



[The APA China Delegation - Maureen O'Hara](#) by Louise S. [2012, Aug 23]

Louise, I am not sure there any negative implications but it's a seven day trip. If relationships are made that endure, then that could be a good thing. Meeting Chinese scholars/professionals keeps the power balance more even neutral and does not automatically privilege the European view point. Such contacts might provide contexts for serious exchanges that did not start from the Anglo-American framework. Good thing.

Maureen O'Hara Ph. D.

Professor of Psychology
National University
11255 N. Torrey Pines Road
La Jolla, CA 92037



[Comment by Alvin Dueck](#) by Louise S. [2012, Aug 23]

Dear all,

I appreciate the interest of APA members in psychological work done in China. I have a couple of thoughts as I sit here in my hotel room in Beijing.

First, it might be wise to build on relationships that have already been established. For example, Dr. Han Buxin of the Institute of Psychology has been a frequent visitor and presenter at APA. Dr. Wang Xuefu of Nanjing will receive the the Charlotte and Karl Buhler Award at APA next year. He is profoundly indigenous in his understanding and approach to therapy. Further, Division 36 under the leadership of Kevin Ladd, sponsored a group that went to China this summer and it might be an idea to build on what they learned. Finally, there was a delegation of some 20 Chinese psychologists of religion two years ago. Has anyone followed up on that emerging relationship? Michael is right. We should check out the history.

Second, what is the purpose of the visit. Louise, you indicate it is strategic but how so? The Professionals Abroad Program indicates that participants of the delegation will have input into the program focus but it is not clear what the larger purposes are. Participants will visit with students and faculty at the School of Psychology Beijing Normal University, spend a day at Hospital #6 and then a morning at Xi'an Mental Health Center. For a single room the cost of the trip is \$5225. So two and half days are spent in listening to talks and discussing them and another 2.5 days are for tourism. No readings are suggested (I concur with Tony's suggestion to read Hwang and I would add Bond). It is not clear whether the delegation will eat with Chinese professionals - rather important if you want to develop relationships in China. All in all, this does not feel like a formal delegation.

Third, it is sometimes wise to wait to be invited - especially for Americans.

Fourth, what will be the structure of the exchange such that EuroAmerican

perspectives will not be privileged? In my experience, once relationships have been established, a one day colloquium on a topic of the host's choice where all participants share their perspectives seems to work well.

Fifth, is there anything that we as North American psychologists regret in our past relationships with Chinese psychologists? We tried to "help" after the Sichuan earthquake. How was our help perceived? Have we in any way imposed on them a normative and universal view of what constitutes good psychology? If so, then how would that shape our emergent relationships with our colleagues in China?

For what it is worth.

Al Dueck
Fuller Graduate School of Psychology

 [Comment by Louise S.](#) by Louise S. [2012, Aug 23]

Alvin and All,

APA is making a strategic move with its delegation to China, so I said. What I meant is that the world is at a strategic juncture, where China is poised to enter the stage as a major player. It behooves APA to move strategically at this important point in time. Unfortunately, as some of us have pointed out, the APA's China delegation does not seem to be strategically planned enough, regardless of whatever its agenda is. This is a shame, since even random action on the part of APA will have far reaching ramifications, because of its power and prestige. Since the APA delegation has the power to do good as well as harm, I think we need to think of ways to increase the odds for the APA delegation to do good rather than harm. Along this line, I think it is important for the APA delegation to showcase Western psychology in a more comprehensive manner than simply mainstream psychology. This is not likely to happen unless some psychologists on this list step up the plate and join the delegation. What can we contribute to the program below (retrieved from the APA site)?

Members of the delegation will have input into the program focus. Preliminary topics for consideration include:

- Cultural norms and the treatment of the mentally ill and the psychological stressors of medical illnesses
 - Public and private treatment options
 - Integration of mind, body, and spirit in education, training, and treatment approaches
 - Use of evidence-based practice, as culturally applicable, in inpatient and outpatient settings
 - Psychological research, education, and treatment of adults, adolescents, children, and family caregivers
 - Traditional and modern Chinese approaches to health and mental health
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One helpful but so far neglected focus for this exchange is the question: How can we help China to build her own psychology? Toward this objective, I think the APA delegation should include the following components:

Psychology of religion: Religion is making a comeback after decades of suppression. Psychology of religion can be very helpful for the potential renaissance of religions in China.

A model of hybridity in psychotherapy: Instead of consilience, hybridity is a more appropriate and creative model of cultures in the globalizing era, as Ken Gergen has pointed out. One prime example is the Zhimien psychotherapy, developed by Dr. Wang Xuefu as a Chinese approach inspired by humanistic-existential psychotherapy from the West.

Models of treatment of indigenous peoples: Treatments of indigenous peoples tend to take a holistic approach, which may have some overlap and affinity with the Chinese traditional approach to healing. In particular, the community-based approach to healing developed by Laurence Kirmayer and Joseph Gone (see their publications in the Special Interest Group on the IP website) are of particular relevance to the Chinese, who are in need of a model that casts mental disorders in the larger context of culture and community. I remember my visit at the psychiatric center of the Beijing Medical School six months after the Tiananmen Square massacre. Many patients told me that they had their breakdown that evening when they heard the sirens of the ambulance all night long. I think it would be a bad idea to use positive psychology or CBT, DBT type of treatments on them. The treatment approaches developed by Laurence Kirmayer for indigenous peoples whose illness has its roots in political oppression is relevant here.

Anything else to be added to the package for China?

Louise



 [Comment by Peter Ping Li](#) by Louise S. [2012, Aug 23]

Dear Louise:

I strongly support your suggestion of joining the delegation so as to have a positive influence in the process of engaging the Chinese scholars. In particular, you can make sure that the delegation will meet with some key Chinese scholars who have been conducting the indigenous psychology research in China. We should be fully aware that most Chinese psychology scholars are the same type in the US in terms of imitating the US mainstream research as closely as they can.

It is sad that truly independent and free-spirited scholars are rare anywhere in the world.

Peter Ping Li
Professor of Chinese Business Studies

 [Comment by Tony Fang](#) by Louise S. [2012, Aug 23]

Hi Peter, Louise, and all,

China is a place where you can see whatever you want to see; for example, if you want to verify that Hofstede's theory is correct you will for sure come back with "satisfactory results". Put in other terms: If you want to torture data; data will surrender...It is all about how to capture China in a Yin Yang (holistic, dynamic, and dialectical) perspective (Peter Li's various papers). Western companies in China can serve as a bridge to help researchers to better understand indigenous Chinese approach.

Best regards,

Tony

 [Comment by Louise S.](#) by Louise S. [2012, Aug 23]

You are right on target, Tony. We see through our preconceived lenses. That's why the Chinese proverb emphasizes the importance of coupling reading with traveling ("Reading ten thousand volumes; traveling ten thousand miles"), as some of us have also recommended the APA delegation to read Hwang and Bond before the China trip.

Cheers,
Louise

 [Comment by K. K. Hwang](#) by Louise S. [2012, Aug 24]

Dear all,

I've been paying close attention to your discussions concerning the APA delegation to China. I strongly agree with Louise's suggestion that we need to think of ways to increase the odds for the APA delegation to do good rather than harm to the future development of psychology in China.

I'll visit Beijing in the end of this week to meet with Dr. Han Buxin and to give a lecture, "Constructive Realism and Multiple Philosophical Paradigms: The Construction of Culture-Inclusive Theories," at the Institute of Psychology. I will forward your discussions to Han and get his opinion on this issue.

Thank you,

K. K. Hwang



 [Comment by Maureen O'Hara](#) by Louise S. [2012, Aug 23]

What is a delegation? What's it for?

Some of the thinking about this delegation seems to exist in a contractual space. We take our views to China, the Chinese share their view with "us" and we "exchange."

What if we were to just meet and see what we might learn that we did not expect?. As Levinas says, to "encounter an enigma"

At the risk of getting too far into the weeds here, I would like to share a story about a project we did about 10 years ago through the International Futures Forum that I am still learning from. We have members of several cultures who live and work in many countries, including India. At one of our meetings the issue of hope in what we were referring to as "liquid times" was under discussion.

We had been studying the desperate state of mental health care for very poor people in Glasgow and elsewhere in the Europe. Organizational consultant Arun Maira and economist Rajiv Kumar from India suggested that we undertake a "learning journey" to India and they would set up meetings to show us both signs of resilience and hope as well as threats and tragedies. We self-funded. At every stop, with residents of slums in Delhi, people in government offices, Hi Tech business board rooms, local Parivartan meetings, an artist's studio, a school for Sanscrit scholars, a school dedicated to indigenous Indian education, Muslim weavers at a silk factory in Varanasi, a meeting with disciples of Krishnamurti, a pre-dawn trip on the Ganges in Varanasi with musicians with us playing ancient ragas as the sun rose over the river and a family prepared their father's body for cremation we engaged in conversations about what we (IFF, our hosts and the people we met) were all concerned about. At the end of each day our group gathered to discuss and tease out what we had learned, how we were being affected by what we were learning and where our questions were taking us. This was facilitated by a UK and Indian team of expert facilitators of group learning . We took the lessons learned and questions asked into the next day's meetings.

I can tell you the "delegates" were the beneficiaries of this trip. We had nothing to teach because we realized we understood so little. How does one rasp a 5000 year culture in trip. As Tony ays, one can make of India whatever one wants. But we did haved our selves--our curiosity, respect, eagerness to be in dialogue. I know the Indians found our presence impotent--they told us so, and wrote up the meetings in tpublications but the cheif benefit was what we learned about ourselves. We had to engage our ignorance, our hubirs and on the upside what we really had to offer (rather what we thought we had to offer)--mostly our humanity

I have to say the trip changed my life, my work, consciousness and my understanding of the limits of what can be done about entrenched mental suffering without working with colleagues within social, cultural, political, economic, and

legal systems.

We have maintained contact with some of our local hosts, some of whom have visited IFF in Scotland. I can't point to dramatic outcomes but I can point to a school for the children of leprosy survivors now using art as therapy and a person-centered stance where before they used a medical model; a decision by city leaders in Varanasi to apply for World Heritage Site status--which one of our European colleagues suggested, a conference on reducing hunger in Tokyo led by Dr. Kumar and a Japanese philanthropist. At the other side, a project in Glasgow that drew on some of the indigenous approaches we found in Delhi, and there is a book on economics in the works that explores an economic framework based in Indian metaphysics. On a spiritual level, friendships grew and love flourished.

The important element was the fact that everyone --both host and visitor--was there with an attitude of humility--to learn and to open themselves to imagination and genuine encounter; to be moved by strong emotions and to consider the experiences we shared not just "interesting" but important enough to harvest through collaborative reflection on our successes and disappointments.

After having worked in the favelas of Brazil, with international colleagues at IFF, and as an immigrant myself, I am pretty sure that these "official visits" should focus on what we have to learn from our meeting, not on what we have to teach.

Maureen O'Hara Ph. D.
Professor of Psychology
National University
11255 N. Torrey Pines Road
La Jolla, CA 92037

 [Comment by Michael Bond](#) by Louise S. [2012, Aug 23]

wow, this is simply the most amazing revelation from Maureen! thank you.

it is my impression that the Indians were better prepared for this kind of encounter than any of the Chinese who the "delegation" might encounter: there is too much eagerness to "make it" as psychologists in established, journal-lionizing ways these days in China, with incentives, tenure, and promotions for the next generation all contingent on acceptance into high-indexed SSCI journals. departures from the Western way are too risky.

the Chinese know how to be humble, but they haven't yet created the space for indigenization and a Chinese voice in their version of a discipline of psychology. [KKHwang and Yang Kuo-Shu are exceptions, but they are from Taiwan where, even there, they are a minority voice who speak from professorial platforms].

in his two chapters on the history of psychology in China for the Handbooks of Chinese psychology (1996, 2010), Geoff Blowers shows the historical reliance by

the Chinese on America, and somewhat on Russia, in the modeling of their discipline; Xu and Bond (2011) just edited a book on Chinese organizational behavior, and concluded with a chapter titled, "There is nothing more American than research on Chinese organizational behavior: Into a more culturally sensitive future"

what does that title suggest about the way forward for this APA "delegation? I expect that the visitors will be treated as validators of the current way forward for the Chinese, and not find any social space for exploring culturally sensitive ways for Chinese psychology to develop. this is doubly likely if the delegation is not addressing some specific content areas of our discipline, as Maureen's delegation was doing in India.

"o tempora, o mores"!

just a few thoughts inspired by Maureen, whom I thank for her forthright account of discovery in unexpected places, made possible by a tenacious intellectual humility.

michael bond

Michael Harris Bond, Ph. D.
Chair Professor of Psychology
Room M902
Li Ka Shing Tower
Department of Management and Marketing
Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Hung Hom, Kowloon
Hong Kong S.A.R.
China

 [Comment by K. K. Hwang](#) by Louise S. [2012, Aug 26]

Dear All :

As an indigenous psychologist who has devoted more than thirty years in developing indigenous social sciences in non-Western countries (particularly in China) , I am very interested in the recent discussion on AP delegation to China. I agree with Al's opinion that Louise's question "How can we help China to build her own psychology ?" is the critical one. But, I am hesitant to accept his advice to avoid the so-called "neocolonialism" by living with the fact that our hosts may choose simply incorporate Western psychology wholesale.

I would like to share with you a story about my personal experience on this issue. After the publication of my book Foundations of Chinese psychology : Confucian Social Relations, National Taiwan University sponsored an international conference on The Construction of Culture-inclusive Theories in Psychology at Taipei from June 1 to 2, 2012. We invited Prof. Michael H. Bond as Keynote speaker at the

opening ceremony of the conference.

As we all know, Michael is a pioneer in the field of Chinese psychology. He edited four books on this topic, organized psychologists all over the world to contribute to his books and presented findings of previous researches to the global community of psychology. But, an intensive book review on the second volume of his Oxford Handbook of Chinese Psychology by Lee (2011) indicated that there is “no structure” in this book, and there are generally a “lacks of theory” in most chapters. More researches cited in this book just followed Western research paradigms of psychology blindly.

In this conference, we criticized that most researches in Michael’s book followed a pan-cultural dimensional approach which attempted to compare non-Western people (including Chinese) along such pan-cultural dimensions as Individualism vs. Collectivism, Independent Self vs. Interdependent Self, etc.. I also used my 2012 book as an exemplar to illustrate my cultural system approach to resolve various difficulties encountered in the indigenization movement of psychology by multiple paradigms in Western philosophy of science.

Michael is open-minded enough to accept our criticisms. He told me that he even advised researchers in this field “to be more culturally sensitive” in his new book Handbook of Chinese Organizational Behavior coedited with Xu Huang.

Recently I found the title of conclusion Chapter in his book is THERE IS NOTHING MORE AMERICAN THAN RESEARCH ON CHINESE ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR : INTO A MORE CULTURALLY SENSITIVE FUTURE !

I think this is Michael’s hearty words from his life-long experience of doing research and interacting with Chinese psychologists. Chinese scholars are very bright and smart. They understand that the so-called scientific psychology is a product of Western civilization, but not their own culture. I have confidence that once they fully recovered from the damage of Cultural Revolution and learned the “correct way”, they can develop their own psychology as well as social sciences pretty soon. If we understand the current status of Chinese academic community, I think this is the most important message which the APA delegation should bring to China.

Best Regards,
K.K. Hwang

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 [Comment by Michael Bond](#) by Louise S. [2012, Aug 24]

such a magnanimous, open-minded response by KK to my intentions in these almost

three decades of editing work in Chinese psychology! we have come a long way from the early days of flora and fauna, "Aristotelian" documentation of unsystematic cross-cultural differences derived from the use of imposed etic theories, constructs and their associated measures.

so far across these 25 years that we can now challenge those who do work on Chinese psychology to be less derivative in their work; despite the hegemony of the journal ranking system and its Western foundations to be more Chinese-culture respectful and confrontive. in this regard, you good folks reading this response of mine will be pleased to learn that the title, "There is nothing more American than research on Chinese organizational behavior" was proposed by my co-editor, the redoubtable Xu Huang, Department Chair of the Management and Marketing Department of the PolyU; michael would have been reluctant to suggest such a bold, challenging title, but as it came from my Chinese co-editor, I was delighted and did not object.

further good news: Xu is in his 40's, so there is bright hope for greater "Chineseness" in research on the Chinese peoples!

during these 25 years of editing such books, my own thinking and research has been moving "beyond the Chinese face", if you will pardon the allusion to my 1991 book title; I want to be more multi-cultural in my work, including more and more cultural groups, so that we can begin to "unpackage" Chinese culture as one among many of our world's cultures, putting the various national realizations of Chinese culture into a fuller perspective with respect to the other "great traditions" that surround us.

in this development, i have never lost my appreciation that Hong Kong culture and its citizens were this Canadian's first extended journey into cultural otherness and provided me the mind-opening opportunity to pursue the "magnum mysterium" of culture, the mother to us all.

thanks always to KK, Yang Kuo-shu, Fanny Cheung, David Ho, Kwok Leung and my other patient guides in this never-ending journey,

michael bond

Michael Harris Bond, Ph. D.
Chair Professor of Psychology
Room M902
Li Ka Shing Tower
Department of Management and Marketing
Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Hung Hom, Kowloon
Hong Kong S.A.R.
China



 [Comment by K. K. Hwang](#) by Louise S. [2012, Aug 26]

Dear Michael and all,

Thanks for Michael's clarification. I'm really touched and impressed by the title of that book chapter. I don't think it is a bold, challenging one. On the contrary, I believe this is just what we need at this time!

I'd like to pay my highest respect to both Xu and Michael: for proposing such an excellent title, and for accepting this forward-looking title! I truly appreciate the multicultural approach adopted by Michael--for grasping a complicated tradition like the Chinese, we indeed need to incorporate various approaches in order to further our understanding.

Best,

K. K. Hwang