Chapter 1
Paradigm Shift: Learning Is a Two-Way Street Between American Universities and Asian International Students

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Abstract This introductory chapter presents key rationales, the main argument, and the organization of the book. It argues that there is a power asymmetry between Asian students and American universities, and this power asymmetry provides one of the fundamental social contexts in which Asian international students at American universities are situated. This power asymmetry also sets up the academic discourse for studying these international students with a traditional deficit framework that emphasizes their adjustment and adaptation. It argues for the urgency to shift from the deficit framework to the one calling for proactive institutional efforts engaging both international students and American university to bring about successful experiences of international students.

Anthony Giddens, in the *Consequences of Modernity*, defines globalization as "the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa" (1990: 64). Globalization is palpable in American higher educational institutions, where students are often from more than 100 countries around the world. Through both classroom learning and interactions outside of the classroom with faculty, domestic students, and the American public, international students are learning and living globalization as their way of life in twenty-first-century American universities.

According to the Institute of International Education (IIE 2016), 974,926 international students are in the United States, making it the top destination for international students. Among these international students, about 51% came from the three countries: China (304,040), India (132,888), and South Korea (63,710). Asian students in total constitute 64.3% of all international students.

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   Most of these international students, especially at the undergraduate level, are not eligible for state tuition or financial aid packages. These students are particularly welcome today when American universities are facing significant budget constraints. They help American universities to achieve multiple purposes of balancing their budgets, diversifying, and globalizing their campuses. However, in spite of skyrocketing enrollment, we know very little of Asian students' experiences on American college campuses. Much of the academic research published in this field focuses on Europe and Australia (Jones 2010; Leask 2010), where major national surveys of international students, backed by government funding, have been done. To the best of our knowledge, no such national surveys have been conducted by the U.S. government on international students, which contributes to the paucity of research in this area. With such a lack of understanding, we may shortchange international students' learning experiences by failing to provide enough support, as well as falling short in our efforts to create global campuses.

   This book is about international students from Asia at American universities in the age of globalization. Why do they want to study in America? How do they make their college choices? To what extent do they integrate with domestic students, and what are the barriers for intergroup friendship? How are faculty and administrators at American institutions responding to changing campus and classroom dynamics with a growing student body from Asia? Have we provided them with the skills they need to succeed professionally? As they are preparing to become the educational, managerial, and entrepreneurial elites of the world, do Asian international students plan to stay in the United States or to return to their home country? This book deals with all of these significant questions.

Asian Students Drive the Growth of Enrollment

Figure 1.1 provides the proportion of international students in tertiary education hosted by top destination countries. It shows that the United States still attracts the highest proportion of international students, followed by the United Kingdom and Australia. There has been steep growth in the United States since 2012; in 2014, close to a quarter of all international students chose to study in the American institutions of higher education. Figure 1.2 shows the proportion of Asian students in the top destination countries, where growth has largely been spurred by the increase of students from Asia.

   Asia is vast and heterogeneous, in both its geography and culture. Figure 1.3 shows that East Asia and the Pacific region, and South Asia, are the regions sending the most international students to American universities. It is no coincidence that these regions also host countries with top-ranking GDPs in the world: China, Japan, India, and South Korea. The soaring economies in these countries have helped to produce an emerging middle class that can afford American higher education. In part, due to their rising economies, East and South Asia are more extensively integrated with the globalizing world in such areas as trade, travel, and information flow, all of which spur student mobility and talent migration.
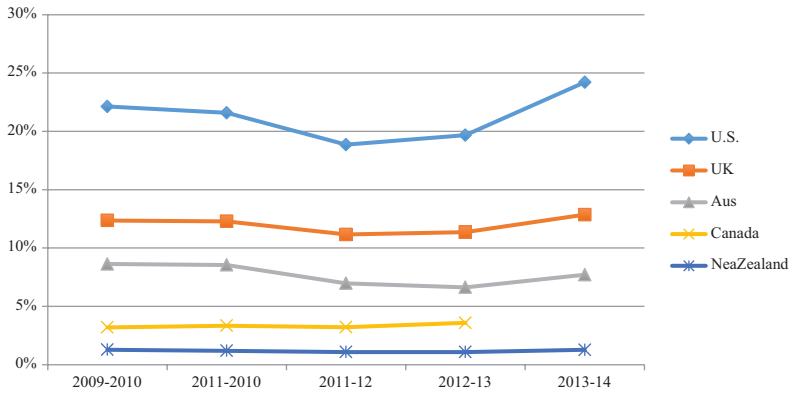
Fig. 1.1 The percentage of international students in tertiary education in the top destination countries (Source: author data compilation from UNESCO website, http://data.uis.unesco.org/Index.aspx?queryid=169. Note: Canada has no data for the most recent year)

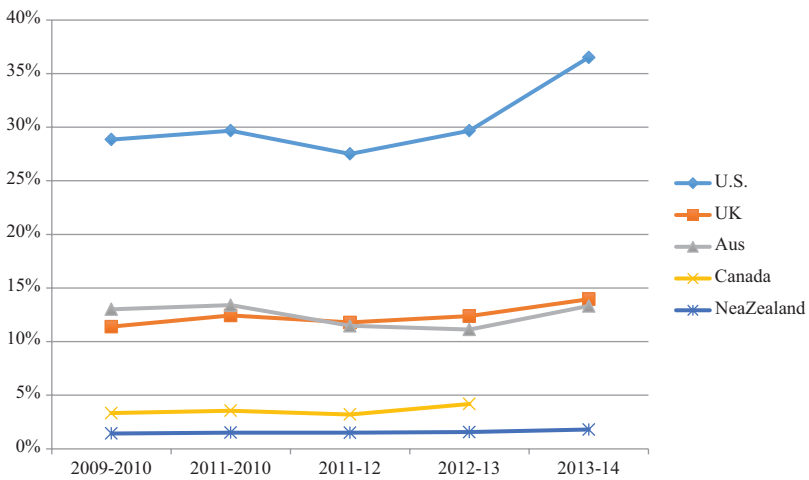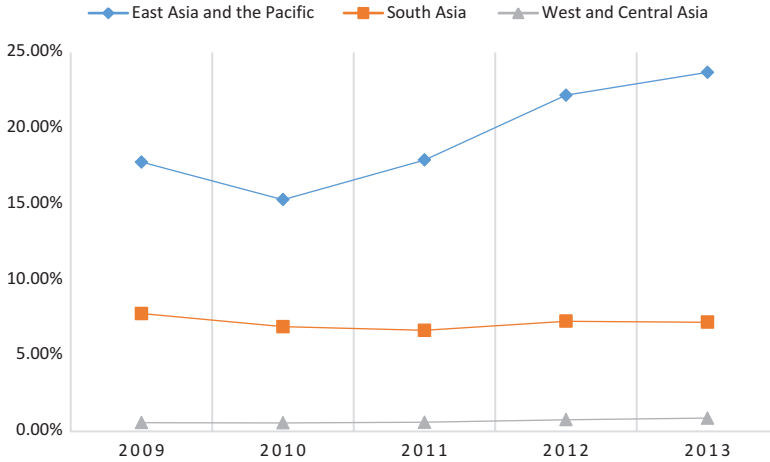**Fig. 1.2** The percentage of Asian students in the top destination countries (Source: author data compilation from UNESCO website, http://data.uis.unesco.org/Index.aspx?queryid=169)

Fig. 1.3 Regions sending Asian international students to American universities (Source: author data compilation from UNESCO website, http://data.uis.unesco.org/Index.aspx?queryid=169)

The Power Asymmetry Between Asian International Students and American Universities

Student mobility between Asian societies and the United States is far from symmetrical. While the United States has become the top destination for international students from Asia, American students are not as likely to study abroad in Asia. According to the Institute of International Education (2014), in 2013 and 2014, the top three destinations for American students studying abroad were the United Kingdom (38,250), Italy (31,166), and Spain (26,949). Among the top 25 destinations of U.S. study-abroad students, four countries are located in Asia—China, Japan, India, and South Korea. Specifically, of the 304,467 U.S. study-abroad students, 13,763 went to China, 5978 to Japan, 4583 to India, and 3219 to South Korea (Institute of International Education 2013/2014). In sum, around 11.9% of U.S. students study abroad in Asia, while around 64.3% of the international students in the United States are from Asia, underscoring the asymmetrical nature of student mobility in higher education between Asia and the United States.

This asymmetrical exchange of students is emblematic of the power asymmetry between Asian societies and the United States. This power asymmetry is best explained by the World-System Theory, which describes how individuals from peripheral nations tend to move toward core nations (Barnett and Salisbury 1996; Wallerstein 1979). According to the theory, many Asian countries are in the so-called periphery, which often produces "labor-intensive" and "low-technology" goods, while higher education is considered a high-end good of higher value if it is produced in a core country rather than in a peripheral country. Some countries in

Asia are semi-peripheral, such as South Korea, which is transitioning from the periphery to the core. Globalization has brought more countries to the integrated world market and has sped up the process of societies' transitioning from the periphery to the core. The most notable example is China, which used to be on the periphery but is now taking on an increasingly important role in the world system (Zakaria 2008). China is now the world's second-largest economy and is expected to overtake the United States in the near future to become the largest.

Instead of a rigid distinction between the core and the periphery, some have argued that globalization and information technology have blurred the very boundary between the two. As Vanessa Fong has argued, "Centers and peripheries are no longer tied to geographic regions as they were in the capitalist world system Wallenstein described; rather, they are located in easily portable skills, credentials, bank accounts, and citizenship documents" (Fong 2011, 22). However, systems of higher education seem to be trailing behind these transformative changes in the geopolitical order of the world. Although the Asian countries have invested heavily in their higher education sector, the world-class universities are still predominantly located in the core countries, usually understood to be Western industrialized countries. In other words, although the power asymmetry along economic lines has responded to changes in the world, the power asymmetry in the higher education sector has been resistant to change. American institutions of higher learning are of higher status and prestige than their Asian counterparts, which contributes to the disproportionate mobility of students from Asia to North America. More broadly, the higher status and prestige of American institutions validate and cement the legitimacy of American-centric and Euro-centric standards.

I argue that this power asymmetry provides one of the fundamental social contexts in which Asian international students at American universities are situated. In part, it shapes the perspective of American students, faculty and administrators, and their expectations of international students from Asia, and it influences how Asian students perceive their own experiences and pressures them to fit in and live up to the expectations of the American mainstream. This power asymmetry also sets up the academic discourse for studying these international students with a traditional deficit framework that emphasizes their adjustment and adaptation. The adjustment literature focuses on the cultural, academic, and linguistic barriers faced by international students, without challenging the presumption that overcoming these barriers is the sole responsibility of these students.

This book intends to challenge this power asymmetry and the traditional adjustment framework. It argues that American institutions of higher education need to catch up with the new realities of the global order and question the expectation that Asian international students should simply make efforts to adjust. Instead, American universities need to embrace the changes and encourage both American domestic students and Asian international students to learn from each other.

Paradigm Shift: Learning Is a Two-Way Street

A majority of extant studies on international students in American universities assume that international students are aiming to adjust, acculturate, and assimilate into American mainstream society (Al-Sharideh and Goe 1998; Bevis & Lucas 2007; Hechanova-Alampay et al. 2003; Pritchard and Skinner 2002; Zhao et al. 2005). Within this paradigm, studies are dominated by a focus on the acculturation stress and depression that pathologizes the international student population. Recently, a handful of scholars (Lee and Rice 2007, Lee 2010; Dolby and Rahman 2008) have argued for a paradigm shift, contending that the prevailing perspective is rooted in a deficit discourse emphasizing unidirectional adjustment, without addressing the real needs of international students. These scholars have argued that this negative perception and treatment of international students constitute a form of neo-racism (Lee and Rice 2007; Henry and Tator 2007), based on overt and covert discrimination concerning one's skin color and country of origin and on the relationships between countries.

This edited book joins the call for a paradigm shift from unidirectional adjustment on the part of international students to a "two-way street" of learning between American universities and international students, by providing empirical evidence, drawn primarily from the voices of Asian international students, to highlight the necessity for such a shift. A two-way street of learning emphasizes the glaring omission from the dominant research framework in the United States that American universities need to learn about, and learn from, their international students. Learning about these students is the precondition for learning from them. American domestic students, faculty, staff, and administrators are all stakeholders in this learning process, as are Asian international students.

Two-way street of learning entails and represents the transformative process of knowledge production, which in turn contributes to new knowledge. Universities in other countries, particularly, in the United Kingdom and Australia, have done significant work in raising awareness about and implementing internationalization (Hanassab 2006; Hills and Thom 2005; Leask 2001; Whitsed and Green 2015). What exemplifies two-way street of learning is internationalization of curriculum. Researchers at the Leeds Metropolitan University and the University of South Australia have done invaluable work in this area (Leask 2001, 2010, 2013; Caruana and Hanstock 2008). In a study at Leeds Metropolitan University in the UK, the researcher surveyed graduates of Higher Education and Research program about their understanding of internationalization. While there are different layers to internationalization of curriculum, the majority "emphasized a curriculum designed to enable students to understand the global context of their studies, to develop awareness of how knowledge is globally linked and to prepare them for viewing change as positive and managing it effectively in a global context" (Caruana 2010). This perspective goes beyond incorporating international content into learning but also about challenging and contributing to knowledge construction in a global context. Caruana (2010) has defined enablers of internationalization of curriculum as those

"providing the raw material and potential richness of cultural experience which can be strategically blended into teaching, leaning and assessment practices to provide an international/intercultural dimension" (Caruana 2010: 35). International students are key enablers. However, it takes two to tango. Domestic students need to be open in the two-way learning and working across cultures. Higher education institutions can play a critical role in encouraging and facilitating this process. For example, at the University of South Australia, policy statements such as Graduate Quality state "graduates of the University of South Australia will demonstrate international perspectives as professionals and as citizens" and nine generic indicators are provided to academic staff as a guide to what this graduate quality means for student capabilities. Support materials are provided to faculty and staff to facilitate and reward intercultural engagement between international students and domestic students (Leask 2010).

This perspective reflects a marked shift from the traditional mindset that emphasizes unidirectional adjustment and assimilation on the part of international students. American institutions fail to recognize that Asian international students are from non-Western societies with their own distinct cultures and educational systems, and this actually provides a great learning opportunity for American students and faculty. Rather than treating them as enablers of internationalization, American institutions tend to perceive their Asian students in the deficit framework. For example, American faculty and students often perceive Asian students as lacking a participatory spirit in and outside the classroom and lacking the ability to socialize, and thus, they are treated as the "foreign" other (Trice 2007). This has led to the further marginalization and isolation of Asian international students. Asian international students tend to have few, or no, American friends and report a lower level of satisfaction than Latin American and European international students (Gareis 2012).

These chapters offer evidence from interdisciplinary perspectives that Asian international students feel that they do not obtain sufficient understanding and support from American universities. We argue that this current lack of understanding stems from an old paradigm by which we expect international students to learn American culture—the idea that learning is a one-way street. Therefore, most of the chapters in this book aim to provide more knowledge and a better understanding of Asian international students. A few chapters are explicit efforts to show how professors and administrators learn from their international students and adjust their teaching and administrative strategies accordingly. We believe that this is a critical direction for moving beyond a deficit framework.

The Organization of This Book

The chapters in this book focus on students from major sending countries such as China, India, South Korea, and Pakistan. Some chapters focus on undergraduate students, others on graduate students. Given the recent surge of undergraduates from China, the magnitude of change and the impact on American universities is

unprecedented and poses fresh and unique questions for American faculty, students, and administrators to grapple with. This is aptly reflected in our chapters as well. Three chapters focus exclusively on China from the varied perspectives of Chinese students, and American faculty and administrators. In addition, we present an accessible collection of empirically based research articles drawn from multidisciplinary expertise in sociology, higher education, and communication and rhetoric studies. Consequently, the study methodology is diverse, ranging from survey data to in-depth interviews to mixed methods. In general, international students' voices and their interests are the central focus.

The book is organized into three sections, spanning the life cycle of international students' experiences: (1) their expectations and motivations prior to their arrival, (2) their experiences in American universities, and (3) their plans and future aspirations for after graduation. Chapter 1 provides the overriding theme and the structure of the book.

The first section, "Before Arrival," includes chapters about the educational backgrounds of international students and their college choice processes and about how American universities can help build cultural bridges for prospective students. It gives a rare glimpse into the processes and experiences of international students prior to their coming to the United States. Using both survey and interview data, Chapter 2 focuses on the college choice process of the Asian international students attending a large public research university in the United States. Using survey data, the study explores different roles played by the country of origin and the level of education pursued. Using in-depth interviews, it focuses on understanding how Chinese students in particular choose programs in the universities they plan to attend. Chapter 3 employs focus group interviews with students from Beijing and Shanghai applying to colleges in the United States, in order to examine the motivations, expectations, and challenges they anticipate in their future studies and to discover how they plan to apply their knowledge and transnational experiences in their future careers. In addition, the chapter discusses the potential benefits in learning about these prospective students so that American universities can support these students.

Chapter 4 focuses on female Indian students studying in American MBA programs. Using in-depth interviews, this chapter explores the paths Indian women took that led them to study in this male-dominated field. Motivated by the gender disparity that favors Indian men among international students, this chapter highlights the educational path taken by these women from private, English-medium, primary and secondary schools in India to American institutions of higher education.

Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 constitute the second section of this book, focusing on the academic and social experiences of Asian international students while enrolling at American universities. Chapter 5 addresses how contact affects intercultural attitudinal changes. The study induced extended contact between pairs of East Asian international students and American domestic students via a semester-long ethnographic project, during which students explored each other's cultures. The results show significant improvements in intergroup knowledge, attitudes, and

social distance, with stereotypes (especially of Asians as smart, quiet, and reserved) being replaced by more differentiated views. Chapter 6 describes how Pakistani graduate students experience prejudice and discrimination based on their religious and national identities during the current era of the "War on Terror." Using qualitative interviews with Pakistani graduate students studying in the United States, this study found that the students not only see their Muslim and Pakistani identity through their own eyes but also see these identities challenged within the context of the War on Terror, reflecting a sense of double consciousness in the host society, and it explores how they struggle constantly as they challenge and negotiate the negative constructs surrounding them.

After China and India, South Korea ranks third among countries sending students to the United States. Chapter 7 examines international students from South Korea and how they construct their academic experiences while dealing with negative stereotypes of their home country, verbal discrimination accompanied by hostility toward their nonfluency in English, and direct confrontations. This chapter also examines how Korean students maintain ties to their home country while struggling to avoid living in complete isolation from the social environment at the host university.

Chapter 8 is based on longitudinal interviews with Chinese international students as they start and finish a 2-year MBA program. This chapter reveals that learning about and living with globalization does not happen organically on its own, nor it is solely a function of an individual's motivation to engage with the process. Overall, the Chinese students experienced key cultural, linguistic, and academic barriers that stood in the way of enacting the globalization about which they were learning. This chapter finds evidence of key power asymmetries between the Chinese international students and American students, faculty, and staff, with the international students holding lower status.

Chapters 9 and 10 present two case studies of instances where American faculty and administrators took the initiative to respond to Chinese international students' needs. Chapter 9 looks at American professors' practices using writing to facilitate learning at an English-medium summer school in China. All of the professors came from highly ranked American universities and taught a variety of courses typically offered to freshmen and sophomores in their home institutions. The majority of students were Chinese international students returning home from North America for the summer. Focusing on humanities and social sciences professors, the study identifies several key adaptive strategies that these professors adopted in teaching, including connecting subject matter to the students' home cultures and valuing students' multilingual resources. Chapter 10 focuses on Michigan State University and discusses how that institution and the surrounding community responded to both the opportunities and the challenges presented by rapidly growing Chinese undergraduate enrollment. As a practitioner, the author discusses various approaches that MSU faculty and students tried in order to learn about and from Chinese students, including conducting surveys about faculty attitudes, mounting research projects about Chinese students, and shooting a faculty-driven documentary movie featuring the Chinese student experience.

The final section, "After Graduation," includes chapters about factors that influence the decision-making process of Asian students considering whether to stay in the United States or return to their home country and about how these students can empower themselves, with the help of American universities, to become leaders in the twenty-first century. Chapter 11 uses data from the Survey of Earned Doctorates, a nationally representative dataset, to examine patterns in Asian doctoral graduates' stay-versus-return decisions through the decades of the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s. This chapter pays particular attention to the question of how country-specific changes, such as shifts in economic development or national policy, may relate to shifts in stay-versus-return decisions. Chapter 12 looks into the future and the types of skills that international students want to cultivate to become leaders in the twenty-first century after graduation and into how institutions can help cultivate these skills in international students.

In summary, this edited volume aims to present the first-hand experiences and highlight the original voices of international students from Asia and to call for proactive institutional efforts on the part of both international students and American university to address the issues. To expect international students simply to adjust to American institutions does not fit the new globalized world in the twenty-first century, yet this mindset of a one-way street of learning is deeply ingrained. This book aims to change that mindset.

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