

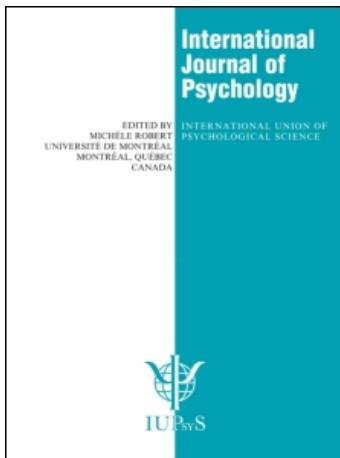
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Modern Chinese psychology: Its indigenous roots and international influences

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Psychological thinking in China originated 2000 years ago when Chinese philosophers debated about the goodness and evilness of human nature. In the 16th and 17th centuries the Jesuit missionaries introduced the Catholic scholastic psychology into China. Modern Chinese psychology was mainly introduced from Germany, America, and Japan in the early 20th century. After the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Chinese psychology tried to stage a reform by taking the psychology of the Soviet Union as its model. During the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) psychology was abandoned due to its Western roots. In the late 1970s psychology was rehabilitated and new fields were opened up for study. Currently, Chinese psychology is adopting a multi-dimensional approach to meet the demands of China's modernization movement.

La pensée psychologique en Chine est née il y a 2000 ans quand les philosophes chinois discutaient du bon et du mauvais dans la nature humaine. Aux 16^e et 17^e siècles, les missionnaires jésuites ont introduit en Chine la psychologie scolaire catholique. La psychologie moderne a été introduite en Chine au début du 20^e siècle par des contributions de l'Allemagne, de l'Amérique du Nord et du Japon. Après la fondation de la République Populaire de Chine en 1949, la psychologie chinoise a essayé de mettre en place une réforme en prenant pour modèle la psychologie soviétique. Pendant la Révolution Culturelle (1966–1976), la psychologie a été abandonnée à cause de ses racines occidentales. Au début des années 1970, elle a été réhabilitée et de nouveaux domaines se sont ouverts à la recherche. Actuellement, la psychologie chinoise a adopté une approche multidimensionnelle pour répondre aux besoins du mouvement de modernisation de la Chine.

INFLUENCE OF ANCIENT CHINESE PHILOSOPHY—CONFUCIANISM

Confucius on human nature

Although the beginning of Chinese civilization dates back to 5000 years ago, in terms of psychology, the basic ways of thinking about the human mind can be found in the writings of Confucius. Confucius (551–479 BC) and his disciple Mencius (468–312 BC) were members of a considerable group of seminal thinkers whose writings had important influences on later Chinese psychological thought. Confucius lived at a time when highly developed Eastern and Western cultures flourished simultaneously and yet independently, and when the basic philosophical systems of each of these civilizations were established. Scholars have been impressed by the parallels of events in ancient China and in the Western world, as Confucius and Mencius were contemporaries of the great teacher Buddha (ca. 500 BC) in India, and Plato (429–347 BC) and Aristotle (384–321 BC) in Greece. Some scholars have called this era the “axial age” (Fairbank, 1992).

Confucius did not leave us with very many writings. After he died, his disciples collected his teachings and sayings and compiled them in a book known as the *Confucian Analects* (1992). This book became one of the canonical

Four Books that would be taught and memorized by generations of Chinese people throughout the different dynasties in China. Confucius was a philosopher who advocated a hierarchical, authoritarian social system, within which every member had a clearly defined role within this system. Unlike what is commonly thought in the West, Confucianism is not a religion; it is a moral philosophy giving a set of guidelines for ways of human relationships and interactions, and the code of proper behaviour for citizenship in society. In Confucian ideology, the family is the basic social unit, over which the father rules as a supreme autocrat. The role of the ruler in the country is analogous to that of the father in the family, with absolute authority in the social system. As a philosophy of life, we have generally associated with Confucianism the quiet virtues of patience, pacifism, compromise, the golden mean, reverence for ancestors, the aged, and the learned. Chinese rulers have, throughout history, consistently adopted the Confucian philosophy as the State philosophy. The Confucian code actually constituted a system of statecraft that enabled the ruler to maintain a stable, peaceful, and harmonious society.

Confucianism's rationale for organizing society began with the cosmic order of taking man, not God, as the centre of the universe. Confucius' major emphasis was on the present world, so the supernatural world occupied a far

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China



less important place than the real world, and he seldom spoke of the soul and spirits (Confucian Analects, 1992, Xiang Jin, p. 157). For Confucius, much discussion was devoted to the essence of human nature and its development. The Chinese word *Xing* can be translated as “human nature” and the word *Xi* corresponds to “nurture” or “habits”, which are formed by environmental influences. In the texts of the times, there was a discussion of the relationship between *Xing* and *Xi*, and of which one played a more crucial role in human development. Confucius believed that all people were subject to moulding and self-improvement, and stressed natural equality at birth. He acknowledged individual differences, but considered these to be the result of environment or training and not due to inborn or inherent qualities. Confucius said, “By nature, men are nearly alike; by practice, they get to be wide apart.” (Confucian Analects, 1992, Yang Huo, p. 227) Confucius believed that, with a common natural endowment as our basis, humans obtained different social traits through learning, and thus education played an important role. All people were, in principle, capable of achieving the same level through learning. If someone were a slow learner, for example, they could nonetheless achieve the same level as everyone else through diligence and hard work. Confucius was against the principle of hereditary privilege; this was counter to the practices of his time, in which feudalism recognized hereditary rights above all others.

Confucius said, “I am not one who was born in possession of knowledge; I am one who is fond of antiquity, and earnest in seeking it” (Confucian Analects, 1992, Shu Er, p. 121). So here we have the Sage himself, Confucius, maintaining that he was not born with any special talent. He portrayed himself merely as someone who dedicated himself to the study of history and the wisdom of the past. He was able to attain sagehood through learning only. In education, imitating the exemplary behaviour of model persons is considered the best way to achieve morality. Sages, or superior people who have mastered *Li* (propriety), are the models of behaviour from which people learn. A good illustration of the importance placed on imitating models in Confucian philosophy comes from the upbringing of his successor, Mencius. The mother of Mencius was so concerned about the people to whom he was exposed that she moved the family three times in search of better neighbours.

Mencius' own view, however, involved an innate human goodness. He said “The tendency of man's nature to good is like the tendency of water to flow downwards” (Works of Mencius, 1992, Gao Zi, p. 471). In Mencius' view, everyone is born with the sentiments of pity, shame, respect, and justice, and from these develop benevolence, justice, propriety, and wisdom. Contrary to this innate goodness, the philosopher Xun Zi (298–238 BC) proposed a negative view of human nature. He claimed that human nature strives for the acquisition of wealth, for the satisfaction of the senses. If human nature is allowed to run its course, struggle and violence will result. He concluded “Human nature is evil, the goodness of human nature is false”

(Yang, 2000, pp. 65–66). In contrast to Mencius, but in line with Confucian ideas about learning, Xun Zi stressed that humans must have education and follow social norms, and only then can society be in peace and order.

Another philosopher, Gao Zi (ca. 300 BC), a student of Mencius, considered human nature to be neither good nor evil. He explained, “Man's nature is like water whirling round in a corner. Open a passage for it to the east, and it will flow to the east; open a passage for it to the west, and it will flow to the west. Man's nature is indifferent to good and evil, just as the water is indifferent to the east and west” (Works of Mencius, 1992, Gao Zi, p. 471). That is to say, whether one is good or evil is determined by the path taken in social life and not by innate inclinations. Here we see the various views of the plasticity of human nature in early Chinese writings. The ancient Chinese emphasis on the moral educability of man has persisted down to the present time and moral education has always occupied an important place in Chinese history.

Confucius on personality and human development

Confucius said, “Since I cannot get men pursuing the due medium, to whom I might communicate my instructions, I must find the ardent and the cautiously-decided. The ardent will advance and lay hold of truth; the cautiously-decided will keep themselves from what is wrong” (Confucian Analects, 1992, Zilu, p. 185). Here we seem to have a reference to three personality types: the introvert, the extrovert, and the medium or balanced person. Of course, Confucius considers the ideal to be the medium person, but recognizes that such people are few, and one is more likely to encounter someone who is either too ardent or too cautious.

Confucius also outlined some behaviour patterns that a gentleman must observe. The Master says,

The superior man has nine things which are subjects with him of thoughtful consideration. In regard to the use of his eyes, he is anxious to see clearly. In regard to the use of his ears, he is anxious to hear distinctly. In regard to his countenance, he is anxious that it should be benign. In regard to his demeanour, he is anxious that it should be respectful. In regard to his speech, he is anxious that it should be sincere. In regard to his doing of business, he is anxious that it should be reverently careful. In regard to what he doubts about, he is anxious to question others. When he is angry, he thinks of the difficulties his anger may involve him in. When he sees gain to be got, he thinks of righteousness

(Confucian Analects, 1992, Ji Shi, p. 223)

Asking for information when in doubt is very important — Confucius once said that the most important thing when you know something is to know that you know it, and when you don't know, to know that you don't know (Confucian Analects, 1992, Wei Zheng, p. 75). One must not pretend to know something when one does not know

it. Also, one must not be driven by emotions. Rather, one should think of the consequences before taking action. Finally, if you see a way to achieve some gain, you must think twice before taking advantage of the opportunity, to ensure that it is consistent with moral code.

There is also a famous quote by Confucius on the stages of human development, as he was looking back and evaluating the course of his own development. It reads:

At fifteen, I had my mind bent on learning.
At thirty, I stood firm.
At forty, I had no doubts.
At fifty, I knew the decrees of Heaven.
At sixty, my ear was an obedient organ for the perception of truth.
At seventy, I could follow what my mind desired without transgressing what was right.

(Confucian Analects, 1992, Wei Zheng, p. 71)

Here, he summarized the cognitive development at various periods of life—something like a life-span description of development. In Confucius' view, the adolescent period is the time for learning so that, when one matures, at the age of 30, one has established a direction that cannot be easily changed. At age 40, one is confident of his goals, firm in the course of action, and not easily manipulated by others. At 50, one understands the laws of nature and society. By age 60, one has learned to evaluate right and wrong immediately and automatically. And finally, at 70, one is said to have had cultivated one's self to such an extent that one can act freely and spontaneously without erring or straying from the right path. From this account, we can see that Confucianism values age and the wisdom that comes with it. Chinese culture has always accorded an enormous amount of respect for old people, and this is still true today.

Furthermore, Confucius tells us what a superior man or gentleman should guard against at different stages of development. "There are three things which the superior man guards against. In youth, when the physical powers are not yet settled, he guards against lust. When he is strong, and the physical powers are full of vigour, he guards against quarrelsome ness. When he is old, and the animal powers are decayed, he guards against covetousness" (Confucian Analects, 1992, Ji Shi, p. 221). Here, Confucius outlined the emotional characteristics that may go astray at different developmental stages. Confucius was aware that there are temptations to which a person can yield and the weaknesses of human nature associated with the different stages of one's lifelong age span.

Some historical roots of modern Chinese psychology can be traced back to the thinking of ancient Chinese philosophers. Human nature, the nature of the mind, and the relation between nature and nurture have always been topics for discussion in Chinese philosophy. These issues, particularly the role of education in shaping the human mind, may give us new insights into the history of educational thought in China.

JESUIT MISSIONARIES AND CHINESE PSYCHOLOGY

In the year 1275 Marco Polo (1254–1324), together with his father and uncle, arrived in Peking (now called Beijing) from Venice after traveling for 4 years along the Silk Road. He was one of the first Westerners that had been recorded in history to have visited China. Marco Polo returned to Venice in 1295 after 17 years in China. His *Description of the World* (published in 1477) aroused immense interest in Europe about the distant land of Cathay, or China. However, after the Polos returned to Italy, there were no more reports from China for almost 250 years, until the first wave of Jesuit missionaries visited China in the 16th and 17th century, and brought with them Western science and technology. It was also these Jesuits who reported to Rome about China's political and cultural heritages. This was perhaps one of the most influential East-West cultural exchanges in modern history. Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) was one of the first of this new wave of Jesuits to come to China. He came to Macao in 1582 and began to study Chinese, its philosophy and culture, and dressed and behaved like a Chinese, and associated with the Chinese elite class. He translated the *Four Books*, including the *Analects of Confucius*, into Latin, and introduced Western science into China. He was also responsible for the Romanized transliteration of the name of Confucius from his Chinese name of Kong Fu Zi (Teacher Kong or Master Kong). After Matteo Ricci's death, the Chinese Emperor assigned a piece of land in Peking to be used for his grave. As described by Cameron:

Among all the Europeans who attempted the task of understanding the Chinese and their civilization, he was the most talented, the most important. Among all the Westerners who sojourned in China, he was the only one to whom the Chinese accorded unreservedly their respect as a scholar in their own language and literature. To achieve that position, Matteo Ricci had to become in all relevant ways at least one-half Chinese himself.

(Cameron, 1989, p. 149)

The other two most well-known Jesuits were Adam Schall von Bell (1591–1666), the German astronomer who came to Peking in 1622, a decade after Matteo Ricci's death, and Ferdinand Verbiest, a Belgian scholar who came to Peking in 1660, and who became a close friend of the Chinese Emperor Kangxi and advised him on scientific and diplomatic affairs. The Jesuits brought with them Euclidean geometry, the world map, the telescope, ways to make cannons, the clock, and astronomical instruments.

However, it is a little-known fact that the Jesuits also introduced psychology into China. The term for psychology in Chinese is Xin Li Xue, meaning the science of the heart, for then the heart was thought to be the organ of the mind. In Ricci's 1596 treatise on memory, he introduced the idea that the brain was actually the seat of memory, and he even specified certain parts of the brain as the locations for certain kinds of memory. Only 6 years earlier, in

1590, the famous Chinese medicine expert Li Shizhen wrote a book called *Encyclopedia of Chinese Herbal Medicine*, in which he introduced the idea that the brain is related to one's temperament. Thus, Ricci, together with Li Shizhen, was among the first in China to hold the view that the seat of the mind is the brain, not the heart, and this concept was an important development in the history of Chinese science.

In 1595 and 1596, Matteo Ricci wrote two books, *Treatise on Friendship* and *Treatise on Mnemonic Arts* (*Xi Guo Ji Fa*; Ricci, 1596). The latter book is of particular interest to psychologists. In Imperial China, all Chinese officials had to pass a several-tiered system of civil service examinations in order to hold office. The examination system was a long-standing tradition lasting from 606 until around 1908. One of the most important requirements of the examination was the memorization of vast amounts of texts taken from the Chinese classics, the *Four Books* in particular. Ricci wrote this book on methods for memorization to impress the Chinese nobles that he was capable of making a contribution to the Chinese literati. Ricci had a phenomenal memory, and developed a system of mnemonics for memorization. His hope was that officials would recognize the usefulness of his system in preparing for the civil service examinations, and would adopt the method for teaching their own children. For this, he obtained the fame and trust from the Chinese nobles to carry out his missionary cause. Ricci described the success of his method in a letter to his superior:

One day, when I was invited to a party by some holders of the first-level literary degree, something happened that gave me a great reputation among them and among all the other literati in the city. The thing was that I had constructed a Memory Palace System for many of the Chinese ideographs and gave some evidence of what I knew of Chinese letters. I told them that they should write down a large number of Chinese letters in any manner they chose on a sheet of paper, without there being any order among them, because after reading them only once, I would be able to say them all by heart in the same way and order in which they had been written. They did so, writing many letters without any order, all of which I, after reading them once, was able to repeat by memory in the manner in which they were written such that they were all astonished, it seeming to them a great matter. And I, in order to increase their wonder, began to recite them all by memory backward in the same manner, beginning with the very last until reaching the first. By which they all became utterly astounded and as if beside themselves. And at once they began to beg me to consent to teach them this divine rule by which such a memory was made.

(Spence, 1984)

Looking back on the treatise he wrote on mnemonic arts, we see that in some sense it can be considered as a protocognitive psychology study of memory. We know that these mnemonic methods did not originate with Ricci. Since Greek times, various mnemonic methods had been developed and were well known in the West. The Greek orator Cicero and the poet Simonides made use of such

devices. If we look at Ricci's own description of how the mnemonic system worked, we find many concepts that are familiar to us now in cognitive psychology. His trick was to build a "memory palace" by assigning different objects to different locations in an imaginary building, making full use of the method of loci and mental representations. A look at the table of contents of Ricci's book can provide a more detailed look at the issues he was dealing with: fundamentals, brain and memory, the use of representations, memory by locations, rules of forming characters, methods of memorization, and applications (Ricci, 1596).

The next important Jesuit to make contributions to early Chinese psychology was Julius Alenis (1582–1649) (Menegon, 1994). He came to Macao in 1611, then entered inland China in 1613 and lived there until his death. His *A General Account of Western Studies* (*Xi Xue Fan*), written in 1623, was an introduction to Western science and philosophy. In this work the most praised philosopher was Aristotle, who was considered the supreme thinker in history, and some pages were also devoted to Thomas Aquinas and his *Summa Theologica*, which represented the conceptual frame of Catholic theology at the time. Alenis was the first to cite Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas in China. In 1623, Alenis completed his *Introduction to Human Nature* (*Xingxue Cishu*), in eight volumes. The book was mainly devoted to the Christian conceptions of soul and body, the five senses, the human faculties, memory and dreams, awareness, ageing, and death. It could be seen as a general course of psychology as it was intended at that time in Europe, and was an adaptation of Aristotelian psychology in Chinese, summarizing the first six chapters of Aristotle's *De Anima* and the last two chapters of Aristotle's *Parva Naturalis*. The Latin title of the English version published in 1935 was *Psychologia Compendiosa* or *Compendium of Psychology*.

The next Jesuit who dealt with psychology was Franciscus Sambiasi (1582–1649), who came to China in 1613, and lived and worked in Peking until his death. He wrote a book in 1624 in two volumes called *Study of the Soul*, which also introduced Aristotle's theory of the hierarchy of souls, i.e., the vegetative, sensitive, and rational souls. In the final section he especially discussed a person's free will in the way Saint Augustine proposed, i.e., individuals were free to choose between the way of the flesh, which was sinful, and the way of God, which led to everlasting life in heaven. The ability to choose, according to Saint Augustine's view, explains why evil is present in the world; evil exists because people choose it. This last subject was written in accord with the Mencian notion that human nature was inclined towards the good, and that humans have the potential to develop into moral beings if one exercises self-control and is given the right environment. These ideas have strong parallels with modern humanistic psychology, which recognizes that humans are capable of self-actualization and that they strive towards actualization as a goal.

As can be seen from these examples, the Jesuits' teaching of psychology was mainly influenced by Aristotle, and later by Thomas Aquinas and St Augustine. They were

responsible for transmitting the basic ideas of Western scholastic psychology into China. After the death of Emperor Kangxi, and the dissolution of the Jesuit order by Pope Clemens XIV in the year 1773, most exchanges between the West and China temporarily came to an end (Xu, 1989). Yet the period of Jesuit involvement in China in the 16th and 17th century remained the most fruitful period of East-West contacts in history, which was also the time when Chinoiserie as an art form and decorative style became popular in the courts of France and other parts of Europe, and which was crucial to the development of Chinese science and technology.

FOUNDING OF MODERN CHINESE PSYCHOLOGY

In 1879, Wilhelm Wundt in Germany founded the first psychological laboratory in the world and established the *Psychologisches Institut* in Leipzig, Germany. This was considered the beginning of modern psychology. Leipzig was called the "Mecca of the new science" (Jaroszewski, 1975) and, as befitting such a mecca, a group of foreign students came to Leipzig to study psychology under Wundt, and then became the leaders of the first generation of psychologists around the world. One of these was the famous Chinese educational reformer Cai Yuanpei. Cai Yuanpei went to Germany in 1907, was in Leipzig in Wundt's *Institut* in 1908, and thereafter returned to China in 1912. It seemed that Cai was already interested in psychology before he embarked for Leipzig, for in 1906 he published *Lectures on hypnosis* using the penname of Kuai Ji Shan Ren. In the same year he published a translation of a book on parapsychology (Wan, 1987). In 1917 Cai Yuanpei became President of Peking University. In 1917, with Cai's support, Chen Daqi, then professor of psychology, established the first psychological laboratory in China. Chen, a returned student from Japan's Imperial University, was influential in Chinese academic circles. He later became Acting-President of Peking University. In the early years of the 20th century, Chinese students who had studied Western psychology abroad brought back ideas fundamental to modern psychology. In 1921, the Chinese Psychological Society was founded.

Even before the establishment of modern Chinese psychology in the early 1900s, Western psychology already showed its influence in Chinese academic circles. In 1889 the Chinese scholar Yan Yongjing (1838–1898) translated Joseph Haven's *Mental Philosophy* into Chinese from the Japanese version, which is to be described next. This was perhaps the first book of psychology in China. Recently a Chinese psychologist librarian, Wang Xingan, located another Chinese book on psychology published in 1898, now kept in University of Michigan library (Wang, personal communication, 1993), which was written by an American missionary W. Martin (Ding Weiliang) entitled *Aspects of Human Nature* (*Xing Xue Ju Yu*). This book, with a preface by the Qing Premier Li Hongzhang, written in question and answer form, contains 29 chapters in two

volumes. Its publication was 1 year earlier than William James' *Talks to Teachers on Psychology* (James, 1899). Martin was trained in the United States, so he might have been influenced by James' *Principles of Psychology* (1890). This book was perhaps one of the earliest books on psychology written in Chinese. Then, in 1907, the famous Chinese scholar Wang Guowei translated into Chinese Harold Hoffding's *Outlines of Psychology* (1907) based on the 1891 English translation by Mary Lowndes. This book ran through 10 editions and was quite influential in the first three decades of the 20th century in China. In this book we saw the Wundtian influence from Europe (Blowers, 2000).

Another channel of Western influence to modern Chinese psychology was through Japan. At the turn of the century, in the late Qing Dynasty (circa 1900), under the influence of Meiji Reformation in 1867 in Japan, China was undergoing an educational reform of abolishing the old educational system and establishing a new educational system. Psychology as an independent scientific discipline was first taught in some Chinese pedagogical institutions. During this time, many scholars were also sent to Japan for study, and Japanese lecturers were invited to China to deliver courses using texts translated from Japanese. In 1875, the Japanese encyclopaedist Amane Nishi (1829–1897) translated Joseph Haven's *Mental Philosophy* into Japanese, and coined the Japanese term "shinrigaku" for psychology, which is now well established in Japan and China (Azuma & Imada, 1994). Fourteen years later, in 1889, Yan Yongjing (1838–1898) translated *Mental Philosophy* into Chinese. However, he did not use the name psychology for the title of this book, as used by Nishi; instead he gave it the name *Science of the Soul* (*Xin Ling Xue*). Then a Japanese scholar Hattori Unokichi, who lectured in the Qing Dynasty's Metropolitan University, published *Lectures in Psychology* in 1902 (Blowers, 2000). The Metropolitan University was the forerunner of the present Peking University. Hattori Unokichi was perhaps the first Japanese psychologist to have visited China in recent history, and the first to use the same translation of *Xi Li Xue* as the Japanese did for psychology. During this period there were several textbooks of psychology translated from the Japanese: to name a few, *Psychology of Education* by Kubota Sadanori published in 1902, *Essentials of Psychology* by Enryo Inoue published in 1903, and *Textbook of Psychology* by Ohse Jintaro and Tachigara Noritoshi published in 1905 (Gao, 1985, pp. 344–345).

Interestingly enough, the first book of psychology authored by a Chinese scholar was written and published in Japan. In 1898 a Chinese student, Chen Huang, went to Japan's Imperial University to study engineering. While there he wrote a book, *Simplified Psychology*, first published in Japan in 1905 and published again in China in 1906 (Yang & Zhao, 2000, p. 134–136). From then on Chinese authors began to publish books on psychology, the most important of which was Chen Daqi's *Outlines of Psychology* published in 1918. His book was a textbook for university students, covered all fields of psychology, and

went through 12 editions in 10 years. This book had great influence on the subsequent development of Chinese psychology.

With the introduction of the Western educational system into China in the late 19th and early 20th century, psychology expanded rapidly. After the founding of the Chinese Psychological Society in 1921, the first journal *Psychology* appeared in 1922. Several other psychological societies were founded later: the Society of Psychological Testing, the Society of Psychoanalysis, and the Society of Mental Hygiene. Around this period, many departments of psychology were established in Chinese universities. The main influences in the 1930s were functionalism and behaviourism, although gestalt psychology and psychoanalysis were also introduced into China.

However, this expansion of modern psychology did not last long. The outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937 caused a serious setback to the progress of Chinese psychology. Given that much of the eastern parts and coastal areas of China were occupied by the Japanese, major universities were moved to the western remote parts of China, with a shortage of books and equipment, and the development of psychology was halted. This lasted until the end of World War II.

PSYCHOLOGY IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Influence of Soviet psychology

After World War II, the Chinese Communists won the civil war against the Nationalists and the People's Republic of China was founded in 1949. To accommodate this political revolution, Chinese psychologists tried to initiate a reform in psychology by using the Soviet Union as its model. Chinese psychologists started a movement to learn from Soviet psychology, and criticized Western psychology. The new psychology took Marxist dialectical materialism as its guiding principle. Meanwhile, in 1950, a joint conference of the Soviet Academy of Sciences and Soviet Academy of Medical Sciences was held, and a resolution was passed to take Ivan Pavlov's theory of conditioned reflexes as the basis for all biological and medical sciences. This resolution was endorsed by the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party. Chinese psychology followed suit by taking conditioned reflexes as the physiological basis of human behaviour. Marxism stressed that human beings are social beings, constantly under the social influences of society, and that the mind is a reflection of the material and social world in which one lives. Because the social environment determines one's social conduct, the people living in a society are imprinted with ideological characteristics specific to their social class.

As in the Soviet Union in the 1940s and 1950s, independent departments of psychology were suspended in Chinese universities, and psychology became a secondary discipline in the departments of philosophy or education. It was only 30 years later, after the Chinese Cultural

Revolution, that independent departments of psychology were re-established. Also following the Soviet pattern, during the first three decades of the People's Republic, social psychology and psychological testing were abolished on the grounds that the former ignored the class nature of social groups, and the latter leaned too heavily on individual differences rather than social differences.

The current state of psychology

During the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), psychology was abandoned completely. In the late 1970s, the Chinese government engaged in political reforms and opened up to the outside world, which led to the rehabilitation of psychology and its recognition as a credible and potentially useful scientific discipline. International exchanges opened up, and with them, various new schools of thought and new research tools were introduced into the country. Chinese psychologists broadened their horizons into new fields of research and were able to adopt more varied approaches. Today, many new fields of research still await exploration within both the biological and social sciences in search of a deeper understanding of mind and behaviour. Chinese psychologists have made contributions in the fields of basic research in cognitive psychology and psychobiology. In the applied field, Chinese psychologists have contributed to education, population control, organizational management, and other applied domains. They are also beginning to provide mental health services to individuals seeking help with mental or emotional problems (Jing, 1994). With the rapid development of China's economy, the research tasks and provision of financial resources by the government have created favourable conditions for scientific research, professional training, and practical applications of psychology.

The important influences on the development of Chinese psychology, both indigenous and international, are summarized in Table 1, and depicted on a map in Figure 1.

NEW CHALLENGES AND A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL APPROACH TO CHINESE PSYCHOLOGY

New challenges

China is now undergoing a process of rapid social and economic development. To be competitive in the new world system, it needs to achieve within a few decades what developed countries took generations or a century to accomplish. The sweeping changes currently going on in China are far beyond anything that developed countries have ever experienced. The State Statistical Bureau reported a blazing average 8.3% growth for China's economy in 2000, the eighth consecutive year of rapid growth (Zhu, 2001). Rapid social changes have brought to the fore many social-psychological problems, such as educational reform, population control, new working relations, and

TABLE 1
Important events in the history of Chinese psychology

Timeline	Important events and publications
500 BC Confucianism	Confucius: <i>The Analects</i> Mencius: <i>Mencius</i>
1600–1700 AD Jesuit missionaries	Matteo Ricci (1552–1610): <i>Treatise on Mnemonic Arts</i> (1596) Julius Aleni (1582–1649): <i>Introduction to Human Nature</i> (1623) Franciscus Sambiasi (1582–1649): <i>Study of the Soul</i> (1613)
1900 AD Modern Psychology	Yan Yongjing (1838–1898): Translation of Haven's <i>Mental Philosophy</i> (1889) W. Martin: <i>Aspects of Human Nature</i> (1898) Hattori Unokichi: <i>Lectures in Psychology</i> (1902) Wang Guowei (1877–1927): Translation of Hoffding's <i>Outlines of Psychology</i> (1907) Chen Huang: <i>Simplified Psychology</i> , first book written by a Chinese author (1905) Chen Daqi (1886–1983): <i>Outlines of Psychology</i> (1918), first Chinese university textbook
1912 AD Influence from Leipzig	Cai Yuanpei (1868–1940) returned from Wundt's laboratory, became President of Peking University (1917) Chen Daqi established the first psychological laboratory in Peking University (1917) Founding of Chinese Psychological Society (1921) First Chinese journal of psychology <i>Psychology</i> (1922)
1949 AD People's Republic of China	New Chinese psychology Introduction of Soviet psychology (1950) Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), psychology suspended Introduction of Western psychology (1980)

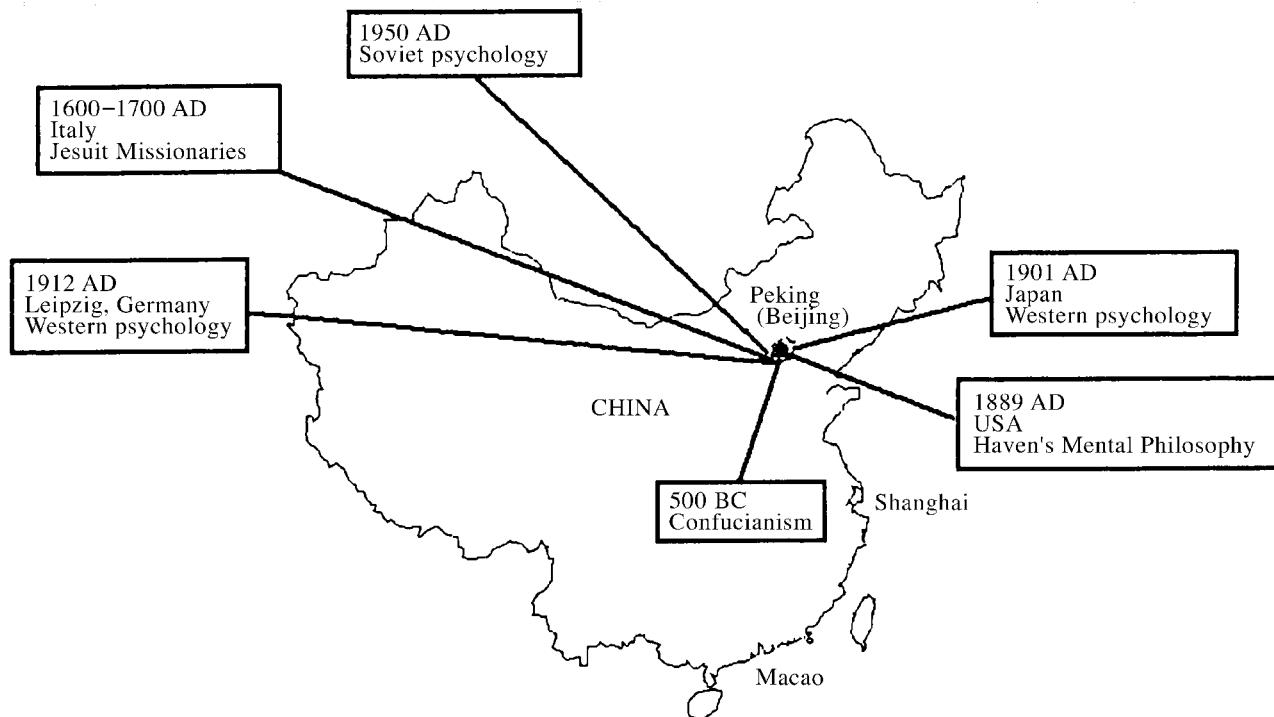


Figure 1. Important influences on the development of Chinese psychology.

rapidly increasing crime rates, all requiring immediate attention. For Chinese psychology to develop, we have to consider its present status and how to meet the demands of society. Several factors should be considered.

Gain recognition for psychology

Chinese psychology has for long remained outside the orbit of national development and social change. In spite of the important role psychology can have in the context of developmental needs of the country, as a discipline it has lagged behind other sciences in China. There are many reasons for this "retardation", having to do with the small number of personnel involved, lack of funding, limited exposure to international journals, dependence on other disciplines for recognition, and so on. An important reason for the neglect of psychology in China may be found in the academic criteria of assessment for scientific contributions, which is to a great extent borrowed from Western evaluations for the physical sciences. Psychology, a science bridging both natural and social sciences, can hardly meet the criteria for assessment relative to the other natural sciences. Because of problems left over from the Cultural Revolution, which tried to eliminate psychology from the scientific community, society at large is still reluctant to give full credit to psychology as a bona fide scientific discipline. Currently, there are no psychologists among the members of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. There seems to be a glass wall barring psychologists from entering high-level academic organizations. It is urgent that psychology uplifts its image and gains full recognition in scientific circles and in society at large.

As of this date, psychology has also not left a noticeable impact on industry or government in China. It has not been recognized as a very important potential contributor to state development and planning. The problems confronting social development are thought to be basically political and economic, and psychology is assumed to play only a minor role in finding solutions. We think psychologists should pull together all relevant knowledge that can be of any use in the process of influencing, in one way or another, the decision-making process of the social political machinery. Psychologists should be encouraged to hold jobs in government departments and important advisory bodies. They should be willing to take leadership roles at the state level to show its relevance and social utility, and to develop a growing concern with the decisions and policies made at various levels. This point also suggests that it is necessary to engage in a disciplinary shift towards the interfacing of psychology and social policy. Such an understanding requires an ongoing appraisal of the latent social implications of research and would be enhanced by efforts to develop or clarify such implications. These efforts are in no way incompatible with the objectivity of psychology as a science and can only enhance its validity as an important domain of inquiry.

Psychologists should also be made more aware of the extent to which the legal system, government administration, and various health service delivery models affect and

will continue to affect both the discipline and profession of psychology. Because psychology is no longer a small, predominantly academic discipline, insulated from the legal, economic, and political realities, by delivering good services to clients it will automatically create a wide base of social and political support.

Coping with social change

Psychology should devote itself to help Chinese people cope with the psycho-cultural shock that comes with social transition while at the same time preserving their psycho-cultural continuity. The process of rapid economic and social change often results in the deviation of a people's traditional ways of living and thinking, which constitute the bases for its identity. The role of psychology is to help people satisfy their needs and utilize their capacities in a new environment in a well-adjusted and integrated manner. To do this requires mapping the existing state, the external influences, and the interaction between the two into the psychological space of the people in the particular developing culture.

Furthermore, psychological theories are products of a specific social milieu of advanced industrial countries, but such conditions are lacking in China, thereby limiting the applicability of mainstream psychological methodologies. Too often, problems taken up for research are mere replications of what has been done in Europe or North America, with little relation to the needs of the country. Also, research has largely been restricted to analyzing biopsychological bases of behaviour, perception, cognitive development, motivations, and personality. With China's new developments, there are new and emerging areas of concern above and beyond the traditional basic and applied interests of psychologists. China's social problems largely emanate from a modernization process in a socialist market economy with its own characteristics of rapid socioeconomic transition. The state-of-the-art technology available to psychologists falls short for the prediction and control of human adaptations in a specific changing social system. Thus, psychologists must acquire new conceptual schemas and practical skills, and possess the capability to deal with new problems of rapid social change.

Dissemination of psychological knowledge

An important challenge for psychology is to disseminate new knowledge and technology in a sufficiently clear and relevant manner to others with less specialized training. Psychology is now becoming an attractive science that has drawn the interests of many people. At present, psychology is one of the popular choices for enrolment by college students, but most people do not understand what psychology is and what psychologists are doing. Some believe that psychology teaches the "secrets of life" and "ways of knowing one's mind", whereas others see it as dealing with responses caused by innate inclinations and the unconscious. It is a great responsibility for psychologists to rectify the false impressions people have about psychology.

Psychology must make its utility clear to the public, and be specific about what it can and cannot do. Psychologists should undertake the task of transferring to everyday language the concepts and techniques of psychology for use by the general public.

Applications of psychology

China's modernization process and knowledge innovation programme have provided psychology with a broad scope for its utilization. The demand for psychological services will increase dramatically. The rapid growth of the economy and industrialization will inevitably bring problems of increased urbanization, environmental problems, health problems, changes in lifestyles, and so on. In addition, as average income levels increase, the Chinese people are beginning to emphasize their emotional and physical wellbeing. Thus, we can predict that psychology-related areas such as clinical psychology, mental health and counseling, the education of only children, and unhealthy lifestyles that accompany modernization will be put on the agenda for psychological research. Whether or not psychology can alleviate these problems, in addition to carrying out basic research, will determine whether or not psychology can make significant advancements (Jing, 1990).

A macro- and multi-dimensional approach to Chinese psychology

Though the subject of psychology deals with both the social system and individual processes, its orientation is basically microsocial, concentrating almost entirely on personal characteristics of the individual in social processes rather than on sociostructural factors. The problems that are vital to China almost invariably have structural and institutional components which psychology does not sufficiently recognize. Most of the research done in China deals with narrow aspects of large social problems and, as a consequence, the information gathered lacks organization, synthesis, and integration.

Clearly, development is a highly complex phenomenon, being the product of a very complicated interaction of a number of variables—economic, social-structural, and psychological. Complex human problems and the parameters of their study should not only be concerned with microcosmic individual processes, but also encompass larger social, structural, and cultural influences. Psychology has to adopt a more global orientation, and a macrocosmic perspective. Psychology needs to study more complex problems related to cognitive processes, language, social behaviour, emotions, and so on, if it is to have significant impact in solving the problems of the country.

We think that one of the reasons that psychology has remained somewhat removed from the complexities of social problems is the constraint of its methodology, modeled after mathematics and pure science. The output produced by following the pattern of the pure sciences bears neatness and precision, but often disappoints scholars by

its artificiality, triviality, and lack of relevance to real-life situations. The methodology of psychological research has to be broadened to make it more relevant for the study of complex social problems that the country faces in the process of development. It is important that observational and correlational data should be used in parallel with experimental data. Of course, experimental data can provide the essence of scientific investigation, but observational and correlational data provide useful information to make further generalizations. It is not a question of making the methods more flexible, but rather of not sacrificing important events due to the lack of methodological resources with which to study the problem effectively. Case-study is another scientific way of studying the individual that can be used in psychology. It is argued that the case-study method is the bedrock of scientific investigation because it examines relevant issues in the widest possible context. The psychological case-study provides a rigorous scientific method for the theory and practice of counseling psychology (Bromley, 1990). It is also often used by organizational psychologists for situational analyses. This approach takes advantage of the real-world context in which cases occur and operate at relatively low levels of abstraction and generalization.

Nonetheless, the most accepted method in mainstream psychology is the psychological experiment. It encompasses a broad conceptual framework and has been applied to the most complex social problems. Most people believe that it can constitute a basis for universal psychology. However, the traditional quantitative research orientation in psychology can no longer be considered the panacea that it was once believed to be. Any research approach, such as a quantitative one, that gives priority to the methodology as opposed to the phenomenon itself, may lead to faulty causal conceptualization. Consequently, psychology should aim at being a more descriptive science as well as an explanatory one. This stance is considered to be compatible with both phenomenological and behaviouristic approaches to research in psychology.

An interdisciplinary perspective is also important. After all, development is a multi-faceted phenomenon and cannot be understood using only the parameters of a single discipline. Increasingly conscious of the overlap of different sciences in understanding complex social processes, psychologists have now begun to borrow freely the concepts, tools, and techniques of analysis from other scientific disciplines. The psychologists are partners in interdisciplinary teams that work together with other scientists to understand the total context of behaviour.

Human adaptability can be effectively studied through an approach that considers biological, psychological, and sociological aspects of change. Psychologists can control biological variables that give rise to psychological changes, provide measures for describing psychological attributes or functions, and monitor psychological effects of specific sociocultural environments. Restatement of the nature-nurture problem in the light of the interaction of genetic and social factors and a multidisciplinary approach would be invaluable.

In conclusion, with the introduction of a market economy and decreased social control, more problems have emerged for psychological study in Chinese society. Mental health, crime, violence, management, human factors, and other problems all need the participation of psychologists to identify their causes and solutions. In China, psychology is expected to play a distinctive role in the attainment of its new national goal of four modernizations. Thus, despite its very late start, the application of psychological knowledge to the problems of social change and national development should be a priority on our agenda.

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