

Brunhild Staiger

Timeline of Chinese-European Cultural Relations*

Introduction

Contacts between China and Europe are more than two-thousand years old. In the first millennium they were sporadic and only indirect, as knowledge of each other was mediated by various peoples of the Near and Middle East and Inner Asia. It was only in the second millennium that the contacts slowly increased and resulted in mutual cultural influence. There have been periods in which Chinese cultural influence in Europe was stronger than European influence in China, and other periods in which China was under the impact of European culture. Generally speaking, until about 1500 it was mainly China that influenced Europe (quite a number of Chinese inventions made their way to the West), whereas since then European influence in China has grown steadily. In most cases contacts on both sides were motivated by economic interests but these were invariably followed by cultural interests, at least on the European side. The Silk Road, e.g., came into existence because of the need to transport commercial goods between Europe and China, but at the same time cultural assets were transported on this route and they, in fact, were of lasting impact.

The first direct encounter occurred during the Mongol period (13th-14th century) when the first Christian friars were sent from Europe to China. Different from the general pattern, their travels were not motivated by economic interests but solely by the aim of missionary work as was also the case with the Jesuits who worked in China in the late 16th and in the 17th centuries. Through the mediation of the Jesuits, Western science was made known in China. Perhaps more important than their work in China was the fact that their reports on China affected intellectual life in Europe during the Enlightenment. Philosophers like Leibniz and Voltaire took China as a model for an ideal society that they deducted from the often idealized reports of the Jesuits. The impact of Chinese culture manifested itself not only in philosophy but in many other fields. The 18th century was the age of chinoiserie that influenced arts and crafts (e.g. porcelain and furniture), gardens and architecture.

In the 19th century the attitude vis-à-vis China had completely changed. China was no longer looked upon as a model but as an uncivilized, backward, despotic and

cruel country that needed Western modernization and innovation. In this view China was degraded to a mere object of Western economic interests and power politics. In the Opium Wars China was opened by military force; the Western powers secured for themselves privileges that allowed them free trade in certain regions, propagation of Christianity, residence in the so-called treaty ports, and diplomatic representation in Beijing. The treaty ports were under extraterritorial rule, i.e. under foreign jurisdiction and administration. By the time they became enclaves of Western civilization on Chinese soil. Towards the end of the century China was forced to lease territories to the great Western powers so that its autonomy was severely cut.

However, Western imperialism for China did not only mean military aggression and economic domination but also cultural modernization, even if it took a long time. In the beginning, Western culture prevailed only in the treaty ports where a typical treaty port culture came into existence with Western schools, a modern press as well as Western architecture, fashion and life styles. The rest of the country persisted in the traditional structures. China's unwillingness to respond to the Western challenge was expressed in the central government's refusal for two decades after the first Opium War to take up diplomatic relations with Western states. Traditionally, there existed no foreign office in China; it was only in 1861 that an Office for Foreign Relations, the *Zongli Yamen* was established, and not until 1901 a regular Foreign Office was set up. In view of the West's military and technological superiority, China's policy vis-à-vis the West gradually began to change in the 1860s. Open-minded groups saw the need for modernizing China and initiated the so-called Self-Strengthening (*zhiqiang*) Movement with the aim of producing Western-style arms, machines and ships in order to be able to resist foreign aggression. Western learning though far from popular was started in special schools and soon the first Chinese students were sent to Europe and the United States of America. Western learning at that time included Western science and technology as well as Western languages but not Western philosophy and culture. This restriction to learning from the West only what was of practical use was summed up in the slogan "Chinese learning for the essential principles, Western learning for the practical application" (*Zhong xue wei ti, Xi xue wei yong*).

But Western culture could not permanently be rejected. Around the turn of the 19th to the 20th century extensive translation work of Western philosophy and literature started that continued through the first half of the new century. This development was promoted by the Reform Movement that gained influence in the late 1890s. Unlike the leaders of the Self-Strengthening Movement, the reformers demanded far-reaching institutional, legal and educational reforms, in other words, they wanted to change China's "essential principles". They themselves were deeply influenced by Western ideas, although they did not break with the Confucian tradition. The ground for this development had been prepared by the missionary societies, in particular the Protestants who were not only committed to evangelism but also to the modernization of social customs and the spreading of Western knowledge.

Their activities included translation work, publishing of books and periodicals (some of them actually became sources of the Reform Movement), founding of schools and hospitals, etc.

After the Boxer War the reforms were intensified; one of the most far-reaching reforms was the abolition of the traditional examination system in 1905 and the introduction of modern schools that taught Western knowledge and culture. In the literature, theatre and art of that time Western influence grew steadily and all kinds of social and philosophical theories then current in the West were discussed and assimilated. This trend reached a first peak in the so-called New Culture Movement (1915-1921), an intellectual revolution directed against the traditional Chinese culture as represented by Confucianism. Its protagonists propagated a modernization based on democracy and science, a then unrealistic aim as the movement was soon politicized and new authoritarian regimes established – the nationalist regime of the Guomindang on the one hand and the Communist base areas in the interior on the other hand.

Though the Nationalist Government in its ideology propagated the traditional Confucian values, yet in its modernization programme it wholly relied on Western models, the more so, because a great part of the educated elite was trained in the West. In the administration, economy, science, technology and education returned students applied what they had learned abroad, and in the cities Western life styles with regard to fashion, dancing, sports, music, cinema, theatre, etc. predominated everywhere. Moreover, the Christian missions had expanded very much and in that period played a great role, not only in social activities but also in education, especially in higher education. Quite a number of universities and colleges were Christian (mostly Protestant) with about one third of their staff being foreigners. In a word, under the Nationalist Government the impact of Western culture was so far the biggest in China.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China on 1 October 1949 Western cultural influence declined noticeably. During the period of friendship with the Soviet Union that in the 1950s served as a model for modernization, there were close cultural ties with the Soviet Union and its satellites but in the wake of the Sino-Soviet strife they came to an end. From the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s, under the auspices of the Cultural Revolution, China's cultural sphere existed in total seclusion. Only slowly relations with the Western world were resumed gaining momentum from 1978 onward when China started its opening-up policy. Yet in the beginning the focus was not on cultural exchange which at best was of secondary importance. Both the Chinese side and the European countries were mainly interested in economic relations, China in importing modern technology and technological know-how from the West and the West in conquering the Chinese market. It therefore is not surprising that the majority of the agreements concluded between China and European states in the cultural field are concerned with science and technology as well as student exchange programmes. As to cultural exchange in the narrow sense involving art exhibitions, theatre performances, film weeks or publications, it remains a sensitive field and

the Western countries always have to take into account the rigid conservative cultural policy of the Chinese Communist Party. In a way the Party's attitude is reminiscent of the conservative modernizers in the second half of the 19th century who stuck to the Confucian values and wanted to take over from the West only the useful things. Similarly, the Party is apt to take over primarily scientific and technological achievements and to exclude Western values and theories. Especially liberal influences from the West that might undermine China's political system (as they manifested themselves during the student protests in May/June 1989) are suppressed. The same is true for the propagation of Christianity and Islam.

Nonetheless, in the last years the cultural scene in China has changed considerably. While the 1980s still saw campaigns against bourgeois liberalization and "decadent" Western culture, the 1990s were marked by greater open-mindedness and more tolerance as regards Western culture. Foreign literature and recent films from the West are widely known, also Western art and music; the same is true for new theories in the social sciences. The cultural influence is clearly noticeable and comparable to that of the 1920s and 1930s. The relations with Europe have perceptibly intensified since the 1990s and Sino-European cultural contacts have also become much more relaxed and play a more prominent role than ever before. The Chinese Year in France 2003/04 and the French Year in China 2004/05 are a clear indication of the normalization and intensification of cultural exchange based on the principles of mutual respect, reciprocity and open-mindedness. As China wants to position itself in a prominent place in the globalized world of the 21st century, it has to meet the challenge of globalization that will also affect the cultural sphere. However, China strictly disapproves of a uniform world culture. Instead it is concerned about preserving its own cultural identity and acts as an advocate of cultural diversity as it did at the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) on Cultures and Civilizations organized in Beijing in December 2003. In this respect China feels close to Europe. China and Europe have the common interest of maintaining cultural diversity – this was the major message proclaimed at that Meeting. At the same time China fully agrees to cultural exchange with Europe and other parts of the world, because it knows that international cooperation requires mutual understanding which emanates from the knowledge of and the respect for each other's culture. The International Cultural Forum organized by the Bertelsmann Foundation in cooperation with the China International Cultural Association in Beijing on 21-22 May, 2004 under the topic "Cultural Diversity – Learning From Each Other, Acting Together" may be seen as a further step of intensifying the Sino-European cultural dialogue.

* The Timeline was prepared by the Institute of Asian Affairs, Hamburg on behalf of the Bertelsmann Foundation, Guetersloh on the occasion of the International Cultural Forum Beijing 2004 initiated by Liz Mohn and Chinese Minister of Culture Sun Jiazheng. It is based on a preliminary research by Isabelle Gras, Berlin, and Yan Yang, Bochum.

Timeline of Chinese-European Cultural Relations

Chinese Empire

- ca. 100 B.C. Development of the Silk Road: trade route and first cultural connection between Asia and Europe (length: more than 7,000 km). After the fall of the Roman Empire the Silk Road was hardly used anymore. The route from Europe to Asia (a trip that took up to 4 years) led through today's Turkey, Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan and ended in China.
- 1271 Marco Polo travels to China. From 1275-1292 he serves the Chinese emperor's court, which also sends Polo to many provinces. He returns to Venice only in 1295 and later writes his travelogue *Il milione*.
- 1303 "Brother Arnold", a Franciscan friar from the province of Cologne, is the first documented German missionary to preach in today's Beijing.
- 1405 – 1433 The flotillas of Admiral Zheng He travel from China to Sumatra, India and East Africa. The emperors of the Ming Dynasty by imperial edicts (1433, 1449, 1452) interdict Chinese trade with foreign countries.
- 1513 The first Portuguese under Jorge Alvares visit Macao and establish a dependency in the mid-16th century (until 1695 Portugal's only Chinese foreign trade post, until 1849 a leased region, afterwards an annexation).
- 1517 The first official Portuguese embassy led by Tomé Pires from Malacca to Guangzhou (Canton).
- 1541 The Jesuits send the Spanish friar Francisco Xavier (1506-1552) to Macao to commence the conversion to Christianity in Asia. The conversion in China was undertaken by his successor Matteo Ricci (1552-1610).
- 1564 First Portuguese commercial settlement in Guangzhou.
- 1575 The Augustinian Martin de Rada leads the first Spanish delegation to China. Jesuit letters and the first Chinese books arrive in Spain and Rome.
- 1582 Matteo Ricci (1552-1610), Italian Jesuit friar, reaches Macao; 1598 he arrives in Beijing where he enjoys great respect among Chinese officials because of his knowledge of science.
- 1622 – 1666 Johann Adam Schall von Bell, a German Jesuit, mathematician and astronomer, in China. In 1644 he was appointed director of the astronomical bureau.
- 1637 First British ships land at the coast of South-East China.
- Oct. 19, 1644 The new calendar system developed by Schall von Bell based on the European model is officially adopted by Emperor Shunzhi.
- 1655 – 1657 Nieuwhof (1618-1672) accompanies the first Dutch delegation to China.
- 2nd half of 17th c. Publication of descriptions of China in Europe: Besides Dutch travelogues, the *Novus Atlas Sinensis de Martino Martini* is published in 1655 in Vienna; it influences the authoritative work *China monumentis qua sacris qua profanis illustrata*. At the same time Jesuit friars publish the first translations of Chinese classics.
- Starting 1662 France and China establish first contacts during the reign of Kangxi (1662-1722). In 1702, at the dawn of the regency of Louis XIV, the "Compagnie de Chine" gained ground in Guangzhou. After Louis XVI had abolished the privilege of the French Compagnie and replaced it by a royal consulate in Guangzhou, no relations existed between the two states until the First Opium War (1840-1842).
- 1687 The first translation of the *Analects* of Confucius published in Europe: *Confucius, Sinarum Philosophus*.

- 1697 G.W. von Leibniz publishes *Novissima Sinica* in which arguments for a cultural exchange between China and Europe are discussed.
- End of 17th c. The British East India Company founded in 1600, establishes a trading house in Guangzhou. The Company monopolizes the British trade with China.
- 1715 The East India Company establishes a branch office in Guangzhou; tea export; monopoly on opium trade starting in 1773.
- 1769 In his *Essai sur les moeurs* Voltaire admires China's "practical philosophy".
- 1840 – 1842 British-Chinese Opium War ("First Opium War") because of the Chinese embargo on opium imports and destroyed opium shipments. Aug. 29, 1842 Treaty of Nanjing between China and Great Britain, the first "unequal treaty" marking the end of the Opium War: it results in the opening of five ports for international trade – Guangzhou (Canton), Xiamen (Amoy), Fuzhou, Ningbo and Shanghai –, British extraterritoriality, restriction of Chinese tariff autonomy, cession of Hong Kong to Great Britain.
- Jan. 1, 1843 Carl Wilhelm Engelbrecht von Pustau, a merchant from Altona, establishes Wm. Pustau & Co. in Guangzhou, the first German trading house in China.
- 1844 French-Chinese treaty of Huangpu. France secures the same rights in the Chinese treaty ports as those granted Great Britain; also, toleration of Catholicism and Catholic missionary activity in the interior.
- 1845 The *China Mail* is established in Hong Kong, one of the first major foreign-language newspapers published by foreigners in China.
- Oct. 1, 1846 From Hamburg, Georg Theodor Siemssen establishes the company Siemssen & Co. with headquarters in Guangzhou; to this day, it is one of the largest European trading houses in China.
- 1850 The *North China Herald* is established in Shanghai, with a Chinese edition 1861-1872.
- 1856 – 1860 "Second Opium War".
- 1857 The Royal Asiatic Society (North China Branch) is established in Shanghai. Aim: Study of the history, philosophy, literature, language and manners of the Chinese people.
- 1858 Tianjin treaty between China and Great Britain, France and the United States: opening of the Yangzi valley for foreign trade, legalization of opium trade, freedom of foreigners to move throughout the country, and the free and unrestricted propagation of Christianity in all regions of China.
- Oct. 13, 1860 British-French troops loot Beijing and destroy the Summer Palace (Yuanming Yuan).
- Oct. 25, 1860 Treaty of Beijing: Confirmation of the treaty of Tianjin, opening of 11 new treaty ports for foreign trade, extension of extraterritoriality, permanent diplomatic representation in Beijing.
- 1861 Establishment of the *Zongli Yamen* (office for foreign relations).
- Sept. 2, 1861 Signing of a friendship, trade and navigation treaty between the states of the German Tariff and Trade Union and the Chinese Empire. A consulate general is established in Shanghai.
- 1862 Opening of the *Tongwenquan* in Beijing, a school for western languages and sciences.
- 1863 Establishment of the *Guang Fangyanguan*, a school for western languages and sciences in Shanghai.
- 1865 In Shanghai, the "Concordia" is founded, the first German club.
- July 1866 The first delegation representing the Chinese government travels to Europe and visits Holland, Denmark and Germany. The writings of the head of the delegation, Bin Chun, and of Zhang

Deyi, another delegation member, were the first and decisive direct Chinese records about the West. Zhang travels to Europe another eight times.

- 1871 Beginning of German classes at the *Tongwenguan*.
- 1871 – 1872 First of seven major expeditions of Ferdinand von Richthofen commissioned by the German fleet to study Chinese topography and resources in China's interior.
- 1873 The German East Asiatic Society (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens) is founded in Tokyo, a branch office is established in Shanghai.
- Zikawei Observatory is established at Zikawei (Xujiahui) near Shanghai by French Jesuits who also run several educational institutions.
- 1875 *Wan Guo Gong Bao (The Globe Magazine)* is established in Shanghai as the most important paper of the Protestant mission.
- 1876 – 1877 First group of Chinese students travel to England, France and Germany.
- 1877 Opening of the Chinese embassy in Berlin.
- 1878 *Yi Wen Lu (Revue pour tous)* is established at Zikawei/Shanghai as the most important paper of the Catholic mission; 1899 renamed *Hui Bao*.
- 1881 Georg von der Gabelentz (1840-1883) publishes the "Chinese Grammar" in Leipzig; it is the first systematic German work about the Chinese language.
- 1884 – 1885 Sino-French War. China is forced to recognize France's protectorates in Vietnam but does not have to pay an indemnity.
- 1886 *Der Ostasiatische Lloyd* is published in Shanghai as the first German-language newspaper in China.
- 1887 Foundation of the Seminar for Oriental Languages at Berlin University; for the first time, Chinese is taught in Germany.
- Starting 1895 Foreign industrial companies are established on a larger scale in the treaty ports.
- 1897 *L'Echo de Chine*, the most important French-language newspaper is founded in Shanghai.
- Two German catholic missionaries are murdered; as a consequence German troops occupy the region around Qingdao (Shandong Province).
- March 6, 1898 German-Chinese treaty: Qingdao is leased to Germany for 99 years. Beginning of large-scale railroad construction in China, financed by foreign capital.
- 1898 Britain leases the New Territories for 99 years.
- The British lease Weihaiwei in Shandong as a naval base.
- The French lease Guangzhouwan (Guangdong) for 99 years.
- 1899 Chinese translation of *La dame aux camélias* by Alexandre Dumas fils comes out; it is the first foreign novel to exert greater influence on Chinese literature.
- Around 1900 For the first time, Western philosophy and literature is translated into Chinese by Yan Fu, Lin Shu, Liang Qichao, Cai Yuanpei, Ma Junwu and others.
- March 13, 1900 German businessmen found the "German Asia Pacific Business Association" in Hamburg as an "association for German interests in East Asia."
- May 1900 Tensions between Christian missionaries and a secret society called Yihequan (Righteous and Harmonious Fists) result in the Boxer Rebellion. Eight allied powers, among them France,

Great Britain and Germany, send soldiers to Beijing to protect the large foreign community there, declaration of war on China.

- Aug. 14, 1900 Conquest of Beijing by the allied troops, lootings and massacres.
- Dec. 24, 1900 Beginning of peace negotiations between the foreign representatives and the plenipotentiaries of China.
- Sept. 7, 1901 Boxer Protocol: legalizes the stationing of foreign troops in China and forces China to pay high indemnities. Also, the *Zongli Yamen* is changed into a full-scale Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- 1903 Aurora University is founded at Zikawei near Shanghai by the French Jesuits. In 1908 it was moved to Shanghai. Part of the teaching was in French.
- 1905 Institut Pasteur is founded in Chengdu.
- 1907 Following an initiative of the German imperial government, the first German-Chinese schools are founded in Hankou and Tianjin.
- June 1907 The German Tongji University for Medicine is opened in Shanghai.
- Oct. 25, 1909 Opening ceremony of the first German-Chinese University in Qingdao. Its founder, Otto Franke, opens an "Institute for Chinese Culture" in Hamburg.

Era of the Republic

- 1912 Alliance Française (China Centre) opens in Shanghai.
- 1912 Hong Kong University run by the British is opened.
- After 1916 Western literature is translated to a great extent and becomes a decisive factor in modern Chinese literature.
- Aug. 14, 1917 China breaks off diplomatic relations with Germany, declaration of war. Germany loses Qingdao which is taken over by Japan. In the Versailles Peace Treaty all former German privileges in Shandong are attributed to Japan. The privileges of the other European powers in China are not changed by the Treaty of Versailles.
- Starting 1920s Systematic translation of Western philosophers and thinkers like Bertrand Russell, John Dewey, Henri Bergson, Karl Marx, etc. by Liang Qichao, Zhang Dongsun and others.
- Early 1920s Guo Moruo translates Goethe's *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* giving rise to a wave of Werther veneration.
- 1920 The Sino-French University is opened in Beijing. It was managed by Chinese, but offered teaching in French; after 1926 it received money from the French Boxer indemnity funds.
- May 20, 1921 German-Chinese agreement on the reestablishment of peace on the basis of full equality. Diplomatic relations between China and Germany are reestablished.
- 1923/24 Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *Romeo and Julia* are translated by Tian Han.
- 1924 Normalization of the relations between Germany and the "Warlord" government in Beijing.
- The Tongji University in Shanghai is reopened.
- 1925 Richard Wilhelm opens the first China Institute at the University of Frankfurt/Main.
- 1925 - 1927 Anti-imperialist movement, strikes against the foreign powers (especially against the British in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Guangzhou and other cities) and boycotts of foreign goods.

- 1929 Large exhibition of Chinese art in Berlin.
- 1931 The "Deutschland-Institut" is founded in Beijing (1931-1946) by Zhang Shouling.
- Feb. 1, 1931 Foundation of the German-Chinese airline EURASIA, which takes up service on the route Shanghai-Manzhouli (via Nanjing, Jinanfu and Beijing) on May 31.
- 1933 The Sino-British Cultural Association is founded in Nanjing with the purpose of promoting cultural relations between China and Great Britain.
- The Chinese-German Cultural Association (Chinesisch-Deutscher Kulturverband) is founded in Beijing by Zhu Jiahua.
- July 2, 1941 The Nationalist government breaks off relations with Germany and Italy and declares war on both countries on December 9.
- 1943 British Council establishes an office in Chongqing. It started its activities in China in 1940 with a scholarship scheme.
- Jan. 11, 1943 British-Chinese agreement on the formal end of the "unequal-treaty" system.

PR China – Post-War Era

- Oct. 27, 1949 Mutual recognition between the People's Republic of China and the German Democratic Republic.
- 1950 China opens diplomatic relations with Sweden (May 9), Denmark (May 11), Switzerland (Sept. 14) and Finland (Oct. 28).
- Jan. 6, 1950 Early, unilateral recognition of PR China by Great Britain (due to the securing of Hong Kong) and beginning of diplomatic relations.
- June 1951 First German-Chinese friendship week in East Berlin.
- Oct. 9, 1951 Agreement of cultural cooperation between PR China and the German Democratic Republic.
- June 17, 1954 Agreement about diplomatic relations on chargé d'affaires level between PR China and Great Britain.
- Oct. 5, 1954 China and Norway establish diplomatic relations.
- Nov. 19, 1954 Agreement about diplomatic relations on chargé d'affaires level between PR China and the Netherlands.
- June 18, 1963 As the first Western country Norway signs a cultural agreement with China.
- Jan. 27, 1964 PR China and France open diplomatic relations.
- 1967 Bilateral trade between the Federal Republic of Germany and PR China for the first time exceeds the volume of one billion DEM.
- Nov. 6, 1970 PR China and Italy open diplomatic relations.
- 1971 PR China opens diplomatic relations with Austria (May 28) and Belgium (Oct. 25).
- Oct. 25, 1971 PR China joins the UNO.
- 1972 PR China opens diplomatic relations with Greece (June 5), the Netherlands (May 18) and Luxembourg (Nov. 16).

China and Malta establish diplomatic relations.

- March 13, 1972 China and Great Britain expand their relations to the ambassadorial level.
- Oct. 11, 1972 The Federal Republic of Germany and PR China establish diplomatic relations.
- March 9, 1973 China opens diplomatic relations with Spain.
- Sept. 11-17, 1973 French President Georges Pompidou is the first Western head of state to visit PR China.
- Dec. 2, 1973 Foundation of the Society for German-Chinese Friendship; its aims are to make a contribution to international understanding, to promote cultural exchange and to inform about China and Chinese politics.
- 1973-74 Beginning of the first limited student exchanges between China and Germany – involving just 10 students. The Max Planck Society signs an agreement with the Chinese Academy of Sciences in April 1974.
- Jan. 1975 The visit of Bavarian state minister Franz Josef Strauss to China becomes a political sensation: Surprisingly, Mao Zedong and the head of the Chinese government, Zhou Enlai, receive the German opposition leader Franz Josef Strauss for an exchange of views on foreign affairs.
- May 1975 After the visit of EC commissioner Sir C. Soames, the European Community and PR China agree to establish diplomatic relations (formally established on Sept. 16, 1975).
- May 12-18, 1975 Deng Xiaoping visits France, the first visit of a Chinese top politician to Western Europe since 1954.
- Oct. 29-Nov. 2, 1975 State visit of German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt to China. During his visit, the first agreement on scientific and technological cooperation is signed.
- Oct. 12-15, 1977 First visit of German Foreign Minister Genscher to China. Meeting with Hua Guofeng, Huang Hua and Li Xiannian. During the visit the first German-Chinese cultural exchange programme is signed on Oct. 14; it intends to promote stronger cooperation, among others in the fields of university and linguistic studies, scholarships, scientific exchanges, music, exhibitions and sports.

China opens up

- Jan. 1978 Sino-French agreement on science and technology.
- April 3, 1978 The EC and China sign their first trade agreement in Brussels, among others for the foundation of a joint EC-China Committee.
- Sept. 1978 Agreement on scientific cooperation between the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Max Planck Society.
- Oct. 1978 Agreement on cooperation in science and technology between China and Germany.
- Agreements on cultural cooperation and on scientific and technical cooperation between China and Italy.
- Agreement on science and technology between China and Sweden.
- Agreement on scientific cooperation between the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the French State Centre of Science and Research (CNRS).
- Nov. 1978 Agreement of scientific cooperation between the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Royal Society of Britain.
- 1979 Deng Xiaoping introduces a new policy on culture advocating free debate between different views and academic schools. Nonetheless, after the opening up of the country the Party initiates

several campaigns to contain the rising influence of Western culture. Western culture itself becomes a target.

Law concerning Chinese-Foreign joint ventures, establishment of four special economic zones in South China.

- Jan. 1979 Three-year scientific cooperation agreement on basic research between the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the French Atomic Energy Commission.
- Emilio Colombo, the first President of the European Parliament, visits China.
- Feb. 1979 The first EC Commission President Roy Jenkins visits China and meets Deng Xiaoping. Moreover, PR China and Portugal open diplomatic relations (Feb. 8).
- May 1979 Agreement on scientific cooperation between the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Italian National Research Committee.
- June 1979 Protocol on scientific and technical cooperation between the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Fraunhofer Society for the advancement of research in the applied sciences.
- Agreement on cooperation in geological science and technology between the Chinese State Geological Bureau and the Ministry of Economy of the FR Germany.
- June 5, 1979 The first representative exhibition of German books is opened in Beijing.
- June 22, 1979 PR China and Ireland open diplomatic relations.
- July 1979 The joint EC-China Committee meets in Beijing for the first time.
- Sept. 1979 China and Luxembourg sign an agreement on cultural cooperation.
- Oct. 1979 Sino-German agreement on cultural cooperation.
- Chinese Prime Minister Hua Guofeng pays a state visit to Great Britain.
- Nov. 1979 The United Kingdom and China sign an Educational and Cultural Co-operation Agreement in London and a cultural, educational and scientific exchange programme to be renewed every two years. The projects include a film week and a retrospective film exhibition in each country and the exchange of delegations and personnel involved in drama, fine arts, publication, photography, education, library science and gardening.
- Feb. 1980 French Foreign Minister Poincet announces the establishment of a French-Chinese Centre and some other cultural organizations in Paris to foster further cultural cooperation.
- May 1980 Scientific cooperation agreement for academic and personnel exchanges between China and Great Britain.
- June 16-19, 1980 First parliamentary meeting between members of the European Parliament and the National People's Congress of China in Strasbourg.
- Dec. 1980 Belgium and China sign an agreement on cultural cooperation.
- April 1981 China and Spain sign an "Agreement for Cultural, Educational and Scientific and Technological Cooperation".
- Oct. 1981 The cultural agreement between France and China results in the display of Dunhuang murals in France.
- Apr. 1982 Agreement on cooperation in the fields of culture, science and technology between Portugal and China.
- Sept. 1982 Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher visits PR China.

- 1983 Strong increase of foreign direct investments in China.
1st EC-China programme on scientific cooperation begins.
- 1984 First consultations on ministerial level between China and the EC within the framework of political cooperation.
Opening of 14 coastal cities for foreign investments.
First EC project of cooperation is launched in China (household business, management training and rural development). The project is the largest undertaken by the EC and the PRC; it aims at expanding the Beijing Business Administration Centre by launching an MBA programme.
- Sept. 26, 1984 British-Chinese declaration (*Joint Declaration*), clarifies the transfer of Hong Kong on July 1, 1997 to PR China.
- 1985 Jacques Delors, President of the European Commission, visits China.
Great Britain opens additional consulates general in Shanghai and later in Guangzhou.
- May 1985 Agreement on cultural cooperation between China and Ireland.
The EC and China sign a second agreement about cooperation in the fields of trade and business in Brussels.
- June 1985 Festival "Horizonte" in Berlin with a strong participation of Chinese artists and authors.
Zhao Ziyang visits Great Britain.
- Oct. 1986 Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh visit PR China.
- 1987 For the first time, the European Commission co-finances development projects of NGOs in China.
- April 13, 1987 Signing of the Portuguese-Chinese agreement on the return of Macao in 1999 (based on the Hong Kong model).
- Oct. 14, 1987 A large majority of the German Bundestag disapproves of the Chinese Tibet policy.
- Oct. 4, 1988 The EC Commission opens a representative office in Beijing.
- Nov. 1, 1988 The first representative office of the Goethe Institute is officially opened in Beijing by German Foreign Minister Genscher.
- April 15, 1989 The death of former CCP Secretary General Hu Yaobang leads to rallies that turn into student protests in several large cities in May and June. The violent suppression of these demonstrations on June 4, 1989 on Tiananmen Square in Beijing leads to an international isolation of PR China and to economic sanctions.
- June 1989 Members of the Goethe-Institute and German students in Beijing have to be evacuated, language classes are stopped and cultural events in the stage of planning have to be postponed.
The EU member states freeze all diplomatic contacts with PR China on a high level, recall all consultants and cancel the granting of export guarantees.
- June 27, 1989 During its summit in Madrid, the EC decides to cancel all top-caliber contacts and all cooperation projects.
- Sept. 1989 The "Alliance Française" opens a "Centre franco-cantonaise de formation linguistique" in Guangzhou.
- Oct. 14, 1989 The Chinese government criticizes German reunification plans.

- Starting 1990 After the suppression of the Tiananmen protests, there is renewed discussion within the British government about the future of Hong Kong (election reforms). An understanding with Beijing fails.
- March 7, 1990 The German federal government grants a credit of USD 450 million for the construction of the Shanghai subway.
- Oct. 3, 1990 The Chinese Prime Minister expresses his joy at German reunification.
- Oct. 7, 1990 Fierce protests by the Chinese government against the meeting between German President von Weizsäcker and the Dalai Lama.
- Oct. 22, 1990 EU unanimously decides to normalize relations with PR China, only armament issues remain open.
- Nov. 20, 1990 Signing of a joint venture contract with Volkswagen: starting in 1994, VW Golf will be produced in Changchun.
- 1991 The European Commission for the first time grants aid to refugees from Tibet.
- April 1991 Vice-Premier Zhu Rongji visits Bonn and Paris.
- Agreement on scientific cooperation between Spain and China.
- Sept. 1991 Prime Minister John Major visits PR China. Diplomatic relations between Great Britain and China normalize. During his visit, a memorandum of understanding regarding the construction of the new Hong Kong airport is signed.
- 1992 Foundation of the "German-Chinese Friendship Association" in China.
- Relations between the EC and China normalize after the Tiananmen Square protests. The arms trade embargo remains in force. Dialogue on environment starts.
- July 1, 1992 China joins the Berne Convention for the protection of literary and artistic works.
- Fall 1992 French-Chinese relations cool down considerably, because France on 10 Sept. decides to sell 60 Mirage 2000-5 fighter jets to Taiwan and also to upgrade its office in Taiwan. In Dec. Beijing orders France to close its consulate in Guangzhou.
- Oct. 31, 1992 Visit of German Foreign Minister Kinkel in China. The normalization of bilateral relations is declared.
- Dec. 10, 1992 The German Bundestag lifts all economic sanctions of 1989.
- 1993 Breaking off of Chinese-British negotiations about the future of Hong Kong (point of argument: introduction of democratic elections).
- The European Commission for the first time supports programmes of the UN & World Bank for projects in China.
- Germany and China sign a new cultural exchange programme; for the first time Beijing allows cultural activities of a foreign cultural institution on Chinese soil. The DAAD (Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst = German Academic Exchange Service) is allowed to open an office in Beijing.
- April 1993 Agreement on scientific and technological cooperation between Portugal and China.
- Sept. 1993 Foundation of the Asia-Pacific Committee of German Business (APA). Its goals are: getting German companies to commit to Asia and improving the economic framework conditions.
- Oct. 1993 The European Commission opens a representative office in Hong Kong.

The German government publishes its new Asia concept. Focal points are in the fields of science, scientific-technological cooperation, environment, telecommunication, cooperation in development politics, cultural cooperation, foreign policy and security policy. In the concept, special weight is given to the relations with PR China.

- Nov. 15-19, 1993 Chancellor Kohl visits PR China. The business delegation accompanying him closes orders with a total value of about 6.3 billion DEM.
- Jan. 12, 1994 The governments of France and China issue a Joint Communiqué in which the French side is committed not to authorize French companies to participate in arming Taiwan any more, thus bringing the bilateral relations back to the right track.
- April 5, 1994 During the trip of Berlin's Governing Mayor Diepgen, a joint declaration about starting a friendly partnership between the cities of Beijing and Berlin is decided upon.
- April 7-10, 1994 French Prime Minister Balladur visits China.
- June 1994 New bilateral political dialogue opened between EU and China starts.
- June 29, 1994 China and the Principality of Andorra formally establish diplomatic relations.
- July 13, 1994 The European Union publishes an Asia concept through which a "radical rethinking of the EU's strategy towards Asia" is to be initiated. The document titled "Towards a New Strategy for Asia" shall contribute to strengthening the European presence in Asia. The strategy defines three aims: to improve mutual understanding; to define and facilitate a framework for cooperation; and to give an impulse to business-to-business contacts.
- Sept. 1994 During a state visit to France, State President Jiang Zemin presents the four-point principles for the relationship between China and Western Europe: first, with a view towards the 21st century a long-term, stable and friendly cooperation has to be developed. Second, there has to be mutual respect and, under consideration of various opinions, consent has to be the goal. Third, one should complement each other for the mutual benefit and promote joint development. Fourth, consultations and cooperation in international matters have to be increased.
- Nov. 1994 Foundation of the China-European Business School in Shanghai.
- 1995 The European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) for the first time grants China humanitarian aid and the European Investment Bank (EIB) sets up its first project in China.
- Jan. 1995 A special dialogue on human rights is started upon suggestion by the Chinese.
- Jan. 16, 1995 China and Monaco establish consular relations.
- July 5, 1995 The Commission first sets out its long-term strategy for EU-China relations in the 1995 Communication "A long-term policy of the European Union towards China".
- July 11-15, 1995 State visit of the President of the PR China, Jiang Zemin, in the Federal Republic of Germany. On July 13, an agreement about the establishment of additional consulates general in Munich and Guangzhou is signed; in addition, Kinkel and the Chinese Foreign Minister Wu Yi sign the "Chinese-German Treaty about Financial Cooperation" on July 15, which grants the People's Republic financial aid amounting to 180 million DEM for the current year. Over the course of the visit further agreements are signed, among them a joint venture project of Daimler-Benz AG for the production of utility vehicles in China representing an amount of more than 1 billion DEM.
- Nov. 12-16, 1995 German Chancellor Kohl visits China for the fourth time.
- Feb. 6-12, 1996 Vice-Premier Zhu Rongji visits Germany.
- March 1-2, 1996 First Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM I) in Bangkok. China and EU both take part.
- April 9-12, 1996 Premier Li Peng visits Paris.

- May 1996 Brussels and Beijing sign a cooperation agreement on higher education that would establish six European Studies Centres in Mainland China.
- June 14-17, 1996 Despite fierce protests from Beijing, the Friedrich Naumann Foundation together with the Tibetan government in exile organizes the second international conference of the Tibet support groups in Bonn.
- June 20, 1996 The German Bundestag, with the approval of the federal government, passes a resolution about the human rights situation in Tibet in which it calls for more resolute support of the Dalai Lama's efforts for cultural and religious autonomy of the region. After that, the government of the PR China officially declares on June 24 its intention to postpone a visit of the German Foreign Minister Kinkel planned for July 11-14, 1996 for an indefinite period of time.
- June 24, 1996 The fifth Alliance Française is opened in Beijing. The Alliance Française de Hong Kong was first established in 1953. The same institution exists in Aomen (1987), Guangzhou (1989), and Shanghai (1992), and others are planned.
- Oct. 21-24, 1996 Visit of Foreign Minister Kinkel to the People's Republic upon invitation from his Chinese colleague, Vice-Premier Qian Qichen. Kinkel also has talks with the head of state and party, Jiang Zemin, and Prime Minister Li Peng.
- Nov. 18-25, 1996 Visit of the German President Roman Herzog and his wife in the PR China. In a festive ceremony in Beijing on Nov. 19, Herzog and the Chinese State President Jiang Zemin sign three agreements on technological cooperation and a treaty on financial cooperation, which grants China 180 million DEM in credits for 1996.
- April 23, 1997 The EU Commission formulates a strategy paper about "The EU and Hong Kong: Beyond 1997".
- May 14-21, 1997 French President Jacques Chirac travels to China and is received by head of state, Jiang Zemin, in Beijing. That same day, a contract for the purchase of 30 Airbus planes worth about 1.5 billion US-Dollars is signed.
- July 1, 1997 Great Britain hands over Hong Kong to the PRC, Hong Kong becomes a special administrative region of China with "far-reaching rights of sovereignty" (except for security and foreign politics). After the handover of Hong Kong Chinese-British relations noticeably improve.
- Oct. 23, 1997 The dialogue about human rights, which was interrupted in 1996, is reopened.
- Jan. 1998 Cultural relations between the United Kingdom and China intensify with the British Education Exhibition.
- Feb. 18, 1998 Opening of the Chinese-German University series of lectures at Tongji University in Shanghai. The Chinese-German University is mainly funded by German companies such as Volkswagen, Siemens and Dresdner Bank.
- March 25, 1998 The EU Commission formulates the strategy paper "Building a comprehensive partnership with China".
- April 1998 The first EU-China summit (April, 4) and the second Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM II, April, 3-4) take place in London.
- Sept. 1998 French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin visits China.
- Oct. 1998 Successful mutual visits between Prime Minister Zhu Rongji and Prime Minister Blair.
- Oct. 6-10, 1998 "British Law Week" with more than 400 British and Chinese lawyers, legislators and academics discussing the Chinese and British law systems and taking part in trials.
- Oct. 29-Nov. 3, 1998 Official visit of the President of the EU Commission, J. Santer, Vice President Sir L. Brittan and Commissioner de Silguy in China and Hong Kong.
- Nov. 1998 China and Norway sign the Programme for Cultural and Educational Co-operation for 1999-2003.

- Jan. 1999 Publication of the first annual report of the Commission on Hong Kong SAR.
- March 1999 The Chinese and Swiss governments sign a "Statement of Intention for Sino-Swiss Cultural Co-operation".
- May 8, 1999 During a NATO bombing attack on Belgrade, the building of the local Chinese embassy is destroyed on the night of 7-8 May; three people are killed, 20 are injured.
- May 12, 1999 Chancellor Schröder on a one-day working visit in PR China. In Beijing, Schröder apologizes in the name of the German government and of NATO Secretary General Solana "without ifs or buts" for the bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade.
- Sept. 1-12, 1999 The "China Cultural Week Paris '99"; it is the largest exhibition of Chinese culture to have been held in Europe in the past 50 years. It was jointly organised by UNESCO and the information office of the Chinese State Council.
- Oct. 1999 Following an invitation from Queen Elizabeth II, State President Jiang Zemin pays his first state visit to Great Britain. It lays the cornerstone for relations between Great Britain and the PR China in the new millennium.
- Jiang Zemin and Jacques Chirac decide to realize French-Chinese cultural years. The Chinese Year will take place from October 2003 until the summer of 2004 in France, and the French Year will take place from October 2004 until the summer of 2005 in China.
- Nov. 1999 Finland and China sign the Programme for Cultural Exchanges in the years 2000-2004.
- Nov. 12, 1999 The European Commission adopts a policy paper on "The European Union and Macao: Beyond 2000".
- Dec. 20, 1999 Following the model of Hong Kong, Portugal hands Macao over to the PR China. Macao also becomes a special administrative region of the People's Republic.
- Dec. 21, 1999 The second EU-China summit takes place in Beijing.
- 2000 Great Britain opens an additional consulate general in Chongqing.
- May 19, 2000 Signing of the agreement between China and the EU about the ascension of the People's Republic of China to the WTO.
- June 2000 Prime Minister Zhu Rongji pays his first official visit to the headquarters of the European Commission in Brussels.
- June 12-13, 2000 The first German-Chinese constitutional state symposium in Beijing. On June 30, 2000 the two national coordinators in Berlin for the constitutional state dialogue, the minister in the Legal Office of the Chinese State Council, Yang Jingyu and the German Minister of Justice, Professor Dr. Däubler-Gmelin sign the "German-Chinese Agreement on Exchange and Co-operation in the Field of Law".
- Oct. 2000 A Chinese-German Centre for the promotion of science is opened in Beijing by the "Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft" (DFG) and the "Chinese Science Foundation". The German side contributed DEM 5 million to the establishment of the Centre.
- Oct. 13, 2000 The first EU-China high-level consultations on fighting illegal migration and trafficking in human beings take place in Brussels.
- Oct. 20-21, 2000 ASEM III in Seoul.
- Oct. 23, 2000 The third EU-China summit takes place in Beijing.
- April 2001 Agreement on scientific and technological cooperation between Italy and China.
- May 15, 2001 Commission adopts the "EU Strategy Towards China: Implementation of the 1998 Communication and Future Steps for a more effective EU Policy" that still shapes the current EU policy.

- July 13, 2001 During the 112th IOC full assembly in Moscow, Beijing is elected host of the Olympic Games 2008.
- Sept. 2001 During the "Asia-Pacific Week" China organizes a successful "Chinese Week" in Germany, thus far the largest event that China has organized abroad.
- Ireland and China sign the Memorandum of Understanding on Cultural Co-operation, whereby the two sides agree to hold a Chinese Cultural Festival in Ireland and an Irish Cultural Festival in China.
- Sept. 5, 2001 Fourth EU-China summit in Brussels.
- Nov. 2001 The Chinese Minister of Cultural Affairs, Sun Jiazheng, visits Germany together with a cultural delegation of the Chinese government. During the visit he explains the development of the cultural relations between the two countries to the representatives of the German Foreign Office and Chancellor's Office.
- Dec. 11, 2001 The People's Republic of China is officially admitted to the World Trade Organization WTO as the 143rd member.
- April 2002 European Commissioner for External Relations Chris Patten pays his first official visit to China upon the invitation of the Chinese government.
- April 3, 2002 Agreement on the Sino-EU energy and environment programme and Sino-EU agreement on the European Study Centre programme.
- April 8-12, 2002 Four-day visit of the Chinese President Jiang Zemin to the Federal Republic of Germany.
- June 25, 2002 The German Foreign Office presents its new East Asia regional concept. Important goal: "Integration of China, which is rapidly growing in political and economic importance, into the community of states".
- Aug. 2002 Sino-French agreement on cultural cooperation.
- Sept. 22-24, 2002 ASEM IV and fifth EU-China summit take place in Copenhagen.
- Sept. 26-28, 2002 Chinese Prime Minister Zhu Rongji pays an official visit to France. During his visit, an agreement on cultural cooperation between France and the PR China is signed.
- Nov. 2002 An agreement on the establishment of cultural centres is signed between France and the PR China. In December, the Cultural Centre of China is opened in Paris.
- End of 2002 The European and Chinese authorities decide to create a "EU-China Working Group on Digital Olympics". This working group is co-chaired by the European Commission and the Chinese Ministry of Science and Technology.
- Dec. 31, 2002 Chancellor Schröder participates in the maiden voyage of the Transrapid in Shanghai, which was developed in Germany, during his third visit to China.
- Sept. 10-17, 2003 Following a visit of the Chinese State President Hu Jintao, German President Johannes Rau visits China. This is the first state visit by the German President to China. Within the framework of his state visit, President Johannes Rau visits the Chinese-German Centre for the Promotion of Science in Beijing, a joint institution of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft and the Chinese Science Foundation.
- Oct. 6, 2003 The Chinese Year in France starts as the first of two years of two-way cultural exchanges between France and China; it will last until June 2004, and the French Year in China will last from October 2004 to June 2005.
- Oct. 13, 2003 A new policy paper of the Commission entitled "A Maturing Partnership: Shared Interests and Challenges in EU-China Relations" is endorsed by the EU. The aim of this document is to

update the strategy set out in 2001 and in the 1998 Communication "Building a Comprehensive Partnership with China", the main lines of which remain valid.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China releases "China's EU Policy Paper", which "is the first of its kind and aims to highlight the objectives of China's EU policy, and outline the areas and plans of cooperation and related measures in the next five years so as to enhance China-EU all-round cooperation and promote a long-term and stable development of China-EU relations".

- Oct. 30, 2003 Sixth EU-China summit in Beijing. China and the European Union agree to launch a structured dialogue on intellectual property rights (IPR) to discuss bilateral and multilateral issues related to the protection and the enforcement of intellectual property.
- Dec. 1-5, 2003 Chancellor Gerhard Schröder visits China.
- Dec. 3-4, 2003 Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) on Cultures and Civilizations takes place in Beijing. Chinese Minister of Culture acknowledges the prominent role of culture in Asia-Europe relations.
- Dec. 19, 2003 EU Commissioner for Education and Culture, Viviane Reding, and the Chinese Minister for Culture, Sun Jiazheng, sign letter of intent to reinforce co-operation in the fields of culture, audiovisual [media], education, training, youth and sport.
- May 21, 2004 The Bertelsmann Foundation and the China International Culture Association host the International Cultural Forum Beijing 2004.