

The Mosher Affair

"Every stomach comes with hands attached" was Chairman Mao's initial response to the issue of overpopulation in China, a land of 500 million people in 1949. China's population has doubled since then, and today, under Deng Xiaoping, birth control has high priority. Women may not marry before age 20, men before 22. Married couples are encouraged to have only one child and are penalized for having more than two. The price of disobedience can be stiff. Reports have come out of rural China of severe repercussions—abortions forced on women in their eighth or ninth month of pregnancy; the murder by parents of girl babies to make room for a hoped-for boy. One American anthropologist who published such reports is Steven W. Mosher, author of *Broken Earth: The Rural Chinese* (1983). But Mosher's work and on-the-job conduct have stirred controversy in both China and America. His experience, Peter Van Ness suggests, raises important questions about the ethics of anthropologists, the objectivity of American China-watchers, and the future of Western scholarly research in China.

by Peter Van Ness

"Why aren't we able to cope with the grays?" mused a young research economist, sharing a *sushi* lunch at a restaurant near the Stanford campus. She had written her Ph.D. dissertation on China's agriculture after a year of field work in the Chinese countryside. Our conversation was about doing research in China and what seems to be an American compulsion to paint China in either black or white colors.

Everything in China somehow has to be either all bad or just wonderful—nothing in between. One is either *for* China or against it.

Our talk had begun on the topic of Steven Mosher, a graduate student

who had been thrown out of Stanford's anthropology department in February 1983.

Mosher, according to a statement issued by the university, was guilty of abusing his status as an anthropologist and engaging in "illegal and seriously unethical conduct while in the People's Republic of China." While the 47-page report upon which the anthropology department's decision was based, along with the specific charges and evidence that it contains, remains secret, the case of Mosher versus Stanford is already being tried in the news media and in the academic rumor mill.

America's China-specialist com-



Steven W. Mosher and some of the villagers he lived with in China during 1979–80. Trained as a biologist, Mosher learned Chinese during a stint in the U.S. Navy, afterwards enrolling at Stanford as a graduate student.

munity is virtually unanimous in its support for Stanford's action, for a variety of reasons. On the other hand, editorial writers for major newspapers, such as the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Times*, seem equally certain that Mosher was sold out by Stanford in response to Chinese pressure.

Both sides insist that the case of Mosher versus Stanford must be black or white, but, in fact, it illustrates the gray areas both in social science research and in the American educational exchanges with China that began in 1978.

Mosher, 35, one of the first Americans permitted to do field research in China, studied an agricultural production brigade in Guangdong Province, which borders Hong Kong, from September 1979 to June 1980, and lived in his Hong Kong-born wife's ancestral village. (Mosher and his wife subsequently divorced.)

Among other things, Mosher was interested in collecting documents, and he had received a \$13,500 grant

from the National Endowment for the Humanities for this purpose. Including \$4,000 in matching funds from the Hoover Institution at Stanford, the project called for microfilming some 20,000 frames of materials from the locality Mosher was studying, such as "land registers, household registers, crime registers, class status registers, and economic data." (The materials in the end were to be turned over to the Stanford and Hoover Institution libraries.)

Some of these materials were extremely sensitive, from the Chinese point of view, but Mosher had been urged by G. William Skinner, his adviser at Stanford, in effect, to go in and get everything he could get. From the start, he was in a delicate position.

Obviously talented and immensely ambitious, Mosher was aided in his work by his ability to speak fluent Cantonese and Mandarin, and required no interpreter. Therefore, the Chinese had no one continually at his

elbow observing his interviews.

Determined to take full advantage of this remarkable opportunity, Mosher, as *Newsweek* put it, "adopted a freewheeling style that smacked more of Indiana Jones than Margaret Mead." One member of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences is said to have been amazed that any foreigner could be so skilled in the language and familiar with Chinese culture that he could quickly come to understand the life of rural China and begin to operate like a Chinese.

A Woman Scorned

American press reports note that Chinese officials have accused Mosher of "traveling in forbidden areas, trying to smuggle old coins out of the country, bribing villagers to gain information, and bringing in an unauthorized female companion from Hong Kong." Other Chinese have alleged that Mosher might even have been an intelligence agent in the service of a foreign power.

Mosher's response, in published interviews as well as in a statement he prepared that was released by Stanford University in February 1983, has been to deny the charges. He has asserted that what has prompted the allegations is Chinese anger over the results of his research in Guangdong Province—particularly the abuses he found in the implementation of China's birth-control policy—and "absolutely false and unsubstantiated slander" by his

former wife, Maggie So, whom he has described as a "scorned woman who vowed to ruin me."^{*}

Mosher argues that the Chinese government wanted to restrict social research done by foreigners in their country, and that they threatened American scholars with "negative consequences" for the Sino-American educational exchange if Mosher were not punished. American scholars, Mosher asserts, "instead of coming to my defense, have abandoned me." Mosher has threatened to sue some of those who have talked publicly about his case.

The Mosher controversy has raised many important questions.

The Chinese wonder if Steven Mosher was somehow encouraged to go to China to test the limits of the system, to see just how far a foreign researcher could go in that country.

Some American scholars ask: Did Stanford officials, pressured by the Chinese, sell Mosher out? Was Stanford fearful of losing its access to China after having been the first American university to establish ties

^{*}During Mosher's collection of what the *New York Times* has called "a highly unusual collection of local police and government documents that the Chinese consider secret," his former wife apparently became convinced that Mosher's activities were endangering her relatives in the village. According to the *Times*, Maggie So, following a quarrel over Mosher's demand for a divorce, went to the American consulate in Guangzhou (Canton) in the spring of 1980 and there accused Mosher of bribing local officials to obtain documents.

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in the People's Republic, when the post-Mao leadership began to open to the West in 1978?

Or, did Mosher, as charged, behave illegally and unprofessionally in a way that most anthropologists, had they access to the evidence, would condemn and judge to be grounds for expulsion from the profession?

Country Life

What about Mosher's findings—his articles on abuses of China's birth-control program and female infanticide, and now his new book, *Broken Earth*, in which he concludes that life for the peasants he studied in Guangdong Province was actually better *before* Liberation than after?

Is Mosher being pilloried for having uncovered embarrassing facts (for example, women in the third trimester of their pregnancies being forced to undergo abortions) that Beijing had kept concealed behind a wall of secrecy?*

Can scholars dispassionately assess the value of his writings without making a judgment about his behavior?

Mosher's anthropological field research in China was in the tradition of ethnography, the "descriptive study of living cultures." His objective was to obtain a comprehensive "micro-level" picture of how rural society in China actually operates. This kind of anthropological research is often undertaken by a scholar working alone. It usually requires living for several months in the village being studied. Such field research is sensitive work in *any* country, and in China, extremely sensitive.

The American Anthropological As-

*The strongest Yes comes from Irving L. Horowitz in "Struggling for the Soul of Social Science," *Society*, July-Aug. 1983.

sociation enjoins researchers to be especially careful to protect the welfare and confidentiality of those whom they interview and observe. One obvious problem this injunction raises in the case of China is that foreigners doing field research there are customarily accompanied in their work either by Chinese officials or by a Chinese colleague who observes virtually everything they do and everyone they speak to. Mosher was an exception. He was permitted to work alone, unlike several other Americans.

The Good Old Days

Broken Earth, a popularized account of life in rural China based on Mosher's conversations with peasants and incidents he witnessed during nine months in the village, is another in the current "China stinks" genre of books by Americans who have recently lived and worked in China. His bias is transparent. Everything is wrong and nothing is right in the People's Republic: black and white.

Yet many of Mosher's observations have a ring of truth about them, and his findings should provoke serious debate. Mosher describes country life in vivid detail—peasants staggering under the weight of an oppressive and mindless state bureaucracy; corrupt Communist cadres handing out favors through the "back door"; Chinese women, liberated from traditional confinement in the peasant household, only to find themselves caught in a "double-bind"—expected now to do both housework and fieldwork.

Is it possible, as Mosher argues, that many Chinese peasants feel that life was better before Mao's triumph in 1949? We know from independent studies that, *in the aggregate*, China is

materially much better off today than it was before the Communists came to power. The World Bank, for example, concluded that China's average annual per capita income during the past two decades grew faster than that of the average low-income country. By 1979, China had achieved a life expectancy at birth of 64 years (well above the average for so-called middle-income countries, which is 61 years).

How can China be materially better off, yet Chinese peasants still tell Mosher that things were better before Liberation? Scholars must confront this seeming anomaly.

The Telegram

But it was not *Broken Earth* that prompted Stanford's action against Mosher—the book was published months after the anthropology department's decision. Mosher's troubles began early in 1980 as he was doing his field work in the Pearl River delta.

He had been in China for only a few months when, in February, he received a letter from John Jamieson, the academic liaison at the U.S. embassy in Beijing, communicating Chinese complaints about Mosher's importing a van and engaging a research assistant (both from Hong Kong), obtaining "sensitive documents," and hiring local villagers to help in his research work. Mosher dismisses the charges as "false and fatuous," arguing that he subsequently responded satisfactorily to all of the allegations and "bent over backwards to alleviate Chinese concern."

A few months later, in June, Mosher, with a Chinese driver, traveled by van through Guizhou, an area well known to be prohibited to foreigners. He was discovered, detained by local Public Security officials, and

returned to Guangzhou (Canton). According to the Chinese account, Mosher, while detained, wrote a self-criticism, admitted that he had violated travel regulations for foreigners, and apologized for his actions.

But after returning to Guangzhou, Mosher repudiated his self-criticism, argued that his travel permit had indeed been appropriate for the trip, and telegraphed the Ministry of Public Security in Beijing protesting his treatment. Apparently, what particularly angered Chinese authorities was Mosher's telegram, which smacked to them of a foreigner demanding "extraterritoriality"—that is, to be exempt from Chinese law as foreigners had been in China's pre-Liberation past under the provisions of the "unequal treaties."

A Meeting with Zhao

Mosher left China at the beginning of the summer, having been refused a three-month visa extension by the Chinese. Rumors about his behavior in the field persisted.

In January 1981, seven months later, when a U.S. humanities and social science commission was visiting China, two members of the group—Kenneth Prewitt, president of the Social Science Research Council, and Michel Oksenberg, chairman of the Joint Committee on Chinese Studies (which funded Mosher's dissertation research)—spoke about the Mosher case with Zhao Fusan, deputy secretary general of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

This was the first of at least two meetings between Prewitt and Zhao dealing with Mosher. According to a letter from Prewitt to the Stanford investigating committee, Zhao in that first meeting raised three issues that troubled the Chinese. They were, said Prewitt, that Mosher "had

"NONE OF YOU HAS ANY CHOICE"

In this excerpt from Broken Earth, Steven Mosher describes a family-planning session at Equality Commune, to which the Sandhead Production Brigade belonged:

Family-planning meetings, which all women who were pregnant with their third or later child were required to attend, or who had had their first child within the last four years, had already been in progress for four days in each of the commune's twenty brigades, and over 300 women had agreed to terminate their pregnancies under urging from local cadres. An equal number of village women had not acceded to the cadres' demand, however, and the commune revolutionary committee had decided to move the meetings to the commune headquarters. . . .

From Sandhead Brigade there were 18 women, all from five to nine months pregnant, and many red-eyed from lack of sleep and crying. They sat listlessly on short plank benches arranged in a semi-circle about the front of the room, where He Kaifeng, a commune cadre and Communist party member of many years' standing, explained the purpose of the meeting in no uncertain terms. "You are here because you have yet to 'think clear' about birth control, and you will remain here until you do. . . ."

Then he began to reason with the women about their concerns. "We know that you want a son in order to be secure in your old age. But remember that you are still young. As the country develops, it will create welfare programs. By the time you are old, you will not have to worry about who is going to support you. The government will support you." Speaking directly to the several women present who had brought along their girl children, he said, "You must remember that some girls can be as filial as boys. . . ."

Up to this point he had spoken in a persuasive, not unfriendly fashion, but then he heard one of the women mutter something about the Communist party to her neighbor, and his voice became loud and hard. "Don't say anything against the Communist party," he warned sternly. "It is very concerned about you. The party is not saying that you are not allowed to have children, just that two children are enough, and that it is best to have just one child. . . ."

Looking coldly around the room he said slowly and deliberately. "None of you has any choice in this matter. You must realize that your pregnancy affects everyone in the commune, and indeed affects everyone in the country." Then, visually calculating how far along the women in the room were, he went on to add, "The two of you who are eight or nine months pregnant will have a [caesarean-style abortion]; the rest of you will have a shot which will cause you to abort. . . ."

This excerpt is reprinted with permission of the publisher from *Broken Earth: The Rural Chinese* by Steven W. Mosher. Copyright © 1983 by The Free Press, a Division of Macmillan, Inc.

secured access to security materials during his field research; had traveled through an area closed to foreigners without proper documentation; and had been involved in removing antiquities from China." These activities led the Chinese to wonder whether Mosher was engaged in intelligence activity rather than field research.

At the same time, Prewitt wrote, Zhao "indicated that the Chinese would not be taking any further action. He did not recommend any specific action to us."

Yet the Chinese had already taken one step. The conversation with Zhao, Prewitt notes, came as background to continued discussions that the delegation was having with the Chinese regarding the recently announced decision to impose what Beijing called a "moratorium" on field research done by foreigners in China.

Answering Charges

In other words, following the allegations in the Mosher case, the Chinese had shut off further opportunities for Americans to do long-term field research. Myron Cohen of Columbia University, the next American anthropologist scheduled to conduct such research in China, would simply have to wait.

After the American delegation returned to the United States, Michel Oksenberg wrote to Steven Mosher on March 18, 1981, telling of Zhao's charges and requesting a detailed response.

Mosher replied on April 4 in a 13-page letter, indicating his wish to cooperate with the Joint Committee on Chinese Studies and his desire for a formal statement from the committee clearing him of the charges.

That was hardly the end of the matter. A month later, Steven Mo-

sher did something that even he now acknowledges to have been unwise: He published, in the popular Taiwan magazine *Shibao zazhi*, an article criticizing mainland China's birth-control policy and describing the problems of implementing it that he had discovered while studying the production brigade in Guangdong Province.

Reality vs. Policy

Mosher showed how peasant members of China's collective farms depended for their security in old age not primarily on the collective, but on the sons they bore, sons who would stay in the family and care for their parents when the latter were no longer able to work. Moreover, more sons meant more workers per family and therefore more family income. Daughters, everyone assumed, would eventually marry and leave home to become members of their husbands' households.

Mosher's analysis demonstrated how the prevailing material circumstances of China's rural society inevitably produced resistance to Beijing's policy of limiting the size of families.

The article itself is a solid piece of research. The findings are important. But when Mosher published it in Taiwan in May 1981—under the name "Steven Westley" (his first and middle names)—it provoked a storm of protest in Beijing and back home. Most controversial about the article were the photographs that accompanied it, one of which showed a seven-and-one-half month pregnant woman with her body exposed, about to undergo an abortion. None of the photos concealed the identity of the villagers.

Moreover, the article was published in Taiwan, where anything



Birth-control posters usually depict the child in a one-child family as a girl, to counteract a Chinese preference for sons. Attitudes change slowly. In 1982, Premier Zhao Ziyang urged Chinese to "resolutely condemn the criminal activities of female infanticide and maltreatment of mothers."

critical of practices on the mainland would inevitably be exploited for its propaganda value in the continuing political battle between the Guomindang government in Taipei and the Communist government in Beijing.

By publishing pictures of his respondents in the village, especially without taking care to disguise their identities, Mosher flouted the anthropologists' code of professional ethics.* That code, adopted by the council of the American Anthropological Association (AAA), reads in part: "In research, an anthropologist's paramount responsibility is to those he studies. When there is a conflict of interest, these individuals must come first. The anthropologist must do everything within his power to protect their physical, social, and psychological welfare and to honor

*The two most controversial of the pictures published by Mosher with the article—the one just cited and another depicting a tubal ligation—are reprinted in *Broken Earth*. In the English edition published in the United States, the faces in the two pictures are now blacked out. In the Chinese edition published in Taiwan, for reasons that remain unclear, they are not.

their dignity and privacy."

G. William Skinner of Stanford's anthropology department quoted the AAA statement when he wrote to Mosher in June 1981 after seeing the article. "I am absolutely appalled at your irresponsibility and insensitivity," he wrote.

Skinner appreciated Mosher's "revulsion at the inhumane treatment of defenseless village women" and acknowledged the importance of an effort to arouse public opinion against abuse of Chinese peasants in the process of carrying out Beijing's birth-control policy. But, he concluded, by "publishing your article in a Taiwan journal you have undermined that objective; international observers will see your piece as designed to embarrass the PRC [People's Republic of China] government *politically*; it comes off as a political gambit not as a humanitarian protest. How could you be blind to this outcome?"

Three months later, in September 1981, Stanford University's anthropology department impaneled a

committee of three professors to investigate the accumulating charges against Mosher, and the committee chairman, Professor Jane Collier, sent letters requesting information from virtually everyone mentioned in the Chinese allegations. The anthropology department claims that it explicitly excluded Mosher's publication of the article in Taiwan from consideration in their proceedings, apparently because such consideration might be seen as a challenge to Mosher's academic freedom. And, as Collier put it, "students have a right to make mistakes."

Negative Consequences

As the Stanford committee's deliberations got under way, Kenneth Prewitt of the Social Science Research Council met once more in Beijing with Zhao. By then, the Chinese position had changed—become more forceful.

According to Prewitt's account, Zhao presented no new information about Mosher but said that the Chinese hoped that "the outcome of the Mosher case would not have negative consequences for the scholarly exchange program."

When pressed to elaborate, Zhao (according to Prewitt) "replied that the exchange program could be harmed if the American scholarly community took no action on what the Chinese regarded as improper behavior by Mosher. Here he made reference not only to Mosher's behavior while conducting field research, but also to the manner in which he chose to publish materials in Taiwan."

In February 1982, Zhao wrote directly to Stanford's Jane Collier. "We hope," he said, "that Stanford University will deal with the [Mosher] matter sternly and inform our academy of

the results of its disposition."* There seemed to be little doubt that the Chinese wanted Mosher punished.

A year later, in February, Stanford's *ad hoc* investigating committee finished its labors. The anthropology department, after considering the committee's report and hearing Mosher's response to it, voted unanimously (11 to 0) to expel Mosher from its doctoral program.

The committee report, as noted above, has never been made public—purportedly for fear of endangering innocent third parties and violating Mosher's right to due process. Mosher, who has a copy of the report, likewise has not divulged its contents, and he is appealing the department's decision. Rejected in his first two appeals, he now has one last resort: a final appeal to Stanford President Donald Kennedy.

"Can Cohen Come?"

Ironically, if there was ever any expectation on the American side that, once Mosher was punished, the Chinese would once again permit American researchers to engage in long-term field research, that expectation has not been realized.

The cultural and educational affairs officer in the U.S. embassy in Beijing recalls that after the anthropology department at Stanford voted to drop Mosher from its program, he xeroxed the *International Herald Tribune* article reporting the Stanford decision, took it over to Zhao Fusan, and asked: "Can [Myron] Cohen come now?" The Chinese "were waiting for justice to be done," he says.

*The Stanford translation uses "severely" and Zhao prefers "seriously." The Chinese word is *yansu*. Both translations are possible. The one used here—"sternly"—comes from David Chu (editor and translator), *Sociology and Society in Contemporary China, 1979-1984* (1984).

"The right decision would help."

But it has not helped Myron Cohen, who is still waiting—apparently with little hope that he will finally be allowed to do the field work in China that he has been nominated by the American side to do.

The case of Steven Mosher, it should be clear, turns on more than the alleged deeds of one individual; just as clearly, more is at stake than the future of one individual's career. However the matter is resolved, the Mosher controversy sheds light on the problems inherent in conducting anthropological field research as well as the nature of academic exchanges between the United States and the People's Republic.

Closed Doors

To begin with, China is not by anyone's standards an open society. In theory, the system is a "dictatorship of the proletariat," one in which Communist party tutelage is designed to bring about the ultimate ideal of a communist society. The party controls the press, education, employment, and place of residence, as well as opportunities to assemble and to express opinions.

The party expects Chinese citizens not simply to comply passively with leadership directives, but also to take an active part in officially initiated programs. Those identified by the state as opponents or deviants may face a secretive and harsh police system that gives the individual no safeguards against arbitrary arrest and imprisonment.

Chinese governments, Confucian or communist, have customarily sought to regulate foreign access to Chinese society and to curb foreign influence. Some attribute this trait to what they see as characteristic Chinese xenophobia; others ascribe

it to a quite natural (given China's turbulent history) fear of foreign manipulation.

While party exhortations to guard against "capitalist restoration" may sound like just another slogan to a visiting American, to many Chinese they touch a sensitive nerve and evoke an unpleasant chapter in Chinese history. American researchers and teachers working in China today complain about being seen as spies, even though many of them find abhorrent any employment of scholars by American intelligence services.

To Americans, China is a country preoccupied with secrecy. Much of what in the United States is public information, readily available to citizen and foreigner alike, in China is classified *neibu*, or "restricted material." Telephone books, maps, newspapers, and academic articles and books having nothing to do with military or national security have regularly been classified *neibu*. At least one American scholar has found that he could not have access to a Chinese translation of an article that he himself wrote and published in the United States, because in China it had been classified *neibu*.

Catch-22

It is illegal for foreigners to have access to *neibu* or other classified materials except under certain conditions—and foreign scholars are often not aware of what those conditions are. This is because some of the laws and other regulations specifying the status and responsibilities of foreigners living in China are themselves classified documents.

Nonetheless, Chinese colleagues and local officials often give *neibu* materials to foreign scholars. They do so because much of the important professional literature in a

given discipline is published in restricted journals.

The generosity of these Chinese unquestionably advances the research of visiting foreign academics, and virtually all researchers who spend any time working in China are drawn into accepting *neibu* materials from their Chinese colleagues whether they are carrying out field research or simply working in a Chinese library doing archival research. But, as a result, they are made vulnerable to possible charges of breaking Chinese laws regarding classified materials, or even allegations of spying. Whether Steven Mosher was a victim (in part) of this Catch-22 is impossible to say. Certainly other Americans have been.*

Joint Projects

Another barrier encountered by foreign scholars is the quality of most disciplines in the humanities and social sciences in China, which falls far below Western standards. This is due in part to Mao Zedong's repeated attacks on intellectuals, particularly those who were Western-trained. As a result, some Chinese and Americans have argued that China must first develop its own humanities and social science disciplines before it can be expected to be willing to welcome foreign scholars

*For example, in May 1982, Lisa Wichser, an American teacher in China who is also a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Denver, was jailed and interrogated in Beijing for six days and then expelled from the country, charged with having violated Chinese law "by stealing China's secret information." Wichser had in her possession classified material dealing with Chinese agriculture, which was the subject of her dissertation, but the materials had not been stolen. They had been given to her by Chinese colleagues helping with her dissertation research. She and a young economist had applied to the government to be married. He and others have been detained since her deportation.

in those fields. Understandably, some Chinese academics are reluctant to permit foreign researchers to investigate social questions in China—particularly if the studies are not part of a collaborative research project with Chinese scholars—before Chinese themselves have researched these problems. Some of the projects thus far that have been most welcomed by the Chinese have been joint American-Chinese ventures involving opportunities for Chinese researchers to be trained in modern social science techniques.

Two Pairs of Glasses

Clearly, Beijing is determined to get all it can out of the present policy of the opening to the West. The Committee on Scholarly Communication with the PRC, which administers the official exchange between the two countries, estimates that there are now some 12,000 Chinese academics (students, teachers, and researchers) studying in the United States, compared to only 300–400 Americans in China.

Moreover, there is a substantial difference in the access enjoyed by Chinese working at U.S. universities and research institutes compared with that granted Americans studying in China. Here, Chinese scholars are sometimes even invited to join U.S. research teams engaged in pioneering work; American scholars in China often have difficulty just getting access to library materials or arranging for an adviser in the appropriate department at a local university.

Major breakthroughs in achieving access for American scholars in China (for example, the opening of the Ming-Qing archives in Beijing and the Nationalist archives in Nanjing) have required White House in-

tervention.

To some degree, the Mosher case has been both a cause of, and an excuse for, the recent setback to foreign field research in China. When I talked with Zhao last September, he described the U.S.-PRC academic exchanges as a "vulnerable relationship." He said that some people in China may not see the validity of field research done by foreigners, and that "people in the infrastructure are not prepared to respond to a very dynamic international relationship."

Zhao declared, however, that the present level of exchanges makes possible the development of mutual confidence and mutual understanding, and provides opportunities for Chinese to understand how social science research is done in other lands.

With regard to the Mosher case, Zhao said that Stanford in effect had three options: They could take the case seriously; they could decide that Mosher had done nothing wrong; or the investigation could drag on for a long time without a decisive conclusion. "Whatever would come out of

the review would have its impact here," he asserted, and that "would involve the image of the whole academic community."

Asked about that impact—specifically, about whether Mosher's actions should be seen as having wrecked subsequent opportunities for other foreign scholars, or, alternatively, whether some Chinese were actually looking for an excuse to close down field research opportunities because they didn't want foreigners doing social science in China in the first place—he responded that it was probably a "combination of both." Zhao explained that, even without Mosher, there inevitably would have been other problems that would have prompted a policy review.

What kind of a future, then, do the Sino-American exchanges have? Let us look at the situation through two pairs of glasses.

The Chinese have one set of concerns. They suspect, for example, that one goal of the scholarly exchanges with the United States may be intelligence-gathering. Rightly or wrongly, the Mosher affair is

Families like this one, common in 1900, would today be deprived by Beijing of half their income—10 percent for each of five "excessive" children. The People's Daily in 1952 opposed birth control, calling it "a way of slaughtering the Chinese people without drawing blood." Famine soon changed many minds.



cited as a case in point. Obviously, any information gleaned about the social structure of the People's Republic of China will have broader implications. But Washington, at whatever level necessary, must make it clear to Beijing that academic exchanges are not being "penetrated" for this purpose.

Some American scholars go to China with a "hidden agenda," as if the objective were somehow to "help China modernize" or to "show China the way." Nothing could be more absurd, or more destined to failure. Chinese today, heirs to the longest continuous tradition known to mankind, and proud of it, will shape their own future, despite any American's missionary pretensions.

The function of the scholarly exchanges, as Kenneth Prewitt and Michel Oksenberg observe in a 1982 report, must be to achieve a solid understanding of the two countries. Other insights may result; that should not, however, be either the avowed or the covert rationale.

From the American point of view, some things have to change.

Whether or not the Chinese finally decide to publish a set of guidelines governing research by foreigners in China, Washington must insist that American scholars not be punished for violating laws and regulations that remain Chinese state secrets. The elimination of that Catch-22 must be a first priority. When Americans go to work in China, they must, of course, be prepared to live under the rules that the host government sets for them; but visitors have to

know what the rules *are*.

As for the matter of reciprocity, if Beijing shows that it is either unwilling or unable to provide suitable arrangements for scholars sent to China under the exchange, then the American government should be prepared to limit the number of Chinese admitted to the United States. As Prewitt and Oksenberg argue, the exchange should not become an aid program.

Finally, with regard to the Mosher case, two observations seem appropriate.

First, no one who has not had access to the unpublished report or who does not know personally of Mosher's experience in China can determine whether Stanford's action to terminate him was justified. As long as neither party makes public the report, this will be the case. Moreover, if, after Mosher has exhausted his appeals at Stanford, he feels that he has not received just treatment, presumably he will sue. In the end, a court of law is perhaps the most appropriate forum in which to resolve this dispute. There, all of the evidence can be brought forward, and a judge or jury with no axe to grind will, it would be hoped, make a just decision.

Meanwhile, Mosher's work—his articles on birth control and female infanticide as well as his book, *Broken Earth*—is worthy of dispassionate consideration and review. Failure to attempt that assessment, even as the case against Mosher at Stanford remains unresolved, would simply show once again that Americans still can't "cope with the grays."

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