

**THESIS :** An Evaluation of the Tertiary Distance Education System in  
China

**NAME :** Anna C. Y. Wong    B.A.(Melb. Uni)., Dip.Ed.( Melb.Uni).,  
Dip.Teaching (Phillip Institute)

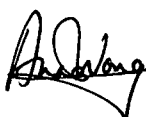
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## DECLARATION

I certify that the thesis entitled "An evaluation of the Tertiary Distance Education System in China" and submitted for the degree of Masters of Distance Education is the result of my own work, except where otherwise acknowledged, and that this thesis (or any part thereof) has not been submitted for a degree or diploma at any other university or institution.

Signed 

Date 14<sup>th</sup> December, 1994

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# **Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 Aim and Structure of the Thesis**

The aim of my research is to evaluate three kinds of tertiary distance education systems in China, namely the Correspondence College (People's University of China), the Central Radio and Television University, and the National Higher Education Self-Study Examination System. To achieve this aim, I will :

1. define the concepts of 'distance education' in the Western World and in China,
2. trace the development of the education system in China,
3. examine the developmental stages of the three different Chinese systems of distance education,
4. compare, analyse and evaluate the three types of distance education; their structure, system, administration, curriculum, student records, success and drawbacks, (on the basis of my readings, observations, interviews and questionnaires)
5. examine 'China TV: Correspondence College for Statisticians' - as an example of merging the three distance education systems,
6. review theories of distance education outside China and their relevance to China's tertiary distance education programs, and
7. discuss the future of tertiary distance education in China.

## **1.2 Methodology, Data Sources and Their Associated Problems**

This descriptive and evaluative study draws on the following principal sources of information:

1. Interviews with professors and teachers from the Correspondence College (PUC), and the Self-Study Examination;
2. Interviews with administrators and educational officers working in the three organisations;
3. Questionnaires and interviews with students and graduates;
4. Educational journals, publications and books (mostly in Chinese; some in English).

I have found great difficulty in obtaining information for this thesis. This is because the information available is often outdated or difficult to obtain. There are English articles written about the Radio and Television Universities but very few publications in English are on the Correspondence Colleges and Higher Education Self-Study Examination System even though these institutions form a significant part of distance education in China.

To overcome the problem of scarcity of information, I have used a number of methods and sources in an effort to gain a deeper understanding of distance education in China and to ensure the validity of my research findings. As well as reading articles published in English, I have also looked at books, journals and publications written in Chinese. I have interviewed a wide range of people, from professors, administrators, directors of education and teachers to students and graduates. I have also sent out questionnaires to these students and visited schools and colleges to obtain first-hand experience in the various organisations and their programs.

I have interviewed Professor Zhou Jianshou (ICDE's liaison officer in China), Dr. Zhu Liyan, (Vice-president of the Correspondence College, People's University of China), students and graduates from the college, Mr. Ren Fuchang (Division Chief, Office of the State Directing Committee for Higher Education Self-Study Examination), Ms. Li Weidong (teacher-in-charge of the tutorial classes) and Mr. Zhang Ruilin (Vice-President of Central Radio and TV University) to seek their views on their distance education programs.

What occurred to me during the interviews was the fact that information about courses and other distance education organisations was not disseminated widely across the institutions. While members and teachers were proud of the courses they made available, they were unaware of the courses taught at other institutions. It was, therefore, not possible for them to compare and contrast their work with the work of others, particularly and more importantly with the work of international institutions and to develop a bias or preference towards one system or another.

Given the above situation, the approach used in my research is necessarily qualitative rather than quantitative. Many of my findings are derived from empirical evidence from interviews and observations that I have personally made in China. I have also used the interpretive paradigm because there were problems in the collection of data. One of these problems relates to the number of students and graduates whom I have interviewed. The interviews were limited to eight from the Self-Study Examination, eight from the Correspondence College and only two from the TV University. Similarly, my questionnaires were also limited in number and not filled by a great enough diversity of students. Out of ten questionnaires which I have sent out to the TV University students, only four were returned. Eight were received from the Self-Study Examination in Beijing city and two from a smaller town Tangshan. This was partly due to the limited time I had stayed in Beijing (two weeks), and the fact that that time of the year was inappropriate for the students who had just finished their tutorial classes and were at home preparing for their examinations. Another problem I have encountered was with the statistics. Authors differ greatly when they discuss statistics and it is almost impossible to

obtain definitive figures and statements from government bodies. There does not seem to be a common standard in their statistical system. For this reason, statistics are inconsistent and my analyses might be subjective. Personal judgements are often used in their analysis.

### **1.3 LITERATURE REVIEW**

I have tried to collect as much information as possible on Chinese distance education here in Australia. I have studied all available documents or articles on books and journals through the ERIC database. Journals such as *Journal of Distance Education*, *Open Learning*, *Open Campus*, *Teaching at a Distance*, *British Journal of Educational Technology*, *Journal of Educational Television*, *Media in Education and Development*, *ICDE Bulletin*, *China Quarterly* etc are valuable resources.

Due to my short stay in Beijing, I had to rely on various literature to obtain a closer look at their systems and organisations. I found that books written in Chinese were most helpful in a way that they can provide information not readily available from English books because they were written by Chinese educationists working in the field. Many articles and books about the Correspondence College, People's University of China and the National Self-Study Examination were not translated into English and are therefore little known outside China. Most Chinese do not have many opportunities to travel abroad to examine distance education in other countries (with the exception of Professor Zhou), and they are fairly restricted in freedom of speech. They are also used to highlight more on the positive aspect rather than the negative ones. Therefore, most of the books written in Chinese are very narrative and non-critical. They do not compare their distance education programs with others in China or with the programs in other countries. Nonetheless, articles written by English and American educators provided very good background information to the Radio and TV University.

My sources could be grouped generally as follows:

1. A number of useful articles was written between 1982-85 about Radio and TV Universities - mainly by D. Hawkrige and R. McCormick, both of whom are from the School of Education at the Open University in the United Kingdom. McCormick spent a year working at the Radio and TV University (RTVU) in Beijing. He also travelled to other provinces, researching student views on the RTVU. Their articles, though out-dated now, provide a very useful background to my understanding of the TV Universities. McCormick reflected on the problems facing the TVUs in the 1980s and these provide a good contrast to situations of TVU today. However, some of the figures quoted by McCormick do not correspond with the figures given in the most current booklet issued by the TVU. There could be many reasons for this: misunderstanding by interpreters, complexity of the courses available, two or three-year diplomas, four-year degrees, and the no-standard definition of non-conventional universities and the distance education universities and colleges. McCormick did an investigation on students' views in one local centre. This article was particularly relevant to me because I was also conducting personal interviews and questionnaires on students.

2. Some articles on the evaluation of the RTVU after the World Bank project - Project by the World Bank had provided assistance to the RTVU in the production and transmission equipment, supplying computers, scientific apparatus and technology. David Hawridge has written a number of articles, evaluating the RTVU and the new polytechnics of China. His article with Chen Chia-Erh (Hawkrige and Chen, 1991) listed TVU's achievements. Again, there are some contradictions as to the courses offered. Their article indicated that there were no degree courses available. Yet, according to the RTVU booklet, there were two or three-year courses which were launched between 1979 - 1983. After I had done further research, I came to the conclusion that their two or three-year degrees really are diplomas and their Bachelor Degree is of four year duration. Hawridge also did a case study where he reviewed 32 World Bank projects. It is interesting to read about projects from other Asian countries such as Malaysia and Philippines.

3. Numerous papers that were submitted to the International Council for Distance Education, 14th World Conference in Oslo 9 - 16 August 1988. Some papers analysed the development of distance education in the Third World. Geoff Arger (1987) for instance, examined three systems in Papua New Guinea, Malaysia and Thailand and found that mass opportunity, national development and high quality distance education is not being delivered in the third world. Young, Perraton, Jenkins and Dodds also looked at distance teaching for the third world and discovered similar problems.

4. Articles written by Chinese commentators in American Journals and ICDE Bulletin etc.- Zhao Yuhui and Mu Xiaomang (1988) have done a case study under the UNESCO Project on the study of Asian institutions making large-scale use of communications technologies for educational purposes. Of special interests are articles by Zhou Jianshu (1990) and Zhu Liyan (1991) from the Correspondence College in the People's University of China. Both researchers write on the current issues on the development of distance education in China. Zhou's article 'Distance education Research in China' relates to the principles of distance education in China. In his Chinese article 'The Survey of World Higher Correspondence Education', Zhou looked at the distance education in UK, America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Russia, Japan, Korea, Germany, Spain, Africa and of course, China. Their articles lead me to meeting them personally in China and interviewing students and graduates from the Correspondence College, People's University of China. I was also given a few books written by Professor Zhou Jianshu which explain in detail about the birth and development of the Correspondence College (PUC). These Chinese books contained information not readily available outside China as all research or survey done by overseas scholars concentrate on the CRTVU and not the Correspondence College.

5. Six issues of "Zhigong Jiaoyu Yu Qita Leiqing Jiaoyu", a Bi-monthly journal on adult and distance education published by the People's University of China - They are written in Chinese and are not easily obtainable. These journals discussed not just distance education but also adult education, continuing education, professional education, agricultural education and discussions on overseas articles. Articles were written by scholars from various universities, colleges or workplaces throughout China. Of particular interest to me is an article by a teacher's college team (G5 1990,2.) discussing the research done on the teaching

methods in distance education. These articles were invaluable in designing the questionnaires for my survey. Another article written by the CRTVU (G5, 1990, 3) is also valuable. It is a survey result of graduates from 1982, 83 and 85. The book published by Mr. Ren Fuchang (1990) '10 years of the Higher Education Self-Study Examination System' is of tremendous help because it offers a very detailed account of this system over the past ten years. However, the information in the book is very repetitive at times. The events are not always in sequence, thus making it difficult to comprehend. The statistics in the graphs or charts do not always correspond. The author did not explain clearly the various types of degrees and diplomas available, thus making charts rather confusing. Nonetheless, it is the most detailed book on the National Self-Study Examination System and reading his book before interviewing him personally enabled me to sort out any queries or misunderstanding that I had.

In the next section I will examine the concepts and definitions of distance education both in China and outside China.

## **1.4 Concepts and definitions of distance education in and outside China**

It has been 20 years since the term 'distance education' was used outside China. Holmberg identified the first use of the term in the Council of Europe Symposium in 1972 and Flinck in the early publications of the Lund research series in 1974. By 1982, the International Council on Correspondence Education (ICCE) officially became the International Conference for Distance Education (ICDE).

There was little unanimity among educators in the definition of 'distance education' before the mid 1980s. Below are the views of some educators from 1973 to 1985.

In 1973, Michael Moore defined distance education as instructional methods whereby communication between the teacher and the learner must be facilitated by print, electronic, mechanical or other devices.

Also in 1973, Otto Peters defined distance teaching / education as a method of imparting knowledge, skills and attitudes which is rationalised by the application of division of labour and organised principles as well as by the extensive use of technical media which makes it possible to instruct great numbers at the same time wherever they are. It is an industrialised form of teaching and learning. This definition seemed to conform with the situation in China.

In 1977 Borje Holmberg described 'distance education' as a term covering the various forms of study at all levels that are not under the continuous, immediate supervision of tutors present with their students in lecture rooms or the same premises.

In 1981, Eric Gough defined 'distance education' as a means of providing learning experiences for students through the use of self instructional materials and access to

educational resources, the use of which is largely determined by the students, for the most part, to choose the time, place, and circumstances of learning.

Since the mid 1980s, educators seemed to agree that distance education is essentially a form of education in which the teacher and learners are largely separated in time and/or space, and communicate through a variety of media. In China, however, the term 'distance education' or 'Yuan Juli Jiaoyu' was not being used until the late 1980s. In the 1950s, the term 'Correspondence Education' or 'Hanshou Jiaoyu' was used for TV University courses and correspondence courses offered by universities and colleges 'Hanshou Jiaoyu' means teaching by correspondence whereby the students hand in all assignments to be corrected by the teachers. This is an inappropriate term for the TV University courses as well as for the correspondence courses offered by universities because both courses involve some kind of face to face tuition. Today the term 'distance education' is still not being used extensively in China and any definition of the term is vague.

Professor Zhou Jianshu from the People's University of China believes that there is no fixed definition of the term 'distance education'. It is still in the process of development. For example, the general view of 'distance education' is that there is a distance between the teacher and the students. How far? It could be thousands of miles apart if the students live overseas or it could be as close as students from conventional universities if both teachers and students live in the same city or town. Much of distance education in China has a certain degree of face to face tuition. This means that teachers and students are not always at a distance from each other. To Professor Zhou, it does not matter which term to use, 'distance education', 'correspondence education', 'external study' or 'home study', they all represent individual characteristics of distance learning.

Theories and practices in distance education have emanated from industrialised countries outside China and the attitude and values and the modes of thinking which are highly representative of those countries. Therefore, to understand Chinese tertiary distance education, one needs to look into the historical and cultural contexts in which distance education is situated. In the case of China, communication between the teacher and the learner by highly sophisticated devices such as teleconferencing, video conferencing or telematics is not possible. Face to face tuition is the most common means of communication. The Chinese situation does not allow for independence and autonomy. Distance education in China is certainly an industrialised form of teaching and learning, catering for a huge population of students. Therefore, students cannot always choose the time, place and circumstances of their learning. I will further elaborate these points in Chapter 7. Yet, due to the popularity of the Self-Study Examination, distance education in China is starting to adapt to a system similar to that based on the theories outside China, particularly with respect to independent and autonomous learning.

In the next chapter, I will briefly present the education system in China and the rationale as to why China needs to develop distance education systems.

## **CHAPTER 2 EDUCATION SYSTEM IN CHINA**

### **2.1 Old China**

In semi-feudal and semi-colonial old China, education was extremely backward and was the privilege of a small percentage of people who could afford it. 80% of the population were illiterate. Most higher educational institutions and specialised secondary schools were located in large cities and coastal provinces.

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, there has been a need for the government to seek methods to increase access to educational opportunities for the 80% who were illiterate. It has also needed to train millions of junior and senior technicians, managers, directors, engineers and experts in various fields to cope with the socialist economic reforms. That is why in the early 1950s, China took vigorous measures to develop higher education as well as tertiary distance education programs. This development led to the birth of the 'Correspondence College' of the People's University of China in January 1952. Later in 1960 when television technology became available, it made possible the establishment of the earliest TV universities in Beijing, Shanghai and Shenyang.

In 1957 began the 'anti-rightist' campaign, which directly followed the 1956 '100 flowers' campaign. The '100 flowers' campaign urged intellectuals and Party members to speak out. This resulted in the articulation of 'rightist' viewpoints such as the perspective that professors and academics, not laymen, must run the universities. With the crackdown on the 'rightists', Chairman Mao Zedong's view that class struggle should involve the universities and that laymen (whose politics were sound) ought to lead the experts, prevailed. The end result of the 'anti-rightist rectification' campaign was that the Communist Party secretaries, whose special attributes were their wartime experience and understanding of and obedience to the Party line, gained power over university administration and policy. With the 'anti-rightist' campaign, the intelligentsia were silenced. They only dared to say what conformed to the Party line. Academic affairs became more oriented towards 'pro-socialism' than towards 'expert' policy.

### **2.2 The Cultural Revolution**

After nine years of 'anti-rightist' campaign came another 10 years of unrest, viz. the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). This resulted in nearly two decades of turmoil, violence, activities and powerful political antagonism to academic education. Slogans that were anti-elite, anti-academic, anti-expert, anti-bureaucratic and anti-material-incentive in nature were used to mobilize people for a power struggle. 'Academic education' deteriorated in China during this period. It was believed that to control the masses, they have to be kept ignorant and obedient. The theory 'duoshu wuyong lun' (education is useless) was advocated by the Gang of Four during the Cultural Revolution. This theory had a significant influence on people's attitude

towards education. As a result, some ordinary people looked down on educated people. Professors and teachers were regarded as 'bloody old intellectuals'. Thus, at that time, few wanted to study formally. Those who did were also denied access to education because large numbers of teachers and students were sent to the countryside to labour in the fields and could not develop their skills and research interests. The universities were shut down beginning in 1966-1967 and when they reopened again in the early 1970s, 'revolutionary committees' were established as governing administrative bodies. Members were selected not on the basis of administrative or scientific capacity but on how much they have 'served the nation'. Army officers, cadres and politically appointed former university heads were likely to be given preference over people with academic or administrative skills. The liberal minded officials and academics then tried to reverse the orientation of higher education from that of being politically motivated to a more academically based approach. Finally, these revolutionary committees were abolished by the new government as the administrative bodies of institutions of higher learning in late 1977 and 1978.

### 2.3 The 1980s and 1990s

In the 1980s, academics were now in greater control of universities than ever because the academic viewpoints were completely in line with the Party's new policy; that is, the modernization of science and technology.

The 'Four Modernizations' were agriculture, industry, defence, science and technology. Universities had to train large numbers of educators, scientists, medical workers, workers in the field of law, foreign affairs and military affairs as well as Party and government workers to keep abreast of developments in modern science and culture, and the technological revolution. They also needed to train large numbers of skilled workers who would be dedicated to the socialist cause and to the nation's economic and social progress into the 1990s. The conventional universities in their degraded and partly destroyed state, simply could not cope with the demands of high school graduates and adults wanting to continue their education.

Few Chinese universities could have an enrolment of more than 5000 students due to lack of resources and only some 0.4 million college graduates were turned out annually.

Below is a chart which shows that by 1982, there were still very few university graduates in China as compared with the rest of the world.

The number of university students per ten thousand people (Gao, 1983. P.211)

Country	U.S.A.	Japan	France	USSR	Germany	India	Pakistan	China
Number	524	210	197	193	138	58	17	11
Year	1977	1976	1976	1976	1976	1976	1974	1982

Thus, it was necessary to place hope in distance education. Since this was still the fastest and the most economical way to train talented people and provide them with occupational opportunities, it was well received by the government and the people of China.

In 1979 the Ministry of Education, together with the Ministry of Radio and Television, combined to sponsor radio and television universities, with the Central Radio and Television University (CRTVU) being based in Beijing and Provincial Television Universities (PTVUs) being set up in all provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities for administering the classes and catering for students' individual needs. The Correspondence Colleges also expanded. More and more conventional universities established their own correspondence education.

Zhao Ziyang, premier of the State Council, said in 1983:

The development of television universities is suitable for China as it is an effective way of training more people at lower cost in a shorter period of time. (Zhao, 1988. P228)

In order to make education more open to everyone, the National Higher Education Self-Study Examination was set up by the Central Government in 1981. Everyone could take the state authorised examinations which were conducted by the Higher Education Self-Study Examination Guidance Committee in various provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities, directly under the control of the central government.

## **2.4 The Structure and responsibilities of China's Education Organisations**

The structure of China's education organisations is pyramidal with the State Education Commission at the top level (SEC), the Provincial Education Commission (PEC) at the second level, followed by the Prefectural/Civic Education Bureau (PCEB) and the District/County Education Bureau (DCEB).

The SEC is in full control of the education system in China. They set up national education principles and policies. Authority is directive or instructive, whereby clear directions are given by the top level to the next level down to be carried out without questioning. The PEC will implement these policies according to its provincial characteristics and give guidelines and instructions to the PCEB who will then pass onto the DCEB. After implementation, each lower level reports directly back to its upper level respectively. There is little communication between levels other than directives issued vertically by the higher level. Responsibilities and terms of reference, particularly for the SEC are hard to ascertain and though this means that all decisions are arrived at by a higher authority and cannot be discussed by anyone, the fact is that there is no delay in implementing them. Work is allocated and completed efficiently and

immediately. The disadvantage of this system is obvious: there is little input from the district or local counties and decisions are made unilaterally and autocratically. The SEC does hold occasional meetings with relevant sections of the education ministry to discuss issues on education, but those meetings are largely tokenistic because the process is a slow one and local or provincial counties have no authority to decide or change rules and regulations. In my opinion, this autocracy makes the system ineffective and does not adequately meet the educational needs of the government and the people.

## **2.5 Current trends in education**

A change is taking place in people's attitude towards education in today's China but it is a gradual one and one whose means and consequences are dubious. Because of the 'Open Door' policy in trade and commerce, a great number of people have become very wealthy. Clerks, for example, who are working for foreign-owned companies can earn up to five times more than the local teachers. Even drivers or simple street vendors can make more money than professionals. Young people are leaving school much earlier than before to pursue this new phenomenon of wealth. In the past, people had to work for six years for the government before they were allowed to venture out into the private industry. Now, this rule is much more relaxed. Teachers and professionals can find after-hours, part-time jobs. They can leave their positions at any time to work elsewhere and then return to their former jobs.

This tendency is discouraging people from studying because to do so is to waste time obtaining qualifications which will only give graduates a few more dollars a month. From the conversation with native Chinese, it seemed that instead of going to school, some young people preferred to find part-time jobs which enabled them to make just as much money as their day-time government jobs. The number of research workers is fast diminishing. One of the areas of study that attracts people is learning business English. American companies are establishing English schools everywhere in China. There are less and less research workers. The theory that 'education is useless' still exists today but it has a slightly different focus. This is because the gap between the rich and the poor has widened considerably with the rich very rich and the poor just barely surviving. The young generation has become more materialistic and valued wealth ahead of education. This change will influence not just education in general but it could well become a social problem in the future.

## **2.6 Deficiencies of the Education system**

### **2.6.1 Methods of Teaching and Learning**

From primary school on right through to tertiary level, teaching methods are very rigid and monotonous. The teacher speaks most of the time, and students are not expected to interrupt the teacher to ask questions or to give their personal views. Students accept what the teacher

says and it is considered rude if one disagrees or argues with the teacher. In fact, teachers do not encourage students to ask questions or to have an open discussion. In examinations, one cannot answer the questions in one's own way. There are standard set of answers and students are expected to conform to standard even though they might share separate views. The courses are well structured and sequential. Students get all the information necessary from teachers. Thus, it is a clearly passive way of learning and so, 'student autonomy' does not exist in China. They cannot choose the time, place and circumstances of learning. They are simply unaccustomed to choosing for themselves, let alone choosing their own learning goals, ways of learning and evaluation.

### **2.6.2 Study resources**

There are few comprehensive libraries in China. Each city has a main library. Yet, facilities are very limited, even in the National Library in Beijing. Availability of books and references are also limited. Further, the library is not yet computerised and readers have to wait for hours just to obtain a book. It is not an open book system (books on shelves) as I discovered when I visited the library in 1991 and 1992. One has to look up the book's reference number from the catalogue, hand in the code, and then wait and listen for the book to be called out. A woman complained to me that she had waited for two hours and still had not received her book. Worse still, the books do not come out at the same time so one has to wait close by for the librarians to read out the next lot of books. One also needs a special, difficult to obtain card to borrow a book. Even teachers and professors have problems obtaining the borrowing card, let alone the students. In fact, only tertiary students are allowed in the library. Uniformed guides are at the door to check the student's identity before being allowed in. However, there is a section of the library where books are actually displayed. They are for the professors and foreign guests only. Thus, it is extremely difficult for students to gain access to reading and reference materials. The students in the Correspondence Colleges seemed to be most disadvantaged because they are not permitted to use the library facilities of the conventional universities even though they are on the same campus. As a result, they must rely on the National Library. TV Universities and Self-Study Centres do have their own libraries, but books and references are extremely limited. There are also limited work unit libraries in major companies, but they have little academic material. They are mostly books and magazines on entertainment and hobbies.

### **2.6.3 Students' study environment and habits**

The students' study environment is usually very poor. It is not unusual to have two or three generations living in a small apartment. To find a quiet place to study at home is almost impossible. Students have to work six days a week. They can only study on weekends and at night. There is also a habit of Chinese students to study by themselves instead of associating with their peer groups. This is because of the passive learning they have been accustomed to since the primary school. The work is mostly memorization and this can best be done alone under the system called 'self-directed learning'.

#### **2.6.4 The nature of students**

The nature of the Chinese students is quite different from that of their counterpart in the affluent West. Students could be from very remote areas or be low academic achievers. Most are mature-aged students who have returned to study after working for a few years. They lead a very busy lifestyle. Students do not have access to modern technology nor the right environment to help them learn. All this has contributed to the development of a particular style of distance education in China, vastly different in format to that outside China.

### **2.7 Overview of the Higher Education System in China**

China's higher education is divided into the conventional and the non-conventional universities and colleges.

#### **2.7.1 Conventional**

They include normal on-campus universities and colleges whose major task is to offer degree courses to secondary graduates. In recent years, they have also been active in Continuing Education. Conventional universities offer comprehensive courses in both natural and social science while colleges focus on one of these two areas. Vocational universities provide courses directly relating to employment.

In 1987 there were 1,063 such institutions, including 47 universities and 565 colleges, 339 training schools and 112 short-term vocational universities. There were 1.96 million students in all, including 120,000 are postgraduate students studying Masters Degrees, and nearly 10,000 are foreign students from more than 110 countries. Universities and colleges geared their enrolments and job assignments to the country's urgent needs for economic and social development, and for advanced professional skills and personnel development.

#### **2.7.2 Non-conventional:**

These include:

##### **a) Evening schools and correspondence colleges**

These schools are affiliated with the conventional higher educational institutions. A total of 612,771 students attended in 1987 and they are largely part-time students where self-study is combined with a certain amount of face-to-face tuition.

### **b) Technical colleges and Cadres Training colleges**

They are aimed to turn out qualified personnel with technical know-how in a particular field. There are 337,906 students studying in 915 technical colleges. There are also 268 cadres training colleges with an enrolment of 55,768 students. The workers take leave with pay to study and the course is based on face to face tuition.

### **c) Central Radio and TV University**

This is a type of learning engaged in long-distance teaching through various media. In 1988, there were 43 Provincial TV Universities, 497 branch schools, 1550 work stations and 27,000 TV classes. In 1987, 565,948 students enrolled in full time 'all-subject' courses, with 84,111 part-time, 'single-subject' students.

### **d) China's TV Teacher-training College**

This is a newly established higher education institution especially for secondary and primary school teacher training. It started in 1986 in a co-ordinating role between regular, higher education institutions, (which offer teaching materials and produce TV Programs) and the local teacher training colleges, (which use teaching materials produced by higher education institutions and conduct the teaching administration). It has an estimated population of 100,000 students.

### **e) National Higher Education Self-Study Guidance Committee**

This is a committee where national examinations for self study students are conducted in various provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the central government. In 1988, there was a total of 2.06 million people who enrolled to take the examination.

## **2.7.3 Distance Education**

Out of all these non-conventional universities and colleges, there are three that are classified as a form of distance education:

- (1) studying through the Correspondence Colleges;
- (2) the tuition centre that prepares students for Self-Study Examination,
- (3) and the Central Radio and TV University.

In Chapter 3, 4 and 5, I will trace the development of China's three main distance education programs, the Correspondence College of the People's University, the Radio and TV Universities, and the Self-Study Examination.

## **CHAPTER 3 THE CORRESPONDENCE COLLEGE, PEOPLE'S UNIVERSITY OF CHINA (PUC)**

In 1990, there were more than 600 universities and colleges (not including training schools and short - term vocational universities) that offered programs in distance education. The Correspondence College of the People's University of China in Beijing was the first university to run higher education correspondence courses in the early 1950s. This university was the first one established by the Communist government after the founding of the People's Republic.

A lot of the teaching staff somehow had previously worked in the 'Communist - Controlled' area. Thus, they helped to train people loyal to the socialist construction. This probably contributed to the reason for choosing the People's University to conduct distance education programs.

The rationale for setting the correspondence education is to train working cadres, to raise their standard of political theory and knowledge in order to fulfil the needs of developing the economy of the country. ( Wu Yu Zhang, Principal of the Correspondence College. Tang, 1991, P.5)

The main objective is, in the shortest possible time, to train thousands of administration cadres who will process Marxist-Leninist theory and also the required knowledge for their field.

### **3.1 Four stages of development of the Correspondence College of the People's University of China**

#### **a) Establishment Stage 1952-57**

After the Correspondence College (PUC) was set up in January 1952, the first group of 2765 students from Beijing, Tianjin and Taiyuan was enrolled. There were 10 specialized diploma courses: economics, accounting, taxation, national economic policy, local trade, international trade, trade statistics, finance, banking and expenditure, which were in urgent demand at that time. In 1956, the college established a five-year degree course for majoring in economics, trade and law.

The early stage of the correspondence education was, in principle, based on correspondence education in the former U.S.S.R. in which the correspondence department was the highest decision-making body. Branch stations were set up everywhere. They were responsible for local administration. There were already objectives for training and the plan and method for

corresponding teaching, which were based on self-study together with face to face tuition, exercises and assignments, and examinations and regulations which govern the teaching administration.

### **b) Great Expansion - (1958 - 1966)**

From 1958, more and more branch stations were established. The students enrolling in Correspondence College (PUC) jumped from 3000 to 6000. Under its guidance, correspondence education entered a phase of expansion :-

i) It established its own teachers for correspondence teaching with its own teaching and research offices and responsibility for the teaching tasks.

ii) From 1960, teachers and staff started to become involved with other organisations in designing courses etc.

iii) Teachers started to write and use their own teaching materials.

iv) Continuing education was established for students who only wanted to enrol in single subjects, such as philosophy, economics etc, thus expanding the range of courses.

Until May 1966, the Correspondence College (PUC) had expanded to include nine provinces and autonomous regions such as Beijing, Tianjin, Inner Mongolia, Shanghai etc, and there were 15 courses offered, and already a total of 33,700 graduates (diploma and degrees).

Then came the 10 years of Cultural Revolution (1966-76) when most universities and colleges were closed including the Correspondence College (PUC). Following this period, the Correspondence College (PUC) was reopened.

### **c) Official recognition -**

Before 1987, the degrees issued by correspondence colleges were not formally recognised by the public and were also inferior in status to those of the conventional universities and colleges. In addition, graduates from the correspondence colleges found themselves difficult in getting employed by good companies. In 1987, there were major changes in correspondence education policy, especially in regard to official recognition of the record of formal schooling of correspondence students. Now the status of correspondence colleges is similar to that of conventional universities. These students were awarded the same qualifications as those who graduated from traditional universities and colleges and enjoyed the same appointments and wages. There were also rules regarding the responsibilities and conditions of establishing branch schools, the stages of teaching, administration and various other issues. This development greatly encouraged people to study by correspondence. About half a million

working people sit for the correspondence entrance examination each year.

A few measures in promoting the development of higher correspondence education have been taken as follows:

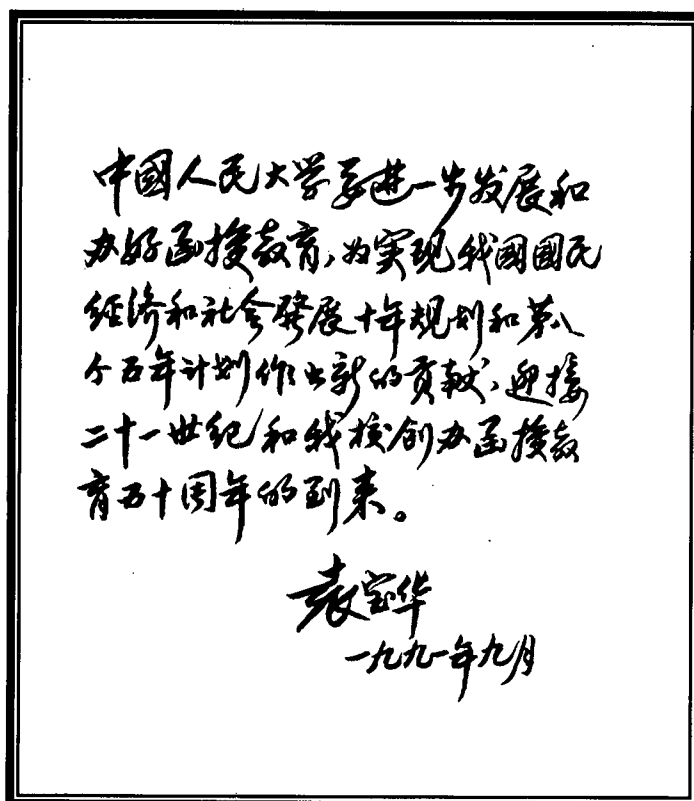
- i) founding the Third Higher Education Department of the State Education Commission of China in 1985, which was in charge of higher adult education, including distance education,
- ii) holding symposiums, with the first one held in Nanjing in Sept 1985, where its main objective was to improve the management of higher correspondence education and to draft regulations for the management of higher distance education,
- iii) establishing a Research Institute of Higher Correspondence Education and Evening Colleges, with regular seminars between delegates from 42 universities and colleges with the Director of the Third Higher Education Department of the State Education Committee, and
- iv) convening three national conferences (1965, 1980, 1986) to discuss the problem of higher correspondence education.

During the third national conference on correspondence education convened by the State Education Commission in Beijing from June 16-20, 1986, He Dongchang, the Vice Minister of State Education gave an important report entitled '*Devote Major Efforts to develop Higher Correspondence Education to meet the needs of development of the National Economy and Society.*' (Zhou, 1988. P.452)

As for the Correspondence College (PUC), it had also expanded nine of its courses and ten subject areas. Due to economic and social necessities, the college had revised its teaching plans twice, in 1987 and 1989, to make educational content more relevant to the people in the workforce. It has also employed more than one hundred full-time and part-time teachers and now has eight teaching and research offices.

According to Yuan Bao-hua, President of the People's University of China, the current aim for the future of the Correspondence College of People's University of China is as follows:

**The People's University of China should take a big step in the development and improvement of its correspondence education so as to make a new contribution to the realization of the ten year and the eighth five-year planning towards our national economy and social development, and to welcome the coming of the 21st century and the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of correspondence education of this university. ( Tang, 1991, Front page)**



*Aim as stated by President of the People's University of China (Tang,1991,front page)*

### **3.2 Analysis of the correspondence programs from Correspondence College (PUC)**

I have interviewed Professor Zhou Jianshou (ICDE's liaison in China) and Dr. Zhu Liyan (vice president of the Correspondence College, PUC) to find out more about the programs. First, Professor Zhou explained to me the All China Unified Entrance Examination which commenced in 1986. If the students passed the High School Examination but missed out on a place at conventional universities, they could then sit for this entrance examination. They could also put down three preferences for the school or college of their choice. Both the Correspondence Colleges and TV Universities required students to pass this entrance examination.

### **3.2.1 Pre-requisites for entry to Correspondence College (PUC) - then and now**

1. The students' standard has to be equivalent to high school graduates who have passed the entrance examination.
2. What the students wished to learn has to be relevant to their work and is decided by the work units. The slogan was/is 'Xueyong jiehe', that is combining study and work.
3. The students must have at least one year of working experience.
4. Their enrolments must be agreed to by the work units which are the personnel department of their workplace.

Perhaps one of the reasons for the success of the Correspondence College (PUC), is that it is very selective in its student intake by ensuring that students selected have high academic standards and some work experience. (Conventional universities only enrolled high academic achievers.) This policy disadvantages some students, as the head of the work units chooses which employees are allowed to study. Some students might be very keen to increase their knowledge in their fields and yet fail to pass this nationwide entrance examination, missing their opportunity to study. Thus, there should be more flexible rules when dealing with the education of mature-age students because experiences in work and life contribute, in large measure, to their success in studying, particularly since the courses stress the relevance between work and study.

I have interviewed eight students at PUC. Two were graduates and six students are currently studying for degrees or diplomas. When I asked them why they chose this type of distance education as opposed to Radio and TV University or the Self-Study Examination System, they all seemed to agree that most students from Correspondence Colleges completed their study and graduated. They chose the Correspondence College (PUC) because of its reputation. People's University is one of the top three universities in Beijing (the other two are Beida and Chinghua) and one of the six top universities in the whole of China, their degrees receive high recognition from society. This could also be the reason why students from all over China enrol in Correspondence College (PUC), rather than enrol in a correspondence college in their hometown.

### **3.2.2 Characteristics of the Correspondence College**

1. The course is mainly self-study with the teacher's help. Students do two or three subjects per semester and there is a timetable with deadlines for assignments.
2. At least 30% is face to face tuition - There are two half-days (8 hours per week) of tuition with up to about 90% attendance. There is a rule stating that to be able to sit for examination, students must attend 70% of tuition.

3. There is also a rule from the Ministry of Education that correspondence students will get 50 - 60 days of paid leave to go to these tutorial classes.
4. There are study centres and branch schools where students can go for help.
5. There are study groups, which schools organise, with or without teachers attending.
6. The study must be relevant to the work - 'Xueyong Jiehe'.

It seems that the Correspondence College is very well organised with various types of student support such as tutorials, study centres and study groups. The work units are very supportive by paying some or all of their fees which is RMB (Chinese Currency) \$350 per year. Students are given time off to attend tutorials and prepare for examinations. Perhaps these are the reasons, in part, for such a low drop out rate as shown in the statistics. Another possible reason is the continuing monitoring and pressure from work units.

### 3.2.3 Student records from 1980-1990 :

Between 1980 to 1990, there were a total of 16144 graduates and 353 drop-outs.

#### *Student records from 1980-1990 (Tang, P.91)*

Year	New Enrolment	Existing Students	Graduates	Drop-out
79-80	1,117	1,117		
80-81	512	1,625		4
81-82	1,158	2,779		4
82-83	2,271	4,392	651	7
83-84	2,266	6,552	94	12
84-85	5,828	11,366	1,000	14
85-86	2,877	11,346	2,087	10
86-87	1,911	10,915	2,248	94
87-88	2,208	8,410	4,674	39
88-89	2,126	8,257	2,182	97
89-90	2,150	7,127	3,208	72
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>23,624</b>	<b>73,886</b>	<b>16,144</b>	<b>353</b>

We should note that in China the semester starts in September and concludes in July the following year.

According to the chart, the biggest surge in numbers in the new enrolment ( 5.828 ) in 1984-85 can be attributed to the government's policy in consolidating the education system, in particular the late Party Secretary Mr. Hu Yaobang whose role in promoting the science and educational development in China was outstanding. People were more aware of the significance of further study.

This is also part of the reason that the drop-out rate in 1980-1990 of this Correspondence College is generally very low. In addition, since it is difficult to enrol in this College because of its reputation and its strict entrance the chance of studying there. The biggest drop-out requirement, the students really valued rate is in 1986-87 (94 students). These students enrolled in 1984-85 and dropped out before completing their courses of three years duration.

From 1986, the number of enrolments seemed to have dropped considerably due to the introduction of this rigid unified entrance examination which became part of the pre-requisites for entering into this Correspondence College.

### 3.2.4 Origins of 1990 Correspondence Students from the Correspondence College, PUC.

*1990 Correspondence students from the People's University of China (Tang 1991, P.103)*

Beijing	2,192	Henan	135	Shandong	174
Guangxi	127	Shanxi	688	Hubei	211
Sichuan	129	Jiangxi	39	Shanghai	128
Guangdong	218	Xinjiang	681	Shaanxi	209
Tianjin	500	Liaoning	68	Helongjiang	398
Jilin	263	Hebei	245		
Yunnan	392	Hunan	330	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,127</b>

These figures seemed to show that many students all over China preferred to study through the Correspondence College of the People's University of China rather than enrolled in night schools or correspondence colleges in their own hometown.

### 3.2.5 Courses offered by the Correspondence College (PUC),1990 and the enrolment numbers in each course

*Student Enrolment for Specialty Courses 1990* (Tang, 1991, P.102)

Economic and Industry	1,398	Construction Economy	719
Archives	367	Supervision	168
Finance	380	Secretarial	253
Journalism	432	Marketing	1,611
Photography	216	Foreign Business	591
Law	415	Administration	628
Accountancy	1,494	Taxation	704
Business	433	Political Theory	40
Construction	102	Earth Work	58
Statistics	65	Chinese language	1,690
Information Technology	44		
Business Administration	45		
Business management	69	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,127</b>

The chart shows that the Correspondence College, (PUC) specialises in the business education - marketing, economics,accounting and Chinese language.

### 3.26 Students' comments on the correspondence courses offered by the Correspondence College (PUC)

Overall the students from the Correspondence College (PUC) are satisfied with their courses except in respect of the following three issues:

**a) teachers** - Students are not pleased with some of the teachers. If the College can not find teachers from the People's University of China, it will employ teachers from other universities and institutes who are only new graduates and inexperienced. Students feel that the institution is not careful in the employment of teachers, some of whom have no practical experience and others no understanding of distance education students. In face-to-face tuition, the teacher goes over the main points. There is little or no interaction between teacher and students, and there is little feedback from students. I noted these conditions when I was visiting study centres and classes.

**b) subject and content** - As for the subjects concerned, students feel that they have little choice of subjects areas. The contents of the textbooks are very repetitive. They also seem to agree that the curricula for diploma and degree courses are almost identical and they studied the same thing year after year. The teaching materials should be designed to be even more relevant to their work, that is more usable and more practical. So, the college should be looking into improving and expanding its curriculum.

**c) examination papers** - Students say that the examination results do not demonstrate their ability. Examinations are still very much based on memory rather than comprehension. Further, examinations should be designed to suit adults, e.g. open book examinations which test understanding and problem solving, and more assignments.

I have found that the students' comments were very constructive. (appendix 1) They know what their needs are but the College has not been able or willing to satisfy these needs. This is probably due to the traditional approach of the teaching methods and the examiners who might be reluctant to implement changes.

### **3.3 ACHIEVEMENT OF THE CORRESPONDENCE COLLEGE OF THE PEOPLE'S UNIVERSITY OF CHINA**

When the Correspondence College (PUC) first started in February 1952, it had an enrolment of 3000 students in Beijing, Tianjin and Taiyuan. Now it has increased its number of branch stations in 19 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions in the country, and has spread to large, medium-sized and small cities.

Between 1983 -1990, there were a total of 16,244 graduates, 4405 obtained degrees, 11,839 obtained diplomas. From 1953 to 1990, there were a total of 50,040 graduates. Today, the college is famous for its arts and business education including economics, accountancy, marketing and Chinese language.

In 1990, there were 7127 students studying at the Correspondence College of the People's University including students at branch schools all over China. (refer to fig.3) There are about the same number of students at the University itself (7000 students).

The number of students (7127) shows the importance and extent of the Correspondence College within the People's University of China. Distance education courses offered by the Correspondence College were so successful that more and more universities and colleges use the Correspondence College (PUC) as a guide to start their own correspondence courses. However, the PUC is still the most popular of all correspondence colleges and has gained strong recognition throughout China.

### **3.4 Correspondence Colleges in other universities and colleges**

By 1960, the universities and colleges conducting higher correspondence education numbered 120, with 190,000 enrolments. The Ministry of Education also officially declared that higher correspondence education was a component of higher education. Several operating rules were drawn up, such as correspondence students were entitled to paid leave for at least one month a year to sit for examinations, attend classes and laboratory practice, etc.

From 1961, the correspondence colleges achieved a phase of steady positive development. During the Cultural Revolution, most of these correspondence colleges were closed down but in the early 80s they all started to flourish again.

By 1986, 311 out of 1054 Chinese universities and colleges had offered courses by correspondence. The number of correspondence students totalled 360,000. In 1987 more than 500,000 correspondence students were enrolled in more than 500 universities and colleges. This dramatic increase in numbers is due to government's increase in education spending promoted by the late Party Secretary Hu Yaobang. In 1990, there are now more than 600 universities and colleges with programs in higher distance education.

A complete system of correspondence specialties has been established. Correspondence Colleges offered in total 172 undergraduate courses and 495 specialist (professional training) courses in 65 subjects or areas of study- eg. industry, Chinese language and literature, history, science, engineering, law, economics, political science, teacher-training, medicine, traditional medicine, music, painting and dance etc. (appendix 2)

The expansion of the correspondence colleges has become an alternative form of gaining officially recognised qualifications. The Chinese Education State Commission stipulated that any candidates whose entrance examination scores are slightly below the minimum scores required by the conventional universities can automatically gain a place at correspondence colleges, which are relatively less competitive.

In the next chapter I will be looking at the development of the Central Radio and TV University and its contribution to Chinese tertiary distance education.

## **CHAPTER 4 THE CENTRAL AND RADIO TV UNIVERSITY**

The Central and Radio TV University (CRTVU) is a university of a special Chinese character. It is an open university which provides a large number of people with access to higher education through distance learning. These people are mainly workers, farmers, teachers, officials, military soldiers, high and middle school graduates and working adults who have reached the required standard of education. The CRTVU offers 3 year or two year Degree Courses for in-service adults or fresh secondary graduates and a Degree in Agriculture for farmers and agricultural workers and secondary vocational certificates for those without school certificates. Then there are free viewers who study in their spare time and sit for examinations.

If anything characterises education in China, it is that it is a co-operative arrangement between the work-place and the Central Government body. It is, by and large, an educational system that caters for the workplace and its workforce. Distance education plays a strong role in this system because of its popularity and its large enrolment. Radio and TV Universities provide the theory, while the workplace provides the practice. At the same time, the workplace determines who should study, what to study and the amount of leave they give to their workers.

The origin of the Central Radio and TV University can be traced back to the early 1960s when it was under the name 'Radio and TV University of Beijing'.

### **4.1 Radio and TV University of Beijing (RTV)**

In order to meet the growing demand for adult education which the conventional educational system could not satisfy, and to provide primary and secondary teachers with the opportunity to raise their general educational level or to upgrade their professional qualifications, the Radio and TV (RTV) University of Beijing was established in 1960. These institutes were run on an experimental basis and offered foundation courses in Natural Sciences, Engineering and the Humanities. Later on, the RTV University of Shanghai and Shenyang were established. From 1960 -1966 Beijing RTV University alone trained more than 8000 college students and more than 50,000 single subject students.

During the Cultural Revolution, the RTV was also closed. After 1976, study by correspondence had become a mass learning movement. Distance education by radio and TV resumed again under different names ' Central Radio and TV University (CRTVU) and Provincial Radio and TV Universities (PRTVU).

## 4.2 Central Radio and Television University (CRTVU)

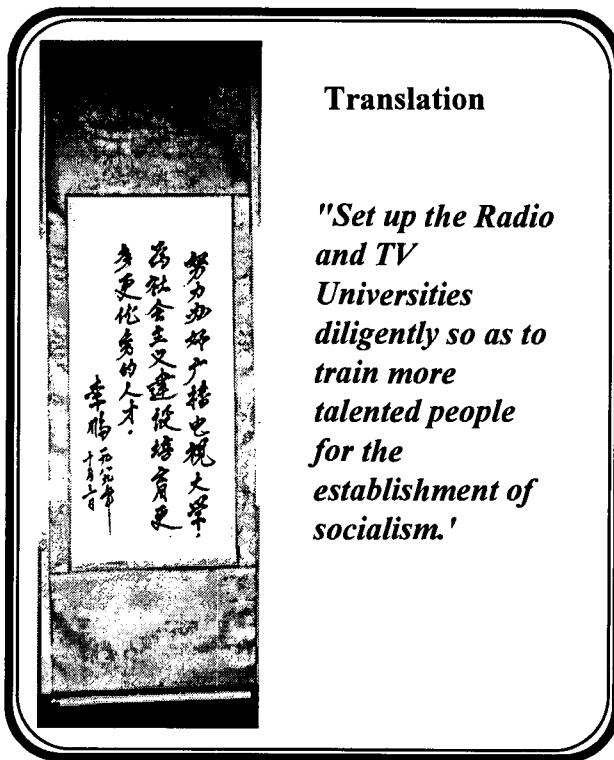
In February 1978 the State Council approved the establishment of the Central Radio and Television University (CRTVU) and 28 Provincial, Autonomous Regional and Municipal Universities (PRTVU). The CRTVU enjoyed the support of the party and government leadership as it had especially suited the needs of training a great number of specialists in a short period for socialist economic construction.

In the 1980s, there was a greater demand for the CRTVU to expand its operation to train college level graduates to deal with modernization and technological change. CRTVU has forged links with a variety of foreign and international organisations. A number of organisations have provided CRTVU with substantial financial and educational assistance. The World Bank has funded the setting up of 85 Study Centres all over the country, and laboratories, audio-visual laboratories and libraries in CRTVU and PRTVU. The World Bank has also provided funding for a large scale internal training scheme and the money for technicians and academic staff to be trained abroad. Further, the British Council has sent advisers to help CRTVU with course development, with the production of TV programs and it assisted in the planning of in-service teacher training courses.

In October 1986, CRTVU used satellite TV for the first time to transmit courses to supplement those already transmitted via the microwave network of Central China Television. Prior to 1986, all students were in-service adults who were given two or three years leave on full pay to study. The type of subjects offered allowed them either to upgrade their professional skills or to pursue a course of study which led to formal qualifications. Their work unit decided which course or training programs were relevant to their workers or work units. Today, there are fewer and fewer students of this type as the work unit cannot afford to give them leave on full pay. There are, however, more part-time students who receive one to three days off a week and have three to six years to complete a course. The fees are RMB \$300 per semester and are usually partly paid by the work unit. If in-service students studying full time fail two end-of-year semester examination, they must go back to their original workunits and become part-time students with their workunit's approval. Students studying part-time are also under pressure to complete their examinations or withdraw from their studies. Perhaps that is the reason for their high graduation rates.

In May 1986, fresh secondary school graduates were allowed to enrol. There are also Continuing Education Courses designed for students who wish to broaden or update their knowledge of specific subjects. These courses are a result of collaboration between CRTVU and a number of different institutions, organisations and bodies such as the Ministry of Finance, Beijing Chemical Engineering Institute etc. These courses provide education without formal prerequisites. Anyone can watch the TV programs, take the examinations, and get subject certificates. Such programs are mostly broadcast on Sundays to make them more accessible. Yet, these students do not get any student support and cannot attend tutorials.

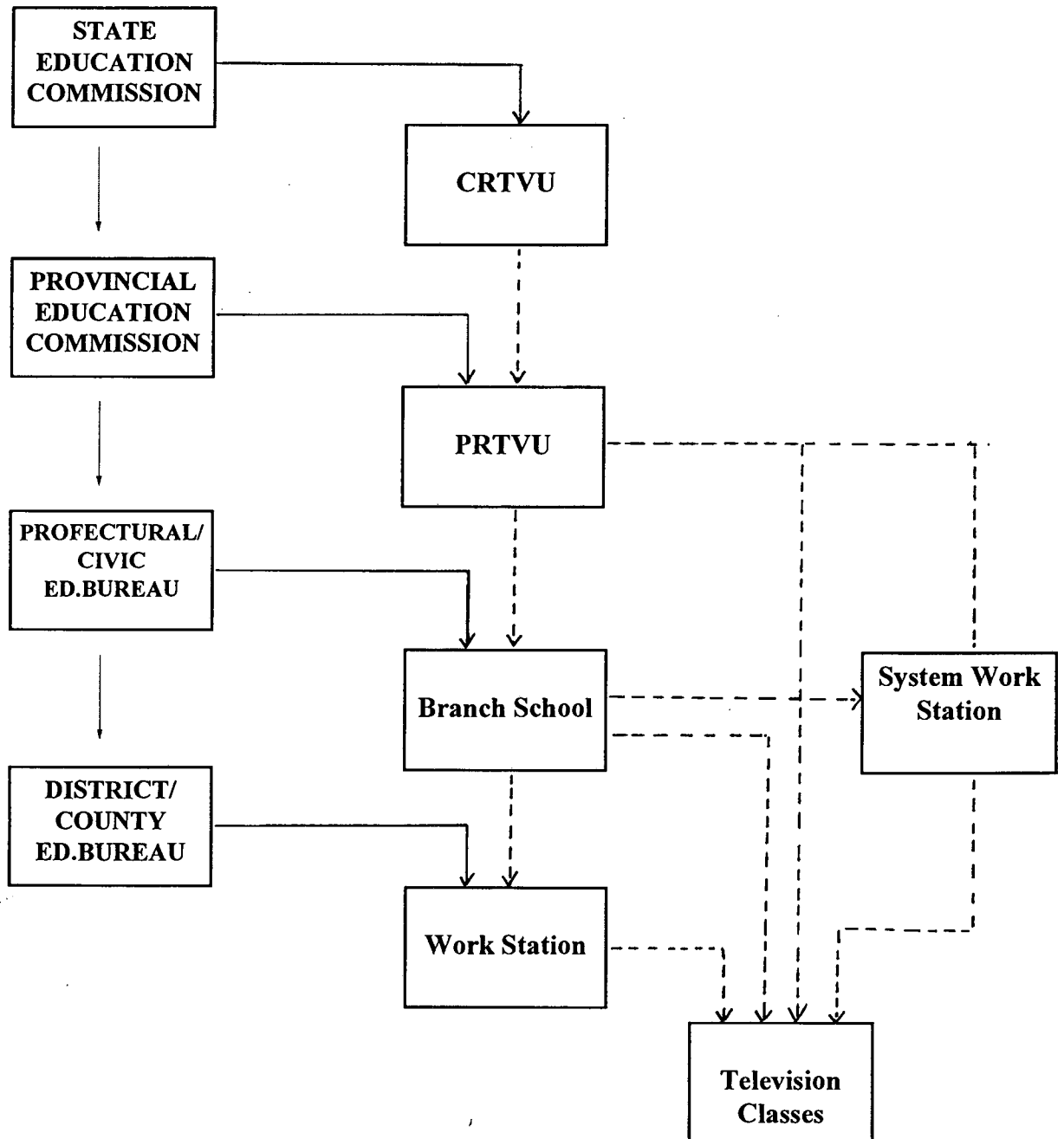
There is a scroll on the wall of the office of Mr. Zhang, CRTVU. It is written by the Premier Lipeng. This scroll shows the importance of the CRTVU attached by the Chinese government.



### 4.3 The Structure of Administrative and Academic Organisation in the TV Universities

The system used for the organisation of Radio and Television Universities parallels China's system of regional and national governments and thus is a five - tiered structure. The CRTVU, which caters for over a million students each year, is at the highest level, followed by the PRTVU, the Branch Schools, Work Stations and TV classes. Each is under the control of its local government administration. I will describe briefly the responsibilities of each level.

**ADMINISTRATIVE AND ACADEMIC ORGANISATION OF THE TVU SYSTEM** (Xie Xin-huan P.10)



—————> Administrative leadership

- - - - -> Academic Guidance

The Central and TV University is a huge organisation which has to cater for over half a million students each year. CRTVU operates under the State Education Committee (SEC) which is in full control of the education system in China. Authority is directive or instructive, whereby clear directions are given by the top level to the next level down to be carried out without questioning. There is little communication between departments other than directives issued vertically by the higher department. Responsibilities and terms of reference, particularly for the SEC are hard to ascertain and though this means that all decisions are arrived at by a higher authority and cannot be discussed by anyone, the fact is that there is no delay in implementing them. Work is allocated and completed efficiently and immediately. The disadvantage of this system is obvious: there is little input from the district or local counties and decisions are made unilaterally and autocratically. The SEC does hold occasional meetings with relevant sections of the education ministry to discuss issues on education, but those meetings are largely tokenistic because the process is a slow one and local or provincial counties have no authority to decide or change rules and regulations. In my opinion, this autocracy makes the system ineffective and does not adequately meet the educational needs of the government and the people.

#### **4.3.1 Responsibilities of the Central Radio and Television University**

The CRTVU is under the direct leadership of the State Education Commission. The responsibilities of the CRTVU are :

a) Producing the curriculum for the PRTVU and ensuring that this curriculum includes all the subjects which are recognised as of interest nationally.

Core subjects are in courses for which there is a sustained demand, which needs analyses have shown to be consistent with the interests and educational needs of students throughout China. There are 150 courses at degree level and a further 15 at secondary levels. The subjects covered are Natural Sciences, the Humanities, Engineering, Economics and Management and Agriculture. (appendix 3)

b) Producing radio and TV programs for these courses including writing, editing, publishing and distributing reference books. TV broadcasts are the essential teaching media, supplemented by reference books which are easily accessible at the bookshops. Teaching through radio especially for country students was popular in the past but now there are very few radio programs because most families have television.

c) Setting end of semester national examinations, ensuring that marking is standardized and drawing up national examination timetables. Examinations are set centrally but organised locally, and are held on the same date throughout the country. Core subjects' examinations are held at the end of each semester while regional examinations for specific courses which are produced by PRTVU are held in mid-semester.

d) Training teachers, technicians and administrative staff. Tutors with no formal teaching qualifications are used on courses where practical experience in their field is more important. In 1988, there were 9659 full time tutors, 12,474 part-time tutors and 24,157 administrative staff.

e) Doing research on higher education through distance learning. For this purpose, there is a distance education Research Office. The research outcome is regularly published nationwide in journals such as the 'Zhigong Jiaoyu Qita Leiqing Jiaoyu' and also in English journals such as 'Research in Distance Education' and the ICDE Bulletin.

f) Directing the teaching administration of PRTVU .

The authority directly below the CRTVU is the PRTVU.

### **4.3.2 Responsibilities of the Provincial Radio and Television Universities**

These are at the second level and are under the auspices of provincial, autonomous regional or municipal governments. Some of their responsibilities are:

a) Producing more detailed courses in subjects which are of specific interest to their region, including producing syllabuses, TV and radio programs, written course materials and supplementary materials for those courses,

b) setting examinations for their own course, marking them, setting the timetable for CRTVU and marking these papers,

c) enrolling new students, keeping students' records and issuing degrees and certificates, and

d) directing the teaching and administration work done in branch schools and work stations.

There are 43 of these PRTVU. However, their success is dependent upon the successful administration of the branch schools.

### **4.3.3 Responsibilities of the Branch Schools**

Branch Schools are at the third level under the prefectural/civic governments. Their responsibilities are :

a) Organising timetables for TV programs, tutorials, examinations, tests, laboratory work and field studies as set out by CRTVU and the local PRTVU,

b) setting up work stations and TV classes, administrating established courses, ensuring that teachers follow the set administrative and examination procedures,

c) issuing degrees and certificates, and

d) providing advice, guidance and help to students with academic / personal problems.

There are 497 such branch schools and they, in turn manage 1550 work stations and some 27,000 TV classes.

#### **4.3.4 Responsibilities of the Work Stations**

They are at the fourth level, run either by district/county education bureau or a particular industry. They are responsible for:

- a) Recruiting teachers and tutors for all educational programs, including the TV classes,
- b) organising TV classes and maintaining high teaching standards, timetabling tutorials, laboratory work and field studies, distributing teaching materials, and
- c) providing advice, guidance and help to students with academic/personal problems.

It is certainly not a simple task for such a big organisation with such a big number of enrolments and graduates to maintain the standard of courses, and to control the administration and to maintain the status of the TV Universities. Although governmental procedure is rigid, control of who attends the TV classes is loose. This multi-storied control tower has lost touch with the people whom it is supposed to service, the students of China. Attendance is made possible by the work units who must organise tutorial sessions, as well as time-off for the employees to watch the TV broadcasts. The decision on whether to organise all this rest with the work units and it will depend upon its size: big work units might be more inclined to do so whereas small work units might not be so induced. This organisation's structure describes a classic model of over-administration.

I think it is a good idea that the core subjects are being examined nationally and minor subjects or electives are being examined at local levels which are more relevant to local conditions; but I also think having so many levels under so many governmental departments may make the system awkward, out of touch and difficult to monitor. It would be preferable if the PRTVU had closer contact with all other levels below it. It is my impression that the central bureaucracy is too vast, too rigid and has too little contact with the great educational need in China. One obvious remedy would be to decentralise and to allow provincial administrations the authority to service this need at the strongest possible point of contact, that is, the students, the local work unit and the province. The central administration should be concerned only with guidance of a general nature and with facilitating the physical and financial needs of the provincial authorities.

## 4.4 ANALYSIS OF THE CRTVU PROGRAMS

In order to analyse the programs offered by CRTVU and PRTVU, I have interviewed two students and sent out ten questionnaires, only four of which were filled in. Their reaction could only be regarded as a glimpse to the effect of the program. In the interview, both students seemed to be pleased with the courses they were doing. They were given time off for their classes and their fees were mostly paid by the work units. They both commented on the examination papers which were not really designed for distance education adult learners. Like the students from the Correspondence College (PUC), they suggested other alternatives to examinations such as assignments and projects. (appendix 4)

In the questionnaires, students made the following comments :

- a) TV programs are broadcast only during the day and so clash with working hours. They should be repeated at night.
- b) The transmission of the radio programs is bad with a great deal of signal interferences.
- c) The subjects offered by the TV University should be expanded..
- d) The examination time should not be too close to the examination of the schoolchildren.
- e) There should be some sample examination questions at the back of the textbook.
- f) More TV tuition classes before the examination. (appendix 5)

Both the responses to my questionnaire and the relevant information given by the director of the CRTVU, Mr. Zhang, show that there are more students studying through the TV Universities in their spare time. The TV sessions and tutorials usually take place in the workplace, and whilst the government bureaucracy still determines the greater part of the curriculum content, the fact remains that workplaces have to calculate in their managerial programs, the educational needs of their employees. With the contraction of funds, however, this workplace education is also being challenged. More and more students are studying privately at home from textbooks and then sitting for the appropriate examinations.

There is another type of students who are called 'free viewers'. They are not formally enrolled in the TV University. They mainly study and get subject certificates. These students are not given any leave from the workplace and therefore cannot attend tutorial classes or watch TV programs, both of which are held during the day. Since there are no repeats of the programs at night, they simply miss out on all programs. The CRTVU needs to consider repeating the programs at night or not accepting students who could not get leave from work to watch the programs during the day. It would not be such a problem if every household had a video recorder.

on the drop-out rate of these groups of students, but it would be interesting to see if these students can successfully complete their courses without much student support from the CRTVU.

There is a much tighter control of students' progress in the Correspondence College, (PUC) than the CRTVU. For example, there are more rules in the Correspondence College as to the attendance rate of students and the completion of work requirements. In the CRTVU, nothing appears to be compulsory. Even though the course relies heavily on the programs broadcast on TV, students are not obliged to watch the programs or attend tutorial classes. They can resort to textbooks in order to pass the examination and get certificates.

#### 4.5 Achievement of the CRTVU and the PRTVU

The CRTVU and the PRTVU have provided unique opportunities to train large numbers of qualified people needed by the economic reform and social development. In 1988, there were more than half a million students studying for degrees. In that year, there were also 275,000 graduates. When one compares the number of graduates from CRTVU and PRTVU and other adult universities/Colleges one can see that there are almost as many graduates from TV Universities as from the conventional universities.

No. of Graduates from TV University and Conventional Universities and Colleges  
(Xia,1988. P.16)

Year	TV Universities	Conventional Universities and Colleges
1982	92,022	134,947
1983	67,905	68,340
1984	17,032	146,904
1985	165,204	181,827
1986	248,778	450,000
1987	178,891	375,241
1988	275,000	278,206

(Guan, 1990, Chapter 2)

**Student Enrolment and Graduates at Diploma level at the TVU (Xie, 1988. P.16)**

Year	NEW ENROLMENT			GRADUATION		
	All subject (complete course)	Single Subject	Total	All subject (complete course)	Single Subject certificates	Total
1979	97746	224725	322471			
1980	79377	80124	15950		92714	92714
*1981	---	---	---		47590	47590
1982	184973	68083	253056	92022	94566	186588
1983	235567	18728	254295	67905	61286	129191
1984	205858	11992	217850	17032	105185	122217
1985	273112	11446	285558	165204	75386	240590
1986	215200	21861	237061	248778	142015	390793
1987	130029	65500	195529	178891	11310	190201
1988	191900	@	191900	275000		275000
Total	1613762	502459	2116221	1044832	630052 #	1674884

\* No students were enrolled in 1981 due to insufficient transmission time.

# The number of students who obtain single subject certificates exceeds its own enrolment because students who fail in the completion of their all subject full course could still obtain single subject certificates.

@ There were no single courses enrolment in 1988 because the TVU cannot financially sustain the enrolment of these free viewers who have increased very rapidly over the years and placed a great strain TVU's resources.

Through the Radio and TV Universities, the doors of higher education have opened to the countryside. There are 2300 counties in China, of which nearly 2,000 have set up TV work stations. This development has generally helped to raise the educational standard of many people in China..

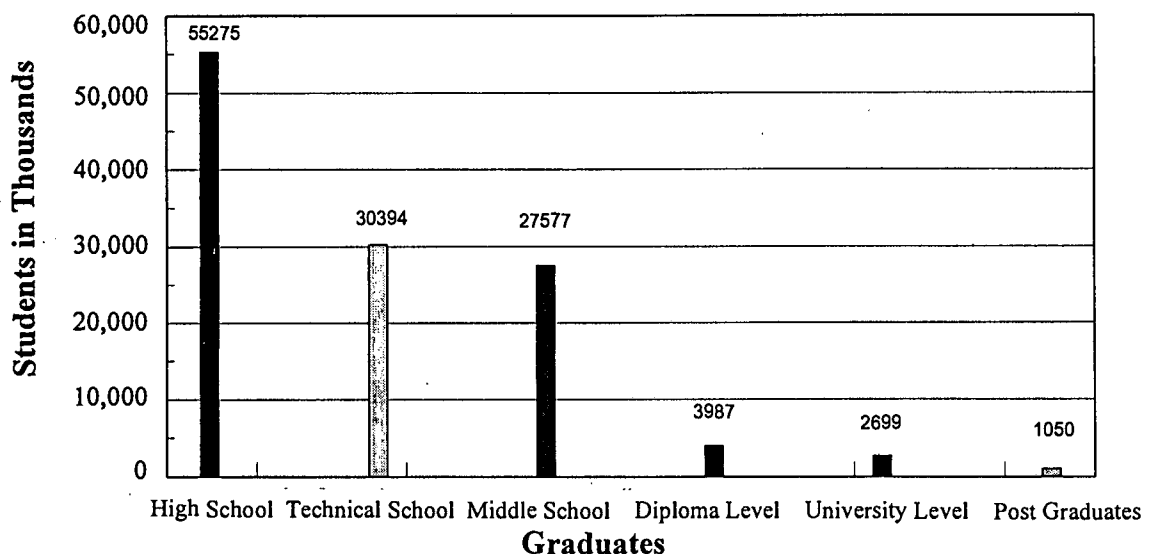
There have been some articles written about the CRTVU in China concerning the involvement with the British Council and the Funding from the World Bank.(Hawridge, 1991) But little is known outside China of the 'Self - Study Examination ' program which was founded in 1981. Yet, it is now becoming a very important means of higher distance education and I will discuss it in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 5 SYSTEM THREE : THE NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION SELF-STUDY EXAMINATION

In 1981, a new type of higher education began to emerge in China. This is called the 'Gaodeng jiaoyu zixue kaoshi' (Higher Education Self-Study Examination). There are three components to this type of higher education, namely 'self-study by individuals', 'assistance from society' (through tuition) and the 'national examination'. This type of higher education had Chinese characteristics and it also satisfied the national conditions of a socialist society.

In the 1980s, education 'to produce talented people' became the urgently needed. There were still many people who missed the opportunity to have a higher education due to the unrest of the Cultural Revolution. They could not get into either the Correspondence Colleges or the TV Universities but wanted to study. This examination system was to satisfy the needs of these people and to open up new roads for them. This development was very different from the Correspondence Colleges or the CRTVU in that the students were not required to sit for an entrance examination. There were no pre-requisites. In Beijing, students who study for the self-study examination varied from 17 to 74 years of age. Completion of all subjects would be awarded a degree or diploma.

### The Academic Standard of Students Who Enrolled (Guan,1990 Ch. 2)





*A 75 year old woman doing the examination*

## **5.1 Four Stages of Development**

The self-study examination system was established through four stages:

**a) Establishment stage** - In February 1978, the government working party report delivered on the First Session of the Fifth National People's Congress stated:

We have to establish a suitable examination system so that people doing spare time study are able to, through this examination, acquire the same standard as the graduates from normal universities and colleges, and therefore should be treated equally in their employment ( Ren, 1990. P.4)

In May 1980, it was announced that those students who passed the examination would receive certificates. In January, 1981, the Chinese State Council issued a pamphlet 'Concerning higher education Self-Study examination and its implementation'. The report listed the nature of attending students, the examination method, the administration and control, the employment of graduates and their salary etc.

### **b) Stage 1 : Initial Trial**

This self-study examination system was just introduced by the State Education Committee. In order to perform well, it was necessary to offer a trial run. The system was first introduced in Beijing, Tianjin and Shanghai in 1981. Then, in April 1982, it was brought to Liaoning.

During that year, there were 19 subjects and 36 examination centres. This new form of education soon became very popular.

On December 4th, 1982, in the Fifth Session of the Fifth National People's Congress, the motion passed to encourage 'self study to be a talented person' and acknowledged this kind of education as one of the most important forms in the history of Chinese education.

### **c) Stage 2 : The Expansion**

In May 1983, the 'National Higher Education Self-Study Examination Directive Committee' was formed with the objective of expanding this program. In August 1983, there was a conference in Kunming and the guidelines of expansion were formalised. In the second seminar of 1983, five more provinces set up examination centres, namely Xiangshu, Yungnan, Jiling, Heilongziang and Xiangxi . In 1984, 15 provinces joined in and in 1985, another five provinces were added, including Inner Mongolia and Xinjiang. By the end of 1985 there were 29 provinces and autonomous regions who set up this examination system.

### **d) Stage 3 : Consolidation, perfection, upgrading and development**

In October 1986, after two and a half years of trialling and three years of expansion, there was a second conference of the National Self-Study Examination Directive Committee and the guidelines were formulated. These guidelines included:

- (i) consolidation - strengthening the leadership; persisting in reforms;
- (ii) perfection - refining the administrative system and various rules and regulations;
- (iii) upgrading - continuously upgrading the quality of the examinations; gradually using modern technology for the administration and correction of papers;
- (iv) development - continuing increasing the courses to adapt to the needs of the society; and strengthening the scientific research in this and other examination regulations.

On March 3rd 1988, the Chinese State Council established a policy regarding the responsibility and role of teachers in 'self study' and study centres, administrative roles, courses being offered, examination methods, finance and the employment of graduates.

## 5.2 The Three Components of the Higher Education Self-Study Examination

There are three components to this system.

a) **"self-study by individuals"** - Since the tutorials are not compulsory, the textbooks are specially designed and written for self-study by students. Professors and specialists in each field gather together to write textbooks and set examination papers.

b) **"tuition by society"** - The Xiangyun Jiaoyu Peixun Zhongxin is a very good example of 'tuition by society'. Xiangyun is a company which runs tutorial classes for self-study students. The company rented a school for night classes. The school collects the fee from students to pay the teachers who are all graduates from the best university, that is, Beijing University. The students pay RMB \$180 per semester (RMB \$360 per year) for attending tutorials for three years which is the average time for the completion of the diploma course. (Conventional university full time diploma courses are of two or three years' duration.) If students from the self-study examination do not finish after three years, they can continue to attend the tuition classes free of charge. The school does not enrol single subjects which is about RMB \$50 per subject while some schools do. The fees collected from students cannot cover the expenditure. It is subsidised by the company Xiangyun and its business associates. The best feature of this school is that after the students graduate, there is a good possibility that if they are not employed or want to change jobs, they will be employed by the companies with which that the school has connections.

c) **"the national examinations"** - They are national examinations and therefore the qualifications obtained are well recognised by the government and by society.



*A group of about 20 students attending a face to face tutorial class at the Xiangyun Jiaoyu Peixun Zhongxin*

### **5.3 Analysis of the Higher Education Self-Study Examination System**

I have interviewed Mr. Ren Fuchang who is the director of the Self-Study Examination system at the State Education Commission. Below are the characteristics and the distinctive features of the self-study examination as he sees it :

1. The system is based on self-study, and therefore there is no conflict between work and study. Its aim is to raise the standard of the workers formal qualification, so the program works closely with industry. There is a close link between education and producing talents for use in the workforce.
2. Its open system allows large enrolments and it is suitable for large-scale tuition classes. This is a fast way to produce talent and to solve the problem of conventional universities and colleges in not being able to enrol all the students who want to study.
3. Investment by the government is minimal. The funding of the self-study examination allocated normally through the central, provincial to local self-study examination office respectively. Some self-study examination office can get financial support from companies, In this way, the problem of insufficient funds from the government can be alleviated. The workunits or individuals can afford to pay for the expenses such as examination fees, textbooks and tuition classes.
4. Because of the national course summary, universal textbooks, the same examination questions and examination dates, the quality of the examination is always guaranteed and the faith in it is high. These courses and examinations are still guided and controlled by the government Ministry.
5. It has no time restrictions - the subjects are based on a point system, so if the students have obtained enough points, they will get a certificate, diplomas or degrees. One student from the survey said that it was so flexible she could enrol for subjects in other courses while still doing her current course.

I asked Mr. Ren how this self-study examination system could be improved. He raised several points :

First he explained there are three difficulties for students doing this examination. The first is purchasing textbooks and reference books. A few students in the rural areas mentioned this difficulty in the questionnaire. The second issue is self reliance without a teacher's aid, and thirdly, the unsatisfactory learning conditions and home environment which can hinder the students' persistence to succeed. I will discuss some of these issues in Chapter seven.

When I asked Mr. Ren how the Self-Study Examination System could be improved, he suggested the following:

1. Do more research in the curriculum of the specialised courses - At present, the specialist courses are based upon standard university requirements. Only the teaching part is business oriented. The courses and the curriculum are too theoretical and inflexible. Therefore, research is needed to make the curriculum content more relevant, expand the specialised area to include practical content and increase the choice of optional subjects.
2. Improve the resources - More textbooks should be written that reflect the self-study type courses in academic research. Also there is a need to make audio-visual aids to complement the texts.
3. Improve the administration - There should be continuous training and assessment of teachers and administrative staff. Therefore, it is necessary to increase the workforce and financial support to modernize the examination.
4. Expand the 'society tuition' activities - The Ministry of Education proclaimed that:

According to the higher education self-study examination plan and the course notes, the country encourages enterprise, business workplace and other social support to start and expand the tuition activities using various media such as TV, radio, correspondence, and face-to-face tuition. (Ren,1990. P.11)

The Xiangyun Jiaoyu Peixun Zhongxin is an example of 'tuition by society'. Tutorials are offered by this company who rent a secondary school ground for their tutorial classes at night. Students are encouraged to undergo tutorial classes. The successful students would be considered as more suitable for employment and this is a strong incentive for the workers to study. The company simply offers financial assistance, encouragement and incentive and has no input in the course content.

If students do not want to enrol in regular tutorial classes, they can go to the public Self-Study Examination Building mainly in big companies. In Beijing, the building has four levels and the first two are for students' use. There are library facilities, a book shop, computer facilities and rooms for forming their own study groups.

I was also impressed by the fee structure. Most students work full time and so they might take longer than three years to complete their studies. Getting free tuition after three years of paying full fees is an incentive for them to continue their studies and obtain their degrees or diplomas.

Like the CRTVU courses, all the compulsory courses have the same examination throughout the whole nation but the preparation of the examination papers for the compulsory courses is the responsibility of the provincial, city, and autonomous regions. They cater for the needs of the district and the workforce. From the small group of eight students who completed the

questionnaire, nearly all chose to study through this system because of its flexibility, e.g. no entrance pre-requisites, self-pacing, not being restricted to the TV Program schedule or attending compulsory night tutorials.

In 1988, a policy stated,

The Chinese people from the People's Republic of China can enter the higher education self-study examination with no restrictions to age, sex, race, nationalities or educational standards. (Guan,1990, Chapter 2)

In fact, prisoners are also allowed to take the examination. They will be awarded their certificates after they finish their sentence. Student support, however, is simply not made available to them.

Another attraction of this Self-Study Examination is the qualifications obtained by the graduates. They are of a high standard and are recognised by all organisations. The examination fee per subject is only RMB \$5.

Also in March 1988, a policy stated,

All graduates from this system will get equal pay with the graduates from conventional universities and colleges. (Yu,Shi and Song, 1990. P.222)

The students overall were satisfied with the system. Six out of the eight students, however, would like more support from their work units such as granting leave for completion of their course or for practical work. (appendix 6)

## **5.4 Achievement of the Higher Education Self-Study Examination**

When the Self-Study Examination began in the first semester 1981, Beijing city had an enrolment of only 2935 students. Then Shanghai, Tienjin and Liaoning Province set up examination centres. By second semester 1983, there were 46 courses with 115 subjects. The enrolment jumped to 331,775 students. Of these, there were 269,395 students (81.2%) who actually took the examination.

After the expanding stage in second semester 1987, there were altogether 70 undergraduate courses, including arts, science, economics, agriculture, medicine, finance, politics, law, education, physical education etc.

By the end of second semester 1989, there were a total of 4,710,990 students who received single subject certificates, 412,394 received specialized course certificates (diplomas), 2570 received degrees and 507 received postgraduates degrees.(appendix 7) This shows that the majority of students are attracted by its single-subject certificates. Since there are more and more new courses available, I believe that the number of students doing under-graduate or post graduate degrees will gradually increase particularly single studies are transferable to diploma or degree courses ie. they can get credits and be exempted from subjects already studied. It is interesting to note that the students from the TVU and the Correspondence Colleges are not normally encouraged to incessantly further their study for qualification after qualification because all credits gained seemed to belong to the students and not to the workunits. But in the case of the Self-Study Examination, students do not need the workunit's approval to study and thus there are no restrictions as to the amount of qualifications gained.

In fact in 1988, there were more students who studied in this system than the students from conventional universities and adult colleges combined.

	Enrolment
1988 conventional universities/colleges	2.066 million
adults higher institutions	1.728 million
self study students	4.74 million

*(Ren, 1990, p.165)*

If these figures are true, they are a brilliant exhibition of the importance of the Self-Study Examination System. It is by far the most attended of all three and shows also the form of education which is available to the greater population of students. By 1989, there were altogether 30 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities which set up examination centres. Courses were increased to 97. (appendix 8)

This examination system has produced many talented people at a fast rate with minimum financial support from the government. It can enrol large numbers of students and is recognised and accredited by the government and the public.(appendix 9) There was a survey in July 1988 whereby the graduate students were compared with their counterparts from the conventional universities and colleges. They found that the standard of 20% of students from the self-study examination was higher than the standard of conventional universities, 78% were about the same and only 2% were lower that of the conventional universities.

I think this kind of self-study is unique to China and is indeed the ultimate achievement in distance learning. As tutorial classes are not compulsory, completing a degree or a diploma through this system relies entirely on self-motivation and self-discipline. It opens the door to anyone who cares to learn and achieve.

## Chapter 6 COMPARISON AND EVALUATION OF THE THREE DISTANCE EDUCATION SYSTEMS

Now I would like to compare and evaluate the three Chinese distance education systems and then discuss the possibility of combining all three systems.

### 6.1 Comparison of the Three Distance Education Systems

Criteria	Correspondence College	CRTVU	Self-Study
1.course content(relations to convent.uni.)	closely related	independent	independent
2.study times	part-time studies	day-time pay leave	part-time A/H studies
3.method of study	self-study and face-to-face	TV and tutorials	self-study,some tutiion
4.capacity of enrolment	limited	huge	huge
5.main teaching methods	tutorial assignments	TV	specially designed textbooks
6.curriculum	56 courses offered by conventional uni.	165 natural and social science courses	97 courses- science, arts, medicine
7.qualifications	degrees and diplomas	mostly diplomas	degrees and diplomas
8.teaching materials	own and textbooks from conventional uni.	produces own	produces own
9.entrance pre-requisites	entrance examination work approval work experience	entrance examination work approval	no
10.examination papers	own	national and own	national and own
11.administration	under the guidance of conventional uni	central,province, prefecture	central,province, prefecture
12. Funding	1.Allocation of State Annual Education Budget 2.Enrolment & tuition fees	1.Allocation of State Annual Education Budget 2. Enrolment fees Ministry of Broadcasting,Filming & TV	1. Allocation of State Annual Education Budget 2. Enrolment fees 3. Companies

## 6.2 Student types

Definitely all three different types of education have their own unique qualities. They do give the students a chance to improve their education and life if they have failed to enter university. In fact each system, with its own learning styles, seems to attract different kinds of students. The following is my impression of the students.

The students from the Correspondence College seem to be more educated, dress nicely and speak well. Academically they must be very good because, according to Professor Zhou, only about one in three students is admitted to the college. One is a former diploma graduate from the People's University of China and others seem to have just missed out on a place at conventional universities. All students accepted have their work units pay all or half of their fees, which shows that they are valued members amongst the staff. I was very keen to talk to these students because they showed so much enthusiasm. They were the group of students who spoke to me rather openly particularly about commenting on the program. In fact they gave some very constructive comments about changing the examination content into something more suitable to adults such as open book examinations, and assignments rather than the old style of memorizing facts. They commented on a wide area from the employment of teachers, the curriculum, textbooks etc and how the course could be improved. They all commented in front of the Professor, Dr.Zhu and their faculty head Ms. Xi. All this was very impressive in its openness. Their valuable comments could attribute to the fact that I am doing a private research rather than one for the Chinese government.

The six students from the Xiangyun Education Training Centre were preparing for their Self-Study Examination. They were young and much quieter. Only about two seemed to be more outspoken. Unfortunately, the sitting arrangement was inappropriate during the interview. The meeting was in the office so students were sitting behind the desks quite separately and not very close to me. In the Correspondence College, the room was huge and I did ask students to move their seats so that we formed a group. Most of these self-study students claimed that they studied for interest and vocational knowledge, and they chose to study via this examination because it had no entry requirements. They were perhaps not as good academically but because they studied voluntarily, they showed a lot of keenness and enthusiasm. This examination certainly provided them with an opportunity to become educated and successful. Also it was the first time that I came across students who study subjects that were completely different from what their present jobs entailed, e.g.a young man who worked in an industrial factory but was studying a 'Tourist administration' course because he foresees that this has a future and he intends to change his job after graduation. Another student works in a factory, manufacturing and developing photos and video, studies 'News' as her specialty course. She studies just for enjoyment and knowledge.

At the TV Universities, however, the students studied because of their job requirements. Although I have only talked to two students of this kind, my guarded impression is that they study because their work units want them to upgrade their qualifications. Both of these students graduated from secondary school. Their academic standard seemed low. They were uncritical about all aspects of the TV Universities. I have not seen enough students to reach a definite conclusion and although I had also asked Mr.Zhang from the self-study examination

office to find me more students to interview, it was of no avail. In contrast, the Correspondence College (PUC) staff could find me eight students at very short notice. The enthusiasm shown by these students was high. Furthermore, the students from the Correspondence College (PUC) are far more satisfied with the course and they feel a great sense of pride in studying it.

### **6.3 COURSES OFFERED**

There is a wide overlap of courses offered by the three different systems. However, their modus operandi creates their individual clientele. The difference is between using the electronic media and using the post-office, and between viewing and listening to lectures and reading those lectures. TV lectures are broadcast during the day and are therefore available to those students whose workplace has given them the time-off to watch TV. The Self-Study and the Correspondence College Systems are, of course, more flexible in respect of time and so they attract yet another type of student.

The TV Universities offer 165 courses such as engineering - civil, mechanical, chemical; applied geology, mining, metallurgy, radio and electronics, grain processing and food industry, agriculture, forestry, transportation, telecommunications etc. They also offer humanities courses such as Chinese language and literature, history, politics, library science and foreign languages. In addition, there is finance and economics, political science and law, physical education, art and music.

The Self-Study examination offered 91 courses in 1992 which included philosophy, Chinese and foreign language, law, media, statistics, finance, computer, mathematics, business administration, industrial management, building industry, Chinese medicine, pharmacy, psychology, travel administration, physics, electronics, etc.

The Correspondence College (PUC) offered 31 courses which included agricultural management, industrial management, building management, banking administration, administrative management, accountancy, Marxist theory, statistics, finance, taxation, media, Chinese language and literature, foreign language and literature etc.

## **6.4 Strengths and Weakness of the Programs**

I am going to list the strengths and weaknesses of each of the systems and then discuss the possibility of merging all three systems.

### **6.4.1 Strengths**

**The strengths of the Correspondence Colleges are that:-**

a) They are mainly based on self-study with a certain amount of time given to compulsory face-to-face tuition.

b) The students study after hours, but are also given time off to attend tuition.

c) They produce their own suitable teaching textbooks and supplementary materials for the students.

d) The passing rate of students in most courses is very high due to the support they get from teachers.

e) The academic standard is relatively high because of its involvement with the conventional universities in same campuses.

**The strengths of the TV Universities are that: -**

a) They can enrol large numbers of students.

b) They have an extensive curriculum and use modern teaching methods and technology.

c) They have the funds to employ the best teachers.

d) The students (those that the work units send to study) are not confined in space and time, as they receive time-off to watch TV lessons and attend classes. Work stations are set up at numerous locations. TV lessons could also be located in their work units.

e) They offer continuing education courses. Anyone can watch the TV programs, take the examination and obtain subject certificates.

**The strengths of the Self-Study Examination are that:-**

a) There are no entrance requirements, and it is most suitable for adults to organise their own learning time after work.

b) There is no conflict between the work units and the students as the study and classes are at night and are not compulsory. Students can study for qualifications after qualifications without content from the work units.

- c) there is more freedom in this system to choose subjects and a greater flexibility in the length of the course
- d) this system has the capacity to enrol large numbers of students.
- e) the examination fee is inexpensive at only RMB \$5 per subject.
- f) the examination is a national one, therefore the qualifications obtained are well organised by the government and the society.
- g) little financial investment is required by the government.

### **6.4.2 Weaknesses**

#### **The weaknesses of the Correspondence Colleges are that:-**

- a) students are confined to the timetable set up by the college.
- b) there is bound to be some conflict between the work units and the student in respect of the amount of time needed to release them from their work, as well as the payment of fees.
- c) enrolments are small, due to compulsory face-to-face tuition.
- d) these colleges use little audio-visual materials in their teaching.
- e) there is an excessive number of rules and regulations concerning pre-requisites and the methods of study.
- f) there are no library facilities for students.

#### **The weaknesses of the TV Universities are that:**

- a) there are too many general courses and there is no in-depth training.
- b) students' time are confined to the timetable. Part-time students normally miss out on TV programs as they are only broadcast during the day.
- c) not all students are studying voluntarily. Most are asked by their work units to study so as to gain some formal qualifications.

#### **The weaknesses of the Self-Study Examination are that: -**

- a) students have to pay for their tuition fees and this may deter some students from joining. There is a considerable drop out rate because it is extremely difficult for students to study completely by self-study without any support.
- b) Little audio-visual media is used.

## 6.5 Merging of the three systems ?

There have been talks by various bureaucrats and teachers about amalgamating all three systems. For example, in February of 1987, the State Education Commission in an article 'The Decision Regarding Reforming and Expanding Adult Education' says:

It is necessary to strengthen and form stronger relationships and co-operation between the various adult education programs and the conventional universities, and to establish various kinds of combined teaching according to the needs of the districts and the courses being offered. In order to maintain the quality of the higher adult education, it is necessary, step by step, to establish the same administrative levels, the same teaching plans and curriculum so that units and examination results in one system are recognised by all other systems.

( Translation, Fan, 1992 P.117)

As well, Fung Xunseng from the the department of the provincial adult education commission argues that it is necessary for the three distance education systems to combine into one. His proposition entailed:

1. the co-operation in their teaching methods : the use of radio and TV University to help all students from all these systems. Any one who wishes to learn can then take the self-study examination and receive certificates.
2. recognition and credits of all examination results: especially in subjects that have the same syllabuses in all three systems, and for students who change from one system to another.
3. the same unified administration : to have the same unified policy and plan under the guidance of the State Education Commission and the Provincial Education Commission.

Amalgamating the three systems is not an easy task. At present there are entry prerequisites for the TV University and the Correspondence Colleges. If all three institutions are to merge, then the first thing is to get rid of is the entry pre-requisites. Next the same syllabuses and examinations have to be written so that the examination results are recognised by all three systems. These two attempts may not be educationally sound. There are already large numbers of students studying. To keep such a great number of records in the one organisation would be very difficult. The enrolment of the Correspondence Colleges is rather limited due to the limited resources. The TV Universities perhaps can deal with more students, though the problem there is that the TV programs are broadcast during the day, which disadvantages the other students. Video recorders are not yet popular items in the family home, and no TV classes are repeated. If the students cannot watch them live at the designated times, they are of no use to them. Thus, to use radio and TV as a means of student support will be unsuccessful unless such programs are broadcast at night which is not possible due to channel limitations. Since each system has its own character trying to meet the different needs of its students, they should all co-exist. As well, all three organisations are

very proud of what they are doing, so it would be difficult to negotiate a way to merge all three into one. There would be difficulty in administration owing to the large numbers of enrolments. Nonetheless, I see the idea of co-operation among the three systems to be beneficial. Since the TV Universities have more experience in producing their own programs, and the other two use very little audio-visual media, it would be advantageous if the programs could be shared amongst the Self-Study Examination students and the Correspondence Colleges students.

The 'China TV - Correspondence College for Statisticians' shows that some co-ordination and co-operation between systems may work well. This is an example of a new future format in Chinese distance education.

## **6.6 China TV - Correspondence College for Statisticians**

### **6.6.1 Starting the China TV - Correspondence College for Statisticians**

On March 12th 1985, the State Statistical Bureau took the initiative to set up a college called 'China TV: Correspondence College for Statisticians'. This college shows how an organisation can incorporate the self-study examination system into their own TV teaching programs and broadcast on national TV to promote the training and education of competent personnel.

In 1985, there were 20 million statisticians but only 60,000 workers qualified with diplomas or degrees. Consequently, this college was begun so as to service the staff who are prepared to take the Self-Study Examinations on statistics.

The College has a different structure. It runs schools at different sub-branches all over China and has its own working stations and tutorial classes which are easily accessible to students. The branch school in Beijing, located in an old building is the office for staff as well as the place where students come to watch instructional videos or to attend tutorial classes. All students are statisticians and they are given time-off to study. Some are able to watch the TV programs in the afternoon yet if their work units do not allow them to do so, then they could come here to watch the video at the tutorial session. The working stations are where the audio-visual programs are produced. These are sent to the CCTV to be broadcast during the afternoon. The College rents an allotted time from the TV Educational Channel which shows the significance status of this Correspondence College for Statisticians. The working stations are equipped with modern facilities for the production and mass-duplication of video and audio tapes. Further, they also have connections with the TV Universities for the production of TV programs.

The tutorial classes from the "China TV" are distributed all over China. For teaching purposes, the college recruits professors and lecturers from many universities, (such as the People's

University of China, Universities of Economics, Finance Universities and Teachers' Colleges) to run tutorial classes, prepare materials and give lectures, through audio-visual aids. In recent years, the college has built up its network throughout the country (36 branches, 1100 working stations and 5000 tutorial classes) with over 3000 full-time or part-time lecturers, other supporting staff and more than 200,000 students enrolled.



*The Production room - television crew producing their own programs*

## 6.6.2 Study method

The students watch designated TV programs, do self study with the texts specially designed for them, and send their homework to be corrected. In previous years, the college used the university materials or texts but now it produces its own. All curricula are arranged to be on a par with the standard of statistics in conventional universities. In this regard, they still work closely with the conventional universities in curriculum development.

There is also non-compulsory regular night-time tuition (two or three nights per week) organised by the cadres in the statistics department. Most students take two subjects per semester and so it will take them three years to complete the course. It is interesting to note that to obtain a diploma one needs 70 credit points, while to obtain a degree requires not only 120 credit points but also passing the subject 'English'.

## 6.6.3 Achievement

In 1985, the first year of operation, there were 32,000 enrolments. By the first half of 1988, the college had issued 1,095,343 single course certificates, and 45,340 students had received certificates for the statistics profession and 24,695 students were the first to receive graduation diplomas. Another 30,000 students will have received their diplomas by the end of 1989. Now, 10 % of the staff are qualified compared with 0.3% in 1985. The college will soon start its postgraduate courses and will also provide secondary-level courses in the near future.

According to the research done by the college in 12 different branches, about 10.6% students after graduation were given promotion in their specialised field, 4.3% students became chiefs or directors and 9.3% of students were given awards for excellence. (Zhang, 1990) This type of training has proven that professional knowledge and the quality of Chinese statisticians have greatly improved.

'China TV - Correspondence College for Statisticians' is the first of its kind. It has worked so satisfactorily that it has become a model for other departments in the government, such as the Finance Department which has since followed suit and established its own college with students doing the National High Education Self-Study Examination, instead of their own examination paper.

## **6.64 Some reflections**

This system seems a very good way of training workers without requiring them to take a great deal of time off. They are usually allowed a week off before the examination. This is also a very inexpensive means of producing graduates for the nation, as the students only need to pay a few dollars for textbooks and for attending tutorials. The enrolments for Higher Education Self-Study Examination per subject is just RMB \$5. Apart from working closely with conventional universities, the college also draws upon its teaching and coaching plans according to the examination programs and syllabus set by the National Examination Committee. The students sit for the national examination, which means that their awards are well recognised by the society.

In the next chapter I will look at some of the theories concerning distance education outside China and see how the Chinese distance education fits in with them.

# **CHAPTER 7 DISTANCE EDUCATION THEORIES IN CHINA AND ELSEWHERE**

## **7.1 Otto Peters - Theory of industrialisation**

Otto Peters (1989) suggests that distance education can best be analysed by comparison with the industrial production of goods. His theory of industrialisation in distance education fits in well with the conditions in China.

China sees distance education as a social solution in which the quality of education can be preserved even though the number of students is much greater than the available teachers. Clearly, it is a form of mass education. China needs to provide systems that are made available cheaply and efficiently and that can reach large numbers of students. As a result, it is necessary to limit the content and choice of subjects which can be made available to large numbers of students.

There is a division of labour in China, in that many industries and businesses have ties with the Self-Study Examination System offering financial assistance, encouragement and incentive to students and set up tuition classes. TV Universities have a five-tier structure with each tier having its own function and responsibilities. Peters also states that the industrialised teaching is based on technical and prefabricated forms of communication. This fits in particularly well with the TV Universities education system which is based on media such as radio and TV with a national communication network that can cater for mass education.

## **7.2 Charles Wedemeyer, Michael Moore - Theories of independence, autonomy and individualisation**

Charles Wedemeyer used the term 'independent study' to describe distance education at tertiary level.

Independent study consists of various forms of teaching-learning arrangements in which teachers and learners carry out their essential tasks and responsibilities apart from one another, communicating in a variety of ways, providing external learners opportunity to continue learning in their own environments, and developing in all learners the capacity to carry on self-directed learning, the ultimate maturity required of the educated person.

(Reference from Knowles, Unit 1 Module 1, Graduate Diploma in Distance Education, South Australia College of Advanced Education P.70)

Wedemeyer claimed that independent study should be individualised, self-pacing and offer freedom in goal selection. The students should be free to pace their learning according to their own circumstances and needs and not be bound by any mechanisms of the institution. Learner autonomy also implies that learners should have freedom in the selection of their goals, the activities that will lead to these goals and the evaluation of their achievements. Yet it was Michael Moore (1973, P.663) who has discussed autonomy and individualisation in greater depth. He said that 'distance' in education is not a question of physical distance, but of individualisation and dialogue. Distance education is individualised to the extent to which learners can control the pace at which they receive information and at which they must make responses. Dialogue describes the extent to which learners may communicate with the teacher. Thus, distant learning is least 'distant' if it has a high dialogue and is highly individualised. It is most 'distant' if it relies on television, radio and textbooks with only little interaction between tutors and students. Moore was trying to set up criteria for considering the nature of 'distance' in distance education. Moore has also defined the function of 'structure' in distant learning. Structure is the extent to which the objectives, methods and evaluation of the teaching programs can be adapted to suit a particular student's learning program. Programs with no dialogue and little structure, such as independent reading-study programs of the 'self-directed' kind, are more 'distant' than programs with dialogue and structure. He also proposes that all distance education programs be measured by the degree of learner autonomy they allow - autonomy in objective setting, methods of study and evaluation. The solution is to match programs to learners so that each learner exercises the maximum autonomy and grows from the experiences.

According to the criteria used by Moore, Chinese distance education would be considered rather 'distant'. The Self-Study Examination would be the most distant since it is based on programs which offer little or no dialogue or structure.

'Independent study' and 'student autonomy' do not suit Chinese distance education because China has such large enrolments that it is not practical for individual students to have the freedom of goal selection, self-pacing and evaluation. These students need a uniform way of assessment and evaluation and the courses have to be well structured and sequential. As in most cases, the ratio of students and teachers is so large that it is unrealistic for students to negotiate the method of assesment, or goal selection. Because the education throughout their primary and secondary school is so rigidly structured, ( influenced by the rigid political and the ideological education theories) the students would find it very difficult to set their own goals. In a way, I think it is not practical for them to be given the freedom to choose their subjects simply because students are not used to do so. But if the 'freedom' is within a given parameter and with sufficient consultation and advice from tutors then it might be feisible. Still, it does not work in China at present, because there are not enough tutors to cater for all students. As for self-pacing that is permitting students to start, stop and learn at their own pace, the self-study examination actually allows students to do this, but not the Corresponding Colleges where tutorial classes are compulsory.

### **7.3 Borje Holmberg - Theories of interaction and communication**

Borje Holmberg's theory of distance education is that it is a form of 'guided didactic conversation'. (1987) Distance education is particularly suitable for individual learning, because typically it is based on personal work by individual students more or less independent of the direct guidance of tutors. Study in a distance system is self-study, but students are not alone because they benefit from having a course developed for them and also from interaction with tutors and other representatives of a supporting organisation. It is this relationship between the student and the supporting organisation which Holmberg characterises as 'guided didactic conversation'. This type of conversation can be either 'real' or 'simulated'. By 'real' conversation, he means that the communication between students and institution is made by personal, physical contact, i.e. the telephone; whereas 'simulated' conversation is the sort of contact made only by textbooks and TV, i.e. where the student is the passive member of the communication. It seems that China needs to improve on both types of conversation.

All three distance education programs in China have produced their own self-study materials. Previously, the Correspondence Colleges used the textbooks of the conventional universities but those textbooks were not suitable because they were more on the theoretical side whereas the students from the Corresponding Colleges need their subjects to be more practical. The motto of these Correspondence Colleges is 'study and work must be relevant'. The self-study examination system is also starting to produce all its own self-help materials rather than use existing textbooks. I did not have a chance to look at the textbooks but from my interview with the students, I have found that they preferred to have more exercises and self-testing exercises in their textbooks. In other words, the 'simulated' conversation is not yet adequate. In respect of 'real' conversation, the Chinese systems, there is little contact by telephone between tutors and students in distance education systems. This situation will be improved as more and more telephones are installed in every household. There is some contact by correspondence and some by personal contact through tutorials, but students, by and large, are left to their own devices.

### **7.4 John Daniel - Balance between 'independence' and 'interaction'**

This study of the theory of distance education would do well to mention John Daniel (1988) who claims that all learning in a distance system is achieved between the learning activities the student carries out independently and those which involve interaction with other people. The main functions of interactive activities are socialisation and feedback. The ideal is getting the mixture right, a balance between 'independence' and 'interaction'.

Daniel believes that the system overall must allow for and indeed encourage two-way communication between teacher and student as regularly as possible so that any ambiguities, misconceptions and frustrations are minimised. It includes having study centres, tutorials, seminars, weekend classes, residential schools etc. He also believes that there should be a

balance between independent study and rigid pacing of student work to ensure that they can study innovatively and efficiently. This theory may well be true in general terms but it is unrealistic when applied to a country as vast and as diverse in personal and industrial need like China.

All Chinese distance education programs, to some extent, involve some kind of interaction. Tutorial classes are compulsory for students of Correspondence Colleges. The programs are held during the day and most students in Correspondence Colleges as well as some from the TVU have time-off work to attend classes, so it is not a burden to them. I could see the benefits involved in interaction between teacher and students but I am glad to note that the Self-Study Examination system has no compulsory classes as the system is meant to be more flexible. If students have difficulties they can always join in the classes for some help. In my opinion, the most important thing is that the students know where they can go for help. Consequently, support groups and centres must be available and within reach of these students.

Theories of distance education as seen through non-Chinese eyes might not always be relevant or adaptable to China. Chinese formulate their own distance education programs to service their own natural/social needs under their own unique circumstances. That is why history of Chinese education, methods of teaching and learning, beliefs and customs and the Chinese way of life all influence Chinese distance education. In the next chapter, I am going to summarize the three types of distance education and deal with the future of the tertiary distance education in China.

## CHAPTER 8 CONCLUSION

### 8.1 Summary

I believe that all three types of distance higher education are indispensable to Chinese society simply because each has its own Chinese characteristics which gears with that of the nation. All people in China, if they want to improve themselves, have some options. Chinese distance education gives students an opportunity to gain qualifications, and in so doing, provides the country with a most economical way of developing talent and educating the general population.

The self-study examination is one that imposes no limitations on students. The doors of certification are open wide for everyone and though only a very small percentage actually manage to complete their degrees or diplomas, those who do are being recognised by society as high achievers and are also recognised overseas. To my opinion, it does not matter whether they can complete the course or not, the actual achievement of completing a subject per se, and of obtaining a certificate is sufficient to arouse the interest in self studying and self improvement. Clearly, this type of education gives the Chinese the opportunity, through self-study, to produce, nurture, exhibit and obtain the benefits of their own talents.

Particularly impressive is the Self-Study Examination because of its flexibility. The fact that anyone can take the examination and can afford the low costs, makes this system very workable in China. It is also economical for the government. One of its better features is the fact that the tuition classes are organised not by the government but by the local communities, incorporating industry and schools. Thus, more communications are established between study and industry and open opportunities for graduates to work in industry.

The TV Universities have an efficient way of upgrading their staff. Most students are selected to do the course and some are paid to do so. In addition, the pressure from the workunits contribute greatly to their completion of their courses. Therefore, the percentage of successful graduates is very high.

As for the Correspondence Colleges they are also indispensable. These colleges work very closely with the conventional universities and they accept many students who have narrowly missed out on a place in those universities. Their curricula corresponds closely to the conventional universities and the standard is therefore very high.

There are limitations and restrictions in the Radio and TV Universities and the Correspondence Colleges. These institutions insist that students obtain approval and permission from their work units prior to their enrolment and the workunits insist that the student's choice of subjects is relevant to that unit's needs. The workplace, therefore,

determines the course which a student may study. This also implies that it is difficult for anyone to change his or her career through study. The way out of this dilemma for the student is the 'Self-Study' Examination which allows anyone to study any course or take any examination which is available.

## **8.2 Future of Tertiary Distance Education in China**

On the basis of this study, I believe there is a considerable potential in Chinese tertiary distance education provided that it is developed along lines that are suitable and applicable to China's national circumstances. China still has a huge population of 1.3 billion people, its economy is still fairly backward, and its scientific techniques remain under-developed. According to an article by Liao Jingfa ( ), the national average education of people is only 4.2 years in 1988, the national average education for workers is no more than lower secondary level. Out of the population of 1.1 billion in 1988, nearly 25% were illiterate. Consequently, China must develop its own distance education system with Chinese characteristics. To achieve this development, China needs to continue to:

1. consolidate, improve and develop the associate diploma level, then the undergraduate courses and steadily develop the tertiary level of education. China must continue to raise the standard of teaching, and the teaching methods of the Radio and TV Universities,
2. develop the various types and standards of non-degree courses, specialized courses, certificates, professional post-training, single subject certificates and specialized technical training according to the practical needs of the nation and society,
3. explore and encourage the co-ordination of Radio and TV Universities, the Correspondence Colleges and the Self-Study Examination with the conventional universities, especially in the basic courses. The conventional universities, Correspondence Colleges and Self-Study Examination can make use of the TV programs of the CRTVU to upgrade the quality and efficiency of their own courses, while CRTVU can make use of the specialized teaching staff and the teaching facilities of the conventional universities to improve the quality of their teaching,
4. explore a way to educate people from the countryside, to train elementary and intermediate levels of technicians, administrative personnel and skilful labourers, according to the agricultural needs and the development of rural enterprises,
5. develop further Continuing Education for graduates of high school and university, whereby the content and subject areas correspond to economic and social needs.
6. develop vocational courses for students who have not finished high school,
7. improve the quality of teaching by combining a variety of teaching methods such as radio, TV, correspondence study, self-study, and face to face tuition,

4. explore a way to educate people from the countryside, to train elementary and intermediate levels of technicians, administrative personnel and skilful labourers, according to the agricultural needs and the development of rural enterprises,
5. develop further Continuing Education for graduates of high school and university, whereby the content and subject areas correspond to economic and social needs.
6. develop vocational courses for students who have not finished high school,
7. improve the quality of teaching by combining a variety of teaching methods such as radio, TV, correspondence study, self-study, and face to face tuition,
8. improve the quality of the production of TV programs, to write teaching and audio-visual materials according to the special needs of distance education students, and to the relevance and practical uses of the course,
9. increase the training of a team of distance education teachers, technical and administrative personnel,
10. reform, evaluate and strengthen distance education, establish testing centres, research the policies and principles of distance teaching, and gradually develop distance education with the above Chinese characteristics.

Meanwhile, the phenomenon of some people pursuing wealth in sacrifice of education will in some ways impair the future development of distance education in China. People will lose their enthusiasm in obtaining knowledge. Fewer people will enrol in distance education and the government will not succeed in its endeavour to elevate the educational standard of the whole population. So far, the government has taken some measures to cope with the situation, such as raising the salaries of educators, improving their living conditions and stressing the importance of education among the younger generation through propaganda. These measures have taken some effect but ,I think, are far less than enough. The government should provide more opportunities and greater access for graduates to better jobs , promotion track and wealth. It should invest and provide more resources to education in general and plow the seed that education is the only way to improve the economy.

I have great confidence that China can and will raise its levels of economy, literature, industry, and agriculture by mass education through distance education. With the increased availability of television and video recorders in the countryside, more and more people will gain access to educational opportunities. Once again, I think the 'STUDY FEVER' that occurred in the '80s will continue to flourish right through into the 21st century and beyond.

## APPENDICES

- (1) Responses from the interview of eight students at Correspondence College, PUC
- (2) Courses at the Correspondence College , Fangyang p.218
- (3) Core Courses offered by the CRTVU, Xin Xin-huan (1989) p.14
- (4) Responses from the interview of students at CRTVU
- (5) Survey results from the questionnaires of students at CRTVU
- (6) Survey results from the questionnaires of students of the Self-Study Examination
- (7) Statistics on the number of students sitting for the Higher Education Self-Study Examination at the second half year 1989, Ren Fuchang (in Chinese) p.136-137
- (8) Courses offered by the Self-Study Examination, Ren Fuchang (in Chinese) p.126-133
- (9) A chart that shows the number of candidates who took the Self-Study Examination between 1981 - 1988 in each province, Ren Fuchang (in Chinese) p.134-135

## **Appendix 1 Responses from the interview of eight students at Correspondence College, PUC**

### **Interview with eight graduates and students from the Correspondence College (PUC).**

The following are questions that I asked the eight students from the Correspondence College, PUC.

1. Introduce themselves - their age, their place of work, their current studies at the College, their year level, their reasons and aims of studying and their reasons for choosing Correspondence College etc.
2. Introduce their day's timetable - working time, TV watching time, studying time, group tuition time etc. Is it a good balance?
3. What kind of difficulties they have encountered since they enrolled?
4. If they have difficulties in their study, where do they go to?
5. After they graduate, are there any changes in their work, pay, position, social status etc ? What kind of change?
6. Do their qualifications have the same status as conventional universities? If not, how can they be equal in status?
7. With which part of the course are they satisfied, timetabling, textbooks, teaching methods, tuition, administration, examination etc ?
8. Which part that needs improvement- administration, student contact, textbooks, student support, teaching methods and aids, examination system etc?
9. Any other comments?

## SURVEY RESULTS

**Student A**, 39, male, married, works in China's Technology Export Company - He graduated from secretarial studies. This student's reason for study was because of the Cultural Revolution which denied him of access to education. He felt a lack of knowledge and wanted to improve himself so as to make his job easier. There are other personal reasons such as improving self-esteem and status etc.

**Student B**, 24, female, single, works in the information sector of the Railway Modern Engineering Department, studying finance. She studied three years at a university set up by the people (Mingban University), but it was not recognised so she chose to study at the Correspondence University here. She is a first year student and her work unit agreed to pay RMB \$650 fees for her.

**Student C**, male, 28, single, works in the office of the famous tourist attraction Yihe Yuan - His reason to study is to learn new ideas and technology, such as operating computers, to improve efficiency. He is studying for a degree and has chosen People's University Correspondence College because it is nationally recognised.

**Student D**, male, 23, single, a graduate, works in the Beijing Leather Technical School's leather research department - In 1992, he became a member of the delegate for the country's adult education committee. He did not get a place at university. Instead, he chose to study by correspondence rather than the Self-Study Examination because it had face-to-face tuition. The work units gave him two afternoons off to study but he had to pay the fees himself.

**Student E**, female, 25, single, a graduate, formally worked in the Beijing Police Department, now works in an import-export company as a typist - She did a secretarial course. Her reason for study was to learn modern technology, such as the use of a computer to help her with her work. She mentioned that the study enabled her to change her job.

**Student F**, 39, female, married, works in the People's University's Archives Department - She is in her third year of study and her reason to study was to learn new ideas. Her work unit gave her time off to study and paid half of the fees.

**Student G**, 25, female, married, works in the office of the People's University of China. She received a diploma from People's University and is now studying for a degree. She is studying a secretarial course and her work unit also pays half of her fees. She would like to see Correspondence College offers Masters Degree in future.

**Student H**, 28, female, works as a secretary in a technology office in Beijing - She was originally a graduate student with a degree in machine manufacturing in Canton, but now she works as a secretary. The student is not familiar with the secretarial job, so she is now studying this course in her spare time to increase her knowledge.

The above responses from the interview confirmed many points made by Professor Zhou, such as, their study must be relevant to their job, that they must get their work unit's approval before they can get some time off and they must have at least one year's working experience etc.

We then had a casual talk on all areas of the courses. First, the students mentioned that there were two half-days of face-to-face tuition where the teacher talked at all times. The students seemed to say that they were not used to the eight hours of tuition per week on top of their full-time work during the day. The media used were mainly video, and computer for business and secretarial activities. The main difficulties for students were finding time to study. As for the graduates, they were much better off and some graduates had gone abroad to further their studies. They mentioned that there are five types of adult higher education students - the students from Correspondence colleges, TV Universities, Self-Study Examination, Night Universities and Workers and Cadres Colleges. Most students from the Correspondence Colleges completed their courses and graduated. Very few students graduate from the Self-Study examination but if they do, they are qualified to go abroad. The conventional universities are better in subjects like English and Mathematics. Rather than concentrate on the question of the status of the degree or diploma compared with the conventional universities, we were side-tracked by the degree of difficulty of the examination paper. Students all seemed to agree that in some subjects, the correspondence college examination is even harder and the standard much higher than conventional universities, particularly in practical subjects.

## Appendix 2

### Courses at the Correspondence Colleges Fangyang P.218

FACULTY	SPECIALITY COURSES	DEGREES	DIPLOMAS
ENGINEERING	Geology	7	13
	Mineralogy	8	11
	Metallurgy	2	6
	Mechanical	4	2
	Tools and Equipment	8	9
	Heating	3	8
	Electrical	6	17
	Electronics	7	16
	Communications	4	9
	Earth Work	9	8
	Hydraulics	6	2
	Survey	4	4
	Environmental	1	5
	Chemical	5	17
	Light Industry	2	29
	Textiles	4	2
	Transport	2	10
	Management	3	30
Mathematics	0	4	
SCIENCE	Physics	0	4
	Chemistry	0	3
	Geophysics	0	2
	Biology	0	4
	Others	0	1
AGRICULTURE	Basic Agriculture	0	3
	Botanic Production	11	12
	Zoological Production	0	5
	Aquatic Products	0	3
	Economic Management	1	8
	Agricultural Management	3	1
	Veterinary	2	4

	Resource/Environment	3	3
FORESTRY	Forest Management	3	3
	Resource/Environment	3	3
	Forestry Engineering	1	2
	Forestry Processing	0	3
	Economic Management	0	1
MEDICINE	Basic Medicine	0	0
	Precautionary Medicine	0	2
	Operational Medicine	0	3
	Chinese medicine	0	6
	Pharmacy	1	1
SOCIAL	Chinese language and literature	2	4
EDUCATION	History	0	5
	Philosophy	0	1
	Sociology	1	4
	Journalism	1	4
	Archives	4	7
	Politics	1	13
	Political Education	1	3
	Law	1	14
	Economic Management	10	75
	Foreign Language and literature	0	9
	Art	0	7
TEACH.TRAIN'G	Teachers Training	13	23
PHY.EDUCAT'N	Physical Education	1	5
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>172</b>	<b>495</b>

### Appendix 3 CORE COURSES OFFERED BY CRTVU

COURSE	SUBJECT AREA	SPECIALIZATION	LAUNCHED IN
DEGREE	Engineering	Mechanical	1979
		Electronics	1979
		Electrical	1979
		Light Industry	1984
		Civil Engineering	1984
		Applied Computer Management	1986
		Management	1984
	Humanities	Chinese language / literature	1982
		Law	1984
		Journalism	1985
		Library / File Science	1985
		Cadre Course	1984
		Teacher Training	1988
		Economics and Management	Banking
	Statistics		1983
	Management		1983
	Finance		1983
Taxation	1983		
Agriculture	Fish Farming	1988	
	Animal Breeding	1988	
VOCATIONAL IN-SERVICE	Engineering	Civil	1986
		Accounting	1987
		Banking	1988
		Puocuratorship	1988
		Librarianship	1988

## **Appendix 4**

### **Responses from the interview of two students of the CRTVU**

The first student is a male, 30, single. He works in the principal's administrative office of the CRTVU. Chinese language is his specialty course. He is only a secondary school graduate and is now studying for his diploma. The student is in his second year of study and he studies mainly to improve his work standards. He has to pay one-third of his school fees. He chose TV University because he worked there and felt that the qualifications obtained were equal in status with conventional universities. He said there are 30 work stations in Beijing and every week he went there two half-days for face-to-face tuition. Sometimes the students watched TV during this time. Then he spent at least two hours a day studying after work. He is quite happy with the textbooks. There are exercises that need to be handed in. The course is very practical and is relevant to his work. In the art subjects, the media used were video, audiovisual, radio and TV. There are 20 odd students in his class. The student said he is very adaptable so he can adapt to the examination system. He did suggest that assignments should be part of the examination marks.

The other student is a female, 31, single. She graduated one and a half years ago and works in the railway department. She was a high school graduate who did three years of study and obtained a diploma majoring in Chinese studies. She was fortunate. Her work unit paid the full fees for her. She said in her class of 20, that there were only two or three students whose fees were paid by their work units. Most of them had to pay 80% of the fees. She also said that some students were not given any time off from work. Some students even had to take leave and lost some pay and benefits in order to study to have a better future. She also did not have much comment about the TV University except that there were too many subjects and she was too nervous, particularly at examinations. Thus, she suggested other alternatives to examinations, such as assignments and projects.

## **Appendix 5**

### **Survey from the questionnaires of four students of the CRTVU**

Two of the students are male, two are female. Two are unmarried in the early 20s, and two are married in their late 30s. Two are working in the post office, one is a research worker and the other is a teacher. They are all in the second or final year of their course.

Below is a summary of the survey:

#### **1. Reasons for study:**

All students except one studied for their interests and to increase knowledge. One said that if a person doesn't study, he or she would go backwards. Only by continuing learning can one be useful to the society. One of the student studied because he was asked by the work unit to do so.

#### **2. Reasons for choosing the TV University :**

Three agreed that the standard of the TV University was higher than other correspondence education. One also said that his work unit only recognised the qualifications of the TV University. One said that he had no choice.

#### **3. Amount of time spent :**

- a) watching TV : None. One did not answer. (Most likely they were not given time-off during the day)
- b) attend tutorial classes: Two said between 6 or 7 hours, one did not answer and one said none at all.
- c) self-study : Three of them studied between 7 to 10 hours a week. One did not answer. When asked how the time could be organised to achieve efficiency, only one student said there should be about 4 hours of watching TV programs and 12 hours of tuition.

#### **4. Tutorial Classes:**

Students were happy with the teaching methods and the tutorial classes where teachers were available to answer their questions. One had no comment.

#### **5. Textbooks:**

Students were pleased with the sequence and content and basically the text itself where there was a brief summary at the back of each chapter and a list of references.

#### **6. Media that help in their study:**

Three students used audiovisual tapes, one used computer to assist his academic research and one listened to radio programs.

#### **7. Self-help groups:**

Only one student said positively that he attended self-help groups and that there was a teacher who helped them. Others do not know of any self-help groups

**8. Time to study:**

Three students said they did not have sufficient time to study.

**9. Getting help:** Two said from friends, one from the tutorial classes, and one said he had nowhere to go for help.

**10. Examination system:**

They were pleased overall with the examination system, the degree of difficulty, the scoring, the examination questions, the listed objectives and use of the same examination for the whole country.

**11. Qualifications at the end of their course:**

All agreed that it would raise their social status and increase their knowledge.

**12. Recognition of their qualifications:**

They agreed that the degrees or diplomas from the TV Universities should have the same status as the conventional universities. In reality they are not. They should also be able to share the same resources such as the use of libraries.

## Appendix 6

### Survey from the questionnaires of the students from Self-Study Examination

#### Survey from the eight students of Self-Study Examination

The questionnaires contain the following points and the results are summarized as follows:

- 1. Reasons for study** - Two students indicated that it was purely for interest and knowledge. All other students studied for qualifications as well as seeking knowledge and for interests. Only three wanted to raise their social status and for promotion with better pay. One student, who is a teacher, stated that she wanted to raise her cultural standard and to do a better job at teaching.
- 2. Reasons for choosing to study through the Self-Study Examination** - Nearly everyone chose this system because of no entrance pre-requisites, self-pacing, not having to be restricted to the TV Program schedule or attending night classes and the qualifications obtained are of a high standard and are recognised by all organisations. Only one student mentioned that the standard of 95% for subjects is of diploma level rather than degree level.
- 3. Aims of study** - Two students were aiming for obtaining degrees, three at diplomas and three studied for knowledge and interests only.
- 4. News about the program** - All six students from Beijing heard about this program from newspapers and friends, but the two from a smaller town heard about this from friends who had done the course.
- 5. Fees** - They all paid for their own examination fees. Enrolment fees for each subject is RMB \$5.
- 6. Hours of study per week** - Most of them studied 6 - 12 hours per week, one student studied between 0 - 5 hours and two over 16 hours.
- 7. Difficulties since enrolment** - One student had no difficulty, one had difficulty in obtaining textbooks (in country town). Seven of the eight students had difficulties finding time to study.
- 8. Textbooks and Reference books** - Three of the eight students were completely happy with all aspects of the text and reference books, the format, layout, contents, examples, language used etc. They are also cheap which are normally around ten yuan (A\$1.50). Three had no comment at all. The other two were happy with the content and text itself.
- 9. Examination** - Six students mentioned that they were pleased with the national examination, which is the same exam for the whole country. One student was happy with all aspects of the examination, the exam dates, degree of difficulties, marking system and objectives etc.

**10. Administration** - All students agreed that the enrolment was easy and fast and some said that information was easily accessible.

**11. Media** - TV programs, tapes and computers were used. No other media were mentioned.

**12. Help available** - Five of the six in Beijing indicated that the local teachers and schoolmates were of great help. Out of the two students from the country, one had no help at all, though he indicated that he would attend tutorials if available and one received help from classmates.

**13. Tutorials** - Nine indicated that they would attend tutorials if available.

**14. Tutorials helpful?** - All were positive that the tutors were helpful and one wasn't certain.

**15. Qualifications at the end of study** - Three students indicated that it would improve their job situation, promotion, etc. Five indicated that it would improve their self esteem and knowledge and be highly respected by people and organisations while two agreed with all items listed, including having a qualification equal to that of a university degree or diploma.

**16. Status of examination** compared with that of conventional universities and colleges - Four thought that it should be equal, and that the examination paper should be the same so as to achieve the same status. But in reality, it is not. In some circumstance, some workunits clearly indicate that only applicants who have conventional university degrees are eligible to apply for the job. It should also lead to a place at universities. One had no comment. Two mentioned about sharing resources.

**17. Practical Work** - Half of them said they would take leave to complete practical requirements (about 30% of the course) in some courses Five mentioned about completion of practical requirements at home or at work.

**18. Relevancy of practical work** -All believed the knowledge obtained was beneficial and useful in the understanding of the subject matter.

**19. Compulsory?** - All shared the same opinion that it should be compulsory.

**20. Language course** - Apart from the two who were not studying a language, it seemed that the rest of the students had the opportunity to use their newly acquired language in their work units, with other students or at home.

**21. Exercises** - Five out of eight students did regular exercises for the tutors to correct. Two thought that there should be oral component in a language course.

**22. Program improvement** -

**Administration** -

1. more efficient in the communication with students
2. more efficient in the handling of students' assignments and examination results.

**Textbooks** - Only one mentioned that it was hard to purchase textbooks. Most students expressed the need for more up-to-date information and ideas, and that the teaching materials should be more relevant to the work units and daily applications. Four mentioned about having more textbooks appropriately designed for self study with frequent and self-correcting examples.

**Media** - Three students had no comment while others thought there should have a variety of media in addition to print and text. Audiotapes should be done more professionally.

**Student support** - One had no comment at all. Six students asked for more support from the work units such as granting leave for completion of the course or for practical work. Students thought it was a good idea to have a centre where students could drop in for help and form study groups.

**Examination system** - One student had no comment. Five students thought that degrees and diplomas obtained should have equal status with those in conventional universities and colleges. The other two would like examination centres to be more easily accessible.

#### **General Comments -**

One student mentioned that the standard of this examination was not as high as that of conventional universities and therefore its standard should be raised. Another student noted that the equipment and the facilities were simple and crude, the standard not high enough and there was little student support. The other students had no comment.

One student, whom I met on the night of my visit, came to this school to enquire about the tuition classes. He had already studied one year at another tuition centre but he was not pleased with it. He commented that there was a lot of tuition conducted by various business or organisations, but all their teaching methods were not up-to-date. Some of these organisations set up classes for their own benefit, using the students' fees as a money making business. There was not enough care and consideration given to the students' learning. He is looking for a centre where teachers have a sense of responsibility and use modern teaching methods. Furthermore, he likes this Self-Study Examination because it reflects clearly the standard of one's learning and the qualifications obtained are very useful.

## Appendix 7 Statistics on the number of students sitting for the Higher Education Self-Study examination at the second half year 1989 (Ren, 1990 P.136-137)

Provinces	Students #	Number	Subject Cert.	Diploma		Degree	
				This Time	(Accum.) *	This Time	(Accum.)
Beijing	31,707	19,029	121,066	1,531	1,414,588	27	147
Tianjin	16,552	9,495	57,654	1,056	11,308	21	50
Hubei	70,226	42,839	107,112	3,637	16,105		
Shanxi	58,234	37,196	444,615	2,632	12,138		
Inn.Mong.	16,339	9,899	24,200	521	3,084		
Liaoning	71,569	49,269	189,849	4,860	55,449	55	74
Jilin	38,121	30,882	108,454	2,292	16,827		
Heilongjiang	32,104	21,619	123,913	2,159	17,594		
Shanghai	18,508	11,588	409,106	2,104	13,433		118
Jiangsu	84,959	47,024	341,075	4,267	29,355		74
Zhejiang	32,512	19,351	172,338	22,829	12,654		9
Anhui	69,081	40,128	298,250	3,974	14,736		
Fujian	23,879	13,333	42,615	1,427	8,937		
Jiangxi	41,128	27,319	62,055	1,839	10,814		
Shandong	54,633	36,437	201,830	2,554	20,260		
Henan	66,063	46,003	110,858	3,235	13,521		
Hubei	74,853	51,275	908,391	6,445	33,268		
Hunan	72,569	40,726	169,521	2,688	19,412		
Guangdong	29,352	20,404	105,480	1,769	21,394		
Guangxi	49,347	31,318	91,721	2,484	11,779		
Sichuan	103,112	52,898	166,488	3,282	21,554		
Guizhou	11,377	11,188	6,392	391	3,269		
Yunan	25,010	15,506	61,971	849	8,811	1	35
Xizang	335	242					
Shaanxi	54,758	32,615	158,802	2,225	11,907		
Gansu	22,206	11,495	46,605	1,024	5,980		
Qinghai	2,131	1,050	5,517	222	2,242		
Ningxia	2,813	1,684	26,096	191	1,022		
Xinjiang	82,877	32,115	144,671	1,515			
Hainan	1,970	1,275	4,345	158	953		
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,583,256</b>	<b>76,520,236</b>	<b>4,710,990</b>	<b>64,160</b>	<b>412,394</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>507</b>

# All numbers under the columns are referred to student number.

\* 'Accumulate' means the number of students obtaining subject certificates, diplomas and degrees are added up year after year since 1981.

## Appendix 8

### Courses offered by the Self-Study Examination (Ren, 1990. P.126-133)

#### Courses offered by the National Higher Education Self-Study Examination

( A sample of 20 out of the 97 courses offered. A sample of 5 out of the 30 provinces )

Courses	Provinces and Autonomous Regions				
	Beijing	Shanghai	Tianjin	Inn. Mong.	Anhui
Chinese Lang./Literature	*	*	*	*	*
Journalism	*	*			*
English Language	*	*	*	*	*
Secretarial Studies		*	*		
Cadres Education	*	*	*	*	*
History		*		*	
Psychology	*				
Industrial Economics	*			*	*
Accountancy	*	*	*	*	*
Finance	*	*	*		
Japanese Language		*	*		
Demography	*	*	*	*	*
Taxation		*	*		
Mathematics	*	*			
Computer Application	*	*	*	*	*
Custom	*	*	*	*	*
Mongolian Language				*	
Educational Administration		*			
Price Valuation	*	*	*	*	*
Physics	*				
Textiles			*		
Chinese Medicine	*	*	*	*	*
Sociology	*				
Pharmacy			*		
Meteorology	*				
Nursing	*				
Safety Management		*			
Construction	*				*
Mechanical Engineering		*			
Statistics	*	*	*	*	*
Economic Planning	*	*	*		
Business Economics	*			*	
Philosophy	*				
<b>Total of Course Offered</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>21</b>

\* denotes courses offered

This chart indicates that there are a wide range of courses offered and that the provinces with the largest and the most 'developed' cities tend to offer more courses than do the poorer ones. This could be due to lack of resources and demand in certain courses in the poorer areas. Sample courses are randomly chosen and so are the provinces.

## Appendix 9

### Number of candidates who took the higher education Self-study Examination between 1981 - 1988 in each province (Ren,1990. P.134-135)

Provinces/ Autonomous Regions	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988
Beijing	11121	12930	90570	130785	126935	114445	97595	79087
Tianjin		902	11850	88510	22548		62645	53262
Hubei				112627	304364	91937	122140	134088
Shanxi				82565	188667	92750	89682	148665
Inner Mongolla					69207	20623	23116	24840
Liaoning		15348	246841	454877	1405830	271142	221570	210176
Jilin			38518	270577	133729	45281	113140	75065
Heilongjiang			62988	206907	180637	97969	103168	85997
Shanghai		15494	92073	140091	196195	116149	95975	65635
Jiangsu			110771	287635	637053	345200	299343	288341
Zhejiang				53423	152303	116463	133219	120977
Anhui				76014	158940	46279	287277	180019
Fujian				31566	93411	34199	78256	71246
Jiangxi				54668	77924	71742	150000	101670
Shandong				123732	134519	149337	196946	172966
Hainan								5189
Henan				45706	52983	99366	115344	121895
Hubei				254193	213418	203284	289734	277693
Hunan				117981	167080	149895	229729	190803
Guangdong				175480	351982	113509	97963	87210
Guangxi				63364	136673	72741	117765	150343
Sichuan				201305	245747	201403	252916	276738
Guizhou				40874	52034	39833	51718	37508
Yunnan			9535	45119	137159	78976	97708	92368
Xizang					2501	755	383	1762
Shaanxi			17717	49219	163339	107402	115090	120088
Gansu				34109	98576	41700	49723	50558
Qinghai					19309	8221	7016	6235
Ningxia					4670	8827	16074	8836
Xinjiang					76016	47531		78776
<b>Total</b>	<b>11121</b>	<b>44674</b>	<b>680863</b>	<b>3141327</b>	<b>5603749</b>	<b>2786959</b>	<b>3515235</b>	<b>3318036</b>

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