



THE UNIVERSITY OF
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The Job-Seeking Experience of *Hai Gui* (High-Skilled Returnees) in China

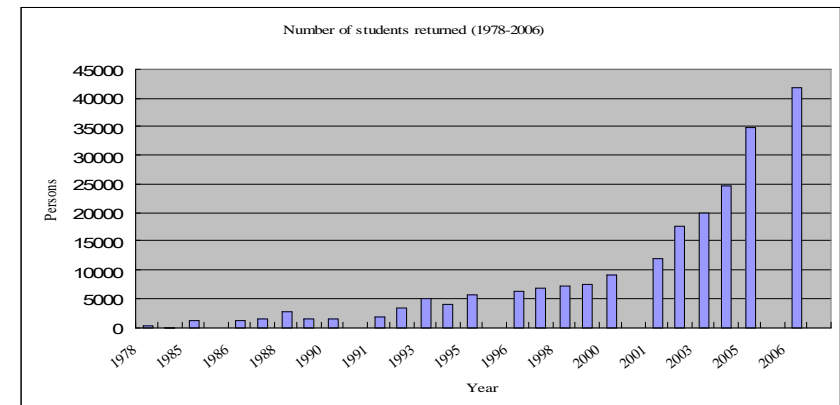
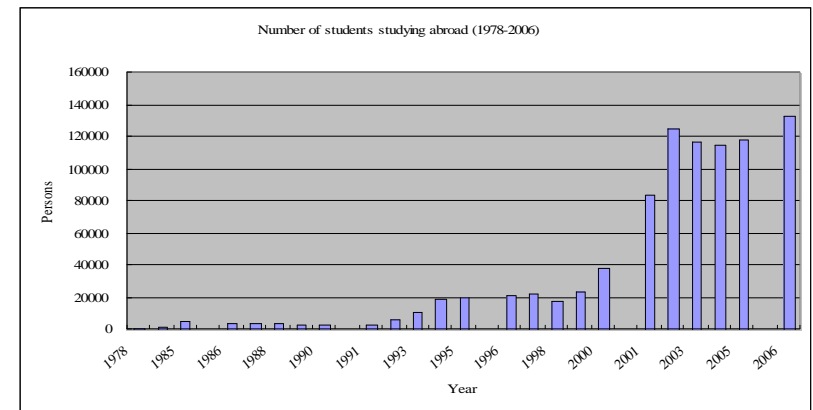
Jie Hao & Anthony Welch
2011 September, Vienna

Overview

- Background
- Current career status
- International education qualification (IEQ) compared to domestic IEQ
- Returnees' advantages & disadvantages
- Reintegration issues

General situation: China

- Thriving economy; more liberalised polity; good opportunities
- By the end of 2010, 1.27 million gone abroad including 946,400 for HE
- In year 2010, 280,47? left for abroad, and 130,480 returned



Source: Ministry of Education, 2011 March
National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2007

Australian higher education and Chinese international students

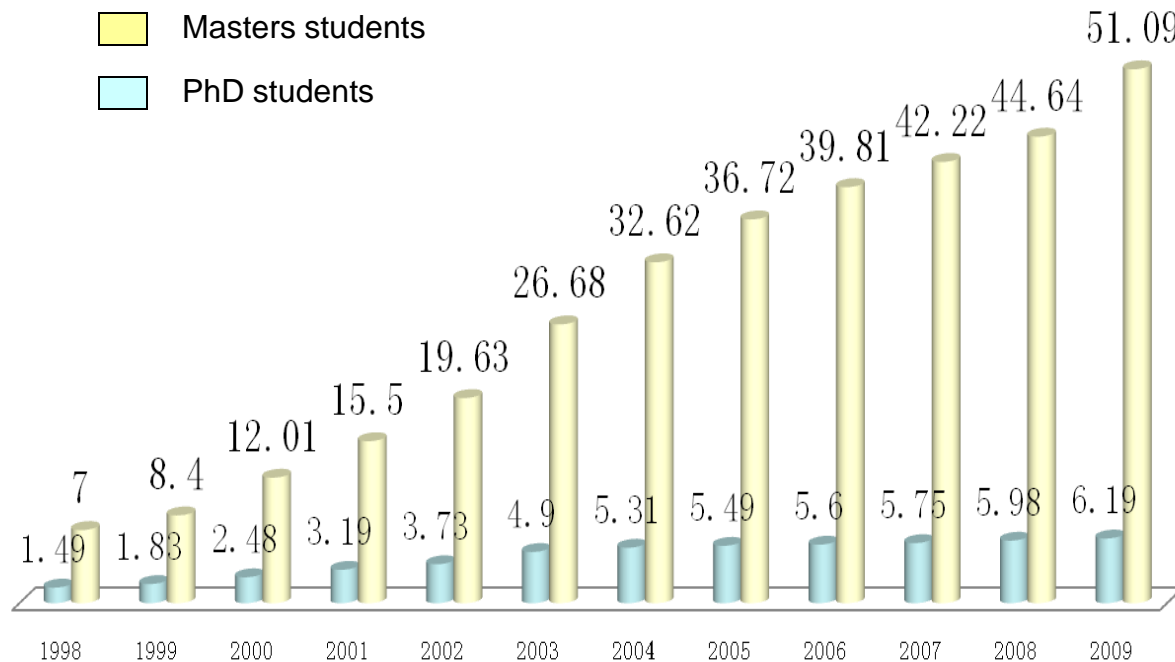
- One of the top five host countries, that collectively account for **72%** of the world's tertiary-level internationally-mobile students
- Amongst 450,000 full-fee international students, almost **40%** are undertaking higher education
- **\$15.5 billion** generated in 2008
- Chinese students comprise **27.4%** of total international enrolment in Australian higher education
- In 2007, of a worldwide total of 657,200 Chinese international students, **10%** studied in Australia
- During global economic crisis in 2008/9, Chinese students comprised **a quarter** of 298,462 full-fee international enrolments

Sources & Debates

- ‘The New Argonauts’ (Saxenian, 2006)
- ‘*Haidai* Doesn’t Exist’ (Zweig & Han, 2008)
- ‘The Chinese Knowledge Diaspora’ (Welch & Zhang, 2007)
- Study Abroad Shapes Global Careers (Norris & Gillespie, 2008)
- ‘*Haigui* becomes *Haidai*, and International Education Problems’ (Zhu, 2005)
- ‘*Haigui* becomes *Haidai*’ (CCTV, 2006; Beijing Daily 2007; etc.)
- ‘More than 35% of returnees have problems with employment’ (Hu, 2008)

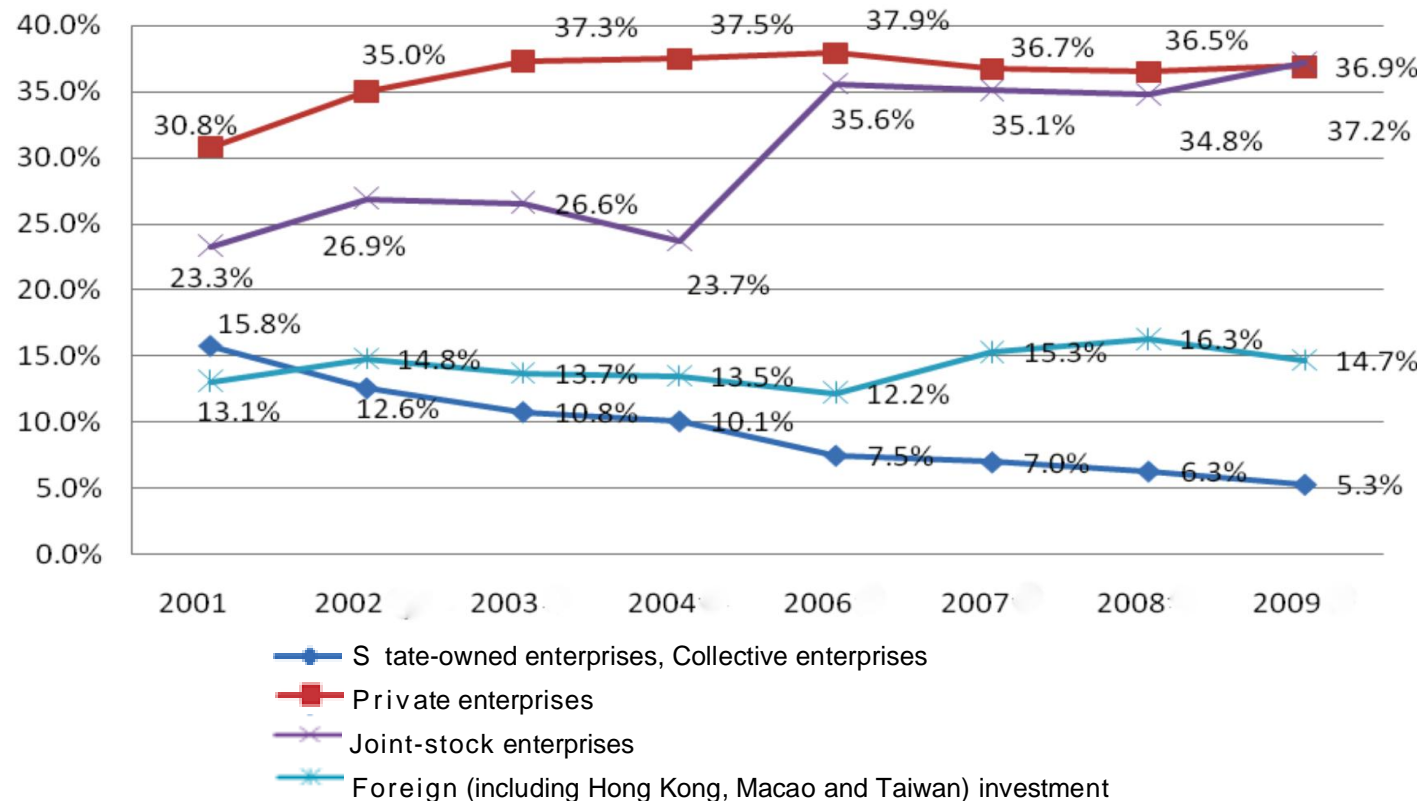
Chinese domestic graduate students (1998-2009)

Unit: 10,000



Aspects of a changing economy

Market shares for different enterprise types



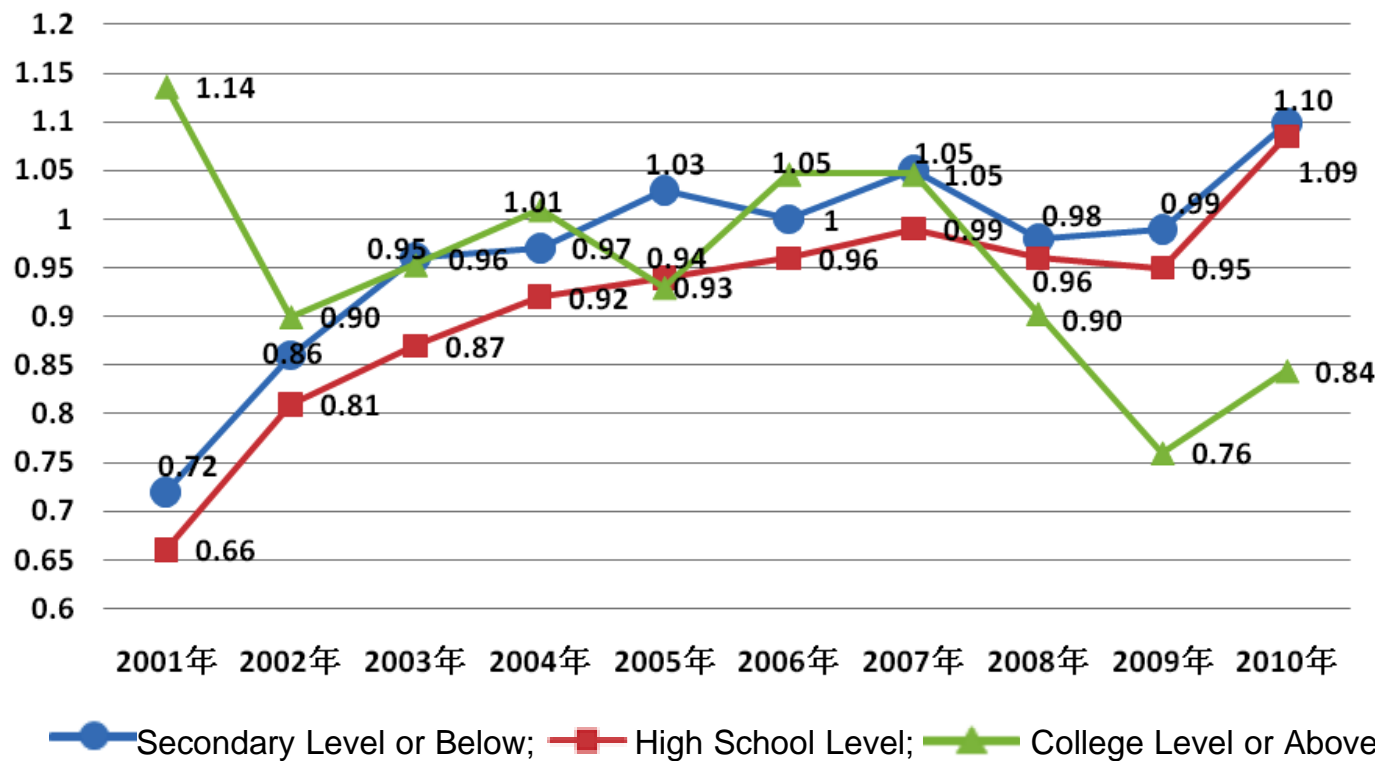
Source: Ministry of Labour and Social Security, 2010

Strategies for international high-skilled labour in China

- *'Rencai qiangguo'* policy
- Medium-and-long-term Plan for S&T (2006 - 2020)
- Medium-and-long-term Plan for Higher Education and Human Resources (2010-2020)
- The 12th Five-Year Plan
- Projects: 111, Thousand Talents, etc
- Projects: 985, 211, 5000

Labour market reality

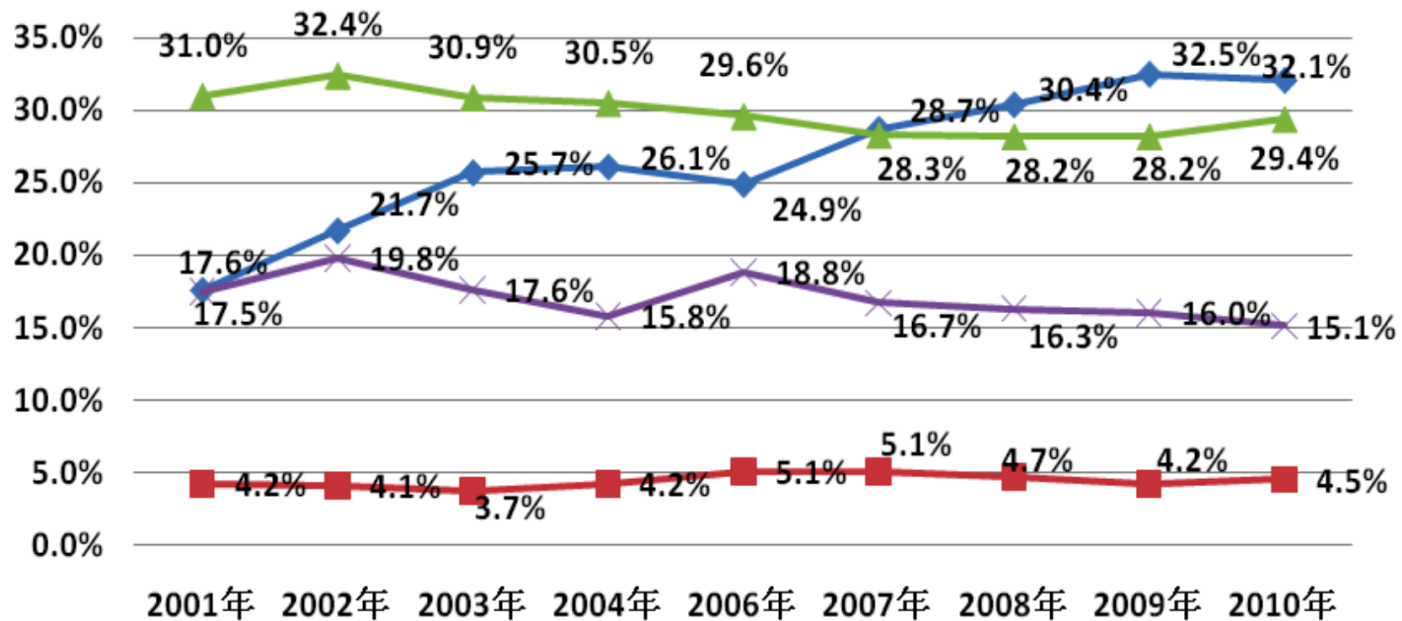
Changes in demand for educated labour (2001 -2010)



Source: Ministry of Labour and Social Security, 2011

Labour demand by sector

Changes in labour demand by industry



- ◆ Manufacturing industry;
 ■ Property, Real Estate industry;
- ▲ Wholesale, Retail, Hospitality industry;
 × Social service industry.

- About 75% international graduates found jobs within 3 months after graduation, another 23% within 6 months.
- Around 90% are in full-time paid employment.
- The three most popular professions are, respectively ,Finance and Banking, Education and Training, and Manufacturing.
- Nearly 70% working 3 major cities (Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou), and the rest are mainly spread in provincial capital cities or special economic zones.

- *Hai Gui* Annual income:
 - 4% (above RMB 960,000)
 - 12% (RMB 360,000 – 960,000)
 - 35% (RMB 120,000 – 360,000)
 - 45% (RMB 36,000 – 120,000)
 - 4% (below RMB 36,000)

Source: Hao (2012)

Domestic graduates' employment

- Reform of job allocation system in 1985
- Higher education expansion in 1998

Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Number of graduates (million)	2.558	3.254	4.076	4.875	5.594	6.1
Employment rate	77.5%	72.8%	78.8%	78.1%	81.3%	74%

Source: Beijing University, 2009; Ministry of Education, 2011

The measure of employment used in this study was the percentage of respondents who had confirmed their *danwei* (or work unit), at the time when students graduated (or left their HEI). Employment also included further study.

Employment rate and income by type of higher education institution

Types of higher education institution	Employment rate	Annual salary (RMB)
Ordinary Universities	88.0%	28,428
'985' Universities	89.7%	35,364
'211' Universities	91.2%	33,072
State Higher Education Colleges	85.2%	22,680
Private Higher Education Institutions	82.8%	22,944

“Ant-tribes” [Lian Si (廉思), 2009]

- Recent domestic graduates
- Work for subsistence wages (average RMB 2,000 per month)
- Live in crowded neighbourhoods away from flourishing city centres
- Often 4 - 8 people share a room
- Many from regional or rural HEIs are attracted by the bright lights of Beijing, Shanghai or Guangzhou

Employment trends for local graduates

- More and more recent graduates are considering career opportunities in smaller emerging cities like Qingdao, Tiayuan
E.g.: in a recruitment fair held at a leading university in Beijing, about 35% of the 3,300 graduating students expect to land jobs in so-called second-or-third-tier cities, up from 20% in previous years. (Do *they* expect, or does someone *else* expect?)
- They are coming to realize that smaller cities present them with more opportunities for career development, particularly since many large companies in other provinces value graduates who received their education in cities like Beijing

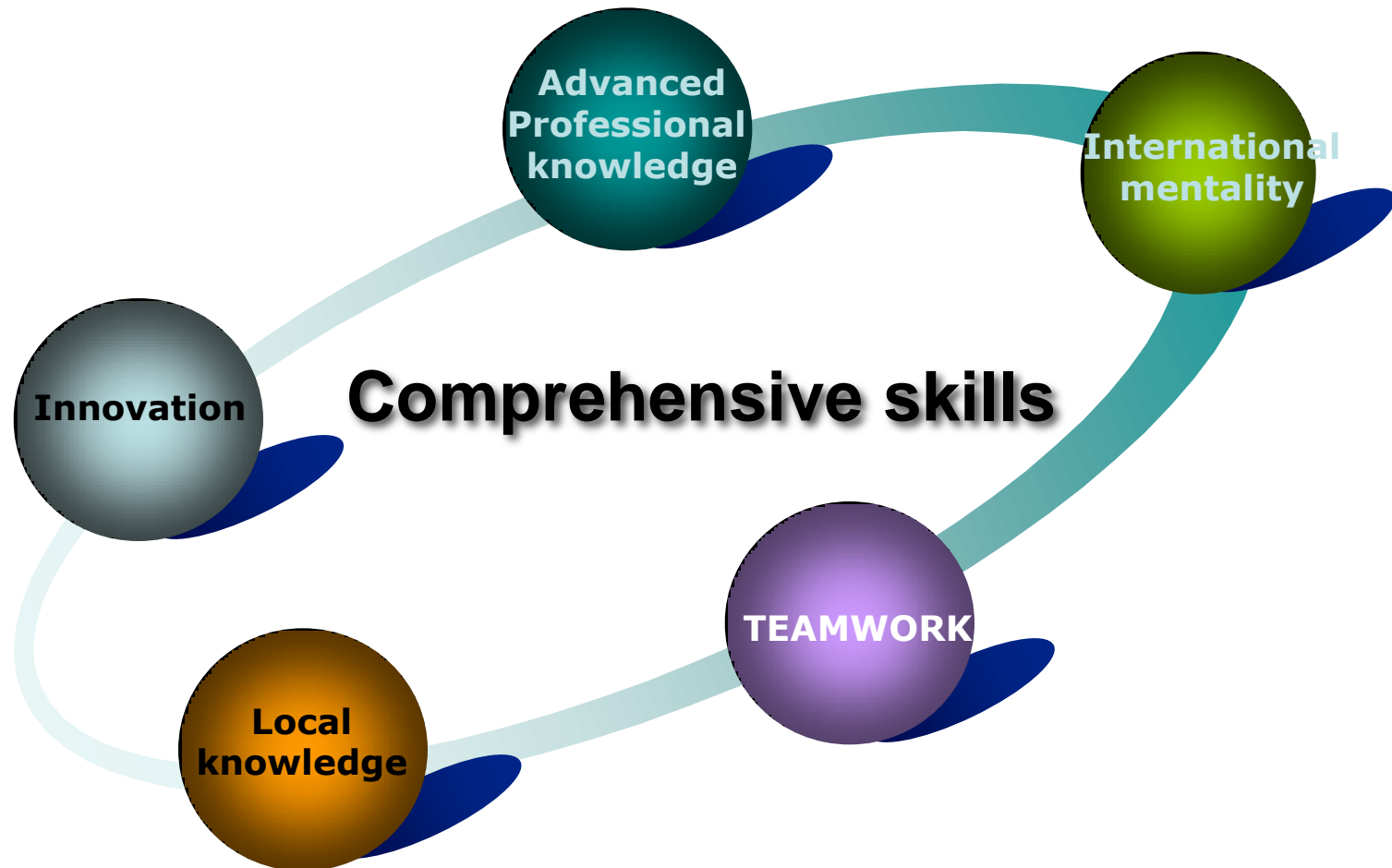
Returnees' key advantages & disadvantages

	Advantages	Disadvantages
External	Conferment of <i>'hukou'</i> *	Employers' high expectations
Internal	International exposure	Lack of current local knowledge

Government's endorsement

- Central government
 - Macro-level policies: National medium-and-long term development plans
 - Pioneer key projects: '111' project, the Thousand-Talent program
- Municipal / local governments
 - Micro-level policies: Parallel programs to attract international high-skilled professionals
 - Practical support: Conferment of '*hukou*'
- State-owned enterprises, Private businesses, International companies
 - High standard employment packages
 - Direct dialogues and assistance

Employers' high expectations



Lack of current local knowledge

- Young returnees often come home believing that they have ‘seen the world’. But China has been changing rapidly, and is no longer the same home which one left behind a few years ago.
- Depending on how fast things change at home, some returning sea turtles may be laughed at, for not being able to adjust to China’s brave new world (Louie, 2006).

Embracing the local culture - a key challenge of reintegration

A male returnee said:

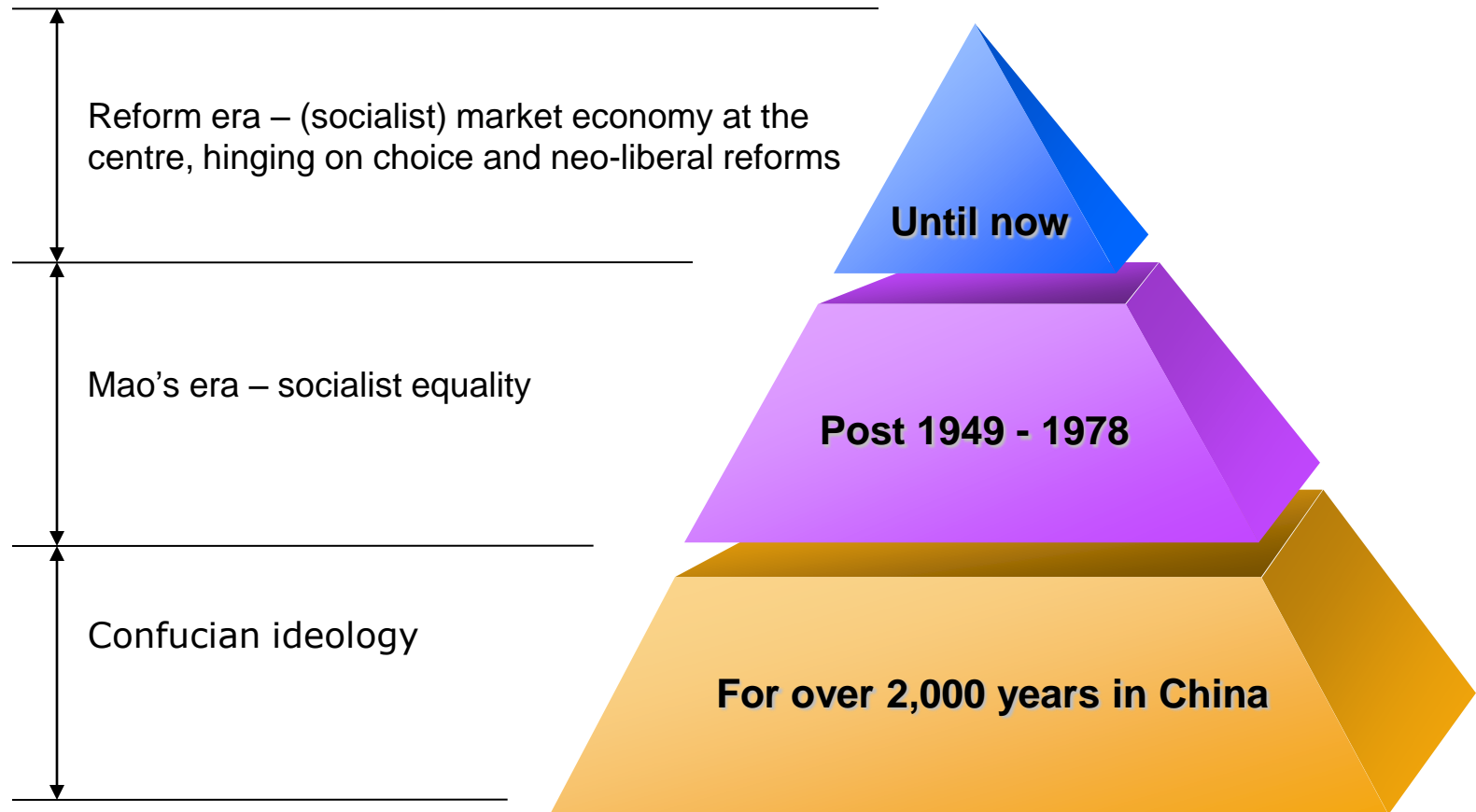
“It took one week for me to adjust to the living environment in China, but it took almost a year to mentally adapt to the Chinese lifestyle. The rhythm in China is too fast, especially in cities like Shanghai.”

Reintegration problems

- Returnees, who've spent some years abroad acquainting themselves with western knowledge and culture, often have issues reintegrating into the home society. This can be all the more significant in East Asian contexts (Goodman, 1990; Goodman, Imoto, & Toivonen, 2011).
- Two thirds of young returnees faced reintegration issues, mainly concerning matters like different thinking styles compared to local colleagues, reverse culture shock, and hesitancy in establishing social relationships (Hao, 2011).

- Local employers and government officials felt young returnees should be modest, and re-learn Chinese traditional culture and the norms and practices of current society.
- An essential step - effective communication, with respect for Chinese culture.

What is Chinese culture?



The importance of culture and tradition

As Premier Wen Jiabao has emphasised,

“Culture and tradition are the soul of a country. China must fully carry forward its traditions while, at the same time, learning from other civilizations in the world. Only in this way can we further develop our culture and make our country stronger” (China Daily, 2011, March 15).

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Thanks (Xie Xie)!

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