

融合之路
Road to Reconciliation
Versöhnungswege
Route de la réconciliation
October 18th 2010



November 27th, 2009

Executive Summary

Respect and trust are fundamental values towards developing and strengthening harmonious and honourable relationships between nations and its people. They play a key role in creating an environment of excellence in all areas of inter-cultural exchanges, be it economical, political, academic, scientific or social.

In the 19th century various countries took advantage of China through the Opium Wars and the resulting concessions which were forced onto the Chinese. The ensuing humiliation was a contributing factor that cultivated the breeding ground for the Taiping Revolution - the bloodiest of Chinese history with an estimated 20 to 50 Million deaths - and culminated into the Boxer War. These events have not only hampered the quality of relationship between the nations involved and China but have up to this day left deep negative impressions in the minds of the People of China, who, through their culture, have a much stronger awareness of the past than most Westerners do. A survey of Chinese students at Peking University in 2006 reveals that 91% still feel hurt over the harm that foreign nations caused their country. 56% of all students attest that to this day they experience various degrees of animosity towards the outside world for this episode in international relations. 54% note that it affects their choice of foreign products.

Through the “Road to Reconciliation” (RtR) up to fifty political, aristocratic, academic, business, military and spiritual leaders from the West propose to travel to China to address historic mistakes and be examples towards building more harmonious and peaceful relationships between our nations, coining a key political philosophy of Chinese President Hu Jintao. They will, amongst other things, present their apologies to the People of China via chosen counterparts (high level Government officials, academics and businessmen) for the harm Westerners caused and demonstrate our friendship through various gestures and projects. Pending a letter of introduction from a current or former executive level politician from the West, the Office of President Hu Jintao has already extended its informal support to our initiative and is ready to facilitate the involvement of the necessary governmental departments and agencies.

Western countries involved include amongst others the United Kingdom, France, the USA, Italy and Germany. Russia and Japan also played a key role in these events but for feasibility's sake, the Road to Reconciliation is focusing its efforts solely on European and North American countries.

The proposed trip begins on October 18th 2010 and coincides with the 150th anniversary of the destruction of the Old Summer Palace (Yuan Ming Yuan) on October 18th 1860 in Beijing. As part of the second Opium War, this once majestic facility built through the succession of several Dynasties was plundered by French and British forces and destroyed by the latter a few days later. It epitomizes in the eyes of the Chinese the aggression and humiliation brought unto them by the foreign nations. Members of the delegation can elect their length of participation based on four segments covering Beijing, Tianjin and ending in Shanghai on October 22nd, three major cities of historical significance during the Opium Wars and/or the Boxer War.

As genuine and lasting reconciliation is a joint effort of all parties involved, we propose that this initiative result in the following tangibles:

- That a commemorative monument be unveiled at the site of the Old Summer Palace on October 18th 2010, the 150th anniversary of its destruction. The accompanying plaque would summarize our initiative and become a historic symbol for generations to come.
- That a private collector from the West or a Western State returns an artefact plundered from the Old Summer Palace to the Chinese President.
- That a China Institute for Peace (CIP) – a name subject to mutual approval - be established through a collaborative effort in Beijing.
- That the Western delegation, after having presented its apologies, receives an appropriate response from the Chinese. During preliminary exchanges, the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries suggested that since Westerners would apologize for the harm their countrymen had done in China, an appropriate response from the Chinese could be to expand on the benefits that some Westerners contributed to China (schools, hospitals, protecting the Chinese during the Nanjing massacre, etc.).
- That the visit and the apologies presented be widely promoted by local and national Chinese media (television and print). Press releases should also be done leading up to the actual trip in order to build up momentum.
- That academic forums be held in Beijing and Shanghai.

We wish to travel to China in the same spirit that Dr. Norman Bethune (1880-1934), Father Robert Jacquinot (1878-1946), John Rabe (1882-1950) and Minnie Vautrin (1886-1941) demonstrated towards the Chinese. We undertake to mirror their and the attitude of many Westerners in history who were not emissaries of foreign Governments or companies seeking financial gain or to extort China in any fashion. In a spirit of servitude, love and friendship, they willingly sacrificed their own time and money to serve the Chinese. Whereas various nations dishonoured the People of China in the course of the Opium Wars and of the Boxer War, we wish through our initiative to bring honour to its People.

1. INTERNATIONAL DELEGATION

1. International Delegation

The Delegation will comprise up to fifty political, aristocratic, academic, business, military and spiritual leaders who are established personalities in their respective countries and who out of their own initiative, wish to convey their apologies to the People of China. England, France and the USA will each contribute about 1/4 of the delegates. The remaining 1/4 of the Delegation will come from Germany, Austria, Italy and the Netherlands.

The status of the Delegation is available in a separate document from the International Office. It depicts who has confirmed his participation, who has been approached and who is in the pool of potential candidates.

Election of delegates

Such delegates are being sought who wish to bring a message of reconciliation and friendship to the People of China. During this trip, we expressly wish to refrain from making statements concerning foreign policy or that directly or indirectly address the internal affairs of China and of its Government. All statements from our delegates should therefore exclusively focus on the stated goals of our initiative.

Each delegate will organize his own flight to and from China. Some delegations will be providing the funds for such. All travel arrangements, accommodations and visits within China will be organized by our Chinese Partner and the International Office of RtR. Costs, where they incur will be communicated as soon as they are known.

Political heads of delegations

Pursuant to proper protocol, the most senior politicians present from the West - former or active - will assume the leadership of their respective delegations.

Which organization is behind this?

There is no single organization behind this as the initiative is a joint and coordinated effort of the delegates who are mostly participating under their own personal initiative or that of their organization. It should therefore not be associated with any one organization but with the network of delegates as a whole. Various politicians will also have the support of their governments and be representing them in some fashion.

International Office and coordination

Gaetan Roy
Chairman, Road to Reconciliation
JMS e. V.
Bahnhofstr. 43 - 47
72213 Altensteig
Germany

Tel. +49 7453 275-60
Fax +49 7453 275-17160
Mobile +49 172 4190830 Germany, Europe, International
+1 615 397 8043 USA, Canada
+86 136 91160664 China, Hong Kong
Email: GRoy@jmsmail.de

Bank information for donations

Main account:

Name: JMS e.V.
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2. DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

2. Description of the initiative

Reconciliation is a process that begins with the acknowledgment of past mistakes. As delegates, we are ashamed and saddened over the actions of some of our countrymen who brought about the Opium Wars and took economic advantage of China thereby providing part of the breeding ground for the Taiping Revolution and the Boxer War. These events inflicted great hardship on and unjustly humbled the People of China and its leadership. These actions are against our values and require a reconciliatory response from our part. We therefore propose to bring a delegation of up to fifty political, aristocratic, military, academic, business and spiritual leaders who are established personalities in their respective countries and who wish to publicly convey their apologies to the People of China and extend their hands in friendship in order that more harmonious relationships can be built in the future.

The delegates will travel to Beijing and electively also to Tianjin and Shanghai, three cities central to the Opium Wars and/or the Boxer War. In Western circles, it would be common to plan a multi-station trip of this nature in the chronological order of the historic events, the last venue being the culmination of the trip. In Chinese culture, it is however typical to start with the most important event and then to move on to the other events. The most important event being placed first shows its significance and gives legitimacy to the other events that follow.

The visit to each city will include the following activities:

Academic forums will be held in Beijing and Shanghai. They will provide a platform for academic exchanges – paper presentations and talks – over historical interpretation and memory especially as they relate to the Opium Wars up to the Boxer War, peace building, conflict resolution and reconciliation. A format will be chosen that also facilitates open discussions. Because of its proximity to Beijing, an academic forum will not be held in Tianjin.

Press conferences and press coverage of our events will play a paramount role in communicating our message of reconciliation to the People of China. A press conference will be held almost daily and will be organized by the official or institution we are visiting that day.

Banquets: Important events in China are always accompanied by a meal. Official banquets will take place daily and will provide opportunity for Westerners and Chinese to conduct informal exchanges. Seating will be arranged in order to promote discussion between delegates and the Chinese.

Gala evening: The culmination of our visit to a city will be the gala evening. It will include short speeches from our hosts and from the Delegation and also cultural and artistic contributions from China. The highlight of the evening will be the presentation of our apologies where each delegate will one-on-one present his apologies to his Chinese counterpart. The content of the apology will be roughly laid out in a standard protocol that will have been agreed upon with the Chinese. This will not be read but simply paraphrased in ones own terms. After having presented his apologies, the delegate will present his Chinese counterpart with a gift – a small replica of the

monument erected at the Old Summer Palace. The Chinese counterpart will reply roughly following the content in the official protocol and will present a gift to his Western counterpart.

It is our hope that through this effort, a new and encouraging line will be written in the history books of our nations and that this trip will be of significant benefit to the generations to come.

Date of the trip: October 18th – 22nd 2010

Anniversary dates play an important role in Chinese culture and often impart legitimacy to an event. In the eyes of the Chinese, the site of the Old Summer Palace (Yuan Ming Yuan) in Beijing epitomizes the aggression and humiliation from the foreign powers, especially from the Opium Wars up to the Boxer War. October 18th 2010 marks the 150th anniversary of the destruction of the Old Summer Palace, a most fitting date for the first official day of our reconciliation trip, for the unveiling of the monument at the Yuan Ming Yuan and also for the Gala Evening in Beijing. We are therefore proposing a 5 day trip whereas the official ceremonies will take place from October 18th to the 22nd 2010 with delegates arriving at the latest on October 17th and leaving on October 23rd.

The proposed daily schedule can be found in the chapter entitled “Agenda”. The trip is split in four segments. All delegates will participate in the first segment and can from there on elect if they participate or not in the further segments.

Chinese partner

Pending a letter of introduction from a current or former executive level politician from the West, the Office of President Hu Jintao has already extended its unofficial support to our initiative and is willing to facilitate the involvement of the necessary governmental departments and agencies. We’re currently considering which politician in our team should fulfil this role.

The practical organization of the initiative will be delegated by the Office of the President to the appropriate Chinese agencies.

Chinese counterparts

The Chinese counterparts, to whom we will present our apologies to, will be high ranking Government officials, academics and Chinese businessmen. They will be selected by the Chinese, a different group for each city visited.

Tangibles

As genuine and lasting reconciliation is a joint effort of all parties involved, we propose that this initiative result in the following tangibles:

- That a commemorative monument be unveiled at the entrance of the Old Summer Palace (Yuan Ming Yuan) on October 18th 2010, the 150th anniversary of its destruction. The structure would include a plaque outlining

the goals of our initiative and the apologies that were presented. The French delegation is proposing donating an original casting of a bronze statue of Victor Hugo from the sculptor August Rodin (1840 – 1911). The world renowned French writer Victor Hugo (1802 – 1885) publically criticized the plundering and destruction of the Old Summer Palace. His attitude and friendship towards China exemplifies the inherent values of our initiative. His statue at this historic sensitive location would serve as a symbolic legacy for generations to come.

- That a private collector or a Western state returns an artefact plundered from the Old Summer Palace to the Chinese President. As most national museums in the West are either prevented by law or internal regulation to return artefacts or are concerned about creating a precedent, we are seeking the involvement of a private collector who would be interested in making such a positive contribution to history.
- As a lasting legacy and a demonstration of mutual friendship, the China Institute for Peace (CIP) – a name subject to mutual approval - would be established as a collaboration between Chinese and Western academical institutions. The institute would offer a PhD and Masters Program, do research and provide training in the area of peace building and conflict resolution and offer input in the resolution of current conflicts. The details are available in a separate project description.
- That the Western delegation, after having presented its apologies, receives an appropriate response from the Chinese. During preliminary exchanges the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries suggested that since Westerners would apologize for the harm that their countrymen caused in China, an appropriate response from the Chinese could be to expand on the benefit that some Westerners contributed to China (schools, hospitals, protecting the Chinese during the Nanjing massacre, etc.).
- That the initiative and the apologies presented be widely promoted by local and national Chinese media (television and print). Press releases should also be done leading up to the actual trip in order to build up momentum.
- That academic forums be held in Beijing and in Shanghai over issues related to historical memory today and on the power of reconciliation

Spirit of our exchanges

Whereas various nations dishonoured the People of China in the course of the Opium Wars and Boxer War, we wish through our initiative to bring honour to its People. We undertake to mirror the attitude of many Westerners in history who were not emissaries of foreign Governments or companies seeking financial gain or to extort China in any fashion. In a spirit of servitude, love and friendship, they willingly sacrificed their own time and money to serve the Chinese. The following persons demonstrate this in a particular fashion:

Dr. Norman Bethune, Canada (1890 -1939). From 1938-1939 he performed battlefield surgical operations for the Chinese, also treating Japanese prisoners. He died on November 12, 1939 from blood poisoning due to a cut he had received

during surgery. Most people in China know of him through the essay "In memory of Norman Bethune" which Mao Zedong himself wrote and which is still required reading in China's elementary schools. Mao concluded: *"We must all learn the spirit of absolute selflessness from him. With this spirit everyone can be very helpful to each other. A man's ability may be great or small, but if he has this spirit, he is already noble-minded and pure, a man of moral integrity and above vulgar interests, a man who is of value to the people."* Bethune is one of the few Westerners to whom China has dedicated statues throughout the country. He is buried in the Revolutionary Martyrs' Cemetery in Shijiazhuang, Hebei Province, China.

Father Robert Jacquinet, France (1878-1946) lost his arm while defending peasants in a remote Chinese village. In light of the Japanese advance into Shanghai in 1937, Father Jacquinet setup a safety zone. Under risk to his own life, he ventured into Japanese occupied territory to save people from certain death and to find food and medical supplies. His heroic efforts saved the lives of up to 250,000 Chinese.

John Rabe, Germany (1882 -1950) went to China in 1908, working for Siemens from 1910 to 1938. He was instrumental in setting up the Nanjing Safety Zone which provided food and shelter and protected many Chinese from the impending Japanese slaughter. Rabe also provided refuge for up to 650 Chinese at his own home. His tombstone was moved in 1997 from Berlin to Nanjing where it has received a place of honour at the massacre memorial site.

Minnie Vautrin, USA (1886 -1941) went to Nanjing in 1912 to serve as a teacher and missionary and later as leader of the Jinling Girls College that she helped to found. During the growing unrest in China brought about by internal military power struggles, she defied the recommendations of the foreign delegations to leave the country as she wished to help the Chinese during their times of greatest need. She also remained when the city was being frequently and severely bombed by the approaching Japanese Army. Once the city fell, the Japanese looted and burned businesses and houses at free will and summarily killed up to 300,000 Chinese (estimates vary greatly), a significant portion of those being women who were executed after being raped. Risking her life, Minnie opened the doors of Jinling College to refugees, saving the women from certain rape and the killing commandos of the Japanese. For her acts, she came to be known by some Chinese as the "Living Goddess" or the "Goddess of Mercy".

3. PROPOSED AGENDA FOR 2010

3. Proposed Agenda for 2010

Delegates opt to participate in various segments of the trip, starting with segment 1.

Oct. 17th All delegates arrive in Beijing.
Earlier arrival (Oct. 16th) is recommended.
Mid-afternoon briefing for all delegates.

Press conference late afternoon with our Host.
Evening banquet with our Host.

Segment 1:

Oct. 18th Visit of the ruins of the Old Summer Palace (Yuan Ming Yuan).

Unveiling of a commemorative monument at the site of the Imperial Summer Palace with the Chinese Prime Minister.

Press conference with the Prime Minister.

Gala Evening at the Great Hall of the People with President Hu Jintao.
Delegation members present apologies to Chinese counterparts.

A private collector returns an artefact plundered from Old Summer Palace to President Hu Jintao.

Segment 2:

Oct. 19th Academic forum in Beijing.

Signing of a Memorandum of Understanding for the “China Institute of Peace”. Press conference.

Banquet with the host university.

Segment 3:

Oct. 20th Travel to Tianjin and visit of sites related to the Boxer War and the Treaty of Tianjin.

Press conference at City Hall with the Mayor of Tianjin.

Banquet with the Mayor of Tianjin.
Delegation members present apologies to Chinese counterparts.

Return to Beijing.

Segment 4:

- Oct. 21st Travel to Shanghai.
- Press conference with the Mayor of Shanghai.
 Gala Evening with the Mayor of Shanghai.
 Delegation members present apologies to Chinese counterparts.
- Oct. 22nd Academic forum in Shanghai.
- Press conference with the President of Fudan University.
 Banquet with the President of Fudan University.
- Oct. 23rd Delegates travel back home.

4. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

4. Historical perspective

Opium wars (1839 – 1860)

In the beginning of the 19th century, British and American merchants began smuggling opium into China to offset their high trade deficit and to circumvent Chinese importation restrictions. Being confronted with escalating opium addiction, China enforced in 1839 its prohibition on the importation of opium by confiscating and disposing of a large quantity of British-owned opium stored at Guangzhou (Canton). Britain responded by sending in gunboats. Unable to withstand modern arms, China capitulated and was forced to sign the Treaty of Nanjing (1842) and the British Supplementary Treaty of the Bogue (1843) which called for Hong Kong to be ceded to the British and that the ports of Guangzhou, Xiamen, Fuzhou, Ningbo and Shanghai be opened to British trade and residency. China was also extorted in paying high restitutions and required to reduce importation duties to insignificant levels. These unfair treaties not only provided a vehicle for missionaries to promote the Gospel but also resulted in a sudden inflow of cheap machine-made imports which undermined the Chinese economy. In contrast to those wishing to exploit China, other Westerners, in particular doctors, nurses, teachers and social workers left good paying jobs in their home countries to come to serve under difficult conditions and low pay. They opened schools, hospitals, clinics and offered help to the most needy. Some of the foreign investment was also beneficial to the Chinese and provided the basis for the economic development of various city and regions, Shanghai being the best example.

A second war broke out in 1856 following an allegedly illegal Chinese search of a British ship, the Arrow, in Guangzhou. After British and French troops invaded both Guangzhou and Tianjin, they and Russia forced China to sign the treaty of Tianjin (1858) which called for the establishment of eleven additional treaty ports, to allow foreign delegations in Beijing, to practically legalize the importation of opium, to provide missionaries with free access to all of China and to receive privileged protection from the police. Foreigners were also granted the right to purchase property. The treaty included a “most favoured nation” clause which allowed other foreign countries to enjoy the same rights as Great Britain. Through these foreign incursion in Chinese affairs, the ruling Dynasty not only suffered a loss of sovereignty but also experienced a dramatic blow to its dignity. The unabated growth in opium imports resulted in many men under forty becoming addicted to opium. The effects on economic productivity were disastrous. The Gross Domestic Product spun into a freefall and China’s trade surplus reverted into a high trade deficit. The economy collapsed and poverty increased. The Chinese Government retaliated in 1859 and a further conflict fired up but was quickly lost.

In 1860 a British diplomatic delegation travelled to Beijing to enforce the provisions of the Tianjin Treaty and that the Chinese accept that Lord Elgin and the French emissary Baron Gros, who were already on road to Beijing with their troops, enter the city with 400 military guards. This was seen as an affront by the Qing as it would bring to an end the century long tributary tradition where nations were obliged to conduct diplomatic relations and trade through ceremony and subservience. As the Emperor had fled, the Imperial Commissioner in charge deemed obvious and honourable to imprison the entire entourage, most of them being severely mistreated.

The British and the French demanded the immediate release, threatening to otherwise take over the Imperial City. On October 5th French troops arrived in Beijing, specifically at the Yuan Ming Yuan, also known as the “Old Summer Palace” or the “Garden of Perfect Brightness” and in retaliation allowed a looting frenzy to begin. British troops arrived one day later and joined the looting which continued until hardly anything was left. The palace had been built by six generations of emperors, housed hundreds of halls containing historical artefacts of up to 3,500 years of age and which covered an area five times the size of the Forbidden City. Most of the artefacts today are in the hands of foreign museums or private collectors and are openly traded thus further aggravating Chinese humiliation and rage. Of the 39 British and French prisoners, 13 British and 7 French were released, the rest tortured, mutilated, murdered and the bodies returned, some beyond recognition. In direct retaliation and to avoid harming the Chinese folk, Lord Elgin ordered the destruction of the Emperor’s prized possession, the Yuan Ming Yuan, thus sealing the fate of one of the greatest Chinese cultural sites and world heritage. The ensuing Beijing convention of 1860 had the Chinese reaffirm the treaty of Tianjin, accept additional concessions (i.e. 80 treaty ports), cede Kowloon and again pay heavy monetary restitution.

Unknown to most tourists today who visit the smaller neighbouring Summer Palace built by Empress Dowager at the end of the 19th century, the original site would vastly surpass the beauty of the contemporary palace and still remains in ruins to this day. Although there has been some discussion about rebuilding it, it is argued that it should remain as it is, serving as a permanent historical reminder of the foreign aggression and humiliation.

Taiping Revolution (1850-1864)

The growing discontentment of the Chinese population over the ineptitude of the Government in dealing with various internal issues, including the ever increasing foreign domination, was a driving force that kindled the Taiping Revolution. Within 15 years, at least 20 Million people died, some estimates going as high as 50 Million, making this not only the largest civil war in the history of China but one of the bloodiest of mankind.

One particularity of this revolutionary movement of simple people was its pseudo links to Christianity. Its leader, Hong Xiuquan, after having failed the highly touted state civil service examination for the third time, fell in a deep depression and dreamt of a heavenly elder giving him a king’s sceptre and a sword, commanding him to rid the earth of devilish influences and to bring back order and harmony. He shortly thereafter discovered some literature that a Chinese protestant Christian had given him, which described an apocalyptic moral crisis and the coming of a saviour who would create a new heavenly kingdom. He understood this as the revelation of his dream: God had called him to be this saviour. Some Western missionaries initially helped him to understand biblical principles but soon cut-off all contacts as it became evident that the movement was heretical and revolutionary in nature. Hong subsequently established the “Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace” (Taiping Tianguo). Within a few years his peasant movement grew to an army of over 2 Million people which conquered one city after the other. They eventually settled down in Nanjing, renaming it Tianjing (City of Heaven). They fell into internal disputes and were defeated in 1864 by the Chinese Army with Western support.

Boxer War (1898) and beyond

The mounting foreign domination and its oppression of the Chinese culminated into the Boxer War. A Chinese report stated: "Seeking neither fame nor money, they fight without consideration of their own lives and are ready to sacrifice themselves on the battlefield. They swarm up to here without prior arrangement and have but one thing in mind: They wish to kill foreigners and Christians without harming the simple folk. It really appears that they are fighting for righteousness". Foreigners including diplomats and thousands of Christian Chinese were killed and churches burned through this movement of mostly simple farmers who, with some support of the Empress, swarmed to and occupied Beijing and Tianjin. Many battles surged between western forces and the Chinese.

In order to suppress the Boxer insurgence and to save their expatriates, the allied troops of Germany, Britain, France, Russia, Italy, Austria-Hungary, the USA and Japan invaded North China. The allied troops eventually came under the German command of Marshall Graf Alfred von Waldersee. At the departure ceremonies of the German expedition corps, Kaiser Wilhelm II gave his now infamous Hun speech: "Just as King Attila of the Huns one thousand years ago made a name for himself that is vividly remembered onto this day, may the name of Germany be known in a similar fashion in China so that no Chinese even dares to look at a German in a demeaning manner". The German forces arrived in the summer of 1900 and conducted retaliatory strikes, executing any Chinese being even slightly suspected of involvement with the Boxers. Thousands died. The Allies won the conflict and occupied Tianjin and Beijing.

Wrangling went on over the proposed indemnity of 450,000 taels or £67.5 million at 4% interest (4.4 billion US\$ today), the Americans arguing that this would bankrupt China and proposing a reduction of 1/3. An irritated von Waldersee complained that the US "seems to desire that nobody shall get anything out of China". The terms remained unchanged and in 1901 China was forced to sign the Boxer Protocol which provided for the following restitution: Russia (130,371,120 taels, 29%); Germany (90,070,515 taels, 20%), France (70,878,240 taels, 15.75%), Britain (50,620,545 taels, 11.25%), Japan (34,793,100 taels, 7.7%), US (32,939,055 taels, 7.3%), Italy (26,617,005 taels, 5.9%), Belgium (8,484,345 taels, 1.9%), Austria (4,003,920 taels, 0.9%) and others (1,222,155 taels, 0.3%). Interestingly, the Americans years later used a small part of their indemnity of 300,000 silver coins to found Tsinghua University, today one of China's foremost learning institutions. It took China 39 years to fulfil this extremely heavy burden.

After years of humiliation through the foreigners, defeats and the fragmentation of China, the Emperor's popularity had suffered immensely. In 1911 Sun Yat-sen mounted a successful revolution against the Throne bringing about the abdication of the Emperor and with it the end of the 2000 year rule of the Dynasties. Sun became the first President of China and is deemed today by the Chinese as the "Father of China". His authority was very dependent on the regional Governors and war lords who held military control over various parts of the country. Many internal struggles flared as different factions fought for control of the country, the Communist Party emerging in the end as the strongest force. On October 1st 1949, Mao Zedong proclaimed the People's Republic of China.

5. Survey from Peking University

5. Survey from Peking University

Postgraduate students of the History Department of Peking University, China's most prestigious humanities institution, out of which some of the country's leading academic, political and business leaders emerge, conducted a survey in December 2006 amongst 500 students of the University (62%) and its affiliated middle school (38%). Only 2% of the students testified in the survey that they did not remember this part of history, giving testimony to the tradition based culture of the Chinese.

The survey dealt with a chain of events from 1800 to 1900, with a particular focus on the Opium Wars. 91% of the students state that they still feel hurt over the harm that foreign nations caused their country and which undermined China's economy and sovereignty. 56% attest that they to this day experience various degrees of animosity towards the outside world for this episode in international relations. 76% of the students note that the past events negatively influence their daily dealings with foreigners. 54% added that this plays a role in their choice of foreign products and when seeking employment with those companies. It in addition hampers their relationship with foreign students (37%) and teachers (26%).

67% of the students concur that although the foreigners carry the responsibility for the Opium Wars, the mistakes of the then reigning Qing Dynasty did contribute to the outcome, a fact that is entertained to this day by many Western experts on China. Only 7% believe that the foreigners carry the whole blame. 80% of the respondents indicate that although the events were a defacto foreign invasion, they did at the same time benefit China in the areas of medical, economical and educational development. History indeed gives homage to the fact that some foreigners did come to China to serve the people by establishing greatly needed schools, hospitals, orphanages, etc. This came at a great cost though. In a multiple choice question, 73% of students respond that the restitution payments China had to pay after the various altercations retarded the growth of the Chinese economy and society. 68% believe that it greatly harmed the sovereignty and political development of China and 58% say that it greatly injured the self-esteem of the Chinese.

70% of the students claim that the foreign governments are responsible for the destruction of the Old Imperial Palace and should apologize for this. Only 7% claim that the events occurred too long ago and require no apology.

80% of the students agreed that an apology would benefit relations with the countries involved. When asked how this would affect how they personally feel, 75% said that it would be helpful in changing their attitudes, 24% adding that it would definitely change their attitudes.