

VARIA

52 Years of the Existence of the Polish-Chinese Friendship Association

by Zdzisław Góralczyk

The victory of Chinese communists over the Kuomintang, backed by the United States, in the Chinese Civil War, which resulted in the foundation of the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949, was the most significant international event after the Second World War. It reverberated not only through the whole world, but also around Poland.¹ The People's Republic of Poland broke diplomatic relations with the Kuomintang government of the Republic of China in August 1949. It was the seventh country of the world to recognize the People's Republic of China on October 5, 1949, and, two days later, Poland and China reestablished diplomatic relations. It is

worth mentioning that this fact was generally well received by the Polish society of the 1950s.

Poland also began to develop comprehensive relations with China on the level of parties, state and government institutions, business (especially trade and sea transport), culture and sport. A number of personal relations were also set up.² As the People's Republic of China was politically and diplomatically isolated by the USA and Western countries, the fact that it could

¹ The People's Republic of Poland officially declared that it was a great victory of leftist forces and the fundamental enlargement and reinforcement of "the socialist camp led by the Soviet Union in the battle against the expansion of American imperialism."

² This cooperation and numerous personal contacts in many fields were widely described in the essays by L. Cyrzyk, *U zarania Towarzystwa Przyjaźni Polsko-Chińskiej i Jak rodzila się polonistyka w Chinach*, "Azja-Pacyfik" 2008. Close economic, scientific and cultural cooperation, as well as the resulting personal Polish-Chinese contacts until the Cultural Revolution, were also presented by Marian Kałuski, a Polish historian living in Australia, in his monograph *Polacy w Chinach*, Instytut Wydawniczy PAX, Warszawa 2004, pp. 31–35.

cooperate with socialist countries (called states of people's democracy at the time) was of enormous political and economic importance for this newly established country (the USSR and other states of people's democracy, including Poland, helped China to develop its industry, science and technology).

Under the agreement between the governments of both countries, the Chinese-Polish Joint Stock Shipping Company was founded on June 15, 1951 (for the sake of camouflage it was first called the Chinese-Polish Shipping Brokers' Company Chipolbrok). The reason for that was the fact that the Chinese coast was blockaded by the US and the navy of the Kuomintang government of Chiang Kai Shek, who, having suffered a defeat in the Civil War in November of 1949, fled from mainland China to the island of Taiwan.

In a letter of congratulations sent to the Shipping Company on June 20, 2001, on the occasion of its 50th anniversary, the then Prime Minister of China Zhu Jongji noted that it was "the first foreign-capital enterprise established in the People's Republic of China (...). Within 50 years of its operations, not only did it contribute to the development of sea transport of China and Poland, but it also promoted the economic and trade collaboration, and fostered friendly relations between both nations."³

It is worth mentioning that in Poland, this company is also presently believed to have been the pioneer and the symbol of the effective and amicable economic cooperation between both countries and nations in the area of international sea transport.

The first Club of the Polish-Chinese Friendship Association was established in 1975 in Gdansk, on the social initiative of the employees and directors of the ship operating and forwarding companies from Tri-City which cooperated with the People's Republic of China, especially the Chinese-Polish Joint Stock Shipping Company Chipolbrok, Polish Ocean Lines and C. Hartwig, a forwarding company. On May 17, 1958, the founding national convention of the Polish-Chinese Friendship Association (*The TPPCh – Towarzystwo Przyjaźni Polsko-Chińskiej*) was held in Warsaw. The decision to establish the TPPCh on the national level was undoubtedly of a political nature, which was reflected by the fact that Stefan Jędrychowski, a member of the Political Office of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party, was appointed chairman of the Association, and Juliusz Burgin, the then chairman of "Książka i Wiedza" Publishing House (former Polish ambassador in China), was elected secretary general. That decision of Polish authorities was linked with the Chinese government's critical stance and protest against the planned Soviet military intervention in response to the develop-

³ The archives of the author and Chipolbrok.

ments in Poland in October 1956. Thanks to this, Warsaw escaped the fate of Budapest.⁴ We can also agree with the opinion that the idea of Polish-Chinese rapprochement, irrespective of our society's friendly attitude towards the Chinese way of building socialism, different from the Stalinist model, coincided with the atmosphere of thaw and revival of the Polish October 1956, and with the declaration of a new policy in China: "Let a hundred flowers bloom, let a hundred schools of thought contend."⁵

In the 1950s, apart from the Polish-Soviet Friendship Association, which was the best known organization of this type and the one most strongly supported by Polish communist authorities, a number of other bilateral Friendship Associations were founded. They promoted friendly relations not only with socialist countries (initially known as states of people's

democracy), but also with many capitalist countries and so called Third World countries (in Poland, in the peak period their number far exceeded one hundred).

It must be emphasized that the TPPCh, which many people associate with the Polish-Soviet Friendship Association (registered as "the association of high public usefulness" and used by the government of the People's Republic of Poland as a tool for promoting and intensifying Polish-Soviet friendship, it even had its own banner), actually only received the status of a "legal entity" and its operations were similar to those of numerous bilateral Friendship Associations with other countries, which were founded at the time.

In order to accomplish its statutory goals and tasks, the TPPCh pursued "activities that were typical of all associations, such as lectures, movie shows, discussions, exhibitions, concerts and other artistic events. It also established clubs and reading rooms, developed publishing and media activity, helped in the cultural exchange between China and Poland, and cooperated with a number of public institutions and organizations."⁶ The association ran the Chinese language course, tutored by Genowefa Zduń, a graduate of Beijing University, and Hu Peifang from China.⁷

⁴ China was also against the Soviet intervention in Poland in the years 1980–1981. They were clearly happy when general Wojciech Jaruzelski declared martial law in Poland and the Poles resolved the conflict in their country without the "help" of Soviet, Czechoslovakian and East German military forces. In reaction to a very difficult situation in the Polish food market, the Chinese government decided to provide Poland with a \$100 m. loan for delivering Chinese pork to Poland with very generous terms (it was repaid within the next ten years with the exported Polish goods). For more details see: F. Grzegorzewski, *Stosunki polsko-chińskie po 1989*, „Azja-Pacyfik” 2003, pp.135–136.

⁵ L. Cyrzyk, *U zarania Towarzystwa...*, pp. 238–245.

⁶ Ibidem, 241.

⁷ The wife of a graduate of People's University in Beijing – Roman Maria Sławiński, also known as Irena Sławińska.

After the association obtained the status of a legal entity, it entered the stage of fast organizational growth, encouraged by the climate of increasing interest in Chinese affairs. The person whose contribution to such rapid development was particularly significant was the secretary of the Main Board Janusz Sokołowski. Offices of the Main Board in Warsaw and regional branches were financed by the state budget (just like the operations of all Friendship Associations with other countries). In the peak period, the Association had approximately 20 thousand individual members and about one hundred institutions and companies actively supported it. It published a monthly magazine "Chiny," and later "Kontynenty," as well as its own Press Bulletin edited on the basis of the service of the Xinhua News Agency.

The development of the Association was obviously the result of favourable political climate at the time, well-developed comprehensive Polish-Chinese relations, general friendly attitude of Poles towards People's China, and better public perception than that of the Polish-Soviet Friendship Association.

The seat of the TPPCh in Warsaw, in Zamoyski (Blue) Palace at Senatorska Street, renovated after war damage in the years 1949–1950, was the pride of the Association. It became an attractive place of meetings of the inhabitants of Warsaw. The ground floor housed a club, a library and classrooms for the Chinese language

courses, as well as a bar, which soon became famous among students and other young people for its Chinese dishes, offered at relatively low prices.

In China, in return, the Chinese-Polish Friendship Association was established. The then Chinese Minister of Arts and Culture Shen Yanbing – who was also an eminent writer known under the nickname Mao Dun – was appointed chairman. As controversies between China and the Soviet Union arose and the Polish government ultimately declared its support for the Soviet side, the Association started to lose its status. During the Cultural Revolution it practically ceased its operations. In the 1970s, the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries was reactivated. It was a federation of bilateral associations with other countries, including also the Chinese-Polish Friendship Association. Like other Chinese bilateral associations, it does not recruit individual members. Pu He – former Vice-President of the Standing Committee of The All-Chinese Assembly of People's Representatives – was elected its *de facto* honorary chairman.

In the years 1964–84, following a cooling in Polish-Chinese relations, which was the result of controversies between China and the Soviet Union, Polish critical view of Maoism and the Cultural Revolution, the TPPCh had to limit its activities but it was not disbanded. Nevertheless, in the early 1980s, due to the lack of finance, the

Association could not run any operations.

After 1985, as international relations gradually became normalized, on the initiative of Polish authorities under the leadership of General W. Jaruzelski⁸ eight regional branches were restored (in Warsaw, Kalisz, Wrocław, Katowice, Bielsko-Biała, Łódź, Cracow and Koszalin). Three regional clubs and so called Harbiners' Club – consisting of Poles who had been repatriated from the Chinese city of Harbin to Poland back in the 1950s and 1960s. After 1991, two more regional branches were set up in Zielona Góra and Tarnobrzeg. In that period, the Association could once again undertake – as far as possible – a number of activities, the goal of which was to increase general knowledge about China and Chinese people among Polish society (days of Chinese culture, exhibitions, movie shows, lectures, meetings with famous Chinese people and Chinese delegations, the TPPCh also helped to organize Polish exhibitions in China, it maintained relations and exchanged promotional materials with the Chinese-Polish Friendship Association and the

Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, etc.). TPPCh Club at the Main Board at Senatorska Street in Warsaw resumed intense promotional and informational activities. It reactivated the Chinese language course, which was tutored by Juan-Juan Go-Góralczyk.⁹ In November 1997, the Secretary General of the Association Bohdan Kikolski was invited to accompany the President of Poland during his official visit to China.

The late 1990s marked another period of stagnation in the activity of the Association, during which regional branches were liquidated. The reasons for that was the fact that budget subsidies were withheld and Polish-Chinese relations became sour again. In 1997, the authorities of Śródmieście District evicted the Association from its seat in Blue Palace at Senatorska street and confiscated most of its wealth (furniture, office equipment) on a charge of not paying ridiculously high rent. As a result, until the end of the 1990s most regional branches got liquidated, with the exception of the Main Board in Warsaw and the branches in Gdańsk, Kalisz and Cracow (the last two were maintained only due to enormous determination of its long-standing chairpersons – Izabela Nałęcz and Wiesław Adamik).

⁸ In 1986, General Wojciech Jaruzelski – the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party and the Chairman of the State Council – was first of the leaders of the states of people's democracy to visit China after the Cultural Revolution. In 1987, the Secretary General of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (Prime Minister) Zhao Ziyang paid a return visit to Poland.

⁹ A graduate of the Russian Department of Suzhou University, a translator, she was the wife of a graduate of Beijing Foreign Trade School – Zdzisław Góralczyk. She received Polish citizenship.

In December 2000, on the initiative of some members and upon the suggestion of the Chancellery of the President of Poland, the Main Board was reorganized and a new chairman was elected – a diplomat and sinologist Zdzisław Góralczyk, Ph.D. As a result of these actions, the authorities of Warsaw handed over a new, small and fairly modest flat to the Association. It became the seat of the Main Board and the Board of Warsaw Branch, with a monthly rent of over 2000 zlotys. Regional branches were restored or established in Warsaw, Gdańsk, Kalisz, Poznań, Łódź, Olsztyn, Toruń, Kielce, Wrocław, Bydgoszcz, and, with the aid of the local Harbiners' Club, in Szczecin. In 2007, local initiatives led to the establishment of the Silesian Branch of the TPPCh in Katowice, the TPPCh Branch in Bydgoszcz and the regional organization in Ostrów Mazowiecka. Two students' interest groups and a high school interest group (Stefan Batory High School) were also set up in Warsaw.¹⁰

¹⁰ They were liquidated a year ago, new generations of high school and university students gave up this organizational form, the reason for which must be an increasingly negative attitude towards China (especially recent criticism of the Chinese government for disobeying human rights, which led to calls for boycotting the Olympic Games in China. They were expressed even by some Polish athletes, who, however, behaved in the Olympic spirit in the end, and participated in the Games and in the glorious Opening Ceremony).

At present, the TPPCh consists of a few hundreds individual members and 4–5 supporting members – Polish and Chinese companies. The Association operates on the basis of the National Court Register from March 14, 2002, and the Statute approved by the District Court of the National Court Register for Warsaw. The following goals and scope of activities of the Association were formulated:

- 1) to perform activities aimed at deepening friendly relations and developing the economic, cultural, scientific and technological, sport and touristic cooperation between Poland and China,
- 2) to familiarize Polish society with the life of Chinese society and with the economy, culture, science and history of China.¹¹

Because of its nature, goals and statutory tasks, the TPPCh has never, neither during the times of the People's Republic of Poland nor after the system transformation, taken part in any political or ideological arguments between Poland and China. According to its present statute, it has become a public, non-government, lay and apolitical organization. The Association cannot be used for promoting any political parties.

The Association supports itself on individual membership fees and contributions from supporting members – typi-

¹¹ The TPPCh archives.

cally enterprises which do business in both countries. Members of the Main Board and Regional Branches work on a voluntary basis. Due to limited financial resources, neither the Main Board nor Regional Branches employ workers on a full-time basis. According to the statute of the TPPCh, all Polish citizens and foreigners who are willing to work towards the implementation of its statutory goals may become its individual members, and all legal entities may become its supporting members. The Main Board and Regional Branches have specialists in the field of the Chinese language and Chinese issues, both those with long experience in the work in China and those of the younger generation, including graduates of leading Polish and Chinese universities. The Association organizes business seminars on the economic cooperation and trade exchange between Poland and China, as well as meetings with eminent Polish and Chinese people. The TPPCh also helps to organize exhibitions which promote the history, culture and the present day of China.

In September 2003, the TPPCh, together with the Ministry of Culture and the Association of Polish Filmmakers, co-organized the Review of Chinese Films in Poland (first after the Cultural Revolution). It enjoyed enormous interest, especially of young people.

On January 30, 2004, the 5th National Convention of the TPPCh was held, at

which the present composition of the Main Board and the Main Audit Committee was selected: the Chairman – Zdzisław Góralczyk, the Vice-Chairman – Andrzej Żor, members of the Plenum of the Main Board – Pan Yu Jian Er, prof. Edward Grzywa and Wojciech Grubman. Chairpersons of the Regional Branches are also members of the Main Board.

The TPPCh maintains relations with the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) in Beijing and with its Shanghai branch. Despite our best efforts, the relations with the Chinese-Polish Friendship Association, which is still a part of the CPAFFC, have been disrupted. In 2005, the Chairman of the Main Board of the TPPCh was invited to Beijing to take part in the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries. In the same year, together with the Association for Cooperation Poland-East, we received a delegation of the CPAFFC with the Vice-Chairman of the All-Chinese Assembly of People's Representatives. In April 2006 this Association invited a delegation of the TPPCh to China (the Chairman of the Main Board of the TPPCh was the head of the delegation, members: Andrzej Żor – the Vice-Chairman of the Main Board, Mirosław Ziemba – the Secretary General of the Main Board, Izabella Nałęcz – the Chairwoman of the Wielkopolska Branch in Kalisz, and Adam Marszałek – the

Chairman of the Kuyavian-Pomeranian Branch in Toruń).

In December 2006, the TPPCh helped the Shanghai Branch of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the Association of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw to organize the exhibition dedicated to a story of saving the lives of 2000 Jews in Shanghai (also from Poland) during the Second World War, with the exhibits provided by the authorities of Shanghai. The exhibition took place in the showrooms of the Institute. The delegation of Shanghai was led by the Secretary of the City Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. The opening ceremony was hosted by the Chairman of the Association of the Jewish Historical Institute Marian Turski¹² and the Chairman of the Main Board of the TPPCh Zdzisław Góralczyk. The exhibition was later moved from Warsaw to Vienna.

In 2005, the TPPCh became involved in the project of building the monument of Fryderyk Chopin. On the initiative of the Chairman of the Main Board, the Social Committee for the Construction of the Monument was established. It was composed of a number of companies and institutions from Poland and China (including the Embassy of the People's Republic of China). Zdzisław Góralczyk,

Ph.D., was appointed chairman of the committee, and Mieczysław Lis, the owner of a phonographic company 4Art, became its secretary.

The idea of building the monument arose in the context of the rejuvenation of Polish-Chinese cultural and business relations at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries. It was initiated by Yu Jian-er, formerly from Shanghai, now a Polish citizen.¹³ The model was designed and made by another Chinese from Shanghai, a graduate of the Faculty of Sculpture of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, Lu Pin. The six-metre-high monument was cast in bronze in the Technical Equipment Plant in Gliwice. The cast could only be made thanks to the generosity of sponsors: companies such as MIN HOONG Development Poland Warsaw-Sopot, BIOTON Warsaw-Macierzysz, KGHM "Polska Miedź" Lubin, Baltic Container Lines Gdynia, DAMIS BT Warsaw, Cramo Warsaw, and Bank Przemysłowo-Handlowy Warsaw. The monument was transported free of charge from the plant in Gliwice to Sun Yat Sen Park in Shanghai by the Chinese-Polish Shipping Company.

Costs of the monument installation in this most beautiful park in Shanghai were fully covered by the Chinese side – the authorities of Changning District, in which the park is located. Despite many

¹² In 2009, Marian Turski was also elected for the Chairman of the Museum of the History of Polish Jews, which is currently under construction.

¹³ The Chairman and the CEO of Min Hoong Development, Warsaw-Sopot.

difficulties, the monument was finally installed, which was possible thanks to personal involvement of the Director for Cultural Affairs of the Changning District Government Hu Yishen.

On the Polish side the project was also financially and organizationally supported by the following institutions:

- The Ministry of Culture and National Heritage
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- The Fryderyk Chopin National Institute
- The Polish-Chinese Friendship Association
- The Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Warsaw.

Financial resources which we managed to obtain from the fund of the Fryderyk Chopin National Institute and the Chinese Embassy were mostly used for making commemorative medals from bronze, commemorative music discs with concerts of Chopin's music performed by two winners of the International Fryderyk Chopin Piano Competitions – Li Yundi from China and Rafał Blechacz from Poland, and financing the trip of some members of the Polish delegation and three journalists from Warsaw to Shanghai, etc.¹⁴

The official ceremony of unveiling the monument took place on March 3, 2007, in Sun Yat Sen Park in Shanghai as part of the celebration of the 197th birthday of Fryderyk Chopin. Apart from representatives of Shanghai and Changning District authorities, the ceremony was attended by delegations from Poland: the official one – led by the Vice-Minister of Culture and National Heritage Krzysztof Olendzki (it included members of the Committee and representatives of the main sponsors: the Chairman – Zdzisław Góralczyk, the Vice-Chairman – Małgorzata Błoch-Wisniewska, and a representative of the Fryderyk Chopin National Institute, the Secretary General – Mieczysław Lis, the Chairman of PROKOM Investment and the Chairman of the Supervisory Board of BIOTON – Ryszard Krauze, the Vice-Chairman of KGHM “Polska Miedź” – Maksymilian Bylicki, the Financial Director of Chipolbrok from Gdynia – Wojciech Grubman), a parliamentary delegation of the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) led by the Vice-Speaker of the Polish Sejm Wojciech Olejniczak, a delegation of the Pomeranian Voivodeship led by the Marshall J. Kozłowski, the Ambassador of the Republic of Poland Krzysztof Szumski, and the General Consul of the Republic of Poland in Shanghai Piotr Sławiński with a group of Polish diplomats, as well as representatives of the Shanghai Head office of the Chinese-Polish Shipping Company Chipolbrok with its Director Janusz Janiszewski. Media

¹⁴ The album included artistic biographies of Li Yundi, Rafał Blechacz and a sculptor Lu Pin, the history of the monument and a list of sponsors. Archives of the author and the TPPCh.

coverage was provided by a journalist from the Polish Public Television (TVP) – Robert Góralczyk, film operators from TVP Katowice and a group of journalists from “Rzeczpospolita” and “Dziennik”, who had been invited by the Committee.

It must be emphasized that the monument of Fryderyk Chopin is the first monument of a foreigner erected in the People’s Republic of China by decision of its government.¹⁵

The commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Polish-Chinese Friendship Association in Poland was honoured with the presence of a four person delegation of the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, affiliated to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, led by its Chairman, a poet and a writer – Mr Chen Haosu. At the official meeting in Warsaw on February 22, 2008, attended by over a hundred members of the TPPCh and invited guests, Chen Haosu gave a very warm congratulation speech, in which he called for the continuation of actions aimed at better understanding and reinforcing friendship between Polish and Chinese people and for enhancing mutually advantageous cooperation. Apart from Warsaw, the delegation visited our branches in Toruń and Władysławowo, where it took part in ceremonial and

working meetings with the authorities of Toruń and the Marshalls of the Kuyavian-Pomeranian and the Pomeranian Voivodeships. The visit of the Chinese delegation was positively described in Polish press, the articles were published in “Trybuna” and “Przegląd”.¹⁶

On the initiative of the TPPCh and the Social Committee for the Construction of the Monument of Fryderyk Chopin, on March 29, 2008, in relation with the 198th anniversary of Fryderyk Chopin’s birthday, a two metre artistic model of the Shanghai monument of Fryderyk Chopin was unveiled in the Chaoyang District Cultural Centre in Beijing. It was possible thanks to the involvement of great Chinese lovers of Chopin’s music – the Director of the Centre – Mr Xu Wei, and the Deputy Chief Editor of monthly “Literary Magazine” of Beijing – Mrs Zhang Xianyang. The unveiling ceremony was attended by representatives of the authorities of Beijing and Chaoyang District, the world of culture, journalists, diplomats and numerous graduates of Polish universities, including the Chairman of the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries Chen Haosu with a group of his associates. The Polish delegation was led by the Undersecretary of State in the

¹⁵ There is also a monument of Alexander Pushkin in Shanghai, but it was erected as early as in 1937.

¹⁶ “Przegląd”, No. 10 (428), March 9, 2008. An interview of Bronisław Tumiłowicz with the leader of the delegation, Chairman Chen Haosu, entitled “Rocznica w Roku Szczura. Przyjaźń można porównać do pochodni.”

Ministry of Culture and National Heritage – Monika Smoleń (other members included the Polish Ambassador in China Krzysztof Szumski, the Chairman of the Social Committee for the Construction of the Monument and the Chairman of the TPPCh – Zdzisław Góralczyk and the Secretary General of the Committee – Mieczysław Lis). Mrs Man Li-Szczepańska, a young Chinese pianist,¹⁷ performed a concert of Chopin's music. Thanks to a big help from the Polish Embassy in Beijing and personal involvement of the Ambassador, two exhibitions were opened on this occasion – of the Polish Olympic Poster and of the photographs about Poland.

In July and August of 2008, under the patronage of the Chinese Embassy, the Warsaw Branch and the TPPCh Club in Ostrów Mazowiecka organized an exhibition of Chinese folk art paper cuts, which presented traditional Chinese sports and folk games. It was first held in Ostrów Mazowiecka, and then it was moved to Brok. The boards were provided by the Chinese Embassy, which also held this exhibition in a few more towns.

On the initiative of some members of the TPPCh, we organized a charity cam-

paign among members of the Regional Branches of the Association, the aim of which was to raise money for the victims of a tragic earthquake with the epicentre in Sichuan province in 2008. We managed to raise funds from donations of the individual members of the Branches in Warsaw, Władysławowo (Pomeranian), Kielce (Świętokrzyski), Kalisz (Wielkopolski) and Poznań, as well as from the Fund of Bank Gospodarki Żywnościowej. The total amount was paid into a special account for the victims of the earthquake of the Chinese Red Cross in the Bank of China in Beijing.

Chairman Zdzisław Góralczyk, as an Honorary Citizen of Beijing, received a VIP invitation from the Mayor of Beijing, to participate in the opening ceremony of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games (among mayors of partner cities of the capital of China and honorary citizens of Beijing from the whole world). He was also an honorary guest of his *Alma Mater* – the University of International Business and Economics. When he returned to Poland, he gave two lectures on the Olympic Games and contemporary China: for members of the Association for Cooperation Poland-East and the Mazovian Branch of the Association “Nowy Świat” (“New World”) as well as for members of the Warsaw Branch of the TPPCh.

In March 2009, the TPPCh invited a delegation of the Institute of the Culture and History of Shanghai to Warsaw and

¹⁷ A graduate of the University of Music in Warsaw. She is currently the wife of Mr Jan Szczepański, a Polish cultural activist from Cracow, where they both live. She is a member of the TPPCh, and her husband is the Secretary of the TPPCh Regional Branch in Cracow.

Cracow. The delegation was led by the Chairman of the Institute Wu Mengqing. During their visit to Russia, Ukraine and Poland, they got acquainted with the works of Sholom Aleichem, a famous Jewish writer (born in Ukraine), as well as with the cultural wealth of Warsaw and Cracow. The main subject was presented to the guests by the experts of the Association of the Jewish Historical Institute, including its Chairman Marian Turski. Marian Turski invited the delegation to participate in the celebration of Passover organized by the Jewish Community of Cracow.

In May 2009, a pianist Man Li-Szczepańska, with a financial help from the Polish Embassy in Beijing and the Chinese Ministry of Culture and under the honorary patronage of the TPPCh, went on a very successful tour of China, during which she gave concerts of Chopin's music in Beijing,¹⁸ Baotou, Hailar, Qingdao and Meizhou. Since she returned from China, she has given concerts in a number of Polish cities.

The Main Board and the Warsaw Branch of the TPPCh maintain contacts with the Chinese Embassy in Warsaw. For example, our activists from the whole country met two former Chinese Ambassadors Zhou Xiaopei and Yuan Guisen, as

well as the current Ambassador Sun Rongmin. We regularly cooperate with the Cultural Department of the Embassy when organizing and participating in bilateral cultural events.

The Main Board of the TPPCh uses its knowledge and contacts in China to help the Association for Cooperation Poland-East in Warsaw, which, in return, lets our Association use its conference rooms free of charge.

Insufficient financial resources are a major constraint on the operations of the Association. Almost all funds are used to cover the costs of maintaining our office at Bugaj Street in Warsaw. We set up our own website www.tppch.pl and our e-mail address is: zfg@vp.pl.

It is with regret that we must note that the activity of our Association arouses little interest both of Polish authorities and mass media, which regard us with suspicion, treating us as a relic of the People's Republic of Poland. They accuse us of promoting friendship with China, instead of joining criticism of the Chinese communist government prevalent in the media. They went as far as to accuse us of malice and slander.¹⁹

The Association is proud of the fact that it manages to continue its activity

¹⁸ The concert was given a high status by the Chinese hosts as it was held in the prestigious Gugong (Forbidden City) Concert Hall.

¹⁹ A typical example is the article of I. Ryciak, *Gra w Chińczyka. Mimo przeciwności losu Towarzystwo Przyjaźni Polsko-Chińskiej trwa niczym Wielki Mur*, "Przekrój – Special Edition", No. 32–33, August 7, 2008, pp. 30–31.

(although in a limited scope because of the reasons mentioned above) despite lack of support and interest from authorities. We are also proud that, in spite of all the hardships, the TPPCh is one of the few that have remained out of over one hundred organizations of this type, and it is the only one that operates in 12 voivodeships. The whole world is waking up to the unprecedented rapid growth of China that we have observed in the past 30 years and the improvement of the living standard of Chinese people. The fact that China is becoming increasingly interested in the history of Poland, and in developing relations and cooperation with our country, especially in the field of science, music, literature and arts, which is also reflected by the growing number of Chinese tourists, confirms our belief that we should persist in our efforts to strengthen a friendly relationship between our nations.

A perfect key to Chinese hearts is Chopin's music, so much loved by them. Chinese people also highly value works of Polish scientists, such as Mikołaj Kopernik and Maria Curie-Skłodowska, whose contribution to the progress of science and the development of mankind cannot be neglected.

A lot of masterpieces of our leading writers and poets, such as: Adam Mickiewicz, Henryk Sienkiewicz, Stefan Żeromski, and Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, have been translated into Chinese.

When discussing the history and prospects for the development of friendly relations with China, it must be remembered that, when the Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs Qian Qichen met the President of Poland Lech Wałęsa and the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Krzysztof Skubiszewski during his visit to our country after its system transformation, he declared that Chinese authorities respect the choice made by the Polish nation and they suggest that Poland and China should continue and develop relations in all fields of activity for the good of both countries, free of ideological aspects.²⁰ He also emphasized that the fact that the relations between our countries are not marked by conflicts of historical interests can be conducive to this development. Qian Qichen indicated similarities between tragic fates of China and Poland in the 19th century, which he believed would facilitate mutual understanding.

What strengthens the position of the TPPCh in Poland is the fact that more and more young people, especially students, are becoming increasingly interested in

²⁰ It means that Chinese authorities have excluded the relations between the ruling parties, which had been of the superior importance in the times of the People's Republic of Poland, from the sphere of mutual relations between both countries. The Chinese government made the same declaration to the other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which had undergone a system transformation. The author.

China and its problems, as well as a rapid increase of business contacts with China.

We hope that the Polish-Chinese Friendship Association will gradually develop as we believe that its goals are

noble and the social support for its activity is steadily increasing. China will continue to grow and its contribution to the progress of whole world will be more and more significant.

Problems connected with professional and academic careers in the so-called post-doctoral phase: Polish and French experiences

by Stanisław Roszak

First of all, I would like to highlight the fact that discussion about the system and mechanisms of self-development of young researchers in the post-doctoral phase in Poland has only just begun. The problem became very serious when we started to implement the guidelines of the Strategy of Bologna, which means introducing three educational stages: Bachelor's degree (after 3 years spent at the university), Master's degree (after next two years), and Doctorate degree (four years). My paper will concentrate on three main issues:

- changes in the Polish educational system and their influence on people's careers;
- the present situation in doctoral and post-doctoral studies;
- perspectives and suggestions for future solutions, based on Polish and French examples.

The traditional model for the academic career in Poland used to function mainly thanks to a direct relation between a master and his student-follower. The professor, who was the master, was simply employing the student as his assistant. Such an assistant was supposed to prepare a dissertation during eight years. After its acceptance by a proper Department Board he was employed as a senior lecturer. Then he had nine years in order to write a habilitation thesis and thanks to it he acquired the status of an independent worker, capable of teaching the next generations, including his own assistants.

Today we need to ask if this old relation between master and student can be kept. On the one hand doctoral studies are getting more and more popular, while on the other students are obliged to take part in various lectures and seminars which