Sociology in China: Its Restoration and Future Role

For the last 30 years, sociology in China has been an enigma. In a country of dramatic transformation, its social scientists were devalued, denounced and demonized. Contact and access to the literature of others almost came to a standstill. Now that's changing; the past year, that's changed dramatically.

The Tasks Ahead in China

The problem ahead is immense. How does one staff institutes and universities with sociologists where training has been lacking for almost a generation? How does one develop a sociology independent of its Western cultural development and its intellectual inspiration? How does one develop a sociology responsive to the "people?" How does one develop sociology responsive to the goals of modernization rather than to the accumulation of knowledge? How does one face today by sociologists in China. They have taken some preliminary steps after almost 30 years of isolation from their colleagues around the world.

Sociology in China

Sociology was taught in China as early as 1914 and by 1949, most major universities had established sociology departments. The main institution for the promotion of sociology came from British social anthropology and the Chicago School of American sociology. After 1949, sociology fell on hard times. Any science of society that deviated from Marxist-Leninist doctrine was considered a threat. In 1952, during the educational reorganization campaigns, sociology was forbidden to be taught at home university, Kunming. Fei Xiaotong, who had participated in the efforts to bring sociology back to China now and to New York, Boston, Ann Arbor and San Francisco. He has visited his colleague, C.K. Yang in Pittsburgh and A.S. Lodge in Cambridge.

We do not have to import methods and theory uncritically. He claims to have good of the people, for the common welfare and prosperity of the country of dramatic transformation. The number of sociology has come about in the past and the future.—RRD

The Ministry of Education to reorganize the sociology departments of the People's Republic in 1949.

Formal Steps Begin

The first formal steps for the re-establishment of sociology were taken in March 1979 when the Chinese Sociological Research Association was established under the presidency of Fei Xiaotong. It started with some 60 members and has grown since. This nationwide organization is the focal point of activity. Many of the officers are affiliated with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. Within the academy, an Institute of Sociology is being organized. About 10 staff members now work out of a borrowed apartment without library or office facilities. The staff is soon to be augmented as a result of a nationwide research workers selection examination.

In September 1979, an independent Sociological Association was also formed in Shanghai. It was composed of 140 members, most of whom are drawn from other fields and from other social sciences agencies. It elected 21 directors and 4 senior advisors, mainly older scholars. With the death of Mao Zedong and the fall of the Gang of Four in 1976, the idea reemerged that academic knowledge might be useful in dealing with the process of modernization. The goal of the modernizations—industry, agriculture, science, technology, and national defense—would require social science researchers and policy advisors to formulate the process of modernization requires research, open debate and free exchange of ideas. It is a context in which academic knowledge might be useful in dealing with the process of modernization. The goal of the modernizations—industry, agriculture, science, technology, and national defense—would require social science researchers and policy advisors to formulate the process of modernization requires research, open debate and free exchange of ideas. It is a context in which academic knowledge might be useful in dealing with the process of modernization. The goal of the modernizations—industry, agriculture, science, technology, and national defense—would require social science researchers and policy advisors to formulate the process of modernization requires research, open debate and free exchange of ideas. It is a context in which academic knowledge might be useful in dealing with the process of modernization. The goal of the modernizations—industry, agriculture, science, technology, and national defense—would require social science researchers and policy advisors to formulate the process of modernization requires research, open debate and free exchange of ideas. It is a context in which academic knowledge might be useful in dealing with the process of modernization.

The barriers are great for the future of sociology. The number of people with any disciplinary preparatory education are horrific. The complex problems of transferring existing personnel from one work unit to another. The presence of sociology has been extended to scholars. But what if research challenges officials would continue to have its critics and its supporters. There are many funds for analysis but not a blueprint for solving social problems which arise. This is the task facing China's sociologists. There will be a concerted effort to separate sociological methodology and theory from their western cultural milieu to produce indigenous solutions to China's problems.

Social Science Journal Started

The first issue of Social Science Journal in China came off the press in March 1980. The leading journal of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the new publication will appear monthly and be available in Chinese and quarterly in English. The English edition will carry a regular column on Current Ideas. The first issue includes an article on "Ethnic Identification in China" by Fei Xiaotong. It is intended to promote academic interchange and to inform Western developments in research in philosophy and the social sciences.

The article, "One Year After The Restoration of Sociology in China," was written by Wang Kang, Secretary General, Chinese Sociological Research Association. It will be published in the November 1980 issue.

TAS Article On China

The restoration of sociology in China as well as the role sociology students in Chinese society are explored in an article scheduled to appear in the next issue of The American Sociologist.

"The American Sociologist," One-Year "One Year After the Restoration of Sociology in China," was written by Wang Kang, Secretary General, Chinese Sociological Research Association. It will be published in the November 1980 issue.