, not having been responsible, and for having missed class one day in high school. He not only brought humiliation upon himself for his truancy, but upon his family as well:

> She [my high school teacher] had a little group of supporters (my classmates) around her -- like Red Guards -- and one day I missed school in the Summer, so she brought several Red Guard students to my home -- this was 1974-75, to shame me and my parents...its pretty intense...all your neighbors are looking out wondering...what's happening? Why all the commotion? Why are they talking to his parents? What's going on?

He said he has always remembered this, and that from then on he has worked hard and never missed classes. But the fear of this kind of losing face (humiliation and punishment) is still with him.

Consultants often used the phrases "we don't want any kind of trouble," or "I don't want to make a mistake." Traditionally, I was told, collective responsibility has meant that if there is any "trouble," both parties
are at fault. Both lose face and are punished irregardless of who started the trouble.

Consultants related their real family experiences of "getting into trouble," losing face, and harsh punishment. All consultants experienced hard times during the Cultural Revolution. The fear of trouble and punishment was alive in their vivid memories, and is presently, they related, in their everyday relationships, especially those in which they perceived themselves as subordinates. A bad word said about them, a criticism against them, a professor who didn't like them (many of them related to me), could spell disaster for them. They expressed the fear of punishment from any superior which might result in the loss of respect from others, and of more importance, in the loss of their financial assistantships.

Mr. F's mother was "punished" severely, memories of which, he said, are still with him. He went on to describe more about his own personal family experiences with punishment:

Well, in the Cultural Revolution at first we thought everything was a lot of fun. We were just young kids! But then the Red Guards came and took everything out of our house...everything. We got scared. Teachers and principals really suffered the most. You know they took them and hung a heavy plate around their necks so it would bring their heads down low. They paraded them in the street, and made them wear a big high hat. And on the plate in front they would put their name and the characters "Anti-Revolutionist" on it. Well, we were looking for her [my mother], and they said, hey your mother is out there! It was really terrible for her. They put a placard around her neck, and they shaved half her head to humiliate her. She had to wear this high hat...We were scared. She said to my brother and me that "...if it weren't for you kids I would commit suicide!"

Several consultants mentioned that they had been afraid that they would be observed and reported by PRC communist party agents here on the NWU campus, that some of them had received strange telephone calls from the Chinese Consulate in San Francisco checking up on them, and that their families at home in China might suffer from their public words or actions here. Mr. F mentioned that students had to be very careful what they said
"public face" (in front of others), or in class. He told me about the caution students had learned to exercise in Chinese universities because:

...every department has a communist party representative, or director. In each class even there are communist party members. They can report someone who is against the party thought. We had political thought meetings to study together the government documents and prevailing communist points of view...half a day each week we had to get together to read that stuff out loud together.

The concern for and fear of offending professors or colleagues as well as the wish to preserve face and harmony, can be seen in Mr. D's comment at the end of the interview, as he was signing the informed consent form I gave him. He said, "I don't think I've said anything offensive to anyone, so I feel this is fine." To offend verbally, is to "cause trouble." To remain inactively silent, is to be on the safe side. With respect to the saying, jou lien (all connected) zhou zhu (all extended families too), Mr. B explained why being responsible to others by remaining silent so they would not suffer punishment by association imprinted his mind so strongly:

...my father was punished for criticizing his boss who was using personal perks, and for mentioning it only once, my father was punished and sent to the countryside...you have to be very careful what you say about who...superiors, or anybody. My father had joined the army in 1950, and from 1958 until 1982 he suffered censure and loss of face...for 24 years...what should be his best years.

Mr. B said that as a son, he inherited his father's public disgrace, and it was not until years later that his personal confidence and self-respect (face) was restored by a teacher who "let him be normal":

Well, the next most important thing that happened to me was when I went back to high school and this new high school teacher allowed me to be a normal person in my own right (not inheriting the disgrace, disrespect and loss of face associated with my father). It was wonderful for my confidence so I have a lot to thank him for.
He explained traditional Chinese philosophy (with the qualifier that young people may not agree) regarding innocence and guilt when one is accused and punished for the alleged breaking of a rule, or "making a mistake," or "getting into trouble," or "doing something wrong":

Older Chinese accept punishment as evidence of having done something wrong, even if untrue. It is the Chinese system. However, values are changing fast! You will find differences with different students...they don't all think alike. Young students both in China and here are changing fast.

But Mr. M told me that many Chinese students in his group still avoided confrontations or disagreements with people for fear of being implicated in "making trouble." Because in Chinese thinking, he explained, "...both sides will be considered troublemakers. It takes two to have a conflict. It doesn't matter who started it..." He illustrated the principle this way so I could understand better:

If you got up from this bench and walked across the street in the crosswalk, and a guy didn't see you and ran into you with his bicycle, injuring you because he went through the stop sign, in Chinese thinking...traditionally...you would be guilty and he would be too...because both of you could have prevented it. So you're both guilty.

Mr. C explained that everyone recognizes the saying, Zhou lien zhou zhu. He said it applied to him also:

Yes, we all suffered because he [my father] was punished. My sisters and I were sent to the countryside, and I worked in a dofu factory in 1969, and then for a mining company breaking rocks from 1970 to '73. He was a government official and so he was in big trouble for being a leader. He was accused as a "running dog," and assigned to prison from 1968 to '69. There were "criticism meetings" and generally just chaos. He was used by different student groups whenever they wanted to show off an example...this group and then that group...until late in 1969, when the military declared Martial Law and Deng took over. Then things began to get better.
Mr. F related his family's experience with suffering and punishment during the Cultural Revolution, and I asked him if he recognized the saying, *Zhou lien zhou zhu.* He answered:

Did my parents suffer? My mother suffered the most. She was sent to...not exactly a concentration camp...but a detention center...my grandfather was a general...kind of like the governor of [a Chinese] province. He was on the Guomendong side. When everyone was trying to get to Taiwan, he almost got to the coast, but the Communists circled around and cut him off. He wasn't killed because he was considered too big. They thought he could be used for propaganda purposes, so he was put in prison for ten years...sort of brainwashed. Before, he was a hard-core anti-communist, but after nine or ten years in prison he came out liking everything about communism.

Consultants also mentioned that romantic relationships in college were a reason for losing face and suffering punishment. Mr. F revealed that romantic relationships between college boys and girls are not looked on kindly in Chinese colleges. He stated that especially in the first three years, punishment, from college officials for any kind of romantic involvement is typical:

My wife and I were classmates. We saw each other and became friends in college. I suppose we fell in love...you can't hold hands! The government is providing your education (although you have to pay for your living expenses), so they figure that you cannot occupy your time with romance. Punishment for such involvement can result.

Other consultants told me that they had known of university students in China being expelled for "romantic involvements."

**Fears of "Getting into Trouble," or Punishment at a U.S. University**

Another example of a student fearing persecution (punishment) from someone who might "get angry at or make trouble" for him may be seen in Mr. E's inability to say, "No," when asked to do work for others here at NWU:
When I first came here whenever anyone asked me to do something more I thought maybe they were testing me. It was hard to say, "No." Maybe they would get angry or make trouble for me. I had to learn to say, "No."

Consultants related not only their fears of being implicated in "trouble" on the campus, but their fears of political repercussions from innocent involvement by proximity as well. Silent withdrawal or non-involvement is seen as the safest precaution or defense when public harmony is disturbed by one or more individuals, I was told by several consultants. Mr. C provided this enlightening example of a campus event to illustrate:

A lot of things are dangerous for PRC students here on campus, for example in the early eighties there were some problems with Taiwan students. There was a Taiwan teacher teaching Chinese at NWU. Some PRC students contacted the [English Language School (ELS)] group to be conversants with American students. They [the ELS office] sent them to her class to meet Americans who were taking Chinese language. I recall... about ten PRC students went to take her Chinese class because they wanted to meet American conversants. Well, she showed a Taiwan videotape which was slanted against mainland China's communist government officials, and called them "scum." The PRC students were insulted but were very careful to tone it down so there would be no cause for political controversy or unnecessary attention to this...well, one of the American students in the class went home and told his Chinese roommate, who became insulted and called to lodge a complaint with the Taiwan Embassy. Then the Taiwan Embassy instructed their agents on our campus to nail PRC student "leaders" in our class who had made this outrageous lie about political persecution, and it got way out of hand. Many PRC students took it very seriously, and thought that somebody (the police, the FBI, or the Chinese government) would certainly put them in jail or punish them for making trouble! This of course is common in China for things of this kind.
The term "face" is used also to mean, "respect." Face is gained and lost. Face is collective and reflexive. It is one's reputation and the respect from others, without which, one does not possess an identity at all. It is the good personal character reference of title, status, and trusted membership within an identity group -- one's class, one's department, one's school or work unit (institute, factory, store, or ministry).

Loss of face has been pointed out in several descriptive themes above. However, one repetitious theme revealed in the descriptions was the perceived loss of face associated with the lack of achieving positive results in GRA experimental research work. Mr. D didn't consider himself "successful" until he had achieved positive results, echoing the same feelings described by other consultants. He said:

Recently I looked in the Directory of Graduate Studies in [the discipline] for the particular people and research group that is working in a similar area to mine for a post-doc research appointment. I've applied to three or four places. Generally the first post-doc position is still regarded as a learning experience while you are forming your professional reputation. I can do work with positive results, and later I can go somewhere else.

Noting that Chinese students in his class cohort were hard working and the best from China, Mr. M also explained the main cultural constraint to active communicative participation in classes on the part of new students in the United States:

You see, we are the top Chinese students from China here in America. We are ashamed to show we might not know something. I was not very active in class (I never entered into any discussions -- only listened), but I worked every problem in the text...maybe ten times as hard or long as the American students, so I always got the highest scores on the tests, but I was not an active participant in the class till later.

Mr. M told me that when Chinese students come here they are afraid to offend (make trouble), and they don't know that they have the right to speak
for themselves, choose for themselves, and decide for themselves. They are cautious and afraid of who might hear them, take offense, or who might possibly "make trouble" for them. But, he said that after the Tien Anmen Square Massacre, he is afraid no longer:

Now I speak public face. My values have changed a lot. I have rights to decide for myself and to speak. I don't care who hears my words — I am not afraid.

All consultants agreed that to ask for academic or personal help of any kind, especially from Americans, would be a loss of face for Chinese students. Mr. M explained his reticence to ask for help:

Who gave me help for the first couple years? Well, the most help was from the old Chinese students who came before me, so I called on them. Help from American students? I was "ashamed" to expose my lack of knowledge about anything -- I would rather read the text over for two or three hours trying to figure out the answer than to ask some American student who could explain the answer to me in five minutes. In China, Chinese pay more attention to "face" -- they don't want to lose their face.

The explanation above points to both the reflexive and collective considerations of face, and to collective responsibility to Chinese fellows (ancestry), and to country (China).

One consultant, Mr C, explained that Chinese students feel pressure (obligation) to produce successfully for their professor. I asked him to explain the different ways a student can lose face. He responded immediately with what seemed to him the most obvious answer and the most important cause:

You mean like getting bad grades? Well, there's a lot of competition and pressure to perform. Why? If a student competes well and gets higher grades than other professors' students, he gains prestige and recognition for his professor, and if he does not, then he loses face for his professor...he embarrasses him.

One consultant explained to me that failure to compete successfully is another reason students lose face. They do not live up to others' expectations,
causing others to lose face also (extreme embarrassment by association). Mr. M gave me his opinion about a student at Iowa State University who shot the Vice President, four others, and then himself:

Really, this student was an extreme victim of the Chinese educational system. His parents encouraged him to study in one narrow area. I think he was a genius in a narrow field which became his whole life... he graduated but couldn't find a job, and thought this award would be his last chance at finding a job. When he didn't get the award he just cracked under the pressures of failure, losing face, and disgracing family and China.

Mr. E talked about his conquering the fear of losing face as a new teaching assistant in front of a group of students:

I gave my first seminar, and my confidence really changed. I prepared well, everyone congratulated me, and then I thought, I CAN TEACH! And I can talk in front of people! I thought afterwards, well, my parents are both good teachers, maybe this has something to do with...maybe this is a genetic factor, or a gene that just "turned on!" In China I always thought that people would laugh at me -- that they would talk and gossip behind my back.

Mr. E also talked about his criteria for gaining face (respect) as a teacher: (a) a sense of humor, (b) caring, and (c) knowledge:

Here at NWU I really love teaching. I joke with my students, and I read a lot of cartoons. I think I understand humor better than any other Chinese student because when there are a bunch of us together I catch the humor, and they say, "What are you laughing at?" And so I explain the joke if I can...you know like when George Bush was talking about the opposition's economic plan in his TV talk and he said, "Where's the beef?" They said, "Beef, beef, what is he talking about? Why are they laughing?" So I had to explain. Anyway, my students like it when I joke with them. The students gave me excellent evaluations. My first year teaching they gave me good grades on knowledge and caring but lowest on language ability, but they gave me a great experience the next term. I was so happy. I wrote my parents to tell them about it...I think I'm getting too old -- like most people
in their 30's and 40's -- to care what others say about me. I don't care...two years ago I won an award for being one of the most outstanding graduate student researchers here. The next year my wife was also awarded this honor. I pride myself in doing excellent work.

Mr. E concluded one session by denying his fears -- fears of having lost face in the eyes of friends, teachers and family for not having finished his Ph.D. degree after seven years' work. He expressed anger regarding the exploitation of his research and teaching labor by his major professor, and humiliation for having lost face because of his apparent lack of success in finishing his Ph.D. thesis because of overworking on a .3 FTE RA. In the text below, Mr. E's avoidance of friends and loss of face with regard to his delayed thesis progress is reflected and contrasted against his rationalization of gaining face for having become an excellent teacher. His humiliation is powerfully summed up in the last sentence below:

I have to know how to do everything well -- [a specific technique], and all the other things I have mentioned. Plus, I do everything the hired technicians do...they could do some of it but I usually do my own. At first they didn't talk to me very much, but now they ask me for help, and I'm always glad to help them...we have a good relationship. Now they feel very comfortable with me...when people ask me, "Why haven't you finished?" How can I explain to them...even my own friends don't take the time to even listen and find out...how can I explain that I have been working so much (on only a .3 all this time) that I have had so little time for my own research? It takes so long to prepare if you're going to do things well. When they ask me now, I just say, "It's none of your business."

Mr. E was caught in a complex "Catch-22" trap of misattributed C1 cultural expectations: (a) of loyalty (can't speak ill of his professor), (b) of obligation (can't say no), and (c) of face considerations (not losing face). The strong cultural value determinant of preserving social harmony prevented him from any disclosure of these difficulties to anyone. Added to this is his claim of having done research from start to finished and published monogram, credit and authorship for which was taken completely by his professor. Consequently, he perceived that he had been exploited and short-changed by
his professor. Ironically, he has been able to compensate for his feelings of failure with feelings of success at becoming "a good teacher."

Private Face

My consultants were consistent with the notion that personal problems are to be kept private, and that only trusted friends or family should be consulted "under privacy," or, ce xia, to help. For example, if a student is suffering from emotional stress, strain, or trauma within his or her marriage, these difficulties should never be mentioned to others as the reasons why a paper was turned in late, or a class was missed, or a student couldn't meet an exam deadline. The teacher might think that if the student is not competent enough even to be in control of his or her own life, how could he or she be entrusted with the management of the lives of other students?

One consultant, Mr. A, related a divorce situation he knew of on campus. He explained that marital problems are never discussed with any university personnel for fear of losing face and ultimately jeopardizing financial assistance:

Married couples with troubles call in friends to help. I knew one couple who had some difficulties, and a group of friends was asked to come and dissuade one of the partners from a particular path of action. The partner had to meet with this group. Well, couples never go to counselors. Married students won't tell their professors any kinds of problems -- you never show superiors or bosses or supervisors...personal problems or difficulties, because they [both spouses] will be held in low esteem for losing face, or he [the professor or superior] will say, "You are not capable of solving your own problems."

Mr. D referred to his past in China during the Cultural Revolution -- the humiliation of losing face from not working hard, not being responsible, and missing class one day in high school. It was a very vivid lesson for him. He not only brought humiliation upon himself for his truancy, but upon his family as well:
She [my high school teacher] had a little group of supporters (my classmates) around her -- like Red Guards -- and one day I missed school in the Summer, so she brought several Red Guard students to my home -- this was 1974-75, to shame me and my parents...it's pretty intense...all your neighbors are looking out wondering...what's happening? Why all the commotion? Why are they talking to his parents? What's going on?

He said he has always remembered this, and that from then on he worked hard and never missed classes, but the fear of this kind of losing face (humiliation) is still with him.

Because of their personal experiences with the collective and reflexive social consequences (public humiliation or severe punishment) of losing face, it was clear in the descriptive data that the maintenance of social harmony was a strongly held socio-behavioral value, and that public and private face considerations assisted in its preservation. Socio-political consequences for expected norm deviations from these values were both tacitly and explicitly expressed as ever present fears. All consultants were extremely aware of and attendant to showing respect to and for others, gaining respect from others, and being sensitive to a high degree to losing the respect of others through the display of loss of self-control in the expression of careless or emotional words or actions.

INDIRECTION

Indirection has been identified (Hsu, 1987) as a traditional Chinese cultural value. It is grounded in one sense by the belief that one should not insult the intelligence of another by directly giving information or telling something already known. In another sense, indirection serves as a face protection strategy to avoid implication in any political "trouble" or controversy by retaining courteous, yet formal, distance from the particular situation. Therefore, in answering questions or in giving information, circumlocution, or a "zig-zag" direction, were the preferred conventions my consultants used to respond to my questions, rather than giving me direct, linear responses. My consultants rarely answered my questions directly. I was first given background information, examples, illustrations and
analogy. I was also given cultural themes (old Chinese sayings) and was often left to conclude the answer from the information given. When I requested potential answers which might include criticisms or disclosure of negative character assessment of any kind, indirect strategies mentioned above were employed by all consultants.

Consultants revealed, for the preservation of social harmony, that a public disagreement, an argument, or unpleasant discussion about anything or anyone should be avoided at all costs. The common strategy was indirection, subject change or avoidance, keeping a friendly face, and immediate retreat.

Indirection strategies can also be considered as social courtesies. Being direct is considered to be impolite. For example, Mr A said, with regard to my particularly prurient personal questions during the interview:

I'd like to tell you something about yourself. Sometimes you want to pry out too much too fast...this makes me uncomfortable...we [Chinese] open up little by little.

And with regard to my inability to decode his indirection (indirect allusion, inference, and implication) in conversations with him, he said:

...also, when I offer a suggestion to you with the word "possibly," usually it means direct advice! [an order or request]. We don't order people to do things. We "suggest an alternative," or we say, "...possibly this would be the best thing to do." But it has the same meaning.

ACTION, INACTION AND NON-ACTION

According to my consultants, most Chinese adhere to the belief that individual actions do not determine events. We have seen that the traditional (Confucian) Chinese concept of self as a collective and reflexive identity is defined only by its relationship with others. Collective responsibility, duty, face considerations, public face acceptance or rejection, potential outcomes, mistakes, and potential punishment must be considered before any action is taken which might affect others or invoke adverse criticism in any conceivable way. We have also seen that actions or words
can be catastrophic if they lose face for self or for others, or if they disturb social harmony. For these reasons, acting for or by one's self irrespective of others "advice" is very difficult for traditional Chinese. They are not used to determining their own course of direction, acting on their own, or directing a course of events. They are not trained this way. Mr. C explained:

Confucian hierarchy is still followed. The social order has been the same for thousands of years. Most still follow a very strict social order -- just like the Emperor-Father-Son relationships -- everyone is born with a role to fill. You cannot make things happen yourself...it's just fate.

The old Chinese saying, "Big waves throw grains of sand," is well recognized as the wisdom of age-old experience, Mr. M told me. The wave of history (events) determines people's lives, and not the reverse. Single individuals can change nothing. Ms. J mentioned that Chinese people are bound within a 4,000 year old tradition of not making decisions or acting for themselves, and if the society were thrust into democratic structures too fast people wouldn't be able to cope. This description is rather like the situation in which graduate students find themselves when they arrive to study at a U.S. university:

In China things change very slowly. People are used to being controlled...they don't know how to make decisions for themselves...we have 4,000 years of tradition and it won't change overnight...you know, they have never had citizens rights or lots of choices before. Rapid democratic change would destroy China. The people wouldn't know what to do. If there was voting for free choice of independent candidates now, most people would vote for the Communist Party candidates anyway.

Mr. C mentioned that he observed in his fellow PRC student friends this acceptance of events and dependence on others for "advice" as to appropriate collective action and direction:

Chinese students are always trying to think of the group...they are in the passive mode...they are always thinking about the group...they are always waiting for things to happen...they don't take any individual action...they wait for the group to take action as a whole. They will follow the group action...one individual
cannot change the group. The whole group must move first and then move the individuals to adapt to the group in order to change anything.

Considerations of assessment, evaluation, and action, inaction, and non-action are very complex for PRC Chinese students. They must consider the effect or consequence of any action on all persons connected. And they must consider face, that is, respect, reputation and appropriate "public face" or disclosure levels. Mr. C explained, as did other consultants, that Chinese people normally take more time to think about something before they make a decision to respond in words or actions, because they have to consider how their responses will be received personally, socially, and politically by the other side. Also, they must consider how their responses will reflect back on themselves personally, and on their associates, since they collectively represent their family, their "father-teacher-professor", their department, their nationality group, and their political group. So Chinese students are very cautious to choose the "correct" responses. He told me that general or oblique responses are often far better than specific ones, for they cannot be identified or particularized by listeners who might "get them in trouble."

Mr. C gave me the best explanation of the tradition of inaction, involving non-judgemental appraisal and assessment. People and events change so rapidly, don't judge too quickly. Don't speak too quickly. Don't act too quickly. Wait and see. That which appears like a calamity, may be an opportunity in disguise. When you judge situations, people, or ideas, don't respond immediately. Take some time to think carefully about it.

He explained this philosophy for me. He said, "I have to tell you this old Chinese story. It's typical of how Chinese look at life. It's a famous story about Mr. Tsai Wong, called, Tsai Wong Shi Ma, or literally in English, Tsai Wong Lose Horse":

Well, Mr. Tsai Wong was a well respected old man. One day he lost his best trained horse. Everyone said, "Oh, this is terrible! We are sorry for you! Poor Tsai Wong!" But Tsai Wong said, "Grieving is premature!" The peasants eventually found him a beautiful horse to replace the one lost. They all said, "Congratulations, Tsai Wong!" He said, "Too early to congratulate!" Well, his son took the horse out for a ride, fell off
the horse and broke his leg. The villagers all said, "Oh, Tsai Wong, what a terrible thing!" He said, "Hard to tell, something good might come of this!" Well, war broke out, and all the young men were drafted into the army, except Tsai Wong's son, who couldn't walk. And so Tsai Wong's son was saved from going to war, all because Tsai Wong had lost his horse. The villagers all thought it was very fortunate that Tsai Wong's son had been saved from being drafted into the army and sent away to fight. But Tsai Wong told them, "You never know what the future will bring, so wait and see before you judge!"

This kind of "wait-see" philosophy cannot simply be labeled as "inaction." It does not necessarily exclude the intention or intervention of human action. It can mean delayed action, and for this reason, a better definitional term might be "non-action."

Non-Action

The cultural principle of non-action is based upon a dialectic view of a very long history in China, and also derives from the Taoist symbiotic dichotomy of Yin and Yang. Lao Zi's *I Ching* (The Book of Changes) relates that events, circumstances, and attitudes can be reversed, and the superior man must anticipate these reversals. Non-action is the process of careful assessment, evaluation and patience before the conscious decision of action or inaction has been made. It is especially important, as one consultant (Mr. M) related to me, because "...delay (non-action) is better than acting prematurely and making a mistake." As we have seen, mistakes can be catastrophic and cause personal or collective disaster. By waiting till the last moment before an action is absolutely necessary, there is the belief that the best understanding of the context can be gained, and the best action can then be decided. Perhaps this is one answer to the question often asked by Americans, "Why do Chinese always wait till the last minute before they do things?"

Non-action was evident in consultant descriptions extended beyond family and extended family to include Chinese friends, chronological cohorts, nationality, and country. One of the burning questions in the minds of all my consultants was, "Will we return to China, and when?" It was especially
a big question for graduate students. Twelve of my thirteen consultants interviewed concurred overtly that they definitely intended to return to China after their studies were finished. Mr. M reminded me, however, that this is the required "public face" response for all non-resident aliens who are "J" or "F" student-visa holders (as a condition of entry by the U.S. INS).

I asked consultants if they were going back to China after they graduated. None responded with the direct answer, "Yes," without explaining their dilemma first. They all agreed that it was a very complicated consideration. They expressed a variety of reasons for returning. Among these were: to take back democratic ideals and change China, to take care of aging parents, or to join family and friends in their home country because they felt the U.S. was a strange culture. Most consultants felt "out of place" in the U.S., even after having been here in graduate school for four to nine years. Several mentioned that they and their spouses were divided on the question, but all agreed that they intended to return to China later, after the political climate had changed.

Many expressed anxiety for their tenuous futures because of the expiration of President Bush's Executive Order which permits PRC "J" and "F" visa holders who were in the U.S. prior to the "Tien Anmen Square Incident" to stay and work in the U.S. until 1994. All identified with China as their "home" country, and with the Chinese people. Ms. L responded to my "Return to China" question this way:

I really miss my sisters and my mother and father...when I first got here and I finished my six months funding period, my institute sent many letters saying, "You coming back NOW?" I said, "Not now but later. I'm Chinese you know, so there's no doubt." They took my name off the Institute list (fired me, no work unit now, no house, no job)...sooner or later we plan to go back to China. We want to learn democracy and freedom and take it back to China. Things are very difficult in China now, so we'll go back later...We have a good house situation right now in China...we don't worry in China. My husband works for a [Chinese work unit] and is here with me. He worries about losing his house and job if he stays here too long...it's complicated for us...if he goes back to China it will make my studies very hard. And if he takes our [child] back it will be hard. But if I work hard and struggle, "risk" is not pain, but happiness.
In the above description Ms. L alludes to the principle of non-action and wait-see orientation, saying that she is going to wait for events to change before returning. She also identifies herself collectively with nationality and country. Not to be overlooked within the text, she identifies with the traditional sojourner notion that all Chinese want to return to China (Fitzgerald, 1972), when she states the public face reason for her "assured" return: "...I'm Chinese you know, so there's no doubt."

**Action vs. Inaction**

The consultants defined action (both verbal and non-verbal) in terms of "correct" behavior, offending no one (losing face) where at all possible, with pre-considerations of collective assessment, evaluation, and consequences. Action, then, by their descriptions, involves choices and decisions based on situational judgements. Inaction appeared to be perceived by consultants as the conscious decision not to be party to, or in the proximity of, any situation which might offend, or be distasteful or unpleasant to others. This conscious decision to withdraw and not participate may be cross-culturally interpreted correctly as "inaction." It appeared, on the other hand, in many cases to be a decisive and strategic act of face maintenance for the preservation of either social harmony out of respect, or for the "appearance" of social harmony. The preservation of personal face (respect) in the eyes of others was another reason for non-participation. It is important that what appears cross-culturally to be "inaction," not be confused with the complexity of strategic situational assessment and diagnosis before appropriate actions are chosen.

**PROBLEMS WITH STUDENT AND PROFESSOR RELATIONSHIPS**

Communication and cultural differences pose great problems for Chinese students, according to consultants. Making friends with American students, and receiving help and direction from their professors is very difficult. The misattribution of Chinese cultural role expectations into U.S.
educational contexts by Chinese students appears to have compounded these difficulties.

Relationships With American Students at NWU

I asked my consultants about their relationships with American students and friends. They told me that generally, Americans didn't seem to be too interested in them; that they were so busy with their work that they didn't have much friendship time even for Chinese friends; and that there were a number of problems which made it difficult for them to make friendships with Americans in general. Mr. M's responses were characteristic of nearly all the answers to this question by consultants. He related his difficulties with English, and with American culture:

My English conversational difficulties made it very difficult for me to make American friends, but I tried. One to one conversations were OK, but I found that if I was in a group it was really difficult to follow a group conversation...to work in a company later you have to know about and be involved in social life, but because of the differences in culture we feel we don't fit. I tried getting into a social network once...I don't know anything about baseball and I don't drink beers, so it didn't work out too well. Americans are very good talkers. They have been trained that way. For the first couple years here I would watch a talk-show on TV and when they laughed I didn't know why...I couldn't understand all the references and jokes.

He said that he was so intent on achievement of good grades, and it took so much time and effort to get involved with people, that he actually hid away from interaction with everybody for two years:

I avoided contact with American students (it was very hard to make friends with Americans), or even other students, and just studied the texts for the first two years...this hurt me in the long run later because I didn't develop any social network of superior students who I could call on later for references or job placement help or assistance in the greater professional or academic community.
He said this is fairly typical of many Chinese students who do not appear as if they want to stop to interact with other students, and that ultimately he realized it would have helped him a lot to have had more American friends.

Relationship Problems With U.S. Professors at NWU

Student-professor relationships were especially difficult for most consultants. Problem themes which emerged in the course of the interviews centered around each graduate student's professed primary educational relationship -- the one with his or her major professor. As was expected, differing levels of disclosure due to cultural constraints limited the depth of elucidation regarding criticisms of superiors. However, because of the initial screening of consultants and the interview methodology, consultant descriptions, nevertheless, yielded a wealth of information. Some of the descriptive themes included "difficulty making American friends," "loyalty and obedience to professors," "negative results equal failure," "taking too long to get your degree equals humiliation (loss of face)," "taking advantage of Chinese graduate students for their research labor," and "fear of losing assistantships." The greatest cultural value conflicts noted in this study were found to be focused within the student-professor relationship.

Mr. M commented that the more choices there were here at NWU, the more confusing it was for Chinese students. Imbedded in the following description is his important reflection that the more differences encountered, the more worries develop. I asked him if life was very difficult for PRC Chinese graduate students here. He prioritized the difficulties:

Life is very hard for Chinese students. The language is the biggest problem, and the cultural differences are next. The more we are exposed to differences, the more worries we develop. Competition for school, assistantships, and for work makes it very hard. Changing visas so you can stay is very difficult.

Although each consultant identified his or her own list of problems, the relationship between the student and major professor appeared to be of the
utmost importance because of its influence on and connection with all other aspects of the students' lives -- those mentioned by Mr. M above.

Ms. J sat on the sofa in their neat, clean and sparse apartment living room, and with her mother holding her new two-week-old baby in the bedroom, and her husband preparing dinner in the kitchen, she described to me her feelings of isolation and rootlessness after five years here at NWU, and in the United States. She had indicated that she had had a very rough relationship with her major professor, who "was no help to her at all." Her desire to return to China soon seemed very genuine, and the appropriate result of her experience at NWU. Here she used the tentative qualifiers of "maybe," and "probably":

My mother doesn't like it here...to visit is OK...but she has no friends and doesn't want to stay. I've had a very difficult time. I'm still really uncomfortable here. The language is difficult, and it's a strange culture. I don't feel comfortable here at all. We want to go back to China. Maybe [my husband] will go back to see first...probably we will go back to one of the Free Economic Zones.

Misattribution of C1 Role and Behavioral Expectations

I asked my consultants if they could describe some of the communications problems PRC students have here on campus. All consultants viewed their primary relationship in graduate school as the one with their major professor. Mr. C explained that Chinese students come here expecting that Chinese cultural communications and behaviors with their professors will be the same as in China:

Well, you know that the students give to, and interpret subtle signals from, their professors in China. In China these signals are understood very well. But the students assume the same is true here and the signals mean the same things.

In China when you live in such close proximity to others, you don't want to offend them, so you give very subtle signs, and people know what you mean. You watch personal relations very carefully and read into hints and gestures. There's a lot of
speculation as to what they mean, but many are understood. So new students here assume it's the same as China. There's a lot of misunderstanding going on all the time. They interpret comments and social gestures incorrectly, and send signals which they assume are understood. This just isn't so. It's a different culture here.

There used to be a Chinese professor here at NWU who was a master at interpreting these signals. He was an old conservative type who took them quite seriously, so he used to call all the Chinese students up and give them advice on how to act and how not to act...he was well-intentioned but a very traditional Chinese. He'd always talk to the international education staff people about how the students were doing and always take little gifts to people in their office...I guess he really was trying to help the students...well you know, we have an old saying, Chao men juan. It means literally, "knock, door, brick," or, something which opens the door to a smooth relationship...that clears away barriers to friendship, etc.. Well, a gift is considered something which "opens the door" -- sort of a beginning token of friendship. But gifts are looked at as problems also in China, because people think, "What is expected from me in return?" For this reason, small gifts are better than big ones.

Several of my consultants described their non-communication with their committee, stating that they thought their primary relationship with "their professor" was the primary one, as it is in China. Mr. F had not been in touch with his committee in a long time. He had been working to support his wife and family, not having any time to finish his thesis project for several years. I asked him if he had a good relationship with his committee members (including his major professor), and if he had any problems with them. He hesitated for a moment (which I have learned to interpret as "this is not comfortable for me to answer"), and then said,

I don't think so. I haven't really talked with them since my proposal meeting [several years ago], but I see them around town in the stores sometimes. I wave and say "Hi!" so they are still around. I haven't given up on it, I just haven't had any time to write it.
Ms. J said her professor was of no help to her at all, lacking knowledge of her project. She quickly mitigated her criticisms by focusing on her own short-comings when I asked her about their relationship. However, her hesitations, and how little she had to say about him (omission) indicated her attitude toward him:

When I first came [to a university in Canada], the Dean was my professor. He had a terrible temper, and I cried a lot...I didn't like the situation. Here [at NWU] my professor was ok sometimes. When I was pregnant and near the delivery, he said, "Don't worry, take a rest," and he never pressured me...usually he doesn't lose his temper...now he always says, "See me if you have a problem...let me know if you need help with something...like your visa..." I've had a .5 assistantship all five years here [at NWU]. Now I have about one year left to finish. My professor has no knowledge about my research. My professor can't help me at all. I am so slow...I try, and try and try, and my professor sometimes just makes suggestions...[my husband] and I share the same professor. I like working in the same lab with [my husband]. I just ask for his advice.

Mr. C related that he was lost academically for a whole year with no help, cultural differences in self-disclosure preventing him from seeking any help, and struggling with loneliness. He was unfamiliar with a strange, new culture, and with the cultural differences in communication. He mentions not knowing how to ask for help:

My professor expected me to establish and figure out my own project by myself! In China the professor guides and instructs the student, and the student carries out the professor’s orders and instructions. Here, I was confused, frustrated, and isolated (small town and few friends) and I was lost academically with no help. I didn't know what to do, what direction to go in, and I didn't know how to ask for help. In China you don't talk to the professor, you listen. I didn't do very well in the beginning. I easily lost a whole year being confused.

He came here expecting that his "major professor" would be his teacher and
Well, you know, professors have no time to spend with you here. I had an assistantship, and I wanted to learn from my major professor. I wanted him to teach me about his research. I never expressed this because it is only appropriate to listen to teachers, not to express your own views.

With tactful and agile avoidance, and diversion by rapid subject change, Mr. H answered my questions, "Tell me about your former professor. Was he helpful? Did you have problems with him?" -- by telling me all about his new professor (everything was rosy). I tried several times in different ways to elicit information about the old relationship, but to no avail:

My former professor was not very involved with his students, but my current professor is very serious. He can give you an immediate answer and immediate help...he...

Mr. F told me about his relationship only indirectly when I asked him what advice he would give teachers who are teaching Chinese students. He then offered suggestions to American university professors and research supervisors, based on his and his PRC friends' relationships with them. He said that "some teachers" think Chinese students are stupid and that they are not capable:

I think professors here should understand that in China the emphasis is on the lectures [about the text material], so students have a good theoretical background, but they are not experienced working with lab equipment because they don't have very much equipment to work with in China! I don't think professors realize this. Chinese students' lack of experience is due to the absence of financial and material resources. I think that they think Chinese students are stupid because they don't know how to use simple lab equipment. They think that Chinese students are not capable "hands on" people. This is not true. It's natural and due to a lack of access to this equipment.

The [equipment name], for example. Here at NWU we have [several of these machines in the department...My wife's
[academic area] has two of them! We can use them any time we want. In China, there was only one of these machines in [our province] for the entire university to use. There wouldn't even be one of them, but it was purchased with a loan from the World Bank. We would have to wait in line for up to six months to use that machine! So I think professors should realize that their graduate students have not all had the same opportunities and experience. Students are coming from poor countries. This should be allowed for. I think they are not aware that we must do a lot more study and work than American students who have always had these resources available to them.

Mr. D's relationship with his professor centered around the themes of conducing research with negative results, and not having enough time to do his own research. His comments were so carefully formed, with indirection and tactful omission, that it is difficult to see the implications of his comments on first glance. The last two sentences of his response, below, indicate that he felt he was being assigned negative result research for the last six years under the professor's guidance, and it wasn't working out. Personally, he needed positive results to be a success, to save face for his own reputation, and for China:

How's my work going? Well my research work has been pretty depressing here. This is my sixth year, and I'm still here -- yes I'm finishing up, but my work has been full of negative results. Last year I got so depressed...I lost confidence in myself, and was so depressed. I talked with my professor and told him I just thought maybe I should quit because all my experiment results were so bad...I felt like such a failure. He said that negative results were just in the nature of research work, and that I shouldn't take them as my negative results. It's part of the job. I had been doing the projects and experiments he had suggested that I do. But at that point he gave me the freedom to try my own approaches so I could do my thesis and finish my degree. I worried a lot at first that if I wasn't successful he would have a bad image of Chinese students...maybe he would feel bad about others.

The last time we chatted before he moved away, Mr. M said to me, "I think it would help a lot if professors were a little more aware of just how very hard it is for Chinese students here."
PERCEPTIONS OF MISTREATMENT
BY U.S. PROFESSORS AT NWU

The quality of relationships which consultant graduate students had with their professors varied. Some students described their relationships with "their professors" as wonderful, while others described them as having some problems. They described their own relationships, as well as alluding to the relationships of others. Those working on independent thesis projects seemed to have the most difficult relationships, and described them negatively, while those working on a specific part of a well defined group project with other graduate students had easier relationships, and described them positively. Mr. H told me that here at NWU:

Some Professors don't like Chinese students because they [previous Chinese students] did something wrong -- they didn't perform well...two or three years earlier. One faculty member says, "I hate Chinese students. I'll never hire Chinese students."

Mr. A mentioned that he had heard many students and scholars complain that Chinese students are not treated the same as Caucasian students. He told me that Chinese students are victimized by professors who give them too much work, and by the students' powerlessness to refuse:

Many teachers give Chinese students "non-white" treatment. They treat them differently than Caucasian students. They give Chinese students more work because they're [the students are] compliant and will say, "yes"...they'll never say, "no"...and their assistantship is everything. If they lose it, then all is lost...they are victims in this sense.

One interview was of outstanding significance for its frank and honest disclosure regarding the requisition of PRC Chinese experimental research assistant laborers by science professors, and the inequity of their assistantship salaries. All consultants said that they were familiar with these practices, and that they did exist, but most politely avoided or circumlocuted my direct questions about "too much work assigned by their professors." The reliability of these occurrences in other departments here at NWU, and at other U.S. universities however, was verified by all my consultants. One consultant was
quick to remind me that it is important not to stereotype all departments or professors in a negative light, because most are ethical and treat Chinese graduate students extremely well. I thanked him for that reminder.

Because of its importance, an introduction to my interview with Ms. I and an extended portion of the transcription of that interview, is included below.

I met with Ms. I at their apartment, where her husband had helpfully agreed to occupy their young son in the bedroom during our interview in the living room. In my judgment, this interviewee was one of the most direct, honest, and straightforward of any with whom I spoke. She was brave in her candor. The interview was extremely emotional and difficult for both of us. To her, as to all my consultants, I owe my deep respect and admiration. She spoke first of her husband's relationship with his major professor, and then of her own.

Ms. I answered the door, and as I said hello, I started to remove my shoes to place them beside the many pairs at the front threshold. She insisted I leave mine on, stating that they took theirs off because they come from their laboratories where they work with radioactive materials, and that they just thought it was better to take their shoes off before they came in their house. I entered facing a couch on the opposite wall, big enough for three people to sit on. It was covered with pillows covered in light green Chinese silk pillowcases with lovely embroidered Chinese scenes on them. There were two end-tables with lamps at each end of the couch, and I sat down, moving one pillow by the arm rest at my right. She sat down on a shorter couch to my immediate right, sitting on the edge with her feet and legs together, hands folded in her lap, with a comfortable and polite posture which was not starchy at all, and made me feel comfortable in what I realized, was the more comfortable of the two seats. I realized that it was not designed especially for taking notes on the lap, however, but I had no difficulty at all.

She let me know that her son was asleep in the other room, and that her husband would arrive in a few minutes to trade off child care during our two planned interviews. I did not realize that the subject would be so important that she would tell me about their lives with such trust for two and a half hours. Later, I would have to request to meet with her husband at another time. I appreciated his patience and forbearance, for I knew that he
had much to add to his wife's comments, and it was particularly hard to contain their son in the next room after he was newly napped and ready to be an active little boy! Two minutes later, her husband walked through the door, and after greeting him, I handed him a copy of my abstract also, as he sat down on the couch beside his wife, underneath their marriage pictures on the wall above them, after their reading of which they studied my "Informed Consent Form" which explains the nature of their voluntary Cultural Consultant relationship to me and to my research. As they read, I studied the beautiful color enlargement of their wedding day above them -- both bright shining faces framed within a champagne glass, and thought, "I wonder if they were in love before they married, or if they married and have learned to love," remembering an old Chinese saying. They both appeared comfortable consulting with me after they fully understood what it was that I was intending to research. We chatted for a few minutes, they both agreed to be mentioned in my final document, and I introduced them to my motivation for selecting this topic.

Ms. I's husband and little boy sat down beside her also. Her husband was going to watch the boy while I talked with her. I explained to her husband to forgive me for not consulting with him during the interview, that the woman's point of view was very important to my study. He got up and went into the adjoining bedroom and didn't come out till 5:15 (2-1/2 hours later). Their little boy came out several times, observed his mother crying and said he was going to call the police, brought a toy gun out and pretended to shoot me with it several times, got close to me, stood by me, and was generally agitated when his mother would start crying, or raise her voice. He didn't go to her much and several times her husband would call him out of the room. It was a very emotionally wearing session for her, and I found that I wanted to stop her from crying several times, but managed to look up frequently, listening attentively, as she was resolved to keep relating the chronology of her painful continuing experience through her tears. I was writing furiously during most of the time. I could not have had such a disclosing interview with a tape recorder present I believe. I owe her and her husband my respect and my deep appreciation for sharing the very core of their lives with me. We began the interview by establishing mutual acquaintances, talking about our children, and gradually I moved into a
question and answer format. I asked her to tell me about the problems they had encountered as graduate students at NWU. She related the following:

[My husband] has been here seven years...I feel so...guilty...he is a foreign student...he can't complain...he was here the first three years...I have to be honest with you for your research...[Dr. X] published a paper researched completely by [my husband] with only a small acknowledgement...for three years he has done Dr. X's research for him without time to do his own research. [She began sobbing] I feel so guilty because at least I have time to do some of my own, but I will finish mine probably sooner than [my husband].

Pausing to wipe her wet face and red eyes with one hand, still sitting straight and tall, then tipping her head slightly from one side to the other to drain the tears down the edges of her outstretched index fingers, first one hand and then the other, the tears streaming, she continued:

Every year he is a .3 RA – every year! And no time! He works from early morning and comes home at 12 midnight and none of this work is for him! All for Dr. X and the department! He teaches [name of class], prepares the lectures, teaches three or four sections, gives the lectures, writes and grades the exams...for three years he has done this!

She mentioned the feelings of failure associated with negative findings, inferring that the professor should know what would work positively:

Dr. X would give him an idea and tell him to work on it...he would...and the idea wouldn't work, so Dr. X would tell him to work on another...this one, another one, none of the ideas worked...we should have stayed at [the first university], and not transferred here!

Sobbing, but not stopping, tears flowing, she continued to describe her perception of his loss of face (humiliation) to peers and other professors for
taking so long to finish:

Now [my husband] just avoids others because he is embarrassed...he has taken so long...his friends have all graduated, others see him and say, "Hey [his name]! When are you going to get your Ph.D.? When are you going to finish?" Now he has taken so long! [still sobbing] We don't see a lot of other people or friends any more...I just do my RA...just do my work...

She described her perceived exploitation with all the research work requested of him by Dr. X:

The first year he worked for Dr. X he got no money for his RA work -- he worked full time. The second year he was given a .3 [FTE]. Dr. X told him all this was necessary data to have for a new grant application and if the grant was accepted then he would be compensated...he never was...just given a .3 [FTE]. The next year with an additional work load and no time to do his own research.

She mentioned again her perception of discourtesy on the part of her own professor, and by repetition inferred her own loss of face by association:

Even my professor discriminates against my husband when he sees him...doesn't take him like a serious student, like he has taken too long with his Ph.D. -- seven years! He doesn't talk to him or acknowledge him...he doesn't say hello...just like he's not there at all!

Tears welling again, she began to heave deep sobs:

We don't mind hard work! I do my professor's research, do my own, do housework, meals...I just keep praying we can continue...go on...with day care for our son...[breaking into sobs again]...its just too much!

She paused to wipe more tears away again, her face and hands wet:
I feel like we are outsiders, foreigners, strangers, we don't want to say anything, I don't want to get into trouble or make trouble for my professor...

She paused, choking, cleared her throat, and took several deep breaths, and gathering her composure she continued:

...for me...you are the first American I have told this to in seven years...

A cascade of tears and sobs followed at which point I could handle it no longer. My writing hand was beginning to cramp, and my stomach and heart were beginning to ache for both of them as she related their story. "What about your work, Ms. I?" I queried. She drew a long deep quivering breath, gracefully wiped her eyes again, and still with a posture I can only describe as regal, tall and proud, sat at the edge of the love-seat, and folding her hands in her lap she turned her head slowly toward me. Her eyes hardened as they locked onto mine, and in her lap her hands tightened around each-other until her knuckles began to whiten. She began again:

I am SO angry at my major professor! [fire coming from her eyes.] He hasn't treated me like other graduate students or like other native English speaking foreign students. When I came from China, I tried to match my graduate work and degree in [the discipline] with my [graduate field] degree from China.

In China, verbal contracts are respected above written ones, Ms. I explained. She went on to describe her financial difficulties:

I came to NWU, and I was given advice to see Dr. Y in the [name] Department. I talked with him and gave him my background from China. I told him we didn't have enough money for me to begin my studies unless I could get an RA position. He said I was too late, the positions had been assigned and there was no money for me, so I should just audit courses until I had enough money, so the first two terms I audited [name] classes, and worked to pass the TOEFL. I passed with better than 550, and Dr. Y accepted me as his graduate student. But then he said he had no money for assistantships. (Actually,
he had given the positions to American students.) So I couldn't
pay the money to attend classes. We didn't have it.

So I interviewed with [a woman] to talk about a tuition
reduction from getting a position in [another program]. She said
OK -- for 90 hours of service per academic year. This reduced my
tuition to the "residence tuition" rate, so I worked Spring and
then Summer to save money, and then enrolled the following
Fall Term.

She explained that the nature of her research work did not lend itself to a
regular schedule of limited hours per week:

The next Summer I started research. I worked the whole
Summer -- full time (16 hours per day)...just like my
husband...because you have experiments...you just can't leave
them...you have to go back and finish them and tabulate results.
Well, Dr. Y paid me $200.00 per month to do his research FULL
TIME! [her eyes blazing] Do you think that's fair? He said he
would get me a TA, and he said he would pay me for my work
in the Fall Term! [My husband] with only his .3 and I could
barely live on what we were making!

She expressed fears that she would lose her assistantship if her pregnancy was
discovered, that she would be judged incapable of doing good work as a
pregnant woman, or that she would be judged incompetent:

Fall Term (my second year) Dr. Y got me a .15 TA. Then I found
out I was pregnant with [my son]. I told [my husband] I would
just get an abortion -- I don't know what you think about
whether abortion is right or wrong, but this is what I told [him] --
I told [him] we couldn't afford to live with a baby in our lives.
We decided we would have the baby, but I thought if my
professor found out I was pregnant I would lose my .15
assistantship because...[he would think] I wasn't capable of doing
good work, that I might make mistakes...the reason we decided
to have [our son] was because I was already thirty and needed to
have my baby before I got too old. We concluded that if there
was no money, I would just quit school, continue to audit
classes, stay home and take care of [our son]. I didn't tell anyone
we were pregnant...this is what we do in China.
She said that she worked even harder so the quality of her work would not be in jeopardy, and she described her diligence:

The first month of pregnancy I got sick every day, but then it was better. I was still doing Dr. Y's research full time and continued to take classes. I was seven months pregnant before he ever noticed -- he was too busy. I told him I needed a couple of days off to study for my exams. That's the only time off I took. Then [our son] was born, and I struggled through the birth and infant care as a full time student, still doing [my professor's] research and some of my own research.

My third year he gave me $450.00 per month (at an hourly wage pay) plus a .15 TA-ship to grade papers. My mother came from China to help. She told me, "Ask your professor for more money!" But I was afraid if I did he would cancel my .15 TA-ship. I found an additional job for ten hours per week in the library and I was afraid to tell [him] because he might think I was not spending enough time on his research. I finally did tell him, and he said, "I'll find the money, work for me, not the library." So I gave up the library job, and he paid me $200 to $300 per month hourly wage in addition to my .15 RA ship position.

Ms. I explained to me what she perceived as racial discrimination. She said:

I was Dr. Y's first foreign student. I was the first Chinese graduate student in the [academic unit]. My fourth year he finally gave me a .3 RA which paid me $900 per month. Suddenly he told everyone...he advertised...that I was the best paid TA in the department, but I said, "No! I'm not! You pay other students with a .3 their first year!" There was a new student from [another country] who got a .3 her first year! She just took class, didn't do any research! She got all B's, and Dr. Y never complained. He paid her this for two terms. For my first three years I was paid a .15 to do full time research! And yet, I was far better qualified! This other student didn't even get the required GPA for an assistantship! It's hard to believe. Now she has got a fellowship. I was told not to apply for this fellowship by Dr. Y. Now she's getting more than me, although I have better grades. Now I have been assigned to work with another professor...I've been working this whole term (two months) for another professor.
She alluded to being trapped into working full time for a .15 assistantship (which included the all-important tuition waiver). When she complained to her professor he threatened to give the RA to someone else if she didn't want it. She said she was trapped by a sense of loyalty and obligation, and that most Chinese students are similarly trapped by these feelings. She continued:

Another thing. In the beginning, when I first started with Dr. Y, he told me that it was normal for a .15 RA to work twenty-four hours per week. He expected this of me. (Of course I later found out it's supposed to be twenty-four hours per month!) He doesn't respect my position. I worked one hundred eighteen hours for him in one particular term that I remember for a .15 RA. I couldn't do it any more. I told him, and he said it was my choice, if I didn't want the RA he could give it to someone else. I told him I would keep it. He then paid me an additional $500 (at an hourly rate) to compensate for this particular month. We tightened our belts and spent less on food and everything. I am so angry about this! I felt obedience and loyalty to Dr. Y. These are things Chinese students feel toward their teachers in China, and toward their teachers here. He has taken advantage of me. I told a Chinese friend who got an assistantship that she didn't need to do research her first term here. She should just go home and study to improve her grades...I told her that good grades were the most important thing, but she felt that she couldn't study. She felt she had to begin doing lots of work! Just like me when I came! I am so angry!

She again stated her perception of being paid unfairly and unequally, compared to the pay given others:

I got awards for my research work at [our last annual conference], and so Dr. Y tells everybody what an outstanding researcher I am (because I get the top awards and scores), but he has never paid me fairly. He has paid others more who are less qualified and less skilled.

She and her husband were in such financial need they had to send their baby away:
We were in such a financial bad place when my mother came here, that frankly we couldn't afford to keep [him] here with us. After one year, my mother took him back to live in China with her for ten months. We didn't have any money to continue like we were.

I asked another researcher, Mr. F, if he agreed that PRC graduate students worked more than their assistantship FTE rate required. He described his perception of unequal treatment, unequal allocation of assistantships, and unequal pay to Chinese graduate students:

If it's your own thesis, it doesn't really make a difference what the FTE is. You work full time on it anyway. But if it's doing the professor's research, most foreign students are too easy to satisfy, so they settle for a .15 assistantship. I don't think American students will accept this. The foreign students just say, "Great! I have a tuition waiver and some money!" They work hard. And the American students won't do the same work for less than a .5 assistantship. I don't know any American students who work for less than a .5! But this way, the professor can have more students working for him, and get more of his research done.

Mr. E did not meet with his professor as much as he would have liked, and he had very little to say about their relationship. When asked if his professor was helpful to him in his research work, he said only, "I was supposed to see my professor every Thursday...my professor would say, 'Why didn't you do this?'...Well..." Later in the interview he interjected some negative statements about his professor. These, however, were balanced very carefully with statements about his own shortcomings, inferring modestly that he perhaps might have been the cause of criticisms aimed at his professor. Throughout the interview, the few references Mr. E made to his dissatisfaction with his professor and to his seven year-long research progress were balanced with extensive and exuberant explanations of his satisfaction with his progress toward becoming an excellent university teacher, like each of his parents. When asked about his relationship with his professor, his responses were diversionary. Avoidance or omission of the subject was glaring. Without commenting directly, his inference rang loud and clear -- by
avoidance, omission, and indirection. Although he was asked about his relationship with his professor several times, he avoided the subject as quickly as possible, and shifted the focus from his thesis to the knowledge and skills he was gaining:

My first year here (1985) -- I have had a .3 RA this whole time -- I was doing my professors work the whole time -- I had no time of my own. He told me to do my own research on the same problem I was researching for him. Well, it did take me longer to do it (his work) because of course I was learning many techniques...and on top of this I was still improving my English, so it took me a lot of time to really prepare and learn well. I spent a year becoming familiar with [a particular dependent variable], and then he told me I'm suppose to begin working on [another dependent variable] since these were cheaper. This made it very difficult. My second year I had a .3 and I taught one class in [discipline] in addition to my full time research responsibilities, I taught sixty students in three sections of twenty students each. It was a five credit class. He did the lecture and I did the lab with one other TA. This really took a lot of time. It took from ten to fifteen hours to prep the two exams (total), but the actual lab preparation and contact time amounted to twenty-six hours per week! Again, I admit that I had a language problem. But I also knew that I had to know things inside and out. I had to be well prepared. That's why teaching is not very easy. The students would expect me to have all the answers to their questions.

Four of the thirteen consultants overtly acknowledged good relationships with their professors. Mr. G was aware of the exploitation of Chinese graduate students by American professors, but he thought it was very important that students back home in China be aware that there are also wonderful teachers who do everything they can to help Chinese students. His description of gaining mutual respect through personal involvement with his professor is important. Consistent with the Chinese tradition of the teacher as a model of morality first, and a teacher of knowledge second, he described "caring" as a moral characteristic a professor should possess. In answer to my questions about his major professor, he did not even mention his professor's academic or professional expertise:
...there are those teachers who want to get things out of their students...who pay them unfairly and use them...but it's important not to stereotype all this way. There are others who are wonderful teachers! I think we have to present a balanced picture to those back in China that there are people here who offer great opportunities and fairness and friendship -- who get involved with you personally -- it's very important to feel involved personally with your professor...in other words...if you share with me personally, and don't look down on me, I respect you more.

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The findings have included the descriptions of the consultants' subjective realities of their perceptions and experiences as college students at a United States university. They described their perceptions and experiences within education-related domains. They also described problem relationships with American students and professors.

Six main Chinese cultural values comprised the framework for identifying the presence of Chinese traditional values in their lives as graduate students at a Northwest U.S. university.

Descriptive themes were identified in the data using theme analysis, and the presence and influence of traditional Chinese cultural values were determined using cultural theme analysis. The six Chinese traditional cultural value domains found to be present in the descriptions were: (a) the Chinese family model as the model for academic institutions, (b) the scholar-official tradition and the teaching of morality over knowledge, (c) collective identity, (d) the preservation of social harmony and face considerations, (e) indirection, and (f) action, inaction, and non-action.

The findings also include the impact of traditional cultural values within two other descriptive theme areas: (g) problems in student and professor relationships, and (h) perceptions of mistreatment by U.S. university professors.

The findings revealed that PRC graduate students and their lives in education-related contexts were impacted heavily by the presence of their C1 traditional values, expectations, and behaviors. The influence of ideal Chinese family structure and the traditional hierarchy of behavioral role
expectations regarding education and the major dyads of father-son/teacher-student were found to be present in descriptions of C2 family life and Chinese student C2 college experiences. The father-teacher figure was found to be the dominant superordinate figure. In C1 education-related domains, Chinese young people's lack of choices and opportunity to make decisions for themselves, and their dependency on the elders to do so, resulted in C2 misunderstandings, confusion, bewilderment, worry and anxiety on the part of PRC students when confronted with the considerations of many alternative choices and the necessity to self-determine and self-direct their classes and courses of study in the United States.

The scholar-official tradition was evident in descriptions of why students had chosen to become scholars (or scientists) -- for high positions, influence, social status, respect, honor and good pay. Teaching and the importance of morality over knowledge were found to be present in consultant expectations and evaluations of their professors.

Collective identity, duties, and responsibilities were found in descriptions of school class cohort groups in Chinese colleges, and descriptions using the collective "we" in reference to family, nationality, and country. It was also evidenced by descriptions of its absence, and the lack of collective support for family and close friends here in the United States. Collective identity orientation was found to be present in descriptions of PRC mutual support efforts, such as the establishment of an assistance and support association to provide acculturation help for fellow PRC students and scholars. Through this collectively oriented association, new friendship networks were formed. Collective identity was also evident in the descriptions of collective and reflexive face considerations -- public and private, and as collective and reflexive respect to and from family, fellow PRC students, professors, American students, nationality as a whole and country.

The preservation of social harmony was present in descriptions as a value in the determination of respectful behavior to others, and the avoidance of public argument, disagreement, unpleasantness, or offense. It was also present in the high degree of face consideration in assessment and contemplation of appropriate discourse (verbal and non-verbal), and in actions within interpersonal situations and relationships.
Indirection was found to preserve distance from taboo subjects or behavior in conversation or social activities, and also as a convention of respect with perceived superordinates, such as professors. The self-protective strategies of indirection were identified in consultant description of behavior, but were most evident in the interview situations. They were circumlocution, avoidance, diversion by immediate subject change, omission, or passive retreat. Also indirection by circumlocution was identified as a convention of respect, so as not to offend by telling someone something already well-known, as if they had little knowledge. For this reason, the structural forms of verbal discourse were observed to include the use of analogy, proximity, association, and allusion.

Action, inaction, and non-action were identified as both cognitive principles and behavioral characteristics of the consultants deriving from enculturated C1 considerations of traditional family and social role and behavior expectations. Caution was seen to be all-important in the consideration of any action -- verbal or non-verbal -- lest it be a "wrong action," or "mistake," which might be taken as offense, insult, injury, or lack of respect. Actions were seen to require extensive consideration of consequences: potential loss of face, reprisal, or punishment due to deviation from C1 cultural behavior norms, or socio-political "correctness." Inaction was described as the retreat from potential "wrong action," or identified to be a "wait-and-see" attitude. Conditions and situations and events can reverse themselves. Do not judge too quickly and act rashly.

Problems in student and professor relationships were found to be due to English language listening comprehension difficulties, and to the lack of sociolinguistic and communicative discourse competencies as well. Students could not or did not understand their American peers or professors, and some semantically misunderstood English definitions of their academic majors or study programs. But their biggest problems appeared to be due to the misattribution of C1 cultural value and behavior expectations and interpretations with American professors and students in C2 interpersonal communication and social interaction situations.

C1 concepts of trust, loyalty, obedience, and reciprocity obligations toward teachers and professors, as well as face considerations (fear of losing face) appeared to contribute greatly toward incorrect assumptions and
predictions, misperceptions, misunderstandings, distance, resentment, and anger on the part of Chinese students and their professors, as well.

Racial prejudice toward and exploitation of the labor assistance of Chinese students by professors were claimed by several consultants to exist in some departments. Inequality with respect to FTE pay equity and the over-allocation of research work given to Chinese student GRAs was reported to exist in the subjective reality descriptions of the consultants, also.

Problems with U.S. professors and perceptions of mistreatment by them seemed to be influenced to some degree by students' C1 enculturated behavior and student-professor role expectations. Culturally determined compliancy and fear of reprisal appear to have contributed greatly to the perceived victimization of some PRC graduate students by their major professors.
CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

For PRC Chinese graduate students in the United States, I was told by several consultants, C2 education-related choices are complex and worrisome. When such considerations are determined by different values and role expectations from within a different C1 world-view, assumed-to-be-simple academic decisions and actions may be, in reality, nearly incomprehensible. Many PRC Chinese students who have come to NWU have found little understanding of or appreciation for, their cultural traditions, values, or political pressures -- all of which may have significantly influenced their interactions with American students and professors, and, ultimately, their performance in university coursework and research. There is reason to believe that ignorance and ethnocentrism on the part of university professors and GRA colleagues may have contributed to unequal and limited access to educational and financial resources for this highly motivated and industrious minority group.

The purpose of this study was to explore PRC graduate students' perceptions of education related choices which are or have been made while in the U.S., and to assess the values and considerations underlying these choices. The objectives of the study were to: (a) explore and discover how PRC students perceive and describe education in their lives; (b) to discover how they perceive and describe problems in important educational relationships and events; and (c) to assess the presence and influence of Chinese traditional values upon their behaviors within, and attitudes toward these relationships and events.

This final chapter will include a discussion of the findings, some inferences from the research, recommendations for further research, and a conclusion.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

This discussion of the findings is organized by the three research objectives, stated above: (a) perceptions of education, (b) perceptions of problems, and (c) the influence of C1 values upon C2 behaviors and events. It is a synthesis of the information revealed by the consultants about
education in their lives, their relationships with people in the academic environment, and the influence of values on the decisions they have made and the relationships they have developed.

Perceptions of Education

Most PRC Chinese student consultants told me either their fathers or their elder brothers had the most influence on their pursuit of a college or graduate education abroad. They described education in their lives as the direct path to high appointments and a good salaries. They all described how proud their parents were of their scholastic achievements. Every father's dream was to have his son (or daughter) become a scholar or a scientist. And to go abroad for an education in the west, especially in the U.S., brought social status to the family, the consultants said. Zhou En Lai and Deng Xiao Ping had gone abroad for college study, and here they were doing it too. They described "their college class" in China as small and like a family. Consultants reported that in China they had a strong but very caring department heads (in most cases), who -- like fathers -- took an interest in every part of their lives, sometimes, from their point of view, too much interest! Some consultants described education as the only path out of a life of poverty and hard physical work, in hopes of becoming a leader or somebody influential. And they described the collective support of their close college friends. Some also described the trust and loyalty they felt toward their "father-teacher-professor."

Problems in the United States

Consultants described their graduate school lives in the U.S. very differently. They said that life was very hard here, that it was very lonely and depressing without their family and friends, and that they were afraid to show their lack of knowledge and culture. They were afraid of losing face for the professors by getting bad grades, of embarrassing their families back home, and of losing face for the other Chinese students against whom they were competing.
They were worried about the communist party student who might report them to the government for not making correct statements about the PRC government. And they were worried about their spouses and children who had to stay in China. Consultants reported that they were worried about losing their assistantships and having to return to China in shame, having not been successful in completing their degrees. And they were re-reading the textbooks over and over and over again, decoding new vocabulary with their dictionaries, and listening to the taped lectures over and over again because they couldn't understand the lectures in English, and they couldn't understand their professor's English, and he couldn't understand them.

And they felt some professors just thought they were stupid. The professors didn't know how hard they had competed and studied to be one in 10,000 to go to college, and in the top three to qualify to study in the United States. Professors didn't know that they were the best of China's best. And so PRC students just worked harder and harder, filling up eighteen hours each day with classes, and studying the books -- reading, writing, decoding, memorizing -- and hoping the professor would recognize their respect for him by their never asking him questions or talking to him; hoping he would take a personal interest in them once they had earned his trust by their never missing a class, by their attentive listening, and by their obedience to any request which would be interpreted to be a test of obedience or loyalty.

Although some of my consultants described good relationships with "their professors," over half said despondently, that their professors were so busy they had no time and were not much help at all. Consultants described their lives in terms of overwork for their professors, no time for their families or friends, exhaustion, loneliness, and isolation. Some used the terms "caught" or "trapped."

The Most Important Relationship

All consultants perceived their primary educational relationship to be that with their major professors. In China, it is the teacher's responsibility to teach the student well. It is the student's obligation to learn and be successful in exchange for the teacher's support. The professor will be helpful and supportive in helping the student obtain his or her degree, and the professor
will then take a personal interest in the life of the student. The student must always be nice and produce hard work. In turn, the professor will advise (the student will choose his own future, but the elder will advise). This means the professor will help the student make decisions and closely direct his program of study. The student dwells on the professor's every word and does anything he suggests. And the student should never speak ill of his professor or embarrass him in any way. Loyalty to one professor over all others is expected. And this professor will always be considered "father-teacher" for the rest of the student's life.

Relationships with Major Professors in the United States

Following were expectations of most of my consultants when they first came to study in the United States. This was their world-view of education and their primary relationship -- before it was turned upside down.

Most consultants described their American professor in terms of a personal relationship, or the lack thereof. They spoke of professors as caring, friendly, and kind. Or they spoke of professors as not having much time to spend with students because they were so busy. There were very few references to the professional reputations or scientific achievements, or expertise of their major professors. They did, however, describe their professors in terms of the work which was assigned to them, or which they were doing for them in their GTA or GRA capacities.

Several of my consultants said they had wonderful relationships with their major professors. They were treated as equals. They joked with and received advice from their professors. But several said that there were "some problems" in their relationships. Generally if these were problems, they shied away from any direct criticism of professors, using polite indirection, avoidance, subject change, and diversion rather than talking about them.

Problems with Major Professors and the Misattribution of C1 Role Behavior Expectations

Consultant graduate students who held GRA positions discussed their relationships with major professors (all men) in terms of work. A common
theme was "doing my professor's work." Many said that they were doing so much of their professor's work, they didn't have time to do any of their own. Consultants saw their professors as wielding tremendous power over their lives -- primarily financial. They feared the possible reduction or loss of their assistantships. Consultants were aware that their lives hung by the threads of pleasing their professors, who provided their assistantships. One consultant told me that the professor who provides the financial support, is like the historical Chinese emperor -- he holds the power of life and death -- he can withdraw life (the assistantship and tuition waiver plus living expenses money), he can maintain it, or he can increase it. The major professor was generally perceived as an all-powerful superordinate by consultants. The majority of student consultants in this study saw themselves and their PRC student friends as powerless.

The largest measure of respect for the student is to learn and be successful -- get the best grades. Students felt this was their obligation to the professor, in turn for his financial assistantship support and his teaching. Many of my consultants said their professors didn't pay much attention to them. There were two scathing accounts of perceived injustice and perceived mistreatment of PRC Chinese students by research professors, the occurrence of which was reported to exist in other departments as well. One consultant said she had to finally quit her major professor's work because he was never going to let her finish her own research and graduate.

Cross-sexual Relationships With Professors

Women graduate students reported that they found it difficult to relate or work with male research professors. Ms. K, who had a U.S. ROC professor, pointed out that it was more difficult and more awkward for a female graduate student than a male graduate student to work in close proximity with a male professor and that possibly her professor was more critical and demanding of Chinese GRAs than of American GRAs. She said also that she thought he didn't like PRC graduate students, but that after four difficult years working for him, she thought she had "earned trust and proved herself" to him. She hoped to get a post-doc position working with him on his research.
Reflecting Elizabeth Johnson's (1975) social research on women and childbearing in China, and the negative power and pollution of women (see Chapter II), Ms. I, who worked with radioactive isotopes and was seven months pregnant before her professor noticed, projected that she might lose her GRA position because he might view her as incompetent because she was pregnant; therefore, she overcompensated by devoting even more time and precision than usual to her experiments during her pregnancy. She also told me that the professor might possibly consider her "bad luck" for his project if he learned she was pregnant.

Women Graduate Students, Work, Pregnancy, and Children

Four women graduate student consultants were mothers. Each planned for and had one child only. All were mothers of boys. Three out of four had husbands also engaged in Ph.D. studies at NWU. Three out of four had their babies during their graduate study and continued to do their GRA work throughout their pregnancies and after the birth of their babies. Three of them had their mothers come from China to visit and help with the baby during the first year, as they had no time to care for the baby during the day and no money for child care. One mother said she and her husband were so short of money for food that they had to send the baby back to China with the grandmother for one year. Each described their educational and family lives as extremely difficult, exhausting, and with not enough time to spend with their studies, their husbands or their children.

Evidenced in the descriptions were the added pressures upon married female graduate students to (a) have a healthy baby before they got too old, (b) not fall behind in their graduate studies, and (c) not jeopardize their GRA work status (income source). Women and men consultants both expressed their urgency and, indeed, the cultural expectation to have children and in addition, to have only one child, echoing the current Chinese political "one child policy." This combined expectation was both tacitly and explicitly imbedded and evident in repeated imperative, possessive-singular statements and descriptive phrases such as, "...we had to have our child..." or, "...we needed to have our child...before I [or 'my wife'] got too old." Women not only experienced socio-cultural pressure from their families to have children,
and socio-political and financial pressures to have only one child, but the pressure of their own perceived limited fertility time cycles as well. Consultants -- husbands and wives -- expressed concern for not having "our child" too late, so as to insure viable ova production, and normal prenatal and postnatal development.

Another point of interest, considering the Chinese cultural traditions of having male children over female children and the "feudal" practice of female infanticide, is the ironic coincidence that of the eleven parents with one child interviewed, nine of eleven children were boys, and of the one parent who had two children, the first child was a girl, the second was a boy (reflecting the current "modified one-child policy"). This one parent consultant reflected that he and his wife had wanted a boy the first time. This coincidence might suggest the possibility that the traditional preference for male children may still be reflected tacitly if not openly and that abortive measures to this end may still be cautiously and privately practiced.

Life appeared to be more difficult for married female PRC Chinese graduate students than for their male counterparts in the United States for the above reasons. The expectations and pressures of having, bearing, birthing, and caring for a child fall upon the female graduate student mother, who must simultaneously achieve "A's" in class work, and as a GRA, "please her professor," in order to maintain both face and a secure income. Usually, for a PRC Chinese GRA, this financial income is the only means for her and her family's survival; therefore, "pleasing" her professor is a necessity, over and above everything else. For these reasons, one can conjecture that perhaps PRC female graduate students may suffer under more pressures of compliancy in their working relationships with their major research professors. And we have seen that this, as reported by consultants, does occur.

Choice Considerations

Choice considerations and the individual freedom to choose, posed many problems for PRC students in the United States. Many Chinese students, I was told by my consultants, were "lost" in confusion over so many choices and the freedom to choose their own thesis project. They had never
had this experience of free choice, and they were not prepared to direct their own program or to determine their own behavior. In China, all decisions are made for students, and all programs are the same. The more choices and differences encountered by consultants, the more confused they became. And U.S. professors were no help at all. They just said, "You have to decide for yourself." One consultant said he easily lost a full year of study by being confused and lost and not knowing how to ask for help.

Further Influence/Impact of C1 Traditional Values

C1 Traditional Chinese values heavily influenced the consultants' attitudes toward and behaviors within their C2 relationships with American students, professors, and other university personnel. These C1 values also influenced their behaviors when making decisions or taking actions within the C2 academic community. For example, consultants described the C1 (Chinese) criteria for being a successful student: the student is given a life chance to get a GRA position. He or she gains acceptance, then must prove loyalty, obedience and diligence to the father-teacher in order to earn respect (gain face). In order to maintain face the student must get the best grades. Consequently, the professor's "reward" will be continued support. Consultants found that in the U.S. these criteria do not always apply.

The consultants thought that Americans would understand their respect for social harmony from their indirect answers and silent avoidance of critical discussion or challenging debate. They thought that Americans would understand the absence of expressive reaction in their faces and body movements to be evidence of self control which would command respect. Many had no idea C1 para-linguistic communication should be different in American C2 culture. They assumed that the non-verbal signals, conventions, and social cues they were so familiar with in Chinese interactions would be understood by their American counterparts. They thought that role expectations might be the same as in China, and that "back door" connections and favors could supercede rules, laws, and restrictions. And some students spent much time waiting for personal relationships with their professor, which never happened. Some consultants spent a lot of time waiting for "advice" and direction, which was never extended to them. And
the PRC graduate students in this study reported that they spent many hours being what they thought was respectful -- silent, unquestioning, indirect, and non-participatory. C1 student virtues were perhaps misunderstood to be "disinterest, stupidity, or incompetence" by C2 university professors and instructors at NWU.

They had thought their professors might have understood their unfamiliarity with "simple" laboratory technology and their lack of experience in dealing with such equipment. But, they confided, they were seen as "clumsy" and "not good at hands-on tasks."

The more differences and choices consultants encountered, the more confused and worried they became in a strange culture with a different language. They felt alone, without the advice and support of family and friends. One key consultant told me that he had to succeed. To do otherwise would be a loss of face. Consequently, he never went anywhere or did anything unrelated to his schooling -- home to school, school to home, and back again. He described his life for two years as "a two point line."

The Relationship between Social Harmony, Indirection and Face Consideration

For Chinese graduate students, social harmony, indirection, and face considerations seem to be closely interwoven. Social harmony was desired and appeared to depend upon the absence of social conflict, possible offense, or even slight disagreement. The preservation of, or adherence to social formality or "public face behavior" (meaning the limited level of open disclosure in public about things controversial, critical or unpleasant), seemed to assure that there would be no particularized, direct argument or opposing confrontation between two parties in the company of others, thereby mitigating any increase of such negativity by circular response. Strategies of verbal indirection observed in interviews (allusion, suggestion, circumlocution and syntactic omission) appear to be employed in order to carefully assess, transmit, negotiate or mediate questionable or negative valuations from one person to another, enabling both parties to avoid any possibility of embarrassment, humiliation or loss of individual or collective face.
Indirection as a Strategy for Extended Assessment Prior to Response
And The Role of Silence

The silence preceding indirection in negative responses by consultants was consistently noted in the interviews. The observed sequence for answering was first a pause of contemplative or surprised silence for the duration of perhaps three to five full seconds, which is long enough to be an uncomfortable silence for most native English speaking Americans. This silent pause, I grew to understand, was an answer in itself. It became a consistent cue, suggesting, first, that perhaps an inappropriate, embarrassing, or difficult question had been asked. Secondly, the silent pause response suggested that the consultant needed time to consider the appropriateness and consequences of his or her response to my question (should the response ever become known to others) with respect to (a) the immediate situational power roles, (b) the confidentiality and security of our trust relationship, (c) implications for the preservation of social harmony, (d) collective and reflexive face considerations, (e) socio-political implications, and (f) negative or punitive reactions from superordinates.

Strategies of indirection observed in verbal discourse, including silent pauses, may serve important temporal extension functions for the purpose of situational assessment prior to verbal responses or choice of appropriate actions. It can be inferred that more time is therefore required for the U.S. Chinese student to consider the added complexities of inter-cultural C2 applications of complex C1 values, expectations and behaviors.

The Relationship Between Collective Identity and Face

As noted in Chapter II, in Chinese society the self is defined only by its relationship to others. If relationship with others is denied or lost, there is a loss of identity. If one does not belong, one becomes a "non-person," lost, with no family, friends, school, life-long work unit (job) and house (provided by the work unit). If one does not belong, one has no associates to depend upon for advice, assistance, favors, job assignments or advancement. But, what is most important, if one does not belong, one has no reference groups to collectively mirror one's good character and accountability -- one's good
face cannot be reflected. In this sense, unless one maintains the face reflection (normative respect) of one's reference identity groups, one has no face, no respect, no basis for trust by others.

The interwoven fabric of the collective self in Chinese society, with its complex and inseparable judgmental and punitive reflexivity upon the individual, serves as the framework for all social structures. Well defined values, expectations, duties and responsibilities within the strict role hierarchy of the traditional patriarchal ideal Confucian family, have served as the social glue binding these social structures together for over 2000 years. For the individual they have provided both trust and accountability reference -- the loss of which means the loss of livelihood, house, job, and assistance. For without membership in, character reference from, and accountability to such a larger group (such as a person's family, school or work unit) to which one must answer and be punished for one's misbehavior or mistakes, the individual is not considered trustworthy or able to be held accountable.

Social Harmony, Public Participation, and The Fear of Trouble or Punishment

Consultants' concern for the preservation of social harmony appeared to be closely tied to fears of trouble or punishment and was most evident in their social behavior. Initially, they were reticent within the interviews to say or do anything which might be construed in the slightest way to be offensive to anyone. "Chinese like to meet with each other privately," said one consultant, who explained that relationships are managed independently in order that harmony, consensus, and support can then be assured when all the members gather in a larger group. Caution, silence, or extreme formal courtesy are essential in a social context of strangers, wherein the "mistake" of a word at which offense is taken can produce an enemy who may prove to be influential and powerful. "Public face" (as opposed to "private face") behavior requires caution and careful monitoring of self and others' behavior in any social context in which the personalities, views, and power structure complexities are unknown. Fears of "making a mistake" or "getting into trouble" or "offending someone" appeared to be strong deterrents to public "in-class" participation by Chinese graduate student consultants. Having the most information possible about the situation, the context, or the players
involved before expressing an opinion or taking some kind of action appeared to be important to graduate student consultants.

Non-Action (Delayed Action) and Situational Diagnosis

The need for situational diagnosis (mentioned above) may be one of the reasons why Chinese students are sometimes interpreted by university personnel or faculty "to leave things until the last minute" and then rush around in a flurry to get things done. Actions or verbal opinions in a public forum without consensus are risky because they may provoke disagreement, argument, conflict, or loss of face for self or others. Postponement or delay of action (non-action) until the last minute may serve as a strategy in itself. Non-action strategies may mitigate potential adverse pre-analysis, possible criticism, counter-moves or policy changes by superordinates or political opponents. Non-action strategies may also allow the longest possible opportunity for situational assessment and choice consideration of alternative actions. Fear of punishment from taking "the wrong action" may contribute to the need for caution and delay. Chinese student consultants reported their personal collective suffering and punishment experiences resulting from "judging in haste," from "wrong actions," or from "wrong words." They acknowledged the belief that inaction or delayed action (non-action) was always better than "wrong action." If plans are confirmed only at the last minute, then one can be reasonably assured that the "winds of Heaven" (the emperor or the government), meaning the leaders and policies which premised the action will still be in effect. Because political policies and social circumstances can change so fast in China, if plans or actions are made too far in advance, reversals of events or ideology may render them to be only wasted efforts, as illustrated by the story of Tsai Wong Shi Ma, in which catastrophes become opportunities if a person delays action and "waits long enough before judging." The difficult task is to know how long to delay action before the delay itself initiates folly. Traditional Chinese C1 notions of delay and non-action can be highly misunderstood by U.S. university faculty and advisors if applied in C2 university contexts, where there is little understanding of the socio-political and cultural complexity involved and little knowledge of the constraints placed upon PRC students.
INFERENCES

This section is organized around the generally accepted mission of most institutions of higher education: teaching, research and service. Although this provides the organization, the terms should be used broadly. The findings infer that some PRC Chinese students may misattribute Chinese cultural values and cognitive role expectations to both American students and professors in U.S. university educational domains. This misattribution leads to inter-cultural misperception and miscommunication with academic personnel. Such miscommunication can have a negative effect on the student-major professor relationship. Comparative culture and university culture orientation classes should be required for incoming PRC students.

Teaching

With respect to the university's mission of teaching, program changes or additions need to be addressed with regard to teaching English and comparative Chinese-American culture to PRC students in U.S. university affiliated English language institutes, with special emphasis on comparative value differences and role expectations. Departments of Anthropology, for example, may have existing classes in "Chinese-American Comparative Culture." These might provide resources or personnel to develop new programs, American participants of which might become motivated "friendship partners" or "go-betweens" for community introductions and intercultural exchanges.

Student consultants reported that their greatest English language deficiencies were in listening comprehension in descriptive classes and conversational discourse in groups, and many agreed that for the first two terms they couldn't understand anything. Because they don't understand verbal discourse, professors should provide written homework assignments and directions. It would be most helpful if professors would become more sensitive to the students listening comprehension needs. Also, further attention is needed to develop innovative listening comprehension classes for, and without further financial burden upon, PRC Chinese students.
In addition, the university has an ethical responsibility to provide training for PRC graduate students who have been accepted, but still lack sufficient communicative competence and knowledge of U.S. university culture, with special emphasis on Chinese-American comparative values, and the nature and expectations of the student-major professor relationship.

Also, PRC graduate student GRAs or GTAs and their research professors should be fully apprised of the ethical parameters and FTE requirements of the GRA or GTA position. The student should be provided with counsel, advocacy, and the means of redress and receipt of compensation should mistreatment be suffered at the hands of university personnel.

In addition, due to the C1 enculturated values related to the cultural family dyad of father-son obligations in which elders are responsible to make all educational decisions for the younger, young PRC students lack experience in making choices related to their course programming goals and career directions. Therefore, professors should meet with students to help them determine their programs and continue to meet with them to evaluate their progress.

Of students who had teaching assistantships, one consultant wanted above all else to become an excellent instructor and serve the students. This goal was valued more highly than his own graduate thesis work. One indication of this was that his personal care of and relationships with students was of primary importance. A possible consequence may be that he and other PRC GTAs who expressed similar goals may have devoted more time and energy to their teaching tasks (to the exclusion of work on their graduate studies) than other GTAs due to culturally determined C1 values and behaviors. Consequently there may be a real need for university graduate school personnel to provide organizational help and to monitor PRC students' use of time preparing and providing lectures and labs.

Research

With regard to the university's mission of research, two findings were apparent with respect to GRAs thesis research: (a) if the student's thesis project was assigned as part of a larger research project, then the student contributed to his own scholarly endeavor and to that of the larger group as
well, which seemed to be consistent with traditional Chinese collective orientation and identity; however, (b) if the student was left to his or her own devises to do an independent research project, then he or she may have become lost -- without the "advice" and direction of knowledgeable elders. Therefore, for the mission of research, special assistance should be given to those PRC students who are attempting independent Ph.D. program research, as they may have had no experience in choice consideration, or in identifying and planning self-directed research projects.

Moreover, U.S. university professors may not be aware of the Chinese graduate students' lack of access to, or experience with, resources, materials, or the "simplest" technology. This technology is often unavailable to graduate students in their own country due to socio-economic differences. Patience and guidance should be exhibited to allow the students, who are a student after all, time to become acquainted with the equipment.

Some PRC graduate students may be taken advantage of for their research labor due to their compliancy resulting from enculturated C1 value differences, their positions of subordination, fear of reprisal, and their perceived or real lack of opportunity for advocacy or redress. These findings infer that there should be ethical standards and guidelines for department heads and all professors working with Chinese (or all international) students to insure fair and equitable treatment.

The loss of face due to negative research findings caused considerable unhappiness on the part of several consultants because of its association with failure. The exception to this was if the student had knowledge of his or her contribution to, and the success of, a larger research project in which he or she was a participant.

It is suggested that regular inter-cultural communication orientations for university research professors with PRC students be facilitated, wherein these cultural considerations may be addressed.

Service

For the mission of public service, mutual cross-cultural understanding might be enhanced with the establishment of accepted American friendship "go-betweens," that is, American friends who provide additional immersive
training and trusted, character-referenced introductions. Homestays were noted by consultants as extremely beneficial in the successful orientation of students. University international student service programs should be expanded to accommodate the need for "go-between" person-to-person programs to introduce Chinese students and members of the American community to each other. Thus, both community and students benefit.

Introductions, orientations, and training in Chinese and American cross-cultural value, norm, and behavioral role expectation differences between U.S. university education-related domains and parallel Chinese university domains, need to be clearly understood by PRC graduate students studying in the United States. Therefore, specially designed comparative American-Chinese culture orientation classes (provided by departments of Cultural Anthropology) should be required of all PRC graduate students in their first term of study.

International student service programs should make a special person-to-person outreach effort with cross-culturally and inter-culturally (and bilingual if possible) knowledgeable staff to regularly check in on and assist Chinese students and their families in matters of finance, health services, parenting, baby-sitting, and child-care, in addition to academic and professional relationships. Integrating community services and individuals with student needs would increase public understanding of the rich diversity of its own existing multi-culturally diverse community as well.
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The value of an ethnographic study is the wealth and depth of information cultural consultants reveal. From this rich descriptive base of knowledge emerge areas that could benefit from further research. Some suggestions are here provided.

It would be helpful to more fully understand the education related choices of PRC graduate students if one were to administer a project with a sample selection based on the three waves of PRC students identified by my consultants.

Of certain benefit would be a project that seeks to identify methods to encourage Chinese graduate students to use the student service resources of the university for language acquisition and cultural orientation, and for assistance with the multiple demands of work-school-family life.

Uncovering subtle biases on the part of administration, faculty, and staff of the university regarding stereotypes of Chinese graduate students can lead to program development and training sessions for university personnel. This could assist them to more clearly and kindly attend to the needs of this minority nationality group within the larger university student population.

An economic analysis of the graduate student labor force using country of birth as the main organizing variable for analysis would be instructive. Such a research project could quantify perceptions such as those included in this research data.

The misattribution of C1 cultural values and the subordination of PRC Chinese graduate students in C2 primary academic relationships needs further study.

The roles of loyalty, obligation, and face consideration as C1 cultural determinants of mistreatment in the acquisition of PRC Chinese teaching and research assistantships by major professors in C2 U.S. university contexts, deserve further study.
CONCLUSION

This study has explored the educational experiences of PRC graduate students in a U.S. university. Descriptive themes within elicited consultant descriptions were analyzed for the presence and influence of Chinese C1 traditional values. In evidence were traditional values associated with (a) the Confucian ideal Chinese family model for the educational institution, (b) the importance of the father-teacher as the model of social behavior and the importance of teaching morality as well as knowledge, (c) collective identity, duty and responsibility, (d) the preservation of social harmony, (e) face considerations, (f) indirection, and (g) action, inaction and non-action. These C1 traditional value orientations appear to have directly influenced student goals for, expectations of, and behaviors within the U.S. higher education system.

C1 and C2 value conflicts were seen to be present in student-professor relationships in C2 university contexts, contributing to student difficulties and perceptions of being misunderstood, not being appreciated, and being taken advantage of by university research faculty in some cases. Lack of understanding of these conflicts and acculturation difficulties on the part of U.S. faculty and university personnel, as well as situational misattribution of C1 role and behavioral expectations upon and within C2 university domains by Chinese graduate students, have contributed to these student difficulties and perceptions.

In addition, the findings of this study have suggested that because of the C1 culturally determined and enculturated complexities of superordination and subordination which contribute to their compliancy, powerlessness, and being taken advantage of by perceived powerful superiors in C2 U.S. university domains, PRC Chinese graduate students may suffer greatly. The findings also suggest that because of their cognitive world view differences and unfamiliarity with western values of individual free choice and self determination, PRC graduate students may be at a great disadvantage in understanding and selecting appropriate graduate study programs and courses of study. For these reasons special services to Chinese students are recommended in the areas of comparative American-Chinese culture, English language listening comprehension, conversational discourse skills,
regular American friendship visitation, and access to information about ethical guidelines in research assistance procurement and pay equity by U.S. university personnel. Most important, however, efforts should be made to provide PRC students with a thorough understanding of cultural differences which impact their interpersonal relationships in U.S. university and related departmental domains, namely, relationships with American professors and instructors.

It is hoped that through collection of data about the complexity of educational choices and interpersonal problem contexts confronting PRC Chinese students and by the sharing of this information, U.S. university officials, advisors, instructors, and others might be more helpful to PRC Chinese university students and more sensitive to their needs.
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APPENDICES
APPENDIX A
DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following terms are used in this research. Definitions are provided to assist the reader.

1. Culture. The accumulated knowledge "by which human beings interpret their experience and generate social behavior" (Spradley, 1979:5).

2. Values. Cognitive principles or axioms which function universally throughout different domains, and which determine attitudes, goals, expectations, norms, and behavior.

3. Consultant. A native of the study group who is teaching the researcher about his/her culture in a non-structured, guided, open-ended interview within his/her own life context. The consultant is neither "subject," upon which are performed isolated tests outside the native's real-life context; nor is the consultant a "respondent," from whom the researcher receives unqualifiable responses to a concrete sequence of discrete questions.

4. Domain. A particular physical or ideological communicative context in which interactional behaviors occur.

5. Interview. An informal, but focused and guided interview which is not necessarily restricted to a pre-structured time, place, format, or sequence of questions.

6. PRC. Peoples Republic of China.

7. ROC. Republic of China.
(Taiwan)

8. HK. Hong Kong.

9. Northwest University (NWU). A pseudonym for the university at which this study was conducted, used for the purpose of guaranteeing anonymity to the graduate students who have served as cultural consultants to the study.
APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT FORM
(To be signed by the Cultural Research Consultant)

I agree to be a cultural consultant for William Kent Buys in his Ph.D. dissertation research; and fully understand and comply with the following statements regarding the nature and purpose of his research, and my consultant relationship with him:

1. The topic of Mr. Buys' research is "VALUES AND CONSIDERATIONS IN EDUCATION RELATED CHOICES: A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF CHINESE GRADUATE STUDENTS AT UNIVERSITY." The purpose of his research is to describe PRC students' perceptions of education related choices which they are making or have made during their tenures of study in the United States, and to assess the values and considerations underlying these choices. Mr. Buys' research is totally funded by himself, with no institutional help.

2. I agree to voluntarily and without pay, talk with Mr. Buys about my educational experiences; and I understand that several conversations may take approximately one hour each of my time, at my convenience, and at a place of my choice. I also understand that Mr. Buys has made arrangements with the Institute in to extend to me an equal amount of time in any English pronunciation or academic skills class taught by Mr. free of charge (as an equitable exchange).

3. I understand that as a cultural research consultant, I may be contributing to a greater understanding of the complexity of educational choice and decision-making contexts confronting PRC Chinese students studying in the United States; and that my knowledge may help increase the cross-cultural knowledge and understanding of U.S. university officials, advisors, student service personnel and instructors, enabling them to be more helpful to Chinese university students' personal, social, and curricular needs as international students in the university community.

4. Mr. Buys has stated to me that to the best of his knowledge there is no significant risk to myself resulting from my participation in this educational research study. I understand that the confidentiality of any part of my consultation, if requested, will be respected, honored and kept by Mr. Buys. I understand that my help will be acknowledged by name as one of a group of consultants in the preface of Mr. Buys' dissertation only; but that if I sign at the end of this paragraph, I will not be directly identified by name anywhere within the finished work.

Anonymity requested by ________________________________.

5. I understand that if I have any questions about the research, Mr. Buys will answer me truthfully; and that I may contact him at any reasonable time prior to his final draft submission to his graduate committee to change or omit any information given to him by myself and printed therein. I understand that my participation in Mr. Buys' study is voluntary, and that any time with good feelings I may respectfully decline to participate further as a cultural consultant in his research.

Consultant Signature ___________________________ Date ____________ W. Kent Buys, Researcher Date ____________
APPENDIX C


SOCIETY for
APPLIED ANTHROPOLOGY
SfAA GUIDES TO ETHICAL PRACTICE

Statement on Professional and Ethical Responsibilities, Society for Applied Anthropology. This statement is a guide to professional behavior for the members of the Society for Applied Anthropology. As members or fellows of the Society we shall act in ways that are consistent with the responsibilities stated below irrespective of the specific circumstances of our employment.

This statement is the fourth version of the Society’s ethics statement. It was modified in response to concern about the increase in the number of anthropologists employed in applied roles outside of universities. This statement is not associated with a system of certification or licensure. Because of this, the society’s Ethics Committee is not equipped with sanctions against unethical behavior.

1.) To the people we study we owe disclosure of our research goals, methods, and sponsorship. The participation of people in our research activities shall only be on a voluntary and informed basis. We shall provide a means throughout our research activities and in subsequent publications to maintain the confidentiality of those we study. The people we study must be made aware of the likely limits of confidentiality and must not be promised a greater degree of confidentiality than can be realistically expected under current legal circumstances in our respective nations. We shall, within the limits of our knowledge, disclose any significant risk to those we study that may result from our activities.

This paragraph states the basic components of ethical research practice. These are: voluntary participation, informed consent, and confidentiality. This is supplemented with a reference to risk. One point must be emphasized: disclosure of sponsorship is especially important in research that has a practical effect. Individuals who are asked to give consent must be made aware of sponsorship so that they can better calculate their own interest in reference to the goals of the sponsoring organization. The paragraph contains reference to the fact that in the United States the promise of confidentiality from a researcher will not protect against a legal subpoena. Researchers are not legally protected like physicians. We are more like journalists in this regard. Risk is primarily viewed in terms of the physical or psychological risk associated with a research procedure as applied on an individual basis. The risks which are generated by social science research tend to be psychological, political, and economic. These risks should be disclosed.
2.) To the communities ultimately affected by our actions we owe respect for their dignity, integrity, and worth. We recognize that human survival is contingent upon the continued existence of a diversity of human communities, and guide our professional activities accordingly. We will avoid taking or recommending action on behalf of a sponsor which is harmful to the interests of a community.

This paragraph is clearly keyed to social survival. The view taken here is that cultural diversity is adaptive and the destruction of it reduces the species potential to survive. Thus, the scheme is not based upon a relativistic conception of what is right or fair, but on a fundamental view of what behaviors relate to and support survival of the species. The last reference to community interests is important to the action-taking anthropologist especially. The statement means that in a basic sense, even though employed by an organization, a basic overriding responsibility toward communities exists.

3.) To our social science colleagues we have the responsibility to not engage in actions that impede their reasonable professional activities. Among other things this means that, while respecting the needs, responsibilities, and legitimate proprietary interests of our sponsors we should not impede the flow of information about research outcomes and professional practice techniques. We shall accurately report the contributions of colleagues to our work. We shall not condone falsification or distortion by others. We should not prejudice communities or agencies against a colleague for reasons of personal gain.

This paragraph addresses that area which produces the most difficulty in ethics, relationships with colleagues. While the entire research community benefits from the free flow of information, sponsoring organizations may have legitimate needs that may result in restrictions on the flow of information. We should not engage in unfair competition with a colleague.

4.) To our students, interns, or trainees we owe nondiscriminatory access to our training services. We shall provide training which is informed, accurate, and relevant to the needs of the larger society. We recognize the need for continuing education so as to maintain our skill and knowledge at a high level. Our training should inform students as to their ethical responsibilities. Student contributions to our professional activities, including both research and publication, should be adequately recognized.

People who train applied anthropologists have the obligation to remain up-to-date in their skills. Further, persons offering training in applied anthropology need to continually consider the needs of society in terms of the training which they offer.
To our employers and other sponsors we owe accurate reporting of our qualifications and competent, efficient, and timely performance of the work we undertake for them. We shall establish a clear understanding with each employer or other sponsor as to the nature of our professional responsibilities. We shall report our research and other activities accurately. We have the obligation to attempt to prevent distortion or suppression of research results or policy recommendations by concerned agencies.

This paragraph points to one of the important uses of ethics statements, the protection of the employee from requests for the performance of unethical practice. The best protection is "up-front" discussion of the constraints. This may serve as a means for supporting the applied anthropologist in cases where the agency which employs him is suppressing or distorting research results.

6.) To society as a whole we owe the benefit of our special knowledge and skills in interpreting sociocultural systems. We should communicate our understanding of human life to the society at large.

Restated in simple terms, we need to communicate to the public anthropological knowledge which will be useful to them and provide positive influences on their lives.