

The State and Policies of Mobility of International Students in China

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Today, while the number of Chinese students studying at universities abroad continues to rise, the number of international students studying in China has also greatly increased. As a destination country, China is third after only the United States and the United Kingdom. The situation seems to contradict the traditional theory of center-periphery, and this paper will specifically analyze whether China has moved from the periphery to the center of the knowledge production system. The number of international students is low relative to the scale of China's higher education system when one looks at the number of international students attending Chinese universities. At the same time, only a few international students go to China to pursue a degree, and student talent tends to be relatively low. In contrast, China is number one as a source country of students studying abroad worldwide, and student talent is considered excellent. In response to on-going globalization, the Chinese government implemented the "Plan for Study in China" and is aggressively recruiting international students, but China still remains on the periphery of the international higher education system in terms of number and talent of students.

1 Introduction

According to the center-periphery theory proposed in 1989 by Philip Altbach, an American education researcher, inequality exists in the global-knowledge and higher education system, where knowledge flows from the center of knowledge in the system to the periphery. As the United States has the richest academic resources on the globe today, and leads the world in the transmission of knowledge and creativity, it is considered to be at the center of the global-knowledge and higher education system. Other developed nations such as Japan, France, and Germany remain as regional centers of international higher education due to their languages and locations, etc. Since developing countries mainly absorb knowledge from knowledge-center countries, they are considered to be on the periphery of the international higher education system. The flow of knowledge from center to periphery takes many forms, but the movements of study abroad students world-

wide are the most important. Japan is a country with an excellent higher education system, but most of Japan's international students come from neighboring Asian countries. Theoretically, Japan serves as a regional center of the international higher education system.

The number of Chinese students studying abroad reached 399,600 in 2012, making China the top origin country of students studying abroad. In this sense, China is clearly a developing country in terms of knowledge production and is at the periphery of the international higher education system. However, according to data published by the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, there were 356,499 international students studying in 746 universities, research facilities, and other educational institutions across China in 2013, an increase of 15.8% over the previous year. China has already surpassed France to become the number-three destination country following the United States and United Kingdom. Being a destination country for such a large number of students does not make sense for a developing country on the periphery of the international higher education system according to Altbach's theory. One possibility is that the widely accepted center-periphery theory no longer applies to the current global study abroad market, but it is also possible that China's enrollment of international students embodies some special circumstances.

This paper will look into the actual situation of international students in China, their number, talents, and regional distribution; analyze the government's policies regarding international students as well as the financial aid system; and make a comparison with Chinese students studying abroad to look into the actual state of the mobility of international students in China.

2 The State of International Students in China

2.1 *The Scale of International Students*

In 2011, the number of international students studying in China exceeded 290,000 for the first time, reaching a total of 292,611. These international students originated from a total of 194 countries. The students attended 660 universities, research facilities, and other educational institutions across China in 31 provinces, territories, and direct-controlled municipalities (excluding Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau).

Compared to 2010, the number of origin countries did not change, but the number of schools enrolling international students in China increased by 40 schools and the number of students increased by 27,521. This represented an increase of 10.4%, which is quite a large rate of increase. Among these students, self-funded international students increased by 10.0% to 266,924. In contrast, the number of international students receiving Chinese Government Scholarships increased by 3,297 to a total of 25,687, which is an increase of 14.7%.

2.2 Origin Countries of International Students

Looking at the breakdown of origin countries of international students, students from Asian countries outnumbered others, totaling 187,871 students and accounting for 64.2% of all international students. Students from Europe came in next with 47,271 students accounting for 16.2%. North and South Americas, Africa, and Oceania accounted for 32,333 students (11.1%), 20,744 students (7.1%), and 4,392 students (1.5%) respectively. In terms of rates of increase, Africa and the Americas accounted for the largest percentages of increase at 26.46% and 18.75% respectively.

Table 1 shows the top ten origin countries of international students. According to the table, South Korea sent the largest number of students, accounting for 21.3% of all students. South Korea was followed by the United States and Japan, accounting for 8.0% and 6.1% respectively. Other than the US and Russia, all of the countries in the top 10 origin countries were in Asia. Of these, five countries, including the number one South Korea, Japan (3rd), Thailand (4th), Vietnam (5th), and Indonesia (7th) are all East Asian countries, and together they accounted for 40.7% of all students. Aside from the top 10 countries, there were three countries sending 5,000 or more students: France (7,592), Mongolia (7,112), and Germany (5,451).

2.3 Purpose of Study Abroad and Length of Stay

There are two types of international students: those who are pursuing degrees in China and those who are studying in China for other purposes. In 2011, the number of students pursuing degrees were 118,837, accounting for 40.6% of all international students.

Table 1 Top 10 Origin Countries of International Students (2011)

Rank	Origin Country	Number of Students
1	South Korea	62,442
2	United States	23,292
3	Japan	17,961
4	Thailand	14,145
5	Vietnam	13,549
6	Russia	13,340
7	Indonesia	10,957
8	India	9,370
9	Pakistan	8,516
10	Kazakhstan	8,287

Source: *China Education Yearbook 2011*

On the other hand, the number of international students not pursuing degrees was 173,774, which included students studying languages, engaging in cultural exchange, or acquisition of specialized skills, but most of the students were in China for language study.¹ The number of international students pursuing degrees in China increased by 11,405 compared to 2010, a large increase of 10.62%. Of the students pursuing degrees, there were 30,376 postgraduate students enrolled in master's or doctoral programs, showing a surge of 25.57% over 2010. The number of postgraduate international students enrolled in master's programs and doctoral programs were 23,453 and 6,923 respectively, accounting for 8.0% and 2.4% respectively of all international students.

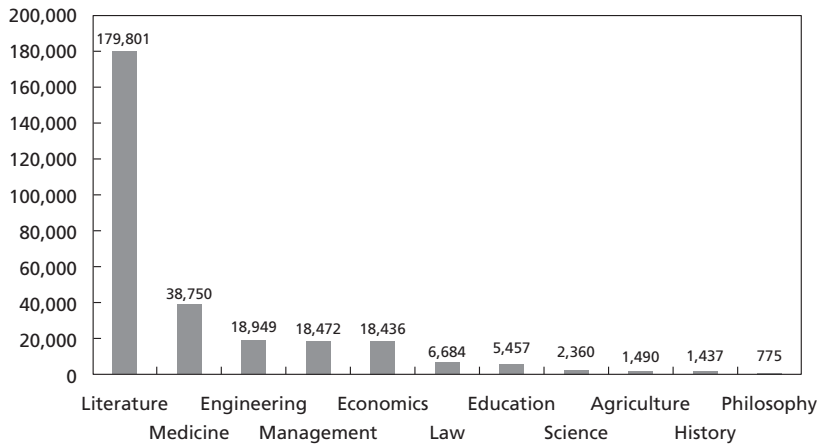
International students are also categorized by length of stay into long-term students and short-term students. Long-term international students are foreign students that study in China for six months or longer to take part in learning activities, and those that stay for less than six months are considered to be short-term students. In 2011, the number of long-term international students was 216,850, accounting for 74.1% of all international students, showing an increase of 15,440 students or 7.7% compared to the previous year. The number of short-term students was 75,761 or 25.9% of all students, with an increase of 12,081 students, which is a sizable rate of increase of 19.0% compared to the previous year.

2.4 Breakdown of Majors

In terms of majors chosen by international students, there is a bias towards certain majors. As shown in **Figure 1**, Humanities was the most popular among international students at 179,801 students, accounting for over 60% of all international students. The second most popular major was Medicine at 38,750 accounting for 13.2%. The rest in the order of popularity were Engineering, Business Administration, Economics, Law, Education, Sciences, Agriculture, History, and Philosophy. Of the Humanities majors, the number of students in Chinese language related majors was 161,964, and there were only 17,837 international students who were majoring in other humanities fields. Furthermore, of the international students studying medicine, 11,822 or 30% of students were studying traditional Chinese medicine.

According to Ninomiya's research, conducted in 2009 on Japanese students studying in Shanghai and Beijing, "to learn a new language" and "to broaden one's horizon" were the number one and two reasons respectively for studying in China. In interviews conducted by the author, many South Korean students discussed how learning Chinese will be an advantage for future employment. According to the research done by Ieki and Xu

1 According to the research conducted at 10 universities in Shanghai and Beijing in 2008 by Yu Ninomiya of Hitotsubashi University Research and Development Center for Higher Education, 71.1% of international students from Japan that were not enrolled in a college or graduate school were in China for language study.

Figure 1 Number of Students by Major (Unit: persons)

Source: *China Education Yearbook 2011*

(2013), the number one reason for studying abroad in China for Japanese students studying at Shanghai International Studies University in 2012 was to “study Chinese in China.” Hence, it is only natural for the majority of international students, whose purpose of going to China was to learn Chinese and to experience living in China, to choose a major related to the Chinese language.

2.5 Regional Distribution

As seen in **Table 2**, international students were distributed all over China, in every province, territory, and direct-controlled municipality. Universities in the three direct-controlled municipalities of Beijing, Shanghai, and Tianjin had the highest number of international students enrolled at 72,171, 47,403, and 16,679 students respectively. The international students in these three cities totaled 136,000, accounting for 46.6% of all international students in China. Also, the eight provinces (municipalities) with the largest number of international students were all located on the eastern coast of China, and together they accounted for over 70% of all international students.

The number of international students has been on the rise in recent years in Gansu, a province located in the western region, but the scale of the entire province did not even reach the scale of a single university in the eastern region, such as Shanghai International Studies University. Lanzhou University had the largest number of international students in Gansu in 2012, but the number of international students there was a mere 485 (Li 2013). In contrast, Shanghai International Studies University, a school offering a single course of study whose student body is less than one-third of Lanzhou University, had enrolled 2,789 long-term international students during the same year. It is clear that univer-

Table 2 Regional Distribution of Foreign International Students (Unit: persons)

Ranking	Region	Number of Students	Ranking	Region	Number of Students
1	Beijing	72,171	17	Xinjiang Autonomous Region	4,289
2	Shanghai	47,403	18	Chongqing	4,033
3	Tianjin	16,679	19	Hebei Province	2,946
4	Guangdong Province	15,973	20	Hunan Province	2,795
5	Jiangsu Province	15,667	21	Jiangxi Province	2,706
6	Liaoning Province	15,013	22	Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region	2,526
7	Zhejiang Province	12,810	23	Henan Province	1,868
8	Shandong Province	12,032	24	Gansu Province	1,384
9	Hubei Province	10,035	25	Anhui Province	987
10	Heilongjiang Province	8,128	26	Hainan Province	434
11	Yunnan Province	8,125	27	Ningxia Autonomous Region	422
12	Fujian Province	7,751	28	Qinghai Province	371
13	Guangxi Autonomous Region	7,718	29	Guizhou Province	343
14	Jilin Province	6,777	30	Shanxi Province	215
15	Shaanxi Province	5,804	31	Tibet Autonomous Region	41
16	Sichuan Province	5,165			

Source: *China Education Yearbook 2011*

sities in the eastern region where economic development has made greater progress are more attractive to international students than schools in the western inland region.

3 China's International Student Policy and Scholarship System

3.1 International Student Policy of the Central Government

“The National Medium- and Long-term Education Reform and Development Plan Outline (2010 to 2020)” and “Shanghai Medium- and Long-term Education Reform and Development Plan Outline (2010 to 2020)” both considered “further expanding the scale of foreign international students” and “giving high priority to the development of international students’ education” central to their future international student policies.

Using other countries’ international student plans such as Japan’s “300,000 International Students Plan” and South Korea’s “100,000 International Students Plan” as references, the Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China issued the “Plan for

Study in China” in September of 2010. The target of this plan was to increase the number of foreign international students enrolled in China’s universities, grade schools, and junior high schools to 500,000 students by 2020, thereby transforming China into Asia’s top destination country for international students. The plan stated specifically as follows: “Create a system to receive and service international students befitting our country’s international status as well as scale and level of education, train high-level teachers specialized in instructing international students, develop many universities and high-level departments appropriate for educating international students, and send off a large number of exceptional China hands.”

In addition to expanding the number of international students, the plan also aimed to improve the quality of international students. The plan specifically stated a goal to increase the number of international students pursuing degrees to 150,000, to gradually increase the number of students on national scholarships, and to provide a logical breakdown of international students by origin country and by educational background.

In order to attain the above goals, a policy to “expand the scale, improve the structure, and systemize the administration in order to secure quality” was issued as part of the plan. The Chinese government has made an effort to improve the recruitment of students, the entrance exam system, the educational content and methods, the training of teachers, the scholarship system, and the support of everyday life, in order to create a comprehensive system for studying in China. The main points of the specifics of such efforts are discussed below.

First, in order to recruit students, place more advertisements about studying in China through related domestic agencies, overseas Chinese Embassies and Consulates, as well as the Confucius Institute. In addition, expand the contents of the website “Study in China” to include foreign language versions of various educational institutes for international students.

Second, screen international students using various methods, including application documents, interviews, and written examinations. Furthermore, set up a preparatory education system for international students, and establish academic standards for students to move on to the official course of study.

Third, revise the traditional method of educating international students. By introducing a flexible unit method, expand various methods for educating international students across the borders. Also, explore various possibilities for distance education for international students such as online learning.

Fourth, develop more attractive curricula for international students by improving the structures of majors and creating “brand” majors. Expand courses taught in Chinese, while teaching certain subjects in English. Expand China’s global influence by supporting further development of subjects unique to and characteristic of China as well as subject matters with high international recognition.

Fifth, improve the English ability of instructors that participate in the education of in-

ternational students.

Sixth, expand the scale of Chinese Government Scholarships. At the same time, ask regional governments, universities, industries, and other organizations as well as individuals to provide scholarships, and create a multi-dimensional scholarship program that is led by the government.

Seventh, give international students the opportunity to work part-time, and set up a health insurance system for them.

3.2 International Student Policy of a Regional Government: A Case Study of Shanghai

Shanghai is China's largest city in a region that has seen the highest economic development standards in China. Shanghai is home to a large-scale higher education system, with 62 higher education institutions and many prestigious universities. For these reasons, Shanghai is a very attractive destination for international students. According to data published in 2010, foreign international students enrolled in universities in Shanghai totaled 41,433 in the same year, a number second only to Beijing among Chinese cities. Of these students, the number of students pursuing degrees was 12,825 (9,531 students enrolled in four-year colleges, 2,624 master's degree candidates, 653 doctoral candidates, and 17 students in three-year specialized courses of study), showing an increase of 7.9% compared to the previous year. Among the universities in Shanghai, twelve schools received over 1,000 international students each.

Shanghai has no separate international student policy of its own, but the city has taken actions as follows, based on the Chinese government's international student policy, in order to increase the number and to improve the quality of international students.

First, Shanghai increased the number of higher education institutions that receive international students. In 2010, the number of universities able to enroll international students with governmental approval had increased to 35 institutions.

Second, the Shanghai government created its own scholarship program. In order to invite more qualified students to Shanghai, the Shanghai Government Scholarship for International Students was created in 2007. The scholarship is divided into three categories, A, B, and C, for graduate students, undergraduates, and long-term international students respectively, covering tuition, living expenses, health insurance, etc.

Third, Shanghai has set up an education system for foreign international students and has placed a high priority on creating good living environments for them. Shanghai has spearheaded the compilation of the textbook "Research on Contemporary China" for international students, and has built up majors and curricula appropriate for the education of international students. In addition, Shanghai has further developed the social support system, and has been setting up the Shanghai Foreign Student Service Center as a part of the support system for international education cooperation and exchange. Furthermore, the

city has been increasingly developing areas known as “Chinese Cultural Experience Sites for Foreign Students” and “Shanghai Foreign Student Sites” every year.

Fourth, Shanghai has established a venue for people and cultural exchange with various countries overseas, and has began the brand new Shanghai Summer School (also called the 3S Project). The Shanghai Education Commission began establishing a place for communication for various languages and cultures in 2007. In 2010, Shanghai accepted nearly 100 international students from Japan, South Korea, US, Russia, Central Asia, and Latin America.² These students learned Chinese, took part in cultural exchange activities in Shanghai, and participated in the 3S Project.

3.3 International Student-Related Policies of Universities: A Case Study of Shanghai International Studies University

Shanghai International Studies University is one of the universities that receive the highest number of international students. In 2012, Shanghai International Studies University enrolled 4,218 students from 92 countries and regions around the globe. Long-term international students numbered 2,789 in total, including 863 undergraduates, 90 masters degree candidates, and 8 doctoral candidates.

The university is taking the following steps in order to develop its international student education program.

First, a new major, International Economics and Trade (instructed in Chinese), has been established specifically for international students in the School of Chinese Studies and Exchange in 2009, and Business Administration (Chinese) was established as a major in 2010.

Second, in order to ensure the continued growth of undergraduate international students, the university has been spreading the word to foreign students³ at various high schools’ international divisions within the city of Shanghai. Also ties were strengthened between the Graduate School and the School of Chinese Studies and Exchange, simplifying the process of enrolling international students to graduate schools.

Third, in order to maintain the quality of undergraduate international student education and to enable the smooth undertaking of education activities, the School of Chinese Studies and Exchange reinforced the assigned teacher system. Each teacher assigned to international students was involved in the management of international students as well as instruction, and had the important role of being “the communicator of information from the university to the students, and the students’ requests to the university.”

Fourth, in order to improve the listening and conversation abilities of foreign interna-

2 The students’ mother tongues included from English, French, Spanish, Russian, etc.

3 Foreign students in international divisions of high schools receive high-level education in Shanghai and many acquire advanced levels of Chinese. Many of them are interested in attending Chinese universities directly.

tional students, the School of Chinese Studies and Exchange opened a “Chinese language corner” where Chinese graduate school students majoring in International Education volunteered to instruct international students. Chinese student volunteers gave individual instruction in Chinese and in English to foreign students enrolled in other schools.

Fifth, Shanghai International Studies University established its own scholarships, such as the Outstanding Students Awards and Diligent Students Awards, that use the academic performance and attendance of students as determining factors to give scholarships to approximately 10% of international students every year.

3.4 Scholarship System and the Distribution of Scholarships

The job of selecting recipients, making payments, and managing government scholarship awards is handled in China by the China Scholarship Council. Government scholarships are largely categorized into two types: those that are arranged by foreign governments and international organizations, and those where the recipients are recruited by the universities. For the former, the study abroad applicant would apply to the foreign governments and international organizations, but for the latter the applicant would apply directly to universities in China. Not all universities are able to enroll scholarship recipients; enrollment of scholarship recipients is limited to the 252 universities designated by the government. The amount of government scholarships vary, depending on the level of the student as follows: 1,400 yuan for undergraduates, 1,700 yuan for masters degree students, and 2,000 yuan for doctorate students. Aside from the Chinese Government Scholarships, regional governments and universities also provide scholarships, but only a handful of scholarships are provided by private industries and organizations.

Table 3 shows the number of international students that were awarded Chinese Government Scholarships by region. In 2011, 25,687 students from 178 countries received Chinese Government Scholarships to study in China based on the education exchange agreement and plans established between China and various countries. The number in-

Table 3 Number of International Students Receiving Chinese Government Scholarships by Region (2011)

Region	Number of Countries	Number of Students	Ratio
Asia	45	13,310	51.82%
Africa	52	6,316	24.58%
Europe	39	3,619	14.09%
North & South Americas	31	1,960	7.63%
Oceania	11	482	1.88%

Source: *China Education Yearbook 2011*

Table 4 Number of Government-Sponsored International Students by Major (2011)

Major	Humanities	Engineering	Medicine	Business Administration	Economics	Law	Sciences	Other
Number of Students	6,189	5,428	3,317	3,139	3,017	1,798	1,155	1,644
Ratio	24.1%	21.1%	12.9%	12.2%	11.8%	7.0%	4.5%	6.4%

Source: *China Education Yearbook 2011*

creased by 3,297 students (14.7%) compared to the previous year. These government-sponsored international students made up 8.78% of the total international student population. Among the rest, some students received various other scholarships such as government scholarships from foreign countries, scholarships from foreign foundations, and university scholarships, but most of the students paid their own way.

Looking at the breakdown, Asia had the most number of government-sponsored students, followed by Africa, Europe, North and South Americas, and Oceania. The high ratio of government-sponsored students in Africa is quite noticeable compared to other regions.

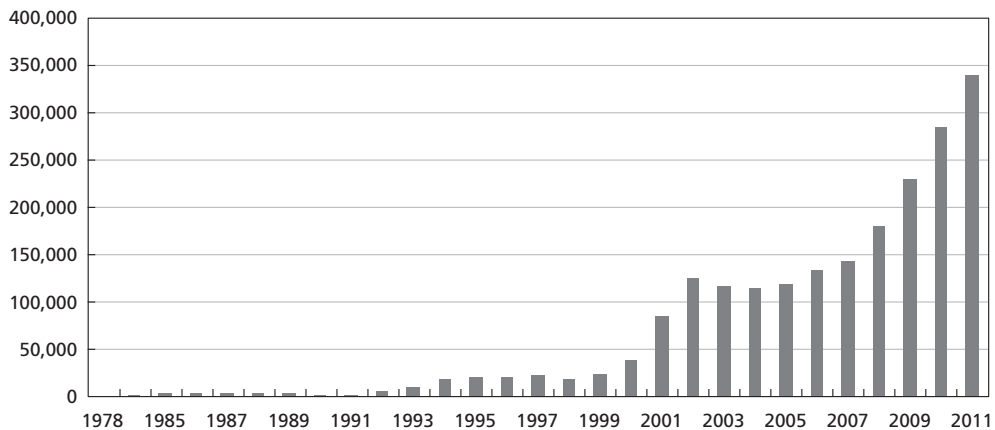
Table 4 shows the number of government-sponsored international students by their major and the ratio to the total international population. While the number of government-sponsored international students majoring in Humanities was the highest, it accounted for only 24.1% of the total number, which was much lower than the percentage of international students studying Humanities (61.4%). In other majors, except for Medicine, the ratio of government-sponsored international students was relatively high. Compared to other majors, Humanities majors clearly had the largest number of international students who paid their own way. The Chinese Government was consciously making adjustments among the majors when selecting students to award scholarships. Here, too, the Chinese Government's effort to improve the quality of international students is evident.

4 The Situation and Policies of Chinese Students Studying Abroad

4.1 *The Number of Chinese Students Studying Abroad and its Breakdown*

Following the end of the Cultural Revolution, the dispatch of Chinese students overseas began in earnest in 1978.⁴ Only 860 students were sent overseas that year. Since then

4 From 1966 to 1976, during the Cultural Revolution, most of China's universities were closed down, and no students were sent overseas.

Figure 2 The Trend of Number of Chinese Students Studying Abroad (Unit: persons)

Source: *China Statistical Yearbook*

the number of students studying abroad has increased little by little, but most of the students were state-funded students sent by the government. In 1985, the Chinese government approved self-funded studies abroad, and while the government's position was to "support studies abroad," the number of students remained under 5,000. From 1989 to 1991, the number of Chinese students studying abroad decreased to less than 3,000 due to the effects of the Tiananmen Square Incident. With the publication of Deng Xiaoping's "South Tour Talk"⁵ in 1992, the Chinese economy began its rapid growth, and with it the number of students studying abroad rapidly increased. As can be seen in **Figure 2**, while there is a slight fluctuation from year to year, the number of students studying abroad shows a dramatic rise overall. In 2011, approximately 339,700 students traveled overseas to study. Of these, 314,800 students were self-funded, accounting for 92.7% of all the students studying abroad.

The top five destination countries for Chinese students studying abroad in 2008 (as seen in **Table 5**) were the US, Japan, Australia, England, and South Korea, in that order. While all of these countries are developed nations, they can be categorized into two groups. Japan and South Korea are neighboring countries, while the US, Australia, and England are English speaking countries. Distance and language seem to be important factors for Chinese students in selecting their destinations.

The number of Chinese students studying overseas in 2011 was approximately

5 Deng Xiaoping visited a number of southern cities such as Wuhan, Shenzhen, Zhuhai, and Shanghai, and issued a series of statements. He criticized the conservatives and emphasized policies such as Chinese economic reform, economic development, and market economy, opening the way to a high level of economic growth after China's economy saw turmoil following the Tiananmen Square Incident.

Table 5 Top Five Destination Countries for Chinese Students Studying Abroad (2008)

Ranking	Destination	Number of Students
1	US	110,246
2	Japan	77,916
3	Australia	57,596
4	England	45,356
5	South Korea	30,552

Source: Terakura (2011)

1,426,700, of which 77.7% stayed from undergraduate through doctoral studies or were involved in postdoctoral research positions. In terms of number of students, the majority of Chinese students were studying abroad in pursuit of degrees or in order to improve their research abilities. The fact that domestic education and research conditions lagged behind other countries and the fact that the value of college degrees was still relatively low were some of the main reasons that Chinese students looked across the border for their education. In fact, these days more and more younger students are going abroad to study. In the past, most of the students going overseas did so in their 20s and 30s after finishing college or graduate school, but the number of students in their teens going abroad after finishing grade school, middle school, or high school is increasing rapidly. Behind such phenomena are the “push” factors such as increased wealth, importance placed on English abilities, opposition to a domestic education system that emphasizes cramming and memorization, as well as the “pull” factors including the quality of education and high value placed on degrees from the developed countries such as the US.

4.2 Study Abroad Policies of the Chinese Government and Issues

Looking at the trends in the number of students studying abroad from 1978 to today, it is clear that the Chinese government’s policies have had a huge influence on students studying abroad. In August 1992, the Chinese government issued an official notice regarding issues surrounding students living abroad; not only did the government welcome returning students, but it had simplified the immigration procedures, and was approving re-departures from China after returning home. Students were also allowed to work for foreign companies, and to hold concurrent posts overseas. These concepts were compiled in February 1993 by the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the State Council as a policy to “support students and scholars studying abroad, encourage them to return to China after their completion of studies, and guarantee them the freedom to come and go” in “China Education Reform and Development Outline.” Furthermore, following

the secondary education system reform, universities began charging tuition in 1997, and university graduates were now free to find work. With this, the concept of university students being obligated to serve the country was abolished, and the government had no grounds to ask for repayment of expenses from self-funded Chinese students studying abroad.

The total liberalization of self-funded study abroad was realized in 2001 when China joined the World Trade Organization. The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), an Annex to the agreement establishing the World Trade Organization, applies to education services across borders, demanding freedom in self-funded studies abroad in higher education. Hence, as part of the move to organize national law to join the WTO, the obligation for self-funded students studying abroad to repay school expenses was removed in 2002. With the liberalization, the number of students studying abroad would only increase. China's tremendous economic growth after moving towards a socialist market economy in 1992, which brought a dramatic rise in people's incomes, was also an important factor in the increase of self-funded studies abroad.

The number of students studying abroad from 1978 to 2011 reached 2,245,100, but only 818,400 students returned to China. While "brain drain" remains an issue, with the economic development of China in recent years, a trend toward "brain return" has been noticed as well. In 2011, 186,200 students studying abroad returned to China, marking the highest number ever. In order to promote "brain return," the Chinese government and regional governments have promised to provide various preferential treatments to returnees. Following are some of the incentives promised. First, for teachers and researchers who return and work at universities and research facilities, special research grants and living assistance are provided by the Scientific Research Foundation for Returned Overseas Chinese Scholars. Furthermore, the government assists returnee entrepreneurs by providing various perks such as exemption and reduction of tax burden, providing land and offices, and providing assistance and loans for operating funds. In addition, assistance is given for spousal job search and enrolling children into schools to make the transition easier for the returnee and his or her family. It is also common for employing universities and/or industry associations to support the returnee's job and living situation based on their own policy.

These days, not all returning students come back to work in China. The concept of maintaining a home base overseas while making a contribution to China's development is growing in popularity. This can be considered a result of China's policy for "the freedom to come and go" for students studying abroad. According to the official notice issued by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security and the Ministry of Education of the Chinese Government, overseas students are encouraged to contribute to the country in many different ways. If the overseas student is doing research in cooperation with one of China's higher education institutions, his or her own research activity can take place outside of the country or can be done during short-term visits home. If a student has ad-

vanced expertise and skills, not only can he or she make contributions to the development of China from outside the country, but he or she can also be a bridge between China and the rest of the world, as someone familiar with the cultures of both China and their country of residence. In this sense, Chinese students studying abroad who remain overseas are considered China's "stash of human resources" overseas.

As returnees increase, new problems arise, too. With the increase in the students returning from overseas, the rarity value of returning students has faded, and as the number of domestic university graduates grows rapidly, many returning students are having trouble finding suitable jobs. Many returning students are losing the competition to holders of domestic university and postgraduate degrees as job markets tighten. These social issues are getting much attention in China today.

5 Conclusion

There are a number of issues regarding the current state of foreign international students in China.

First, the relative number of foreign international students is still small. In 2011, the number of undergraduate students in Chinese universities reached 21,447,000 whereas there were only 293,000 foreign international students in China.

Second, the level of international student education remains very low. Most international students are in China for language acquisition and cultural experience, and only 40% of the students are pursuing degrees. Students who would be considered "language school students" in Japan have the same status as university level international students in China. There are only about 30,000 students in graduate schools, accounting for only 10.4% of the total international student population. Humanities, including Chinese, are by far the most popular major among international students.

Third, international students tend to be concentrated in certain regions. Over 70% of international students study at universities on the eastern coast, and they tend to gather in large cities such as Beijing and Shanghai. This situation is disadvantageous for the internationalization of universities located in the western regions.

Fourth, most of the international students come from a small number of countries. Students from Eastern Asian nations such as South Korea outnumber others. There is a danger of losing cultural diversity among international students if the ratio of students from certain countries and regions becomes too high.

Fifth, scholarships for foreign students are insufficient overall. Supports for living situations and study are insufficient, and there are no support systems in place. This is one likely reason that China has not been able to attract high quality students.

On the other hand, it is evident that the number of Chinese students studying abroad is high, and most of the students are highly qualified students who travel to pursue advanced degrees or to do advanced research overseas. While the number of students returning to

China is on the rise, the number of students going abroad continues to outnumber returning students.

After analyzing the foreign students enrolled in Chinese universities, the validity of Altbach's "center-periphery" theory was confirmed. China has a large number of foreign international students, but the quality of the student body is still far below the standards of developed countries in the center of international higher education system such as Japan. As globalization continues, movements of students across borders will continue to grow, and the number of international students alone will no longer be sufficient to measure the level of higher education in a destination country. Improving the quality of incoming international students is essential for a county to move to a central position in the international higher education system.

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