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# China U.

**Confucius Institutes censor political discussions and restrain the free exchange of ideas. Why, then, do American universities sponsor them?**

Marshall Sahlins

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We were sitting in his office, Ted Foss and I, on the third floor of Judd Hall at the University of Chicago. Foss is the associate director of the Center for East Asian Studies, a classic area studies program that gathers under its roof specialists in various disciplines who work on China, Korea and Japan. Above us, on the fourth floor, were the offices and seminar room of the university's Confucius Institute, which opened its doors in 2010. A Confucius Institute is an academic unit that provides accredited instruction in Chinese language and culture and sponsors a variety of extracurricular activities, including art exhibitions, lectures, conferences, film screenings and celebrations of Chinese festivals; at Chicago and a number of other schools, it also funds the research projects of local faculty members on Chinese subjects. I asked Foss if Chicago's CI had ever organized lectures or conferences on issues controversial in China, such as Tibetan independence or the political status of Taiwan. Gesturing to a far wall, he said, "I can put up a picture of the Dalai Lama in this office. But on the fourth floor, we wouldn't do that."

The reason is that the Confucius Institutes at the University of Chicago and elsewhere are subsidized and supervised by the government of the People's Republic of China. The CI program was launched by the PRC in 2004, and there are now some 400 institutes worldwide as well as an outreach program consisting of nearly 600 "Confucius classrooms" in secondary and elementary schools. In some respects, such a government-funded educational and cultural initiative is nothing new. For more than sixty years, Germany has relied on the Goethe-Institut to foster the teaching of German around the globe. But whereas the Goethe-Institut, like the British Council and the Alliance Française, is a stand-alone institution situated outside university precincts, a Confucius Institute exists as a virtually autonomous unit within the regular curriculum of the host school—for example, providing accredited courses in Chinese language in the Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations at the University of Chicago.

There's another big difference: CIs are managed by a foreign government, and accordingly are responsive to its politics. The constitution and bylaws of CIs, together with the agreements established with the host universities, place their academic activities under the supervision of the Beijing headquarters of the Chinese Language Council International, commonly known as Hanban. Although official documents describe Hanban as "affiliated with the Ministry of Education," it is governed by a council of high state and party officials from various political departments and chaired by a member of the Politburo, Vice Premier Liu Yandong. The governing council over which Liu presides currently consists of members from twelve state ministries and commissions, including Foreign Affairs, Education, Finance and Culture, the State Council Information Office, the National Development and Reform Commission, and the State Press and Publications Administration. Simply put, Hanban is an instrument of the party state operating as an international pedagogical organization.

In larger universities hosting CIs, Hanban assumes responsibility for a portion of the total Chinese curriculum. In the more numerous smaller hosts, most or all of the instruction in Chinese language and culture is under its control. Hanban has the right to supply the teachers, textbooks and curriculums of the courses in its charge; it also names the Chinese co-directors of the local Confucius Institutes. Research projects on China undertaken by scholars with Hanban funds are approved by Beijing. The teachers appointed by Hanban, together with the academic and extracurricular programs of the CIs, are periodically evaluated and approved by Beijing, and host universities are required to accept Beijing's supervision and assessments of CI activities. Hanban reserves the right to take punitive legal action in regard to any activity conducted under the name of the Confucius Institutes without its permission or authorization. Hanban has signed agreements that grant exceptions to these dictates, but usually only when it has wanted to enlist a prestigious university, such as Stanford or Chicago, in the worldwide CI project.

For all the attention that the Confucius Institutes have attracted in the United States and elsewhere, there has been virtually no serious journalistic or ethnographic investigation into their particulars, such as how the Chinese teachers are trained or how the content of courses and textbooks are chosen. One difficulty has been that the CIs are something of a moving target. Not only are Chinese officials willing to be flexible in their negotiations with elite institutions, but the general Hanban strategy has also been changing in recent years. Despite its global reach, the CI program is apparently not achieving the political objectives of burnishing the image and increasing the influence of the People's Republic. Unlike Mao's *Little Red Book* in the era of Third World liberation, the current Chinese regime is a hard sell. Having the appearance of an attractive political system is a necessary condition of "soft power" success,

as Joseph Nye, who coined the phrase, has written. The revamped Confucius Institute initiative is to engage less in language and culture and more in the core teaching and research of the host university. Still, the working principles of the CI program remain those of its constitution and bylaws, together with the model agreements negotiated with participating universities. Routinely and assiduously, Hanban wants the Confucius Institutes to hold events and offer instruction under the aegis of host universities that put the PRC in a good light—thus confirming the oft-quoted remark of Politburo member Li Changchun that the Confucius Institutes are “an important part of China’s overseas propaganda set-up.”

A 2011 article in *The People’s Daily*, the organ of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, declared as much, boasting of the spread of the Confucius Institutes (331 at the time) alongside other indices of China’s ascent to world-political prominence, such as its annual growth rate of 8 percent, its technological and military accomplishments, and its newfound status as the second-largest economy in the world. “Why is China receiving so much attention now? It is because of its ever-increasing power.... Today we have a different relationship with the world and the West: we are no longer left to their tender mercies. Instead we have slowly risen and are becoming their equal.”

One impediment to understanding the operations of the Confucius Institutes is that the model agreement establishing them, ratified by one or two representatives of the host university, is secret. The agreement includes a nondisclosure clause, which reads as follows (as translated from the Chinese part of the bilingual text): “The two parties to the agreement will regard this agreement as a secret document, and without written approval from the other party, no party shall ever publicize, reveal, or make public, or allow other persons to publicize, reveal, or make public materials or information obtained or learned concerning the other party, except if publicizing, revealing, or making it public is necessary for one party to the agreement to carry out its duties under the agreement.”

Subject to nondisclosure are the articles of the model agreement, most notably Article 5, which requires that Confucius Institute activities conform to the customs, laws and regulations of China as well as those of the host institution’s country. How would that be possible in, say, the United States? Hanban operates under Chinese laws that criminalize forms of political speech and systems of belief that are protected in the United States by the First Amendment, making it likely that by adhering to Article 5, American universities would be complicit in discriminatory hiring or violations of freedom of speech. And because the constitution of the Confucius Institutes stipulates that it and its bylaws are “applicable to all Confucius Institutes,” the officers of host universities must accept the Chinese control of academic work in their institutions and agree to keep this arrangement secret. Is this even legal?

Although there appears to be no statement of the specific “soft power” aims of the Confucius Institute program in its governing texts, there is a seemingly innocuous clause that amounts to a Trojan horse. In laying down a certain mandatory rule of language instruction, it effectively stipulates that students will acquire their knowledge of China only in ways acceptable to the Chinese state. The tenth and last of the “General Principles” in the constitution and bylaws (Chapter 1) states: “The Confucius Institutes conduct Chinese language instructions in Mandarin using Standard Chinese Characters.” What is here misleadingly called “Standard Chinese Characters” is the simplified script officially promulgated by the PRC as a more easily learned alternative to the traditional characters in which everything was

written in China for thousands of years, and in which much that is not to the liking of the regime continues to be written in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Malaysia and the many other Chinese communities beyond Beijing's direct control.

In a richly detailed exposé of the politics of the mandatory language rule, Michael Churchman has observed that instruction exclusively in Standard Chinese Characters would create a global distribution of scholars only semi-literate in Chinese. Native Chinese speakers with knowledge of the relevant context and some prior exposure to the traditional script may be more or less capable of deciphering it, but not foreign students who learn the language at college age. Unable to read the classics except in versions translated and interpreted in the PRC, cut off from the dissident and popular literature of other Chinese communities, students in CI courses cannot even access “the large and growing corpus of material on Communist Party history, infighting, and factionalism written by mainlanders but published exclusively in Hong Kong and Taiwan,” Churchman argues. Rather, they are subject to the same policies of language standardization (Mandarin) and literacy (simplified characters) by which the regime seeks to control what can and cannot be discussed in China.

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Many reputable and informed scholars of China have observed that the Confucius Institutes are marked by the same “no-go zones” that Beijing enforces on China's public sphere. In an interview reported in *The New York Times*, June Teufel Dreyer, who teaches Chinese government and foreign policy at Miami University, said: “You're told not to discuss the Dalai Lama—or to invite the Dalai Lama to campus. Tibet, Taiwan, China's military buildup, factional fights inside the Chinese leadership—these are all off limits.” The Confucius Institutes at North Carolina State University and the University of Sydney actively attempted to prevent the Dalai Lama from speaking. At Sydney, he had to speak off-campus, and the CI sponsored a lecture by a Chinese academic who had previously claimed that Tibet was always part of China, notwithstanding that it was mired in feudal darkness and serfdom until the Chinese democratic reforms of 1959. The Confucius Institute at Waterloo University mobilized its students to defend the Chinese repression of a Tibetan uprising, and McMaster University and Tel Aviv University ran into difficulties with the legal authorities because of the anti-Falun Gong activities of their Confucius Institutes. Other taboo subjects include the Tiananmen massacre, blacklisted authors, human rights, the jailing of dissidents, the democracy movement, currency manipulation, environmental pollution and the Uighur autonomy movement in Xinjiang. Quite recently, Chinese government leaders explicitly banned the discussion of seven subjects in Chinese university classrooms, including universal values, freedom of the press and the historical mistakes of the Chinese Communist Party; this was part of a directive to local officials to “understand the dangers posed by views and theories advocated by the West.” It stands to reason that these subjects will also not be matters of free inquiry in CIs.

More than one CI director has stated that his institute is free to discuss anything it wants to; the only problem seems to be with the things they don't want to discuss. “We don't know anything about the contract that [Hanban officials] force their teachers to sign,” said Glenn Cartwright, principal of Waterloo's Renison University College, which houses the institute. “I'm sure they have some conditions, but whether we can dictate what those conditions can be is another story.” Human rights are not discussed in the Confucius Institute of the British Columbia Institute of Technology because that isn't part of its mandate. According to director Jim Reichert, “our function is really focused on cultural

awareness, business development, those sorts of pragmatic things.” Even at liberal arts universities like Erlangen-Nürnberg in Germany, the deputy director of the CI told a newspaper in 2012, Confucius Institutes may not be the correct venues for debates on Tibet and other sensitive issues; such topics were better left to Sinology departments.

Elite universities resort to the same cop-out when justifying CI restraints on the free exchange of ideas. Commenting on the possibility of Chicago’s CI discussing Tibetan independence, the Tiananmen Square massacre or Falun Gong, Ted Foss told me: “I think there’s a certain amount of self-censorship. And thank goodness we have money for the Center for East Asian Studies; we can go there for these kinds of projects. Our mandate for the Confucius Institute here is to look at business and economy in modern China.” That mandate, as he and others have allowed, has provoked some “pushback” from Hanban about research subjects that the Chicago CI should support. Hanban officials ask if “we are really trying to fund [projects on] tenth-century art, because the agreement was [that] we would concentrate on modern China.” Regarding “money for grants,” Foss said in another context, “there hasn’t been any direct interference, but as I say, there’s a certain amount of self-censorship.... What I’m happy about is that we’re not having a lot of programming forced down our throats; because we get these calls for dance groups or whatever coming through town, and we have been able to say no.... But some of the other CIs, basically they’re told, ‘Do this programming.’”

What Foss did think had been “dumped on” Chicago’s CI was its deputy director, who hails from Chicago’s partner institution, Renmin University in Beijing. An expert on the European Union, she had been assigned no teaching or other duties at Chicago. “She’s basically the eyes of Hanban,” Foss says. It puts him in mind of “any department, any academic department in China. You’ve got the chair of the department, and you’ve got the party head; and it drives my academic friends mad, but still you’ve got the guy or girl who is to report” to Beijing. At every level—from the Politburo authority over the Hanban headquarters to the deputy director from Renmin reporting on the Chicago CI, with its echo of the party official monitoring a Chinese university department—there is a repetition of the dualism of the party state, in which the administrative entity is subject to surveillance and control by the party. It should be incumbent on the higher administrators at Chicago and other host institutions to make themselves familiar with such unorthodox arrangements—or so you would think. You would be surprised.

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Because Confucius Institutes depend on a policy of what is *not said*, which originates in the inner circles of the Chinese government and is largely implemented through self-censorship, direct evidence of restraints on academic discourse is not easy to come by. What little that is publicly known must be a small fraction of what is actually practiced. There exists, however, a body of evidence that is all the more revelatory because it consists of the subterfuges practiced by Hanban to conceal policies that are objectionable by the common standards of scholarly knowledge and academic freedom in American universities and most others worldwide. What Beijing learned, for example, was to drop from early agreements the clause requiring American institutions to accept the PRC’s “one China policy,” according to which Taiwan is part of the People’s Republic. However, the description of Taiwan as “China’s largest island” on Hanban’s website remains.

Until quite recently, the official English website of Hanban, in the section listing the requirements for volunteer overseas Chinese teachers, specified that applicants should have “no record of participation in Falun Gong and other illegal organizations and no criminal record.” After a dustup with a Canadian university about a Chinese teacher who did belong to the spiritual movement, the site now states: “Applicants shall declare to abide by Chinese laws and not to endanger the state security of China, harm public interests or disrupt public order”—which, as a set of qualifications for teaching in a North American university, seems bad enough. In the matter of teachers’ qualifications, Professor Liu Xiaobo, for instance, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010, could not be an instructor at a Confucius Institute because he has a criminal record: he is serving an eleven-year sentence in China at present for advocating human rights and democratic reforms.

According to *The Epoch Times*, a video about the Korean War titled “The War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea” was recently withdrawn from the Hanban website. Among other historical claims, the video declares that the Chinese were provoked into entering the war because the United States had bombed Chinese villages near the Korean border, and had manipulated the UN Security Council into passing a resolution that enabled American troops to expand aggression against Korea. It seems that the page with the video feed was deleted on June 11, 2012, the day after Christopher Hughes of the London School of Economics sent the link to faculty colleagues who were just then debating the teaching materials of the Confucius Institute, which was established there in 2007.

Because of these questionable practices of academic discourse, the Confucius Institute’s classroom program is not wanted in the public primary and secondary schools of New South Wales, Australia. In July 2011, *The Sydney Morning Herald* reported that a petition with more than 4,000 signatures had been tabled in the New South Wales Parliament calling for the state government to remove the Confucius Institute classrooms from a number of public schools. “The government,” the story said, “has confirmed that controversial topics, including the Tiananmen Square massacre and China’s human rights record, will not be discussed in the program.... The petition states that foreign governments should not determine what is taught in NSW schools and that the curriculum should be free of propaganda.” Then, in October 2011, a Greens MP, Jamie Parker, introduced another such petition with some 10,000 signatures. Parker’s speech in support of the petition rehearsed many essentials of a critique that could be voiced wherever Confucius Institutes have been established:

The NSW government has admitted that topics sensitive to the Chinese government, including Taiwan, Tibet, Falun Gong and human rights violations, would not be included in these classes.... The Greens welcome the teaching of Chinese language and culture, however we must be cautious of foreign government influence within our state schools. These classes are very different to other international programs such as Alliance Française.

Two incidents involving Confucius Institutes at Canadian universities, McMaster and Waterloo, echo these concerns while also indicating some of the larger intellectual and legal implications of the CI program. This year, McMaster terminated its agreement with the program following a complaint of discriminatory hiring filed with the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario by a CI instructor against the university. The complaint was lodged by Sonia Zhao, a teacher from China who alleged that McMaster was “giving legitimation to discrimination” because the CI contract that enabled her to work at the university required her to conceal her belief in Falun Gong. The Toronto *Globe and Mail* obtained a

copy of Zhao's contract, which was signed in China and included the provision that teachers "are not allowed to join illegal organizations such as Falun Gong." In 2012, a year after coming to Canada, Zhao recounted not only that she had hidden her adherence to Falun Gong from the Chinese authorities, but also how the Chinese authorities hide the Falun Gong from CI classrooms. Interviewed in connection with her case, she said, "If my students asked me about Tibet or about other sensitive topics, I should have the right to...express my opinion.... During my training in Beijing they do tell us: 'Don't talk about this. If the student insists, you just try to change the topic or say something the Chinese Communist Party would prefer.'"

Zhao's case against McMaster went to mediation. After McMaster broke its agreement with CI, the assistant vice president of public and governmental relations explained, "We have a very clear direction on building an inclusive community, respect for diversity, respect for individual views, and ability to speak about those." That's a noble position, but it was undermined by the university's failure to perform its due diligence: the Falun Gong proscription had been on the Hanban website for some time before McMaster signed on with CI. And note the implication of the affair: a Canadian university had to take legal responsibility for promulgating the political agenda of the People's Republic of China.

A different controversy erupted at the University of Waterloo, where, as noted earlier, the head of the college that houses the local CI professed no knowledge of the contracts that Chinese teachers sign and no ability to control their terms. Perhaps that explains the militant action of the Chinese director of the CI in defending the PRC's actions in Tibet and mobilizing her students to do likewise. The director, Yan Li, was previously a reporter with Xinhua, the official news agency of the Chinese Communist Party. In 2008, when the PRC put down a Tibetan uprising, she rallied students of the Waterloo Confucius Institute to "work together to fight with Canadian media," which was reporting the regime's heavy-handed action. Yan Li took class time to recount her version of Tibetan history and the current situation, using a map that showed Tibet clearly inside China. Thereupon the students launched a campaign against the Canadian media, protesting against newspapers, TV stations and online coverage they claimed was biased in favor of the Tibetans. The campaign succeeded to the extent that one TV station publicly apologized for its presentation of the conflict.

For the University of Manitoba, the creation of political impediments by the Chinese government to the free discussion in Canada of topics controversial in China is the reason it has not permitted a Confucius Institute on campus. Said Terry Russell, a professor of Asian studies at Manitoba, "They have no particular interest in what we would consider critical inquiry or academic freedom.... We didn't see how you could reconcile inviting the Chinese government, which the Confucius Institute is basically an agent of, to come on campus and present programs that wouldn't ever actually talk about human rights in China except according to the official Beijing line."

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Confucius Institutes appear to have met more serious resistance in Canada and elsewhere than in the United States, where there are more CIs in colleges and universities—over eighty—than anywhere else. (Second to the United States are Korea and Russia, with at least seventeen each; Canada has eleven.) One reason is that CIs can operate

differently in the United States when it is to their strategic advantage to do so. Everything suggests that as a means of increasing China's own soft power in the camp of its greatest competitor for world supremacy, Beijing is willing to be flexible and accommodating in negotiations with certain American universities. Other institutions may reject Confucius Institutes out of fear of Chinese influence, but, says the curriculum coordinator of the CI at the University of Iowa, "as far as my experience with it, it would be a fear that's not well grounded."

The Iowa administrators have no complaints about their Confucius Institute; in particular, they have none about Chinese hiring practices—because these practices don't exist there. Officials at Iowa, having heard about the Falun Gong fiasco at McMaster, demanded contractual measures to avoid a similar occurrence and Hanban acquiesced, allowing Iowa to hire all employees internally with no interference. A McMaster administrator who was involved in the Zhao case said that its "contract with Hanban did not have the same stipulations." After the Zhao case broke, McMaster attempted to renegotiate its agreement with Hanban with a view toward modifying the hiring rule; unlike Iowa, however, it was unable to persuade Beijing. But then, as a large American public university, Iowa is more favorably positioned to win concessions from Hanban. While questions may remain about how the Chinese teachers there are selected, how courses are taught and in what Chinese script, it is clear that Hanban does learn from its mistakes.

Or perhaps its "loose rein policy" in the United States is an adaptation of the empire's form of indirect rule over the non-Chinese peoples of its borderlands that began in the Tang Dynasty, if not earlier. In those bad old imperial days, it was known as "using barbarians to rule barbarians." Similarly, the emphasis by Chinese authorities on Confucius Institutes as a component of their politics of cultural conquest has more than one resonance with the traditional imperial strategy of transforming non-Chinese others by bringing them into contact with the dazzling splendor and pacifying virtue of the Celestial Emperor. A beautiful and peaceful China, harmonious and generous: these are major themes of Confucius Institutes.

Another reason Hanban is willing to accommodate some American universities is that their interests are different in scale and character. As an instrument of the Chinese government, Hanban wants to spread the influence of the Chinese state worldwide, particularly in strategically consequential regions, and above all in the United States. The apparent loss Hanban suffers by making a concession may be a long-term gain for a global program. By contrast, American universities are concerned only with their parochial welfare as academic institutions. They are thus inclined to ignore or dismiss the unsavory political aspects of Confucius Institutes—which is to say, the larger implications of their own participation—so long as they get a good deal. Then again, given these private interests, American universities have other good reasons for refraining from objecting to the CI program. Directly or indirectly, but ever-increasingly, American institutions of higher learning are heavily dependent on Chinese money.

As of the academic year 2012–13, there were 2,062 students from China at the University of Iowa. In the university's business school, 21 percent of the students are Chinese, an increase from 8 percent in 2009. Chinese students account for more than half of the international student population campus-wide, and more than 80 percent of the approximately 500 foreign students in the business school. Nor is Iowa unique in these respects. The number of students from the PRC attending American universities has grown dramatically in the past few years. In the academic



year 2011–12, there were 194,029 such students, most of whom pay full tuition, accounting for over 25 percent of all foreign students—nearly twice as many as the country with the next-highest number, India. The number of students from mainland China grew from 98,235 in 2008–09 to 127,628 in 2009–10 and 157,558 in 2010–11. Nor are PRC students the only source of Chinese largesse for US educational institutions. There are the CIs themselves, which endow most affiliated universities with an initial fee of \$100,000 or \$150,000 and annual payments along the same lines for the duration of the contract, as well as free instructors, textbooks and course materials, a number of scholarships for study in China, and upscale, wine-and-dine junkets to China for American administrators. These are not negligible perquisites, especially for smaller colleges, and they are all the more desirable because of the 47 percent decline in US government funding for language training and area studies programs in recent years.

Moreover, for publicly financed state universities, there may be another indirect but important dependence on China, insofar as their states have significant business relations with the People's Republic that it would not be wise to endanger with complaints about academic freedom or invitations to the Dalai Lama. In 2009, when North Carolina State University—at which a CI had been established two years earlier—peremptorily canceled a scheduled visit of the Dalai Lama because, the president said, there had not been sufficient time to prepare for so august a guest, the provost, Warwick Arden, allowed that there were other considerations. "I don't want to say we didn't think about whether there were implications," he said. "Of course you do. China is a major trading partner for North Carolina." The director of the North Carolina State Confucius Institute told the provost that a visit by the Dalai Lama could disrupt "some strong relationships we were developing with China." A Confucius Institute, Arden commented, presents an "opportunity for subtle pressure and conflict."

For years, only smaller American colleges and universities—as well as the Chicago Public School system—struck deals with Confucius Institutes. But lately, major research universities like Michigan, UCLA, Columbia, Stanford and Chicago have joined the CI program. (An exception is the University of Pennsylvania, which has rebuffed efforts by Hanban to establish a Confucius Institute there.) As one would expect, these schools got sweeter deals than the less prestigious early adopters. Still, by paying \$1 million over five years to Columbia and an initial \$200,000 to the University of Chicago, the Chinese got a bargain in advertising, if nothing else. It is difficult to understand why Chicago and Columbia settled for such modest sums, except possibly as loss leaders on the important overseas academic centers they are establishing in Beijing.

Stanford upstaged both universities by negotiating a payment of \$4 million from Hanban: \$1 million for conferences, \$1 million for graduate fellowships, and \$2 million for an endowed professorship. One Stanford professor pointed out that it was "convenient for everyone concerned" that the designated professorship be assigned to the field of classical Chinese poetry, "something that isn't controversial in any contemporary political way." The Stanford dean who negotiated the deal, Richard Saller, also warded off a Chinese suggestion that the institute refrain from discussing Tibet. Saller, who is a highly regarded scholar of classical Rome, thereupon became the head of Stanford's Confucius Institute, despite the stipulation in the Hanban guidelines that CI directors should "have in-depth comprehension of Chinese current national issues." Yet in his own way, Saller knew enough about Chinese current national issues to grasp that Hanban was willing to treat Stanford generously and circumspectly because it was keen to use the participation of a prestigious university for its own larger purposes; its relationship with Stanford was too

precious to jeopardize. Hanban officials “are very interested in getting a foothold at Stanford,” Saller said. He suggested it was because the Chinese would like to create a Stanford University and Silicon Valley of their own.

Even if Saller is correct, the affiliation of Stanford and its equals with Confucius Institutes has other advantages for the Chinese government: namely, it encourages other schools to sign up. According to *The GW Hatchet*, the student newspaper of George Washington University, after fecklessly comparing Confucius Institutes to the British Council, which has no university presence, the dean who negotiated the installation of a CI at George Washington mentioned solidarity with other universities. As she told the *Hatchet*, “I think we saw other top universities taking on Confucius Institutes, and that increased our comfort level.” She cited Chicago as an example.

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The establishment of a Confucius Institute at the University of Chicago was marked, as might be expected, by “free enterprise” in both its inception and academic content. Henry Paulson recently contributed several million dollars for an institute in his name, housed in its own building on a prime piece of real estate near the main campus. Currently under renovation adjacent to the campus is a large church complex destined to become the new home of the famous Chicago Economics Department and the Becker Friedman Institute, thus posing to the architects the difficult challenge of changing the functional arrangement of the building while preserving its religious character. The Confucius Institute, aside from providing language teachers from China, has likewise been funding considerable research on aspects of Chinese economic development—in fact, a lot more economics than language teaching. As with other institutes at Chicago, the origin of its CI is identified with one man, the political scientist Dali Yang, who at the time he developed the proposal for the Confucius Institute was director of the Center for East Asian Studies. Over the course of about a year, Yang was able to usher the proposal through negotiations with Chinese officials, Chicago administrators and faculty colleagues.

Yang didn’t just build it by himself; his enterprise succeeded because it engaged larger institutional conditions that gave it persuasive force and effective backing. On the one hand, there was the ready complicity of the university administration, which like many others is given to an unseemly avidity for gelt, glitz and glory. The University of Chicago takes a lot of pride in its traditions. (By Thorstein Veblen’s account in *The Higher Learning in America* [1918], a certain competitive interest in institutional grandeur and public esteem on the part of the captains of erudition was already in place at the beginning of the twentieth century.) On the other hand, Yang knew how to adapt to Hanban’s new emphasis on “core research,” and in particular the apparent fascination on the Chinese side with the Chicago School of economics. According to Ted Foss, the Center for East Asian Studies is frequently besieged by calls from the Chinese Consulate asking to arrange a photo op with Gary Becker for a delegation of visiting dignitaries.

At Chicago, Hanban got what it wished for: not only a heavy preponderance of research proposals concerned with Chinese economic development, but an annual University of Chicago–Renmin Symposium on Family and Labor Economics, now in its fourth year. The partner institution of CIs in more than a dozen schools besides Chicago, Renmin has, more than any other Chinese university, a Janus-like reputation. In Chicago, it is vaunted as the leading Chinese university in the social sciences and humanities, whereas in China it is popularly known as the party’s

university, as it was founded by the Communist Party and is a major forcing house for government cadres. The CI at Chicago presents the risible spectacle of Chinese Communists using Confucius' name to channel Gary Becker's über-capitalist ideology of rational choice.

The still-greater contradiction is that the Confucius Institute engaged the university's cherished traditions of *laissez-faire*, both as a matter of academic freedom and as an economic philosophy, in a global project designed to increase the political influence of the People's Republic of China. This antithetical combination of free enterprise and government constraint was already present in April 2008, when Dali Yang and Ted Foss consulted a Chinese education consul in Chicago on the general requirements for a Confucius Institute. By the testimonies of these two gentlemen—including a historical sketch of the Chicago CI written by Yang—the process of consultation that followed involved an early “heads-up” to the deans of humanities and the social sciences. Later, Yang presented the proposal for a Chicago CI to the China scholars of the Center for East Asian Studies, who after some discussion unanimously approved its establishment. This was the only group that ever had a vote (the Korea and Japan scholars were left out of the loop), and they were among the only university faculty members who knew anything about the institute before it was inaugurated.

Later, in 2010, after news of the deal became public, 174 Chicago faculty members signed a petition protesting the administration's ill-advised acceptance of a Confucius Institute without the consent of a governing body that properly represented them. According to Dali Yang's history, the executive committee of the Center for East Asian Studies had discussed the CI in the year leading up to its founding, but at least one member of this small committee—Bruce Cumings, the eminent historian of Korea—did not learn of the CI's existence until a good six months after the deal had been signed and sealed with Beijing. (The executive committee of the center meets very infrequently, according to Foss, even less than once a year.) Otherwise, the only other consultation was a meeting late in the day with a “small working group of faculty, deans, and administrators.” In September 2009, the CI proposal was submitted to Hanban. On September 29, 2009, the agreement to establish a Confucius Institute was signed by a vice president of the university and the executive director of the Hanban headquarters. On June 1, 2010, the institute was formally opened, with the president of the University of Chicago and Hanban dignitaries in attendance at the festivities.

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Among the concessions that Hanban made to Chicago was striking the secrecy clause from the CI agreement. Apparently none was needed, because the Confucius Institute is still a secret in important respects to the chair of the faculty board that monitors its operation. Headed by the humanities dean, Martha Roth, the board consists of two other Chicago professors and two members appointed by Renmin University. Roth indicated in an interview that she was not aware of the provisions of the constitution and bylaws of the Confucius Institutes: “I don't remember having looked at it.” Neither did she recall the provisions of the agreement that the university signed with Hanban. She thought, wrongly, that Hanban was “under the direction and auspices of the Ministry of Education”—an impression that Hanban officially conveys in English-language documents by its “affiliation” with that ministry, instead of the council of government officials to which it in fact reports. When asked about the required submission of research proposals to Beijing for approval and funding, Roth found the procedure unobjectionable, likening it to the practice of

submitting proposals to the US Department of Education. Nor was she concerned about the problems that had arisen with Confucius Institutes in other universities, being satisfied that Chicago was following its own principles of academic freedom. When asked to comment on the provisions governing Confucius Institutes in the Hanban constitution and the agreement, Roth responded that such questions are “better addressed to the legal office” of the university.

Roth was certain, however, that Beijing does not supply Chinese-language teachers to Chicago and pay their salaries and airfare, as specified in these official documents. She said Hanban was thought to do so a couple of years ago, but “that never happened.” “This was unfortunate,” she said, “because we need more Chinese-language instruction.” Perhaps this patent mistake was made because the teachers supplied by Hanban offer courses in the regular curriculum of the undergraduate college, rather than in a teaching program of the Confucius Institute itself. Hanban has been providing two or more visiting language teachers to the University of Chicago since 2006, even before the formal agreement; since the agreement was signed, the supply has continued under its terms. Chicago’s own proposal for a Confucius Institute, as noted previously, had a significant teaching component. However, misconceptions linger about how these teachers are selected.

Referring to what would be another concession to Chicago, both Dali Yang and Ted Foss say the university substantially controls the hiring of language teachers from China. In Yang’s words, “The university is fully engaged in the hiring process for Chinese teachers, not just a right of refusal.” Says Foss, “We have control over who’s sent.” However, the director of the Chinese-language program at the university, who engages the Hanban teachers, has a different view of the process. She says that, based on her knowledge, all Chinese-language teachers can apply for the job, but that they must hold advanced degrees in Chinese language and have taught foreign students at their own university. “Then they need to take some tests, such as English and psychological tests. If they are chosen by Hanban, they need to attend a training session. They say they learned things such as traditional folk arts.” When asked what role Chicago plays in choosing the teachers, the director, then in Beijing, responded: “We don’t choose. They recommend, and we accept.” Six weeks later, when contacted again in Chicago, she said the university could refuse Hanban’s recommendation on reviewing the candidate’s CV, and Hanban would then recommend another instructor, but that this doesn’t happen. In any case, because Hanban is operating under Chinese laws—such as those defining Falun Gong as a criminal organization—Chicago is at risk, however unwittingly, of practicing the kind of discriminatory hiring that brought McMaster University before a human rights tribunal. The university may be all the more vulnerable because it pays the Hanban-selected teachers a supplement to their Chinese wages.

This oversight seems still more serious because the obliviousness regarding the institute extends even higher in the administration than those immediately charged with overseeing it. On June 4, 2010, three days after the Confucius Institute of the University of Chicago was ceremoniously opened, the president and provost had a meeting with representatives of a self-constituted faculty organization called CORES, during which the CI came under discussion. CORES had organized the petition signed by 174 faculty members protesting what they called the “corporatization” of the university, of which the Confucius Institute and the Milton Friedman Institute were prime examples. The minutes of this meeting were circulated to all participants, with no corrections offered to any of the contents. The minutes indicate that two prominent East Asia scholars, Bruce Cumings and Norma Field, objected to the political character of

the Confucius Institute, the role it would play in determining what is taught about China at the university, and how “they and other faculty members who work on East Asia had effectively been excluded from discussions and the decision-making process.” They were not alone: the minutes also record that University President Robert Zimmer and Provost Thomas Rosenbaum “acknowledged their lack of information on this matter and expressed bewilderment and regret at how this happened.”

What, then, would prevent Zimmer from cutting Chicago’s ties to its Confucius Institute, or Columbia and the LSE from doing the same? Prominent CI hosts should take the lead in reversing course, stressing that the issues involved are larger than their own particular interests: by hosting a Confucius Institute, they have become engaged in the political and propaganda efforts of a foreign government in a way that contradicts the values of free inquiry and human welfare to which they are otherwise committed. More than parochial institutions, universities too, each and all of them, are global projects: the universal ideal of free inquiry for the good of all humanity on which they are founded should make them more than a match for Confucius Institutes. It is long past time for Chicago to live up to its motto, *Crescat scientia; vita excolatur*. Let knowledge increase, that human life shall flourish.

Foreign-language teachers in China often become accidental confidants, even therapists. China U |. Matthew DeButts. What it's Like to Be a Chinese High Schooler in America. Fitting in is hard for everyone, but particularly for students born thousands of miles away. China U |. Why a growing number of Chinese students at U.S. universities are coming home with Christian beliefs. China U |. Han Zhang. Chinese Students Are Flooding U.S. Christian High Schools. And new data shows their atheist parents don't seem to mind. Caixin Global provides the latest China news headlines on politics, economy, business and finance with insight and in-depth analysis. Snowball Derivatives Offer a Risky Bet on Stock Market Stability. Market players need to clearly see the potential downside of the products, which lack an investor-friendly design, insiders say. China's Derivatives Market to Get Boost With First Options Product Open to Overseas Investors. In Depth: China Speeds Up Expansion of Derivatives Market. The China national under-20 football team, also known as the China Youth Team (中国青少年足球代表队), represents the People's Republic of China in international football competitions in the FIFA U-20 World Cup and the AFC Youth Championship, as well as any other under-20 international football tournaments. It is governed by the Chinese Football Association (CFA). In 2017, the under-20 team began playing in the Regionalliga Südwest, a fourth-division German league, as part of an agreement between the two countries. The See more of CHINA U on Facebook. Log In. or. Create New Account. See more of CHINA U on Facebook. Log In. Forgot account? CHINA U updated their info in the about section. Contact Us. CHINA U. December 1, 2020. CHINA U updated their address. Get Directions. See All.