

University Alliance for Sustainability

– Final Report

Research and study stay 2015 at 北京大学 in the field of sustainability

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From July until September 2015 I carried out an inquiry concerning sustainability in the light of 体 and 用 at Peking University.

My activity consisted mainly in cross-cultural conceptual analysis and concept building. Since I intend to publish my research results, I will not elaborate on them at this point. The following report shall rather provide a potential source of information for scholars who might be carrying out research at PKU in the future.

Visa can be obtained at the *Chinese Visa Application Service Center*¹. Li Yun² can send you a letter from PKU that will help to obtain an F-visa. She might also support you in securing accommodation in Beijing. A single room in *Shaoyuan*³ is recommendable.

It is recommendable to create a *WeChat*-account⁴ and download the *FU-VPN*-client⁵.

Upon arrival at the campus, you may register at the *Office of International Relations*⁶, so you can get the documents necessary to apply for a PKU- and a library-ID card. Upon paying a refundable deposit at the library you will receive the permission to borrow books under generous conditions.

The atmosphere at PKU is tremendously thrilling and inspiring. One can literally sense the history and tradition of that institution wherever one goes. My favourite two spots at the campus are the lake with no name (未名湖) and the central library.

¹ http://visaforchina.org/BER_EN

² email: liyun[at]pku.edu.cn

³ <http://web5.pku.edu.cn/pkucc/shaoyuan>

⁴ <http://wechat.com>

⁵ <https://zedat.fu-berlin.de/VPN>

⁶ <http://www.oir.pku.edu.cn>

When tourists are gone, the sun has set, and silence arrived, the lake is most beautiful. Sitting in a lonely corner and enjoying the reflections of the trees that at some moments don't seem to be reflections, while having the great poets that were walking around and got inspired by that lake in mind, together with the ineffable feeling you experience upon returning to the campus at night, make PKU one of the truly rare aesthetic places in the world. The library has an impressive selection of books and contains, which had been a surprise to me, a statue by Yan Fu – a major figure of my research. If you are sensitive about air pollution, you might want to visit PKU in summer/early autumn, as during those seasons you can even enjoy blue sky and fresh air for some time.

Beijing is a huge academic, cultural and political hub. It is advisable to contact Beate Rogler⁷ in order to receive invaluable hints and becoming part of her e-mail distribution list.

I mainly collaborated with students and researchers from the Institute for Advanced Humanistic Studies, the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, and the Yenching Academy. I was given the opportunity to present my work to several of them and attend a series of colloquia, conferences, and workshops.

Fortunately, a colleague drew my attention to the annual conference of the *Institut International de philosophie* under the theme “Dimensions of the Human” taking place at the PKU campus during my stay. In his closing speech, Tu Weiming asked for a new religious musicality. At that moment it struck me that the potential of religion as a bridge for sustainable development⁸ might very well be totally underappreciated and underexplored yet.

At this point I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Free University Berlin and their Beijing Office, the Peking University, their Center for History and Philosophy of Science and their Office of International Relations, and the University Alliance for Sustainability, as well as the persons affiliated with these institutions, without whom my research stay wouldn't have been possible.

⁷ email: beate.rogler[at]fu-berlin.de

⁸ cf. an event with that very title organized by f.ize in September 2015 (<http://fize.de/printer.php?id=veranstaltungen.2015-9-28>)