

Chinese Kinship

Contemporary anthropological
perspectives

Edited by

**Susanne Brandtstädter and
Gonçalo D. Santos**

Routledge Contemporary China Series

Chinese Kinship

The essays in this volume present contemporary anthropological perspectives on Chinese kinship, its historical complexity and its modern metamorphoses. The collection draws particular attention to the reverberations of larger socio-cultural and politico-economic processes in the formation of sociality, intimate relations, family histories, reproductive strategies and gender relations – and vice-versa.

Drawing on a wealth of ethnographic material from the late imperial period and from contemporary Taiwan and the People's Republic of China, from northern and southern regions as well as from rural and urban settings, the volume provides unique insights into the historical and spatial diversities of the Chinese kinship experience. This emphasis on diversity challenges the classic 'lineage paradigm' of Chinese kinship and establishes a dialogue with contemporary anthropological debates about human kinship reflecting on the emergence of radically new family formations in the Euro-American context.

Chinese Kinship will be of interest to anthropologists and sinologists, as to historians and social scientists in general.

Susanne Brandtstädter is Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Oslo, Norway.

Gonçalo D. Santos is a Research Fellow in the Department of Anthropology at the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Routledge Contemporary China Series

- 1 Nationalism, Democracy and National Integration in China**
Leong Liew and Wang Shaoguang
- 2 Hong Kong's Tortuous Democratization**
A Comparative Analysis
Ming Sing
- 3 China's Business Reforms**
Institutional Challenges in a Globalised Economy
Edited by Russell Smyth and Cherrie Zhu
- 4 Challenges for China's Development**
An Enterprise Perspective
Edited by David H. Brown and Alasdair MacBean
- 5 New Crime in China**
Public Order and Human Rights
Ron Keith and Zhiqiu Lin
- 6 Non-Governmental Organizations in Contemporary China**
Paving the Way to Civil Society?
Qiusha Ma
- 7 Globalization and the Chinese City**
Fulong Wu
- 8 The Politics of China's Accession to the World Trade Organization**
The Dragon Goes Global
Hui Feng
- 9 Narrating China**
Jia Pingwa and His Fictional World
Yiyan Wang
- 10 Sex, Science and Morality in China**
Joanne McMillan
- 11 Politics in China Since 1949**
Legitimizing Authoritarian Rule
Robert Weatherley
- 12 International Human Resource Management in Chinese Multinationals**
Jie Shen and Vincent Edwards
- 13 Unemployment in China**
Economy, Human Resources and Labour Markets
Edited by Grace Lee and Malcolm Warner

- 14 China and Africa**
Engagement and Compromise
Ian Taylor
- 15 Gender and Education in China**
Gender Discourses and
Women's Schooling in the Early
Twentieth Century
Paul J. Bailey
- 16 SARS**
Reception and Interpretation in
Three Chinese Cities
*Edited by Deborah Davis and
Helen Siu*
- 17 Human Security and the Chinese
State**
Historical Transformations and
the Modern Quest for Sovereignty
Robert E. Bedeski
- 18 Gender and Work in Urban China**
Women Workers of the Unlucky
Generation
Liu Jieyu
- 19 China's State Enterprise Reform**
From Marx to the Market
*John Hassard, Jackie Sheehan,
Meixiang Zhou, Jane Terpstra-
Tong and Jonathan Morris*
- 20 Cultural Heritage Management
in China**
Preserving the Cities of the Pearl
River Delta
*Edited by Hilary du Cros and
Yok-shiu F. Lee*
- 21 Paying for Progress**
Public Finance, Human Welfare
and Inequality in China
*Edited by Vivienne Shue and
Christine Wong*
- 22 China's Foreign Trade Policy**
The New Constituencies
Edited by Ka Zeng
- 23 Hong Kong, China**
Learning to Belong to a Nation
*Gordon Mathews, Tai-lok Lui,
and Eric Kit-wai Ma*
- 24 China Turns to Multilateralism**
Foreign Policy and Regional
Security
*Edited by Guoguang Wu and
Helen Lansdowne*
- 25 Tourism and Tibetan Culture in
Transition**
A Place Called Shangrila
Åshild Kolås
- 26 China's Emerging Cities**
The Making of New Urbanism
Edited by Fulong Wu
- 27 China-US Relations
Transformed**
Perceptions and Strategic
Interactions
Edited by Suisheng Zhao
- 28 The Chinese Party-State in the
21st Century**
Adaptation and the Reinvention
of Legitimacy
*Edited by André Laliberté and
Marc Lanteigne*
- 29 Political Change in Macao**
Sonny Shiu-Hing Lo
- 30 China's Energy Geopolitics**
The Shanghai Cooperation
Organization and Central Asia
Thrassy N. Marketos

**31 Regime Legitimacy in
Contemporary China**
Institutional Change and
Stability
*Edited by Thomas Heberer and
Gunter Schubert*

32 US–China Relations
China Policy on Capitol Hill
Tao Xie

33 Chinese Kinship
Contemporary Anthropological
Perspectives
*Edited by Susanne Brandstädter
and Gonçalo D. Santos*

Chinese Kinship

Contemporary anthropological perspectives

**Edited by Susanne Brandtstädter and
Gonçalo D. Santos**

First published 2009

by Routledge

2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 5RN

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada

by Routledge

29 West 35th Street, New York, NY 10001

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

This edition published in the Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2008.

“To purchase your own copy of this or any of Taylor & Francis or Routledge’s collection of thousands of eBooks please go to www.eBookstore.tandf.co.uk.”

© 2009 Editorial selection and matter Susanne Brandtstädter and Gonçalo D. Santos. Individual chapters, the contributors.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Chinese kinship : contemporary anthropological perspectives / edited by Susanne Brandtstädter and Gonçalo D. Santos.

p. cm.

1. Kinship–China–History. 2. Family–China–History. 3. China–Social life and customs. I. Brandtstädter, Susanne. II. Santos, Gonçalo D.

HQ684.A227 2008

306.870951–dc22

2008014953

ISBN 0-203-88988-6 Master e-book ISBN

ISBN 978-0-415-45697-5 (hbk)

ISBN 978-0-203-88988-6 (ebk)

Contents

<i>List of Illustration</i>	ix
<i>List of Contributors</i>	x
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xiii
Introduction: Chinese kinship metamorphoses SUSANNE BRANDTSTÄDTER AND GONÇALO D. SANTOS	1
PART 1	
Motion, Migration and Urbanity	27
1 'Families we create': women's kinship in rural China as spatialized practice ELLEN R. JUDD	29
2 Living a single life: the plight and adaptations of the bachelors in Yishala HUA HAN	48
3 Practicing connectiveness as kinship in urban China WILLIAM JANKOWIAK	67
PART 2	
Intimacy, Gender and Power	93
4 The ties that bind: female homosociality and the production of intimacy in rural China SARA L. FRIEDMAN	95
5 The 'stove-family' and the process of kinship in rural South China GONÇALO D. SANTOS	112

6	Actually existing Chinese matriarchy CHARLES STAFFORD	137
---	--	-----

7	The gender of work and the production of kinship value in Taiwan and China SUSANNE BRANDTSTÄDTER	154
---	--	-----

PART 3

	State, Body and Civilization	179
--	-------------------------------------	-----

8	Becoming a mother in Late Imperial China: maternal doubles and the ambiguities of fertility FRANCESCA BRAY	181
---	--	-----

9	Education and the governing of child-centered relatedness ANDREW KIPNIS	204
---	--	-----

10	Disruption, commemoration and family repair STEPHAN FEUCHTWANG	223
----	---	-----

	<i>Afterword</i> JANET CARSTEN	246
--	-----------------------------------	-----

	<i>Index</i>	249
--	--------------	-----

List of illustrations

Figures

- | | | |
|------|--|-----|
| 8.1 | Childbirth chamber: the new mother is sitting on her bed propped up by piles of quilts to prevent sudden movement and hemorrhaging; a maid or perhaps the wet-nurse is holding the baby. | 190 |
| 10.1 | Wang extended family network (a) in J neighbourhood; (b) in S neighbourhood. | 228 |
| 10.2 | Wu extended family network. There may be errors, for example of order in generation. All in same neighbourhood; two Wu groups distantly collateral. | 229 |

Tables

- | | | |
|-----|---|----|
| 2.1 | Sex ratios by age, Yishala, 2005. | 52 |
| 2.2 | Marriage types by male cohort, Yishala, 2005. | 53 |

Map

- | | | |
|-----|----------------------|---|
| 1.1 | Field locations map. | 4 |
|-----|----------------------|---|

List of contributors

Susanne Brandtstädter is Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Oslo. She has undertaken anthropological fieldwork in Taiwan, Fujian, and more recently Shandong Provinces. Her research and publications have focused on the intersections of Chinese kinship and gender dynamics with larger historical formations, on 'civilizing processes', modernity and moral economies, and on notions of rights and justice in rural China. She is the editor of 'Transitional Spaces: Postsocialism as a Cultural Process' (*Critique of Anthropology*, Special Issue, 2007:27(2)).

Francesca Bray teaches social anthropology at the University of Edinburgh. Her research includes the history of science, technology and medicine in late imperial China, and the anthropology of technology in the contemporary world. Her publications include *Technology and Gender: Fabrics of Power in Late Imperial China* (1997) and *The Tomato, the Telephone and the Toilet: The Technics of the American Home* (in preparation).

Janet Carsten is Professor of Social and Cultural Anthropology at the University of Edinburgh. She is the author of *The Heat of the Hearth: The Process of Kinship in a Malay Fishing Community* (Clarendon Press, 1997) and *After Kinship* (Cambridge University Press, 2004). She has co-edited *About the House: Lévi-Strauss and Beyond* (Cambridge University Press, 1995) with Stephen Hugh-Jones, and edited *Cultures of Relatedness: New Approaches to the Study of Kinship* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), and *Ghosts of Memory: Essays on Remembrance and Relatedness* (Blackwell, 2007).

Stephan Feuchtwang is part-time Professor in the Department of Anthropology, London School of Economics. His current research interests include anthropology of history and of self-realisation in different temporalities, and comparative approaches to large-scale entities, empires, oekumenes and civilisations. Recent publications include, as editor and contributor, *Making Place: State Projects, Globalisation and Local Responses in China* (UCL Press, 2004).

Sara L. Friedman is Associate Professor of Anthropology and Gender Studies at Indiana University. She has conducted research in Fujian Province and in Taiwan. She is the author of *Intimate Politics: Marriage, the Market, and State Power in Southeastern China* (Harvard University Press, 2006) and is currently conducting research on marriage and citizenship across the Taiwan Strait.

Hua Han is a cultural anthropologist with research interests in marriage, kinship, gender and family, sexuality, political economy, and migration. She received her PhD in cultural anthropology in 1998 from Washington State University. Since then, she has been a research associate at the University of Washington in Seattle, and has been involved in several field research projects in China on topics of the interplay between post-Mao political economy, kinship, gender, and family.

William Jankowiak is Professor of Anthropology at University of Nevada, Las Vegas. He has written over 85 scholarly articles and book chapters. He is the author of *Sex, Death and Hierarchy in a Chinese City* (Columbia University Press, 1993), and editor of *Romantic Passion* (Columbia University Press, 1995); 'Well Being, Family Affections, and Ethical Nationalism in Urban China' (*Journal of Urban Anthropology*, 2004); *Intimacies: An Individual's Predicament and a Culture's Dilemma* (Columbia University Press, 2008), and co-editor (with Dan Bradburd) of *Drugs, Trade and Colonial Expansion* (University Arizona Press, 2003).

Ellen R. Judd is a professor of anthropology at the University of Manitoba. She is the author of *Gender and Power in Rural North China* (Stanford University Press, 1994), and *The Chinese Women's Movement between State and Market* (Stanford University Press, 2002), and editor or co-editor of *Rural Women in Reform Era China* (Chinese Sociology and Anthropology, 1999), *Feminists Doing Development: A Practical Critique* (Zed, 2000) and *War and Peace* (Anthropologica, 2006). Her current field-based research is on gender, mobility and livelihood in rural west China, specifically the kinship mediated implications of large-scale rural-urban migration for people living in rural sending communities.

Andrew Kipnis is a Senior Fellow in the Department of Anthropology and Contemporary China Centre of the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies at the Australian National University. He is co-editor of *The China Journal* and author of *China and Postsocialist Anthropology: Theorizing Power and Society after Communism* (Eastbridge, 2008) and *Producing Guanxi: Sentiment, Self and Subculture in a North China Village* (Duke University Press, 1997).

Goçalo D. Santos is a Research Fellow in the Department of Anthropology at the London School of Economics. He has been carrying out field research in rural South China since 1999. More recently, he started to

undertake comparative field research in other parts of rural China and in the island of Sulawesi (Indonesia). His research and publications focus on kinship, family and relatedness. Other interests include wet-rice farming and material culture; modernity, demography and social change; culture and cognition.

Charles Stafford teaches anthropology at the London School of Economics. His research – conducted over the past 20 years in mainland China and Taiwan – focuses primarily on learning, schooling, child development and cognition. He is the author of *The Roads of Chinese Childhood* (Cambridge University Press, 1995) and *Separation and Reunion in Modern China* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), and is co-editor of *Questions of Anthropology* (Berg, 2007).

Acknowledgements

This volume is based on the conference ‘On Chinese Kinship and Relatedness: Contemporary Anthropological Perspectives’ held at the University of Manchester on April 22–23, 2006. Back in the autumn of 2005, we had discovered our common interest in new anthropological approaches to Chinese kinship, and decided that a collective rethinking of this classic theme was long overdue. Our call for papers was well received and brought together young and already well established China anthropologists and historians for a two-day international workshop at the Chancellors Hotel and Conference Centre in Manchester. Its aim was to rethink our approach to Chinese kinship as well as to show that the Chinese kinship experience can make an important contribution to anthropological debates on the nature of human kinship. The original arguments presented and the following discussions at the workshop contributed tremendously to the formation of this edited volume.

Besides the two of us, paper presenters included in alphabetical order — Francesca Bray, Harriet Evans, David Faure, Stephan Feuchtwang, Sara Friedman, Suzanne Z. Gottschang, Han Hua, Bill Jankowiak, Ellen R. Judd, Andrew Kipnis, Ma Guoqing, Steve Sangren and Charles Stafford. We also invited two discussants, Maurice Bloch and Janet Carsten, whose insights into the larger anthropology of kinship provided the necessary theoretical framework to place our discussion in relationship to the wider anthropological theory. The discussion also benefited from the participation of a surprisingly large audience of interested students and scholars who chose to attend the event and contributed to its success. We would like to thank all for their contributions and for the lively intellectual atmosphere they helped to create throughout the conference.

The workshop would not have been possible without the conference grant we received from the British Academy, and the financial support of the Department of Social Anthropology and the School of Social Sciences at the University of Manchester, and of the Institute of Social Sciences at the University of Lisbon. We would also like to thank people at the faculty research office of the University of Manchester for helping to organize the conference. We also want to express our thanks to João Segurado for

preparing a map outlining the locations of the various field sites discussed in the volume. Finally our thanks go to the two anonymous reviewers of the volume for their constructive suggestions and to the editing team at Routledge for doing a wonderful job in preparing the manuscript for publication.

Susanne Brandtstädter and Gonçalo D. Santos
Oslo and London, June 2008

Introduction

Chinese kinship metamorphoses

Susanne Brandtstädter and Gonçalo D. Santos

The essays in this volume focus on kinship in China¹ from a broad anthropological perspective, one that is firmly committed to the work of ethnographic description and imagination. Our volume proposes an update to previous collections of essays on this classic anthropological topic (Ebrey and Watson 1986; Freedman 1970),² in light of the dramatic changes that have occurred since not just in China, but also in anthropological kinship theory itself. More specifically, this volume – which follows from an international conference held at the University of Manchester in April 2006 – seeks to move beyond such earlier collections in at least two fundamental respects.

First, the volume responds to an increasingly manifest urge within Chinese anthropology to question and revise the ‘lineage paradigm’ – originally inspired by the groundbreaking work of the late Maurice Freedman (1958, 1966) – that has dominated the study of Chinese kinship for much of the second half of the twentieth century (Santos 2006; Watson 1982). Second, after almost two decades of enormous growth within the China field (hitherto a rather ‘specialist’ region within general anthropology), this volume poses the question of what the Chinese kinship experience can bring to the anthropological understanding of kinship in general, and *vice versa*. Here we are following in the footsteps of Maurice Freedman himself, whose adaptation of the famous descent group theory, laid out in *African Political Systems* (Evans-Pritchard and Fortes 1940), to the study of China powerfully demonstrated that kinship can also be of enormous social, cultural and political importance in civilizations with an ‘old state’ (Baker and Feuchtwang 1991). Freedman’s intellectual achievement and important legacy is thus acknowledged here. However, we believe that a revision of Freedman’s central ideas, and a more general rethinking of the anthropology of Chinese kinship, is timely in both disciplinary and empirical terms. The post-Mao transformations beginning in the 1980s have marked the beginning of an unprecedented wave of field research on Chinese soil that has prompted many anthropologists to come back to the classic topic of kinship and family relations. This recent research – many of whose authors are represented in this volume – highlights the remarkable transformations that have

2 *Chinese Kinship*

happened in China since the post-war period, if not since the late imperial and the early republican eras. This work has also generated a new set of synchronic and diachronic perspectives on Chinese kinship that we think deserve wider attention. The more so, we suggest, because this rethinking coincides with a remarkable resurgence of interest in kinship within the general field of anthropology – and in the public realm of many Western societies – that has yet to be confronted with the Chinese case study – and *vice versa*.

The present volume makes an important step in this direction. In addition to providing fresh historico-ethnographic snapshots of the Chinese kinship experience, the various chapters in this volume demonstrate that transformation and variation – and thus ‘social change’ – are central rather than marginal elements in the making of Chinese kinship. They suggest that the Chinese case study, rather than providing an example of extreme historical unchangeability or stasis, is the illustration of a rather extreme capacity to adapt continuously to widely varying circumstances, both geographically and historically. Yet, despite these ongoing transformations, the Chinese kinship experience has also remained recognizably ‘similar to itself’ over very large historical and geographical distances. We believe that this apparent paradox of malleability and constancy, fluidity and rigidity is not just typically Chinese, but is an important element of human kinship cross-culturally. That this aspect of human kinship is particularly visible in the Chinese case study is probably because there is an unusual amount of easily available historical data on Chinese kinship practices (both public and domestic). We think these data suggest that the anthropology of kinship must theorize transformation as central, rather than as exceptional, to what human kinship is and does.

We aim to capture this theoretical insight with the expression ‘Chinese kinship metamorphoses’ – an expression of our invention that evokes a recent work by Maurice Godelier (2004), in which he provides a remarkable account of the human kinship experience from a cross-cultural perspective. Drawing on the chapters that follow, our introduction highlights three important theoretical perspectives or ideas that a focus on transformation in the Chinese kinship experience can generate. First, the idea that human kinship practices and representations are subject to significant cross-cultural (and intra-cultural) transformations built around diverse sets of ‘ideals’ and ‘materialities’. These not only go well beyond issues of biological reproduction, but also recast the nature/biology and culture/social divide that has informed kinship theory in significantly different ways. Second, the idea that people’s kinship practices and representations are everywhere not just about what is inherited or given from the past, but also about what is acquired in the present and aspired to in the future. And third, the idea that kinship might be represented as emerging from the local, the moral, the emotional or the traditional, but that kinship practices and representations are historical and therefore subject to historical transformations. This is because the realm of kinship (including the ways sex and gender, and age and generational

relations are regulated) is both embedded in and contributes to the reworking of the larger politico-economic and sociocultural processes that form its particular ‘experience’. The focus on Chinese kinship as a (static, traditional or local) ‘thing’ has been coterminous with understandings of China as a (politically bounded) culture. Focusing on transformations, instead, also implies approaching ‘China’ as a historically shaped, evolving cultural field of relations, where kinship is increasingly engaged in the complexities of global markets and modern state formation.

Our volume is organized into three thematic sections – (1) Motion, migration and urbanity; (2) Intimacy, gender and power; (3) State, body and civilization – that are symptomatic of the current diversity of research interests in the China field, and that aim to operationalize transformation through focusing on the different materialities central to the making of Chinese kinship. ‘Materialities’ is, for us, a term that does not just comprise ‘things’, but that is conceived in contrast to ‘ideals’ or even ‘ideologies’ and thus that also comprises, for example, emotional or memory practices. We shall come back to these ‘materialities’ later on. For now, we would like to note that the volume also includes a considerable diversity of field settings and historical periods purposefully designed to capture the remarkable historical and spatial variations of kinship in China (Map 1). While most chapters focus on the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and on the contemporary post-Mao era, the Maoist era and even the late imperial and early republican eras are also the object of some attention. For example, Chapter 8 (Bray) is a historical ethnography of elite practices and medical discourses of ‘multiple parenthood’ during the late imperial period. Beyond the PRC, Chapter 10 (Feuchtwang) focuses on modern Taiwan, and Chapters 6 and 7 (Stafford and Brandstädter) compare the PRC and Taiwan. The focus of this volume is the Han Chinese (the politically and numerically dominant ‘ethnic group’ in both the PRC and Taiwan), but we also remain sensitive to the diversity of ethnic and identity issues at play in the Chinese world. Two chapters deal with non-Han communities, in western Sichuan (Chapter 2, Han) and Inner Mongolia (Chapter 3, Jankowiak), and one with a Minnan-speaking Han community in Fujian (Chapter 4, Friedman) that is often associated with ‘non-standard’ marriage practices. The volume also highlights the variations between urban and rural settings, a duality that in ‘modern’ China has acquired increasing political, economical and cultural significance. Moreover, the collection brings together material from different regions including the far south (Guangdong), south-east (Fujian and Taiwan), south-west (Yunnan), central-west (Sichuan), coastal east (Shandong) and north (Inner Mongolia). Taken as a whole, this recurrent emphasis on diversity is not merely descriptive; it has the theoretical aim of drawing attention to Chinese kinship through its multiplicities rather than through defining a standard ‘model’ and exploring all variations as ‘deviances’.

Emphasizing transformation might appear too contemporary and too much influenced, both empirically and ideologically, by the scale and scope



Map 1 Field locations map

of the process of social change going on in the mainland since the foundation of the PRC, including the current accelerated move towards globalization and industrial capitalism. We can only gesture here towards the enormous amount of historico-anthropological scholarship – partly triggered by a groundbreaking volume edited by Patricia B. Ebrey and James L. Watson (1986) – that shows how Chinese kinship and gender were constantly affected and transformed, during the high imperial era and the late imperial period, by political and economic developments, growing class inequalities and local warfare, and historical upheavals of state-making and ‘civilization-making’ (Bossler 1998; Birge 2002; Ebrey 1991; Faure 2007; Furth 1999; Ko 2005; Mann 1997; Sommer 2000; Szonyi 2002; Zheng 1992).³ Beyond this question of the relation between kinship and history, we also think that our emphasis on transformation is more in tune with Chinese ancient forms of knowledge and philosophical concepts, which combined an emphasis on classification and categorization with the recognition of the pervasiveness of metamorphosis and transformation both across and within classes/categories. An example of this is the famous duality of *yin* and *yang*, which is constantly reshaping and reorganizing while always remaining recognizably the

same.⁴ We think that this ancient emphasis on metamorphosis and transformation is not a mere relic of the past, but informs much of China's recent history, and is particularly visible in the realm of kinship and family relations.

In what follows, before proceeding to a detailed presentation of the various chapters in the volume, we first provide a brief 'genealogical' overview of the key debates in discussion. This overview prompts us to spell out the major contributions of the volume to recent developments in anthropological kinship theory and Chinese kinship studies.

Kinship and civilization: the classic transformations

The intellectual fields of Chinese studies and sociocultural anthropology have long shared a common interest in kinship as a fundamental sphere of social action and a major source of culture. In Chinese studies, this interest derived from the centrality of kinship in the Chinese civilizational project, a complex process in which state and family have been both conflictual and complementary actors. Imperial society was understood to exist 'under the shadow of the ancestors' (Hsu 1948) and to be organized around familist ideals based on hierarchical relations of age and generation, and of sex and gender, which extended from the family outwards to become the 'conscious model' (Ward 1985) for all relations in society, including those between emperor and subject. This imperial model of a harmonious society was inspired by state-endorsed Confucian sayings and doctrines (going back more than 2000 years) that emphasized the importance of the 'family' and its normative regulation for the order of the empire. Historically, this model promoted a whole complex of patriarchal kinship institutions organized around ancestor worship and organizing a patrilineal system of transmission of identity, power and patrimony. The reason why these familial rituals and institutions were important to wider society – especially after the tenth century (Ebrey and Watson 1986) – is that they promoted the historical stabilization of social relations based on kinship position and ritual propriety (*li*). Legal statutes (*lii*) enshrined this moral ideal but, in terms of procedures, they seemed to have served only as a complement – albeit an important one – to the forces of morality and social etiquette (Faure 2007). The spreading out of kinship into wider society, echoed in customary practices such as ancestor worship and lineage building, was also supported 'technologically' by a kinship terminology with a high degree of descriptive precision, which produced an unparalleled number of kin terms. Such complexities explain, no doubt, why family and kinship became topics of central interest for students of Chinese society and history.

Anthropologists' interest in kinship, by contrast, derived primarily from how kinship seemed to have replaced politics, economics or Culture (with a capital C) in what earlier generations called 'primitive' or 'simple' societies (see Kuper 1988). Because there seemed to be no state, writing systems, 'high' art or philosophy in these societies, anthropologists looked to kinship

as the key principle around which ‘primitive’ culture and society was organized. In other words, kinship was seen to be an ‘irreducible principle’ (Fortes 1949, 1969) or an ‘elementary structure’ (Lévi-Strauss 1949), which extends from securing natural procreation to the organization of political, economic and cultural life. Until quite recently, this assumption that kinship is a central principle of organization in ‘simple’ societies went hand in hand with the assumption that the ‘complex’, ‘modern’ societies of Euro-America were shaped by the reduction of kinship to the nuclear family and its ‘privatization’ into an epiphenomenon of personal emotions (Goode 1963). In China, many early twentieth-century intellectuals (some of whom had studied in Western universities) were also convinced that the Chinese political fascination with kinship was one of the reasons why the country had failed to break away from its agrarian predicament towards modernity and industrial capitalism (Liu 1995: ch. 9). Despite a few early anthropological attempts to address this question (e.g. Fei 1939), it was only in the post-war period that kinship would emerge as a major topic of anthropological research, playing a key role in the consolidation of the China field in the discipline.

The work of Maurice Freedman (1958, 1966) on lineage organization in pre-Communist rural South China – which depicted this regional phenomenon as a form of grassroots social organization centred on descent and territory – was particularly important in this respect. First, because it suggested that the anthropological tradition of ‘small detailed case studies’ could be profitably used in the study of Chinese history and society. Second, because it showed that Chinese kinship phenomena could be better understood in both functionalist and evolutionary terms in light of general anthropological theories such as the Africanist theory of unilineal descent groups. While the impact of Freedman’s work in mainstream anthropology remained limited, its impact in the China field was profound, especially during the 1960s and 1970s, when the PRC was still largely closed to international researchers and a highly innovative wave of field investigations was undertaken in Taiwan and in colonial Hong Kong. Inspired in part mistakenly by the work of Freedman, these studies developed a paradigmatic way of looking at Chinese kinship and society – a so-called ‘lineage paradigm’ – that assumed that the politico-jural principle of patrilineal descent had an objectivist precedence over all other kin and non-kin dimensions of social life. This paradigm resulted not only in an overemphasis on kinship in the study of Chinese society, but also in the narrowing of the domain of kinship to that of descent and property, at the analytical expense, for example, of the study of marriage, women and the family (Santos 2006). While, before Freedman, ‘kinship’ was about many different things and perspectives (family dynamics, reproduction, kinship terminologies, marriage practices, philosophical doctrines, psychological dispositions, the agrarian state), after Freedman ‘kinship’ became more strictly associated with descent, property and lineage organization. In this view, patrilineal descent organizes the

distribution of property and people while linking the local to the imperial polity, and Chinese kinship looks like ‘an extreme and non-fluid version of patriliney’, as Charles Stafford (2000a: 38) has recently put it. The typical realizations of this kinship model were the pre-revolutionary ‘localized lineages’ of rural South China studied by Freedman (and revisited in Chapters 5 and 7 by Santos and by Brandtstädter). Divergent kinship formations, including urban and other non-lineage-centred rural formations, were either ignored or regarded as mere corruptions or variations of this ‘traditional’ southern rural model.

Recent kinship transformations: China and the ‘global West’

Since Freedman’s classic publications, much has happened in the anthropology of China, in the anthropology of kinship, and in China itself, and these recent developments are the focus of our book. To begin with, the post-Mao opening of mainland China from the late 1970s onwards confronted anthropologists with the massive social transformations going on since the foundation of the PRC in 1949 (for an early example see Parish and Whyte 1978, 1985). These mainland transformations, much more than those previously observed in Taiwan and Hong Kong, forced anthropologists to shift their concerns from the ‘traditional’ to the ‘contemporary’ and to the question of modernity and social change. They also forced anthropologists to reinsert history into ‘China’ and to rethink its place in the modern world. In the kinship field, this new post-Mao wave of field research has contributed to the exposure of the limitations of the lineage model, and to the growing visibility of earlier alternative approaches developed through ethnographic research in Taiwan and colonial Hong Kong (Sangren 1984; Watson 1985; Wolf 1972; Wolf and Huang 1980). This critical momentum has also led some anthropologists to point out the need to combine anthropology with history in order to move beyond concepts such as ‘traditional society’ (Ebrey and Watson 1986; Watson and Ebrey 1991). The 1980s were thus an important turning point in terms of rethinking. However, it was only in the 1990s that kinship would re-emerge as a major topic of anthropological research in all possible senses (Bray 1997; Chun 2000; Cohen 2005; Diamant 2000; Faure 2007; Fong 2004; Jing 1996; Judd 1994; Kipnis 1997; Sangren 2000; Stafford 2000a, 2000b; Wolf 1995; Yan 1996, 2003; Yang 1994). Again, we can only gesture towards this already vast literature, which includes both diachronic and synchronic approaches (for overviews see Harrell 2001; Santos 2006). It seems clear, however, that there is a growing consensus in the field that the ‘southern’, ‘rural’ kinship model of the Freedman era is no longer adequate in both empirical and theoretical terms.

Innovation seems even more urgent when we turn to the context of the wider field of anthropology, where discontent with ‘grand’ kinship models such as Freedman’s started to emerge as early as the 1950s and 1960s (e.g. Leach 1955, 1961). By the 1970s and 1980s, leading practitioners such as

Rodney Needham (1971) and David Schneider (1968, 1984) were developing powerful critiques of the theoretical foundations of ‘classic’ kinship theories (Godelier 2004: 25–32). Schneider (1984) in particular went as far as arguing that the comparative study of kinship should be abandoned because its analytical categories only reproduced the fundamental truths of Euro-American culture. These ‘truths’ include the idea that ‘kinship relations’ are everywhere built around two major hierarchically related orders: a primary ‘order of nature’ based on ‘natural substances’ such as biogenetic material, and a secondary ‘order of law’ based on ‘codes for conduct’ such as socially sanctioned rules. Contrary to Schneider’s suggestion, the ‘fall of kinship’ (Sousa 2003) in anthropology would never occur. Instead, the 1990s would bring about an important cycle of renovation that only reconfirmed the importance of kinship for anthropology theory by bringing about developments on many different fronts (Carsten 2000b; Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995; Collier and Yanagisako 1987; Edwards et al. 1999; Faubion 2001; Feinberg and Ottenheimer 2001; Franklin and McKinnon 2001; Franklin and Ragoné 1998; Ginsburg and Rapp 1995; Godelier *et al.* 1998b; Maynes *et al.* 1996; Schweitzer, 2000; Stone 2001).⁵

Drawing on this intellectual renovation, the present volume focuses less on recent developments dealing with kinship rules and terminologies – the ‘cool side of kinship’ (Godelier *et al.* 1998a: 5) – than on those dealing with its ‘hot side’ (*ibid.*: 5) – the issue of kinship practices and idioms. This is the research front that is less fascinated with the ‘classic’ approaches criticized by Schneider (1984) and that has been trying to redefine the ‘kinship’ enterprise shorn of the ‘biological essentialism’ he thought to be associated with Euro-American culture writ large. Drawing on anthropological studies of gender, body and personhood, these ‘new kinship studies’ have been less concerned with ‘what kinship does’ (that is, with how kinship structures economic and political relations) than with ‘what kinship is’ (that is, with how it is perceived and practised). This analytical shift was also a ‘shift in contextualization’ (Holy 1996: 6) brought about by the emergence of a new ‘anthropology at home’ triggered, above all, by a series of particularly dramatic kinship and gender transformations in the global west.⁶ Confronted with public concerns over the rise of radically new family formations and gender relations, including new reproductive technologies, anthropologists started to focus on recomposed families, gay kinship or surrogate motherhood with the technical (research) toolbox developed in non-Western, small-scale settings. The results of this new research were very thought-provoking (Edwards *et al.* 1999; Franklin and McKinnon 2001; Franklin and Ragoné 1998). It was suggested, for example, that although kinship in the ‘modern West’ often has few wide-ranging formal organizational functions in the wider society, this does not mean kinship here is less important than elsewhere; it only means that kinship works in a different way in different contexts. A further suggestion was that the problem with classic kinship theory is not that it is Western-centric, as Schneider (1984) claimed; rather, the problem is that it is

based on analytical distinctions such as that between the ‘natural’ and ‘biological’, and the ‘social’ and ‘cultural’, that have little to do with the experiential reality of kinship anywhere in the world (for overviews see Carsten 2004; Holy 1996).

These arguments were particularly influenced by earlier debates on nature, culture and kinship, and on gender and sexuality, in the 1980s and 1990s (Atkinson and Errington 1990; Collier and Yanagisako 1987; MacCormack and Strathern 1980; Yanagisako and Delaney 1995). Further influences include recent debates around the Lévi-Straussian notion of *sociétés à maison* (Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995), recent studies of gay and lesbian kinship (Weston 1991), and recent developments in science studies (Latour 1993). Beyond these influences, this quest for a more ‘symmetrical’ anthropology reflects long-standing concerns in the field over the incapacity of kinship definitions based strictly on sexual reproduction or biological connections to convey the cross-cultural variations and historical complexities of the human kinship experience. However, in contrast to earlier critical efforts such as that of Schneider (1984), what is now being questioned is not just the assumption that kinship formations are everywhere grounded in biology or in the ‘natural facts of procreation’, but also the assumption that they are everywhere based on a conceptual opposition between what is natural or biological, and what is cultural or social. One of the major objectives of this critique is to encourage anthropologists to discard their scholastic assumptions about what kinship is, so that more attention is given, for example, to the ways kinship is perceived and practised in different societies. In this new paradigm, kinship is no longer a natural or biological reality that takes various social or cultural forms. Instead, it is a complex, hybrid process of establishing relations of proximity, not separable from the more general phenomena of intimacy and relatedness (Carsten 2000b; Franklin and McKinnon 2001). This analytical shift is not consensual, and has already generated important debates (see Parkin and Stone 2004: part II). Although most would agree that biological connections and people’s kinship constructions do not necessarily overlap, not all would concur that the distinction between the natural and the social is universally irrelevant (e.g. Astuti 2001). In any case, these disagreements are not entirely new, but evoke old nature/nurture debates. Now, as before, the crux of the problem seems to be the extent to which, if at all, ‘material facts’ of whatever sort can help us understand people’s sociocultural practices and representations.

A new materialist perspective

The present volume proposes a recontextualization of these new–old tensions between ‘traditionalists’ and ‘revisionists’ (Carsten 2004: 23) on Chinese ground. At the same time, we want to propose a fresh approach to kinship that derives largely from relocating these anthropological debates in China as a historical formation. Read together, the essays in this volume suggest

that we need to look at kinship not just from a broader analytical perspective – well beyond Freedman’s privileging of male descent or the ‘classic’ tendency towards ‘biological essentialism’ – but also in distance to the more ‘extreme’ forms of kinship constructivism in the new kinship studies. While our approach converges with recent analyses of kinship centred on wide-ranging concepts such as ‘relatedness’ (Carsten 2000b) or ‘connectiveness’ (Bill Jankowiak’s term, Chapter 3 in this volume), none of the authors in the volume goes as far as suggesting that kinship ought to be replaced analytically by such general categories. Yet most of us have found such categories useful in order to theorize ‘kinship’ in more fluid and more active terms, as an instance of the more general phenomenon through which people come to identify and establish proximity and distance, similarity and difference, between themselves and others. That we cast our net so wide is not because we want to sidestep the question of the boundaries between kinship and other forms of relatedness (such as friendship), but because we want to get around the constraints of dominant definitions of kinship that often assume a great divide between material, natural dimensions on the one hand, and immaterial, cultural or social aspects on the other. We propose, instead, what could be called a ‘new materialism’ in kinship studies. The idea is to explore kinship as a constructive process by drawing attention to the various materialities involved in its making (blood, *qi*, emotions, memories, rice, labour, property) and their inter-relation or ‘co-association’ (the term is from Thompson 1988).

In this volume, this emphasis on materialities is also linked to an effort to develop a fresh approach to the famous ‘micro–macro’ problem in kinship studies by stitching together two approaches that are too often kept apart: one focusing on the more private and domestic aspects of kinship, the other focusing on its more public and politico-economic aspects. Trying to go beyond this unfruitful dichotomy, most chapters look at kinship as an intimate and creative practice – a form of ‘social production’, as Steven Sangren (2000) puts it – that both spills over and is embedded in wider politico-economic and sociocultural processes. Binding these two approaches together through what Ellen Judd (Chapter 1) calls a ‘robust materialism’ helps us explore kinship as an active process of becoming that is always situated within wider, historical-political, economic and sociocultural relations – in other words, a metamorphosis. The ‘material’ focus also helps us to look beyond established categorical oppositions and to draw attention to the productive processes that are and that make kinship in different contexts and spheres of reality. This question of contexts and spheres of reality is particularly important because the relation between practice and representation is not straightforward, and people’s kinship practices, as Pierre Bourdieu (1977) long ago suggested, have different degrees of ‘official’ visibility and of discursive formalization. It is quite striking in this respect that all essays in the volume explore Chinese kinship through a focus on that what has been ‘traditionally’ perceived as marginal in the ‘official’ kinship ideologies:

women (Judd, Stafford, Brandtstädter, Santos, Friedman, Bray), children (Stafford, Kipnis, Jankowiak, Santos), non-standard families and same-sex relations (Han, Friedman), or class, violence and work (Bray, Feuchtwang, Brandtstädter).

More generally, this volume proposes an exploration of the metamorphoses of kinship through an exploration of how relatedness is created in daily life as part of material practices shaped by their situatedness in space. The material practices we have in mind include acts of spatial mobility and immobility, rupture and connectedness (Judd, Jankowiak, Han), acts of working for each other, remittances and sharing property (Brandtstädter), acts of resource-sharing around a common stove (Santos), acts of practical and emotional support (Friedman, Stafford), sacrifices of family income for school fees (Kipnis), flows of blood, milk and education from mother to child (Bray), and even acts of remembering and forgetting (Feuchtwang). Materialities have, of course, always played a central role in both kinship studies and in the study of Chinese kinship. For example, Maurice Freedman (1958, 1966) regarded the imperial state, the lineal transmission and the collective holding of ancestral property as central elements in patrilineal kinship. His model of A–Z lineage formations in South China postulated a continuum between two extreme types. On the weak side, there were those lineages with few members, weak social cohesion, few collective rituals, and shallow social differentiation that own ‘no common property except for a plot of land which is the grave side of the founding ancestor’ (Freedman 1958: 131). On the strong side, there were those lineages that are ‘corporately rich in land, ancestral halls, and other items of property as rice mills’ (*ibid.*: 132). For Freedman, most significantly, the complex of patrilineal property also included women, because the strength of the Chinese lineage ‘was to be gauged by the relinquishment of its female agnates and the *incorporation* of the women married into it’ (*ibid.*: 134, emphasis added). In such ‘classic’ anthropological accounts of kinship in China as part of economic strategies (see also Cohen 1970), we find strong traces of what Susan McKinnon (2001: 278) has called the ‘enterprising of kinship into the paternal economies of culture’ that shaped approaches to kinship ever since the different ‘origin stories’ of Morgan and Lévi-Strauss (Brandtstädter 2003).⁸ While natural kinship was maternal, ‘the paternal relation was unable to generate any social form *unless property was added to it*’ (McKinnon 2001: 284; original emphasis). This distinction between a natural, undifferentiated, soft and maternal relatedness, which is associated with biological reproduction and with the ‘domestic’ sphere, and a rigid, differentiated and paternal kinship, which is associated with culture and with the ‘public’ politico-economic domain, also underlies Freedman’s own descent-centred account of Chinese kinship (Santos 2006: 294; Stafford 2000a: 37).

At this point, we would like to draw attention to two recent anthropological explorations of Chinese kinship in which this ‘classic’ domestic–public divide has collapsed: Francesca Bray’s work on technology, power and

gender in late imperial China (Bray 1997), and Charles Stafford's work on what he calls 'the cycles of *yang* and *laiwang*' (Stafford 2000a) in contemporary China. Bray explores the relations between state-making and gender-making (the making of what she calls 'the moral order') through a focus on architecture, the culinary and symbolic relations between altar and stove, the sociocultural and economic meaning of gendered work, and the 'gynotechnics' of Chinese medicine. Stafford, in contrast, draws ethnographic attention to two indigenous systems of relatedness besides patriliney and affinity: the cycle of *yang* (literally 'to raise') – which centres mostly on parent–child relationships – and the cycle of *laiwang* (literally 'to come and go') – which centres mostly on relationships between friends, neighbours and acquaintances (Stafford 2000a: 38). Because what is clearly at stake in these two cycles is the production of relatedness (quite often achieved through everyday or domestic transactions), he concludes that kinship in China 'is crucially articulated with these distinctly fluid, creative, and incorporative systems' (*ibid.*: 38–39). Bray's and Stafford's interventions are significant not just because they remind us that kinship is a process of social production, but also because their focus on materialities undermines the domaining so central to 'classic' kinship theory. Bray (1997) suggests that *nügong* (both 'women's work' and 'womanly work') was not just about reproducing the secluded, subordinate role of women in the overall moral order, but was also about producing material items such as offspring, food and cloth, which played a key role in establishing links of proximity between people, and between the state and its subjects. In Stafford's two cycles of relatedness – of *laiwang* (come and go) and *yang* (raise) – the key material connectors are 'money, houses, and food, but also affections as emotional support' (Stafford 2000a: 44). In both perspectives, kinship is at the centre of other forms of relatedness (not necessarily grounded on biological reproduction) and the classic domestic–public divide has vanished, as has that between emotions and economics, and between blood and labour.

The distinction between different practices, however, might remain important. This is precisely what Stuart Thompson (1988) suggests in his article 'Death, food and fertility', where he develops the important concept of 'co-associational substances'. Focusing on the symbolic meanings of food offerings in funerals, including their role in the representation of male and female, agnatic and affinal relations, Thompson (*ibid.*: 93) proposes an interesting distinction between 'substance shared' and 'substance for exchange'. The term substance shared refers to food items (such as rice) that are inalienable and can only be shared by patrilineal ancestors and their living representatives. As 'ancestral stuff', these substances shared are those that represent/produce both maleness and the agnatic groups. By contrast, the term substance for exchange refers to food items (such as pork) that are transferable between individuals and groups. As 'fertile stuff', these substances for exchange are those that represent/produce both femaleness and affinity. Importantly, Thompson (1988: 106–8) points out that these

categories are not opposites, but it is their intermingling and mutual transformation that creates fertility and, by extension – we would add – kinship. Susanne Brandtstädter shows in Chapter 7 how such a distinction can be made meaningful as part of the changing dynamics of larger political economies. She argues that the process of transforming ‘women’s work’ (a substance for exchange that is co-associational with female relatedness) into ancestral property (a substance shared that is co-associational with male relatedness) is a central moment in the recasting of Chinese kinship as patrilineal, and in the eliding of the work and value of women in producing kinship. In these metamorphoses, it is the presence of gendered ‘co-associational substances’ that makes the boundaries between kinship and other forms of relatedness extremely porous in practice. This does not mean that people do not acknowledge the existence of natural kinship (Bill Jankowiak’s anecdote of the little boy who acknowledges that his playground friend is not his ‘real brother’ – *zhen didi* – makes this point). It means only that the substances and actions that are seen to create natural kinship are just one category of substances and actions, the intermingling and mutual transformation of which create life and thus kinship.

Motion, migration and urbanity

This brings us to the first set of metamorphoses figuring in this volume, those occurring in space and relations across space. Space, place, mobility and scale have been important issues in rethinking the nature of the social in anthropology and in the social sciences in the past two decades, offering new ways to cast the relations between local and global, state and society, economics and culture.⁸ These relations might have been of particular significance in the historical formation of Chinese civilization, because economic, bureaucratic and religious spatial formations all played a significant part in the making of ‘places’ (Feuchtwang 2004). As Wang Mingming (1995: 34) puts it, ‘place is intrinsic to the formation of social space and the ritual construction of landscape, and, as such, is intrinsic to Chinese ways of being in society.’ Spatial relations have always been central to kinship studies, but they gained particular prominence recently via the Lévi-Straussian concept of ‘house societies’ (Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995), which provided an ingenious way to bring together architecture, material and spatial practices, emotions of affection and memory, as well as cognition and embodiment. Reflecting this recent ‘spatial turn’ in kinship studies, most chapters in this volume are sensitive to issues of space. However, they all also tend to move well beyond the house in exploring the role of spatial formations in kinship. Again, Bray’s and Stafford’s earlier work is relevant in this context. Bray (1997) explored how architecture in Late Imperial China ‘encoded’ patriarchy and gave context and meaning to domestic practices such as cooking and weaving. Stafford (2000a) described two indigenous cycles of relatedness that are firmly grounded in space, but his emphasis is more on

motion and mobility, while Bray's is more on production. In another article, Stafford (1999) links his emphasis on the production of relatedness through mobility and movement to migration, transnational relations and the global economy.

The three chapters in this section focus on spaces that are central not just to the formation of local relations, but also to the process of 'state-making' in China. These include the spaces of labour and marriage mobility, of the urban-rural divide and of the formation of urbanity, all of which have taken on a new and amplified meaning under first the Maoist and then the post-Maoist state project. Not limiting their analyses to the realm of the house, the authors in this section find important ways of linking the micro level of social relations and emotional connections to the macro level of wider political and economic relations. Ellen Judd (Chapter 1) most eloquently articulates the need to look at Chinese kinship from a spatial framework. She also suggests that space is a good way to think about gender. As her material from Sichuan (western China) shows, Chinese women often view families as their own creations, and Judd explores the specific ways in which women in rural China are creating families in the spatial interstices of formal kinship structures. Expanding Margery Wolf's earlier focus on 'uterine families' in her *Women and the Family in Rural Taiwan* (Wolf 1972), Judd argues that women's kinship, in contrast to men's kinship, was always shaped by rupture, mobility and distance, due to the widespread practice of patrilocal exogamy. Her point is not that women are mere passive circulatory objects within Chinese patriliney, but that they transform their often-painful experiences of social and spatial rupture into expressions of strength, struggle and positive agency, and thus become active creators of kinship. On the basis of household surveys and interview data collected in rural northern China (Shandong) and western China (Sichuan and Chongqing), Judd suggests that women's kinship relations, which have always been created through and in mobility, might be better suited to the environment of post-reform China than patrilineality and agnatic relations. This is what Hua Han also suggests in Chapter 2.

In her ethnographic account from Yishala, a village in south-west China, Hua Han examines bachelorhood, and its causes and effects on family and kinship relatedness, in relation to what she calls the 'spatial practices of migration and the temporal pursuits of modernity that are increasingly gendered' in the post-socialist political economy. She shows that the growing rates of bachelorhood in Yishala are not the product of demographic factors such as an increasingly slanted sex ratio, but are related to a series of local factors. Most notably, she demonstrates that more and more women are choosing to migrate to urban spaces – looking for status mobility that eventually might result in an urban marriage – while more and more men are choosing to remain in the village. In Yishala, bachelors are living a single life, adapting to the social changes brought upon them by economic disparity and mobility, and struggling to overcome the conflicting kinship

strategies of marriage and lineal reproduction. Han's description of the nearly 'sterile' relations between men in bachelor families reveals both the increasing difficulty, after the economic reforms, of creating localized agnatic kinship, and the ideological inversion at play in standard representations of men as the makers and women as the breakers of relatedness in China. An important point made is that although kinship in Yishala is being shaped by the wider post-socialist political economy, it still reflects individual negotiations for love, marriage and intimacy.

In Bill Jankowiak's contribution (Chapter 3), we move to urban kinship in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia in the wake of the post-Maoist transformations and their impact on the old urban *danwei* (unit) society. Jankowiak argues that while the Maoist *danwei* emphasized proximity, production and kinship-relatedness, the greater work mobility and new residential patterns in the reform era have resulted in more flexible, mobile, 'emotional' family forms among the new middle class. A concomitant devaluation of the patrilineal ideal, which is no longer critical to material gain, has led to more bilateral kinship patterns. Jankowiak writes that the kinship of these socially and geographically mobile Hohhotian families is composed increasingly around 'sentiment and ethical obligations', as well as around childcare provided by grandparents, whose considerable investment of time, labour and love (one could also say, whose sacrifice) in their grandchild reconfigures new types of multigenerational families in China. In contemporary urban China, kinship is organized more around emotional bonds than around pragmatic necessity. Here, grandparents are central – over 80 per cent of the city's children are given to grandparents to be raised. Maternal and paternal grandparents also compete over rearing the single child (a theme also developed by Kipnis, Chapter 9). Jankowiak argues that all these connections, taken together, constitute 'family' in a contemporary, provincial Chinese city.

Intimacy, gender and power

In this section, the focus on materialities takes us behind the representational form of patrilineal kinship and reveals kinship as an intimate process of creation embedded in the 'mundane' power relations of daily life. It also makes clear why it is important to pay attention to the close link between gender and kinship. The study of gender was central to the reconfiguration of kinship studies since the 1970s, and the themes and perspectives of the new kinship studies have been deeply influenced by the feminist critique of anthropology. In the China field, the work of Margery Wolf (1972) on uterine families still stands as a major hallmark in this respect. Wolf was the first to argue that classic Chinese kinship studies were male-centric, because they largely neglected the knowledge, experience and point-of-view of women. Wolf's path-breaking descriptions of family life in rural Taiwan revealed the existence of a female mode of 'kinning' – largely centred in the relationship between mothers and their sons – that was both distinct and subordinated to

the more male-centred structures and strategies of patrilineal kinship. Wolf's classic analysis has already been criticized for its tendency to overemphasize motherhood at the expense of other relations, and above all for its tendency to look at women's agency in negative rather than in positive creative terms (Judd 1989, Chapter 1 in this volume; Stafford 2000a, Chapter 6 in this volume). This was the sort of problem that led Collier and Yanagisako (1987) to argue in their introduction to *Gender and Kinship* that 'rather than taking for granted that "male" and "female" are two natural categories of human beings whose relations are everywhere structured by their difference, we ask [...] what specific cultural processes cause men and women to appear different from each other' (quoted by Carsten 2004: 63). Their argument was also a call for the unification of the study of kinship and gender as a single field of inquiry. Janet Carsten (2004) has recently responded to this call, while adding that this work of analytical unification requires a focus not just on the construction of difference – as Collier and Yanagisako suggest – but also on the construction of sameness in different cultures (see Astuti 1998). Carsten's point echoes Charles Stafford's recent critique of Margery Wolf's notion of uterine family that assumes, at least implicitly, a distinctive 'female consciousness' (Stafford 2000a: 51). A possible way out of this problem can be found in Emily Martin's (1988) article 'Gender and Ideological Representations of Life and Death'. Martin (*ibid.*: 168) argues that Chinese visions of life and death (as revealed in rituals and practices surrounding birth, marriage and funerals) are ideologically constructed in relation to gender, and that they demonstrate the existence of distinct 'male' and 'female' gender perspectives. In her own words, 'on the female side, we see emphasis on the unity of opposites, denigration of separation [...], and celebration of cyclic change. On the male side, we see constant efforts to separate opposites, to maintain and make opposites steadfast, and desire for attainment of eternally unchanging social status' (*ibid.*: 173). What Martin calls 'female ideology' might today be better described as a type of counter-hegemonic knowledge, emergent from social relations and concrete experiences. This knowledge is 'female' precisely because it is rooted in practical experiences that challenge dominant representations. Hence it remains marginalized, if not officially repressed, knowledge.

Bringing gender to kinship focuses our analyses not only on women and men, but also on practices that constitute a form of counter-work (Fardon 1995) and that highlight the problematic, changing and often conflictive relationships between kinship practices and representations. These tensions are clear in the four chapters included in this section. Sara Friedman in Chapter 4, on women in eastern Hui'an County, Fujian (south-eastern China), examines the contested role of non-kin and same-sex bonds in the production of intimacy. As she shows, same-sex ties (known in Minnan dialect as *dui pnua*) are part and parcel of community and family life in both ritual and everyday practices. They challenge the 'standard' with close emotional relations between women or between men, and with non-kin social

networks. However, as Friedman also shows, during most times such emotional work ‘shores up’ the norms of patrilineal kinship and patrilocal residence because it creates lasting attachments, and reinforces many of the practices also found in standard kinship. Sara Friedman’s exploration of *dui pnua* relatedness is one example of how same-sex doubles appear to be an important part of kinship production in China (Bray’s chapter provides another important example of such doubling). *Dui pnua* work for each other, eat together, and even sleep in the same bed until marriage; and they also often pool their resources to run a business together. In short, they do what a married couple would do, but substitute sexual intimacy with a greater emphasis on emotional intimacy (thus Friedman speaks of homosocial rather than homosexual bonds). As in a number of other chapters (especially those of Kipnis, Judd, Bray and Jankowiak), sacrifice is a central theme in Friedman’s chapter. Female *dui pnua* sometimes even commit joint suicide as a most radical, irreversible and dramatic expression of their emotional closeness and devotion to each other, and always perform ritual sacrifices to each other after death (a hallmark of standard kinship). In *dui pnua* relations, we can see how the flow of (non-biological) substances, where food, property and beds are shared, and labour and love are exchanged, can create family-like relations across ‘structural’ obstacles and even change the direction of kinship from heterosexual to homosocial, or from male to female. This theme is also developed in Kipnis’s study of child-centredness (Chapter 9).

In Chapter 5, on the ‘stove-family’, Gonçalo Santos uses data from a Cantonese ‘lineage-village’ in northern Guangdong (South China) to draw attention to the prominent role played by resource-sharing (food-sharing in particular) in the local conventional modes of representing the process of kinship. Although Guangdong is historically one of the places where Freedman developed his ‘lineage paradigm’, Santos shows that also here kinship is not simply represented as a relationship that is given through patrilineal descent (either through one’s father or through one’s husband). Kinship in rural Guangdong is also represented – at a more practical level – as a relationship that needs to be constantly produced and nurtured through the ongoing sharing of ‘rice’ (or food) and other vital resources like money around a common stove. Santos suggests that this symbolic prominence of ‘rice-sharing’ (the term ‘rice’ standing not just for ‘food’ but also for other key material resources) in the local idioms of kinship echoes the widely noted role of food as a key operator of intimacy and proximity among humans. It also reflects the impact of long-term historico-ecological factors such as the centrality of small-scale, family-centred agriculture in the Chinese civilizational project and – above all – the centrality of wet-rice farming in subtropical South China. Santos situates his ethnographic discussion in relation to recent debates in the discipline regarding the cross-cultural foundations of the notion of ‘kinship’. He argues that the fact that ‘natural kinship’ (in contrast to descent or food/rice) does not play a particularly elaborate symbolic role in people’s kinship representations does not imply

that people do not make some kind of distinction between ‘natural’ and ‘social’ kinship.

Charles Stafford’s contribution on Chinese matriarchy (Chapter 6) reminds us that the anthropology of China and Taiwan since the 1970s might have focused too exclusively on the ‘subordination’ of women in Chinese kinship and social life. As a result, it has tended to ignore the very real power that women can wield in a variety of ways, for example through their influence over husbands and children. Stafford argues that this power is also very much acknowledged on a more informal, day-to-day level in Chinese society. At the same time, the strong evidence of the continuing discrimination against women in both mainland Chinese and Taiwan (for example in terms of access to healthcare, education and employment) makes gender asymmetries and the routine subordination of women appear as fundamental aspects of social organization. Stafford’s account highlights the contradictions between ‘local truth’ and ‘official truth’ (a point also made by Santos), and also the extent to which women – as crucial producers of kinship and relatedness – are themselves the source of the system that is said to work against them. Stafford argues that both matriarchy and the reproduction of women’s subordination might be traced back in important ways to female strategies of emotional and status security. The link between matriarchy and women’s subordination in China is formulated here as an important challenge for anthropological theorizing.

Susanne Brandtstädter’s ethnographic comparison of gender and kinship transformations in Taiwan and the People’s Republic (Chapter 7) suggests that work, in a wider social sense, and the question of its (in)visibility, have been elementary aspects of Chinese gender and kinship dynamics, and have shaped their interaction with larger economies. A comparison across the Taiwan Strait is particularly pertinent: the PRC claims to have ‘liberated’ women by wresting control over both property and labour from the ‘traditional family’; in Taiwan, in contrast, women entered the labour force as ‘working daughters’. In the 1990s, however, Brandtstädter argues that women’s work was more publicly valued in the Taiwan than in the mainland Chinese village she studied. She argues that struggles over the value of women’s work, in both an emotional and economic sense, is at heart of Chinese kinship historically, and that its public devaluation interrelates with concomitant reifications of male property as socially productive in itself (rather than the practices that constitute it). On the Taiwan side, the longer dominance of wage labour and the monetarized economy revealed a more fluid family centring on women’s resources in actively producing relatedness, while at the same time ‘exploiting’ women’s labour for nation construction.

State, body and civilization

In our final section, the focus shifts directly to the interchanges between kinship formation, state-making and ‘civilization-making’ in China: a relationship

crucial for the understanding of Chinese sociocultural and politico-economic dynamics from the imperial era to the present (Faure and Siu 1995). We do not support the recent fascination with Chinese Confucian familism and its ethics as a possible ‘cultural key’ to explain China’s post-Mao economic dynamism. On the contrary, our point is similar to an argument made by Susan Greenhalgh (1994), who, in a complete inversion of this ‘Confucian thesis’, suggests that orientalist economics are relevant primarily in their ideological legitimation of gender, ethnic and other inequalities, which respond to the particular insertion into larger political economies. Allen Chun’s (2000) study of land and kinship in colonial Hong Kong directs a similar critique against ‘classic’ anthropological representations of the role of land in rural society, which, in his view, have reflected not so much a traditional view but past colonial encounters, that were institutionalized in the codification and regulation of everyday life. Chun’s point echoes the post-colonialist critique of anthropology, and reminds us of the weight of powerful discourses and histories in shaping Chinese kinship metamorphoses.

Francesca Bray (Chapter 8) draws on medical and social sources from the Ming and Qing periods to explore the conceptualization of parent–child bonds in theories of natural kinship, the historical spectrum of maternal roles, and the ‘doubling’ of flows of substances in procreation and gestation with flows of educational and other resources of class distinction that create ‘kinship’ between an educated first wife and the child of a concubine. She shows that the institution of polygyny facilitated, and medical theory naturalized, such maternal doubling and the pairing of women of different social status (a wife and a concubine) in upper-class families, who jointly fulfilled the biological and social roles of ideal motherhood. She uses the late imperial case to suggest some interesting analogies with contemporary reproductive technologies such as surrogacy, and with the new maternal ideals and practices emerging in China’s market-oriented and increasingly polarized society. In her view, similar concepts of natural and social motherhood remain prevalent in today’s urban upper and middle class. The upper-class doubling of the maternal link and the maternal flow of substances can be contrasted with the covalent notion of singular paternity forged through a ‘drop’ of semen at conception.

We move on to the contemporary period, with an ethnographic study of schooling in rural Zouping, Shandong by Andrew Kipnis (Chapter 9). In his critique of the anthropological negligence of the role of education in kinship-making, Kipnis makes an argument similar to that of Bray, on the role of education in the formation of relatedness and kinship obligations in families. He describes the sacrifices rural parents in Shandong make in order to send their children to a state-run boarding school, where they are to receive the intellectual and nutritional sustenance seen as necessary for becoming high-quality (*suzhi*) people in post-Maoist China. This is a ‘quality’ that peasant parents are seen as incapable of providing, a lack that these parents themselves fear. And although students are likely to develop a particular relatedness to

the nation-state that provides educational resources (Fong 2004), Kipnis argues that the economic sacrifice of uneducated parents for their children remains largely a kinship strategy, and a strategy of family reproduction. The extraordinary sacrifice of resources, which also reflects China's public child-centredness (a reversal), here also effectively boosts familial relationships between rural parents and their children in contemporary rural China. The flow of substances turns here into a torrent, a depleting of the source that is also linked to a state of pain; which seems to create such strong emotional attachment that it can bridge the rural–urban and the generational gap that divides contemporary Chinese families and society.

Finally, Stephan Feuchtwang (Chapter 10) discusses the relationships between kinship and history, and between disruption and repair, in the light of a severely disruptive political event in 1952–53 in northern Taiwan. In this mountainous area of great poverty, state violence disrupted and dispersed the households and kinship relations of some hamlets. This disruption was followed by some 35 years of enforced silence, isolating the families involved and problematizing their relations. Feuchtwang's chapter inquires into how the households maintained and repaired (and in the process changed) themselves, and whether the story of the event became part of that repair. He also asks how families constitute themselves materially. As he shows, national commemoration of this event was not integrated into family memories and into the efforts to repair disrupted family relations. Instead, family repair focused on the maintenance of family tombs and domestic shrines, which also prominently involved the practices of the women of these families: again a turn-about of a perspective that has viewed families 'just like' small states, or that paints family relations as simply 'the result of' larger political–economic formations.

Notes

- 1 The term 'China', as used in this Introduction, refers to the Chinese world writ large, including the People's Republic of China (PRC), Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao, as well as their relations with the Chinese diaspora worldwide.
- 2 There are many recent volumes dealing with kinship-related matters in both past and present contexts (e.g. Brownell and Wasserstrom 2002; Ching and Silbergeld 2008; Davis and Harrell 1993; Entwisle and Henderson 2000; Faure and Siu 1995; Gilmartin *et al.* 2005; Goodman and Larson 2005; Ikels 2004: ch. 1–4; Jing 2000; Knapp and Lo 2005; Stafford 2003; Watson and Ebrey 1991). However, none of these volumes focuses specifically on the topic of kinship or discusses it in relation to the anthropological tradition of kinship studies.
- 3 These references are only a minor sample of the existing literature on the subject, which also includes a substantial amount of work by Chinese scholars based in Taiwan and in the PRC. This volume presents in many ways a 'Western anthropological perspective' on Chinese kinship, but we hope it might initiate more dialogue. For Chinese scholarship, we would like to draw attention to the Xiamen school of 'historical kinship studies' pioneered by the seminal studies of local social history in Fujian by Fu Yiling and Yang Guozhen (see e.g. Chen 1991; Zheng 2001), and to the work of Wang Mingming (1996).

- 4 As the historian G.E.R. Lloyd (2004: 110) recently noted, ‘it is not just that an individual item may figure now in one category, now in another. More fundamentally, the categories themselves are often not fixed entities, but relational, aspectual, interdependent. *Yin* and *Yang* exemplify this strikingly. They do not connote permanent essences, but aspects of a constantly shifting balance or interrelationship. [...] Analogously, the classes or categories of living creatures are not fixed and eternal, nor the boundaries between them impermeable. They have a history and are subject to shifting cycles of transformations.’
- 5 This ‘revival’ of kinship can also be illustrated by the growing publication of introductory texts to the anthropology of kinship, including Deliège (1997); Holy (1996); Parkin (1997); Stone (1997). Carsten (2004) provides a selective discussion of recent kinship studies, while Godelier (2004) presents an ambitious synthesis of the twentieth-century anthropology of kinship. See also Parkin and Stone (2004) for a recent ‘kinship reader’ that brings together a provocative span of diverse materials from the early 1900s to the present day.
- 6 We use this term by analogy with the ‘global north’ that includes Australia and New Zealand, and that has replaced terms such as the ‘first world’ or, in a different context, the ‘West’.
- 7 As McKinnon (2001: 278) writes, Lévi-Strauss’ (1949) *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* used ‘analogies of scarcity, risk, market speculation and exchange’, while Morgan relied on ‘analogies of labour, property, and inheritance’ to argue how kinship developed from a ‘state of diffuse, unbounded relationality in primitive promiscuity’ to ‘culminate in monogamous marriage and a discrete line of exchange.’
- 8 Again, the list of relevant writers is far too long to give justice to here. Most central here have been, maybe, the work of Lefebvre, Harvey, Scott and Tsing.

References

- Astuti, R. (1998) ‘“It’s a Boy!”, “It’s a Girl!”: Reflections on Sex and Gender in Madagascar and Beyond’, in M. Lambek and A. Strathern (eds) *Bodies and Persons: Comparative Perspectives from Africa and Melanesia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (2001) ‘Are We All Natural Dualists? A Cognitive Developmental Approach’, (Malinowski Memorial Lecture 2000), *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 7(3): 429–47.
- Atkinson, J. and S. Errington (eds) (1990) *Power and Difference: Gender in Island Southeast Asia*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Baker, H.D.R. and S. Feuchtwang (eds) (1991) *An Old State in New Settings: Studies in the Social Anthropology of China in Memory of Maurice Freedman*, Oxford: JASO.
- Birge, B. (2002) *Women, Property, and Confucian Reaction in Sung and Yüan China, 960–1368*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bossler, B. (1998) *Powerful Relations: Kinship Status and the State in Song China (960–1279)*, Harvard, MA: Council on East Asian Studies.
- Bourdieu, P. (1977) *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press [transl. R. Nice].
- Brandtstädter, S. (2003) ‘The Moral Economy of Kinship and Property in Southern China’, in C. Hann (ed.) *The Post-socialist Agrarian Question: Property Relations and the Agrarian Question*, Münster, Germany: Lit Verlag.
- Bray, F. (1997) *Technology and Gender. Fabrics of Power in Late Imperial China*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

- Brownell, S. and J.N. Wasserstrom (eds) (2002) *Chinese Femininities/Chinese Masculinities: A Reader*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Carsten, J. (2004) *After Kinship*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (2000a) 'Introduction', in J. Carsten (ed.) *Cultures of Relatedness*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (ed.) (2000b) *Cultures of Relatedness*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Carsten, J. and S. Hugh-Jones (eds) (1995) *About the House. Lévi-Strauss and Beyond*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chen, Zhiping (1991) *Jin 500 nian lai Fujian de jiazuo shehui yu wenhua (Lineage Society and Culture in Fujian During the Last 500 Years)*, Shanghai: Sanlian.
- Ching, D. and J. Silbergeld (eds) (2008). *The Family Model in Chinese Art and Culture*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, in press.
- Chun, A. (2000) *Unstructuring Chinese Society: The Fictions of Colonial Practice and the Changing Realities of 'Land' in the New Territories*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Cohen, M. (1970) 'Developmental Process in the Chinese Domestic Group', in M. Freedman (ed.) *Family and Kinship in Chinese Society*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- (2005) *Kinship, Contract, Community, and State. Anthropological Perspectives on China*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Collier, J. and S. Yanagisako (eds) (1987) *Gender and Kinship: Essays Toward a United Analysis*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Davis, D. and S. Harrell (eds) (1993) *Chinese Families in the Post-Mao Era*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Deliège, R. (1997 [2005]) *Anthropologie de la Famille et de la Parenté*, 2nd edn, Paris: Armand Collin.
- Diamant, N.J. (2000) *Revolutionizing the Family: Politics, Love, and Divorce in Urban and Rural China, 1949–1968*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Ebrey, P.B. (1991) *Confucianism and Family Rituals in Imperial China. A Social History of Writing about Rites*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Ebrey, P.B. and J.L. Watson (eds) (1986) *Kinship Organization in Late Imperial China, 1000–1940*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Edwards, J., S. Franklin, E. Hirsch, F. Price and M. Strathern (eds) (1999) *Technologies of Procreation: Kinship in the Age of Assisted Conception*, New York/London: Routledge.
- Entwisle, B. and G.E. Henderson (eds) (2000) *Re-Drawing Boundaries: Work, Households, and Gender in China*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Evans-Pritchard, E.E. and M. Fortes (eds) (1940) *African Political Systems*, London/ New York: International African Institute.
- Fardon, R. (ed.) (1995) *Counterwork: Managing Knowledge in its Diversity*, London/ New York: Routledge.
- Faubion, J. (ed.) (2001) *The Ethics of Kinship. Ethnographic Enquiries*, Lanham, MD/ Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Faure, D. (2007) *Emperor and Ancestor. State and Lineage in South China*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Faure, D. and H. Siu (eds) 1995. *Down to Earth. The Territorial Bond in South China*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Fei, Xiaotong [Fei, Hsiao-Tung] (1939) *Peasant Life in China*, London: Routledge.
- Feinberg, R and M. Ottenheimer (eds) (2001) *The Cultural Analysis of Kinship. The Legacy of David M. Schneider*, Urbana and Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press.

- Feuchtwang, S. (2004) *Making Space: State Projects, Globalisation and Local Responses in China*, London: UCL Press.
- Fong, V. (2004) *Only Hope: Coming of Age under China's One-child Policy*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Fortes, M. (1949) *The Web of Kinship among the Tallensi*, London: Oxford University Press.
- (1969) *Kinship and the Social Order. The legacy of Lewis Henry Morgan*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Franklin, S. and S. McKinnon, (eds) (2001) *Relative Values: Reconfiguring Kinship Studies*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Franklin, S. and H. Ragoné (eds) (1998) *Reproducing Reproduction. Kinship, Power and Technological Innovations*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Freedman, M. (1958) *Lineage Organization in Southeastern China*, London: Athlone Press.
- (1966) *Chinese Lineage and Society: Fukien and Kwangtung*, London: Athlone Press.
- (ed.) (1970) *Family and Kinship in Chinese Society*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Furth, C. (1999) *A Flourishing Yin: Gender in China's Medical History: 960–1665*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Gilmartin, C.K., G. Hershatter, L. Rofel and T. White (eds) (2005) *Engendering China: Women, Culture, and the State*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Ginsburg, F.D and R. Rapp (eds) (1995) *Conceiving the New World Order: The Global Politics of Reproduction*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.
- Godelier, M. (2004) *Métamorphoses de la Parenté*, Paris: Fayard.
- Godelier, M., T.R. Trautmann and F.E. Tjon Sie Fat (1998a) 'Introduction', in M. Godelier, T.R. Trautmann and F.E. Tjon Sie Fat (eds) *Transformations of Kinship*, Washington, DC and London: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Godelier, M., Trautmann, T. R. and Tjon Sie Fat, F. E. (eds) (1998b) *Transformations of kinship*. Washington, DC and London: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Goode, W. (1963) *World Revolution and Family Patterns*, New York: Free Press.
- Goodman, B. and W. Larson (eds) (2005) *Gender in Motion. Divisions of Labour and Cultural Change in Late Imperial and Modern China*, Lanham, MD and Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Greenhalgh, S. (1994) 'De-Orientalizing the Chinese Family Firm', *American Ethnologist* 21(4): 742–71.
- Harrell, S. (2001) 'The Anthropology of Reform and the Reform of Anthropology: Anthropological Narratives of Recovery and Progress in China', *Annual Review of Anthropology* 30: 139–61.
- Holy, L. (1996) *Anthropological Perspectives on Kinship*, London: Pluto Press.
- Hsu, F. (1948 [1967]) *Under the Ancestors' Shadow. Kinship, Personality and Social Mobility in China*, 2nd edn, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Ikels, C. (ed.) (2004) *Filial Piety. Practice and Discourse in Contemporary East Asia*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Jing, Jun (1996) *The Temple of Memories. History, Power and Morality in a Chinese Village*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- (ed.) (2000) *Feeding China's Little Emperors: Food, Children, and Social Change*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

- Judd, E.R. (1989) 'Niangjia: Chinese Women and their Natal Families', *Journal of Asian Studies* 3: 525–44.
- (1994) *Gender and Power in Rural North China*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Kipnis, A. (1997) *Producing Guangxi. Sentiment, Self and Subculture in a North China Village*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Knapp, R and Kai-Yin Lo (eds) (2005) *House Home Family: Living and Being Chinese*, Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press.
- Ko, D. (2005) *Cinderella's Sisters. A Revisionist History of Footbinding*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Kuper, A. (1988 [2005]) *The Re-Invention of Primitive Society. Transformations of a Myth*, 2nd edn, London: Routledge.
- Latour, B. (1993) *We Have Never Been Modern*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press [originally published in French 1991, transl. C. Porter].
- Leach, E. (1955) 'Polyandry, Inheritance and the Definition Of Marriage', *Man* 55: 182–86.
- (1961) *Pul Elya, A Village in Ceylon: A Study of Land Tenure and Kinship*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lévi-Strauss, C. (1949 [1969]) *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, 2nd edn, London: Beacon Press (transl. Rodney Needham).
- Liu, L. (1995) *Translingual Practice. Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity. China 1900–1937*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Lloyd, G.E.R. (2004) *Ancient Worlds, Modern Reflections. Philosophical Perspectives on Greek and Chinese Science and Culture*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- MacCormack, C. and M. Strathern (eds) (1980) *Nature, Culture and Gender*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mann, S. (1997) *Precious Records. Women in China's Long Eighteenth Century*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Maynes, M.J., A. Waltner, B. Soland and U. Strasser (eds) (1996) *Gender, Kinship, Power. A Comparative and Interdisciplinary Approach*, New York and London: Routledge.
- McKinnon, S. (2001) 'The economies in kinship and the paternity of culture. Origin stories in kinship theory', in S. Franklin and S. McKinnon (eds) *Relative Values: Reconfiguring Kinship Studies*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 277–301.
- Needham, R. (1971) 'Remarks on the analysis of kinship and marriage', in R. Needham (ed.) *Rethinking Kinship and Marriage*, London: Tavistock Publications.
- Parish, W.L. and M.K. Whyte (1978) *Village and Family in Contemporary China*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- (1985) *Urban Life in Contemporary China*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Parkin, R. (1997) *Kinship. An Introduction to the Basic Concepts*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Parkin, R. and L. Stone (eds) (2004) *Family and Kinship: An Anthropological Reader*, London: Blackwell.
- Sangren, P.S. (1984) 'Traditional Chinese Corporations: Beyond Kinship', *Journal of Asian Studies* 43(3): 391–415.
- (2000) *Chinese Sociologics. An Anthropological Account of the Role of Alienation in Social Reproduction*, London: Athlone Press.
- Santos, G.D. (2006) 'The Anthropology of Chinese Kinship. A Critical Overview', *European Journal of East Asian Studies* 5(2): 275–333.

- Schneider, D.M. (1968 [1980]). *American Kinship. A Cultural Account*, 2nd edn, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- (1984) *A Critique of the Study of Kinship*, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Schweitzer, P. (ed.) (2000) *Dividends of Kinship: Meanings and Uses of Social Relatedness*, London: Routledge.
- Sommer, M. (2000) *Sex, Law, and Society in Late Imperial China*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Sousa, P. (2003) 'The Fall of Kinship. Towards an Epidemiological Explanation', *Journal of Cognition and Culture* 3(4): 264–303.
- Stafford, C. (1999) 'Separation, Reunion and the Chinese Attachment to Place', in F. N. Pieke and H. Mallee (eds) *Internal and International Migration: Chinese Perspectives*, Richmond: Curzon Press.
- (2000a) 'Chinese Patriliney and the Cycles of *yang* and *laiwang*', in J. Carsten (ed.) *Cultures of Relatedness: New Approaches to the Study of Kinship*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 37–54.
- (2000b) *Separation and Reunion in Modern China*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (ed.) (2003) *Living with Separation in China*, London: Routledge.
- Stone, L. (1997 [2000]) *Kinship and Gender. An Introduction*, 2nd edn, Boulder, CO and Oxford: Westview Press.
- (ed.) (2001) *New Directions in Anthropological Kinship*, Boulder, CO: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Szonyi, M. (2002) *Practicing Kinship: Lineage and Descent in Late Imperial China*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Thompson, S. (1988) 'Death, Food and Fertility', in J.L. Watson and E.S. Rawski (eds) *Death and Ritual in Late Imperial China*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Wang, Mingming (1995) 'Place, Administration, and Territorial Cults in Late Imperial China: A Case Study from South Fujian', *Late Imperial China* 16(1): 33–78.
- (1996) *Shequ de Licheng: Xicun Hanren Jiazuo de Gean Yanjiu (The Process Of Community: A Case Study of a Han Lineage in Xi Village)*, Tianjin: Tianjin Renmin Chubanshe.
- Ward, B.E. (1985) *Through Other Eyes. Essays in Understanding 'Conscious Models' – Mostly in Hong Kong*, Hong Kong: Chinese University Press.
- Watson, J.L. (1982) 'Chinese Kinship Reconsidered. Anthropological Perspectives on Historical Research', *China Quarterly*, 92: 589–622.
- Watson, R.S. (1985) *Inequality Among Brothers: Class and Kinship in South China*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Watson, R.S. and P.B. Ebrey (eds) (1991) *Marriage and Inequality in Chinese Society*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Weston, K. (1991) *Families we Chose. Lesbians, Gays, Kinship*, 2nd edn, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Wolf, A. (1995) *Sexual Attraction and Childhood Association: A Chinese Brief for Edward Westermarck*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Wolf, A. and Chieh-Shan Huang (1980) *Marriage and Adoption in China, 1845–1945*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

- Wolf, M. (1972) *Women and the Family in rural Taiwan*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Yan, Yunxiang (1996) *The Flow of Gifts. Reciprocity and Social Networks in a Chinese Village*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- (2003) *Private Life under Socialism: Love, Intimacy and Family Change in a Chinese Village, 1949–1999*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Yanagisako, S. and C. Delaney (eds) (1995) *Naturalizing Power: Essays in Feminist Cultural Analysis*, London and New York: Routledge.
- Yang, M.M.H. (1994) *Gifts, Favours and Banquets. The Art of Social Relationships in China*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Zheng, Zhenman (1992 [2001]) *Family Lineage Organization and Social Change in Ming and Qing Fujian*, Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press (transl. Michael Szonyi).

Part 1

Motion, Migration and Urbanity

1 'Families we create'

Women's kinship in rural China as spatialized practice

Ellen R. Judd

In the quest to understand the lives of women and men in rural China, we have continually been led to the tight weave of ties that we have thought of in classical kinship terms, or in the now more inclusively conceptualized modes of relatedness (Carsten, 2000, 2004). Virtually everyone in rural China is related somehow, and these varied ties form the idiom through which rural social life is expressed. In very many places, including most where I have worked, patriline forms the framework for community social relations, and anthropology has been resourceful in tracing how it can work to form effective bonds between men and, through men, with women (for example Cohen 1976, 2005; Faure 1986; Freedman 1966; Liu 2000; Potter and Potter 1990; Watson 1985; Yang 1945). This has extended significantly into our understanding of the collectives of an earlier period (Croll 1981) and, together with patrilocal, underlies emergent shifts in the second phase of land division under way in the past decade.¹

Throughout this work, whether classical and influential or modern and provocative, Chinese patrilineages have remained central, and have been defined largely in terms of specific geographical locations, with genealogies calculated from the ancestral arrival at a location, dropping lines of those who later migrated away to distant locations. Lineality worked, and still works, to structure local communities around patriline in multiple ways that are realized and grounded (sometimes through landed incorporation) in one or in many places. Lineality provides a legitimate, shared conceptual framework of kinship and relatedness, powerfully imagined in material space.

In looking specifically at the lives of women, we have tended to look for the same or similar structures of close and localized kinship. We have looked for ways in which women might have some of the continuity of closeness given by near kin. This has produced findings of delayed transfer marriage and sworn sisterhoods in Guangdong (Stockard 1989), and of uterine families in Taiwan (Wolf 1968, 1972; also see Judd 1994). Norma Diamond (1975) has drawn our attention to the distinctive role of small daughters-in-law² in the early years of the revolution, poor women who grew up in their adoptive/marital villages and, for a revolutionary moment, emerged into local leadership roles in the 1940s. In the late Cultural Revolution, there was

an organized promotion of uxori-local marriage as a response to the structural disadvantages of patrilocality. Selden (1993) and others have found an increase in intra-village marriage,³ and I have investigated the complex around women's natal families in north China and its continuity into the present.

I have also been looking, both in Shandong and, more recently, in investigations in Sichuan and Chongqing, for women's kinship and networks in possibly altered forms associated with either the increased mobility of rural residents in general, or the relative concentration of women in some rural locations. I have not been entirely successful in this pursuit – or at least not in the ways I had imagined. Reflection on earlier fieldwork and listening to new voices have raised some questions in my mind about whether I have been looking in quite the right manner.

Women's space

I would like to use this occasion to explore the potential of looking at women's kinship in rural China, not as resembling men's, but as structured definitively by rupture and by space. In contrast with some earlier propositions about women's ties, as characterized by fundamental continuity (Rosaldo and Lamphere 1974), women's lives in rural China are normatively marked by the profound break of marriage, out and away from their natal family into the new space in which they will then create a family of their own. However the natal family may strive to soften, mute or condition this move, it occurs decisively, and marks the threshold to adult status and creative potential for the majority of rural women. This is underlined by the evident disadvantage experienced by women in uxori-local marriages, not only the well established problems of such matches in themselves, but also because the practice leaves women unfavourably situated within their own network of kin, in sharp contrast to the situation their male cousins enjoy.

This exploration will lead in several connected directions. It will depart from the centrality of rupture, and with it separation that is physical, social and very much else (see Stafford 2000, 2003). It will then examine the processes through which families are created in the interstices of the culturally elaborated space of patriliney. Finally, this chapter will venture to suggest some of the ways in which women can, and do, actively manage distance in the tripartite senses of physical, social and conceptual space.

The discussion will be based primarily on recent (2003–05) fieldwork in three villages in Chongqing and Sichuan. The object of the broader project is to trace the impact of large-scale rural–urban migration on gender and community structure in rural sending communities. The communities selected are predominantly agricultural, in relatively remote locations, and each has high rates of out-migration to both intra- and inter-provincial destinations. Two of the communities are in low mountain regions, and one in a hilly region. Together they indicate some of the rural responses to the political

economy of western China, and especially to the increased mobility permitted by the labour market and relaxed policies on both rural–urban migration and the household registration system. This material will be supplemented and contrasted with earlier field data from three communities in the north China plain in Shandong. Those villages represent more stable and prosperous possibilities, the primary population movement being that of local hired workers into the workshops of two of these villages. Using recollected interview material from older residents, as well as a wider range of material on the current situation, I will venture a reflection on persisting and current dimensions in rural women's practices of kinship.

I begin with a summary introduction of the woman whose words provided the title for this chapter:

Zhao Dajie was born in the middle of the twentieth century in the Chongqing area, the eldest child of a man who would later be a production team leader. She finished lower middle school in the early years of the Cultural Revolution, and immediately became a schoolteacher. She started a correspondence with her future husband through an introduction by his older sister, who had married into her community. He had been orphaned in 1961, and was then a soldier in the north. They exchanged pictures and corresponded for two years before marrying during a 12-day leave. Zhao Dajie had expected her husband to marry uxorilocally, as she had sisters but no brothers, and he had no close family remaining at home. She learned at the last minute that he would not do this, but she decided to go ahead with the marriage nevertheless. This led her 400 *li* (800 km) away from her home, to live with her husband's uncle while he returned to the north. She soon filled a vacant schoolteacher position, but lost a rapid promotion by overstaying her first visit north to her husband. Eventually, her husband was demobilized and arranged a job for himself in a city a few hours away from his home, but he would never live in his rural home until he retired. They had two daughters in the 1970s, who were a challenge for her to care for on her own while also teaching (she sent the older daughter to her mother for a few years). When they decided to have another child, the era of the one-child policy had already begun. Zhao Dajie had made plans for a job in the city where her husband lived, and had taken refuge elsewhere during her pregnancy. Her husband was prevailed upon to reveal her location, and she was compelled to have a nine-month abortion. She also lost her teaching position as well as the new city job. She then worked the land, stating that it was important to 'stand up in the place where one had fallen down (*zai nar shuaidao, jiu cong nar paqilai*)'. A few months later, higher authorities successfully had her reinstated as a teacher, and she continued teaching until she reached regular retirement age. She considered divorce and remarriage to a suitor in a nearby team, but decided against it. Eventually her younger daughter entered

into what appears very much to be an uxori-local marriage, although the daughter denies it, saying that she lives in the city with her husband. Nevertheless, she is registered in her natal home, is the formal household head, and the elder of her twin sons has taken her surname. Her mother has, in her own hand, written her younger daughter, the daughter's husband, and both grandsons into the final page of the household's copy of her husband's family genealogy. When Zhao Dajie's husband reached retirement, they were for the first time at the point where they might live under the same roof, but Zhao Dajie did not want this. Her husband told her that neither of them would live unless she agreed – this not long after her younger sister's murder by a rejected suitor – and they coexisted for a time in the same rural home. Zhao Dajie and her younger daughter had saved enough to purchase a home in a nearby town, where Zhao Dajie could live with the grandsons, while her daughters visited on weekends. Her husband could not be excluded, although he made frequent day trips to the family rural home on his own. Zhao Dajie does not accompany him or go there on her own.

One might read this narrative anthropologically as an account of the severe structural constraints on women in rural China, illustrative as it is of patri-line and patrilocality, and of patriarchal and statist patterns of control of work, residence and birth. Each of these could be analysed productively at some length. Zhao Dajie's husband saw this (as he told me) as manifesting his wife's fine qualities of obedience and proper womanhood. Zhao Dajie was explicit that she saw the family as her own creation, a view that she extended to women in general (*'ba jiali kan shi ziji chuangzao de'*). She created a family out of remarkably little, and under conditions not of her own choosing. While she once said that the first half of her life had been bitter and the second half was all right (*'qian beizi ku, hou beizi keyi'*), in general she avoided the usual language of suffering, preferring a language of strength and creation.

It might be questioned whether this is an exceptional case. I would argue that, while it has its own particularity, and no single case can represent all rural Chinese women, it is not extreme or anomalous. My field notes are replete with similar accounts, especially from Chongqing and Sichuan. These indicate widespread shared patterns, a range of specific variants and a suggestion that key elements of this experience are being altered with renewed and increased mobility.

Rupture and relatedness

The experience of rupture is paradigmatically present in rural China through abrupt adult patrilocality, as in this case, and there are other forms as well, for both girls and women. Wolf and Huang (1980) have found historically high rates of small daughter-in-law marriage, a practice that may well have

been very common in some regions of south China (for Sichuan, see Ruf 1998), and which can also be found elsewhere. While this form of marriage apparently no longer figures in the lives of girls and younger women, current childhood practices include the abandonment and occasional adoption of girls, and the sending away of girls to relatives for hiding, sometimes for protracted periods.

For adult women and women approaching adulthood in contemporary rural China, while the dominant discursive realities are variants of local embeddedness, enduring monogamy, village exogamy and patrilocality, there are wider practices that form part of local knowledge and repertoires. These include forms of marriage at considerable and problematic distances, as in the case of the numerous Yunnan brides married into Sichuan, Chongqing and elsewhere in ambiguous circumstances, as well as practices of abduction and sale of women in marriage. And there are customary practices of divorce, in which the wife leaves her home, and very often her children. The older divorced women I have spoken with have sometimes been able to re-establish ties with adult children later, but younger women who have been unable or unwilling to take their child(ren) are often reported as gone without a trace by their marital families. Women may also lose their children on widowhood and remarriage, as the patriline has customary first claim on children. Despite elite models of widows who never remarry and remain permanently with their marital families, this has not commonly been a viable option for widows without adult sons. Younger widows very commonly remarry, rapidly and from necessity, creating a renewed marital rupture as well as the possible loss of children. While the rupture of first marriage is culturally elaborated, as in the bridal laments of Hakka women (Johnson 2003), the experience of rupture in intimate family relations has significant additional sources and is much more common than classically recognized.

My point here is not that rupture is absolute, although I assume the separations commonly involved are ones that mark women in life-defining and experientially difficult ways. Rather, my point is to note the endeavour of creating families and broader networks of relatedness that then falls to women in a gender-specific manner in the places to which they have relocated.⁴ I read Zhao Dajie's statement that families are our creations, not as a limited or naturalized statement, but as a vision of a life project and a positioning of herself within her life. The encompassing vision matters, and informs (or inspires) this chapter as a whole, but certain strands may be isolated.

Women's strategies

Foremost among these is an adaptation that can be made of the concept of the uterine family. As Margery Wolf originally formulated it in relation to extended families in Taiwan about 50 years ago, it referred to the strategies women could adopt to build and nurture families of their own descent (with

the emphasis very much on sons), within the conflicting forces of extended families. Through uterine families, women created places of intimacy and support apart from their spouse and the agnatic structure of their life, and apart from the competing pressures and strategies of mother-in-law and sisters-in-law (primarily *saozi*). In the present situation, uterine families do not appear as a response to the pressures of extended families, but remain very much a matter of women's creation, and bring the same positive elements to their lives. They also keep them separate from other adult women, isolated by the depth of family and household boundaries fostered by this strategy and its premium on independence.

In addition to the domestic sense of raising children, women are providing very much more for their families. In the case of Zhao Dajie, this also included supporting the family through her work as a teacher and, when the land was divided in the early 1980s, working the land (as was required in addition to her teaching) with her younger child on her back or in tow. She described this as the hardest point in her life. The requirement to work the land on her own as well as teach full-time was temporary, but women working hard to support their family materially is entirely normal in rural China. Women's labour has long been, and still is, a mainstay of agricultural production, household sideline production, rural enterprises, and now migrant labour (Wolf 1985; Judd 1994, 1997). Whether conducted outside or within households, rural women's labour is indispensable to the wellbeing of their family. It is a rare rural family that can do without the hard work of any of its adult women or men. The realization of the benefits of this work is embedded within kinship relations, although they are not simply phenomena of the kinship system, if that is viewed as somehow autonomous.

This is also a production of the inter-penetrating relation between family, state and economy that is characteristic of Chinese society. Prior to the temporary period of people being relatively fixed in place, from the late 1950s to the early 1980s, people have often moved, temporarily or permanently, to pursue opportunities or to follow dictates of policy. Even in the more fixed collective era, the household registration system commonly produced situations of married women and children remaining in the countryside while husbands and fathers worked elsewhere. This continues with the (reduced) impact of the household registration system and dual pressures both to migrate and, unless and until this offers some more stable future for the whole family, to maintain a home in the countryside. While some women, especially younger women, succeed in migrating together with their husband, the split family remains a major element and possibility in the lives of very many rural women (see Han, Chapter 2 in this volume). The larger research project of which this chapter is part – an examination of women's networks, community structure and mobility in villages characterized by large-scale out-migration – shows significant depopulation, the feminization (and aging) of the agricultural work force, and a tendency for some women to remain caring for families in the countryside. One result of this is a situation

in which families are maintained in multiple locations with flexible and often ambiguous boundaries.⁵

This is especially evident with children, as there are issues of providing daily care and access to schooling, which may be difficult if the mother, as well as the father, migrates to work or to join her husband and build a conjugal family in the city. Children may move back and forth depending on the arrangements possible at different points in time. While many rural children spend part of their childhood in the city, many migrant women find they need to send their children to the countryside to be cared for by their mother-in-law or mother for some period. This results in an extension of the uterine strategy to grandmothers, as they work to create and nourish ties with a younger generation. While women will work as long as they are able and make significant contributions to childcare, cooking and raising domestic animals, even when elderly, they do not effectively enjoy property or resources in their own name (Judd 1992, 1994, 2007). Their basic security, as well as the intangibles of family life, require that they knit close ties with their descendants. Supplement strategies of caring link related women (and men) through space in a terrain of partial and mobile families. Zhao Dajie again provides a clear instance – in her own mother's care of her older daughter for several years, in the care she is giving to her grandsons, and in the regular visits and sustained care when she is ill by her own daughters.

The family so created is conceptually noteworthy, as well. Women such as Zhao Dajie are building these families out of their own bodies, their nurturing work in families and communities, and their hard work in fields, homes and other places of work. They can be viewed as women's creations, but even in the absence or near-absence of men, they are formed within worlds structured by accepted patriliney and patrilocality, and conceptualized as part of communities and kin groups of related men.⁶ The families women create rest and move in the interstices of that androcentric and patriarchal kinship structure. Women do this creative work within the conventional terms of the dominant discourse on kinship that renders their work substantially invisible at the same time as it is indispensable to the real world of rural Chinese kinship.

Strong women making families and livelihoods work are not new cross-culturally, and were in definite evidence in pre-Liberation Chongqing, as remarked by Isabel Crook (personal communication, 2006) on the basis of her fieldwork in the early 1940s. The particular formulation of this at present is less the result of the evident mortality of the earlier period, than of mobility and declining birth rates now. Conjugal ties may be important and strong, and increasingly so (Salaff 1973, Yan 2003), but husbands (or wives) may be absent (or absent together, or absent in different locations). Natal families may provide a critical source of support, but increasingly these are unavailable as their members are also migrating, and natal families may be entirely absent from the region (cf. Brandtstädter, Chapter 7 in this volume). Families that were, from the early 1950s, somewhat larger are now required

to be much smaller. The relatively isolated world of Zhao Dajie as she created her family may be slightly more accentuated than the norm, but it resonates with wider patterns of family change. In all these contexts, it is essential for women to be strong, independent and resourceful in creating and recreating fluid social worlds.

Spatialized practices

In examining how women create families, it may be helpful to utilize a robust materialism, following Timpanaro (1975), that will allow us to bring together disparate aspects of the external material conditions and the social and material practices in which women and men are engaged (also see Bloch 1983; Brandtstädter 2003; Entwistle and Henderson 2000; Gates 1996; Greenhalgh and Winckler 2005; Lavelly 1991; Massey 1994). I would propose that this might be accomplished by looking at the *materiality of space* and at *how people do things with space*. I will argue that this can be usefully demonstrated with respect to both apparently persisting elements of rural kinship practices and more recently emergent (and re-emergent) elements. Such an approach may render visible the work, life and practices of rural women in an appropriately embodied, embedded and concretely mobile manner.

Again, the key departure point is normative patrilocality. In approaching this, I would revisit and reconsider some aspects of the complex of customary practices involving women and their natal families or 'mother's homes' (*niangjia*) in Shandong. The distinguishing feature of this complex is its retention of very close relations between a woman and her natal family, most visibly including her ritual return to her natal family a few days after her wedding, and her usual but flexible residence there most of the time until about six months to two years after her wedding, when she would have taken up regular residence in her marital home (*pojia*), with more or less frequent visits continuing to her natal family. She was expected to give birth to her first child at her marital home, and this would often mark the shift in primary residence. Although this was viewed explicitly as a way to soften the transition of a bride to her new home, it was also the beginning of a new stage in her life that would usually, but variably, continue as long as either of her parents remained alive. Nurturing her would commonly shift to her helping her parents, and daughters in rural Shandong engaged in significant economic cooperation with their natal family, and later contributed to the care of aged parents. In time, each woman could look forward to providing a mother's home to her own grown daughters. This was a well established pattern present among all living generations of rural Shandong women I was able to interview, with minor generational differences, such as a greater emphasis on childcare earlier and wamework later as factors affecting mobility back and forth.

As noted earlier, the distances involved were not great. Of the 57 married women in my early sample, where I could fairly closely calculate the distance

between *niangjia* and *pojia*, 42 were within 6 km, and nine more were within 10 km (Judd 1989: 531). Many were barely any distance away, and might be in the neighbouring administrative village, which could be immediately adjacent. Young married women delivering babies to their mothers on a bicycle in the morning and picking them up in the evening were everyday occurrences, as sometimes were lengthy overnight stays by older mothers and sisters, when these became relieved of daily household responsibilities. The idea of a woman marrying far away from her mother's home was treated with intense disapproval, and was clearly not something a filial daughter would do.

Apart from the temporary advantage of remaining close to a supportive natal family, what was happening in this relational complex was a spatial positioning of married women, where they would be able to distance themselves physically and socially from both natal and marital kin, and somewhat selectively connect themselves with both. Moving across a boundary marking village exogamy, they could remove themselves from the constraints of their own patrilineal kin group, while still being able to draw on the support of their mother (note how references to the natal family are always expressed as being to the 'mother's home', *niangjia*) and immediate natal kin. In this they secured the support of their family without being confined in an anomalous position in the midst of androcentric ties, as were those in uxori-local marriages, who are invariably considered disadvantaged. And, where circumstances permitted, they could stay long at their mother's home to exert pressure on a mother-in-law, or hasten the building of a new house or household division. Marriage out, but close, created optimal conditions for daughters/daughters-in-law.

This should also be viewed as a uterine strategy on the part of the mothers of daughters. In the classical uterine formulation, mothers' focus was on their sons, who would stay with them and care for them when they were older. It is evident everywhere I have done fieldwork, but especially in Shandong, that the uterine strategy extends to daughters as well. Through the practice of marrying daughters out, but close, and fostering lifelong ties with them through the customary practices around mothers' homes, mothers hold their daughters as well as their sons. This works unobtrusively in the interstices of patriliney and patrilocality, and does not persist past the generation of grandchildren, but it figures very large in the everyday lives of women (and men).

The problems posed, and the manner in which space for women is asymmetrical with space for men, are evident in an unusual situation in which married women were markedly remaining fixed in place:

Li Erjie, at 35, is one of the few younger married women who have never left Li Home, either for work or marriage, although she has twice spent a few months visiting her husband where he worked in construction, in Chengdu and in Guangzhou. She is the second of three daughters, and is

the one for whom her parents arranged an uxorilocal match. Her father died in 1989, cared for by all three of his daughters, prior to her marriage in 1990, so her uxorilocal match was largely an arrangement to care for her mother, and she and her husband also undertook to care for and marry out her younger sister. Like most families in Li Home, Li Erjie's family has very limited means, and the loss of her father and the lack of brothers has made their situation harder than for more gender-balanced households. Her husband is a capable construction worker, who also built their incomplete but modern home, but is not highly educated or a skilled tradesman, and he can only earn enough to send adequate remittances if he goes far away to work, where the wages are better.

A fellow villager with a male cousin past the usual marriage age had suggested that Li Erjie's widowed mother should marry this cousin, a younger man (he was 35 and she was 44), and bring him into her household. They all attempted to live together for a while, but the new husband resisted this arrangement, and household dissension resulted in his leaving the household and taking his wife and new daughter to form a separate household within Li Home. Li Erjie's mother has not been happy about her second marriage, which she openly views as a mistake, but she stays in the marriage to care for her youngest daughter. She is in daily contact with Li Erjie and in less frequent contact with her two married-out daughters. Her second husband is working, making heavy bamboo mats in the home of her older sister, as he tries to make money to complete building a new house. Li Erjie's mother is working the land for her household, as Li Erjie does for hers. Li Erjie would like to leave for work outside the village, but has no mother-in-law available to care for her two children.⁷ Her stepfather objects to her mother providing childcare for her, and her mother is much too burdened with her own household responsibilities and poor health to be able to do so. There is an intimate pattern here of closely related women caring for and nurturing each other, as permitted by living within the same village, but also a note of resignation from Li Erjie, her mother and even her young stepsister.

Marrying within one's own village does not work for women in the way that it works for men. Women here are attempting – and partly succeeding – to build nurturant relations with their close women kin, but have more limited human and material resources than do women who have been able to leave and establish themselves in new marital communities through preferred major marriages. Even the resource of spatial distance and potential physical manoeuvre is lost for those who stay in place.

Normally, the process of locating and negotiating suitable marital homes has been, and continues to be, predominantly the province of mature women, whether as professional matchmakers (*meiren*) or non-professional

introducers (*jieshaoren*). Records of hundreds of cases of arranged or semi-arranged marriages show that locating a bride or finding a mother-in-law's house (*pojia*) is almost always done by women, usually of the parental generation or one generation older. Women have the knowledge of people across village boundaries required for the usual practice of village exogamy, and are viewed as being most likely to understand and effectively manage people and households. Men may find matches for family members in elite cases, where there is a weightier sense of alliance and where the men have wider networks. And men may step in to resolve a difficult situation or give respectability to a questionable match, or may ordinarily participate together with their wife. But most people introduced in the countryside have had this major transition in their lives managed by a woman, who negotiated this together with the mothers (largely, but also the fathers) on both sides. Mature women effectively make the movement of women through the countryside in marriage work, and much of this applies even today.⁸ Aside from the professionals, of whom there continue to be a small number, the women performing this work receive little benefit, beyond a few gifts. A search for patterns in these arrangements has produced many personalistic ties, a few cousin marriages, and a more widespread possibility that a young woman may know at least one senior woman in her marital village. Except for isolated cases that appear exceptional, networks upon which women might draw are not formed in this fashion. The primary explanation offered by introducers is that the overriding consideration is the household into which the young woman will marry. In effect, inter-household ties between women within marital communities are dismissed as a valuable resource, although ties to women within a household (as in cross-cousin marriage) can be viewed as desirable, especially from the perspective of the mother-in-law. Women act to facilitate the movement of women in a relatively circumscribed area (without fixed borders), but the result does not build identifiable networks of women, or draw women out of the isolation of each building her own household.⁹

Mobility and fixity in emergent practices

The emergent situation in Sichuan and Chongqing offers suggestive contrasts. Apart from the regional difference, the terrain and somewhat remote locations limit economic options and cause a degree of relative and some absolute poverty, which manifest themselves in more fractured families and missing family members, especially in the mountain areas. In these places, women and men have a struggle to create viable and persisting kinship ties. Some strategies are focused closely on the space of the marital home, and can depart far from cultural norms in seeking resourceful ways to create and sustain precarious families. Perhaps the difficult terrain is also part of the explanation for the thinner links between marital and natal homes for women in these areas. There is neither the lengthy residential transition (or delayed transfer), nor the cultural elaboration and daily visiting to the mother's home, that are

found in Shandong. Distances are greater and travel takes longer. The material impoverishment of the mountains is matched and profoundly exacerbated by an impoverishment of social ties, resisted through the forging of kin.

I cannot address all the possibilities here, and will limit myself to some indicative instances. One original manner of creating a family was found in the least affluent of the three villages. This village has been losing people, not just temporarily through indeterminate labour migration, but has even been shrinking in official numbers (in conditions where people no longer make timely registration changes). It has declined from over 700 people in the 1970s to just over 550 officially registered in 2003, as a result of mortality, daughters marrying out, sons marrying out (at least 19 recent cases that I could identify in this small village), and sons not marrying or losing a wife. One man, who lived far up the mountain in the village's most land-poor team, and whose wife had left him, went to Yunnan to find a new wife among the Bulang nationality. She subsequently introduced two more Bulang women from her village to his two younger brothers, and they now have an undivided, large and expanding extended family. In place of importing tenant farmer families into this village, as is done in more affluent areas, women are migrating here through marriage and the transformation of an otherwise abandoned family form. There are seven Yunnan brides in this small village, although only one such extended family.

It is more difficult to see the levirate as being quite so much women's creation, although I would suggest that it should also be viewed in this frame, with the understanding that women are creating their families under conditions of considerable constraint, and that the robust materialist view proposed here does not erase that, but rather encompasses it. The levirate is an established local custom, at least in the two mountain villages. I first encountered it as a response to a recent coal-mine death, and later found it as a pre-Liberation step taken after the first husband had left with a passing army and was subsequently presumed dead. The levirate could simply be viewed as advantageous to the marital family, which it is, but it also saves the young widow from loss of home – and perhaps children – and immediate remarriage elsewhere. In none of these communities was it viable for a woman without an adult son not to remarry. Through the levirate, she retains her home and her children's home.

The thinness of ties between women and their natal families in Sichuan and Chongqing is a relative matter. At difficult distances and with heavy household demands, the elaborated cultural complex around women's homes in Shandong is not to be found, nor is daily visiting feasible. But women are often found in the homes of their mothers, sisters and daughters, and do maintain significant ties. These are most visible at calendrical rituals (often passed at the wife's mother's home) or parents' birthdays, but are more strongly in evidence in times of need.

Generational differences are critical here. The women presently in established, long-term residence in these agricultural areas of the countryside are

middle-aged or older women, who are, for the most part, past the age at which they are receiving nurturance, refuge or support from their natal kin. They may, however, still be giving support to their natal family, as middle-aged daughters may provide a home and care for their mother in her final years.

But for most of the women still resident in these communities, the salient issue is that of ties with their daughters. As part of the larger study on mobility and staying in place, I am in the process of analysing data on three samples that include 129 daughters who have married out of these three communities. A preliminary finding has been one of no detectable change in the locations into which these women have married, despite clear thresholds for women born after 1965 (in two villages) and after 1975 (in one village) in significant and even long-term migration to work elsewhere, sometimes at great distances away. There are occasional cases of marriage at a greater distance both before and after these thresholds, and rarely of daughters who move and gain urban registration through higher education, but the continuing and overwhelming majority are marrying into nearby rural communities. My current interpretation of this is, in part, that mothers are succeeding in marrying their daughters nearby.¹⁰

This perpetuates a structural basis for creating families and familial networks by bringing in daughters-in-law and marrying daughters not too far away. But it is undermined by the spatial challenges of the burgeoning coastal economy and enormous rates of migration, for women as well as men. While daughters can be provided with nearby roots to a marital community, they (and often their husband) are commonly pursuing their own strategies far away, resulting in flexible, multi-sited families.

The minority of daughters (other women's daughters-in-law) who remain in long-term residence in the countryside are somewhat older, settled before migration for work became common for women, or trapped by family demands (especially the lack of a healthy mother-in-law). Some younger married women are in the countryside for the birth and early infancy of a child, as staying for the first year in the marital home is not unusual. There are also a few young women who are in the process of moving away with their husband (and perhaps other family members) to a nearby town or city. In agricultural places such as these, the countryside is being emptied of younger women as well as men. Virtually all who can leave, do leave.

The younger daughters have been leaving for work outside these communities in smaller proportions, or only after marriage in earlier years, but now almost universally before marriage as well as after. Some stay at home for a while after school, if very young, and learn to work the land (something not always demanded of their brothers or male cousins, many of whom are not acquiring this fallback skill). But they do leave soon, both in search of an encounter with the wider world and larger possibilities (Gaetano and Jacka 2004; Lee 1998), and because of family need for their earnings combined with a lack of local opportunities. The work for these young girls is often far

from anyone's dreams, and can have mother and daughter on the telephone in tears of mutual distress, but some find stable work that is at least relatively attractive, and most now work away for extended periods.

The current, and possibly transitory, moment is a contradictory one. Young women retain formal legal and social ties to the countryside, through marriage and agricultural household registration, as well as through kinship with the older natal and marital family members still residing there. They also remain potentially key to the performance of agricultural work in the countryside, as men abandon agriculture more decisively. This is so even though young women's link with the land is being severed by policies that now leave their land in their natal home and deny them land in their marital home, except by inheritance through their husband's patriline (Judd 2007). But while tied formally in ways of questionable advantage, they are now able – and very often expected – to depart physically for work outside and, ideally, to create a new urban family.

If the young women leave briefly, or only prior to marriage, this does not undermine their mother's (and mother-in-law's) family strategy, but long-term migration is more of a challenge. At present, the younger woman may rarely be home in the countryside, either in the natal or the marital family, unless it is for a short period early in the marriage or during an infant's first year, depending on how long she can afford to remain away from work. It is striking, however, that mothers and mothers-in-law will not only continue uterine strategies through now-established patterns of caring for children in the countryside, but may make extended visits to daughters in far locations, such as Guangzhou, to care for children and grandchildren. Apart from actual travel, links can be, and are being, maintained across space by telephone and by the electronic money transfer system of the national postal service.

The present maintenance of families in multiple and mobile locations is one of the powerfully defining elements in the lives of people in rural China. As they confront and address these new realities, rural women seeing their daughters as well as their husbands and sons migrate to seek new opportunities are drawing on deeply embedded practices, located within lifelong processes and embodied inter-generational memory, to continue to create and nurture families. Current practices of mobility make this especially dramatic and salient, as people weave together relationships in ways that are flexible, fluid and indeterminate, but still grounded in space.

The analysis of women's spatialized kinship practices can be readily articulated with the analysis of the official kinship structure with which this chapter began, and with men's and women's management of it, provided one sees that the men's kinship is explicitly oriented to, and legitimized as, space grounded in place, while women's kinship is contrastingly defined by space lived through rupture and mobility. Rural women and men in China have a long-standing repertoire of concepts and practices of kinship and relatedness that use space in a differing and intricately articulated fashion. The robust

materialism proposed here enables us to see the many facets of kinship as realized in space and place, in mobility and fixity.

Each facet is gendered, often in counterintuitive ways that require close ethnographic examination. Consider especially how men and patriline are conceptually linked with local places, while it is their in-marrying wives who are more likely to spend their adult life building a family in these (to them) new places. This particular and life stage-specific form of fixity for women provides the very condition that allows men's greater mobility for work and concurrent continuing ties to rural homes. This chapter identifies some of the lacunae in the classical models, and proposes an analytical perspective that allows us to see women as well as men within persisting structures and practices of Chinese kinship. The contribution of robust materialism within ethnographic method is that it enables us to trace innovations as they emerge in the full specificity of embedded, spatialized relations of kin, community, work and power.

The official framework of classical anthropology has said little about women, apart from noting their arrival in genealogies as those who will become the mothers of the next generation. This silence permits a radical openness to the mobile strategies through space without which those familiar places would not exist. Space, and things people do with space, are internally critical to the practices through which women (and men) in rural China create, sustain and re-create their marriages, homes and families, and thereby their relatedness with others.

Acknowledgements

The research reported here was generously supported by a series of grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. I am grateful for the generosity and patience of innumerable women and men in communities in Shandong, Chongqing and Sichuan in helping me to approach an understanding of their lives over the past two decades. I can only hope that I have grasped a little of the richness and strength of their lives and creativity.

Glossary

<i>jieshaoren</i>	介绍人
<i>li</i>	里
<i>meiren</i>	媒人
<i>niangjia</i>	娘家
<i>pojia</i>	婆家
<i>tongyangxi</i>	童养媳

Notes

- 1 The collective era was followed by an initial period of land allocation that was eventually standardized with 15-year land contracts to households, then followed, after 1993, by a second round of 30-year land allocations. For the historical processes involved and their intricate connections with gender and kinship, see Judd (2007).
- 2 Formerly, Chinese couples would sometimes take in a young girl who would subsequently be married to one of their sons. This practice, known as ‘small daughter-in-law’ (*tongyangxi*) marriage, was associated with poverty and the need to avoid the expenses of bringing in an adult daughter-in-law. From the perspective of the older generation, there were also advantages for harmony within the larger family. The practice was especially common and well studied in Taiwan (Wolf 1972; Wolf and Huang 1980), but has fallen into disuse as illegal (a form of arranged marriage) and as resisted by the young people themselves. There are still a number of older women living who were married in this fashion in their youth.
- 3 See Judd (2005) for a more extensive treatment of this issue, and Yan (1996) for an example of a multi-surname village in the north-east where village endogamy has been common for several generations.
- 4 Neolocality has not been a cultural standard in rural China, although it has been a *de facto* practical consequence, temporary or permanent, of migration. It is also often connected with a concurrent sense of legitimate residence or belonging at a patrilocal site. Even neolocality can be tinged with patrilocality, and requires layered analysis.
- 5 The ambiguity is especially evident in relation to household division, which may not take place when a young couple are predominantly absent for work, although they may actually be retaining their earnings and be a *de facto* separate household. The emphasis here is on the mobility of people, but it is important to note that relations continue across space in other ways, as well, often materially expressed in childcare and elder care.
- 6 All living generations interviewed show long- or short-term absences of men for work, official service and military service, while these mobile men retain significant ties with their community and generally return regularly and even frequently. This translocality is gendered and long-standing, although its specific features are changing with increased out-migration, some of which is now potentially a permanent and even familial exodus from the countryside. Women’s translocality is quite different, as indicated briefly later in the body of this chapter.
- 7 Li Erjie’s husband’s father died when he was four, his mother remarried, and he was raised by his paternal grandfather and uncle. When he was about 11 he went with his uncle to Qinghai, where the uncle had settled, but he returned on his own as an adult. In effect, he had no available family. Men who enter uxorilocal matches are typically not able to bring ties and resources with them in a manner parallel to those that women bring to a patrilocal marriage.
- 8 First marriages of young rural women seem still to be predominantly semi-arranged, often before a woman first leaves to work away, at least in the Sichuan and Chongqing research sites studied in 2003–05. Some women are finding distant spouses while working or studying away, or finding increasing opportunities to leave unhappy marriages and remarry, but the proportion of these is not high, and there were some such instances in earlier living generations. If there has been a significant change, it may be in the new practice of young couples migrating for work together shortly after marriage, providing an opportunity for the younger generation’s independence within a conjugal frame.
- 9 Skinner (1964–65) earlier argued that marriages were made by men within the areas of standard market communities, where these were present. It is difficult to

reconstruct this retrospectively at present, although I have interviewed women of all living generations in the three Shandong and three Sichuan/Chongqing villages where I have worked about their own matches and, where relevant, about their role as matchmaker or introducer. I would venture that, even in the past, men made the elite matches, as they have in more recent times, for the children of village cadres. This might well consolidate social organization and extend affinal ties within a standard market community. Most rural matches, however, strongly appear to have been made by women, and these would coincidentally fall within the standard market community even when operating through fundamentally different ways of managing space and people in space.

- 10 This leads to the question of how far these matches are made by the young people themselves. I am reasonably confident of much of my interview data on this subject where I have been able to speak with the couple themselves, but less so with respect to the absent migrant workers. It is difficult in every case to ascertain how a match was made. My impression is that romantic matches were made in all periods, but the predominance of marriage close by on the part of migrant workers indicates a widespread continuation of semi-arranged marriage. In addition, there are qualitative accounts of matches made by young people, some of which are outside the framework of marriage, or lead to second marriage. Records of post-marital work histories show couples migrating together, and couples in long-term work in different locations, indicative of a strong conjugal tie. A good marriage is unquestionably valued, and may well be achieved even with semi-arranged marriages.

References

- Bloch, M. (1983) *Marxism and Anthropology*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Brandtstädter, S. (2003) 'The Moral Economy of Kinship and Property in Southern China', in C. Hann (ed.) *The Postsocialist Agrarian Condition: Property Relations and the Rural Condition*, Münster, Germany: Lit.
- Carsten, J. (ed.) (2000) *Cultures of Relatedness: New Approaches to the Study of Kinship*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (2004) *After Kinship*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cohen, M. (1976) *House United, House Divided: The Chinese Family in Taiwan*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- (2005) *Kinship, Contract, Community, and State: Anthropological Perspectives on China*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Croll, E. (1981) *The Politics of Marriage in Contemporary China*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Diamond, N. (1975) 'Collectivization, Kinship and the Status of Women in Rural China', in R.R. Reiter (ed.) *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Entwistle, B. and G.E. Henderson (eds) (2000) *Re-drawing Boundaries: Work, Households, and Gender in China*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Faure, D. (1986) *The Structure of Chinese Rural Society: Lineage and Village in the Eastern New Territories, Hong Kong*, Hong Kong: Oxford University Press.
- Freedman, M. (1966) *Chinese Lineage and Society: Fukien and Kwangtung*, London: Athlone.
- Gaetano, A.M. and T. Jacka (eds) (2004) *On the Move: Women in Rural-to-Urban Migration in Contemporary China*, New York: Columbia University Press.

- Gates, H. (1996) *China's Motor: A Thousand Years of Petty Capitalism*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Greenhalgh, S. and E.A. Winckler (2005). *Governing China's Population: From Leninist to Neoliberal Biopolitics*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Johnson, E.L. (2003) 'Singing of Separation, Lamenting Loss: Hakka Women's Expressions of Separation and Reunion' in C. Stafford (ed.) *Living with Separation in China: Anthropological Accounts*, London: Routledge.
- Judd, E.R. (1989) 'Niangjia: Chinese Women and Their Natal Families', *Journal of Asian Studies* 48(3): 525–44.
- (1992) 'Land United, Land Divided', *China Quarterly* 130: 338–56.
- (1994) *Gender and Power in Rural North China*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- (1997) 'Gender and Capital Accumulation in Chinese Village Enterprises', in T. Brook and H.V. Luong (eds) *Culture and Economy: The Shaping of Capitalism in Eastern Asia*, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- (2005) 'Women on the Move: Women's Kinship, Residence and Networks in Rural Shandong', in B. Goodman and W. Larson (eds) *Gender in Motion: Divisions of Labor and Cultural Change in Late Imperial and Modern China*, Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.
- (2007) 'No Change for Thirty Years: The Renewed Question of Women's Land Rights in Rural China', *Development and Change* 38(4): 691–712.
- Lavelly, W. (1991). 'Marriage and Mobility under Rural Collectivism', in R.S. Watson and P. Ebrey (eds) *Marriage and Inequality in Chinese Society*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Lee, Ching Kwan (1998) *Gender and the South China Miracle: Two Worlds of Factory Women*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Liu, Xin (2000) *In One's Own Shadow: An Ethnographic Account of the Condition of Post-reform Rural China*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Massey, D. (1994) *Space, Place and Gender*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Potter, S.H. and J.M. Potter (1990) *China's Peasants: The Anthropology of a Revolution*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rosaldo, M. and L. Lamphere (eds) (1974) *Women, Culture and Society*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Ruf, G.A. (1998) *Cadres and Kin: Making a Socialist Village in West China, 1921–199*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Salaff, J.W. (1973) 'The Emerging Conjugal Relationship in the People's Republic of China', *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 35(4): 705–17.
- Selden, M. (1993) 'Family Strategies and Structures in Rural North China', in D. Davis and S. Harrell (eds) *Chinese Families in the Post-Mao Era*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Skinner, G.W. (1964–65) 'Marketing and Social Structure in Rural China', *Journal of Asian Studies* 24(1–3): 3–44, 195–228, 363–99.
- Stafford, C. (2000) *Separation and Reunion in Modern China*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (ed.) (2003) *Living with Separation in China: Anthropological Accounts*, London: Routledge.
- Stockard, J.M. (1989) *Daughters of the Canton Delta: Marriage Patterns and Economic Strategies in South China, 1860–1930*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

- Timpanaro, S. (1975) *On Materialism*, London: NLB.
- Watson, R.S. (1985) *Inequality Among Brothers: Class and Kinship in South China*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Wolf, A. and Chieh-shan Huang (1980) *Marriage and Adoption in China, 1845–1945*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Wolf, M. (1968) *The House of Lim: A Study of a Chinese Farm Family*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.
- (1972) *Women and the Family in Rural Taiwan*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- (1985) *Revolution Postponed: Women in Contemporary China*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Yan, Yunxiang (1996) *The Flow of Gifts. Reciprocity and Social Networks in a Chinese Village*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- (2003) *Private Life Under Socialism: Love, Intimacy and Family Change in a Chinese Village, 1949–1999*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Yang, M.C. (1945) *A Chinese Village: Taitou, Shandong Province*, New York: Columbia University Press.

2 Living a single life

The plight and adaptations of the bachelors in Yishala

Hua Han

Introduction

In the sun-drenched morning of a typical autumn day in October 2005, Mao You Guang, a 37-year-old bachelor in Yishala, a village in Panzhihua, south-west Sichuan, is cooking brunch for himself and his father in their large yet empty kitchen. (Unlike peasants in rural northern China, villagers in Yishala eat two meals a day, at around 10:00 am and 6:00 pm.) His father is also a 'bachelor', but by default, as his wife left him several years ago due to the hardship of living in the village. His father's wife, who Mao You Guang calls 'aunt' (she is his stepmother; his biological mother died), is now living with her lover and her biological children in another village, which is much closer to Panzhihua city. The meal being made is simple as usual, consisting of a bowl of beans and a bucket of rice. At around 9:30 am the father comes back to eat after he has herded their goats up to the mountains. The son sets up two sets of chopsticks and bowls systematically on a dining table that seems to be too big for just the two of them. They begin to eat at 9:45 am, and finish the meal without much talking. While the father smokes, the son cleans the table and washes dishes. The silence continues.

Around 10:00 am, they both go to the stable at the same time to finish the last chore for the morning – making sure the pigs and cattle have enough food for the day. Fifteen minutes later, the son heads out to the steep mountains above the Jinsha River where he, along with his cousin and another village man, quarry ink stones for a businessman who lives in the city of Panzhihua. He got this work through a cousin, who has recently returned from a wage-labor job in Zhejiang. He has been doing this job for only two days, making 20 yuan per day. Because the government has issued strict rules to regulate quarries, he is not sure how long he can keep working. His father also takes off to the mountains again, to watch the goats. They will not be able to come home until 5:00 pm, when their evening routine begins with cooking, tending the animals, eating, and watching TV separately in their own rooms.

A couple of years ago, a family relative arranged a mate for Mao You Guang from a poorer county in inner Sichuan. The girl stayed with his

relative in Yishala for a short time to get to know him and his family. He liked her and planned to marry her. Unfortunately the matchmaking didn't work out, because the girl felt Yishala was too remote and far from her natal village. Later, Mao You Guang went back to the county again to meet with other girls, but none of the trips ended in success. He discussed the situation with his male lineage members and decided that in order to marry eventually, he would have to focus the search among women who have been married before and perhaps have children from a previous marriage. He tries to be optimistic, but feels distressed by the fact that if he were able to marry soon and have a child, the child would be only a teenager when he himself reaches 50, the age when other village men would already have had many grandchildren.

The phenomenon of bachelorhood has long been a social problem in rural China.¹ Among rural Chinese, being able to marry and construct a domestic space is a manifesto of a man's social status, economic power and personal charisma. Marriage is considered a responsibility that village men normatively assume. Therefore, although not all men are able to marry, they are expected to do so. Not surprisingly, not being able to marry often attracts sympathy as well as ridicule from others. And a future without wife, posterity and affinal allies deeply frightens Chinese farmers, their families, and the rural communities they live in (Liu 2000: 51; Watson 2004). Because of the rising sex ratios, issues associated with bachelors are worsened.

This chapter provides an ethnographic account of bachelorhood in Yishala. It examines the causes of a large number of bachelors, and their effects on family and kinship relatedness in relation to spatial practices of migration and temporal pursuits of modernity, which are increasingly gendered by the post-socialist political economy. It reveals how bachelors are, in a marginalized village space, struggling with living a single life, adapting to social changes brought upon them by disparity and mobility, and challenging the Chinese kinship norms that are deeply rooted in descent, seniority and sex.

The village

The village of Yishala is tucked away among the low mountains in the southern tip of Panzhihua city, Sichuan province. Down the valley is the *Jinsha* river, roaring through much of the city. The village is currently under the administration of Pingdi, the most southern township in Panzhihua, although until the 1960s it had belonged to Yongren, Yunnan. The social and economic ties between the village and Yongren were never completely severed. Even today, people prefer to go to Yongren than to Panzhihua to shop for dowry items and large household goods.

When this field research was conducted in 2006, there were 522 households with a total population of 2094 people, mostly belonging to the four large lineages – the Qi, the Mao, the Na and the Zhang. Although officially

classified as the Yi, the villagers have retained many cultural practices of their Han ancestors during the 400-year history of integrating into the aboriginal culture. It is said that the ancestors of the four Lipo lineages were Han soldiers and businessmen, who were originally from Jiangsu, Jiangxi, Hunan and Anhui provinces in eastern China; during the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) they were sent by the central government to Yunnan to guard against rebels and engage in trade (personal interviews). After the war, many of them intermarried with aboriginal women, had children and settled down in the region. Although the Lipo, along with 30 or 40 related ethnolinguistic groups, were classified as the Yi *minzu*, or ‘nationality’ in the 1950s, the best known Yi group is the Nuosu of Liangshan, whose social organization is based on a clan-and-caste system and is much less influenced by the Han Chinese or other neighboring groups. For example, the Lipo have carefully maintained several genealogies written in Chinese (all literacy is in Chinese); they perform ancestor worship religiously; and they emphasize kinship relatedness and obligations within the lineage. Therefore the case studies of the bachelors in Yishala largely reflect marriage and kinship practices of the Han Chinese, yet with some ethnic and regional specificities (see details in ‘Local kinship and marriage systems’, below).

In Yishala, the average gross household income was 10,796 yuan in 2005. The majority of the villagers are engaged in subsistence farming; they grow rice, corn, winter wheat and vegetables. In addition, they raise cattle and goats, which are sold periodically for a large lump sum of cash, to be saved for weddings, funerals and other family emergencies. Because salted pork is a dietary staple, every family also likes to raise a few pigs that are butchered in winter, and the meat is made into ham to last into spring or even summer. Not only essential to local diet, pigs are socially significant. Every year, starting in November, families would be busy with butchering their *nian zhu* (the yearly pigs), preserving the legs and using the rest for reciprocity by hosting *nian fan* (the annual feast), during which lineage members and close friends are invited to share a meal with the host family together.

As elsewhere in rural China, Yishala has been encouraged by the government to break away from the traditional subsistence economy by developing cultural tourism and growing cash crops such as tobacco. Although potentially more profitable, these new forms of economy are much more market-driven and riskier. According to local officials, these new economies are bringing an exciting new ‘revolution’ to village lives (personal conversation with the village party secretary). For the common people such as the bachelors, who have limited means of economic and social resources, the economic transitions from subsistence farming to tourism and cash-cropping are multiple and are by no means ‘revolutionary’ or ‘liberating’. Instead of helping to improve the socioeconomic standing of the poor, tourism and cash-cropping is deepening social and economic disparities in every element in people’s lives, including a man’s prospects of marrying.

Beyond demographic causes

In Yishala, the locals call men who have long passed the legal age for marriage (22 for men; 20 for women) but are still single the *nian qing de wu bao hu*, a category that normally stands for single-person households or households with special needs whose survival largely depends on government aid. In addition, they are also commonly referred to as ‘bare branches’ or ‘bare sticks’, *guang gun* in Chinese. Loosely defined in the village, *guang gun* can be used for any man who is a confirmed bachelor, or for those available unmarried men who are still trying to get married. The terms testify to ‘the bleakness and loneliness that the life of a man who doesn’t have a family can be’ (Hudson and den Boer 2004: 188) and connote nothing but failure, ill fortune and misery brought by the fact that these men cannot, and perhaps will never, marry. By the end of 2005, 93 village men in Yishala fell into this category of *guang gun*, while female marriage was largely universal.

The phenomenon of *guang gun* in rural China has drawn wide attention from scholars who are interested in Chinese demography, birth control and gender. Their studies often focus on the demographic causes and consequences of the interplay between state mandatory birth-control policies and traditional family values, which stress the importance of sons (Banister 2004; Cai and Lavelly 2003; Coale and Banister 1994; Zeng Yi *et al.* 1993). A shortage of young women as a result of sex-selective abortions and female infanticides is frequently cited as the leading reason for bachelors. However, this is not always true, as the case of Yishala demonstrates.

Using the tally of women of reproductive age and a household register that was used until 2002, I retrieved sex ratios for cohorts between the ages of 1 and 34 for village residents (Table 2.1). The findings show that the causes of the prevalence of bachelors in Yishala are not demographic (for instance, female infanticides or sex selections for abortion). Because Yishala is officially a minority village at the remote periphery, local families are allowed to have a second child four years after the first one was born, regardless the sex of the first child; this greatly reduces the stress that consumes rural families in other regions, the Han areas in particular, where the birth quota is only one child per family. Therefore in Yishala, as the overall risk of not having at least one son per family is relatively small, families are less likely to carry out sex-selective abortions and female infanticides, as evidenced by the overall low sex ratios in Table 2.1.² The low ratios suggest that, in Yishala, it should be the females who are experiencing a marriage squeeze while males are in a more favorable position for marriage. This, however, is not the case.

If sex ratio is not the cause of marriage difficulties for men in Yishala – what is? In addition to the second child policy, are there any social and economic factors that have led to the low sex ratios, which are usually high in many other rural communities? More importantly, what are the relations between kinship, marriage and gender in this village, which has experienced

400 years of cultural coalition and ethnic interplay between the Han and the Yi, and the economy of which has recently been transformed?

Local kinship and marriage systems

The local kinship and marriage practices in Yishala share characteristics of the southern minority populations, such as the Li in Hainan, which are 'conducive to female autonomy' and 'accord a higher value to females' (Lavelly *et al.* 2001). These systems may have helped reduce female infanticide and selective abortion, which are adverse to girls. Therefore the more equal sex preference for children and less sex-biased familial behaviors that are not the norm among the Han are in fact normative in Yishala. The most important elements of village kinship and marriage systems contributing to a more balanced gender equation include village endogamy, cross-cousin marriage and uxorilocal marriage.³

Village endogamy

Boys in Yishala frequently mentioned to me that girls in the village are well known in neighboring communities for their attractiveness. Their beautiful

Table 2.1 Sex ratios by age, Yishala, 2005

Year born	Age	Number		Sex ratio
		Males	Females	
2004–01	1–4	39	57	68*
2000–1996	5–9	75	79	94
1995–91	10–14	77	82	94
1990–86	15–19	126	115	109†
1985–81	20–24	42	44	95
1980–76	25–29	63	87	72
1975–71	30–34	123	117	105
Total		545	626	96

Rates were calculated based on three different sources. (1) the tally of village women of reproductive age from 20–49. (2) The township birth record for Yishala. Carefully maintained by the township birth planning office, it lists all live births for any given year. It is a reliable source for birth statistics for recent cohorts. Together with (1), it allows me to count as well as limit discrepancies for more recent birth cohorts. (3) The old household register used during the 1970s to 2002, which I used for cohorts born in the 1970s and 1980s.

*I have no explanations for the extremely low ratios of 68 for the most recent age group of 1–4 and of 72 for the cohort of 1976–80. To clarify, I checked the township birth record of Yishala and did not find major differences.

†The sex ratio of 109 for age group 15–19 is slightly above the norm of 106 male per 100 female births. The ratio for age group 1–4 is only 68. Similarly, the ratio of 72 for children born between 1980 and 1976 is low, which in principle is in favor of men in the cohort of 1975–71, if village endogamy is a consideration when selecting a mate.

eyes, dark hair, slender bodies and outgoing personalities easily draw admirers from the village and neighboring communities. Perhaps because the parents want to extend their protection and love for their beautiful daughters as long as possible, they prefer to marry them to local men, to keep them close by. The strong attachment of a parent to a daughter is neither new, nor unique to Yishala. In *Women and the Family in Rural Taiwan*, Margery Wolf depicted how a mother ‘would like to keep her daughter at home a bit longer’ by rejecting numerous marriage proposals (Wolf 1972: 109).

In the local kinship practice, same-village marriage is not considered a taboo, and is therefore not opposed by parents. On the contrary, village endogamy (marrying within the same village; as opposed to village exogamy, marrying outside the village) has been a pattern of marriage since the nineteenth century, if not earlier (Harrell 1992). Between 1948 and 1987, about half of marriages were of this type (*ibid.*: 332);⁴ my own study also verified that this pattern had continued to up to the mid-1990s. And slightly over 50 per cent of all marriages for men between the cohorts of 1961 to 1980 were village endogamous. However, there has been a steady increase in village exogamies among the younger cohorts, who were born in the mid-1970s and later (Table 2.2). While the Yi ethnicity may be a limiting factor that confines the Yi to marry other Yi in the village, the presence of the four prominent patrilineal clans makes intermarriage between the Yi in Yishala structurally plausible. In addition, there are three satellite settlements nearby that are also under the administration of Yishala, providing a sustainable supply of local brides for village endogamous marriages.

A woman in a patrilocal marriage experiences her initial months of married life under great stress, unease and anxiety as she tries to adapt to her husband’s family, which is strange to her. A new bride may find her sister-in-law ‘hostile or at best condescending’ and her mother-in-law resentful (Wolf

Table 2.2 Marriage types by male cohort, Yishala, 2005

Male cohorts	Total marriages	Village endogamies		Village exogamies		Uxorilocal marriages	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1976–80	45	18	0.40	21	0.47	6	0.13
1971–75	107	46	0.43	49	0.45	12	0.12
1966–70	121	66	0.55	44	0.36	11	0.09
1961–65	97	55	0.56	31	0.32	11	0.12
	370	185	0.50	145	0.39	40	0.11

Statistics are constructed based on the tally of women of reproductive age from 20 to 49 that lists date of birth of both the couple, their marriage date, and their children’s birth dates. Because local women who married to other villages are not registered on the list, nor are the village men who married out uxori locally, I only included the patrilocal marriages of local grooms and unions of uxori local marriages of local brides. Cohorts younger than 1980 and older than 1961 are omitted to avoid incomplete data.

1972: 35). It takes years for her eventually to construct her own ‘cohesive unit’ – the uterine family centering on her and her children (*ibid.*: 33). I interviewed a newlywed couple who married on 26 December 2005. Both husband and wife are natives of Yishala. The 20-year-old bride is from the Mao lineage and the 24-year-old groom is a member of the Zhang lineage. A week after the wedding, we met again. When asked how she felt about her new married life, she said she liked her mother’s home better. There she could do whatever she liked without worrying about responsibilities and consequences.

Although it is true that village endogamy still requires a bride to adapt to her husband’s family on marriage, the lengthy task is shortened. Unlike women who married to different villages, a bride of village endogamy doesn’t need to spend years building rapport with women in the village. And there is always the natal home that she can easily visit, should she need help and advice from her loving parents. When the need for collaborative farming arises, the close proximity to their natal clans proves crucial, as women do most of the agricultural work. Village endogamy rewards women with stronger affinal ties and an easier and smoother transition into post-marriage life.

The interplay between forms of marriage and sex ratio is documented in Dyson and Moore’s (1983) comparative study of kinship and sex ratio in northern and southern India. They showed that village endogamous marriages tend to create a society organized more around affinal ties than around descent, as it is often the case with village exogamies. The differences affect female autonomy and shape marriage and gender behaviors. During interviews, Yi women married through village endogamy often said, in their keen voices, how passionate and warm the Yi are, and how different their parents are from Han parents who are cold, distant and authoritative with their daughters. It is the Han’s tradition to marry daughters out to a stranger far away, but not the Yi’s. Every year during the Chinese Lunar New Year, relatives from women’s natal homes would come in person to invite them to return to their natal homes. This applies to women of village exogamous marriages as well. This is not to say that women don’t go back to their natal homes at other times during the year; they often do. However, the formal invitations are important and very meaningful to them. While in Han areas, a married woman loses her membership of her father’s lineage on marriage, in Yishala, the invitations symbolically renew a woman’s membership to her own patrilineal lineage and strengthen the closeness she has with her natal kin, which has never been broken due to her marriage.

Cross-cousin marriage

As in societies practicing ‘elementary’ marriage systems (Lévi-Strauss 1969), in Yishala kinship not only defines who or into what group one cannot marry, it also prescribes rules specifying who, and into which groups, one should marry (Stone 2000). One such rule, related to patrilineal cross-cousin

marriage, is *jiu shu li*. It grants a man the priority to arrange for his sister's daughter to be married to his son.⁵ This special relationship between a man and his sister's child is widely documented ethnographically among Tibeto-Burman groups, for instance the Naxi in Yunnan province, China (McKhann 1989: 165).

Literature on cross-cousin marriage often stresses its importance to the forming of perpetual group alliances, and its negative implications for women, who are the 'goods' being exchanged and allocated by men in marriage transactions (Levi-Strauss 1969; Fox 1980). For example, McKhann states that among the Naxi, 'preferential patrilineal cross-cousin marriage' forms 'reciprocating marriage relations' through which males link to their matrilineal kin who reside in other villages (McKhann 1989: 165). While its functions in constructing kinship groups and alliances should not be overlooked, not all cross-cousin marriages are about social alliances. Looking at it from an emic and individual perspective, Margaret Trawick's (1990) depiction of cross-cousin marriages among the Tamils of southern India, which in her opinion are culturally rooted in the affectionate bond between brothers and sisters, reminds us that marriage is also personal, private and emotional. In China, the emotional bonds and affection between a brother and a sister are often 'striking' and frequently 'extend to their caring of each other's children' (Chao 1983; Han 2003).

It is important that a family finds a good-natured bride. A bride who is related in kinship, and of whom the groom's family has been fond since her birth, may very likely be the one. Although not guaranteed, a bride of this kind, who is not a stranger to the groom, increases the odds of a happy marital life for the couple and lasting harmony for the newly expanded family. 'Match making is a game that both women and men can play' (Stone 2000: 206). In Yishala, men are not the only ones to take the initiative in the arrangement; women are active players as well. Differently from their brothers', a woman's interest in arranging a cross-cousin marriage for her daughter is perhaps not so much to secure political and economic interests for her own conjugal family by entering a profitable marital alliance; but rather to secure support for her daughter by marrying her to her cousin, a man who is obliged by kinship rules to help her when she needs it, just as he would help other blood relatives.

Uxorilocal marriage

Uxorilocal marriage, in which a groom moves to live with the bride's family, is far from rare in Yishala. In the year 2005, among the 370 marriages registered on the tally for men between the ages of 25 and 45, 11 per cent were uxorilocal (Table 2.2), much higher than in most rural communities. There are local customs with long histories providing 'solutions' and 'facilitations' that make it easier for people who adopt this type of marriage. For example, there is the practice of *san dai huan zong*, which allows the

restoration of the original surname of the grandfather in an uxorilocal marriage by naming at least one of the grandchildren after his surname. Until recent years, a man who married uxorilocally was obligated to change his surname to his wife's. His sons often receive the name of his wife. In addition, people like to preserve the heritage of both descents by creatively naming a grandchild with a combination of both surnames.

Whereas patrilocal marriage and residences are direct sources of social and economic constraints on gender, village endogamies, cross-cousin marriages and uxorilocal marriages invigorate the close ties and strong sentiments between parents and their daughters. The structural local naming practices that allow couples in uxorilocal marriages flexibly to preserve the heritage of both descents, and the relatively high degree of fluidity in post-marital residence, all indicate that, although the local kinship in Yishala is largely Han, here people are less attached and restricted by the patriline than people in the 'pure Han' regions. And these local specificities in kinship and marriage systems denote a less painful transition to marital life for the village women, and help maintain a more balanced gender spectrum that, in general, permits women more freedom and power in both private and public life.

How about men? What do local men feel about marrying uxorilocally? In *Women and the Family in Rural Taiwan*, Margery Wolf (1972) states that Chinese men in uxorilocal marriages are 'in a limited sense, male brides'. In March 2006, I had an opportunity to attend a wedding in which a male bride was married into a wealthy family in Yishala. After a simple ceremony at his natal home, which was intentionally delayed by his family in an attempt to show their discontent toward the marriage, his female groom finally escorted him to his 'sedan chair', a burgundy Volkswagen adorned with colorful tinsel waiting outside. While walking to the car, he was symbolically 'veiled' under a red umbrella to avoid encountering evils and misfortunes. He wept, quietly, just as a bride in a virilocal marriage would normally do.

In Yishala, the practice of uxorilocal marriages for either preservative or practical reasons can be dated back to at least the Qing dynasty. During the field study, I found several uxorilocal marriage contracts signed during the *Qing* and the Republic periods. Clearly they documented the nature of male hypergamy for poor families who otherwise could not marry their sons properly in a virilocal marriage. The contractual clauses stipulated a wide array of responsibilities for the male bride. For example, whenever called upon (by his wife's family), he ought to answer and come right away; he should not avoid obligations and run freely to the east or flee to the west; once his name was changed to his wife's, he could not change it back. The harsh language that detailed the duties for male brides foreshadowed their adverse future in their wife's household. Clearly, these marriage contracts provide indisputable historical evidence showing that uxorilocal marriage has never been in the favor of local men. The fact that families adhere to this minor form of marriage despite its negativeness demonstrates that Yishala women historically were, and still are, in a favorable position in the dynamic

local marriage market, as further testified by the recent practices of dowry and brideprice.

Brideprice and dowry

It has been theorized that the practice of dowry intertwines with gender and sexuality. Writing about traditional Eurasian societies, Jack Goody (1973) argued that dowries perpetuated class endogamy by 'diverging devolution', an inheritance system allowing women also, although indirectly, to inherit family wealth through marriage. To achieve and maintain class endogamy, parents look for a good match between a prospective bride's dowry and a groom's inheritance. However, marrying into one's own status group (class) 'does not mean that everyone marries an exact equal' (Stone 2000). In fact, it is not mistaken to argue that the combination of dowry, matchmaking and status enhanced the practice of hypergamy in traditional Eurasian societies, including China. And because family wealth was invested in dowry for the purpose of maintaining or even better improving their status through class endogamy, or perhaps hypergamy, parents strictly controlled their daughters' premarital sexuality, as 'sex before marriage could diminish a girl's honor, and reduce her marriage chances' (Goody 1976: 17). In Yishala, as in elsewhere in rural China, female hypergamy has largely remained customary, at least up to the period of collectivism (Lavelly 1991). It was also during the collective era that brideprice and dowry were discouraged; these were later revived in the 1980s amid the increased prosperity led by economic reforms, and recently are becoming increasingly pertinent to a happy marriage and conjugality (Davis and Harrell 1993; Yan 2003). However, different from Goody's framework, which assumed female virginity to be essential for male sexual preferences, the current practices of dowry and brideprice in Yishala connote more complex dynamics between marriage, gender and sexuality.

In Yishala, a formal marriage proposal starts with negotiations for a proper brideprice between the groom's representative (often his father's brother) and the bride's parents. It used to be that brideprice was much higher than dowry. For example, in the mid-1980s the average brideprice was about 1000 yuan, whereas an average dowry was only around 500 yuan (Harrell 1992: 336). This pattern has changed in the past 20 years. In the two weddings I mentioned earlier, although one was virilocal (but also endogamous as both bride and groom are from Yishala) and the other was uxorilocal, both brides were lavishly dowered in cash, furniture, jewellery, motorcycle and household goods such as satellite TV, and the monetary values of the dowries were slightly higher than the standard brideprice, which was about 10,000 yuan. In both cases, the brides' families are better off than the grooms', therefore dowry was not intended for hypergamy, but was simply out of parents' love toward their daughters. It is not mistaken to say that, in both cases, it was the grooms but not the brides who married hypergamously.

Although the two cases above cannot represent all recent marriages in Yishala, nevertheless they indicate, first, that in rural China hypergamy is perhaps becoming more commonly adopted by males, particularly by men of lesser means and not as ‘marriageable’ as others due to their inferior economic and social standing. Second, dowry is becoming less about marriage transaction and social mobility as rural family life is becoming more ‘characterized by the moral experiences of individuals, whose concerns about privacy, intimacy, emotionality, and individual rights are as important as economic gains’ (Yan 2003: xii). Third, the changes in hypergamy and dowry practices add new examples of emerging variations in marriage behavior that challenge traditional Chinese kinship and family systems, which have long been believed to be collective, male-centric and institutional.

In short, in Yishala the fluidity of both traditional and new kinship and marriage behaviors favors the overall prospects of marriage for females. What are the other impacts on gender and sexuality of changes in marriage behavior? While in Yishala dowry is not necessarily always an instrument for female hypergamy, have its constraints on female premarital sexuality also diminished? Is female premarital sexuality no longer an issue for a girl’s marriage prospects? How does premarital sexuality interplay with gender and marriage in a village where females are in a favorable position to marry, whereas males are experiencing a marriage squeeze?

Marriage squeeze for males, gender and sexuality

As a crucial element of kinship, marriage forms alliances between groups and changes the economic lot of individuals as well as families (Stone 2000). While marrying out of love and passion is not lacking in rural China (Yan 2003), marriage is often utilized as a strategy for village women and their families to move up the social hierarchy. In comparison with female marriages, which are largely universal, male marriages are more closely constrained by changing socioeconomic conditions (Lavelly 1991, Li and Lavelly 1995). This is even more so in post-Mao China, where capitalism and market-driven economies are increasing economic discrepancies and social stratifications across China.

In Yishala, although the overall low sex ratios indicate that there is no shortage of girls in the village, they are not available in the local marriage market for men to marry. In ‘The Peasant and His Body’, Pierre Bourdieu (2004) showed how the cultural clash between country and city led to a devaluation of the men from the hamlet in his native village in France, where young women quickly assimilated city life, whereas the men were condemned as ‘introvert’, ‘ill-adapted’, ‘shy’, ‘disconcerted’ and thus ‘unmarriageable’. This is also true in Yishala, where more and more girls are leaving the village for wage-labor jobs in cities, and once they have left, few of them return. This has led to a decrease in village endogamies and an overall marriage squeeze for males, which in practice imposes few benefits but more costs to

women (South and Trent 1988). It has been theorized that ‘when women become scarce, males – particularly powerful men who view females as commodities to be bought and sold – control them even more tightly’ (Hudson and den Boer 2004: 203). Demographic studies of historical lineage populations show that richer and more reproductively successful lineage branches have a lesser spread of male ages at marriage, while female ages at marriage tend to be low everywhere, regardless of a family’s economic status (Harrell 1995). In Yishala, where women have always married young (around the age of 20, the legal age of marriage for females), there has been a gradual yet steady increase in the median first marriage age among men, from around 22 in the 1980s to 23 in the 1990s, and finally to 25 in 2003, indicating a strong marriage squeeze for men.

Why do women marry so early? Do they want to? The stories of the two young brides, who were not yet 20 when they got pregnant and had to marry, seem to indicate otherwise. Because they were under the legal age for marriage, and abortion was not considered ideal because it could potentially harm their health, the girls’ families had to spend a lot of money to change their birthdays on the household registration book so that they could apply for an official marriage license. If they were not pregnant, the brides said, they would have waited longer to decide when and who to marry. Although it is impossible to verify if grooms intentionally impregnate girls in order to secure a future wife, it was evident that premarital pregnancies helped seal marriage proposals and expedited the weddings, which the brides would not otherwise have agreed to so hastily.⁶

Contesting gender space and modernity

As an instrument of social change, marriage is often used by social groups to form alliances, change the economic lot of families, and transform the spatial allocation of individuals. In China, while female marriages are largely universal and women tend to marry up the social hierarchy through hypergamy, the odds of a male finding a spouse and marrying are more closely constrained by the changing socioeconomic conditions (Lavelly 1991; Li and Lavelly 1995). This is even more so in post-Mao China, where the market-driven capitalist economy has been deepening economic discrepancies and social stratifications. While hypergamy provides a ‘glass floor’ for females, preventing them from falling to the bottom of society, non-elite males, unprotected from the glass floor, often fall to the bottom of the social and economic hierarchy, struggling with poverty and crime (Fong 2004: 112).

In Yishala, marriage practices are changing. In the context of the socio-economic transformations, new patterns of marriage and family behaviors are being adopted. For instance, there has been a decrease in village endogamies, from 56 per cent for the cohort of 1961–65 to 40 per cent for the cohort of 1976–80 (Table 2.2). Village exogamous marriages, by contrast, have been rising steadily in the past 20 years, from 32 per cent for the cohort

of 1961–65 to 47 per cent for the cohort of 1976–80. The reasons for the change are largely due to increased rural-to-urban migration among the young.

Bourdieu's (2004) ethnography of celibacy depicts that, in his native village, whether a man is born in town or hamlet is a 'necessitating condition' or a 'permissive condition' of bachelorhood; women, accepting urban cultural trends and ideals much more quickly than men, are sensitive to bodily presentations such as clothing, gesture, attitudes, bearing and conduct. Together, these two factors render peasant men 'worthless in the eyes of potential marriage partners' (*ibid.*: 579). In Yishala, both young men and women migrate (*dagong*) to cities for low-paid wage-labor jobs. Similarly to the women in Bourdieu's study, migrant girls of Yishala are more likely to adapt to urban life, meet potential mates outside the village, and eventually make a living in the city. Male migrants, on the other hand, have more difficulty in finding mates in cities because the temporary wage-labor jobs they hold are highly gender-segregated.

For men, *dagong* projects a heroic image of leaving the home to assume laborious work for the sake of the family. Female migrants, however, are perceived by the locals as drifters and loose. As documented in Ngai's (1999, 2005) ethnographic investigation, because of their supposedly 'nimble figures' and 'malleable personalities', young women have a better chance of being recruited by export factories and service industries. Here, 'malleable' contains a twofold meaning. First, female workers are more adaptable and capable of adjusting to changing circumstances. The second, more derogative, meaning implies that female migrant workers are more easily influenced, changed or managed by external forces. It is the latter description that village men often identify female migrants with. In their eyes and minds, young girls are leaving the village not for work, but to find rich husbands. Working in service industries such as hot-pot restaurants, tea houses, retailers, beauty salons, massage parlors, spas or karaoke halls brings more opportunities for girls to meet and eventually marry 'Mr Right'. Men say that for girls 'all they need is a pretty face' (personal interviews). Bitterly, they declare:

'Once becoming a *dagongmei*, the girls are no longer the same as they were before; girls become more daring and like to migrate out even further once they became a wage laborer. Young men, however, are less adventurous. Girls do not want to come back. Even if they do, we look down on them as they have changed too much. And they (girls) don't like us either, because we are poor.' (Personal interview)

Thus, although demographically there is no shortage of girls in Yishala, as indicated by the low sex ratios, they are not 'available' and few of them are interested in marrying local men who, like their French counterparts in Bourdieu's study, are not accustomed to the rhythms of urban life. In short, in Yishala the gendered experiences of migration and longing for modernity

lead to great differences in the desirability and prospects of marriage between the two sexes.

While girls are being 'rushed' into marriage, what about the bachelors in the village? Every day, their need to find a mate is increasing, yet at the same time their opportunities to find an ideal mate of suitable age are dwindling. Are they stressed out? Are they giving up on marriage? How do they strategize and cope with the changing marriage market that is becoming less and less favorable to them? How do they adapt their sexuality and living a single life in a society that has a long tradition of communal life? And on a larger scale, what do their stories say about the current conditions of Chinese kinship, family and gender?

Living a single life: the plight and adaptations of the bachelors

Because of the prevalence of bachelors, there are many 'non-standard' families in Yishala that may be composed of, for example, a middle-aged man and one or both of his parents, and/or grandparent(s). In standard nuclear and stem households, it is usually the young couple who are the pivotal unit of family life, and who assume key economic roles as the parents age. In these non-standard households, the roles of the young daughter-in-law and children are glaringly missing, along with *tian lun zhi le*, the everyday family happiness and dynamism that the Chinese treasure dearly. In these bachelor families, the yearning for love and intimacy that the men have experienced for so long is yet to be fulfilled, and is taking an emotional toll.

In Yishala, there are also several families with two bachelor brothers. The one that I visited quite often during my stay in the village is a three-member stem family consisting of the mother, who was born in 1944, and her two unmarried sons, Wei and Shi, who were born in 1971 and 1975. Wei is quiet and sweet-natured, while Shi is more outgoing. They are both dressed roughly, yet are clean and pristine. In tears, their mother told me that the fact that Wei does not eat meat has ended a few marriage proposals, as people feel there must be something wrong with him. The family is relatively poor in comparison with others. In 2005, their gross household income was only 5700 yuan (about half the average gross household income in the village), coming from Wei and Shi's short-term low-paid wage-labor jobs, a small rental from the vineyard, and sales of pigs and goats. They have few household items and no cattle. Since the 1990s, the family property has shrunk in half due to serial divisions between them and their two elder brothers, making the two brothers even less ideal potential partners, as the amount of property one owns signifies a man's economic standing and affects his ability to marry.

It has been theorized that bachelors are more likely to turn to vice and violence, such as gambling and prostitution, in comparison with other males (Hudson and den Boer 2004). In Yishala, although there are several gambling houses, some of which also facilitate prostitution, bachelors rarely go

because they do not have enough money.⁷ One night, gathering by the family rice fields, Shi and his two bachelor friends chatted about their largely restrained sex life. He joked that 'we bachelors are monks of the *shaolin* temple who are capable of putting sex drive on hold for months or years by practising *shaolin gongfu*'.

The stories of Wei, Shi and You Guang testify that marriage practices and demographic behaviors are contextual to the transformations of political economy spanning transnational and global capitalism, national and regional policies, wage migration, village and household economies, and personal aspirations for modernity. Amid all these changes, bachelors are struggling to cope with the difficulties that living a single life brings to them every day. They are, however, not passive. Chinese marriage is 'a process of negotiation and a mirror of social change' (Liu 2000: 26). It is observed that 'men of average or superior means generally contract marriages in the local area; those with lesser means are more likely to go afield of the traditional market area. They are more likely to do so because of the financial advantages afforded by such matches' (Lavelly 1991: 302). To find a mate, bachelors such as You Guang are breaking away from the traditional marriage arrangements and adding more heterodox elements that are new to the local family and kinship norms. Two strategies, in particular, are adopted. The first involves expanding the array of possible candidates by marrying widows or divorcees with children; the second, enlarging the geographical spectrum for brides by going to remote and less economically developed areas.

Based on the migration register provided by the township public security bureau, which has been administering household registration since 2003 (in order to computerize the data administration), I reconstructed marriage migrations for Yishala for the years of 2004 and 2005. The trajectory of the movements of brides and uxorilocal grooms mirrors regional social and economic conditions. In 2005 seven people, all women, moved out of Yishala due to marriage, but only three, also women, moved in for the same reason. The geographical areas into which the seven women married are mostly regional and provincial cores, such as Panzhihua city, district seat of Renhe, Chengdu and Kunming, the capital city of Sichuan and Yunnan. By contrast, women who married into Yishala are from poorer peripheries of inner Sichuan and Yunnan. This pattern also applies to the year 2004, and a longer period from 1981 to 1990, during which 66 local brides married out while only 47 non-local women married into Yishala (household registration).

We need to be aware that on the migration register, only marriages involving the relocation of *hukou* (household registration) are listed. Other marriages, such as village endogamies in which the bride does not have to move the *hukou*, are not included. It is also true that non-local brides in virilocal marriages may not relocate their *hukou* immediately to Yishala. They may do so only when a baby is due. Nevertheless, we can see from the register how the flow of brides falls into the spatial hierarchy of the regional economy. Yishala draws brides from peripheral Yunnan and inner Sichuan,

where socioeconomic conditions are less favorable and men are of lesser means. However, while hypergamy is still commonly practised, it no longer benefits only females. Increasingly, more and more bachelors are forced to be more flexible and adaptable in the marriage market by marrying 'down'. In the past two years in Yishala, there are several cases in which previously married women with small children married into Yishala to much older men. In addition, in 2004 a 43-year-old village man married uxorilocally into Yongren. These cases illustrate that older men avoid the risk of never marrying by moving down the social and spatial hierarchy through marrying uxorilocally into a strange community at the periphery, or marrying a widow or divorcee with children from a previous marriage.

The adaptations and marriage strategies adopted by bachelors are not always welcomed by the lineages, whose interests can be very different, and often irreconcilable with the individuals'. For instance, Mao You Guang is interested in marrying uxorilocally, but the elders of his lineage strongly oppose it, stating that if he does so, there would be nobody to take care of his father at home, adding an additional financial burden to other lineage members. Therefore, in Yishala we see that not only is rural China experiencing transformations in the political economy, so are the people and the ways they relate themselves to society, families and the other gender. While young girls are leaving the village for the city for work, fun and love, men are rushing into the marriage market to ensure they will marry successfully. While village women have always been marrying early to men with better means in the social and economic core, bachelors have to marry widows and divorcees, or marry themselves to other villages, if they hope ever to have a family.

As a mechanism in human relationships, marriage creates, facilitates and manifests changes in kinship, gender and the family. On the importance of marriage to womanhood, Elisabeth Croll (1995: 6) held that 'in China, it is the discontinuity, rupture and uncertainty of daughters' anticipation of and experience of becoming a woman through marriage that underlies female-specific concepts of both measured and fantasy time ... '. I would add that the effects of marriage on one's emotional constellations are also pertinent to sons, and in particular bachelors, whose journey to realize manhood is much delayed and may never be fulfilled because of the marriage squeeze and increased economic disparity. This is even more so in Han villages, where sex ratios are likely to be high, and kinship and marriage systems are often less fluid and more constrained by orthodox lineage traditions. The plight and adaptations of the bachelors in Yishala thus provide ethnographic insights into the current conditions and processes of kinship and relatedness in rural China.

Glossary

<i>dagong</i>	打工
<i>guang gun</i>	光棍

<i>hukou</i>	户口
<i>jiu shu li</i>	舅叔礼
<i>minzu</i>	民族
<i>nian fan</i>	年饭
<i>nian qing de wu bao hu</i>	年轻的五保户
<i>nian zhu</i>	年猪
<i>san dai huan zong</i>	三代还宗一
<i>shaolin gongfu</i>	少林功夫
<i>tian lun zhi le</i>	天伦之乐

Notes

- 1 It is said that periodically in Chinese history there would be a rebellion or revolution triggered by desperate bandits who could not find wives (Ownby 2002). One of Mao Ze Dong's first efforts in the Jiangxi soviet was to secure wives for his rebel army of bachelors by 'liberating' concubines.
- 2 In Table 2.1, except for the slightly escalated total sexual ratio of 109 for the cohort of 1990–1986, ratios for other cohorts are either low or normal, ranging from 68 to 105. This pattern is consistent with the 2000 population census of Panzhihua, which states a normal ratio of 104 for Pingdi township, 100 for Renhe township, 104 for Dalongtan (a neighboring Yi township), and 104 for Panzhihua city.
- 3 Although village endogamy and uxori-local marriages are not unfound in Han areas, they are much more commonly practised in Yishala, as shown by the relatively high percentages in Table 2.2.
- 4 The popularity of village endogamy reached its highest during the collectives when out-migration was forbidden and therefore the opportunity to find an ideal mate outside the village was very slim.
- 5 Unfortunately, I was not able to do find out exactly how many cross-cousin marriages there are in the village. During my stay in the village, I became acquainted with two women who married their cousins in the early 1940s and early 1980s.
- 6 In Yishala, birth control services are exclusively for married couples. Young unmarried girls do not have ready access to effective birth control in the village. Although pills can be purchased from drug stores in the township of Pingdi and the city of Panzhihua, girls do not take them because it is believed that the pills would shrink the uterus and put their future pregnancy at risk. Because of this, and because long-term birth control methods such as IUD are not available, girls can only depend on their mate using a condom for preventing pregnancy, putting themselves in a more vulnerable position when love and intimacy are desirable, but pregnancy is not.
- 7 In Yishala there are four local women, from 21 to 40 years old, who provide 'sexual services' to males at 40 yuan per service. It is not openly admitted nor censored by the government. Yet prostitution is commonly acknowledged among the locals.

References

- Banister, J. (2004) 'Shortage of Girls in China Today', *Journal of Population Research* 21: 19–46.

- Bourdieu, P. (2004) 'The Peasant and His Body', *Ethnography* 5(4): 579–99.
- Cai, Yong and W. Lavelly (2003) 'Missing Girls in China. Numerical Estimates and Effects on Population Growth', *China Review* 3(2): 1–17.
- Chao, P. (1983) *Chinese Kinship*, London: Kegan Paul International.
- Coale, A. J. and Banister, J. (1994) 'Five Decades of Missing Females in China', *Demography* 31(3): 459–79.
- Croll, E. (1995) *Changing Identities of Chinese Women: Rhetoric, Experience and Self-perception in Twentieth-century China*, London and New Jersey: Hong Kong University Press.
- Davis, D. and Harrell, S. (eds) (1993) *Chinese Families in the Post-Mao Era*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Dyson, T. and Moore, M. (1983) 'On Kinship Structure, Female Autonomy, and Demographic Behavior in India', *Population and Development Review* 9: 35–60.
- Fong, V.L. (2004) *Only Hope: Coming of Age Under China's One-Child Policy*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Fox, R. (1980) *The Red Lamp of Incest*, New York: E.P. Dutton.
- Goody, J. (1973) 'Brideprice and Dowry in Africa and Eurasia', in Jack Goody and S. J. Tambiah (eds) *Bridewealth and Dowry*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 103–24.
- (1976) *Production and Reproduction: A Comparative Study of the Domestic Domain*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Han, Hua (2003) 'Sexuality and Uxorilocal Marriage in Rural North China: Impacts of the One-Child-One-Family Policy on Gender and Kinship', *Journal of Family History* 28(3): 443–59.
- Harrell, S. (1992) 'Aspects of Marriage in Three Southwestern Villages', *China Quarterly* 130: 323–36.
- Harrell, S. (ed.) (1995) *Chinese Historical Microdemography*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Hudson, V. M. and den Boer, A. M. (2004) *Bare Branches: Security Implications of Asia's Surplus Male Population*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Lavelly, W. (1991) 'Marriage and Mobility under Rural Collectivism', in Rubie S. Watson and Patricia Buckley Ebrey (eds) *Marriage and Inequality in Chinese Society*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 286–311.
- Lavelly, W., Li, Jianke and Li, Jianghong (2001) 'Sex Preference for Children in a Meifu Li Community in Hainan, China', *Population Studies* 55: 319–29.
- Lévi-Strauss, C. (1969) *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, Boston: Beacon Press.
- Li, Jiang Hong and W. Lavelly (1995) 'Rural Economy and Male Marriage in China: Li, Jiong, Jiangsu 1933', *Journal of Family History* 20(3): 289–306.
- Liu, Xin (2000) *In One's Own Shadow: An Ethnographic Account of the Condition of Post-reform Rural China*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- McKhann, C. (1989) 'Fleshing out the Bones: The Cosmic and Social Dimensions of Space in Naxi Architecture', in Chien Chiao and Nicholans Tapp (eds) *Ethnicity and Ethnic Groups in China*, Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong, 157–77.
- Ngai, Pun (1999) 'Becoming Dagongmei (Working Girls): The Politics of Identity and Difference in Reform China', *China Journal* (42): 2–18.
- (2005) *Women Factory Workers in a Global Workplace*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Ownby, D. (2002) 'Approximations of Chinese Bandits: Perverse Rebels, Romantic Heroes, or Frustrated Bachelors?' in Susan Brownell and Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom

- (eds) *Chinese Femininities/Chinese Masculinities: A Reader*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 267–317.
- Trawick, M. (1990) *Notes on Love in a Tamil Family*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- South, S. and Trent, K. (1988) 'Sex Ratios and Women's Roles: A Cross-National Analysis', *American Journal of Sociology* 93(5): 1096–1115.
- Stone, L. (2000) *Kinship and Gender: An Introduction* (2nd edn), Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Watson, J.L. (2004) 'Self-Defense Corps, Violence, and the Bachelor Sub-culture in South China: Two Case Studies', in J.L. Watson and R.S. Watson (eds) *Village Life in Hong Kong: Politics, Gender, and Ritual in the New Territories*, Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 151–65.
- Wolf, M. (1972) *Women and the Family in Rural Taiwan*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Yan, Yunxiang (2003) *Private Life under Socialism: Love, Intimacy, and Family Change in a Chinese Village 1949–1999*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Zeng, Yi, Tu, Ping, Gu, Bao Chang, Xu, Li, Li, Baohua and Li, Yongping (1993) 'Causes and Implications of the Increase in China's Reported Sex Ratio at Birth', *Population and Development Review* 19(2): 283–302.

3 Practicing connectiveness as kinship in urban China

*William Jankowiak*¹

Introduction

Cities are dynamic, exciting, soothing and, at times, fearful places, as evident in the array of stories, real and imagined, about 'golden' opportunities for social advancement or personal decline. They are also all-too-real arenas of human suffering and life satisfaction. Georg Simmel (1950), a leading twentieth-century sociologist, thought urban life promoted a blasé outlook that resulted in indifference towards the fate of others. For Simmel, the city was a corrupting site that dampened an individual's ability to become empathically engaged in another's plight. In effect, urbanism, especially when linked to a capitalistic market economy, did not enhance, but numbed, people's capacity for empathy and thus restricted opportunities for human connection. In contrast, Viviana Zelizer notes that Simmel failed to account for 'the rich social hues as people improvised different ways to personalize and differentiate monies' (Zelizer 1979: 9) for strikingly different uses such as charitable gifts and civic improvements. For Zelizer, the city is not only the site of alienation, but also the site of richness, possibilities and future achievements. In this scenario, urban life, especially when linked to a market economy, does not dull an individual's ethical sensibilities as much as nurture it. From this perspective, urban mental life is not based in anomie, but rather results in the expansion of a people's moral horizon and, with it, their web of social connections or connectiveness.

Early twentieth-century Chinese literati, like their western counterparts, also entertained conflicting images of the city. One view, often referred to as the 'Beijing perspective', did not consider the city worthy of study at all. This perspective glorified rural life as an idyllic setting where people reflect simplicity and a purity of heart. Much like Simmel's perception of the twentieth-century European city, the city was regarded as a bleak settlement and the source of social alienation and personal disillusionment. In contrast, the 'Shanghai perspective' regarded the city as the embodiment of novelty, exuberance, reform, stylistic experimentation, and thus ongoing modernity (Zhang 1999). Initially the communist party endorsed the Beijing perspective, and with it the idealization of the farmer. It was not until the 1990s that

the party-state would embrace the Shanghai perspective, and with it the idealization of the individual as a private decision-maker (Logan 2002).

The conflicting views discussed above are recurrent themes in western and Chinese history, making the subject of urban relatedness or connection a rich topic for ethnographic investigation. As people respond to large macro-forces that have already had an impact on many western societies, the way social relationships, especially kinship, are being reconceptualized is as dramatic as it is significant for understanding contemporary urban life. Exploring urban kinship, as an expansive set of social relations, forms another means of assessing social change in the larger society. An individual's sense of relatedness or kinship often includes a wide variety of connections that can include village associations, neighborhood fellowships, ethnic and religious bonds, classmate affiliations, student–teacher bonds, and long standing or newly formed friendships. Thus it is imperative, Janet Carsten (2000; 2004) argues, that kinship studies focus on these alternative forms, albeit often deeply felt, of social connectiveness that structure sentiment and organize obligation in a community.

Building on Carsten's insights, Gonçalo Santos (2006) and Susanne Brandtstädter (2007), in separate papers, offer insightful commentaries on the benefits of approaching the study of Chinese kinship as something more than a formal system of relationships. For them, kinship is a form of relatedness or connectiveness most saliently revealed through its transactions or social flows that always extend beyond a community's formal genealogy. Not all social flows or connections, however, are equal. In order for a connection to be transformed into a more salient form of relatedness, individuals have to recognize sharing a common identity that always involves some form of ethical entanglement. In this way, the construction of relatedness or expanded kinship takes place within a shared moral system.

In most, if not all, societies, the natal family (parents, siblings, usually grandparent/s), along with occasional uncles and aunts, constitutes an individual's core social unit and thus serves as his or her primary source of social flow. From this core unit, other types of social relationships are often highlighted or rendered mute. For example, patrilineal descent systems focus on the father's side, while matrilineal descent models emphasize the reverse – those relationships established through the mother. With maturity, individuals begin to participate in a wider social nexus that can become an additional source of relatedness. In China, if not everywhere, the expansion of an individual's social network seldom results in the devaluation of the natal family.

As other contributors to this book demonstrate, Chinese notions of relatedness or kinship extend beyond the formal structure highlighted in earlier research (see overviews by Cohen 2005; Szonyi 2002). Because most of the contributors have worked in rural China, their chapters understandably focus on the complexities of village connectiveness or kin relatedness. Less explored in this literature is the meaning, practice and quality of relatedness found in contemporary urban China.

In this chapter, I will explore northern urban Chinese notions of kinship as they are manifested through local understandings of kinship or relatedness affiliations and associations. In developing my position, I will focus on contemporary urbanites' sense of belonging and interaction in five domains or social contexts: neighborhood ties, native place associations, ethnic affiliation, religious affiliation, and the intergenerational dual family. Specifically, I want to examine how China's changing political economy resulted in a shift from a more village-centered patrilineal descent model toward a cognatic or bilateral model. The second part of this chapter focuses on the Chinese family as it is being reconstituted into a dual or bilateral multigenerational family that is sustained through individual linkages with rearing the family's only (grand)child.²

My research site is Hohhot, capital of Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, in northern China. The city has grown from a population of less than 500,000 in 1981 to its present size of over one million citizens. It is primarily a Han Chinese city with around 100,000 Mongols (most born in the city) and 20,000 Chinese Muslims (or Hui). A word on methodology: my initial research was conducted in 1981–83 and again in 1987. In this research, I was interested in writing a general ethnography of urban life. Consequently, I focused on 75 key families (45 Han, 30 Mongol) regarding a variety of different aspects of their lives, and also visited, observed and interviewed other residents living throughout the city. The material found in this chapter was taken from my field notes, personal memories of individual lives, and reading of the literature. I was able to document what Hohhotians actually felt about their lives as models of thought and the embodiment of action in the Chinese work unit or *danwei* socialist era. In 2000, I decided to begin a longitudinal re-study of the social changes that have taken place in the city during the era of market reform. Between 2000 and 2007, I have repeatedly returned to northern China to conduct a series of shorter field seasons designed to revisit and expand on many of the topics I had originally studied in the 1980s. I did not find ethnicity a significant factor that separated Han and Mongolian Hohhotians in the domains of neighborhood and family relationships. Han and Mongols' responses are combined. During this second research stage, I held in-depth interviews with over 67 individuals and observed (often with brief exchanges) countless more in various settings, to obtain more in-depth information concerning what they thought about their lives, their relationships, and their future in the market-reform era compared with the 1980s. These conversations enabled me to understand better the value Hohhotians place on social change, especially as it pertains to feelings of affiliation or kinship. The new research projects enabled me to re-evaluate the potential significance of many of my earlier 1980s observations.

Danwei social organization and neighborhood interaction as relatedness

The Communist Party came to power promising to curb government complacency, corruption and economic individualism, and thereby rescue Chinese

society from impending economic and moral bankruptcy. Under the Party's guidance, a 'socialist ethos' was promoted that stressed public virtue over individual gain, the importance of self-denial and social obligations, and an egalitarian lifestyle. This ethos, the Party felt, would improve the moral climate and, in turn, increase the productivity of the entire nation. Toward this end, an increased number of 'efficient' production and consumption work units (*danwei*) were created to function as combined social, political and economic institutions by providing, among other things, labor insurance, social security, health benefits, residency and travel permits, as well as serving as a means of administering marriage and divorce and investigating crime (Brady 2005; Lu and Perry 1997; Southall 1998; Walder 1986). In effect, enormous resources of power were placed in the hands of the government official (*ganbu*), a new kind of bureaucrat responsible for management of the state-sponsored work enterprise.

In the early 1980s, urban China was organized around a *danwei* (work unit) distribution system that strove to recreate an idealized version of rural village life, with its emphasis on fellowship, support and insularity in life orientation. Unlike pre-1949 Chinese village life, the socialist-inspired work unit was highly restrictive of individual, social and geographical mobility. Its opportunity structures were quasi-feudal, with emphasis on political position and bureaucratic rank. The work unit, the local embodiment of the communist state, stressed social values similar to those emphasized in Soviet-dominated Eastern Europe. In both cultural settings, the good life was based on 'having a modest income while improving knowledge of the communist doctrines, cooperating with the state bodies, watching cautiously, and being observant as to whether anyone did not disturb the socialist order' (Czech Communist Museum, Prague, Card No. 6).

The institution designated to create the urban village was the work unit that would nurture its citizens, while also promoting among its residents a cooperative spirit that would replace the former emphasis on patrilineal decent and lineage organization. In this way, the Party wanted to foster an expansion of kinship ties beyond the more restrictive patrilineally based system, to also include co-residents and work associates. Implicit within the newly formed social unit was the importance of developing a more expansive frame of reference that included non-agnatic (or blood) relatedness. A few elderly Hohhotians recalled the 1950s as a time when the Communist Party insisted it should be loved more than a person's own kin. The institutionalization of a nationwide *danwei* organization resulted in a more homogenized urban landscape (Gaubatz 1995: 3033). It also produced an insular orientation that resulted in the construction of high-walled compounds, guarded gates, and the development of a cautious mindset. The effort to link people's sense of relatedness or expand their notion of kinship to include workmates also contributed to reshaping the way Hohhotians came to value neighborhood interaction, which, for many, was nothing more than the expansion of customary practices that used locality or physical proximity as a basis to establish specific types of 'kin' relationships.

Proximity, friendship, and relatedness: the urban ‘neighborhood’

Anthropologists were initially interested in understanding social life in late Imperial China, and focused much of their analytical gaze on village life as the primary means of studying what was, from their perspective, China’s traditional social organization. More recent research is less interested in identifying possible cultural survivals from an early era, and more concerned with understanding contemporary village life. This research departed from early generations, that focused on the more formal properties of kinship, to also examine other forms of relatedness or ‘kinship’ that transformed those villagers who were not members of the patrilineage, and thus, in a way, neighbors, into a special type of kin (Yan 1996). Working in another northern Chinese village separate from Yan’s, Charles Stafford (2000) found that kinship practices involved establishing social bonds through developing feelings of connectiveness. He noted that there are two ways, or cycles, in which this development takes place. One cycle, Stafford labels *yang*, as it is organized around a system of mutual obligations between parents and children that entails the transfer of money and the sharing of food. The other cycle is *laiwang* or ‘relationships constructed between friends, neighbors and acquaintances’ (*ibid.*: 38). The cycles of relatedness differ in their level of emotional involvement, intimacy and ethical obligation: the more intimate encounters are reserved for some members (usually the mother or a same-sex sibling) of the natal family and occasional close friend/s, whereas a more reserved psychological posture is extended to neighbors and acquaintances.

In contrast to northern village life, northern urbanites do not rely on physical proximity as a primary basis for the construction of relatedness. The discrepancy in perception and practice may arise from the fact that urban neighborhoods in the PRC, unlike villages, have fewer recognizable names or localized rituals that could serve as a basis for identity. It is revealing that there is no Chinese word for ‘neighborhood’. Although the word *linju* (or neighbor) and *jie* (or street) has been translated as neighborhood (Schipper 1977: 656), it involves less of a relationship with physical space than a relationship with specific individuals who occupy that space. This restriction may account for the urban Chinese perception of a neighborhood that is less expansive than it is in the USA. For example, when I asked informants to draw a map of their ‘neighborhood’, in every case the map contained only those dwellings that could readily be seen from the steps of the informant’s front door. For example, if a person lived in a U-shaped courtyard, the drawing depicted only that courtyard. If they lived in a lane of seven houses, only that lane was drawn, with an occasional alleyway to the main street. If the informant lived in a multistory apartment complex, only those units adjacent to the informant’s own apartment were drawn.

Does this mean that Hohhotians refuse to recognize or enter into neighborly relationships with others living on different floors or in nearby lanes? Clearly not. In the 1980s and again in the 2000s, when I asked my

informants directly, they readily agreed that people living within the general proximity (within a two- or three-minute walk from one another) and who had established friendly ties would also be neighbors. Here, the emphasis is on ‘the establishment of personal ties’ or something the individual has to construct by his or her own effort. It differs from the customary obligations found in some northern Chinese villages (Stafford 2000; Yan 1996), where residency or physical proximity automatically makes one related, and thus obligated, to engage in ritualistic exchanges. In the urban neighborhood, physical proximity does not make someone obligated to perform ritualistic exchanges – something more is required: the construction of friendship ties. This pattern is evident in the way individuals discussed the meaning of their ‘neighborhood’ or the ideal qualities of a good neighbor: they inevitably focused on those with whom they were in daily contact. They tended to exclude those who might live near their apartment, but with whom they had not established a cordial relationship. The defining criterion was not an abstract notion of space, but specific relationships to recognized (*renshi*) households, especially individuals in specific families. In this way, the Chinese conception of a neighborhood was anchored in, and structured by, the ties that a person maintains with a personal network, and not with an object or imagined social border.

This is what Schipper (1977) found in his study of Taiwanese temple associations. Taiwanese residents who lived on the same street (*jie*) also belonged to a similar temple association. Schipper, more for purposes of translating cultural meaning, refers to the temple organization as a neighborhood or street association. In fact, it was not physical proximity but shared membership in the temple association that fostered individuals’ perceptions of relatedness with their ‘neighbors’, who were also temple associates. In this way, the temple association shared many commonalities with native place association. Clearly, physical proximity in Taiwan, as on the mainland, as a primary basis for the establishment of relatedness is not a primary value. Proximity only presents an opportunity for an individual to establish some type of relationship with a specific person who is also a neighbor.

In the *danwei* socialist era, Chinese work units shared some similarities with northern village social organization. Many of Hohhot’s long-time residents who were former villagers moved into the city in 1954, when the autonomous region’s capital shifted from Jiangjiakou to Hohhot. These new urbanites brought with them long-held folk practices that Stafford calls the cycle of *laiwang*, or obligatory gift-giving between friends, neighbors and acquaintances. Living in newly constructed urban villages (or work units), individuals applied previous ethical convictions, such as the cycle of *laiwang* or its equivalents, to reconstruct northern village customary life, and thus provided a justification for the establishment of a non-genealogical sense of relatedness. In the short run, spatial proximity served as a basis for the construction of an individual’s web of relatedness. In time, the village customs

and ethical expectations became part of the urban order of things. Whatever the role of physical proximity in the construction of urban relatedness, it never replaced a more central reality: in the urban setting, relatedness bonds are individualistic and thus highly personalized creations.

The disintegration of the *danwei* system, combined with the steady expansion of urban development, has changed neighborhood social interaction from one of intimacy and mutual aid to one best characterized by distance, avoidance, and a mutual respect for personal privacy. However, in more intact neighborhoods that have not experienced rapid change, people continue to interact much as before. In these neighborhoods, there has not been a fundamental lessening of the quality or immediacy of personal relations among many neighbors. In the older intact neighborhoods, relationships between neighbors, particularly in homogeneous working-class communities, continue to be active, close-knit and highly personalized. In this setting, an implicit, albeit modified, version of the village cycle of *lai-wang* is present. Neighbors think of themselves as connected, and thus almost kin. However, even within these homogeneous communities, there is tremendous variation in the level of intimacy that exists between families of similar social status.

There are other considerations besides physical proximity that can influence an individual's network of social ties, and with whom he or she does or does not engage in a cycle of visiting and gift-giving. The most important factor is social status. Throughout the 1980s, I found the level of privacy each household strove to maintain constituted a fundamental social cleavage, that is, the degree to which they strove to create and sustain mutuality as opposed to a 'friendly' but socially aloof kind of neighborly relation. Working-class households, by and large, thought that a good neighbor was someone who did not put up walls (literal and metaphorical) and who was not preoccupied with protecting his or her privacy. Their attitude toward mutuality is aptly articulated by 34-year-old female worker who lived in a socially homogeneous residential area, and insisted that a good neighbor was someone who took seriously the importance of mutual involvement. She notes: 'Being isolated from one another is terrible. You should be able to know and like your neighbors.' A worker who lived in a narrow street residential zone told me, 'I am always careful whenever I do something, as it might upset my neighbor.' He then added, 'It is important to be involved with your neighbors.' A government official who lived in a multistory building complex took pride in his excellent neighborly relations, because he went 'out of my way to be helpful.' Finally, a college teacher admitted, 'I tend to keep to myself, but I still have excellent neighborly relations.' For most, locality served as a basis for the establishment of some sense of connections or relatedness.

Only intellectuals and high-ranking government officials stressed the additional attribute of being 'quiet' as a desirable feature of 'good neighbors'. In 2000, the preference to be more detached from one's neighbors, or

no longer using residential proximity as a basis for establishing a sense of connectiveness and thus social identity, was voiced by those who had moved into more upscale high-rise apartment complexes. In sum, despite the endorsement of the Confucian ethos of social cooperation and the citywide affirmation of the village ideal of obligation based on common residence, I was surprised at the ease with which social ties were readily fragmented, or only continued, if at all, as a polite formality whenever a serious disagreement or quarrel erupted among neighbors. This ease seems to fly in the face of the citywide espousal of neighborly ideals.

In the 1980s, the idealization of neighborly relations as a basis of relatedness was one of the core images Hohhotians had of themselves. It was crucial to everyday life, but, unlike northern village life, it was not a function of a locality. Rather, it was individually negotiated and sustained through periodic exchanges of goods and services (Jankowiak 1993). In this way, neighbors' detachment was anchored less in residential proximity and more in friendship, an older, more salient and more emotionally powerful form of connectiveness. Although Hohhotians were sensitive to their neighbors and reluctant to offend them, they nonetheless regularly engaged in the act of food exchange, an act of individual discrimination and discretion. In this way, much of the lamentation for the collective solidarity of the 'good old days' needs to be understood as a sentimental echo of postsocialist nostalgia.

In brief, the issue of neighborly relations is a sensitive one in Hohhot, as in Chinese cities everywhere, partly because the compositions of neighborhoods are changing and different groups and classes of people are interacting on a scale previously unknown. It has resulted in the transformation of the way Hohhotians understand and relate to one another in a neighborhood. Instead of polite, albeit reserved, formalistic interactions, there is a noticeable posture of complete indifference. For those who have moved beyond their former work unit residence into new residential complexes, there is no basis of commonality, nor is there an interest in establishing it. For the majority of Chinese urbanites, physical proximity no longer serves as the basis for the development of a sense of relatedness (for description of a similar process in Guangzhou, see Ikels 2004: 340–1). Today, friends and associates do not live next door, but elsewhere. This position was reinforced by a 49-year-old man who had left his work unit apartment for a new housing development. He noted that 'we moved and are happier with the new life. We do not have close relationships with our neighbors but that is okay as we do not want them. We are very connected to other people in the city, however.' The shift in affiliation away from previous *laiwang* ethical obligations normally extended to one's neighbors was vividly revealed when, in 2005, I tried to locate a friend's new apartment. Not certain if he lived on the third or fourth level, I knocked to inquire if anyone knew my friend's apartment. I was told 'No' and then shooed away from the door. I suspect the man, who did not open the door, thought by my Chinese accent that I was a southern migrant and thus, from his perspective, I was up to no good.

Unlike in the 1980s, when people readily opened the door to talk with a visitor, I found his behavior typical, combined with a genuine anxiety that made people more cautious in their interactions with strangers. For most Hohhotians, the city has become unpredictable and thus dangerous. The next day, I returned with my friend to his apartment complex and found he lived in the apartment adjacent to the one I had approached the previous evening. Clearly, neither he nor his neighbor had ever interacted.

This does not mean that urban China has become a place of disconnection and psychological anomie. People continue to favor rich webs of connections that are based on former school ties, newly formed work contacts, native place associates, friendship bonds, and close family relationships. These webs of social connections are sustained via ubiquitous use of cell phones that often involves nothing more than setting up a future meeting. Today, Hohhotians' connective bonds extend beyond their conjugal and multi-generational families and are a salient feature of ordinary life. In the world of the urban neighborhood, however, residential bonds have been recast into selective friendships that are based more on particularistic ties than on the expectation that neighbors are automatically a kind of kin. For most, relatedness is no longer anchored exclusively in residential proximity. Today, the tacit obligations that linked villagers together have effectively vanished from much of China's urban landscape (Yan 1996).

Ethnicity, native place and religion: a basis for relatedness

The decline in neighborhood relationships as a source of fellowship does not mean that Chinese cities have become the center of homeless souls drifting in social space. In contrast, the socially and emotionally supportive neighbor is giving way to a new array of social connections that are used by some as a basis for the construction of emotionally salient bonds that are equal to, and can surpass, those found between villagers and former *danwei*-based neighbors. These values are initially based in a sense of fellowship that arises from sharing a common membership and interest (real and presumed) in a variety of different types of association: secret societies, guilds, school ties, and teacher-student bonds. For others, relatedness is anchored in a presumption of shared ethnicity and/or religious affiliation that provides an additional opportunity to form a friendship. In every case, these alternative forms of relatedness represent values outside the ideals of patrilineal descent, and represent an additional way of constructing bonds of relatedness.

In Hohhot, I am repeatedly struck by the persistence and strength of the ethnic/religious solidarity in ordinary life. Hohhot's Mongol and Hui (Chinese Muslim) residents tend to confine their most intimate interpersonal contacts to members of their own ethnic group. For example, in the 1980s and again in 2006, I found fewer than 40 per cent of the Mongols surveyed regularly associated with a Han in an intimate (as opposed to work) setting. The ethnic association bias arises from an overt decision to prefer the

company of other Mongols. The emphasis on intentionality is aptly summarized by a 39-year-old Mongolian woman who, in 2006, told me 'when I was a child I actively played with Han children, but when I started to attend high school I made a conscious decision to pull back and associate only with Mongols.' For most Mongols and Hui, social life continues to be defined by their desire for a commitment to an ideal of ethnic and religious exclusiveness. In this way, friendship bonds have a cultural face.

Given that friendships develop through frequent interaction, it is not surprising that these Mongols (my guess estimate is around 50 per cent) practice an overt form of social exclusion and become close friends, as opposed to associates, with other Mongols. There are three exceptions to this pattern: the first is the formation of a childhood friendship. Many best friends are formed in early childhood (3–12 years old) when ethnic considerations are irrelevant. Once a childhood friendship has been formed, it will be maintained for life. This childhood best friends pattern is not unique to Mongols – it can be found throughout China. Significantly, Chinese, as in the USA, tend to have not many friends, but only one best friend. As a 53-year-old Mongol told me, 'my best friend is a Han and he disagrees with my position on ethnic entitlements but we still enjoy each other's company.' The second exception to ethnic exclusiveness arises from the pragmatic realities of inter-ethnic marriage. China's official policy is to let parents determine their child's ethnicity. Because of affirmative action policies, the vast majority of Hohhotian offspring from ethnic mixed families are officially classified as Mongol. Because a person's relatives are from different ethnic groups, it makes it difficult, if not impossible, to avoid interacting with all their relatives. Most Mongols who have chosen to be more exclusive in their friendship associations usually make compromises with childhood friendship(s) and relatives. The third exception involves 'dating'. In Hohhot, intermarriage is common. I noticed that even the most radical Mongolian will make an exception when it comes to a dating partner or a future spouse. A long-time Mongolian freely acknowledged that his male friends are Mongols while his girlfriends are Han. I found his opinion was shared by most urban Mongols. In this way, whatever a person's political position toward the value and importance of maintaining ethnic exclusivity as a criterion for establishing relatedness, it is usually compromised by other, often competing, social and sexual realities.

Although I was not able systematically to study the Hui community or the city's smaller Catholic and Protestant religious communities, my periodic observations found a similar pattern of association based, in this instance, around a shared sense of religious identification and thus affiliation. For example, worshipers often visit each other to form luncheon prayer meetings that also serve as a base for discussing life's issues. These regular associations often develop into close friendships anchored in deep-seated feelings and ethical obligations of mutual support.

For many Han Chinese, especially those living in the border areas, a minority's autonomous region has become a new and significant source of

personal identity. Two and three generations ago, the Han settlers in the autonomous regions included youth sent to the countryside in the wake of the Cultural Revolution, retired and demobilized servicemen, and political prisoners and criminals. These original Han migrants did not identify themselves as local, but continued to retain their identity from their place of origin. Now, however, their offspring consider themselves to be local residents. Like the British citizens banished to nineteenth century Australia, these Han see themselves as 'Inner Mongolians'. In every way, the birthplaces of these offspring have become their native place. They have positive feelings about the region's food habits and cultural traits that may also be associated with a particular minority group. For most, it is irrelevant that the autonomous region is associated with a particular minority. This generation has developed a strong sense of connectedness with the fate of the region. These are the new non-ethnic minorities of Inner Mongolia. But not every Mongol is pleased with this shift and the appearance of this new source of regional identification.

Further evidence for the expansion of the Hohhotian notion of relatedness, or kinship, is found in the way people develop a particular relationship with a specific geographical region or native place – an identification that can serve as the basis for the development of an individual's sociability network. Native place identities (usually developed without the government's formal recognition) are formed through tracing genealogical ties that link an individual with his or her parents' or grandparents' birthplace. Native place identities are anchored in the pragmatics of ordinary life, and are based in the need for social support and personal affiliation. The connections established through native place associations appear to be weak, as they are used to obtain housing and employment, but not for engaging in shared cultural activities (Jacka 2006: 126). In this way, a person's native place can promote a sense of fictive kinship that enables it to serve as an unofficial ethnic identity.

In the early 1980s, due to restrictions on internal migration, there were no native place associations in Hohhot; by 2007, I documented 11. Of those 11, four (Wenzhou, Zhijiang, Shanxi and Hebei) are formally organized; the others remain loose assemblages that hold periodic gatherings (for example, at an apartment or restaurant), useful for exploring business opportunities, support needs and the creation of friendships. Unlike ethnic and religious affiliation, native place ties are not as totalizing or exclusive.

Many Mongols retain ambivalent feelings toward this new form of identification. Among intellectuals, there are strong ethnic borders that are seldom transgressed. They appreciate the Han's respect for their region and enjoyment of many of the local ethnic foods and cultural elements, but, on the other hand, they do not like the dilution of their ethnic heritage through an outsider's eagerness to engage in what many view as a form of cultural appropriation through their development of a broader, more inclusive form of regional identity. However, among more uneducated Inner Mongolian Mongols and Han migrants, there is evidence of solidarity, albeit weakly

developed. They interact more at work, eat together more frequently, and discuss personal issues more readily. I found that Inner Mongolians, regardless of ethnicity, are prone to associate more readily than Han who are from different regions. For these migrants, regional dialect and commonality of diet and local customs make interacting easier and thus aesthetically more pleasing. Consequently, work-related friendships among this group tend to cross ethnic borders, while staying within regional or native place boundaries.

Relatedness, friendship and *guanxi*

The establishment of a personal connection does not in and of itself produce an expectation or a sense of being related (Smart 1999). At best, it engenders a momentary feeling of solidarity. It is equivalent to the rush an individual may experience on unexpectedly meeting someone from their home town, or discovering they share a similar hobby with someone. The connection is always a fleeting one. If a sense of relatedness develops out of an affinity of shared ideals or with frequent interaction, it will do so in one of two ways: through membership in an association or embracing a collective identity that serves as a basis for the construction of social borders; or through transformation of a relationship into a special friendship, usually involving a linguistic shift, with the person now being referred to as 'my older and younger brother or sister'. Both sets of connections involve a normative ethical commitment and obligation toward each other. It is this ethical obligation that transforms a relationship from a casual association into a more personal and thus salient form of involvement.

In urban China, individuals who are outside the formal (bilateral or patrilineal) genealogical systems are frequently transformed from casual friends into close kin through the idiom of kinship. It is conventional practice for parents to instruct their child to call a visiting acquaintance or a true close friend *shushu* (uncle) or *ayi* (aunt). Further, in Hohhot's countryside, but not in the city proper, it is common for children to address strangers as *shushu* or *ayi*. Susanne Brandtstädter (personal communication, 2007) observed a similar pattern in southern China, where it was customary to address younger people unknown to an individual as *didi* or *meimei*. Both terms are associated with membership in a patrilineal descent system and thus a test of the lingering symbolic efficacy of that system. It is also common for friends to use fictional kin terms to refer to one another as older or younger brother (*gegedidi*), or older or younger sister (*jiejie/meimei*). For example, I often found myself with an old friend at late-night clubs, and whenever one of his friends happened to meet him they would hug him and say 'he is my older brother' or 'he is my younger brother'. On learning that I was a long-time friend, they immediately looked at me and said 'if you are my older brother's friend than you are my friend.' In this way, close friends are transformed through equivalency into an individual's conjugal family. This pattern is consistent with evolutionary psychology's

inclusive fitness hypothesis: there is a sliding scale of connectiveness or intimacy based on the degree of kinship distance. It is significant that Hohhotians, like most people, continue to reserve their strongest bonds for their more immediate blood relatives from either side of the family. This is not new psychological orientation; Rubie Watson (1985) found a similar psychological orientation and behavioral pattern in southern rural China.

Hohhotians' emphasis on the value and importance of friendship as a basis for the construction of relatedness or kinship is also not new. The subject of friendship has been a recurrent theme in Chinese literature. Most scholars have preferred to approach the subject of friendship through a related, albeit different set of relationships, often characterized as *guanxi* (or connection), with some scholars noting that *guanxi's* instrumental aspect is only part of the story (Smart 1999; Yan 1996; Yang 1994). *Guanxi* encompasses a range of emotive relationships that can range from straightforward exchange to more complicated personal entanglements (Smart 1999). The importance of *guanxi* relationships in daily life has retreated with the return of market reforms. The market economy, which operates with a different set of principles, does not require people to enter into a dependency relationship to conduct business. For ordinary urban Chinese, the market, and thus money, has weakened the importance of the government official, and thus administrative power, in their lives. The shift in China's political economy has resulted in a corresponding de-emphasis in ordinary conversation of the importance of *guanxi*. Coterminous with the de-emphasis of *guanxi* is the increase in voicing expressions about friendship in casual conversation in urban China. Clearly, what has remained vital is the value of social networks and thus communication with other people. In this way, urban China's movement toward a more egocentric society needs to be qualified. The market economy, and with it corresponding mobility, has not resulted in a decrease in social relations but rather, as in the case of contemporary Jamaican society, in a kind of invigoration of social relations (Horst and Miller 2006: 81). These researchers found that the cell phone facilitates social mobilization around collective events such as organization of funerals, weddings, business opportunities and mutual help. Moreover, they found that individuals viewed communication and networking as a value in its own right (*ibid.*: 113). They also noted that the cell phone helps people to cope with pressures of living and to overcome loneliness. The Chinese would concur.

Unlike in the early 1980s, when people sought to expand their social networks out of a need to survive, today people do so to thrive psychologically. As one 42-year-old woman noted: 'You Americans tend to be lonely a lot, but I have so many friends, not a day goes by when we do not connect in some way.' For her, extensive networking devoted to the practices and process of enlarging and maintaining link-ups is an extension of her self, and thus a confirmation of her presences in the lives of others (*ibid.*: 121). The shift from a *guanxi*-centered to a friendship-based idiom is consistent with

China's shift in its political economy, and with the shift from a unilineally based system to a more egocentric system of relatedness. It also suggests that friendship bonds contribute to urban stability through linking individuals to one another and thus prevent the formation of a full-scale urban isolation.

Domestic arena and urban kinship

Bilateral kinship practice came late to urban China. This is due, in large part, to the historical development of the city, which was different from European societies. In Europe, the city developed as an alternative to the feudal estate or manor. In contrast, China never had such a clear cultural division between town and countryside. It was typical for someone to be born in a village, move to the city, and then retire back to his native village. This constant movement resulted in a more integrated form of regional cultural uniformity. Research in Shanghai in the 1930s continued to document the close relationship between the city and its hinterland that also accounted for the continuation of the patrilineal descent as the central organizing principle of family life (Lang 1946). It was not until the arrival of socialist policy, with its *hukou*, or passport system, of population control that social mobility and movement of peoples were frozen. In a relatively short time, people would forget the historically close relationship between the city and the countryside. In the process, the city became a different society, with its own form of descent, bilateral or extending equal weight to both paternal and maternal sides – the *de facto* kinship system in practice. Today, kinship or family relatedness among contemporary Hohhotians has come to possess two features: a network of mutual help established bilaterally between households in relationships of mutual help; and the remnant of a patrilineal descent ideology that has force in symbolic arrangements, social orderings and material gifts at ritual events (funerals, marriages, family photographs). Elements of the patrilineal system's survival can be found in the centering of the elderly in family photographs, the preference for using certain patrilineal kin terms of address (brother, sister, aunt, uncle), and the custom of the groom's family (if it is their son's first marriage) paying for the wedding. Besides these habits, other aspects of the patrilineal system have been abandoned in favor of an individual's situational needs. There is no rule, therefore, as to where the bride and groom should live after the wedding – most will find their own apartment; others may live with the groom's or the bride's family, depending on the spouse's needs and desires. Unlike in Imperial China, there are no inheritance laws that favor patrilineal kin or the son over a married daughter. Today, neither gender nor marital status can serve as a basis for paternal inheritance. The decline in the importance of patrilineal descent extends to naming practices. In the past, it was common to take names from the father's side of the family, whereas now naming practices can and do include both paternal and maternal relations.

My genealogical studies that involved Hohhotians constructing a detailed kinship chart, as well as my conversations concerning the cognitive borders of relatedness, found no difference between urbanized Mongols and urban Han. Everyone perceived kin as situated in both the paternal and maternal sides of the family. In contrast, my 1982 small study ($n = 21$) found that informants could more readily recall kin (father's brother/s or father's sister/s and his or her children) compared with the maternal side (maternal grandparents and mother's brother/s and sister/s). In 1997, I replicated the study ($n = 11$) among Hohhotian singletons, and found a shrinking in the number of relatives they could recall. Urbanites' new-found geographical mobility has resulted in visiting kin less frequently, so it is easy to forget uncles and aunts, to say nothing of distant cousins. However, not a single informant failed to recall their grandparents from either side of the family. In fact, many, without my prompting, described the warm relationship they had with a grandparent. A 22-year-old noted that she had lived with her grandmother for the first two years of her life, but that she 'had lunch with my [paternal] grandmother once middle school started, every day for the next 10 years.' She added 'I feel so close and warm being around her.' In this way, what was once a traditional patrilineally restricted social universe has been transformed into something resembling an egocentric pattern based on personal preference.

My research also uncovered that, as a rule, the more distant the relative, the smaller the role played by that relative in the lives of the family. In this way, the role of a distant relative is considerably less complex than that of parents, grandparents and siblings. As in Taiwan, contacts between relatives tend to be circumstantial as opposed to prescribed. Moreover, 'there is a marked decline in normative obligations toward extended kin' (Marsh 1996: 305). This is not to say that cousins, uncles, nephews, aunts and nieces do not interact or visit with greater frequency than do mere acquaintances. Some do, others do not. Although relatives may feel a special tie, collateral kin will not necessarily seek or plan occasions for interaction because of it. While they readily visit each other 'if in the area', as one informant put it, or if there is a special request for information or assistance, they do not ordinarily plan a special excursion for the sole purpose of visiting kin.

Kinship is clearly regarded as a potential burden as much as a potential benefit or familial necessity. This arises from changes in the economy whereby parents, adult children and other extended and neighborly kin tend to work at different jobs, and so have developed an unconnected network of friends. As a result, traditional dependence on one's kin is greatly reduced in favor of increasing reliance on friends in the workplace.

There is a worldwide pattern in the way intergenerational bonds have been reorganized so that economic and non-economic resources have shifted from offspring giving to parents, to something of the reverse: from parents to children. This pattern, with only a few modifications, is typical of intergenerational relations in urban China. This is also typical of Taiwan, where children have retained a deep-seated responsibility for their parents' wellbeing. Robert Marsh

found that intergenerational flow of help and resources from offspring to their parents was greater in 1991 than in 1963 (Marsh 1996: 305). In Hohhot, the resource exchange between generations is somewhat mixed. For example, a 22-year-old Hohhotian young man told me that he never gave money to his parents, as he ‘needs money to buy things and improve my life.’ He also knew that his parents did not need money. His response is representative of the better-off youth. The only exceptions to this pattern were for some youth, especially teenagers from families with laid-off parents (*xiagang*) and unmarried females, to give different sums of money to their parents, more as a symbolic statement of affection than due to their parents’ financial need.

The shift in giving from parents to child has not diminished the intensity of affective bonds, which have served, in many cases, to intensify the depth of feeling and commitment between generations.

The reorganization of Hohhot’s family practices can also be seen in many southern Chinese cities. Helen Siu’s research in Nanxi, a mid-size town in the wealthy Pearl River Delta, observed that ‘young urbanites created a viable conjugal fund that was largely self accumulated’ (Siu 1993: 187). As in the case of Hohhot, Siu found that Pearl River Delta parents continued to promote intergenerational dependency based more on personal sentiment than on fear of parental authority or negative economic sanctions. The continuation of emotional interdependency continues to be embraced by the junior generation. In this way, the contemporary Chinese urban family combines aspects of the conjugal and intergenerational family to produce a more modified family type – the dual multigenerational family.

Although the range of kinship bonds is shrinking, the value placed on marriage and family life has never waned. People continue to think of the family (*jia*) as the dominant metaphor by which to assist and evaluate another’s progress through life. Marriage and the establishment of a family remain critical, yet truncated, markers used by urban Chinese to sort each other out into relative degrees of social maturity and psychological stability. The truncated kinship sphere has not undermined the practice of using traditional patrilineal kinship terms of reference and address.

Young Han and urban-born Mongols continue to instruct their ‘only child’ to address neighbors, guests and relatives by the traditional kinship terms of address. According to conventional kinship terminology, the father’s younger brother is addressed as *shushu* (uncle), while the older brother is called *bobo*. Among younger Hohhotians, however, these terms have been expanded. *Shushu* is the generic kinship term used to address both a father’s older and younger brother, as well as a male friend or visiting acquaintance. On the mother’s side, an uncle is addressed as *jiujiu*, suggesting that both immediate family and distant kin continue to be a cherished value and form a fundamental arena in which to establish an identity. In this way, kinship sentiments and obligations remain strong.

In the 2000s, I found that Hohhotians continued to retain a more expanded image of the ideal family than that found in the truncated one-child

family. People expressed that the perfect family has one boy and one girl. I frequently heard this ideal expressed among parents (but not the unmarried or married without a child). This folk ideal continues to affect how parents instruct their children and playmates to call one another by a fictive kinship term. It is not uncommon to find children who are friends referring to one another as older brother (*ge*) and younger brother (*di*) and older sister (*jie*) and younger sister (*mei*) when playing together. This pattern is often manifested whenever a child is asked about their relationship with a friend. They usually reply that he or she is my older or younger brother (*gege/didi*). If I asked whether the person is their real (*zhende*) brother, they would lower their eyes and acknowledge that the person was not a real sibling. Here, then, is demonstration of the power of an ideal that the Chinese actively seek to uphold. It is an ideal that people clearly enjoy creating, if for no other reason than for their own cognitive satisfaction.

In setting up a household, married couples start by forming a nuclear family. Later, on the death of one of their parents, the family structure changes to incorporate the living parent. This reincorporation does not, however, lead to the elderly parent becoming the head of the family. While in ceremonial occasions an elderly parent is referred to as the head of the family, and is given the seat of honor whenever a photograph is taken or a special dinner is cooked, the fact is that the elderly parent is perceived to be an important but nonetheless burdensome duty. All the elderly persons I talked with lamented that, although their physical needs were taken care of, they still did not receive the respect they desired or deserved. This may be due in part to the use of 'structural nostalgia', whereby the elderly cast themselves as victims of a ruptured reciprocity (Herzfeld 1997). A similar sentiment has been reported among residents of Dalian, a northern coastal city, where 'people believe in the cultural model of filial piety while also pursuing the cultural model of modernization' (Fong 2004: 145). Nevertheless, in many of China's more internal cities, the urban family continues to be organized into two different forms: nuclear and stem. While the nuclear family is the preferred arrangement, most Chinese, at one time or another, will enter into some form of stem family arrangement (a family with a married couple, children and another relative, usually a parent). Significantly, the parent can be, and often is, from either side of the family; my research found the man's parents were being taken in more frequently. It remains to be seen if this pattern will hold once China's singleton generation parents start to need caretaking assistance. Given the prominence of bilateral descent as a mode of practice, I suspect that today's patrilateral bias will disappear completely from the Chinese social landscape.

Reconfiguring the dual multigenerational family

In Hohhot, the contemporary urban family is an amalgamation of shapes and forms. Some families are conjugal, while others continue to function as

extended or stem families. Given the new-found wealth, as well as parents' desire to live independently of their offspring, it is not clear if every conjugal unit will eventually become a stem family. For example, over 65 per cent of the parents I interviewed (45 out of 67) admitted they preferred, if health permitted, to live separately from their offspring. If the senior generation prefers residential independence from their offspring, this does not mean they do not want to be closely connected with their child or grandchild. I found strong interdependency between a singleton and his or her parents. The strength of this emotional bond is evident in the way parents are coming to embrace their role as grandparents. The grandparent-child relationship has always occupied an esteemed position in Chinese society. This was especially so for grandfathers who had grandsons. Funerals that involved a deceased male who had one or more grandsons were called 'red happiness', as it was a time of grief and celebration – the man had died knowing his line would continue. It is common for a father who had assumed a more aloof posture towards his offspring to demonstrate public affection towards his grandson. This selective pattern of behavior is consistent with the logic of patrilineal descent. As only males will remain in their home village and thus potentially reproduce themselves as well as work the farm, sons and not daughters were celebrated and honored as the more worthy gender. This preferential sex bias changed with the institution of the single child. In time, urban Chinese came to value daughters equally as much as sons. What has been less known, and thus appreciated, is how the structural reality of having an only child is reshaping the way maternal and paternal grandparents are relating to each other through efforts to see their only grandchild.

Because the patrilineal ideal is no longer critical to achieve material gain or social success, urban Chinese have come to live in a *de facto* bilateral universe organized around sentiment and negotiated ethical obligations. This means that paternal and maternal grandparents can claim rights of access to their only grandchild. In the pursuit of their own interests, a new institution has emerged that has yet to receive a name. It is organized around the sharing of responsibilities towards rearing a grandchild. As an emerging institution, there are no formal norms and thus it requires frequent negotiation over issues of parenting rights, responsibilities and future obligations. Taken together, these negotiations and habitual patterns are reshaping what was once a patrilineally grounded extended family into something that resembles a vertical orientation linking paternal and maternal generations together into a quasi-bilateral multigenerational family. The bilateral multigenerational family, as in the case of friendship created between neighbors and ethnic associates, is not automatic, but is based entirely on sentiment and personal commitment.

The Chinese multigenerational family is a fragile institution. The relationship between paternal and maternal grandparents is seldom strong. There is therefore an uneasy alliance between all interested parties, who are also potential rivals in their efforts to gain greater access to a valued, albeit

scarce, resource that is their only grandchild. The arena in which most negotiations take place is often their adult offspring's home. If one set of grandparents is perceived as being unreasonable, the other set of grandparents will appeal to their offspring (their son or daughter) for support. The sum of these interactions and transactions constitute the essence of Hohhot's newest institution: the dual multigenerational family.

The emergent institution's representativeness is illustrated in my grandparent-child co-residence 2000 survey, which found that 213 out of 261 (82 per cent) of people interviewed had lived for some time with a grandparent. Moreover, there is no evidence of a patrilineal bias. Of the 261 respondents, 111 lived for a period of time with their paternal grandparents, while 102 lived with their maternal grandparents; 48 did not live with a grandparent. The average length of time living with a grandparent ranged between one and 16 years, the average length being 8.16 years. There is regional variation: in Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan in south-west China, a grandchild stayed with a grandparent on average for 33 months, while in Hohhot it was around 62 months. Clearly, Chengdu parents are taking their child back earlier, while Hohhotians tend to wait until their child is old enough to go to first grade. This may be a reflection of urban scale. In Hohhot, a smaller city, it is easier for parents to interact with their child regularly and frequently when they do not live together. In both cities, grandparents have replaced parents as caretakers and emotional guardians.

My 2000 Chengdu (Sichuan) surveys also included families who grew up outside the city. In these small towns, patrilineal descent rules continued to shape grandparent interactions. For example, in Sichuan's smaller towns, I found that out of the 38 grandchildren surveyed, 34 (90 per cent) lived only with their paternal grandparents. In smaller Sichuan townships, the norm of patrilineal privilege continues to retain much of its customary strength. This is less apparent in China's larger cities (such as Chengdu and Hohhot). Like France, and contrary to William Goode's (1963) conjugal loyalty thesis, grandparents devote a large amount of time to contacting their grandchild (Attias-Donfut and Segalen 2002: 284). In this way, Hohhotians' behavior is consistent with research in western Europe that found a new intergenerational trend in which grandparents are extending a 'massive investment into their grandchild(ren)' (Attias-Donfut and Segalen 2002: 285). The extensive involvement of Chinese grandparents with their grandchild is also consistent with more recent studies of kinship and family interaction in the USA (Lawton *et al.* 1994).

Although the dual multigenerational family is common in other parts of the world, it had no official existence in Chinese society, where patrilineal descent system legally elevated the rights of the father's kin over the mother's kin ties. In this milieu, intergenerational official ties were primarily but not entirely unilineal (Watson 1985). All this changed under socialist China's policies designed to create a new society. The party's expectation and policies that required that younger women needed to work made childcare, especially

infant care, a pressing concern. As in many eastern European countries (such as the Czech Republic and Hungary), grandparents from either side of the family stepped into the void and performed the necessary childcare. In time, the extensive involvement of grandparents with their grandchild established a stronger, more vibrant relationship. This pragmatic adaptation undermined the principle of patrilineal descent as it was imagined and practiced in urban China.

Chinese grandparents understand the importance of staying connected to their roots. For most, grandchild care provides a sense of fulfillment that is seldom regarded as onerous. When asked what she got from spending so much time with her granddaughter, a 66-year-old grandmother replied ‘I enjoy taking care of her.’ Another 64-year-old grandmother simply added ‘she is me.’ It is the point echoed by a 72-year-old grandfather, who acknowledged, while simultaneously hugging his three-year-old grandson, that ‘he is my life.’ A grandparent’s involvement did not shift with the sex of the grandchild. I did not find any evidence of a sex bias: a granddaughter was taken just as readily as a grandson.

Suzanne Zhang Gottschang (personal communication, 2006) conducted research in a Beijing maternity ward, and found paternal and maternal mothers carefully entering into negotiations over future visiting schedules and the length of time each grandparent would have with their grandchild. Sometimes this discussion began as soon as the parents were aware that the wife was pregnant. These negotiations will continue throughout the grandchild’s early childhood years, and form a justification for much of the in-laws’ interactions. The grandparents’ involvement in rearing their grandchild that has reshaped many urban Chinese families into a blend of conjugal loyalties and bilateral multigenerational emotional linkage. The transformation in childcare duties often undermines the affective bonds a child feels toward his or her parents, especially the mother. For example, a 34-year-old woman confided that: ‘I feel more comfortable with my grandmother than I do with my mother. I did not listen to her [her grandmother] as I know what she had to tell me about the contemporary world was nonsense. Her ideas were old. But I simply enjoyed being around her.’ Another 29-year-old woman acknowledged that ‘My mother [who did not raise her] is always ordering me to do this or that. She makes lists. I still resist her. We are *not* close.’ However, she added: ‘This is not the case when I am with my grandmother. I just want to sit next to her.’

Conclusion

More than 50 years of political and social upheaval have remade, redefined and redesigned many of China’s more venerable traditions – perhaps none more so than the value placed on residential, neighborhood and family bonds. The northern Chinese urban family is in the process of shifting away from an institution organized around categorical imperatives and its required

social roles to an egocentric institution based in choice and mutual feeling. The official policies that favored patrilineally related males over issues of property and inheritance have shifted in the direction of greater choice, and thus in the direction of increased *de facto* bilaterality. Although patrilineal customs continue to be observed more in the Tylorian sense of cultural survivals in the form of kinship nomenclature, wedding obligations and seating arrangements for the extended family photograph, these customs are ceremonial, and no longer retain any *de jure* or official support. Today, descent in urban China is cognatic (or non-unilineal), and as in contemporary Euro-American societies, no distinction is made between paternal and maternal relatives.

The social transformation of the Chinese family is also intertwined with a reconfiguration of parenting style. In the 1980s, connectiveness or kinship among contemporary Hohhotians posed two distinct features: a network of practicality that established relationships between households based on ties of mutual support and a flow of conviviality. These relationships could be framed in assumptions of a shared biology, ethnicity, religiosity or locality. By 2000, the neighborhood obligations were being discarded in favor of other forms of connection that are linked more to friendships established in school, in the workplace, and in the emerging dual multigenerational family. In areas that have experienced mild impact of urban development, neighbors' sense of relatedness continues to mirror that typically found in the work-unit era, while in more fluid locations, physical proximity as a basis for the establishment of closer relations has completely disappeared. Relatedness based in a shared ethnicity remains vibrant among Mongols, as it does among the Hui and the city's smaller Protestant and Catholic communities. Finally, bonds between parents and child(ren) remain strong, with emotional involvement and obligations flowing both ways. Although a remnant of a patrilineal descent ideology continues to be a force in the symbolic arrangements of ritual events (such as funerals and marriages), it has lost much of its significance and power to organize an individual's life strategies. This is especially so among China's singleton generation, where patrilineal ideology is immensely weakened and, in most instances, nearly non-existent.

A pattern of inclusive relatedness continues to structure urban and rural family alliances and interactions. In an urban setting, maternal and paternal interests are creating a more complex family system than the one anticipated in William Goode's (1963) conjugal loyalty thesis, which held that the increased wealth in society would result in the senior generation retreating from material and emotional involvement with their grandchildren. In urban China, the conjugal family is the primary family unit, but its monopoly over a child's affection is diluted by the continuing involvement of the senior (or grandparental) generation. The dual multigenerational family continues to serve as a primary reference for the construction of kinship obligations it shares with other forms of connectiveness. As most chapters in this book have demonstrated, the pull toward forming ties with more immediate kin is

a primary, albeit not the only, force in restructuring kinship relations in China. This can be seen in the Hohhotians' preference for transforming close friendships into the equivalent of near kin (brother or sister, uncle or aunt) as opposed to more distant kin (cousins), consistent with the inclusive fitness hypothesis (for overview see Buss 2008).³ It can also be seen in the persistence with which Hohhotian grandparents participate in what has become essentially an intergenerational enterprise dedicated to raising their only (grand)child, and is significant for understanding the contemporary Chinese family, urban society and the human condition.

Glossary

<i>ayi</i>	阿姨
<i>bobo</i>	伯伯
<i>danwei</i>	单位
<i>di</i>	弟
<i>didi</i>	弟弟
<i>ganbu</i>	干部
<i>ge</i>	哥
<i>gege</i>	哥哥
<i>guanxi</i>	关系
<i>hukou</i>	户口
<i>jia</i>	家
<i>jie</i>	街
<i>jie</i>	姐
<i>jiejie</i>	姐姐
<i>jiujiu</i>	舅舅
<i>laiwang</i>	来往
<i>linju</i>	邻居
<i>mei</i>	妹
<i>meimei</i>	妹妹
<i>renshi</i>	认识
<i>shushu</i>	叔叔
<i>xiagang</i>	下崗
<i>yang</i>	養
<i>zhende</i>	真的

Notes

- 1 I would like to thank Susanne Brandtstädter and Gonçalo Santos for their dedication, insight and diligence in the organization of the conference on new directions in kinship studies at the University of Manchester. In addition, I benefited enormously from comments from conference participants, especially those of Brandtstädter and Santos on an early draft of this chapter.
- 2 The transformation into a full-scale market-based system may have also resulted in the importance of the patron–client relationship in order to conduct business. It has been proposed by some scholars (Davis and Harrell 1993; Walder 1986) that patron–client ties are receding in importance. Doug Guthrie (1999), based largely on his Shanghai research, found that Shanghai businessmen no longer consider it necessary to cultivate the patron–client relationship. The market economy, which operates with a different set of principles, does not require people to enter into a dependency relationship to conduct business. David Wank (2002), working in a different city, argues on the other hand that social ties or connections (or *guanxi*) relationships continued to be very important. The critical factor is the degree to which government officials will require the cultivation of the patron–client relationship as a precondition for receiving their endorsement. Concurring, Victor Nee (1989, 1991, 1996) argues that bureaucratic power will continue to persist in reformed China. ‘Market coordination does not supplant bureaucratic coordination, but is grafted onto it, creating a hybrid or segmented system’ (Bian and Logan 1996: 741). As long as the official has a critical role in approving a business arrangement, it seems likely that the importance of cultivating ties with key government officials will remain a constant.
- 3 Significantly, with the exception of the ‘best friend’, an individual’s closest connections are usually with individuals with whom they are (from a western science perspective) more closely genetic linked. We may never know if this behavioral bias is a by-product of our genetic heritage or social learning. It may be a by-product of twin forces, or it may be entirely learned.

References

- Attias-Donfut, C. and M. Segalen (2002) ‘The Construction of Grandparenthood’, *Current Sociology* 50(2): 281–94.
- Bian, Yanjie and J. Logan (1996) ‘Market Transition and the Persistence of Power: The Changing Stratification System in Urban China’, *American Sociological Review* 61: 739–58.
- Brady, D. (2005) *Social Space and Governance in Urban China*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Brandtstädter, S. (2007) ‘Transitional Spaces: Postsocialism as a Cultural Process: Introduction’, *Critique of Anthropology* 27(2): 131–46.
- Buss, D. (2008) *Evolutionary Psychology: The New Science of the Mind* (3rd edn), Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Carsten, J. (ed.) (2000) ‘Introduction’, in J. Carsten (ed.) *Cultures of Relatedness*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (2004) *After Kinship*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cohen, M. (2005) *Kinship, Contract, Community, and State Anthropological Perspectives on China*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Davis, D. and S. Harrell (1993) ‘Introduction’, in Deborah Davis and Stevan Harrell (eds) *Chinese Families in the Post-Mao Era*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1–24.

- Fong, V. (2004) *Only Hope*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Gaubatz, P. (1995) *Beyond the Great Wall: Urban Form and Transformation on the Chinese Frontiers*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Goode, W. (1963) *World Revolution and Family Patterns*, New York: Free Press.
- Guthrie, D. (1999) *Dragon in a Three-Piece Suit: The Emergence of Capitalism in China*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Herzfeld, M. (1997) *Cultural Intimacy*, New York: Routledge.
- Horst, H. and D. Miller (2006) *The Cell Phone: The Anthropology of Communication*, Oxford: Berg.
- Ikels, C. (2004) 'The Impact of Housing Policy on China's Urban Elderly', *Journal of Urban Anthropology* 33(2-4): 321-56.
- Jacka, T. (2006) *Rural Women in Urban China: Gender Migration and Social Change*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe
- Jankowiak, W. (1993) *Sex, Death and Hierarchy in a Chinese City*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Lang, O. (1946) *Chinese Family and Society*, New Haven, CT, USA: Yale University Press.
- Lawton, L., M. Silverstein and V. Bengtson (1994) 'Solidarity Between Generations in Families', in Vern Bengtson and Robert Hasrootyan (eds) *Intergenerational Linkages: Hidden Connections in American Society*, New York: Springer, 19-42.
- Logan, J. (2002) 'The Three Challenges for the Chinese City: Globalization, Migration and Market Reform', in Logan, J. (ed.) *The New Chinese City*, New York: Blackwell, 3-21.
- Lu, Xiabo and E. Perry (eds) (1997) *Danwei: The Changing Chinese Workplace in Historical and Comparative Perspective*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.
- Marsh, R. (1996) *The Great Transformation: Social Change in Taipei*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.
- Nee, V. (1989) 'A Theory of Market Transition: From Redistribution to Markets in State Socialism', *American Sociological Review* 54: 663-81.
- (1991) 'Social Inequalities in Reforming State Socialism: Between Redistribution and Markets in China', *American Sociological Review* 56: 267-82.
- (1996) 'The Emergence of a Market Society: Changing Mechanisms of Stratification in China', *American Journal of Sociology* 101: 908-49.
- Santos, G.D. (2006) 'The Anthropology of Chinese Kinship. A Critical Overview', *European Journal of East Asian Studies*, 5(2): 275-333.
- Schipper, K. (1977) 'Neighborhoods Cult Associations in Traditional Tainan', in G.W. Skinner (ed.) *The City in Late Imperial China*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 651-78.
- Simmel, G. (1950) 'The Metropolis and Mental Life', in Kurt Wolf (transl.) *Sociology of Georg Simmel*, New York: Free Press, 221-38.
- Siu, H. (1993) 'Reconstituting Dowry and Brideprice in South China', In D. Davis and S. Harrell (eds) *Chinese Families in the Post-Mao Era*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 165-88.
- Smart, A. (1999) 'Expressions of Interest: Friendship and Guanxi in Chinese Societies', in S. Bell and S. Coleman (eds), *The Anthropology of Friendship*, Oxford: Berg, 119-36.
- Southall, A. (1998) *The City in Time and Space*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Stafford, C. (2000) 'Chinese Patriline and the Cycles of *yang* and *laiwang*', in J. Carsten (ed.) *Cultures of Relatedness*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 37-55.

- Szonyi, M. (2002) *Practicing Kinship: Lineage and Descent in Late Imperial China*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Walder, A. (1986) *Communist Neo-Traditionalism: Work and Authority in Chinese Society*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Wank, D. (2002) 'An Introduction to the Study of Guanxi', in T. Gold, D. Guthrie and D. Wank (eds) *Social Connections in China: Institutions, Culture, and the Changing Nature of Guanxi*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1–20.
- Watson, R. (1985) *Inequality among Relatives*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Yan, Yunxiang (1996) *Flow of Gifts*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- (1994) *Banquets, Favors, Gifts: Art of Social Relationships in China*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Zelizer, V. (1979) *Morals and Markets: The Development of Life Insurance in the United States*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Zhang, Yingjin (ed.) (1999) *Cinema and Urban Culture in Shanghai, 1922–1943*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Part 2

Intimacy, Gender and Power

4 The ties that bind

Female homosociality and the production of intimacy in rural China

Sara L. Friedman

At first glance, a chapter examining non-kin relations and women's same-sex ties fits somewhat oddly in a volume focused on Chinese kinship. Yet it also builds on a growing literature that has forced us to broaden our understanding of Chinese kinship and relatedness beyond the 'official' domain of patrilineal ties and lineage institutions (Judd 1989; Stafford 2000; Wolf 1972). Through examining non-kin bonds and the forms of intimacy they engender, this chapter questions the prominence of patrilineal kinship in China studies and the privileged status we grant to kinship as an analytical category. In so doing, it seeks to reshape our understanding of affective ties and the fabric of social relations in rural China.¹

I am concerned here with a form of same-sex relationship found in eastern Hui'an County on the Fujian coast, known in Minnan dialect as *dui pnua* (*dui ban* in Mandarin).² *Dui pnua* translates roughly as companion, a gender-neutral, non-kin-derived term that is used in eastern Hui'an villages to describe same-sex, same-age cohort bonds formed by women and men in childhood and young adulthood. These bonds reflect a mode of homosocial interaction and intimacy that builds upon both dyadic and group ties. The scope of such ties has expanded greatly during the post-Mao era, with market reforms and a corresponding growth in work and educational opportunities in the region.

Although I discuss male *dui pnua* later in the chapter, I focus primarily on women's *dui pnua* bonds because of their contrast with kinship ties. More precisely, I outline two ways that female *dui pnua* provide a different orientation for women when compared with their relationship to patrilineal kin. Unlike patrilineal kinship, which is found in more and less elaborated forms across rural Han China, *dui pnua* relationships set eastern Hui'an villages apart from most of the Han countryside and contribute to local residents' ambiguous ethnic status, despite their official inclusion in the category of majority Han. *Dui pnua* are part of a larger constellation of gendered practices – including marriage, labor and dress – that have distinguished Hui'an villagers from other Han peasants.

Dui pnua ties also expand the scope of intimacy created by Hui'an residents, women in particular. In eastern Hui'an, patrilineal kinship is defined

predominantly through lineage branches organized at the village level. These kinship bonds tie men to their natal community through both hierarchical, intergenerational bonds and same-generation groupings of men as ‘brothers’ (Watson 1982a, Watson 1985). Women, on the other hand, shift their kinship affiliations upon marriage. Although rates of village endogamy grew rapidly in eastern Hui’an, beginning in the 1980s, and intravillage marriages now outnumber exogamous unions in many communities, the continued practice of postmarital patrilocal residence makes women’s kinship more ‘mobile’ than men’s, even if that mobility entails moving only within a village to a new neighborhood or residence (see Judd, Chapter 1 in this volume). Female *dui pnua* ties are differently mobile, however, linking non-kin women of the same generation within and across villages. Through everyday and ritual practices, women’s *dui pnua* relationships broaden the space of intimacy across neighborhoods and village boundaries, and create a social world defined by female peer ties as opposed to the male-dominated structure of patrilineal kinship.

In describing *dui pnua* ties as intimate, I suggest that intimacy does not naturally or necessarily exist in any particular relationship or institution, but must be produced and reproduced over time. The sense of intimacy that I invoke here pivots on several features. It indicates emotional and physical closeness and familiarity, a feeling of comfort in mutual understanding and recognition. I describe *dui pnua* relationships as intimate precisely because I want to capture the depth of attachment *dui pnua* have to one another and to underscore the social recognition that enables them to display that attachment in normative ways.³ It is important to note, however, that *dui pnua* intimacy is not necessarily, if at all, sexual. Hence it differs from kinship in that it does not derive from the fact and fiction of blood ties and heterosexual coupling, or from bonds of sworn or ritual parenthood that imitate those forms.

By investigating how intimacy is created in *dui pnua* ties, I also elucidate cultural standards that establish how intimacy is defined and constructed in kinship relations. Here I take inspiration from studies of gay and queer kinship that use the model of ‘families we choose’ to challenge assumptions of ‘nature’ as the root of kinship, thereby broadening the scope of anthropological inquiry to examine the social construction of relatedness more generally (Carsten 2000b; Hayden 1995; Lewin 1993; Weston 1991, 1995). In adopting this approach in my analysis of women’s *dui pnua* relationships, I focus on the discursive and practice-based elements of intimacy. I ask how women talk about their fellow *dui pnua* as intimates, and how they create that intimacy through ritual and everyday forms of practice (see also Carsten 2000b: 17–18).

At the same time, my analysis in this chapter diverges from recent anthropological scholarship that seeks to broaden the limits of what counts as kinship in light of new reproductive technologies, social practices of intimacy, and the growing visibility of gay and lesbian relationships and

parenting (Carsten 2000a; Franklin and McKinnon 2001; Lewin 1993; Stacey 1996; Stack 1974; Strathern 1992; Weston 1991). Although I find such work inspirational, I argue that we must also pay attention to forms of sociality that are defined by their participants as outside the boundaries of kinship. What significance do these non-kin bonds have for participants, and how are they different from kinship, even when kinship is defined in more fluid, open-ended terms? My approach expands the scope of relatedness not by encompassing a greater range of ties under the sign of kinship, but by asking for whom and in what contexts non-kin ties become more prominent and compelling.

An unusual cultural configuration

The material in this chapter derives from nearly two years of research spanning the period 1993–2002 in the village of Shanlin, a multi-surname community located in coastal Fujian's eastern Hui'an County (also known as Huidong).⁴ The economy of the region rests on fishing, some agriculture, and since the early 1990s an export-oriented stone-carving industry that emerged from a regional tradition of artisanal stone carving and local granite quarries. This export-oriented economy has revitalized the historically poor region, injecting much-needed resources for infrastructure construction and a growing consumer market. The landscape, though still dotted with sweet potato and peanut fields and harbors full of fishing boats, is now marked by multistoried residences, commercial buildings, factories and paved roads. With easy transportation access to the county seat and the coastal cities of Quanzhou and Xiamen, eastern Hui'an has, in the past decade, become increasingly integrated into the booming economy of south-eastern Fujian.

The villages of eastern Hui'an are also known for an array of distinctive cultural practices that have, at various points in time, raised questions about the ethnic status of the region's residents, despite their official classification after 1949 as members of the Han majority.⁵ These practices include wives' extended residence in their natal home after marriage and before childbirth, women's elaborate dress and headscarf styles, atypical gender divisions of labor, and, most salient for this chapter, the widespread presence of same-sex *dui pnua* networks among women and men. Together these practices constitute a unique cultural configuration that distinguishes patterns of life in Huidong from those found in most Han villages.

Dui pnua networks are typically formed in childhood and thus historically have been based in natal villages, where they often clustered around neighborhood peers.⁶ Older women often described their *dui pnua* as girls with whom they did everything, from working and going to school together to sharing clothing and a bed at night. *Dui pnua* also participated in key life-cycle rituals: accompanying a bride on her wedding day and visiting her at her conjugal home before she returned, semi-permanently, to her natal

residence; and assisting with funeral preparations for a *dui pnua*'s close relative and joining in the funeral procession.

For younger women who came of age after the introduction of market reforms, their core group of childhood *dui pnua* often expanded significantly over their teens and into their twenties as they participated in a wider range of work opportunities beyond the agricultural and fishing-related tasks performed by their mothers and grandmothers. Although still based in natal communities, *dui pnua* circles grew dramatically with increased rates of female schooling and employment in one of the many stone-carving factories emerging in the region in the 1990s. Whereas everyday socializing typically included no more than ten women, rituals such as weddings were opportunities for young women to display their social capital, and some marshaled as many as 50 or 60 *dui pnua* (some obviously more intimate than others) to accompany them in the bridal procession. Friendship (*ping iu* in Minnan), by contrast, was used to describe more generic ties forged with women from outside the village or created after marriage, thereby reserving for *dui pnua* a privileged status marked by long-term intimacy and the highly valued natal context in which the relationship was nurtured (Smart 1999: 128).⁷

Despite the special place of *dui pnua* in village social relations, the formation of such ties is not ritually marked in either a public or private way, unlike the sisterhoods and sworn spinster communities found in other parts of Han China.⁸ Nor do *dui pnua* occupy designated sites in village life, such as the girls' houses or spinster residences of the Pearl River delta. In the Maoist era, *dui pnua* might have gathered together at the women's militia barracks or in the sleeping quarters provided for women sent to labor on public works projects during the Great Leap Forward, but they were just as likely to meet at one member's house after the work day was over. Today the emergence of new business and consumer sites in the village has provided alternative spaces for *dui pnua* socializing, such as a shop run by a fellow *dui pnua*, or a restaurant or karaoke parlor where *dui pnua* might celebrate a birthday or engagement.

The absence of fixed spaces in the community and the lack of ritual confirmation do not diminish the affective intensity of *dui pnua* bonds, however. When women spoke with me about their *dui pnua* relationships, they described in great detail the intimacy of such ties, using the Minnan adjective *cin* (*qin* in Mandarin) to indicate emotional closeness and affection. The *cin* of *dui pnua* ties was produced through shared activities and intimate communication; a *dui pnua* was someone who 'knew your heart' or who you were 'fated to be with'. By contrast, when *cin* was used to describe kin, it indicated a more structural status defined by the type of relation (patrilineal, matrilineal, affinal) and degree of genealogical proximity. Conjugal intimacy, on the other hand, occupied the very different semantic universe of *ganqing*, a Mandarin term for feelings with a long, politicized genealogy in post-1949 China (Friedman 2005, 2006a; Yan 2003). I do not mean such a comparison to suggest that kin could not be intimate with one another, but instead to

show how, for women, the kind of intimacy attributed to kinship ties differed qualitatively from that enjoyed by *dui pnua*.

Shanlin women produced intimacy in their *dui pnua* relationships through specific kinds of communication and shared activities: see chapters 5 (Santos), 6 (Stafford) and 7 (Brandtstädter) in this volume. Hence they experienced intimacy both discursively (talking about marriage and pregnancy, for instance) and through everyday practices (sharing food, working together, providing ritual support, engaging in gift exchanges, sleeping together at night). This mode of homosociality was interwoven with the heterosexual imperatives imposed by the patrilineal kinship system and the specific form of marriage practiced in Shanlin (Sedgwick 1985). In addition to accompanying a bride to her husband's home on her wedding day, visiting her during the multi-day marriage ritual, and receiving gifts from the groom's family, *dui pnua* might also encourage a new wife's efforts after the wedding to refuse her mother-in-law's requests for conjugal visits.⁹ *Dui pnua* provided support and solace to young women during their early years of marriage when they remained in their natal home and, in some cases, after they gave birth and moved in with their husband's family. Through this affective labor, *dui pnua* created a form of intimacy that was not encompassed by kinship models, but existed alongside them. *Dui pnua* both provided emotional support that was lacking in heterosexual marriage, and shored up patrilocal marital imperatives through making the conjugal transition less painful for young women.

When Shanlin residents compared *dui pnua* with kin, they typically defined kin as the category of *gagi'e lang* (one's own people, *ziji de ren* in Mandarin). One's own people encompassed an agnatic kin group related through patrilineal descent, a lineage branch designated in village parlance as those who shared an ancestral home or *zoocu* (*zucuo* in Mandarin). Before a woman married, her *gagi'e lang* included her parents and siblings, as well as patrilineal kin related through her father's descent line.¹⁰ After marriage, a wife theoretically transferred her affiliation to her husband's 'own people'. In eastern Hui'an villages, however, a married woman's continued residence in her natal home prior to childbirth meant that she was more likely to identify with her natal kin group during this period, despite the fact that, technically speaking, she had already married out into her husband's family. Only after shifting to conjugal residence did women begin to refer to their husband's kin as their own people (in addition to their natal relatives). In fact, some women argued that it was only after they gave birth and moved in with their husbands that their conjugal kin included them in the category of *gagi'e lang*.

Instead of collapsing *dui pnua* into the more familiar category of one's own people, Shanlin women explicitly distinguished their *dui pnua* relationships from bonds with sisters or other female kin.¹¹ Although, in formal terms, they acknowledged that *dui pnua* were outsiders when compared with the insider category of kin, in practice they were more likely to engage in culturally recognized intimate behaviors with their *dui pnua* than with sisters

or female cousins. Nor did one category serve as a referent for the other, as they have at other times and in other places in China. Non-kin women have often modeled their relationships on sibling ties through swearing bonds of sisterhood (Chiang 1995: 19–20; Honig 1985; Mann 1997: 139–40). Alternatively, as in the *nüshu* (women's script) region of southern Hunan, female kin also adopted the position of non-kin intimates to demonstrate the strength of their bonds (Silber 1994). Shanlin women used neither tactic; instead they acknowledged the power of *dui pnua* as a category independent of kinship both in the language they used to talk about their intimate bonds (including the absence of kin-based terms of address) and in the practices they engaged in together.

The practice of *dui pnua* intimacy

The relationship between Bbingden and Soelan nicely illustrates how *dui pnua* intimacy is produced through everyday practice. Both women were in their mid-twenties when I first met them in 1993 and had been *dui pnua* since their teenage years. In fact, their fathers had been *dui pnua* in their youth as well, and when Soelan's family built a new house down the road from Bbingden's natal home, the two girls began to spend much of their daytime and nighttime hours together, sharing a bedroom in Bbingden's house. By 1993, Bbingden had been married for several years to a Shanlin man, and Soelan was already divorced from her first husband and had just remarried a man who lived in a village on the other side of the township seat. Each had accompanied the other on her wedding day and had brought customary gifts of food on the second day of the wedding sequence. After marriage, both women continued to reside with their natal families and to spend their nights together, until they had children. Even after giving birth, their residence patterns enabled them to maintain a close relationship: Bbingden moved back in with her parents and Soelan commuted regularly from her husband's village, at times bringing her daughter along for extended stays in Shanlin.

Bbingden and Soelan ran a small fruit shop located in the front of Bbingden's natal home. They had started the venture a few months before I first met them in the summer of 1993. In addition to spending their days working in the shop and their nights together, the two women often shared meals or brought treats from their respective homes to give to the other *dui pnua*. When Bbingden had her first child in 1995, Soelan regularly slept with her and the baby at Bbingden's conjugal home during the customary postpartum recovery month. After Soelan gave birth a few months later, the two resumed their work together in the shop, alternating responsibilities so that they also had time to care for their children and attend to household tasks.

Bbingden and Soelan continued this arrangement for several years, despite the changes in their formal residence patterns brought by childbirth. When Bbingden experienced a difficult pregnancy with her second child in 2001, Soelan again purchased nutritious foods for her and took responsibility for

the shop. After Bbingden gave birth and moved into her own home with her husband, Soelan continued to run their business while Bbingden cooked meals for her to eat while working. Bbingden also confided to me that Soelan had lent her the money she needed to finish building the house she now shared with her husband.

Despite Soelan's decision to marry out of Shanlin, the two women were able to maintain their *dui pnua* tie after marriage by engaging in culturally recognized intimate practices: feeding and clothing one another (and later their children); sharing a bed together at night when possible; confiding desires, fears and intimate experiences; and providing financial support through a joint business venture and loans. Many of these practices would have been familiar to *dui pnua* of older generations, while others, such as opening a business together, were specific to the reform era. Older women typically married out of their natal villages and were not always able to maintain close *dui pnua* ties after marriage. Some, however, like Bbingden's mother, married into the same village as other *dui pnua* and thus sustained their relationships through offering mutual assistance and emotional support. If a *dui pnua* failed to provide such support even when resident in the same community, however, she effectively indicated that she was no longer committed to such an intimate bond.

Despite the fact that Bbingden and Soelan both had sisters living at home, neither engaged in similar kinds of activity with their female kin. In Bbingden's case, her relationship with her younger sister was so fraught with conflict that the two refused to speak to each other for much of their young adulthood. Perhaps by virtue of being outside the circle of close kin, *dui pnua* escaped conflicts over family resources that so often marred kin ties in Shanlin (see also Yan 2001). Although many of the young women I knew in Shanlin experienced frequent tension with their female relatives, including sisters, all had close *dui pnua* with whom they spent many of their working and leisure hours.

In death as in life

Dui pnua intimacy also extends beyond the realm of everyday activities to create linkages between the living and the dead. Elsewhere I have discussed how *dui pnua* who committed suicide together in the past were reaffirming their attachment to one another through the decision to take their own lives (Friedman 2006a: 83–84, 146–47). Equally important, however, are the ties that living *dui pnua* maintain with their deceased peers. These ties are often affirmed through acts such as bringing offerings to and cleaning the grave of a *dui pnua* during the annual Tomb Sweeping Festival. A young woman might also present gifts to the parents of a deceased *dui pnua* at the New Year holiday, or when she marries. These acts weave deceased *dui pnua* into a web of ritualized exchanges that resemble those that families use to reintegrate close kin who have died. In so doing, living *dui pnua* transform the

cross-generational orientation of ancestor worship to appease the spirits of their peers and to ward off ailments or misfortune attributed to the dead.

For women who have already married and shifted to conjugal residence, the most common means of reconstructing their ties with a deceased *dui pnua* is through *hulin* worship. *Hulin* (*furen* in Mandarin) refers to a set of small human figures installed in a case on an altar that a woman sets up in her marital home. These altars typically are found in private rooms in the house, such as a bedroom, and the cases may include any number of figures, some as many as 15 or 20. The figures represent the spirits of deceased *dui pnua*, husbands or other kin from a previous life (in the Buddhist cycle of death and rebirth), generic categories of hypothetical individuals who died before marriage, and, occasionally, actual patrilineal or matrilineal kin who died without spouses or children. *Hulin* figures are distinguished from the ancestral tablets or photographs of deceased patrilineal kin who have descendants to worship them in lineage branch halls, ancestral homes or public spaces in the house. Although *hulin* worship more closely approximates the veneration of spirits and gods than ghosts and ancestors,¹² like ancestor worship it also reproduces the ties it commemorates and their significance for the worshipper.

A married woman often installs a *hulin* case when she encounters illness or ill fortune that affects either her or her children. Many Shanlin women turn to spirit mediums to resolve such problems, and mediums frequently attribute these ailments to a deceased *dui pnua* whose spirit has not been placated sufficiently. After installing the case, the woman lights incense and places offerings in front of the figures on occasions such as the first and 15th days of the lunar month, the annual birthday of all *hulin* spirits, or a child's one-year birthday.¹³ When the spirit of a deceased *dui pnua* is deemed particularly powerful, several members of a *dui pnua* group may install the same spirit in their *hulin* cases.

The spirit of A Ggin, Bbingden's maternal aunt, was worshipped by several *dui pnua* circles, demonstrating the power of *hulin* worship to create bonds between women across space and time. When I returned to Shanlin in 2002, I lived with Bbingden and her husband in the home they had finished building just a few months earlier. In a corner of Bbingden's sparsely furnished bedroom, I noticed a small wooden table on which rested a freshly painted, red *hulin* case. The case included two rows of figures, one seated and one standing. Bbingden explained that she had set up the case at the insistence of her mother-in-law after the difficult pregnancy and birth of her second child, a son. Bbingden's mother-in-law hailed from Haibin, the same natal village as Bbingden's birth mother. Like other Haibin women of that generation, she had installed in her own case a figure of A Ggin, Bbingden's mother's older sister who had committed suicide as a young woman. When Bbingden set up her *hulin* case, her mother-in-law insisted that she include A Ggin as well.

A Ggin had taken her life some 30–40 years earlier after an unhappy marriage and the birth of a son. Together with two of her *dui pnua*, she had

drowned herself in a pond near Haibin. Haibin women of her generation considered her spirit especially powerful; among those who had married into Shanlin, virtually all included a figure of A Ggin in their *hulin* case. Bbingden's mother, A Peng, and her fellow *dui pnua* all worshipped A Ggin, and a Haibin native a few years their senior became a spirit medium possessed by A Ggin's spirit. On numerous occasions over the years I spent in Shanlin, I accompanied A Peng (and sometimes one of her *dui pnua*) up the path to the older part of the village, where we entered this woman's house and climbed the ladder to her bedroom. There she would sit on a stool and sway back and forth, beating rhythmically on the table with her hand. Once she had entered a trance state, A Peng would pose a question to her (typically concerning the future fertility of her daughters-in-law) and the medium would reply not in her own voice, but in that of A Ggin.

The worship of A Ggin's spirit, whether in a *hulin* case or through a spirit medium, linked several sets of *dui pnua*. A Peng's childhood *dui pnua* worshipped A Ggin regardless of which village they had married into. Other Haibin women of roughly the same age cohort also worshipped her, as did A Ggin's own *dui pnua*. Moreover, as these women's daughters-in-law set up their own *hulin* cases, some began to include A Ggin in their personal worship as well. Thus *hulin* worship and spirit mediumship connected same-generation, non-kin women across the township's villages (and, in rare instances, same-generation kin as well, as seen in A Peng's worship of her sister's spirit). For younger women such as Bbingden, moreover, *hulin* worship linked them not only to their own deceased *dui pnua*, but also to older female kin through the worship of those women's *dui pnua* or same-generation peers.¹⁴

The death of a *dui pnua*, in other words, produced a new kind of intimacy between the living and dead. Unlike the death and commemoration rituals associated with ancestors that reaffirmed ties among kin (both living and deceased) across and within generations (Sangren 1987; Watson 1982b), these intimate practices generally reinforced non-kin bonds within generational cohorts. And whereas ancestral death rituals typically integrated co-resident villagers and nearby kin, *dui pnua* worship linked non-kin women within and across village borders, creating a form of intimacy at once more ephemeral (because less public) and more extensive. Even when a daughter-in-law worshipped her mother-in-law's deceased *dui pnua* or childhood peer, she created cross-generational ties that were built not simply on patrilineal kinship, but more importantly on the intimacy cultivated through same-generation, same-sex bonds from the older woman's youth.

Male *dui pnua*

At the beginning of this chapter I noted that *dui pnua* ties are not exclusively a female phenomenon; men form them as well. Yet because men enjoy a very different relationship to patrilineal kinship and norms of patrilocal residence, their *dui pnua* bonds diverge from those of women in terms of how they

situate men socially and spatially. Hence although both men and women use the same term, *dui pnua*, to describe intimate ties with their same-sex peers, those ties have certain gender-specific meanings and practical consequences for participants.

Men form *dui pnua* ties in their youth much like women do, not with patrilineal kin but with neighbors, classmates and co-workers from the same village. In their childhood and young adulthood, men's *dui pnua* practices look strikingly similar to women's. Male *dui pnua* might attend school and work together, spend leisure hours together, share a bed at night, and provide ritual support at weddings and funerals. Yet because in the past boys were more likely to advance in school or to leave the community for work, they also developed more diverse social networks that drew them beyond a village-centric circle of *dui pnua* ties. At the same time, the custom of postmarital patrilocal residence has meant that male *dui pnua* bonds are less threatened by life-cycle events such as marriage and the birth of a child, because these events do not require a change of residence as they do for women. Local marriage practices do not pose a structural threat to male *dui pnua* ties in the same way that they potentially separate female *dui pnua* from each other.

As market reforms have expanded economic opportunities in eastern Hui'an, they have also transformed the paths that men take to employment inside and outside the region. During the collective era and through the 1980s, Shanlin men primarily engaged in fishing, some in local coastal waters but most on collectively owned boats that traveled north to fishing grounds off the coast of Zhejiang Province. Boat assignments were made by cadres according to class status, and men might or might not find themselves on boats together with close kin and *dui pnua*. By the 1980s, the collective began to contract out boats to individual captains who gradually assumed control over labor assignments. As boat ownership shifted from the collective to individual or group hands, kin and *dui pnua* ties assumed greater salience for employment opportunities.

These ties have become even more important with the growth of stone-carving factories in the 1990s. Not only do kin and *dui pnua* work together in local factories, but they also provide critical introductions when new positions become available. Men dominate the managerial level in stone-carving enterprises and thus are well positioned to assist kin and *dui pnua* in search of work. When Bbingden's husband, Wilam, lost his job as a fisherman on a Taiwanese fishing boat, he looked to the stone-carving industry for employment. After working as a stone cutter in a local factory for almost a year, he went north to the city of Dalian to cut stones in a factory managed by one of his *dui pnua*. Without the connection provided by his *dui pnua*, Wilam would not have been aware of the job nor would he have been considered seriously for the position.

The expansion of Wilam's economic opportunities helped him move beyond the village, but only through the aid provided by a *dui pnua* tie rooted in the community. In this regard, men's *dui pnua* networks orient

them differently from women's. Although male *dui pnua* may provide connections to places and opportunities outside the region, they do so through reaffirming a bond based in Shanlin, the place to which men always return. Women's *dui pnua* networks also connect them across village boundaries, and they also originate in women's natal villages. But by adulthood, women no longer identify exclusively with their natal place, either because they have married into another community or because, despite having married within the village, they have taken up residence in their conjugal home and now orient themselves toward their conjugal family.¹⁵ Thus female *dui pnua* networks produce a very different kind of social and intimate space, one much less constant and rooted over the life course than that of male *dui pnua*.

Male *dui pnua* also differ with respect to their relationship to kin. In practical terms, men appear to maintain similar relationships with *dui pnua* as they do with male kin, in part because their kin ties do not change dramatically over the life course as they do for women who shift their *gagi'e lang* after marriage and childbirth. It is certainly possible, however, that men turn to *dui pnua* for different kinds of support, particularly because *dui pnua* do not face conflicts over property in the same way that patrilineal kin do. Yunxiang Yan (2001) found that men in rural Heilongjiang often preferred to collaborate in business ventures with friends or affinal kin rather than with brothers or paternal cousins, precisely because they felt friendship ties and non-agnatic kin bonds were more supportive and straightforward with regard to resources. Shanlin men undoubtedly engage in similar kinds of strategizing, both among categories of kin and between kin and *dui pnua*.¹⁶ Yet the relative stability of both their patrilineal kin ties and *dui pnua* networks (as compared with those of women) means that male *dui pnua* do not provide a new realm of emotional and practical intimacy in the way that *dui pnua* do for women. Hence, to a degree, the distinctive intimacy of *dui pnua* bonds is gender-specific, expanding the affective worlds of women to a much greater extent than those of men, who maintain a more privileged status within the dominant order of patrilineal kinship.

Conclusions

Dui pnua ties shed light on different dimensions of social relations in rural China. They occupy a space in between the privileged category of kinship and the less-valued domain of friendship. In some contexts (such as ritual life) *dui pnua* might resemble kin, but their ritual functions and practices create a differently contoured sphere of affective bonds. In everyday settings, moreover, *dui pnua* often provide more support and emotional intimacy than is expected from kin. For women, in particular, *dui pnua* offer the potential for constancy in intimate ties when compared with the shifts in kinship affiliation they experience at marriage and childbirth. *Dui pnua* ties also create a different spatial and temporal orientation for intimacy by traversing village boundaries and reaffirming same-generation bonds among women.

How do we evaluate the significance of *dui pnua* when compared not only with kinship, but also with other types of non-kin, peer bonds found across China? Many of those bonds model themselves on kinship ties and take the form of sisterhoods and brotherhoods or sworn sisters and sworn brothers. Hence kinship remains the privileged category, and non-kin relationships claim legitimacy and strength through borrowing from the language of kinship. The closest parallel with *dui pnua* that I have found is the *laotong* (old-same) relationship that Cathy Silber (1994) describes in the *nüshu* region of southern Hunan. Silber mines the letters that *laotong* wrote to a new bride in her conjugal home to construct a picture of non-kin, same-sex intimacy not unlike that forged between *dui pnua*. And yet, despite this similarity, there are also significant differences between the two. *Laotong* appear to have been strictly paired relationships, whereas *dui pnua* include both dyadic ties and groups of women. Moreover, although *laotong* as a term of address did not itself allude to kin ties, letters between *laotong* borrowed heavily from images of idyllic matrimonial pairings, and the formation of *laotong* relationships had many parallels with marital matches. Furthermore, when sisters and female cousins wrote letters to brides, they often adopted the language of *laotong* to reaffirm the strength of their kin relationship and to mourn its passing following marriage. These examples suggest that, even in contexts where non-kin ties were socially and emotionally significant, such ties nonetheless remained conceptually and pragmatically interwoven with kinship bonds. This reaffirms the unusual position of *dui pnua* as a parallel bond of equal (if not, at times, greater) intensity than kinship, and sets *dui pnua* apart from other models of non-kin, same-sex relationships.

By making this argument, I do not mean to suggest that *dui pnua* fully challenge the power of kinship in rural Chinese communities or that *dui pnua* and kin occupy completely separate social universes in eastern Hui'an. Nor do I think that we should simply include *dui pnua* in a more fluidly defined sphere of kinship. Kinship is already quite variable in Huidong villages, as seen in various adoptive relations and sworn parenting ties. Instead, the example of *dui pnua* suggests that we need to broaden our understanding of relatedness beyond the kin–friendship binary to consider how intimacy is produced and enacted in a greater range of social forms. *Dui pnua* expose the constructed quality of both ‘biological’ and ‘chosen’ bonds, and in so doing they encourage us to move beyond existing frameworks for explaining what binds together different categories of people in rural China.

Glossary

Minnan	Mandarin	Characters
cin	qin	親
dui pnua	dui ban	對伴

gagi'e lang	ziji de ren	自己的人
	ganqing	感情
hulin	furen	夫人
kue		契
	laotong	老同
	nüshu	女書
ping iu		朋友
	siren fo zai	私人佛仔
zoocu	zucuo	祖厝

Notes

- 1 As Cathy Silber nicely argues, 'The fact that non-hierarchical and/or non-kin social arrangements lack prominence in Confucian social ideology merely indicates a need to see through this ideology, especially where those who have the least to gain from it are concerned' (Silber 1994: 48).
- 2 Mandarin terms are romanized using the *pinyin* system. Minnan terms are romanized according to the system developed by the Chinese Dialect Research Office at Xiamen University's Chinese Language and Literature Research Institute (Xiamen Daxue Zhongguo Yuyan Wenxue Yanjiusuo Hanyu Fangyan Yanjiushi 1982). For a more detailed discussion of the Minnan romanization system, see Friedman (2006a: xv-xvi).
- 3 For an insightful discussion of how private and public intimacy are interwoven in Western contexts, see Berlant (1998).
- 4 Although there are officially four surname groups in Shanlin, the community is numerically dominated by one surname group whose members are divided into 19 lineage branches. The second largest surname group boasts three lineage branches, and the remaining two surnames have only one lineage branch each. Shanlin is a pseudonym for the village, as are all village names used in this chapter. I also use pseudonyms for all personal names.
- 5 For Chinese literature on the subject of Huidong ethnicity, see Guohua Chen (1986); Guoqiang Chen (1990); Guo (1997); Jiang (1985, 1989); Lin (1981). For a discussion of this literature see Friedman (2006a).
- 6 *Dui pnua* may have the same or different surnames, but typically do not encompass close kin relations, particularly agnatic kin. There are cases, however, where a woman's brother might marry her *dui pnua* or her *dui pnua's* sister, creating an affinal tie between the two women.
- 7 The decontextualized (and hence less valued) quality of friendship is reaffirmed in a funeral ritual where friends carry generic funerary symbols in the funeral procession (white hand towels, black armbands), but *dui pnua* carry items that indicate particular mourning grades and hence identify their relationship to a specific primary mourner (Friedman 2006a: 164-65).
- 8 On sisterhoods and spinster communities in the Pearl River Delta region, see Sankar (1978); Stockard (1989). On non-kin ties in the *nüshu* (women's script) region of southern Hunan, see Chiang (1995); Silber (1994); and on sisterhoods in Republican-era Shanghai, see Honig (1985). One account from eastern Hui'an,

originally written in the 1950s, describes an incident from the pre-1949 period in which women formed a group to monitor members' sexual relations with their husbands and required a contribution of either five silver dollars or ten *jin* of eels (1 *jin* = 0.5 kg). Although the author does not use the term *dui pnua* to describe the members of these groups, he was probably referring to women who would today be recognized as *dui pnua* (Lin 1981: 256, 258).

- 9 Prior to childbirth and the shift to conjugal residence it initiated, a married woman was required to spend the night at her husband's home only on the first night of the Chinese New Year. At other holiday times, or when her labor was needed, a woman's mother-in-law or sister-in-law might summon her for a conjugal visit. Wives could (and often did) refuse such requests, however, in order to delay sexual relations and the pregnancy that might result. Only in the 1990s did it become more common for Huidong youth to choose their own marriage partners, and young wives gradually began to visit their husbands on their own initiative. The gifts of foodstuffs that a bride's *dui pnua* received from the groom's family comprised a small portion of the overall bride wealth (which includes money, gold jewelry, cloth and food) presented to the bride and her natal family. Dowries, when they were given, typically included appliances for the couple's new home.
- 10 Although villagers privileged *gagi'e lang* in their definitions of kinship, they also maintained ties with matrilineal relatives (particularly their mother's siblings and their children) and affinal kin, categories that were becoming increasingly important in the post-Mao era with the shift to village endogamy and the pressures of a market economy. Moreover, individuals were recruited into the category of *gagi'e lang* not strictly through biological descent, but also through various forms of adoption and uxorial marriage (Friedman 2006a: 37–38). Other village relationships modeled themselves on kinship, such as sworn parent–child relations known in Minnan dialect as *kue*.
- 11 I did encounter one scenario in which a young woman sometimes included her sister-in-law in her *dui pnua*. Although the sister-in-law was already married to this woman's older brother, she did not reside with the family because she had yet to bear a child. The woman was actually much closer to her sister-in-law's younger sister (who was her own age peer), and after the sister-in-law gave birth and moved in with the family, the kinship tie between the two women seemed to replace the *dui pnua* bond.
- 12 Shi (1997) also makes this point in his overview of *hulin* worship in the region, although he goes so far as to argue that *hulin* should be termed 'private Buddhas' (*siren fo zai*). As he notes, one feature distinguishing *hulin* worship from ancestor worship is the use of three sticks of incense in *hulin* offerings (a *yang* number) as compared with two or four for ancestor worship (a *yin* number).
- 13 When a woman first installs a *hulin* case, she brings it to a temple to be blessed by the gods. Shanlin women typically blessed their cases at the village Mazu temple or at one of the two nunneries in the community. On auspicious occasions, a woman might also bring offerings to the temple or nunnery and recite the names of the figures in her case. For an example of such worship, see Friedman (2006a: 150–51).
- 14 Because Bbingden had married out and resided in her own conjugal residence, the decision to include A Ggin in her *hulin* case could only have come from her mother-in-law, not her mother. In other words, the only reason Bbingden's worship of A Ggin created a link to her matrilineal kin was because Bbingden's mother and mother-in-law hailed from the same natal village. I should add that *dui pnua* ties are not inheritable in the strict sense of the term, but may be passed on through specific relationships such as a mother-in-law–daughter-in-law bond, or when opportunities for familiarity are created by parental *dui pnua* ties.
- 15 There are some exceptions to this scenario, such as women who come from powerful and wealthy families who retain strong natal allegiances. Unmarried women

would also experience the transformations brought by adulthood very differently, although very few women remain unmarried throughout their adult lives. For one such example, see Friedman (2006b)

- 16 My status as a single woman during much of my research in Shanlin made it difficult for me to discuss these topics with men. More research would be necessary to determine precisely how men strategically mobilize different kinds of social ties to achieve particular aims.

References

- Berlant, L. (1998) 'Intimacy: A Special Issue', *Critical Inquiry* 24: 281–88.
- Carsten, J. (2000a) *Cultures of Relatedness: New Approaches to the Study of Kinship*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (2000b) 'Introduction: Cultures of Relatedness', in Janet Carsten (ed.) *Cultures of Relatedness: New Approaches to the Study of Kinship*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1–36.
- Chen, Guohua (1986) 'Huidong Nu Zuyuan Chu Tan (A Preliminary Discussion of the Ethnic Origins of Huidong Women)', *Quanzhou Xuekan (Quanzhou College Journal)* 4.
- Chen, Guoqiang (1990) 'Chongwu de Yishi yu Zushu Shi Tan' ('A Preliminary Discussion of Chongwu Attire and Ethnic Affiliation'), in Chen Guoqiang (ed.) *Chongwu Yanjiu (Chongwu Research)*, Hui'an: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe, 251–61.
- Chiang, W. W. (1995) "'We Two Know the Script; We Have Become Good Friends": Linguistic and Social Aspects of the Women's Script Literacy in Southern Hunan, China', Lanham, MD: University Press of America.
- Franklin, S. and S. McKinnon (2001) 'Relative Values: Reconfiguring Kinship Studies', Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Friedman, S.L. (2005) 'The Intimacy of State Power: Marriage, Liberation, and Socialist Subjects in Southeastern China', *American Ethnologist* 32(2): 312–27.
- (2006a) *Intimate Politics: Marriage, the Market, and State Power in Southeastern China*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, Harvard University Press.
- (2006b) 'Watching Twin Bracelets in China: The Role of Spectatorship and Identification in an Ethnographic Analysis of Film Reception', *Cultural Anthropology* 21(4): 603–32.
- Guo, Zhichao (1997) 'Tianye Diaocha Yu Wenxian Jikao: Huidong Wenhua Zhi Mi Shijie' ('Fieldwork and Documentary Research: A Tentative Explanation of the Secret of Huidong Culture'), *Xiamen Daxue Xuebao (Journal of Xiamen University)* (3): 109–14.
- Hayden, C. (1995) 'Gender, Genetics, and Generation: Reformulating Biology in Lesbian Kinship', *Cultural Anthropology* 10(1): 41–63.
- Honig, E. (1985) 'Burning Incense, Pledging Sisterhood: Communities of Women Workers in the Shanghai Cotton Mills, 1919–49', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 10(4): 700–14.
- Jiang, Bingzhao (1985) 'Fujian Hui'an Funu Chang Zhu Niangjia Hunsu de Tedian Ji Qi Canliu de Lishi Yuanyin' ('Distinctive Features of Extended Natal Residence Marriage Customs Among Women in Hui'an Fujian and Historical Reasons for Their Survival'), *Renleixue Yanjiu (Anthropology Research)* Shi Kan Hao (Trial Volume): 112–19.

- (1989) 'Hui'an Diqu Changzhu Niangjia Hunsu de Lishi Kaocha' ('An Historical Investigation of Extended Natal Residence Marriage Customs in the Hui'an Region'), *Zhongguo Shehui Kexue (China Social Science)* 3: 193–203.
- Judd, E.R. (1989) 'Niangjia: Chinese Women and Their Natal Families', *Journal of Asian Studies* 48(3): 525–44.
- Lewin, E. (1993) *Lesbian Mothers: Accounts of Gender in American Culture*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Lin, Huixiang (1981) 'Lun Changzhu Niangjia Fengsu de Qiyuan ji Muxi Zhi Dao Fuxi Zhi de Guodu' ('A Discussion of the Origins of Extended Natal Residence Customs and the Transition from Matrilineal to Patrilineal Society'), in Xiamen Daxue Renlei Bowuguan (ed.) *Lin Huixiang Renleixue Lunzhu (Lin Huixiang's Anthropological Works)*, Fuzhou: Fujian Renmin Chubanshe, 254–88.
- Mann, S. (1997) *Precious Records: Women in China's Long Eighteenth Century*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Sangren, P.S. (1987) *History and Magical Power in a Chinese Community*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Sankar, A. (1978) 'The Evolution of the Sisterhood in Traditional Chinese Society: From Village Girls' Houses to Chai T'angs in Hong Kong', PhD dissertation, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan.
- Sedgwick, E.K. (1985) *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Shi, Yilong (1997) 'Cong gu hun ye gui dao shen ling de zhuanhua: Minnan 'si ren fo'a' de chubu yanjiu' ('The Transition from Lonely Souls and Wild Ghosts to Gods: An Initial Study of Minnan Region 'Private Buddhas)'), *Mintai Minsu (Customs of Minnan and Taiwan) Chuang Kan Hao*: 1–32.
- Silber, C. (1994) 'From Daughter to Daughter-in-Law in the Women's Script of Southern Hunan', in Christina K. Gilmartin, Gail Hershatter, Lisa Rofel and Tyrene White (eds) *Engendering China: Women, Culture, and the State*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 47–68.
- Smart, A. (1999) 'Expressions of Interest: Friendship and *guanxi* in Chinese Societies', in Sandra Bell and Simon Coleman (eds) *The Anthropology of Friendship*, Oxford: Berg, 119–36.
- Stacey, J. (1996) *In the Name of the Family: Rethinking Family Values in the Postmodern Age*, Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Stack, C.B. (1974) *All Our Kin: Strategies for Survival in a Black Community*, New York: Harper and Row.
- Stafford, C. (2000) 'Chinese Patriline and the Cycles of *Yang* and *Laiwang*' in Janet Carsten (ed.) *Cultures of Relatedness: New Approaches to the Study of Kinship*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 37–54.
- Stockard, J.E. (1989) *Daughters of the Canton Delta: Marriage Patterns and Economic Strategies in South China, 1860–1930*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Strathern, M. (1992) *After Nature: English Kinship in the Late Twentieth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Watson, J.L. (1982a) 'Chinese Kinship Reconsidered: Anthropological Perspectives on Historical Research', *China Quarterly* 92: 589–622.
- (1982b) 'Of Flesh and Bones: The Management of Death Pollution in Cantonese Society', in Maurice Bloch and Jonathan Parry (eds) *Death and the Regeneration of Life*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 155–86.

- Watson, R.S. (1985) *Inequality Among Brothers: Class and Kinship in South China*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Weston, K. (1991) *Families We Choose: Lesbians, Gays, Kinship*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- (1995) 'Forever is a Long Time: Romancing the Real in Gay Kinship Ideologies', in Sylvia Yanagisako and Carol Delaney (eds) *Naturalizing Power: Essays in Feminist Cultural Analysis*, New York: Routledge, 87–110.
- Wolf, M. (1972) *Women and the Family in Rural Taiwan*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Xiamen Daxue Zhongguo Yuyan Wenxue Yanjiusuo Hanyu Fangyan Yanjiushi (Xiamen University Chinese Language and Literature Research Institute's Chinese Dialect Research Office) (1982) *Putonghua Minnan fangyan zidian (Mandarin Minnan Dialect Dictionary)*, Fuzhou: Fujian Renmin Chubanshe.
- Yan, Yunxiang (2001) 'Practicing Kinship in Rural North China', in Sarah Franklin and Susan McKinnon (eds) *Relative Values: Reconfiguring Kinship Studies*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 224–45.
- (2003) *Private Life Under Socialism: Love, Intimacy, and Family Change in a Chinese Village, 1949–99*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

5 The ‘stove-family’ and the process of kinship in rural South China¹

Gonçalo D. Santos

This chapter proposes an ethnographic description of the expressive dynamics of kinship in rural South China based on long-term field research in a small Cantonese single-lineage village – the local term is *tuhng-sing-chyun*² or ‘common-surname village’ – situated in the southern coastal province of Guangdong. Back in the 1950s and 1960s, the subject of kinship in rural South China was of some magnitude within the discipline of sociocultural anthropology. At the time, the post-war Maoist period, China was still largely closed to international researchers, and anthropologists were seeking some kind of consolation in the exploration of topics such as kinship, which were *then* often seen to point more in the direction of the past and its traditions than in the direction of the present and its ongoing metamorphoses. The region of South China – the homeland of much of the Chinese diaspora and a former frontier area of the Chinese empire – looked particularly exciting in this respect.

At this earlier stage, China appeared to anthropologists as a complex agrarian society in which people attached particular importance to the family, to the practice of ancestor worship, and to the tracing of family genealogies based on the principle of patrilineal descent. This was the principle that coordinated the transmission of family resources (including family surnames) over the generations, and that allowed people to define themselves as members of more or less inclusive descent groups whose apical ancestors could go as far back as the founding period of the Chinese empire, several millennia into the past. In most regions of China, these descent groups were trans-local and dispersed in space, but in rural South China – and this is what made this region look so exciting – these descent groups were quite often objectified in concrete, localized ‘family-like’ units well above the level of a Chinese ‘extended family’ with three or five generations. These compact rural communities came to be known technically as ‘lineage-villages’ or ‘localized lineages’ because their resident families claim to descend patrilineally from a common founding apical ancestor and practice patrilocal exogamy at the group level – other defining factors include the sharing of rights of territorial settlement, the sharing of ritual duties of ancestor worship, and sometimes the sharing of land and other resources (for an overview see Watson 1982).

Writing about the pre-Communist era, the late Maurice Freedman (1958, 1966) famously described this southern phenomenon of 'lineage-village organization' as a 'traditional' descent-centred form of social and politico-ritual organization that clearly differed from other similar phenomena found, for example, in small-scale African societies such as the Nuer, because it was compatible with class stratification and state organization. Despite this comparative qualification, Freedman's emphasis on patrilineal descent as the key indigenous idiom and operator of kinship would have a profound influence on subsequent studies of the region. Besides leading scholars to give analytical priority to the lineage over the family, and to men over women/children, Freedman's work would inspire – in part misleadingly – the development of a comparative model of Chinese kinship as an extreme and non-fluid form of corporate patriliney (Santos 2006; Stafford 2000a; Introduction to this volume).

From the 1970s, many scholars have questioned this 'classic' lineage model because of its overemphasis on descent, not to mention its neglect of the realms of marriage, gender and private life, or its failure to deal with history and with the state (Bray 1997; Cohen 2005; Faure 2007; Judd 1989; Kipnis 1997; Sangren 1984; Stafford 2000a, 2000b; Wolf 1972; Wolf and Huang 1980; Yan 1996, 2003). Like other chapters in this volume, this chapter follows the groundbreaking footsteps of these previous critical efforts, but it does so more specifically with material recently collected in the very region at the heart of Freedman's original model (see also Friedman, Chapter 4 and Brandtstädter, Chapter 7 in this volume). My main goal here is not to expose the limitations of Freedman's 'classic' picture of South China in light of the radical transformations that occurred in the region during the past decades (Aijmer and Ho 2000; Ku 2003; Potter and Potter 1990; Watson 1985; see also Faure and Siu 1995). Instead, I benefit from the hindsight of history to draw attention to a practical phenomenon – the phenomenon of resource-sharing as symbolically epitomized in the practice of food (rice) sharing – that was largely left out of Freedman's lineage-centred picture of the region, even though it has long played a prominent role in the local modes of representing kinship and family.

Towards the end of this chapter, I suggest that this idiomatic link between kinship and resource/food-sharing can help us make more sense of the dramatic kinship transformations that occurred in the local society during the past five to six decades. I also argue that the particular prominence of food (rice) sharing in the local modes of representing kinship and family is not simply an echo of the widely noted role of food as a key operator of intimacy and proximity among humans. Most importantly, it reflects the impact of long-term historical factors such as the centrality of small-scale agriculture (wet-rice farming in particular) in the Chinese civilizational project, especially in subtropical rural South China. I conclude by arguing that these southern Chinese considerations have important implications for recent anthropological debates regarding the nature of human kinship.

A Cantonese ‘lineage village’ in the late post-Mao era

Harmony Cave³ is the pseudonym of the small Cantonese ‘single-lineage village’ (with fewer than 700 residents) where I undertook 14 months of fieldwork between 1999 and 2001.⁴ Since then, I have tried to keep tuned to the historical developments in this village by means of short-term field trips (summer of 2005 and early 2008) and most recently by means of telephone exchanges. Geographically speaking, the village is situated in the poorer and less fertile, ‘hilly regions’ of northern Guangdong, in a relatively out-of-the-way township, the township of Brightpath,⁵ at about 200 km to the north of the provincial capital, Guangzhou. The township area has recently been expanded and currently includes some 20 rural administrative areas with about 140 villages (most of them single-lineage villages) spatially distributed around the market town of Brightpath, where the township government is located and where the local periodical market is held on every day of the lunar calendar with a 4 and a 9. The landscape beyond the market town is mostly made up of figure-shaped limestone mountains, extensive paddy-rice fields complemented by small fishponds and small plantations of sweet potatoes, peanuts, taro and cassava, and small compact villages with many houses still built from fragile yellow clay bricks and tiles. Despite the increasing levels of non-recyclable waste in the streets and fields, the local landscape still echoes the ‘traditional’ late imperial picture of Guangdong as one of China’s subtropical double rice-cropping provinces, and is clearly at odds with the current media picture of Guangdong as one of the most booming, prosperous, urbanized, industrialized and globalized provinces of the country.⁶ This ‘traditional-looking’ landscape is a reminder of the growing peripheral position of Guangdong’s northern hilly areas in the wider vibrant political economy of the province, which largely revolves around the city of Guangzhou, the Pearl River Delta region and the three Special Economic Zones implemented in the early 1980s near Hong Kong and Macao.

Agrarian as the Brightpath landscape may still seem, the township area has been undergoing important transformations since the late imperial period, especially after the Maoist reforms when the state apparatus expanded exponentially and the local economy was collectivized. More recently, the local implementation of the post-Mao reforms from the mid-1980s onwards prompted a structural shift towards a more open market-oriented economy that has recently culminated in a series of official efforts to promote the region for tourism development. As in other rural areas in the province, this has been a complex process of transition from a mode of livelihood largely centred on subsistence farming (wet-rice farming in particular) to one increasingly relying on money-oriented activities such as wage-labour or petty-capitalist enterprises. In Brightpath, this transition to a ‘post-agrarian’, ‘postsocialist’ condition was largely led by the more energetic and educated younger generations (women included). Moreover, it was possible only due to the loosening of the Maoist restrictions on rural/urban migration that

triggered a massive wave of 'temporary labour migration' to the wealthier southern urban parts of the province, mostly to the industrialized suburbs of major cities such as Guangzhou. Here, the Brightpath sojourners remain classed as 'second-class citizens' due to enduring official restrictions on permanent residence change, and they tend to work in factories as wage-labourers or else set up small family enterprises of vegetable gardening near major markets of redistribution. In the past two decades, these new strategies of livelihood have led to an overall increase in the annual income of Brightpathers in some cases to more than 10,000–20,000 renminbi (RMB) (approximately €1000–2000). At the same time, these changes have also resulted in growing levels of socio-economic inequality. These inequalities have already triggered the emergence of class-based idioms of social stratification, such as the one opposing the few 'advanced' (*sin-jeun*) local families who were already able to build a new modern 'mansion' (*lauh*) with industrial cement, bricks and glass windows to the more numerous and 'backward' (*lohk-hauh*) local families that still live in old-style 'clay-houses' (*naih-nguk*).

These growing levels of socio-economic and spatial mobility could lead one to think that the local pre-Communist structures and idioms of 'lineage organization' have already disintegrated, not least because the state also tried to eradicate them during the Maoist period with its various campaigns against 'feudal superstitions'. In practice, however, this disintegration or eradication never took place, and the post-Mao era only came to expose the limits of the Maoist revolutionary reforms. This can be easily illustrated by the fact that Brightpath's recently emerged bourgeoisie of temporary labour migrants has been investing much of its cash-savings back home, not just on modern-looking projects such as the above-mentioned mansions, but also on traditional-looking projects such as the rebuilding of old village ancestral halls destroyed or abandoned during the Maoist period. This widespread investment in pre-Communist forms of symbolic capital is symptomatic of a broader process of revival of old structures and idioms of lineage organization, including the open practice of ancestor worship at the family, village and inter-village levels. This means that the local village people are once again defining themselves in public as members of localized lineages or lineage-villages, most local villages being single-lineage villages. Obviously, this process is leading to the growing visibility of the lineage-village category in the local society. The more so because the customary practice of village patrilocal exogamy was never interrupted under Mao, being still generalized in the township. The same can be said of the customary practice of marriage exchanges such as bridewealth and dowry. However, while during the Maoist era the value of these exchanges was small and was not calculated with money, with the post-Mao reforms these exchanges were almost fully monetarized and quickly reached values previously unknown to the local rural society.

This phenomenon of 'lineage revival' is of course not specific to Brightpath, but echoes what has been going on in many other parts of rural

Guangdong and South China since the post-Mao reforms (Aijmer and Ho 2000; Ku 2003; Potter and Potter 1990; see also Chapter 7 in this volume). Although it is quite tempting to conclude that this 'return of the lineage' illustrates the power of tradition in society, I think that this suggestion should not divert our attention from the question of social change, because these recently revived lineage customs and traditions are only a poorly reproduced copy of their pre-Communist templates. This is because the local society was profoundly changed during the past five to six decades of socialist and postsocialist modernizing reforms. This has been a complex process of transformation whereby the old grassroots collective structures of social organization (including the lineage) have lost much of their material power, not just to the rising Communist state and its various modern technologies of governance, but also to the rising younger generations (women included) and their equally modern, individualistic aspirations. As in much of rural China (Yan 2003), these individualistic aspirations were first empowered by the radical reforms of the Maoist era aiming at intergenerational and gender equality. More recently, the post-Mao institution of a more liberal and market-oriented regime has further empowered the younger generations by giving them more opportunities to move, both spatially and economically. Today, this growing power of the younger generations is quite clear, for example in their tendency to move out of the village at a very early age to seek temporary work in the cities, or in their tendency to call for family partition immediately after marriage, regardless of parental opinion.

In what follows, I shall not focus directly on these transformations. Rather, my goal is to use my Harmony Cave material to examine the 'classic' emphasis on the principle of patrilineal descent as the key idiom/operator of kin intimacy and relatedness in rural South China – this is the analytical framework that placed the lineage at the heart of the study of Chinese kinship and society. My point is not to question the role of descent as a major local idiom of kinship, and one with important social, political and ritual implications. To my mind, the very fact that this idiom did not lose its social power after more than two decades of Maoist collectivism should be a convincing enough argument to anyone doubtful of its prominence in this part of rural China. Instead, my point is to argue that by having centred our analyses in the principle of descent, we may have produced an intellectualist picture of kinship that has largely neglected other more informal, practical and affective considerations of our interlocutors on the ground.

The 'looking for food' business of the local village world

It was only a few weeks after my arrival in Harmony Cave, and soon after having moved in late August 1999 into the humble clay-house of the family of my second host in the village, Bright Gold, that I began reporting in my field notes that I was starting to get used to the everyday life of the village. Every night after dinner in the alley of Bright Gold's residential area, many

men would sit on their doorsteps smoking rolled-tobacco cigarettes, wearing no shirt due to the suffocating heat of the summer. It was in one of these incredibly hot and humid summer nights that grandfather Golden Sun, a 70-year-old illiterate neighbour of mine who spent his whole life farming the local paddies, first tried to convince me that people's lives are really all about *wan-faahn-sihk*, roughly 'looking for rice to eat' – rice being the most cultivated and popular staple food in the region, as well as a major metaphor for food in general. If people do not look for food (*wan-sihk*), Golden Sun asked me, what will they eat? This is the reason why, he tells me, there will always be people farming the land, regardless of a country's importation policy. If we farmers do not farm the land, he asked me, what would we all eat?

As we had been previously talking about the scientific achievements of the foreign western countries of which he took me to be a diplomatic representative, he asked me whether the science of those so-called 'advanced' countries would ever discover a way for people not to need to eat? After a short but disturbing moment of reflection, in which I kept thinking about science fiction movies and astronauts, I ended up coming to my senses and replied negatively. No, I do not think that the science of the western countries will ever discover a way for people not to need to eat. He thus continued. Given that it is impossible not to need to eat, he argued, it's hardly surprising then that people's lives are really all about 'looking for food'. I must say that this first encounter with Golden Sun's 'looking for food' business left me most intrigued. And I eventually became even more intrigued when I started to realize over the weeks that these were not just the philosophical considerations of a few individuals, but amounted to what one could call, to use an expression of Dan Sperber (1996), a major 'epidemiological representation' of what life is all about. That such a representation was not the object of the kind of intense work of cultural elaboration that is nowadays being once again invested in the wellbeing of the ancestors could only be because, so I was learning, it was too obvious to need any elaboration, hence it being of a more informal and practical (if not affective) nature. Let us look in more detail at this more informal and practical epidemiological representation as I encountered it in the field.

Do you see those people in the rice fields, I ask not one but many villagers, what are they doing? The villagers' answer is that those people are 'looking for food' by toiling the soil in order to collect the harvest later on. You should know that, the villagers add, as you yourself have been doing it since you arrived. What about those farmers by the fishponds, I again ask not one but many villagers, what are they doing? They are also 'looking for food', but by taking care of the small fish in the ponds in order to catch them later on to eat or sell in the market. What about those farmers out there in the mountains, what are they doing? They are of course also 'looking for food', but by catching grasshoppers or snakes in order to sell them to market peddlers. Right, what about those gambling with money in the Brigade's headquarters, are they also 'looking for food'? Of course they are, but they

are doing it rather impatiently by trying their luck repeatedly at each round – [some villagers warn me that although gambling is becoming again a popular way of ‘looking for food’, it is as risky and dangerous as it used to be in the pre-Communist period]. Right, what about the young troupe of religious experts who came to the village the other day, were they also ‘looking for food’? Yes, most religious troupes are certainly ‘looking for food’, the villagers insist, but by performing funerals and other rituals in order to get paid cash and kind. The same can be said of the local doctors, the villagers continue. Local doctors are also ‘looking for food’, but by giving injections to people in order to be paid either with a salary from the government or with cash or kind from their patients. Does that mean that local state officials are also ‘looking for food’? If officials are not ‘looking for food’ when they extract rice and money as taxes from us farmers, what are they doing? The same can be said of you, the villagers add, when you spend all that money in transportation, lodging and food to come to our village to (as you say) write a book about farmers, if you aren’t ‘looking for food’, what are you doing?

Perhaps to make themselves clear, some villagers noted – as our conversations unfolded in everyday life – that there had been during the past 100 years many different modes of putting to practice this ‘looking for food’ business. For example, during the somewhat turbulent late imperial and republican periods before the foundation of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, the value of money was too unstable to be reliable. This meant that the practice of ‘looking for food’ was less associated with ‘looking for money’ (*wan-chin*) activities (as it is today) than with activities such as agriculture, trade and even banditry that allowed people to get the food items (primarily rice) and all other barter commodities necessary to their survival and well-being. At the time, these barter commodities were simply the major form of economic capital of the local political economy. Things would change, however, with the ‘Communist liberation’ as it brought about the stabilization and collectivization of the local and national economies. At this point, the practice of ‘looking for food’ became less associated with either ‘looking for money’ or ‘looking for barter commodities’ than with ‘looking for work-points and vouchers’ – these work-points and vouchers being distributed by local cadres to the various village families in function of their relative labour performance in their respective production team. Because these work-points and vouchers gave access to basic food items (including rice) as well as basic industrial products (such as clothes), they constituted the major forms of economic capital of the local collectivist political economy of this period. Things would change again, however, with the post-Mao reforms. It was at this point that the practice of ‘looking for food’ started to become more associated with ‘looking for money’, even if to most people living in poor villages like Harmony Cave the practice of ‘looking for food’ is still strongly associated with toiling the soil to get rice and the other things that assure one’s survival and well-being (*gaang-tihn wan-faahn-sihk*).

In short, the overall point of the villagers is that despite the dramatic social transformations that occurred during the past century, the lives of the local people are still about the same old 'looking for food' business. If the *form* and *shape* of this local idiom are related to the fact that the practice of small-scale subsistence wet-rice farming has a history of many centuries in the region, the same cannot be said of its *content* and *meaning*. This is because, as we have seen, the villagers use this 'looking for food' idiom to describe all sorts of agricultural and non-agricultural activities (including writing books or collecting taxes), and all sorts of agrarian and non-agrarian modes of livelihood (including those based on work-points and ration coupons or on money earnings). This suggests that the 'looking for food' idiom cannot be interpreted in a literal sense. Rather, it must be interpreted more broadly as something like 'looking for vital resources' – the nature of these vital resources being related both to the specific occupation of each individual/family and to the contours of the overall political economy. My goal in this chapter is not to use this local idiom to argue in objectivist terms that 'food' plays everywhere a key role in people's work of 'looking for vital resources' to survive and reproduce – even though it seems to me quite reasonable to make such a claim (see Anderson 2005). What I want to suggest instead is that the social world described here is one in which the reality of this 'looking for food' business is rather explicitly – if not rather over-realistically – socially taken for granted in practice. So is the fact that this 'business' is both an individual and a familial enterprise (see Meillassoux 1981 on the 'alimentary structures of kinship').

The stove as a major metaphor of and for the family

A first glimpse of such a social world can be offered if we keep on following the villagers' informal reflections – those kinds of reflections anthropologists usually have to wait many months in the field to understand. Can you imagine – the same Golden Sun and other fellow villagers once asked me – what is the worst thing officials can do to poor village farmers like us? My hesitant answer could not be more intellectualist. I said, as Maurice Freedman (1958, 1966) probably would, to destroy people's ancestral halls and tablets. Golden Sun laughed, not because he was one of those loyal Maoist farmers (there are still a few in the village) still stubbornly against the so-called 'old superstitious customs', but because it was hard to imagine, he noted, what could be so bad about it for poor village farmers like them. Besides, that had already happened in the late 1950s when the ancestral halls and tablets of the village were destroyed by the Maoist cadres and their supporters, and yet it was not the end of the world. To be sure, it is not so much that when such things happen, people rejoice with happiness – the same can be said, for example, of when the tombs of people's ancestors are pillaged by scoundrels looking for valuable jewellery – but that when such things happen, people's lives are not really put at risk.

The worst thing officials can do to poor village farmers like us, he continued, is what some local officials have been doing to some of us (usually the poorest and most vulnerable families) for violating the restrictive guidelines of the local family planning policy. Given that I knew this controversial policy had reached this part of rural Guangdong only as late as 1988, and had since then been submitted to a series of revisions imposing increasingly tight childbirth limits and increasingly heavy penalty fees, I thought he was referring to the practice of coercive sterilization of young rural couples with too many children. This supposition also fitted the fact that I had already heard many villagers (men and women) openly refer to this restrictive family planning policy as ‘the worst thing of the post-Mao era’. It turned out, however, that Golden Sun had something quite different in mind.

He argued that the worst thing officials can do to poor village farmers is to destroy their stove (*jou*) and cooking woks (*wok*). To be sure, he tried to explain, if officials arrest members of one’s family or village because of their polluted class background (as they had already done in the village during the Maoist period), if they do not allow one to engage in market exchanges or to circulate across local and regional boundaries (as they had already done in the village during the Maoist period), if they destroy one’s ancestral halls and tablets (as they had already done in the village during the late 1950s), or if they mandate the sterilization of one’s husband or wife (as they have often been doing since the implementation of the new family planning policy), it is of course a bad enough fate for any farmer, but it represents only one severe blow among many others in his/her life. If, however, officials destroy a farmer’s ‘stove-wok’, Golden Sun argued, it is like destroying the very thing that embodies the survival and growth of his/her familial body. Golden Sun’s point here – to avoid any misunderstanding – is not that the local farmers find it worse to have these objects destroyed than, say, to have one’s husband or wife coercively sterilized. He surely knows as well as anyone that stoves ultimately can be improvised with mountain firewood virtually anywhere on the ground, and that woks can easily be found in the local periodical market. We can understand what he means only if we first understand the forms of life that underlie the expression: ‘having one’s stove and wok destroyed’.

For a farmer to have his/her stove-wok destroyed by the local officials, this usually means in practice that his/her family must already have reached a state of political vulnerability, economic precariousness and/or social isolation in which it may have become humiliatingly dependent on other village families even in order to have rice to eat. At this point, this family may commit some kind of symbolic and/or politico-economic suicide. Indeed, it may even commit actual suicide in some extreme cases. Our point here is less to understand the details of these historical tragedies than to make sure they do not go into oblivion without us first understanding what they are telling us about the nature of the sociocultural environment here under consideration. Namely, that it is here taken for granted the fact that everyone’s livelihood is about ‘looking for food’, or better still – to put it more precisely – about

'looking for food for the stove-wok of one's family'. I should note that the term 'stove-wok' refers not just to the material object where the rice-based meals of the family are cooked daily, but also to the symbolic object standing for both the family's shared vital resources and their capacity to look for vital resources. The stove-wok (and the kitchen more generally) is also a key place in the house to put food offerings and burn incense in honour of one's patrilineal ancestors as well as of the local gods, including the famous 'stove-god' (*jou-gwan*). This stove-god is one of the most popular gods in China (both rural and urban), and various folktales of its origins clearly illustrate the strong symbolic association between the stove and the family, including the 'conjugal family' (Chard 1990).

This strong symbolic association between the stove and the family first became clear to me when I started making statistical inquiries about family size, and discovered that contrary to the local big-family ideal, the composition of most village families was limited to a leading couple, their children and eventually one, sometimes two, patrilateral grandparents. That the village families were so small is because it was widely assumed in the local village world (where both official connections and family holdings were never significant) that family partition ought to occur at some point after the marriage of the family's children. I should recall at this point that, according to the classic lineage model, the process of family partition involves a dynamics of partible inheritance that is mostly centred on men and patrilineal descent. This is clearly not the view of the villagers of Harmony Cave, as their descriptions also include women/children and marriage – these two being neither less important nor strictly antagonistic to the first two (as Freedman and others assumed). To the villagers, family partition is primarily a process of *fan-fo* or 'partition of the stove-partnership' because its main point is the division of the stove of the father's family into as many stoves as the number of in-married children, usually the sons⁷ (Cohen 1976; Fei 1939; Wolf 1968; for a historical perspective see Wakefield 1998). In the past, this stove-partition would occur only when all the children of the family were married – the task of arranging their marriage being one of the most important duties of parents as social persons. Nowadays, with the growing power of the younger generations, sons tend to establish a separate family stove immediately after marriage, regardless of parental opinion. These newly formed stoves (*jou*) may construct a separate house of their own, but they may also remain in the house of the husband's parents. In either case, they will be economically independent, but they will still belong, at least formally speaking, to the 'family' (*ga*) of the parents – this is why people say that sons or brothers can talk of *fan-ga* (literally, family-partition) with one another, but can talk of *fan-jou* (literally, stove-partition) only with their parents. To complete the process of stove-partition, sons will have to reach an agreement not just on the question of the equitable division of parental resources, but also on the question of who will take care of the parents (the local tradition being that the father should stay in the stove of the eldest son and the mother in the stove of the youngest son).

The point I want to make here is that it is the stove – *not* the patriline – that symbolically defines the formation of each new familial unit. Marriage is clearly a key part of the making of a new stove, but it is not a determining or sufficient factor (for example, bachelors are also entitled to establish their own stove). What makes marriage (and marital fertility) so important is the fact that in the local village world there is an all-encompassing social obligation to marry and get hold of children (one son at least) that follows – among other reasons – from the perceived need to assure the continuity of the family/village line.⁸ It is this social obligation that explains why there are so few unmarried adults and childless couples in the village,⁹ or why people tend to look at the few existing stoves of confirmed bachelors or of childless couples as being somewhat incomplete. Yet, although full personhood comes only with marriage and children (one son at least), it is neither marriage nor children that defines the social unit I shall here call a ‘stove-family’. This is a familial unit of variable size whose members are primarily related to one another through their joint business of ‘looking for food’ (in a broad sense) to be shared around a common focal stove. The local people refer to this indigenous unit as *fo-jou*, roughly ‘stove-partnership’; as *ga*, roughly ‘family’; or even as *nguk-ga*, roughly ‘house-family’, but its contours are not always empirically clear. Moreover, it does not always overlap with the current official unit of taxation locally known as *wuh-hau* (M: *hukou*) and usually translated as ‘household’. I call it the stove-family because its developmental dynamics is shaped not only by the phenomenon Freedman and others called ‘patriliny’, but also – albeit more informally – by the phenomenon of resource-sharing as symbolically epitomized in the practice of food-sharing around a common stove. This stove-centred familial system of relations presents – like the Euro-American – a twofold structure, because it is also positioned somewhere in between the public and the domestic, the ritual and the practical, the political and the economic. We could add here that it neither is on the side of Freedman’s ‘lineage’, nor on the side of what Margery Wolf (1972) called the ‘uterine family’ (which includes only a married woman and her children); it is in between the two, and its power derives precisely from this *in-betweenness*. Let me give you an ethnographic illustration of what I mean.

Resource-sharing – or food-sharing – around a common stove

Although the specific arrangements of each family can vary quite significantly, it certainly is the case that all village families tend to share their rice-based meals in the house, to emphasize that these rice-centred meals come from a common stove, and to celebrate this ongoing practice of loyal commensality in various rituals and festivals. Much of the ritual calendar of the village, as elsewhere in rural China (Stafford 2000b), is often described as a series of reunion meals, the most important of which (including the New Year festival, Mid-Autumn festival and Ancestor Worship festival) even

those whose practice of 'looking for food' has taken temporarily out of the village are expected to attend.

These are the most elaborate meals of the year in which, to the delight of the young children, there will be much delicious and highly ranked 'food toppings' (*sung*) such as pork and chicken, to accompany the more usual, but more lowly ranked, 'cooked rice' (*faahn*), or the equally usual and even more lowly ranked 'rice-congee' (*juk*) (for more details on Chinese food ways, see Anderson 1988; Chang 1977; Simoons 1991; Thompson 1988). It is precisely because these meaty food toppings are more valued than other food toppings such as vegetables, besides being more valued than the local standard categories of cooked staple food (cooked rice and rice-congee), that the local table etiquette has it that the host should always play at being modest and ask his/her guests' forgiveness because the meal he/she was able to offer them did not have any food toppings whatsoever (*mouh-sung*). By contrast, the guests should always insist that there was plenty of it (*yauh*) and that they got so full that they cannot eat anything more (*kai-baau* [*kai-biiu*]).

Throughout most of the year, most villagers of Harmony Cave would not be being modest if they said that they have no food toppings whatsoever to offer. Their precarious economic situation, together with their extremely frugal ethics, does not allow them to get pork or chicken more than once every five or 10 days in order to supplement their usual daily diet of cooked white rice with vegetables. In fact, many village families do not even manage to retain enough rice from their harvests and have to eat rice-congee and/or other self-farmed cheap staple food items such as sweet potatoes and taro instead of cooked white rice. Had they more money, many of them tell me, they would be just like the families living in rich places such as the so-called 'western countries' or the big cities of southern Guangdong, who can eat as many meals of rice with meat as they want on a daily basis. However, even within the village itself, as already noted, there is some degree of differentiation. Some families are more productive than others in the work of 'looking for food' (including money), and thus in the work of getting enough cooked rice and food toppings to eat. Regardless of the nature of the staple food items and food toppings on one's table, the forms of social life to be found at the table of most village families will not be very different from those described below.

The following life vignettes are inspired by field notes describing various early meals at Bright Gold's [my second host in the village] just a few weeks after my first arrival in the village in July 1999, as a foreign visitor with no local acquaintances whatsoever. I shall use these life vignettes from meals at Bright Gold's humble clay-house to illustrate the centrality of the role of resource-sharing as symbolically epitomized in the practice of food-sharing in the local modes of representation and production of kin intimacy and relatedness:

Early August 1999 [a few weeks after my first arrival in the village] –
With the stormy showers that had started to fall that late afternoon, the

usual noise in the alley of Bright Gold's residential area had somewhat faded and the electricity had also been cut (as it usually happens during storms). It was lucky for us (Bright Gold and me) that we had returned from the local periodical market before the rain started to fall and the local sand paths and field ridges became completely soaked in water thus making it difficult for one to flip-flop one's way back home.

As expected of anyone (usually the men) who goes to the local periodical market, we had returned with the small red plastic bags the children love because this means that they might have some nice 'food-toppings' for dinner and/or that some delicious fruits might be given to them. When I first moved into Bright Gold's house one of the clauses in our verbal rental agreement was that I would contribute (whenever possible) to the family expenses, namely by buying some food and other household products on market days. That market day I had in fact returned with two of those red plastic bags the children so love: one of them had 8 RMB (\approx €0.8) of pork, the other had 4 RMB (\approx €0.4) of Asian pears. Since Bright Gold's eldest son was temporarily away from the village working in a factory in the suburbs of Guangzhou, there were only six of us for dinner, myself, Bright Gold and his wife, their only daughter, Plum Blossom, and their two younger sons, Buddha Cassia and Common Ocean.

While the rice was being cooked, the children were unusually quick to wash their bodies near the water pump in the kitchen's inner yard under the fading light of candles and oil lamps. As the rice was being cooked and the pork stir-fried with the water-spinach young Plum Blossom had got from the family's small garden plot, the rain (and its infuriating noise) eventually stopped falling, the children stepped out of the kitchen into the family room just opposite to play, and the already too familiar noisy cacophony of frogs and their friends outside made itself explicit. Some instants later, one could hear Bright Gold calling the children: *kai-faahn, kai-faahn, kai-faahn*, roughly 'eat cooked-rice, eat cooked-rice, eat cooked-rice'. Like most other families in the alley, we were soon sitting around the table with our bowls filled of cooked white rice and our chopsticks attacking the plate with food toppings in the centre of the table.

One never talks too much while eating, at least not before one gets full – after which gossip is expected. It is in fact an important skill to know how to talk while eating and keeping up with the usual eating speed in order for one not to play the humiliating role of the most backward (*lohk-hauh*) individual at the table, that is, the last one to finish the meal – a role usually played by the smallest children who are still not very smart at using chopsticks and who usually end up scattering their rice all over the table and on their clothes. If there are guests, however, the local table etiquette has it that the host should not force his/her speed upon the guest, just as the guest is not expected to eat

faster than the host does. If the host happens to finish first, he/she should tell his/her guest not to worry and eat slowly (*maahn-maahn-kai*), just as the guest is expected not to eat too much or else people will say that he/she is a guest who needs to come to the house of others in order to eat enough. It is socially taken for granted in villages such as Harmony Cave that the way people act towards guests while eating is quite different from the way people act towards the ones close to them. This can easily be shown by drawing attention to the contrast between Bright Gold's attitudes towards his children and his attitudes towards me during our daily meals in this early period of my stay in his house.

Towards his children, Bright Gold remained largely silent, but my presence made him feel that it was necessary to tell them to cool down and eat more slowly, while excusing himself over their inability to restrain themselves from eating quickly – a behaviour that he himself had trouble in restraining and that was particularly characteristic (as I myself came to understand through practice) of meals with nice food-toppings. But Bright Gold was also careful, as parents in Harmony Cave are expected to be, to force himself tenderly upon his children and put some pork-bones (*gwat-jai*) in the bowl of his youngest child and some pieces of lean pork in the bowls of his older children. His patronizing behaviour towards me was, however, less subtle. That evening, although I had been eating with them for more than a month – and in spite of the fact that I had been the one to buy the very food toppings we were eating, and also that I had actively participated in the harvest of the very rice we were eating! – Bright Gold still felt it necessary to play the host by telling me about 21 times in less than 20 minutes (I am not exaggerating) to 'grab food toppings with chopsticks' (*gaap-sung*). And he did so in spite of my insistence, in the line of what I had already learned about the local table etiquette, that 'I already knew the road and did not need to be asked to do so' (*deih-louh, ngh-sai giu*). He also felt it necessary to ask me many times, even before my bowl of rice was empty, if I wanted 'to refill it' (*jong-faahn*); and he did so, once again, in spite of my insistence, also in line with what I had already learned about local table etiquette, that 'I already knew the road and could do it on my own without needing to be asked' (*deih-louh, jih-gei jong, ngh-sai giu*). He also insisted many times that 'I did not need to act like a guest' (*ngh-sai haak-hei*), or, to use an older local idiom, that 'I did not need to act like the literate' (*meih-haahng-mahn*).

Let us now have a look at this same kitchen table about one month later, or some 65 rice meals later. What follows is an adaptation of an entry from my field notes describing an early autumn dinner at Bright Gold's during the busy period of the second rice harvest. That night we – meaning Bright Gold, me and his three younger kids [his wife had already joined their eldest son in Guangzhou] – had some local visitors for dinner, a situation that was

not unusual, but that was also not that frequent as, like all other families in the village, Bright Gold's family had guests for meals only on special occasions such as family celebrations or when outside relatives and friends called in. These local strangers were farmers from the poorer neighbouring township of White Bay, who were often coming to the village area during that farming season because, not having sufficient irrigated rice fields back home, they had just rented unwanted pieces of land belonging to some of the few privileged families in the village who were no longer farming all their agricultural land.

October 1999 [already a few months after my first arrival in the village] – We had been working all day in the fields harvesting the family's second rice crop. Because we were late in the harvest and above all because he wanted to make himself look good in front of all other villagers, Bright Gold decided to approach four farmers from neighbouring White Bay township to hire them (with the money from my rent) to help him with his harvest. After the arrangement was made, Bright Gold asked me to return to the house with the children for us to start preparing dinner, while he and these White Bay farmers would keep on working in the fields. He also sent his son Buddha Cassia to the market town to buy some pork and rice wine for dinner (again, with the money from my rent). That he did so is because, according to the local egalitarian etiquette, when one is helped by local people, besides having to pay them, one is also expected to invite them to one's house for a nice rice meal full of food toppings and rice wine and even to offer them a place to spend the night – or else, so this local egalitarian etiquette has it, people will say that one's house has no 'warm sentiments' and that it also has no food and wine to offer to its guests.

As was usually the case with any other strangers (poor ones especially), the children were visibly irritated and suspicious of these White Bay guests. They said that they smelled bad, and that they heard people say that one of them often drank far too much. They said that they did not trust these strangers, and that they did not want them to get drunk and sleep in their house, as their mother (to whom they were strongly loyal) also would not. That's why they asked me – a total stranger to them a few months before – to help them hide in my room the bottle of rice wine Buddha Cassia had bought in the market. The plan was to impel these guests – as if naturally – to go and drink wine somewhere else in the village after dinner. And so it was. When Bright Gold returned from the fields at dusk with his guests, the pork was quickly cooked and served with rice, but the only bottle of rice wine available was already half empty and could but fill three or four glasses. This was when the most illuminating phenomenon happened just in front of my eyes.

I had noticed during the previous days that the patronising and demarcating 'grab food toppings with chopsticks' kind of lines, so

strongly present during my first weeks at Bright Gold's, had, after more than 65 meals together, significantly diminished in frequency during our daily meals in the house. But what happened during this etiquette dinner is that the above-mentioned kind of patronising and demarcating table etiquette lines returned in full scale, not from the mouth of my host but from the mouth of his guests (those White Bay farmers) who treated me, as every local farmer (from the village or not) who met me for the first time usually did, like a 'total stranger' and a 'western foreigner'. Accordingly, they told me more than 60 times in no more than 100 minutes to 'grab food toppings with chopsticks' (*gaap-sung*) and to 'drink rice wine' (*yam*). And they did it with my host's silent complicity, and in spite of my insistence in the line of what I had already learned about the local table etiquette that 'I already knew the road and did not need to be asked to do so'. In the end, though, they ended up having to go and drink rice wine somewhere else in the village, just as the children and I had secretly planned, as it seems that the bottle of rice wine bought by Buddha Cassia in the market had strangely disappeared ...

My point here is quite simple. As my intimate secret plotting with the children suggests, if one stays long enough and finds oneself drawn to contribute and share the family's resources on a regular basis, including to practise daily food-sharing with the various members of the family, one will soon find oneself (regardless of one's individual will) being gradually incorporated into this familial system of relations. We have to remember, however, as the etiquette behaviour of Bright Gold's guests towards me reminds us, that this is not a process of formal and politico-ritual social incorporation, much less an official one. Rather it is a process of informal and practical (if not affective) social incorporation that is largely localized and dependent on the ongoing practice of the above-mentioned performances of resource-sharing, and that in no way alters (at least when practised during a short period) one's formal/official identity in the family and beyond; though it is certainly not less real, relevant or important because of that. This last point can be easily illustrated by what happened after I moved out of Bright Gold's house into the house of Bright Moral's third son (my third host in the village). This is that the incorporative power of my previous participation in the daily practice of resource-sharing and food-sharing around Bright Gold's stove was so taken for granted by my new hosts that it became a major source of anxiety for them due to fear of divided loyalties. I should add that the same phenomenon had also occurred when I moved out of the house of Bright Image's first son (my first host in the village) to the house of Bright Gold. In many ways, this is also what happened on a minor scale each time I (or the children belonging to the families of my hosts) 'wrongly' accepted an invitation to eat (rice) in someone else's house in the village or elsewhere. Most interestingly, whenever this form of 'misbehaviour' occurred, my hosts would also show signs of anxiety over two other related issues. On the one hand, they

would be concerned with the fact that people would gossip that they do not have enough food (rice) to feed their guests (or their children). On the other hand, especially when our acceptance of a 'wrong' invitation involved strangers outside the village, they would be concerned with the possibility of us being poisoned in some way.

All this evidence suggests that to dismiss – as the anxiety of my hosts tells us that they do *not* – these more informal and practical/affective stove-anchored dimensions of the local families is to dismiss history and its transformative power. It is also to misrecognize the twofold nature of the idiom of kin intimacy and relatedness at the heart of the local family system. This twofoldness follows from the fact that the local family system is represented not only in terms of a more political and ritual idiom of kin intimacy and relatedness based on patrilineal descent (as Freedman suggested), but is also in terms of a more practical and affective idiom based on resource-sharing, and symbolically epitomized in the idea of food (rice)-sharing around a common stove. This later idiom of kin intimacy and relatedness is of course very important at the level of the family *tout court*. However, it is also relevant and extendable well beyond this lower kinship level, as when the village collectives of the Maoist period defined themselves as corporate groups of agricultural (rice) production and also – in the height of the collectivist period – as corporate units of (rice) consumption with their own collective canteens. Today, the newly revived lineages may no longer depend on land trusts and agricultural (rice) production as they did in the pre-Communist era, but they are still defining themselves as corporate units with territorial rights, and this corporateness is still being celebrated in ritual feasts reproducing the fiction of an inalienable sense of commensal unity. I should add that this idiom of 'commensality' (or better still, resource/food-sharing) is also used by people well outside the realm of 'the stomachs of the living', as when people talk, for example, of ancestor worship as a process of feeding the ancestors with incense 'cooked' in incense burners placed in the family stoves or in the altars of lineage ancestral halls. Here, as in the realm of the living, the degree of instrumentality of this idiom of resource/food-sharing is variable and is often difficult to ascertain. Nevertheless, it seems quite clear to me that we need to differentiate people's practices of resource/food-sharing in terms of their degree of instrumentality, despite the fact that even practices with a low degree of instrumentality are not just about affective interests, but also imply practical interests of all sorts.

Rice and food, kinship and relatedness

Recent anthropological writings on kinship have revived old concerns over the incapacity of cross-cultural definitions of kinship based strictly on sexual reproduction and biological connectedness to convey the complexities of the human kinship experience (Carsten 2000; Franklin and McKinnon 2001; see also Carsten 2004). If human kinship in its most general sense is about the

process of reproduction of life, that is, the modes through which the succession of generations and the appropriation of children unfold, this does not necessarily imply that people's kinship arrangements, idioms and institutions are everywhere based primarily on sexual procreation and biological connectedness. A recent volume edited by Janet Carsten (2000) suggests that one of the most elegant ways to deal with this problem of cross-cultural comparison is to look at kinship as an instance of the more general phenomenon of relatedness, the process through which people come to identify and establish closeness and distance, similarity and difference between themselves and others. One of the main objectives of this analytical reframing is to encourage anthropologists to pay more attention to people's own 'cultures of relatedness', that is, to the question of how kinship is perceived and practised in different human societies. My ethnographic efforts in this chapter can be seen to echo this call. I, too, tried to move beyond the essentializing primacy given to patrilineal descent in the 'classic' lineage model by paying more attention to the question of how kinship is perceived and practised in southern single-lineage villages such as Harmony Cave. This new focus has allowed me to bring to light a previously neglected indigenous idiom of kinship centred on resource-sharing that is often symbolically condensed in the idea of food (rice)-sharing around a common stove.

This symbolic prominence of food-sharing – or better still of rice-sharing – in the local modes of representation of kinship is not surprising if we look at China, and at the region of rural South China, from a long-term historical perspective. As noted by many authors (e.g. Bray 1984, 1986; Deng 2003), the history of the Chinese civilizational project is intimately tied to an important relationship of mutual dependence between the peasantry and the state – a kind of social contract that started to take shape during the beginning of the process of unification and state-building more than 2000 years ago. The basic idea of this profoundly unequal symbiosis is that the state works to secure the support of the peasants (for example, by asking them to pay low taxes, by giving them rights of usage over newly conquered territories, by allowing them to transmit property rights through the family line) in order to safeguard its own survival and expansion – and *vice versa*. Historically, this symbiosis has generated, among other things, a strong but highly fragmented class of landholding peasants (with more rights of usage than rights of ownership) that played a key role in the process of imperial expansion. In the region of South China – a former frontier region of the Chinese empire – the 'coming into being' of this landholding peasantry was particularly shaped not just by the mass spread of elite ritual practices of ancestor worship and lineage building (Faure 2007), but also by the successful proliferation of the practice of wet-rice farming. As early as the ninth century, the wet-rice farming plains of the subtropical south were already overcoming, in terms of production, the sorghum, millet and barley dryland plains of the temperate central areas of the north. However, it was only during the Song dynasty (tenth to thirteenth centuries) – when a large

number of Chinese colons began to move south and the state initiated a series of powerful developing policies leading to a major technological revolution in agricultural productivity – that the rice region of South China would become the agrarian powerhouse of the empire. An important shift that allowed Late Imperial China to accumulate the necessary agricultural surpluses to become what Francesca Bray (1984, 1986) has described as a highly commercialized agrarian ‘rice economy’.

Francesca Bray (1984, 1986) has written extensively on how the technology of wet-rice farming has played a key role in the making of the Chinese peasantry, one of the oldest surviving peasantries in the world. Bray (1986: 26, 134) has shown that one of the distinctive features of Asian wet-rice cultivation in general is the fact that most developments are scale-neutral and tend to be achieved not through capital investment or the introduction of machinery, but through increased inputs of skilled manual labour supplied by the family and the community involved in the process of production. In this skill-oriented (as opposed to mechanical or capitalist) mode of agricultural development, once a certain level of intensification is reached, the small family farm tends to predominate as the basic unit of production (*not* necessarily of land ownership), and the relations between family farms tend to remain characterized by a strong spirit of communality necessary to regulate access to labour and irrigation water (*ibid.*: 170, 196). Bray’s point is that this tension between the individualistic spirit of the small family farm and the communal spirit of collective organizations like irrigation networks is characteristic of all Asian rice societies, including China.

My ethnography in this chapter converges with Bray’s suggestion, but expands it into the realm of kinship. Besides arguing that the long-term historical centrality of wet-rice farming in South China has infiltrated the local modes of representing the process of kin intimacy and relatedness, I am also arguing that the local kinship arrangements and institutions were profoundly shaped by the above-mentioned tension. While the lineage described by Freedman (1958, 1966) and many others is more on the side of the communal dimensions of wet-rice cultivation – the same can be said of the village collectives of the Maoist period –, the ‘stove-family’ described in this chapter is more on the side of its individualistic dimensions. If this hypothesis is correct, we should not look at the stove-families of Harmony Cave as a mere by-product of the post-Mao reforms (cf. Yan 2003). In all likelihood, these small kinship units of agricultural production were already the ‘motor’, to use Hill Gates’s (1996) term, of the local rural society during the pre-Communist era. What made them so powerful and so resilient is the fact that they dovetail very neatly with petty commodity production, which requires very little capital and absorbs surplus labour without depriving the family farm of workers at times of peak demand (mostly transplanting and harvesting). Historically, this process of commercialization and commodification of the local stove-families started to occur during the late imperial period, but it was only in the current post-Mao era that they were directly

confronted with industrialization, capitalism and globalization. This is an important transformation that raises the question of the extent to which 'rice' is being replaced by 'money' as the key operator of kin intimacy and relatedness.

In any case, we still have to explain the symbolic prominence of food-sharing – or of rice-sharing – in the local modes of representing kinship. Does it strictly denote a long-term historico-ecological specificity, as I seem to be suggesting? My first impulse as a sociocultural anthropologist is to reply affirmatively to this question. On reflection, however, I think it is much more than that. I think that the symbolic prominence of 'food/rice-sharing' in the local kinship idioms is also telling us something about human kin intimacy and relatedness in general, something that the anthropology of food has already hinted at for quite some time. This is the fact, to put it briefly, that commensality (broadly defined as the act of sharing food and eating together) is one of the most powerful operators behind the social process of establishing intimacy, proximity and relatedness among humans (Anderson 2005; Counihan and Van Esterik 1997). The reason for this, to put it in the words of Maurice Bloch (2005: 45), is quite simply that the sharing of food tends to be seen in some way or another as the sharing of that which will cause, or at least maintain, a common substance among those who commune together. This commensal perspective suggests that the process of kinship in all human societies may well be as open, flexible, temporary and fluid as the Chinese commensal units that were described here. However, what to make of the other dimension of these stove-families: their patrilineal descent business? My hypothesis here is that, like commonsensical biological kinship in Euro-American societies, this patrilineal descent business stands on the side of those aspects of human kinship and relatedness that tend to be associated with given-ness, closure, tenacity, permanence and rigidity, even if they themselves have to be cognized and can of course be strategically manipulated in practice.

Finally, does this dual ethnographic picture of kinship imply that we have to conclude, in the line of the critical work of anthropologists such as David Schneider (1984), that there is no such a thing as natural kinship, or that even if it exists, it is not a cross-cultural category? My answer to this question is negative. The fact that what is vulgarly understood as natural kinship in Euro-American societies is *not* the object of pronounced social elaboration in villages like Harmony Cave does not imply that the kinds of natural phenomena linked to this concept (including the idea of natural parenthood or of biological inheritance) are not recognized in some way (Godelier 2004). Several easily observable facts can help us illustrate this point. These include, just to give a few examples, the existence of a clear-cut awareness among local people that parents have the capacity to transmit traits (physical, psychological) to their offspring; or the widespread tendency among local people to give more value to children brought into the family realm through natural childbirth as opposed to adoption or other means of recruitment.

Beyond the world of the village, there is still another, more general, reason for us not to dismiss natural kinship from our analyses of people's kinship perceptions and practices. This is that the bulk of the existing evidence coming from the growing field of studies of cultural cognition suggests that the process through which people come to learn about kinship is not as open-ended and unconstrained as Schneider (1984) seems to imply. Recent studies of the process of ontogenetic acquisition of folk-biological and folk-sociological knowledge in non-Western contexts (e.g. Astuti *et al.* 2004) suggest that this process is enabled and constrained not just by sociocultural environmental factors, but also by certain evolved cognitive abilities and psychological dispositions that may make it quite difficult to obliterate natural kinship from our analyses. There is no reason to reject *a priori* such hypotheses because they remain sensitive to the cross-cultural variation of kinship representations. What these hypotheses add to our traditional concern with culture is the key Darwinian insight that humans have a common natural history clearly reflected in the structure of their brain.

Glossary (Cantonese in Yale, Mandarin in Pinyin)

<i>deih-louh, ngh-sai giu</i>	地路, 唔使叫
<i>deih-louh, jih-gei jong, ngh-sai giu</i>	地路, 自己裝, 唔使叫
<i>faahn</i>	飯
<i>fan-fo</i>	分伙
<i>fan-ga</i>	分家
<i>fan-jou</i>	分灶
<i>fo-jou</i>	伙灶
<i>ga</i>	家
<i>gaang-tihn wan-faahn-sihk</i>	耕田搵飯食
<i>gaap-sung</i>	夾餸
<i>gwat-jai</i>	骨仔
<i>jong-faahn</i>	裝飯
<i>jou</i>	灶
<i>jou-gwan</i>	灶君
<i>juk</i>	粥
<i>kai-baau</i> [kai-biiu]	喫飽
<i>kai-faahn</i>	喫飯

<i>lauh</i>	樓
<i>lohk-hauh</i>	落後
<i>maahn-maahn-kai</i>	慢慢喫
<i>meih-haahng-mahn</i>	未行文
<i>mouh-sung</i>	冇餸
<i>naih-nguk</i>	泥屋
<i>nggh-sai haak-hei</i>	唔使客氣
<i>nguk-ga</i>	屋家
<i>sin-jeun</i>	先進
<i>sung</i>	餸
<i>tuhng-sing-chyun</i>	同姓村
<i>wan-chin</i>	搵錢
<i>wan-faahn-sihk</i>	搵飯食
<i>wan-sihk</i>	搵食
<i>wok</i>	鑊
<i>wuh-hau</i> (M: hu-kou)	戶口
<i>yam</i>	飲
<i>yauh</i>	冇

Notes

- 1 The writing of this chapter would have not been possible without the generous financial support of the Portuguese Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia (grant reference: SFRH/BPD/20489/2004/119K). I also thank Aurora Donzelli and all the participants in the Manchester workshop for their comments.
- 2 Except where indicated with an [M], standing for Mandarin (the official language of the People's Republic), all Chinese expressions quoted in the text refer to the Cantonese language as spoken in the village area – Cantonese being one of the major Chinese spoken languages. The system of Cantonese romanization used in this chapter is the Yale system with minor modifications due to local variations. All expressions quoted in Mandarin follow the standard *Hanyu Pinyin* system.
- 3 I have chosen to use English pseudonyms to refer to places and persons directly related to my fieldwork setting, in order to facilitate the reading and safeguard the privacy of my informants.
- 4 My initial fieldwork in Harmony Cave followed a three-year period of language training (in Cantonese) in the cities of Macao, Hong Kong and Guangzhou. My stay in the village was possible only due to the ongoing support of the local population. During this period, I had the opportunity to live in three different households and had the freedom to accompany the villagers in their daily

activities. My field data were collected primarily through this ongoing participant observation, but I also used other, more formal methodologies, including household surveys and semi-structured interviews.

- 5 The township of Brightpath was recently (2002) expanded and renamed Yellow Flower (its old pre-Communist designation). Here I use the old term Brightpath for the sake of clarity.
- 6 Between 1978 and 2005, the official GDP per capita of the province increased from approximately €65 to over €2000, an astonishing leap that is clearly evocative of the economic take-off of the Four Asian Tigers. In 2006, the official GDP per capita of the city of Guangzhou surpassed the symbolic US\$10,000 mark.
- 7 If the family in question only has one son, people say there is no need to undertake family partition because there is nothing whatsoever to partition: the son (and his wife) simply inherit the 'stove' of his father's family.
- 8 Today, the local marriage system is monogamous, but I should note that polygyny has a long history in China. This practice was legally abolished in the Communist era by the Marriage Law of 1950, which explicitly prohibited all forms of polygamy. Despite the official reiteration of this prohibition in 1981 and 2001, the phenomenon of extramarital concubinage (with multiple residence) remains an unofficial marginal reality in some parts of China. In the past, there were several polygynous families (with co-resident wives) in Harmony Cave. Today, there is still one case of a man with one legal wife and another non-legal wife residing elsewhere.
- 9 While there are a few confirmed bachelors, there are no spinsters in Harmony Cave, a state of affairs that is quite common in rural China. In addition, the number of childless couples (those without any 'natural' or adopted children) is very small.

References

- Aijmer, G. and V.K.Y. Ho (2000) *Cantonese Society in a Time of Change*, Hong Kong: Chinese University Press.
- Anderson, E.N. (1988) *The Food of China*, Yale, CT, USA: Yale University Press.
- (2005) *Everyone Eats. Understanding Food and Culture*, New York: New York University Press.
- Astuti, R., G. Solomon and S. Carey (2004) *Constraints on Conceptual Development: A Case Study of the Acquisition of Folkbiological and Folksociological Knowledge in Madagascar*, Monographs of SRCO No. 277, Vol. 69, Ann Arbor, MI: Society for Research in Child Development.
- Bloch, M. (2005) 'Commensality and Poisoning', in *Essays on Cultural Transmission*, Oxford: Berg, 45–60 [originally published 1999, *Social Research* 66(1): 133–49].
- Bray, F. (1984) *Science and Civilization in China, Volume VI: Biology and Biological Technology, Part 2, Agriculture*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (1986) *The Rice Economies: Technology and Development in Asian Societies*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- (1997) *Technology and Gender: Fabrics of Power in Late Imperial China*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.
- Carsten, J. (ed.) (2000) *Cultures of Relatedness: New Approaches to the Study of Kinship*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (2004) *After Kinship*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chang, K.C. (ed.) (1977) *Food in Chinese Culture*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

- Chard, R.L. (1990) 'Folktales on the god of the stove', *Chinese Studies* 8: 149–82.
- Cohen, M.L. (1976) *House United, House Divided: The Chinese Family in Taiwan*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- (2005) *Kinship, Contract, Community and the State: Anthropological Perspectives on China*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Counihan, C. and P. Van Esterik (eds) (1997) *Food and Culture: A Reader*, London: Routledge.
- Deng, K.G. (2003) 'Development and its deadlock in imperial China, 221 BC–1840 AD', *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 51(2): 479–522.
- Faure, D. (2007) *Emperor and Ancestor: State and Lineage in South China*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Faure, D. and H. Siu (eds) (1995) *Down to Earth: The Territorial Bond in South China*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Fei, Hsiao-Tung (1939) *Peasant Life in China*, London: Routledge.
- Franklin, S. and S. McKinnon (eds) (2001) *Relative Values. Reconfiguring Kinship Studies*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Freedman, M. (1958) *Lineage Organization in Southeastern China*, London: Athlone Press.
- (1966) *Chinese Lineage and Society: Fukien and Kwangtung*, London: Athlone Press.
- Gates, H. (1996) *China's Motor. A Thousand Years of Petty-capitalism*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Godelier, M. (2004) *Métamorphoses de la parenté*, Paris: Fayard.
- Judd, E. (1989) 'Niangjia: Chinese Women and their Natal Families', *Journal of Asian Studies* 48(3): 525–44.
- Kipnis, A. (1997) *Producing Guangxi. Sentiment, Self and Subculture in a North China Village*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Ku, Hok-Bun (2003) *Moral Politics in a South Chinese Village: Responsibility, Reciprocity and Resistance*. Oxford: Roman and Littlefield.
- Meillassoux, C. (1981 [1975]). *Maidens, Meal and Money: Capitalism and the Domestic Community*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Potter, J. and S. Potter (1990) *China's Peasants: The Anthropology of a Revolution*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sangren, P.S. (1984) 'Traditional Chinese Corporations: Beyond Kinship', *Journal of Asian Studies* 43(3): 391–415.
- Santos, G.D. (2006) 'The anthropology of Chinese kinship. A critical overview', *European Journal of East Asian Studies* 5(2): 275–333.
- Schneider, D. (1984) *A Critique of the Study of Kinship*, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Simoons, F.J. (1991) *Food in China: A Cultural and Historical Inquiry*, Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.
- Sperber, D. (1996) *Explaining Culture: A Naturalistic Approach*, London: Blackwell.
- Stafford, C. (2000a) 'Chinese Patriline and the Cycles of *yang* and *laiwang*', in J. Carsten (ed.) *Cultures of Relatedness*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 37–54.
- (2000b) *Separation and Reunion in Modern China*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Thompson, S. (1988) 'Death, Food and Fertility', in J.L. Watson and E.S. Rawski (eds) *Death and Ritual in Late Imperial China*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Wakefield, D. (1998) *Fenjia: Household Division and Inheritance in Qing and Republican China*, Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press.
- Watson, J.L. (1982) 'Chinese Kinship Reconsidered: Anthropological Perspectives on Historical Research', *China Quarterly* 92: 589–622.
- Watson, R.S. (1985) *Inequality Among Brothers: Class and Kinship in South China*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wolf, A. and Huang, Chieh-Shan (1980) *Marriage and Adoption in China, 1845–1945*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Wolf, M. (1968) *The House of Lim*, New York: Appleton Century Crofts.
- (1972) *Women and the Family in Rural Taiwan*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Yan, Yunxiang (1996) *The Flow of Gifts: Reciprocity and Social Networks in a Chinese Village*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- (2003) *Private Life under Socialism: Love, Intimacy and Family Change in a Chinese Village, 1949–1999*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

6 Actually existing Chinese matriarchy

Charles Stafford

Having read, as a graduate student, about the patrilineal and patriarchal foundations of Chinese society, I was a little disconcerted when I got to know my first real Taiwanese family – this was back in 1987 – and realised that, so far as I could tell, there were no men in it.

I suppose I was, at least to some extent, in the position of the naive reader mentioned by Francesca Bray (1997: 370), the type ‘acquainted only with stereotypical images of “traditional” Chinese women as dependent victims of patriarchy cut off from the significant male stage ...’. I’d been living for a few weeks in the teacher’s dormitory of the lower middle school in Angang, a rural Taiwanese township, which I’d been told was a highly conservative and traditional kind of place. Schools being intrinsically dull, I started following the lead of the more adventurous students in jumping the fence and spending my afternoons loitering in the surrounding village. Adjacent to the school there was a small food shop run by a woman and (in rotation) her four daughters, all of whom were high-school age or above. They were a force of nature. The mother was a smart and ambitious operator, and she and her daughters ran a tight ship. They were also extremely warm-hearted and funny, and the local people seemed to like and admire them very much. The mother clearly loved her daughters, and among other things, invested heavily in their schooling. I spent a pleasant hour or two in their shop most days, sometimes helping them roll betel nuts in leaves for their steady stream of customers.

Eventually, I did learn that they were, in some respects, an anomalous family unit. The township was overwhelmingly ‘Hokkien’ Taiwanese (almost all residents were descendants of migrants from Quanzhou prefecture in Fujian), yet the mother was from a Hakka background, while her husband – from whom she appeared to be irreconcilably separated – was a ‘mainlander’. For most of my fieldwork period, he was living elsewhere in Taiwan. As a result, mother and daughters effectively operated in a world of their own, with what seemed to be complete autonomy. From what I could see, the mother ran the show.

Of course, their autonomy – and, by extension, the lack of subordination they experienced as women – is a matter of perspective. Thanks to her

mainlander husband, the girls' mother had, after all, left her natal community far behind, and in her new place of residence she had neither his nor her kin to rely on. I also never learned much about the financial basis of the couple's separation. It's possible, and perhaps even likely, that the husband had a claim on the profits of the shop in which his wife worked so hard. It might have also been the case (although I have no evidence of this) that their separation was caused partly by her failure to conceive a son. I do know that she, for her part, regretted not having a son, and at one point had even notionally 'adopted' a local military service cadet as a kind of consolation prize.

Bearing all this in mind, what still impressed me most at the time, rightly or wrongly, was the extent to which these bright, articulate and assertive women appeared to be in control of their own lives. To portray them in terms of patrilineal 'failures' of various kinds would have seemed, to me, very odd. In any case, because I was primarily interested in issues of learning and child development (cf. Stafford 1995), I found myself asking: what have these daughters, growing up in this particular family, learned along the way about Chinese family and kinship and gender?

The second family I got to know was a more conventional one, at least in local terms. The middle-aged couple at the head of it were both Hokkien Taiwanese, and the husband (who ran a small construction business) was a local man by birth. His father had died some years before. But his elderly mother often lived with him in his house (as part of a meal-rotation system for elderly support), and he also maintained close ties to his brother and sister, both of whom lived within a short walking distance. However, his brother and sister didn't live quite as close as his wife's relatives – for it turned out that she too had been born in Angang. Indeed, his wife's mother lived literally around the corner from them, and as far as I could tell the couple had more to do with her family than with his. Perhaps partly as a result of this, the wife was, at least in my experience, extremely assertive with her husband; she certainly wasn't dominated by him in any very obvious way.

They had three children, two boys and a girl, who they doted on in various ways. But at the time of my fieldwork the heaviest educational investment was being made in the daughter, simply because they considered her to be the smart one. Again, I found myself asking: what have these children, with these parents, learned about Chinese family and kinship and gender?

But allow me to cut a long story short. As I moved around Angang, adding families to my vanishingly small sample, a pattern emerged. This multi-surname community appeared to be a place with a fairly high degree of (township) endogamy, and quite a few uxorilocal marriages. Affinal ties were as important, in most cases, as agnatic ones. The daughters I met were unfailingly treated with warmth and love, and given uncompromising support – so far as I could tell from the evidence seen in everyday village life. As you might expect, people in Angang did repeat to me the classic formulation that among the Chinese 'men are more valued than women' (*zhongnan*

qingnü). But it was a little hard to see how children could actually *believe* such a thing, given their experience of the local world. The adult women I met were, for the most part, assertive, bright and funny (sometimes obscenely so), and they seemed in many respects to be the equals, if not the betters, of the men around them. Among other things, I was struck by their physical strength and, as I saw it, toughness. I recall a fisherman joking roughly (if affectionately) with one woman – not a relative – about the fact that she was much too hard on her husband, to the extent of even hitting him if he got out of line. She responded to this slur by shouting back at him and then eventually, when he wouldn't stop the teasing, grabbing a slipper off the floor and whacking him, very hard, right on the top of his head.

Local people often told me, in the months that followed, that Angang women were known to be *lihái* – fierce, terrific, impressive. What could explain this? Clearly, the tendency for Angang women to live close to their natal family after marriage might have helped them resist domination by their husbands' kin.¹ Angang is also a fishing community, the kind of place in which anthropologists might reasonably expect agnatic kinship – not to mention the day-to-day subordination of women – to be relatively weak.² And of course this was Taiwan in the 1980s, not Shandong or Anhui or Sichuan during the Qing dynasty or earlier. Why shouldn't the Taiwanese women I met at the end of the twentieth century, even in the countryside, have been relatively liberated? Yet another possibility (addressed by Ellen Judd, Chapter 1 in this volume) is that the 'strength' I saw in Angang women was itself, at least in part, a creative response to women's subordinate roles in Chinese/Taiwanese society and culture.

One afternoon, I found myself discussing all of this with a friend, a young artist from Taipei who had taken up residence in Angang for a couple of months. She too found the local women remarkable. But then she added that, after all, 'China is a matriarchal society'. For outsiders, she said, this might be difficult to see; but to her it was completely obvious.

Women at the top

Could she be right? Surely China is simply another one of the many places around the world in which 'matriarchy' exists primarily as a negative fantasy – as an object lesson about the risks of giving too much power to women. For instance, during the Tang dynasty, according to Jay (1996), we find decidedly odd accounts of 'kingdoms of women' at the edges of the Chinese world in which snakes, monkeys and ghosts are taken as husbands. Then there are somewhat more plausible accounts of matriarchies or quasi-matriarchies in nearby Thailand, central Asia and Tibet, not to mention significant traditions of actual female rule in Japan and Korea. In the latter two cases it was, tellingly, the introduction of solid Confucian standards from China that helped put an end to all that (*ibid.*).

Meanwhile, within China itself, empress dowagers are known to have controlled affairs from ‘behind the curtain’ during a number of dynasties, notably the Han, Northern Wei, Liao, Song, Yuan and Qing.³ But as Yang Lien-sheng notes, this was criticised

... as early as the Later Han period, when in 107 Tu Ken, a court gentleman, and one or more of his colleagues criticized Empress Dowager Teng and petitioned that she return governmental power to the Emperor. Infuriated by this request, she ordered these gentlemen to be placed in heavy silk bags and beaten to death in the imperial court (Yang 1960: 56–57).

However, Tu Ken managed to survive this punishment and reportedly ‘fled to an obscure place where he served incognito as a waiter in a wine shop’. He was later honoured for his actions, and his story went on to provide ‘an inspiring example for literati-officials as late as the end of the Manchu dynasty’ – that is, incredibly, some 1750 years later (*ibid.*: 57).

Then there is Wu Zetian, the one woman in China who actually *became* emperor rather than ruling ‘behind the curtain’ (for overviews see Guisso 1979; Twitchett and Wechsler 1979). She is said to have risen to power, in part, by killing her own infant daughter and blaming her main competitor, the empress Wang, for the terrible deed. Once this plot succeeded, Wu Zetian reportedly had Wang and another enemy killed ‘by having their arms and legs cut off and leaving them to die in a wine vat’ (Twitchett and Wechsler 1979: 251). As you might expect, however, it’s difficult to know what is true when it comes to accounts of this powerful woman. As Jay observes, ‘traditional Chinese historians have condemned her short rule as an anomaly, a gender reversal and a violation of nature comparable to having hens instead of roosters crowing at dawn’ (Jay 1996: 228). Jay also reminds us that, in any case, Wu Zetian

... was neither a matriarch nor the head of a matriarchy. The society remained patrilineal and patrilineal ... Hers is a case in point that having a woman on the throne does not signal female dominance (*ibid.*: 228).

The power of ordinary women

So much, then, for matriarchy at the top. But what about the world of ordinary mortals? Over the years, anthropologists of China and Taiwan have written a great deal about (ordinary) women’s power and influence, or the lack of it. And it has always been recognised that women – and more specifically, married women with male children – could exercise very real power on the domestic front. In an influential formulation, Freedman observed that:

When we discuss the household and family ... we cannot fail to take account of the importance of women (Freedman 1958: 32).

But then he adds that:

When we turn our attention to wider kinship units we may conveniently think of these groups as being composed primarily of men (*ibid.*: 32).

It should be noted that for Freedman, as for others, the importance of women in domestic affairs (household and family) is intrinsically linked to their potential, as daughters-in-law, to seriously exacerbate the strains of family life, and specifically to make worse the intrinsic rivalries between brothers with competing interests. In short, women's power, when it exists, is typically construed in negative terms and *vis-à-vis* patrilineal principles.

Similarly, Emily Martin Ahern and Gary Seaman have discussed the fact that the real or imagined ability of women, as disruptive outsiders, to wreak havoc within their husband's family is sometimes given symbolic form in ideas about 'dangerously polluting' menstrual fluids and childbirth (Ahern 1975; Seaman 1981). And then, of course, Margery Wolf famously wrote about the influence (typically more benign, but sometimes not) which is exercised by Chinese mothers through their 'uterine family', and in particular through emotional entanglements with their sons. But this exercise of power, Wolf suggests, is best understood as a subaltern coping mechanism:

Women, in their struggle for some security in their day-to-day existence with the all-powerful male-oriented family and its larger organisation, the lineage, worked like termites hollowing out from within places for themselves and their descendants ... Uterine families were in fact only a way of accommodating to the patriarchal family (Wolf 1985: 11)

Then there is Ellen Judd's important research on the previously neglected topic of women's ties to their natal families – something which, as I've already noted, may help mitigate patrilineal dominance – and her research on women's very considerable agency in the context of China's changing political economy (Judd 1989, 1994, Chapter 1 in this volume). Judd remarks, however, that her informants in northern China often only *implicitly* recognised women's roles in making things happen, and that more generally 'The culture of rural China is marked by a pervasive devaluation of women that is' – ironically – 'constantly denied in the practice of everyday life' (Judd 1994: 254).

In short, almost all anthropological discussions of Chinese women, including those specifically about their power and agency, have been centrally framed by the facts and/or ideologies of their subordination (at least beyond the domestic realm). Obviously, anthropologists have meanwhile stressed the great variability of Chinese gender relations over time and space, including during the late imperial and modern eras, on which our research has been concentrated (notably Bray 1997; Davis and Harrell 1993; Gates 1996; Judd 1994; Watson 1991; Wolf 1985; Brandtstädter, Chapter 7 in this

volume). However, most commentators agree that even the concerted post-imperial policies that have been explicitly intended to improve the lives of Chinese women, to help free them from patriarchy, have produced at best mixed outcomes, and in some cases may have made things even worse (Croll 2000).

To be sure, images of powerful and autonomous women do sometimes come through in the literature and in everyday discourse. Among a range of interesting examples, Gates cites the comment of a Hong Kong administrator in the early 1900s about ‘the paradoxical situation of the average [Chinese] farmer’s wife, who, being entirely at his mercy, rules him with a rod of iron’ (Gates 1996: 198). But isn’t this precisely the kind of joke that might be made – and in fact probably is made – with reference to women in every patriarchal society?

Undoubtedly to be taken seriously, however, is Yunxiang Yan’s account of changes over a period of 50 years to kinship, gender relations and ‘private life’ in Xiajia, a farming community in Heilongjiang, north-east China (Yan 2003). Yan describes, among many other things, the recent increase in households that, according to local people, are wife-dominated – in which the wife ‘has the final say’ (*shuole suan*), even in matters involving external relations. The villagers suggest that whereas something like 19 per cent of households are husband-dominated, a full 35 per cent are wife-dominated, while in 46 per cent they see husband and wife as having equal status. (Again, I wonder what children in the 81 per cent of households that are *not* husband-dominated learn about family and kinship and gender?)

Yan accounts for these remarkable figures, in part, by telling us of dramatic changes to the status of the conjugal unit within Chinese kinship (*ibid.*: 86–111), and of changes in particular to the position of women (as daughters, brides and wives) in relation to marriage transactions and family property (*ibid.*: 140–61). Speaking of what has transpired, he even goes so far as to refer to ‘the collapse of patriarchy’ (*ibid.*: 158). But I suspect that many readers might doubt, in spite of Yan’s meticulous evidence, that things really could have taken such a dramatic turn. This is because there is, meanwhile, plenty of evidence to suggest that the position of women in China and Taiwan remains problematic, even precarious.

Consider evidence about educational attainment. Broaded and Liu (1996) conclude that in urban China as recently as the mid-1990s, girls whose abilities were equal to those of boys were, for a variety of reasons, aiming for lower academic qualifications. Since then, things have almost certainly moved on.⁴ But the informants of Broaded and Liu considered it risky for girls to follow academic tracks because they would, in any case, almost certainly be discriminated against in employment after graduation. They also had to contend with the widely held view that wives should not be more educated than their husbands. As a result, they tended systematically to opt for, and/or be pushed towards, less prestigious vocational streams (Broaded and Liu 1996; see below). Perhaps this isn’t evidence of patriarchy as such,

but it is certainly symptomatic of recent discrimination against girls and women in education and employment.

Or consider evidence that in spite of wholesale revisions of China's marriage and property laws, 'Traditional ideological constructs' relating to women and property, and to women *as* property, 'are very much alive today ...' (Ocko 1991: 337). Writing of the People's Republic in 1991, Ocko says:

There are still parents who attempt to determine (sometimes brutally) their daughters' marriage choices ...; husbands who, whether or not they have paid substantial betrothal gifts, continue to treat their wives as property over which authority has been conveyed to them by marriage ...; and even kidnappers of and traffickers in women who persist in seeing women as a valuable commodity from which a profit can be made (*ibid.*: 337).

Then, of course, there is evidence about the resilience and even strengthening of some forms of son preference in recent years, during a period when overall fertility rates in China have declined markedly. This is observed in, among other things, the fact that the sex ratio at birth has gone up dramatically above the norm since the 1980s in favour of boys, presumably through the use of prenatal selection (Croll 2000: 21–40). It is also observed in the fact that although infant and child mortality has improved significantly since the 1950s, researchers have nevertheless found 'an increasing disadvantage for females in survival' relative to males (Li and Feldman 1995: 9; Li *et al.* 2004). More specifically, a highly detailed study in one county found that girls who had sisters, or who had both brothers and sisters, had lower survival rates than those who did not – a result consistent with a son-biased 'family building' strategy. According to the researchers, 'The main mechanism of excess female child mortality', as they refer to this phenomenon, 'is lack of use and effectiveness of curative health care rather than nutrient deficiency or a lack of preventive health care'; but female infanticide is almost certainly a contributing cause (Li and Zhu 1999: 21; Li *et al.*, 2004). The scale of the son preference issue is starkly conveyed in one statistic cited by Elisabeth Croll in her comprehensive overview of the position of 'endangered daughters' in China and more generally in Asia. Surveys in Hebei in the 1980s showed that, at that time, 'If only one child was to be permitted [under family planning regulations] then a mere 2.2 per cent [of the population] wanted a daughter' (Croll 2000: 22).

Reconciling the conflicting evidence

Again, things may have moved on since then, and indeed almost certainly have done so in some respects and in certain locations. But how can we reconcile the undoubted evidence that does exist of ongoing discrimination

against girls and women (in schooling, property, health, etc.) with Yan's observations about the 'collapse of patriarchy' in Xiajia, or my own observations about the power and autonomy of (at least some) women in Angang?

One consideration, already mentioned above, is that women's status might vary not only in time (for example, before and after the introduction of new birth control policies or new marriage laws), but also in space. As I pointed out, my Taiwan fieldwork site of Angang – with its 'fierce, terrific, impressive' women – is marked by a high degree of endogamy and uxori-local residence. For this reason, I was particularly interested to read the demographic research of Li *et al.* (1998) about the transmission of son preference in two counties in Shaanxi during the 1990s. They suggest that one of these counties, Sanyuan, exhibits 'the core elements of the traditional Yellow River culture', with large family clans, a 'strict patriarchal family system', patri-local marriage, few adoptions, etc. Here the sex ratio at birth for 1990–96 'was as high as 117 [meaning 117 boys were born for every 100 girls], much higher than the normal worldwide [sex ratio at birth] of 105–7'. In multi-surname Lueyang county, by contrast, large family clans are 'few and unimportant to village life', the patriarchal system is weak, there are a large number of uxori-local marriages, and there is a high rate of adoption. As a result, son preference in Lueyang appears to be weak, as evidenced by a sex ratio at birth of only 105 – which, as the authors point out, is 'quite normal [by world standards] and very different from that in Sanyuan' (Li *et al.* 1998: 4–6; cf. Li *et al.* 2000, 2003). In brief, one implication of this demographic research is that people in Lueyang appear to have learned, from the evidence of their own senses, that daughters, after all, are as good as sons.

Perhaps one could say that if Chinese patriarchy, and all that goes with it, were to collapse in Lueyang county, it wouldn't have too far to fall. And the same might be said for my Taiwanese fieldwork township, Angang, and (from what I understand) of Xiajia village, where Yunxiang Yan conducted his research. For it turns out that Xiajia, too, is a multi-surname community where 'village endogamy has been practiced for several generations', with the result that 'many villagers are bound by affinal ties' rather than agnatic ones (Yan 2003: 37). The authority of patrilineages there is notably weak. Under these circumstances – specific to given communities at given times – we might expect the ability of women to participate in, and even dominate, domestic and public life to be enhanced.

Consider, by way of contrast, the township of Protected Mountain, in western Yunnan, where I carried out research in 2000–01. (See also the very interesting comparison, in terms of kinship and gender, between two villages with differing political-economic histories in Brandtstädter's contribution, Chapter 7 in this volume.) Protected Mountain is a place in which lineages exist in a very substantive way (with ancestral halls, corporate worship, etc.) and where patriarchal ideals and Confucian rhetoric are very strongly in evidence. I was told that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries,

when out-migration to Burma (Myanmar) was common from this township, wives were expected to sit dutifully at home – sometimes for decades at a time – serving their husband’s parents. Such women were sometimes called ‘living widows’ (*huo gua*): that is, even though their husbands were alive (and in many cases had taken second wives in Burma), the women were meant to act out the chaste and sombre life of a widow back at home. As a result, people in this region are said to have warned each other:

Don’t give your daughters to Protected Mountain!
A whole lifetime playing the widow,
and then half a lifetime actually *being* a widow!⁵

Having said this, one of the first public events I witnessed there was the funeral of a woman who, precisely, had gone with her husband in the 1940s to Burma, where they jointly ran a successful business. She had returned to China in order to die at home and be buried next to her husband – who predeceased her – and in the event she was given a spectacular and expensive funerary send-off. From everything I heard about this woman, it seemed clear that she had led a remarkable life, and was far from being the retiring wife who lived in her husband’s shadow. More generally, I think it would be seriously misleading to juxtapose, in a simplistic way, Angang (as a modern, non-patriarchal place, where women have autonomy and power) with Protected Mountain (as an old-fashioned, lineage-oriented place where women submit to men). Among other things, it should be noted that women from Protected Mountain, back in the Republican era, actually attained higher levels of education than would have been the norm in the Chinese countryside, and that the township had a strong ‘reforming’ movement directed precisely towards (among other things) women’s liberation.

In Protected Mountain, too, I met a number of powerful and impressive women, including one who was so tough, especially when it came to business deals, that behind her back she was jokingly referred to as the ‘Iron Goddess’. At the opposite end of the social scale, I met the married-in wife of a pig farmer. This incredibly jovial woman made a considerable amount of money in the reform era by walking many miles every day to sell cooked food to men who were working on construction projects. Her husband openly acknowledged her talent at business and human relations – including a talent for enduring hard work without complaint. I was told by others that she was, without doubt, the ‘boss’ of this particular family. She had, among other things, invested very heavily in education and healthcare for her daughter (who had been seriously ill).

My point is that although Protected Mountain is, in some ways, more obviously patriarchal in outlook than Angang, I could easily produce, from my field notes, a narrative about the (publicly acknowledged) power and influence of women there. And even if demographic research proved that, for instance, son preference is stronger there than in Angang, the power and

influence of women in lineage-oriented Protected Mountain would still, I think, require explanation.

In other words, I'm trying to suggest that the illustrations of 'impressive' women given at the start of this paper – drawn from fieldwork in Angang – might not be as exceptional across time or space as they might at first seem. In support of this, one might note the recent evidence that 'modern' and heavily 'westernised' Taiwan is, in fact, more culturally conservative in some respects than the People's Republic, including in ways that impinge directly on the autonomy of women there. In a fascinating article, Martin Whyte (2004) has suggested that support for the urban elderly in Taiwan may actually follow a more traditional pattern than it does in China. The young Taiwanese women in his sample are more likely than their Chinese counterparts to live with their parents-in-law. They are also more likely to be either unemployed or employed by family firms – and thus to end up with primary responsibility for the care of their husbands' parents (Whyte 2004). Certainly, the community of Angang, in spite of its tough and seemingly liberated women, is said – both by local people and by those from outside – to be an unusually conservative kind of place, one in which Daoist and Buddhist and Confucian ideals heavily organise everyday life for many residents. As one outsider (a person from Taipei sent to work in the local government) remarked to me, 'The people here ask the gods before they do anything – even going for a walk'. It was only a slight exaggeration. Women in Angang appear to have power and autonomy, but they spend an awful lot of their time and energy worshipping gods and visiting spirit mediums, thereby helping to reproduce and spread the (generally conservative) values and precepts of Chinese popular religion.

Reproducing patriarchy?

Obviously, women sometimes exercise their agency in ways amenable to patriarchy. But perhaps it is useful to distinguish, as many authors have done at least implicitly, between the 'ideological' and 'pragmatic' reasons behind this (these are ideal types, of course, and typically merged in practice). On the one hand, a woman might sincerely believe, thanks to a kind of indoctrination, that men are intrinsically superior, that it is morally right for patriline to be continued *ad infinitum*, and that her primary job on earth is to bear and nurture sons. (The actual production of the desires and dispositions that underpin patriliney is, of course, a hugely complex business; cf. the thought-provoking discussion by Sangren 2003.) On the other hand, a woman might recognise that women are just as good (and bad) as men, that patriline comes and goes, and that there's more to life than making sons for somebody else's family. Still – given the *realpolitik* of Chinese gender, notably the facts about old age security for rural women – she might conclude that, all things considered, she prefers to have a son. Perhaps the practicalities help blur the more far-fetched claims of the ideologies?

With reference to the research on girls' educational attainment noted above, a similar distinction between 'ideological' and 'pragmatic' motivations can be made. The authors suggest that mothers with high levels of education may have been 'instrumental in reinforcing gender differences in high school enrolment patterns, nudging sons toward [academic] schools and daughters toward [vocational] schools' (Broaded and Liu 1996: 77). Similarly, they find that mothers with 'intellectual' jobs (such as lower-grade professionals) tend not to encourage their daughters to pursue academically oriented subjects. Is this because they actually believe the stereotypes implicit in Chinese gender ideologies? Perhaps, but the authors stress more pragmatic concerns, or at least a combination of the two:

One wonders whether the reason [for not encouraging daughters] might lie in intellectual mothers' assessments of the relative risks of commitment to the academic track for boys and girls. Intellectual mothers are, after all, in the best position to assess from personal experience both the costs and the benefits of pursuing higher levels of academic schooling and the intellectual careers to which such schooling may lead. Awareness of pervasive male preference in the workforce, coupled with concerns about the marriageability of highly educated daughters, might lead some intellectual mothers to discourage their academically capable daughters from following in their footsteps. It is also possible, of course, that daughters draw these kinds of conclusions from their observations of their mothers' experiences, without the mothers advocating any particular course of action (*ibid.*: 80–81).⁶

At this point – on the question of what conclusions daughters might draw from experience – let me return to where I started, with my first real Taiwanese family: a mother and her four daughters. Given that, as I've said, the mother appeared to be irreconcilably separated from her husband, I was somehow a bit surprised (although I probably shouldn't have been) to learn that she continued to worship one of *his* ancestors at the altar in her home. This was not simply an occasional thing. The ancestor was honoured by a wooden tablet placed on the domestic altar, next to the Buddhist and Daoist gods she worshipped. Every day she burned incense for them all, and showed them all respect. Rather like her stated disappointment in not having a son (which I'm convinced was genuinely experienced as a failure), this seemed a confirmation that China's patrilineal ideologies – in spite of her apparent independence and autonomy – were continuing to define her life. But the reality is a bit more complex, as I later learned from the daughters, and in some ways it relates to some very pragmatic issues. Briefly, it seems that during childhood, and for prolonged periods, one of the four girls had been seriously ill. At the time, her mother consulted a spirit medium about this problem, and the medium quickly identified the source of it – her husband's deceased father. As a father-in-law whose spirit was not being properly

nurtured (thanks to her husband's rushed departure from the mainland), he caused the girl's illness. A tablet was thus produced for him, and placed on the family altar – almost certainly not at her husband's insistence. One could say, I suppose, that she was deluded in offering incense to it, but I wonder to what extent she was deluded specifically in the service of patriarchy. (And what did her daughters learn? That their mother respected their father's patriline? I doubt it: they themselves appeared to have little respect for their father.)

Discussion: women's actual power

Since 1987, I have conducted fieldwork in four different places – two in Taiwan, two in China. Of these four places, I would make the following (perhaps rather predictable) statements:

- (1) women play important roles in enacting and thus reproducing traditional values, including those associated with religion, patriarchy and patriliney;
- (2) they have both ideological and pragmatic reasons for so doing;
- (3) no boy or girl growing up in these places could possibly avoid learning that women are typically strong, tough and impressive, and that they often dominate men.

On the latter point, it probably helps, in the specific case of Angang, that 'private' life tends to be relatively public there, so that domestic issues are frequently aired in full view of the world, thus revealing to children some of the complexities of the balance of gender power – and not only in their parents' households. For example, at spirit medium sessions (which even very young children often attend), family matters of various kinds may be discussed openly – if sometimes a bit too poetically for easy comprehension. Probably easier for children to follow is the (often good-natured, sometimes more serious) bickering between husbands and wives that occurs on the streets and back alleys of the township, or in the family sitting rooms, which are effectively public thoroughfares. The soap opera of township life is recounted here and elsewhere, and moral judgements are passed around for public consumption. In much of this, at least in my experience, women often have the upper hand, and they seldom show signs of being seriously intimidated by the men around them, including the senior men. To the extent that real women have substantive power, at least in the context of 'private life', children surely know it.

Boys and girls in Angang also could not help but learn, from years of direct observation, that many women are highly effective economic agents (hard workers and skilled businesspeople), and in the Taiwanese economy, where so many firms are family firms, they could not help but connect domestic economic activity and family life with the wider economic world beyond the borders of the township.

It is also the case that they inevitably encounter, in various contexts, what might be called the ‘mother-worshipping’ tendency in the Chinese cultural tradition. This is clearly observable in religious practice (especially in the worship of Mazu), but also (as conveyed by things like school textbooks) in the veneration of the mothers of historical figures as diverse as Mencius and Chiang Kai-shek. To the extent that the Chinese tradition openly reveres women, especially as mothers – whether as a matter of popular sentiment or national orthodoxy – children surely know it.

Then there is something else that boys and girls in Angang (but also in my other three fieldwork locations) unfailingly encounter throughout childhood, which centrally involves women – but this is a rather complex and diffuse thing, difficult to explain in a sentence or two. Basically: women are observably key agents in the production of relatedness, and especially of the intense emotions associated with it (Stafford 2000a, 2000b, 2003; see also the comments on women and emotion/affect in Chapter 4 by Friedman and Chapter 7 by Brandtstädter in this volume). Of course, every child will eventually encounter the idea that who you are, in kinship terms, is effectively given to you by birth or marriage or adoption into a patrilineal unit. But they will also know, from direct experience that starts very early in life, that within the main cycles of familial and communal reciprocity – where relatedness (including of the patrilineal kind) is explicitly seen to be produced by human action – it is women who typically have the pivotal roles. Most obviously, women have responsibility for the nurturing and care (*yang*) of children themselves, and are also frequently responsible for the day-to-day nurturing and care of parents, parents-in-law and grandchildren, as well as the broadening of ties to others beyond the scope of the family.⁷

For these various reasons, but especially because of their roles in the production of relatedness, I want to suggest that in places like Angang – but also in more lineage-oriented places such as Protected Mountain – children cannot help but encounter and learn about a form of actually existing Chinese matriarchy.

If by the term matriarchy we can only mean a way of life based around matrilineal descent and/or matrilineal residence and/or political power being solely in the hands of women, then the term could hardly apply to Angang. But if we mean a way of life in which considerable power and authority is vested in women (and in wives and mothers in particular), to the extent that they often ‘have the final say’ over men, including in public discussions, while also often significantly dominating the emotional dispositions and outlook of their children, then there is something worth exploring – not only, I would say, in Angang and Protected Mountain, but also potentially much more widely in China and Taiwan.

The importance of women in the domestic realm – and specifically in their roles *vis-à-vis* children – has never been doubted by anthropologists of China. But I’m not referring here to a kind of hidden power, nor to one that is unremarked, nor to one that can be construed primarily as a form of

'resistance'. If this is a secret, it is an open secret. More to the point: all people – male and female – observe and learn about this matriarchy, years before they become experts in anything resembling patrilineal ideology. To put it in Bourdieu's terms, their 'primary habitus' is often, I think, heavily matriarchal in orientation. (For this reason, by the way, the idea that household and family can be separated out from Chinese kinship – as if a distinction of this kind would be made in the minds of our informants, all of whom started life as children – strikes me as highly implausible.)

But has this phenomenon really been overlooked? Taking a long historical view, Francesca Bray writes of the extent to which Chinese perspectives on the domestic realm, and on the proper roles of women, have varied significantly across imperial history and between different classes (Bray 1997; Chapter 8 in this volume). She finds especially significant, for instance, the process whereby 'a revised view of women' emerged during the Ming and Qing, one in which 'reproductive roles were much more prominent than productive roles' (*ibid.*: 272). However, throughout her survey of these transformations Bray is keen to stress that women's activities as producers and reproducers were an essential, indeed foundational, element in the creation of a 'distinctively Chinese civility' – and, crucially, that they were always seen to be so within China (*ibid.*: 371).

A similar point is made by Gail Hershatter (2003) in a highly thought-provoking paper on the fate of 'the private' in revolutionary China. She notes the undoubted (and sometimes extreme) limits set on women's freedoms in imperial China, but then observes that:

... at the heart of imperial political thought was the precept that activities and values inculcated in the family, usually by women, were the very foundation of social order and state function. The domestic, in this sense, was not at all private. Women's role in household production was also linked to a wider public world. Late imperial statecraft writers ceaselessly promoted women's handicraft labour as crucial to the health of the agrarian economy and hence the stability of the state itself. Imperial state officials did not stop exhorting, rewarding, or regulating at the gate to a 'private' or domestic realm. On the contrary, they regarded this realm both as the foundation of their power and as an appropriate subject for their encomia (Hershatter 2003: 258).

But then, according to Hershatter, political activism in the early twentieth century produced a new outlook on all of this, generating an unrelentingly negative evaluation of the domestic/traditional realm, and of women's (by definition, exploited) role within it (*ibid.*: 259). Eventually, she suggests, the socialist state came to deprive 'the domestic realm of causative status':

No longer a major location from which modernity was supposed to emerge, the domestic was regarded as a merely residual, reactive realm

of human activity. Hidden from history, unvoiced, it became, arguably for the first time in Chinese history, private (*ibid.*: 262).

I suppose I wonder, among many other things, to what extent this perspective – as filtered through our post-imperial informants in both China and Taiwan – has influenced anthropological perspectives, leading us to misconstrue women's roles both now and in the past.

Glossary

<i>huo gua</i>	活寡
<i>lihai</i>	利害
<i>shuole suan</i>	说了算
<i>yang</i>	扬
<i>zhongnan qingnü</i>	重男轻女

Notes

- 1 Although note the comments by Ellen Judd (Chapter 1 in this volume) about some of the disadvantages, for women, of uxori-local marriage arrangements. In other words, staying close to one's natal kin should not be assumed to be uniformly beneficial for women.
- 2 This is by contrast with farming communities, where the need to control land is often thought to increase the need to control women (cf. Acheson 1981).
- 3 Note that, as Patricia Ebrey (2005) explains, it was common for elite women – elite widows in particular – to play crucial roles in the Chinese system of succession to high office.
- 4 Andrew Kipnis notes, for example, that in his recent research on education in China the increasing importance of daughters' education was strikingly evident (personal communication; Chapter 9 in this volume).
- 5 See also Hom (1987: 111–47) for comparable lamentations about wives who were left behind when their husbands 'sojourned' to San Francisco.
- 6 Andrew Kipnis' recent research suggests that attitudes towards daughters' education is changing, seemingly very rapidly, in at least some places in China. I cite this (earlier) research because it relates to the way in which a version of patriarchal conservatism – or, more simply, the expectation that women's possibilities will be more constrained than those of men – can be reproduced by women.
- 7 Although note the important comments by Bray (Chapter 8 in this volume) on the striking historical variation in women's parenting roles and also in the social valuation of these roles.

References

- Acheson, J.M. (1981) 'Anthropology of Fishing', *Annual Review of Anthropology* 10: 275–316.

- Ahern, E. (1975) 'The Power and Pollution of Chinese Women', in M. Wolf and R. Witke (eds) *Women in Chinese Society*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 193–214.
- Bray, F. (1997) *Technology and Gender: Fabrics of Power in Late Imperial China*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Broaded, C.M. and Liu, Chongshun (1996) 'Family Background, Gender and Educational Attainment in Urban China', *China Quarterly* 145: 53–86.
- Croll, E. (2000) *Endangered Daughters: Discrimination and Development*, London: Routledge.
- Davis, D. and S. Harrell (1993) *Chinese Families in the post-Mao Era*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Ebrey, P. (2005) 'Succession to High Office: The Chinese Case', in M. Cole and D.R. Olson (eds), *Technology, Literacy and the Evolution of Society*, Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 49–71.
- Freedman, M. (1958) *Lineage Organization in Southeastern China*, London School of Economics Monographs on Social Anthropology No. 18, London: Athlone Press.
- Gates, H. (1996), *China's Motor: A Thousand Years of Petty Capitalism*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Guisso, W.L. (1979) 'The Reigns of the Empress Wu, Chung-tsung and Jui-tsung', in D. Twitchett (ed.) *The Cambridge History of China, Vol. 3, Sui and T'ang China, 589–906 AD, Part One*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 290–332.
- Hershatter, G. (2003) 'Making the Visible Invisible: The Fate of "The Private" in Revolutionary China', in Lü, Fangshang (ed.) *Wusheng zhi sheng (I): jindai Zhongguo de funü yu guojia (1600–1950)* [Voices Amid Silence (I): Women and the Nation in Modern China (1600–1950)], Taiwan: Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, 257–81.
- Hom, M.K. (1987), *Songs of Gold Mountain: Cantonese Rhymes from San Francisco Chinatown*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Jay, J.W. (1996) 'Imagining Matriarchy: 'Kingdoms of Women' in Tang China', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 116(2): 220–29.
- Judd, E.R. (1989) '*Niangjia*: Chinese Women and their Natal Families', *Journal of Asian Studies*, 48(3): 525–44.
- (1994) *Gender and Power in Rural North China*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Li, Shuzhuo and M.W. Feldman (1995) *Sex Differentials in Infant and Child Mortality in China: Levels, Trends, and Variations*, Working Paper 61, Stanford, CA: Morrison Institute for Population and Resource Studies, Stanford University.
- Li, Shuzhuo and Zhu, Chuzhu (1999) *Gender Differences in Child Survival in Rural China: A County Study*, Working Paper 80, Stanford, CA: Morrison Institute for Population and Resource Studies, Stanford University.
- Li, Shuzhuo, M.W. Feldman, Li, Nan and Zhu, Chuzhu (1998) *A Survey of Transmission of Son Preference in Two Counties of Shaanxi, China*, Working Paper 75, Stanford, CA: Morrison Institute for Population and Resource Studies, Stanford University.
- Li, Shuzhuo, M.W. Feldman and Li, Nan (2000) 'Cultural Transmission of Uxorilocal Marriage in Lueyang, China', *Journal of Family History* 25(2): 158–77.
- (2003) 'Acceptance of Two Types of Uxorilocal Marriage in Contemporary Rural China: The Case of Lueyang', *Journal of Family History* 28(2): 314–33.

- Li, Shuzhuo, Zhu, Chuzhu and M.W. Feldman (2004) 'Gender Differences in Child Survival in Contemporary China: A County Study', *Journal of Biological Sciences* 36: 83–109.
- Ocko, J.K. (1991) 'Women, Property and Law in the People's Republic of China', in R.S. Watson and P.B. Ebrey (eds) *Marriage and Inequality in Chinese Society*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 313–46.
- Sangren, P.S. (2003) 'Separations, Autonomy and Recognition in the Production of Gender Differences: Reflections from Considerations of Myths and Laments', in C. Stafford (ed.) *Living with Separation in China: Anthropological Accounts*, London: Routledge Curzon, 53–84.
- Seaman, G. (1981), 'The Sexual Politics of Karmic Retribution', in E. Ahern and H. Gates (eds) *The Anthropology of Taiwanese Society*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 381–96.
- Stafford, C. (1995) *The Roads of Chinese Childhood*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (2000a) *Separation and Reunion in Modern China*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (2000b) 'Chinese Patriline and the Cycles of *yang* and *laiwang*', in J. Carsten (ed.) *Cultures of Relatedness*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 37–54.
- (ed.) (2003) *Living with Separation in China: Anthropological Accounts*, London: Routledge Curzon.
- Twitchett, D. and H.J. Wechsler (1979) 'Kao-tsung (Reign 649–83) and the Empress Wu: the Inheritor and the Usurper', in D. Twitchett (ed.) *The Cambridge History of China, Vol. 3, Sui and T'ang China, 589–906 AD, Part One*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 242–89.
- Watson, R. (1991) 'Afterword: Marriage and Gender Inequality', in R.S. Watson and P.B. Ebrey (eds) *Marriage and Inequality in Chinese Society*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 347–68.
- Whyte, M.K. (2004) 'Filial Obligations in Chinese Families: Paradoxes of Modernization', in C. Ikels (ed.) *Filial Piety: Practice and Discourse in Contemporary East Asia*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 106–27.
- Wolf, M. (1985) *Revolution Postponed: Women in Contemporary China*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Yan, Yunxiang (2003) *Private Life under Socialism: Love, Intimacy and Family Change in a Chinese Village: 1949–1999*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Yang, Lien-Sheng (1960) 'Female Rulers in Imperial China', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 23: 47–61.

7 Gendered work and the production of kinship values in Taiwan and China¹

Susanne Brandtstädter

On a hot summer day in 1991 I arrive on Niaoyu Island, taking the passenger boat from nearby Baisha Island. The boat is full of women, most of them returning from a shopping trip or from selling shellfish in Makung Town, the administrative seat and main market town of the Penghu Islands. I notice how many of them are wrapped up against the scorching sun, with a hat, long trousers, shirt with long sleeves and black gloves, and some even use a scarf to cover parts of their face in the typical traditional outfit of women in the Penghu Islands. But there are also younger women on the boat who dress much more fashionably, and who carry an umbrella to avoid a tan in a way I know from urban Taiwan. All on board seem to know each other. I start a conversation with one young woman, who tells me she is on her way to visit her family in Niaoyu whom she has not seen for several months. She informs me that she works as a shop assistant in Kaohsiung, Taiwan's second largest city, and has left Niaoyu already at the age of 17. She is not alone there, many of her relatives and female friends work in the same city, and regularly send part of their wages home to support their families in Niaoyu. She says she shares her apartment in Kaohsiung with her aunt and her two cousins ...

On the basis of an ethnographic comparison of Taiwan and mainland China, this chapter explores Chinese kinship as an 'economy of *ganqing*' (sentiment) in which kinship value is produced by gendered work: work that produces gender as it produces politico-economic, biological and moral-social values, and the 'productivity' of which is linked in significant ways with wider political and economic contexts. Niaoyu, a fishing village on a small island in the Taiwan Strait, was the first of two fieldwork sites where I spent a total of 18 months in order to, originally, compare responses in gender and kinship relations to the different economic and political systems that had developed on Taiwan and the mainland. The other village was Meidao, an island community roughly 200 km north-west of Niaoyu, with very similar geographical, social and historical-cultural conditions, but since 1949 part of the People's Republic. What struck me, the foreigner, first was the public visibility of women in Niaoyu as the main producers of economic, social and moral values in this small fishing community in industrializing Taiwan. Most

families, in the early and mid-1990s, were dependent on the remittances of children, and especially on daughters working in Taiwan, to survive economically, and it was very visibly women who were spinning the networks of family and friends in the community that often included their husbands and male kin as well. On the mainland side, after the economic reforms, families too had become dependent on the wage labour of children to finance the most important household expenses beyond mere economic reproduction, and in Meidao's case, young people even went abroad to work, often in ethnic Chinese companies. In comparison, however, women's social productivity or agency was publicly elided and new agnatic solidarities were highlighted. Here, money made in the new global economy had been transformed into the reconstruction of ancestral halls (*citang*), and into the formation of patrilineal values that 'traditionally' had turned women into kinship outsiders. What was shaping this different value-values nexus in the process of kinship on both sides?

In this chapter I argue that 'work' is the key element in the process of value formation in Chinese kinship, structured around a gendered dialectics of inside (*nei*) and outside (*wai*), that continues to influence the formation of kinship values in modern Taiwan and the People's Republic. Work, in my understanding, encompasses all productive social action, not only of economic, but also social and cultural-moral values. Classic anthropological accounts of Chinese kinship, such as Freedman's (1958, 1966), and even early efforts to view Chinese kinship from women's perspective, such as Margery Wolf's (1972), conceptualized Chinese kinship like male *property* and as a set of values that informed social agency. Even if Wolf's famous account described the emotional ties that Chinese women created with their children (Wolf's 'uterine family'), it was women's essential *propertylessness* in kinship for which their emotional work substituted, and their *ganqing* work, to paraphrase Wolf, was potentially destructive of kinship value. In this account, I revert the relationship between values ('property') and effective social action ('work') in kinship. I draw on recent studies on Chinese *guanxi* and gift economies (Kipnis 1997; Yan 1996) that show how people actively produce 'good feelings' (*hao ganqing*) in social relations, and that suggest that such acts should be approached as a source of, rather than as the result of, kinship and gender subjectivities and moral obligations in rural China. My argument also takes forward a proposition made by Silvia Yanagisako and Janet Collier in their path-breaking book *Gender and Kinship* (Collier and Yanagisako 1987: xiii, 369), that kinship and gender are locked into a dynamic of 'mutual constitution' which eliminates the need to find ultimate reasons for gender and kinship forms, and for their pattern of transformation, beyond the social in economic or political structures. At the same time, gender and kinship dynamics are never separate from, but in particular ways are articulated with, larger social systems of inequality. But as dynamic processes, gender and kinship materially sustain, morally evaluate and socially respond to the dynamics of the larger political economies in historically and culturally particular ways.

Through the following comparison of ‘*ganqing* economies’ in rural Taiwan and China, I hope to show how a focus on ‘work’, broadly defined, might also open up new avenues to view the production of intimacy, sameness and difference in daily life (see Carsten 2004) together with much larger political or economic processes that are, themselves, also cultural processes. This relates to Stephen Sangren’s (2000) concept of ‘social production’ that draws on Marxism and psychoanalytic theory to explore Chinese cultural processes, and in particular to his important argument on ‘value transformations’ in family and gender relations. But I want to argue more ethnographically that ‘work’ (whether it translates, with different degrees of formality, as *gongzuo*, *laodong*, or simply as *gan huo*) resonates profoundly with everyday Chinese understandings of relatedness as produced and authored. In a typical Western context, kinship and economic spheres are ideologically opposed as separate domains of emotional states (love) and intentional agency (labour). But in Niao-yu and Meidao, a hard-working or -studying son or daughter was praised not so much as an ambitious achiever, but as an exemplar of ‘filial piety’, and people often expressed their emotional attachment or indebtedness to parents or ancestors by highlighting the values they had accumulated through suffering and sacrifice. To make a relationship, or to honour an existing one, a Chinese person is typically expected to *materially do something* (to work for, share, host or give) in a form that represents the nature of the relationship (Smart 1993).

The anthropological comparison of Taiwan and China is here particularly pertinent for the study of Chinese kinship processes, as the ‘Republic of China on Taiwan’ and the ‘People’s Republic’ have been grounded in radically different views of the traditional Chinese family and of women, and in diametrically opposed politics towards labour. One important difference here was also new relations between labour and space, relations that ‘traditionally’ had been linked with the gendered opposition of *nei* (inside) and *wai* (outside): Taiwan’s industrialization made labour a mobile element in a national market structured around the public–domestic divide, while Maoist China immobilized most of its labour force and introduced new dichotomies to evaluate labour value, such as heavy–light, or skilled–unskilled (Jacka 1997).

***Ganqing* economies inside-out: kinship space and gendered production in Niao-yu and Meidao**

As I had intended to compare the local effects of different political and economic regimes, my interest in choosing field sites was to locate two communities with a very similar social setting, local economic and environmental contexts, and close cultural and historical links. Niao-yu and Meidao, located on opposite sides of the Taiwan Strait, were nearly ideal for such a comparison. Both were tiny islands (Niao-yu 0.26 km², Meidao 0.6 km²), with a population of a comparable size (200 households and 1000 permanent inhabitants in Niao-yu, roughly twice as many in Meidao), a local economy

dependent on the sea and its products, and a history of migration, market exchange and trade that preceded the foundation of both modern states by several centuries. Both communities were also Hokkien-speaking, made up of several different surname groups, and historically married predominantly within the same place. There was a high percentage of marriages with the 'little-daughter-in-law' (*tongyangxi*) in both places before the 1950s.

In the early 1990s, Niao-yu's increasing involvement with Taiwan's modern economy could be best observed during Chinese New Year, when hundreds of neighbours, family members or friends who had found work on Taiwan returned home for the festivities. Work as the source of a particular livelihood had always loomed large in Niao-yu's local history. The village economy, because of the island's isolation and tiny size, always relied entirely on the sea, and it was the rich maritime life of its coral shelf that had attracted the first ten settler families to Niao-yu in 1832. And in both places, but especially so in Niao-yu, it was not so much the division between the land and the sea, or, as Confucian ideology would have it, between the land and the loom, that informed the gender division of labour on the island, but different ways of 'working the sea'. Still, different gendered activities followed the opposition between *wai* and *nei*, a division that has historically adapted itself to different local conditions, economies and practices, but which at the same time inserted a constitutional logic into Chinese gender relations and their mode of transformation.

In both Meidao and Niao-yu, it was traditionally men who fished in deeper water, before the twentieth century using stone weirs (Niao-yu) or stake nets (Meidao) and later boats, all of which were the property (or the shared property) of patrilineal families or their associations. It was also historically men who engaged in commerce and trade. In 1913, five sailing junks from Niao-yu regularly travelled to markets on Taiwan's west coast, the owners selling fish on commission in Taiwan and bringing back sweet potatoes, wood, salt, roof tiles, cloth, fruits and vegetables (Chen 1992: 125). Meidao was similarly dependent on the production of fish and the import of essential goods. But before the revolution, the island's most important income source had been the commercial shipping of cargo between Jinmen and the many small market towns on the south Fujian coast. When I spent time on both islands in the 1990s, fishing was organized in boat groups that often co-owned the boats and nets, and that always used shares to divide the income from the catch – a method with a long history in Fujian (Fujian sheng shuichan xuehui 1988: 110–11).

In Niao-yu, as the Penghu Qing dynasty gazetteer noted, 'The women follow the sea all day [as it retreats during low tide] to catch shrimps and crabs and collect mussels. This is called "to beg from the sea"' (Lin 1963 [1893]: 308, my translation). In the 1990s, they also harpooned blowfish in shallower waters. Thanks to Penghu's growing tourist industry, since the 1980s women could sell mussels mainly to restaurants in Makung, and blowfish skin was a sought-after souvenir. Women had also acquired other,

new income sources: they sold fruits and vegetables from handcarts in the streets, the village had an ice cream shop run by two sisters, all primary school teachers were female, and the new local shops selling items of daily need and comfort were all run by women. But the most dramatic change that 'work' had brought to local livelihoods was the exodus of young unmarried women to find waged work on Taiwan proper, a female migration to urban centres that has been documented for all of Taiwan since the 1970s (Kung 1983). The Penghu Islands had always sent people to Taiwan, either as starving emigrants escaping the islands' traditional poverty and inhospitable climate, or as seasonal workers when raging winter storms made fishing too dangerous for extended periods (Yin 1981). In the early 1990s, however, Niaoyu was a village vastly extended, mainly because of its absent working daughters: all unmarried women in their late teens and 20s, and also some of the men, were on Taiwan working for wages. Many of them had left to become unskilled factory labourers, but an increasing number also pursued a secondary education and later found a more prestigious and better-paid white-collar position. To many urban Taiwanese, small islands such as Niaoyu, or the Penghu Islands in general, appeared stuck in time, traditional in outlook and manners, while the rest of Taiwan was developing rapidly. But this traditional appearance depended on Taiwan's modern economy, and more precisely on the remittances sent by daughters from the outside-in, without which most families would have had to leave the declining fishing industry and move to Taiwan altogether.

Maoism had, in Meidao, temporarily 'compressed' social relations in the village by emphasizing economic autarky, abolishing markets, immobilizing villagers and cutting most of the ritual, economic and political links that the community maintained with others in the vicinity. With the economic reforms, however, the village became dependent on national and international markets, and social and economic geography expanded massively in a way that the Penghu Islands as a whole had already experienced since the late 1960s. In Meidao, women had traditionally been responsible for tending oyster fields, harvesting seaweed and collecting firewood, and older women also remembered spinning cotton for sale to urban weavers before the revolution. Collectivization had changed surprisingly little in this gender division of labour, although those tasks, now organized in production teams, became officially part of the 'collective' (*jiti*) labour that built socialism from below. Many younger villagers turned outwards to explore new income opportunities, not just in China's cities, but in the global economy, following the financial demands of rising living standards and a new desire for consumer goods. In 1994, young women from Meidao travelled as far as Mauritius to work for some years in overseas garment factories before their marriage, while young men found work on Taiwanese fishing trawlers that took them as far as the Fiji Islands. I was told that a young man would now ideally leave three times before finally settling in Meidao: three years before his marriage to finance his wedding; three years afterwards to finance his own

house; and then another three years to have money for school fees and consumer goods, and to put some savings in the bank. The consequences, especially for those recently married, could be heartbreaking:

I hear a young women crying bitterly in a house where only a day before I had participated in a lavish wedding celebration that had hosted nearly 300 people. The couple had seemed particularly happy, indeed a very good match made by one of the local *jieshaoren* (introducers), an experienced old woman known for her 'sweet tongue'. I am later told by the woman's aunt that the new husband had long applied for work on a Taiwan fishing trawler but was very unlucky to have been ordered to leave only the morning after the wedding. This means he will not return to the village and see his new wife for a full three years. Her additional worry is whether she became pregnant on the wedding night, if not she might be ridiculed as useless and being too old until her husband comes back.

Changes in local economies on both islands had meant increased mobility and a geographical expansion of family life that affected gender and generational relations. Especially in Meidao, new income opportunities important to families often implied the disruption of normal family relations and married life. At the same time, moving 'outward' no longer increased the value of work from a national perspective (as under Mao the more 'outward' a work, the higher its socialist value), but the economic reforms had reduced this 'sacrifice' of outside work to a much more private – an 'inner' – affair, as villagers worked now primarily for themselves and their families, or, in the case of unmarried women, even 'merely' for their dowries.

As is often the case in China, people in Meidao were convinced that they were less traditional (*chuantong*) than their counterparts across the Taiwan Strait, and since the 1980s the community had reimported some forgotten ritual practices through revived Taiwanese contacts. But in terms of family relations, especially with regard to the spatial and social division of *nei* and *wai*, it was Meidao that appeared more traditional. Consider the following two scenes, both taking place at the house of the respective village head in Niao-yu and Meidao. In both cases I had visited to obtain some census data and to discuss local politics. This is how I later recorded the meetings:

Niao-yu, Taiwan, October 1996. Visited the village head in Niao-yu. When I came into his office, I found only his wife and a female friend of hers who was plucking a chicken to prepare lunch for her family. I sat down and waited for about half an hour for the village head to arrive. During this time his wife, who was sitting at her husband's office desk, chatted with me and her friend about village affairs. When her husband arrived, she remained at his desk with her feet on the table, while he made some tea and offered me some cookies and then sat down on the

sofa to answer my questions. While we were talking, his wife answered his telephone calls, was on the phone to some of her friends and occasionally interrupted our conversation to express her views on some of the things her husband had just told me.

Meidao, PRC, October 1994. Went to a dinner invitation at the house of the village head. As usual, it was an all male affair with me being the only woman at the table. While I was having dinner with both the party secretary and the village head and some other members of the village government, the wife and the mother of the village head were serving the food. I told the village head that I had had a conversation with his wife a couple of days ago. He looked at me in surprise and exclaimed, with her standing next to him: 'But she doesn't speak Mandarin, she speaks only the local dialect! She never went to school! She is too stupid!' Even when I insisted that I had spoken with his wife in Mandarin, he continued to claim that she couldn't understand it. His wife didn't say a word and continued silently to bring in food and take empty plates away.

The setting in Meidao was more formal, and there are of course differences of particular marriages and personal character. But my comparative fieldwork suggests that the contrast here was so strong *because* it was telling. Despite revolutionary policies that allowed some women to enter party politics, and women's integration into collective production, in Meidao a much stronger defined 'outer' male sphere of interpersonal relations existed where women's agency was habitually erased or disguised (also by the women themselves). While I stayed in the village, Meidao had a female women's representative (*funü daibiao*) with an unusual public presence and a wide-reaching influence, and already in the 1950s the brigade had a female party secretary who was the wife of the local army commander. The vast majority of women without political office, however, would prefer to fall silent in the presence of outsiders, gesture their husband to answer questions, and retreat to the kitchen when guests visited. There was nothing shy about these women, who in more familiar contexts (in the double sense) could often be loud and boisterous. But they clearly considered it inappropriate or unwise to initiate social exchanges or venture their own opinions in settings with outsiders.

The division between a female inside and male outside was also marked in ordinary social activities in the community. After tending to their seaweed fields, married women would usually spend a large part of the day in the inner courtyards of the traditionally built houses, working alone or together with female relatives and friends. Men, who were fishermen or worked in local trade, spent their leisure time watching TV in the *keting*, a family home's main reception room that also housed the domestic altar, and groups of men would regularly meet in a village office or in one of the restored ancestral halls to chat and play cards. Like many other villages in south China, Meidao had seen a 'race' to reconstruct these traditional buildings

which, together with the local temples, Mao had regarded as the key symbols of feudal superstition (*fengjian mixin*) that retarded national progress. Now they were resurrected with money made in the global economy, and as one of the new *tiaozhang* (branch leaders) in Niaoyu admitted, corporate patriline was again a major force of social organization and political power in the village: ‘The political pressure (*yali*) exerted by the larger groups on the smaller is again very large’, he told me. I met even young women who, despite their traditionally weak claims on membership, considered sacrificing some of their income for the calendrical festivities of ‘their group’.

In Niaoyu, in contrast, villagers had already in the 1970s stopped performing public ancestor rites. Wu Qingshui, an elderly fisherman who remembered organizing the Winter Solstice festivities for the western Wu, explained me that too many young men had left the village and that the others were only ‘interested in their own freedom’ (*guan ziji de ziyou*). Young couples – and in particular young men – often referred to the value of ‘freedom’ in personal conversations, especially when they described why, for example, they wished to live apart from parents, or preferred a fisherman’s life to that of an employee in a Taiwan company. Women in Niaoyu had never held political office, and – as the example of a young mother who, because of high-school education, had been asked to stand as a candidate but declined – they also did not show much ambition to gain public office. But in settings where Meidao’s women would ‘erase’ their agency, Niaoyu’s women would remain outspoken and assertive, and sometimes were so publicly critical of their ‘useless’ husbands that they easily fitted the stereotype ‘ferocious’ (*lihai*).

I do not wish to claim that these two villages, which are in many ways exceptional, represent China or Taiwan, and there are probably numerous counter-examples from other places on either side. But I believe that the comparative visibility of women as producers of social value allows insights into the dynamic relationships of work and emotion, and moral value and kinship formation, which also shape the relationships between kinship processes and larger economic and political processes. The ‘traditional Chinese family’, as Barbara Ward (1985) argued long ago, was first and foremost a ‘conscious model’ of the family, which linked highly diverse rural and urban worlds with the body politic of the imperial state. As I want to argue here, what responded to, and was part, of historical political economies was not this ‘conscious model’, but processual kinship and its matrix of value formation – a familial ‘economy of *ganqing*’, in which the production of social value and its cultural form was shaped by the *nei-wai* ‘mutual constitution’ of kinship and gender.

The duality *wai* and *nei* has most fundamentally pertained to the gendering of both labour and space, and, as Goodman and Larson (2005) argued in their recent book, it exhibited a greater gender ‘fixity’ than, for example, the related duality of *yin* and *yang*: ‘A woman may be relatively *yang* to her son, but she is not relatively outer’ (Goodman and Larson 2005: 4). I suggest

that this fixity resulted from the cross-link between inside–outside as the gendered work and inside–outside as kinship value, and its importance for distributing rights in people and things in rural China. This dynamic constitution has generally been obscured by conflating both – patrilineal kinship was what delimited women’s space of agency. In my reverse reading, *nei* work produced familiarity (in a multiple sense), while *wai* work produced the non-familiar (politics, strangers and, by extension, the state). At least in Fujian and Taiwan, people used the terminology *nei* and *wai* also in a property sense to describe essentially different kinship values. Here the ‘algebraic signs’ of gender were reversed: *nei* was the male world of inherited kinship property and of kinship bonds that formed a bounded centre, to which all women were more *wai* (‘girls facing outside’),² and where *wai* kin were a ‘product’ of female relatives (for example, *waisun* is a grandchild born to a daughter). This kinship-as-property perspective located men inside, and stands in contrast to, for example, the famous appellation *neiren*, ‘inner person’, for a wife who should *act* inside. Daughters-in-law gained ritual recognition as family by giving birth to a son, maybe their most important *nei* work. A hegemonic view of kinship as inherited male property, which in premodern China was embedded with the reproduction of the imperial cosmos (Faure 2007), thus mitigated against the recognition of women as producers of value (also see Gates 1989). This is the view, ‘normalized’ in structural–functional anthropological accounts of Chinese families, of the agency of women, and of the relationship of family dynamics to property and labour (classic examples are Cohen 1976; Freedman 1958).

‘Cracks’ in this hegemony could be found in local religion and ritual practices, revealing what Emily Martin called ‘different female and male ideologies of life and death’: the first working towards ‘the unity of opposites, denigration of separation [...] and celebration of cyclic exchange. On the male side [in contrast], we see constant efforts to separate opposites, to maintain and make oppositions steadfast, and desire for attainment of eternally unchanging social status’ (Martin 1988: 173). My argument here is that Chinese kinship comes in a duality of form: male kinship, associated with genealogical time and the politics of place, with origins, shares, bones, property and bounded centres; and female kinship associated with circular time, nurture, blood-flesh, spatial flows, emotional closeness, gift-like in form and substance. Both forms of kinship are realized in work and its products, and it is their dynamic coming together in the constitution of families and states that is central to making sense of the historical ‘metamorphoses’ of gender and kinship on both sides of the Taiwan Strait.

China and Taiwan: wrestling control over labour from the family

Female work, its value and the question of its visibility has long played a central role in Marxist feminism, most prominently during the 1970s and 1980s, when Marxist feminists argued that the male ownership of property

and women's confinement to the domestic or private sphere rendered women's productivity invisible, which was seen as a central factor in women's subordination and a strategic asset for capitalist economies that accumulated profit from women's unpaid or underpaid housework (for an overview see Moore 1988: ch. 3–4). Such accounts strike us today as reductionist, as they explain the formation of the social mainly, or even only, through economic rationalities and structures. Recent anthropological studies have, in contrast, highlighted the 'moral' or 'emotional' values produced by gendered labour in 'modern' or even capitalist' contexts. They have demonstrated how important the alignment of such moral economies with the larger cultural economies of states has been to national economies and projects of state-building and nation-construction, something that has become particularly visible in postsocialist countries (Gal and Kligman 2000, Pine 2007, Reed 2007; also see Adkins and Lury 1999).

For both island communities, the twentieth century meant increasingly direct involvement in larger politics – including Japanese occupation, civil war, the closing of the 'bamboo curtain' in the Taiwan Strait, and then their integration into two different 'revolutionary' projects of state-building. The construction of ideologically directly opposed 'new societies' on either side of the Taiwan Strait bore itself out in radically different politics towards the family and women, as well as in a radically different approach to labour and its appropriation by the state. Either positively or negatively appropriated, the 'traditional Chinese family' and women's role in it played the most important anchor for the hegemonic projects of both states. Mao, following Engels, linked the 'liberation' (*jiefang*) of women with the liberation of their labour power from familial control, and the collectivization (or, better, etatization) of labour and land, all of which also formed the precondition of the construction of a 'Great Socialist Country'. The Guomindang on Taiwan regarded the preservation of traditional family values as the most important bulwark against Communist infiltration, and placed great emphasis on a maternal, feminine image of modern woman (*nüren*). Already in 1928, one year after the split with the Communists on the mainland, a Guomindang pamphlet had stated: 'The meaning of the women's movement is not to annihilate masculine strength, men's valour, nor is it to put an end to the grace of women's nature or avoid the function of motherhood ... the women's movement [from now on] must cut out, root and branch, this attitude of antagonism of the sexes' (quoted by Croll 1978: 155).

At the same time, wrestling control over labour from the *jia* (the family-household) and subordinating it to a new value standard linked to the state (the national market and currency in Taiwan; 'work-points' in the People's Republic) was essential for the developing states on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. But labour had already been a central concern of statecraft under the empire. The imperial state had been mostly interested in the extraction of taxes from peasant households; parallel to this, however, it sought to engage the *jia* in building a civilization through 'virtuous work'. Francesca Bray

(1997) is, to my knowledge, the first anthropologist to explore the parallel cultural value of certain kinds of labour in imperial China, where Confucians saw a fundamental aspect of the moral–cultural order realized in the duality ‘men plough and women weave’. As Bray points out, when weaving later became a male and urban profession, women’s work became less culturally visible or valued – although, as Bray also notes, its economic value actually increased towards the end of the dynastic order. If we define work as a value-creating activity in the wider sense, however, then ‘cultivating virtue’, which under the Qing became important even for peasant women, was an equally visible ‘womanly work’, even if detached from economic production. In the Qing gazetteer on the Penghu Islands, where the official chronicler disdainfully reported that ‘women do not weave’, the longest chapter is actually on the islands’ ‘virtuous women’ (*lienü*). The imperial state here obviously sought to align women’s productivity in the ‘economy of *ganqing*’ with the reproduction of the state’s cultural order – often against the interests of the *jia*, as for example in its prohibition of widow remarriage.

What happened to the ‘labour–value’ nexus and the articulation between family and state on both sides of the Taiwan Strait after 1949? In China, importantly, socialist public labour was defined by its ‘total’ (economic, social and political–ideological) value. But despite the entry of (some) women into politics, the general correlation between male outer and female inner work also remained the same, even if the dichotomy was now rationalized in terms of heavy/light or skilled/unskilled labour (Jacka 1997). Most of Meidao’s men worked only as boys in the teams, and then moved outwards to work in the fishing or stone-breaking specialized teams (*zhuanye dui*) at the brigade level, or for the commune in the new shipping cooperative where they earned considerably more. Women, in contrast, worked from the 1970s onwards as unmarried girls temporarily in the brigade’s embroidery factory (*xiuhua chang*) or seaweed team (*zicai dui*), to then move inward again and work exclusively for their (often new) production team after marriage.

Through the work-point system, the new value standard of socialist labour, the socialist state came to present itself as the owner of all public (productive) labour and land, and thus ultimately as the source of all public values. Socialist collectivization attempted not only to appropriate economic values and destroy ‘traditional solidarities’, but also to redirect moral or kinship values towards its new cultural economy. Kipnis strikingly reports from Zouping village how Maoists prohibited cross-class weeping at funerals (an emotional ‘labour’ typically performed by women) in order to undermine the production of empathy with class enemies who were also kin (Kipnis 1997: 1). But such alignment never succeeded entirely (also see Kipnis, Chapter 9 in this volume). In Meidao, which as a border village was directly involved in 1958 in the military confrontation over Jinmen Island, many simple white gravestones represented the ‘official’ memory that many male villagers sacrificed their lives in a heroic effort to ‘liberate Jinmen’ (*jiefang*

Jinmen). Oral family histories, in contrast, typically remembered a son, father or son-in-law who lost his life fishing too close to *Jinmen* (and therefore being shot by the Guomindang) in an effort to feed his family during the time of the great famine.

It is important here to point out that a woman (*funü*) who, in socialist China, participated in public production was considered a product of the new state. Under the Imperial State, female subject positions had always been familial: daughter, mother, wife, sister (the exception was maybe *lienü*, but that was a title). The Maoist *funü* was, in contrast, a 'collective woman' represented by the women's federation (*fulian*), and a new woman formed in public labour and political work (Barlow 1994). As *funü* was created against 'woman-in-the-family', the different public behaviour of 'family women' and 'political women' in Meidao might become more understandable. I suggest that *funü* represented more generally the socialist state's attempt to control the labour-value nexus, and to appropriate not just the economic value of women's work but also its moral and emotional value. In a sense, *funü* was the national subject liberated from historical invisibility *par excellence*. Its 'other' on Taiwan was *nüren*, a generic woman defined by an essential femininity seen as protected by the Guomindang state.

In Taiwan, the industrializing state proceeded on a different path to gain control over the value-values matrix: it turned labour into a commodity, the value of which was determined by the national and, increasingly, the international market. This implied the separation of labour's economic value – now a quantifiable, sellable aspect of citizens – from the production of cultural-political values: industrial labour was neither 'virtuous' nor 'political' in post-war Taiwan. Instead, the Guomindang state ideologically enlarged the family to the nation-family (*guojia*) as the protector of kinship values and the focus of a new form of filial piety (*xiaoshun*) (Stafford 1992). But constructing the cultural economy of the new state here also depended most directly on politics concerning women and the family. The Guomindang's Woman Department promoted an image of women as loving mothers, devoted wives, obedient daughters-in-law as well as dedicated patriots and charity workers (Chiang and Ku 1985: 27–28). 'Mother's workshops' (*mama jiaoshi*) trained women in hygiene and child education, as well as in handicrafts and other skills that could produce an additional family income. With industrialization from the 1970s onwards, a whole army of 'working daughters' were asked to discharge their filial obligations (and, incidentally, to 'develop' the country) through unskilled, underpaid factory labour. Studies show how, in contrast to Maoist China, familial-like relations were reproduced at the workplace, with the factory foreman posing as 'elder brother' (*dage*) to be respected and obeyed, and strictly controlled dormitories replacing parental control (Kung 1983).

Although it was formally under 'conservative' rule, social transformations in Niaooyu were, in the end, as profound as those in Meidao. Within one generation, the old family ideal of many sons changed into an ideal of

having two children: one girl and one boy. Village women, who in the past had rarely left the island, now shopped regularly in Makung, and many villagers flew several times each year to Taiwan to work or to visit friends and relatives. No family could do without money earned on Taiwan, and even moving house several times between Taiwan and Niaoyu was not unusual. As a result, there were more women from Taiwan who had married into Niaoyu in recent years, but an even larger number of Niaoyu's 'working daughters' had found a husband on Taiwan. The consequence was that a growing number of young men had not married even past the age of 30. This had earned Niaoyu the nickname *heshang dao* (monk island) in Penghu. But despite these disruptions of 'normal' family life, in the villagers' view the survival of the community still depended on the modern metamorphoses of filial piety: in the 1990s to work in Taiwan to support their family back home was perceived as the *ordinary* expression of filial piety for unmarried daughters, while sons would more often remain home to work in the boat group of their father. When I stayed in Niaoyu, not a single grown-up unmarried daughter lived on the island. People explained this gender division of labour neither with the 'tradition' that women marry out (and thus have less time for supporting parents), nor with the 'fact' that there was more work for women in factories. It was, rather, that 'daughters are more filial (*bijiao xiaoshun*) [than sons].' Working sons, I heard, always kept most of their wages for themselves and were also more likely to meet the wrong people and get into trouble. Some parents also told me that *nühaizi* (girls) preferred to live in the city where they could 'avoid the sun, be with friends, and buy new clothes'. But in the end, family needs decided: 'If we [people in Niaoyu] don't make enough money with fishing', Yumei, a mother of three working daughters in Kaohsiung, explained, 'we'll send our daughters to Taiwan.' Taiwanese women, in sum, did not enter the national workforce as individuals or as part of 'the people', but as filial daughters (or dutiful wives) discharging national duties through familial duties. The Taiwanese state was thereby able to create a readily available pool of low-paid labour for its industrializing national economy. At the same time, it globally marketed a labour force of 'nimble fingers' – femininity (*nüxing*) par excellence – as a national asset that enhanced the country's competitive economic edge. I will argue, however, that 'filial piety' is a bad description of the motives of young women, whose work actively produced values within an economy of *ganqing* that strengthened the link between themselves and their parents.

Money, work and sincerity: producing kinship in Meidao and Niaoyu

I sit in the house of Xiaolin, 30 years old, who returned to Niaoyu seven years ago to marry a neighbour's son. She had worked in Taichung in a shoe factory, but her mother wanted her to marry in Niaoyu so that she

can have her daughter close by. She now helps to look after Xiaolin's five-year-old daughter. Both Xiaolin and her husband work in local boat groups, though in different ones, and still return to Taiwan in winter for a shorter time to have some income when the winter storms make fishing impossible in Niaoyu. Their house is simple and has only few rooms, but there is space for enlargement. Xiaolin is unhappy with her husband, who, like many men in Niaoyu, is a heavy drinker and likes to gamble in his leisure time. I interview her about family life in Niaoyu. At some point she bursts out: I bought *everything* in this house with my own money, she tells me with a sweeping gesture, and, pointing at her husband who sits at the table, *he* wastes all his money on drink and Mah-jongg. She has so much money that she does not know what to do with it anymore, he answers in a defiant tone.

Not just on the mainland – where liberation narratives placed the nature of work as an indicator of social change in the foreground – but also in Taiwan villages such as Niaoyu, people narrated change, and especially a new quality in family or gender relations, by invoking new divisions of labour and new flows of income, and they frequently morally evaluated spouses, children, and other family members by pointing to how much – or how little – work they did for the family, close kin and friends. Frequent misgivings in the village against daughters-in-law from Taiwan were typically voiced by reproaching them to be 'spoilt' or to 'uselessly' sit around in the house, and as many of them came from poor regions and had not brought a dowry, such negative gossip was often topped by the remark that they had been 'bought' (*maide*). They were also suspected of plotting to return to Taiwan with their husband. A young wife from Taiwan, in contrast, told me that she rarely left her house in Niaoyu as 'I have no friends here'.

In Meidao, shifting divisions of labour and patterns of familial support were also evoked to discuss social changes in China more generally. Men felt that their labour power (and thus themselves) had been 'brought down' to compare with women, and they often would link this with remarks about the general devaluation of peasant labour in the post-Maoist reforms. Many of them had lost a prestigious job in a shipping cooperative when it closed down in 1987, while the female work of growing and harvesting seaweed had brought increasing financial return. Some of the older men were used to calling their wives 'housewives' (*jiating funü*) even during the collective era, possibly because they 'only' worked inside the teams and in private production. This had changed with the economic reforms: 'You see', a retired cadre said, embittered, while we watched village women returning from the seaweed harvest in the tidal basin, 'even women's labour power is now bigger than men's.' In both places, people did not primarily reason about the social 'impact' of economic reforms or of Taiwan's industrialization. Instead, while talking about work, money and property, people spoke about the changing moral quality of relationships, criticized social decay, described emotional

attachments, and evaluated each other's actions as family members, women and men, kin, friends and neighbours. Put more generally, people argued in terms of a moral economy in which gendered work produced not just economic, but also social, emotional and moral values.

The claim that 'work' is a fundamental aspect of Chinese relatedness brings us to Shulamith and Jack Potter's argument in 'The cultural construction of emotion in rural Chinese social life' (Potter and Potter 1990: ch. 4). Comparing rural Guangdong with the USA, they view relationships in the USA as based on personal emotions and their sincere expression, while in rural China this appears socially irrelevant, and instead work 'affirms relationships in the most fundamental terms the villagers know' (*ibid.*: 95). They explain the emphasis on work through Chinese society's concern with structural reproduction, where relatedness requires no 'reference to an inner feeling, but [...] only the enactment of civility' (*ibid.*: 187). As do others (e. g. Kipnis 1997: ch. 6), I believe their presentation is flawed, as it naturalizes the occidental dichotomy between 'labour' and 'love' and totally misses the importance of expressing sentiment – often through work – and of eliciting emotional responses from others. And it is precisely sincerity – to the social rather than simply to the individualistic self – that makes action efficacious in China by eliciting a desired response from others (including gods and ancestors).³ This generally includes working for others – doing, giving, lending and sharing things. Failing such an engagement, in contrast, ultimately might be interpreted as denying the other's, and also one's own, essential humanity. In Meidao, in cases where people refused to help each other or to engage in the ordinary relations of visiting, hosting and gift-giving between neighbours, friends and kin, villagers would that say people had no *renqingwei* – no moral propriety and human feelings.

Why is this relevant for an understanding of the dynamic process of gender and kinship in Meidao and Niaoyu? In China, inside and outside work made gender as it made things and relationships: women who did 'inside work' also produced themselves culturally and socially as (particular) females. Francesca Bray (1997) has argued so much for the 'womanly work' of weaving in old China. Similarly, during the Maoist era, Iron Girls didn't just perform the same (valuable) labour as men, but, as Honig (2002) shows, they saw themselves actively 'becoming male' through performing 'public' and 'heavy' labour – the metamorphoses of *wai* work in socialist China (Jacka 1997). Evidently, here it was not 'traditional values' that produced certain types of agency, but the interrelated gendered production of moral, kinship and cultural value and subject positions, as part of the daily work of men and women as social persons. The latter, however, shaped a labour–value nexus that linked the familial 'economy of *ganqing*' to the 'cultural economy' of the new state, in historically specific ways.

Traditional gender stereotypes in China have attributed an intrinsic 'narrow-mindedness' to female agency (*xiaoqi*) and 'generousness' (*dafang*) to men (Sangren 2000: 179). This gender difference is obviously related to

women not sharing in kinship property, and men embodying such shares and the evaluation of their actions in terms of 'larger values'. In both Meidao and Niaoyu, such views were historically embedded with the holding and transmission of corporate property through male bonds, which had shaped not just local economies, but a whole 'cosmos' of village life. Boats, stake nets and stone weirs were owned by patrilineal families or associations of them, and the temple represented the collective, exclusive and inalienable rights held by local families to important properties such as the tidal basin and the 'inner sea' (*neihai*), where only local fishermen could fish. In Niaoyu, it also owned shares in the seaweed harvest on some uninhabited islands north of Niaoyu, which the village shared with its 'elder brother village' (*dage cun*) on Baisha, the original point of emigration to Niaoyu. Wilkerson's analysis of temples and lineages in the Penghu Islands shows how property shares and the flow of sacrifices between households and the temple were key to household affiliations, gender hierarchies, and family and marriage status (Wilkerson 1990, 1995). Such a local cosmos of male property relations located the ultimate origin of all value, in time and space, in male kinship essence, agnatic bonds and genealogies, and stressed the community's kinship debt to its settler ancestors.

In mainland China, socialist collectivization located the origin of all value in the socialist state and revolutionary time. But socialist 'space-time' remained male, especially at the village level, where, as in Meidao, production teams overlapped with the old settlement areas of lineage branches, where class 'essence' was inherited patrilineally, corporate hierarchies were affirmed and men continued to perform the more important, more valued tasks (Jacka 1997; Judd 1994; Potter and Potter 1990). As labour became the most important economic asset of households, it also remained collectively owned, especially so in the case of women, whose labour was still 'exchanged' between families, teams or brigades. More importantly, women's labour remained 'hybrid': its domestic part serving family (private) interests,⁴ while male work was more completely collective, socialist or 'altruistic' in a Maoist sense (and through the work points earned, also sustained families). Especially on the village level, even socialist *funü* thus remained more *xiaoqi* (that is, less collective) than men, and their public labour also earned fewer work-points. Women's lack of 'altruistic value' is reflected in the predominance of the brideprice and the near disappearance of dowries in Meidao during much of the socialist era: an imbalance in marriage exchanges that already, in premodern China, was interpreted as an economic transaction between households. Only when a daughter was to marry a cadre, I was told, a family might waive the brideprice in exchange for building good feelings (*hao ganqing*). This pattern reversed after the economic reforms, when dowries in Meidao started skyrocketing – mostly assembled, however, by young women themselves.

What happened in Niaoyu in comparison? With the increasing dependence of families on wage labour, money representative of labour (not of

exchange value) became the main currency in the local economy of *ganqing*, that is, productive of kinship and gender values. Money had of course always played a role in China's moral and ritual economies: it was customarily given, in the famous red envelopes (*hongbao*), at weddings and also at funerals, and spirit money was burned for gods (gold-printed) and ancestors (silver-printed). However, in all these instances, money was turned into a social and moral currency: fixed sums were matched with kinship distance as the red envelopes erased the national currency, and spirit money was a cosmological currency, the sacrifice of which expressed personal devotion and (especially in the case of ancestors) 'care'. Sincerity (as a quality of the *social* person) thus transformed the most abstract of currencies into a token of moral value.⁵ When labour migration and geographical distance reduced the importance of work done in and between families, however, the importance of monetary remittances as a token of *ganqing* work (done elsewhere) and of kinship values greatly increased. Money is also interesting here, as it is the most 'heterosexual' token of *ganqing* value available. Whereas property shares represented male kinship work and value, items such as cloth, food or 'care' typically given by women were products of female kinship work and value. Money, in contrast, always represented the combined productivity of a household, and could be given by both women and men on family and religious occasions.

In Niaoyu, women used their ability to earn money outside the familial and the village context to create female kinship value, in particular to sustain close emotional links with their parents and create female-centred family networks. Even in the local economy, more 'heterosexual spaces' had emerged in Niaoyu rather than Meidao. So since the early 1980s women in Niaoyu had begun to work alongside men in boat groups, and increasingly more men took to the 'female labour' of collecting mussels on the beach. All these had remained gender-divided activities in Meidao. And while in Meidao men would admit that a mother, wife or sister could be an important mediator in cases of family problems (between men), in Niaoyu, in contrast, I heard that women 'are better at relationships' than men (*bijiao hao gao guanxi*) and thus could solve conflicts better in general. More significantly, an emergent new core family in Niaoyu centred on the *hao ganqing* between mothers and daughters, despite the fact that most young women had been away from Niaoyu for many years. These new 'emotional' families were also linked here to new residence patterns (see Jankowiak, Chapter 3 in this volume). Young couples lived no longer than three 'customary' days with *his* family after a wedding, and then moved on to their own house, the construction of which had often been sponsored by *her* family. Married women spent much time at their own parents' home, to the extent that some husbands 'broke' with their own fathers and started to work in the boat group of their fathers-in-law. With an emigration of a large part of the younger generation, *hao ganqing* was what recruited people, bound them to a family, and made them work for and with each other. Old women in this

context often recalled how they had been restrained in their time by their mothers-in-law, and a 70-year-old former midwife – the first-ever trained midwife in Niaoyu – remembered how she had to sneak out before dawn in order to help her own mother fetch water. Underlining the kinship value of work, she summarized the new situation with the words: ‘Today it is no longer a daughter, but a son a family loses with marriage.’

These shifts, however, also responded to another development linked to the modern state: the destruction of the ‘male-kinship-property cosmos’ at the centre of local worlds and its ‘dissolution’ into the nation-state, an argument that echoes early Marxist feminist theories. Change was most striking in the case of Niaoyu’s temple corporation, the former collective owner of inalienable rights to community property. In the 1980s, the temple decided to auction off rights to the seaweed harvest to local households, it used the money earned in this way to finance its annual festivals (also reducing the need for household donations). In the 1990s, the auction was opened also to outside investors, as ‘more money can be made this way.’ In such a context, mostly interested in the own freedom, as the village elder had suggested, or wanting to be their own boss, young men appeared increasingly less productive of the moral values that sustained relatedness; and even often remained single into their thirties. Moreover, they earned less and less as fishermen. The author of a local newspaper article put it like this:

‘Men in the fishing villages in our county earn less and less. Therefore women themselves have to roll up their sleeves and shoulder the burden of life. Some dry fish on a wage basis. Some collect mussels on the coast to feed their families. [...] [The income] is not high, but still far more secure than the income of fishermen. [...] According to our research, a fisherman earns an annual average of NT\$50,000, not even as much as a woman can earn with drying fish. Therefore in some villages men follow the women, and instead of fishing, they dry fish or collect mussels.’ (*Jianguo Ribao* [*Jianguo Daily*], 7 June 1990, my translation.)

In the Qing dynasty gazetteer from the eighteenth century, which also had reported on the hard work of Penghu’s women, the tone had been very different: here, where ‘women do not weave’ but work in the fields and tidal basin, the local official wrote ‘Penghu women [are like] Taiwan cattle (*Penghu nü, Taiwan niu*)’ (Hu 1961 [1759]: 149). In other words, women worked hard for family survival but, submerged within a male property complex, such work gave them little prestige. By 150 years later, women produced the main values in economic and emotional terms that sustained the family as family. In the 1990s, from the villagers’ perspective, women and money produced ‘good feelings’; men and money produced divisions.

Let us return finally to Meidao in the 1990s, where people no longer lived under a Maoist regime. Also here, the importance of female work was acknowledged: young daughters earned as much as young men outside the

village, and women's seaweed production produced as much income as men's fishing. But, in contrast to Niaoyu, young women leaving the island were seen as 'social risers', working first and foremost for their own dowry rather than to send remittances to their parents. Moreover, items that were bought by the bridegroom's parents as part of the engagement and marriage transactions now went directly to the bride herself (and thus to the young couple; Yan 2003), instead of including her parents. I would often hear stories about brides who would themselves 'haggle' over the amount, demanding 'another gold ring' or 'another watch' from their future parents-in-law before agreeing to a marriage. This, however, did not seem lower their esteem in the village, at least not with their future husband. Rather, these men seemed generally proud of their 'high-value' bride:

I sit in the *keting* of a family preparing their son's wedding on the same day. The female relatives are out in the courtyard preparing enormous amounts of food, 16 tables have been set up (for 12 guests each), the wedding chamber displays the new furniture and the new bedding is all in pink. There are also some of the gifts the bride received from her new in-laws: a huge colour TV, a video recorder, jewellery, clothes and even a new motorcycle. Moreover, as is the custom in Meidao, a glass frame stands on the family altar that displays the monetary part of her dowry: in this case stacks of Hong Kong dollars, all earned by Li herself during the three years she worked there prior to the wedding. As the first guests arrive, mostly friends of the bridegroom, he starts preparing the bright red sheets of paper that will display the amounts each friend and relative gives as a wedding gift. Li is seated on a chair already in her red wedding gown and is having final touches applied to her hair. We talk about how they met and their engagement, and at some point he interjects laughingly to remark how much his new bride has cost his parents, to which she responds with a smile.

One peculiar remnant of the Maoist period in contemporary China seems to be a view of labour as owned in a more modern sense than the claims Chinese families 'traditionally' held over the labour power of their members. Production teams reimbursed families for the public labour their members delivered, which at the same time meant that, to a certain degree, families (represented by the *jiazhang*, the family head) exchanged the labour they 'owned' for work points and other rights to collective property. Decollectivization and the emergence of a market in labour seemed to have replicated this relationship on the level of the family and the individual. Scholars have already commented on increasingly 'contractual' arrangements in contemporary Chinese families, especially between parents and children (on the lines of 'if you act as a father/mother, I act as a son/daughter') (Guo 2001; Yan 2003: 171–82). In a situation where family incomes are increasingly dependent on mobile children, these families appear to view their labour as

individually owned, and as a private property they can invest on any 'market'. But this shift seems to sit strangely with the reconstruction of ancestral halls and corporate properties in Meidao and other Fujian villages that I visited. Whereas the production teams might have maintained many of the 'deeper structures' of the localized lineages (Potter and Potter 1990: 98; see also Judd 1994: 244), the reconstructed agnatic groups of the 1980s and 1990s seemed in many ways to have filled the void left by the dismantling of the production teams (Brandtstädter 2003). They not only staked a new claim to assets and production facilities on 'their' land, but, I suggest, they were also trying to re-own and, in a sense, collectivize labour power (in the several senses that I have argued for in this chapter) in an increasingly competitive rural environment. That even young women were willing to donate for the reconstruction of 'their ancestral hall' is probably the best example of this in Meidao. Cut off from their former 'cosmological link' with the imperial state, the new 'lineages' in Fujian in the 1990s were politico-economic corporations using the promise of future dividends as much as competitive resources and pedigree to attract members and to increase shareholder value. But at the same time, the labour of young people was also reappropriated to produce larger (but now local) values. In a context of competing agnatic groups and relations of patronage in post-Maoist China, however, female work in the economy of *ganqing* was rendered invisible to sustain corporate boundaries and build up male kinship value.

Glossary

<i>bijiao hao gao guanxi</i>	比较好搞关系
<i>bijiao xiaoshun</i>	比较孝顺
<i>cheng</i>	诚
<i>chuantong</i>	传统
<i>citang</i>	祠堂
<i>dafang</i>	大方
<i>dage</i>	大哥
<i>dage cun</i>	大哥村
<i>fengjian mixin</i>	封建迷信
<i>fulian</i>	妇联
<i>funü</i>	妇女
<i>funü daibiao</i>	妇女代表
<i>gan huo</i>	干活

<i>ganqing</i>	感情
<i>gongzuo</i>	工作
<i>guan ziji de ziyou</i>	管自己的自由
<i>guanxi</i>	关系
<i>guojia</i>	国家
<i>hao ganqing</i>	好感情
<i>heshang dao</i>	和尚岛
<i>hongbao</i>	红报
<i>jia</i>	家
<i>jiating funü</i>	家庭妇女
<i>jiazhang</i>	家长
<i>jiefang Jinmen</i>	解放金门
<i>jiefang</i>	解放
<i>jieshaoren</i>	介绍人
<i>jiti</i>	集体
<i>keting</i>	客厅
<i>laodong</i>	劳动
<i>lienü</i>	烈女
<i>lihai</i>	利害
<i>maide</i>	买的
<i>mama jiaoshi</i>	妈妈 教室
<i>nei</i>	内
<i>neihai</i>	内海
<i>neiren</i>	内人
<i>nühaizi</i>	女孩子
<i>nüren</i>	女人
<i>nüxing</i>	女性
<i>Penghu nü, Taiwan niu</i>	澎湖女, 台湾牛
<i>renqingwei</i>	人情味
<i>tiaozhang</i>	条长

<i>tongyangxi</i>	童养媳
<i>wai</i>	外
<i>waisun</i>	外孙
<i>xiaoqi</i>	小气
<i>xiaoshun</i>	孝顺
<i>xiuhua chang</i>	绣花厂
<i>yali</i>	压力
<i>yang</i>	阳
<i>yin</i>	阴
<i>zhuanye dui</i>	专业队
<i>zicai dui</i>	紫菜队

Notes

- 1 I thank Ellen Judd for her valuable comments on the last draft of this paper.
- 2 This is just one of the sayings that reflected women's ideological 'lack' in kinship property: in others, daughters were called 'goods on which the money has been wasted', or daughters-in-law were mistrusted as 'pillow ghosts', who would use the intimate relationship with their husband to agitate for family separation.
- 3 Sincerity in this sense is similar to what Kipnis calls 'non-representational ethics' (Kipnis 1997: ch. 6) and Sangren (2000: 173) translates as 'faith'. These concepts, however, themselves appear directly linked to the Chinese philosophical concept *cheng* (usually translated as sincerity), which combines the idea of being 'true to oneself' with the showing of 'empathic feelings'. In contrast to sincerity in Western romanticism, *cheng* demands being truthful to the self not in an individual, autonomous sense, but in a universal, social sense – that is, one should be true to one's 'universal human nature' from one's particular subject position as father, mother, etc. (An 2004).
- 4 This includes the 'private sideline production' tolerated by the state, which was mostly women's work.
- 5 Viviana Zelizer's (1994) book on money in America shows that its 'socialization' might not be uniquely a Chinese phenomenon.

Bibliography

- Adkins, L. and C. Lury (1999) 'The Labour of Identity: Performing Identities, Performing Economies', *Economy and Society* 28(4): 598–614.
- An, Yanming (2004) 'Western 'Sincerity' and Confucian *cheng*', *Asian Philosophy* 14(2): 155–69.
- Barlow, T.E. (1994) 'Theorizing Woman: *Funü, Guojia, Jiating* (Chinese Woman, Chinese State, Chinese Family)', in Angela Zito and Tani E. Barlow (eds) *Body, Subject and Power in China*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 253–89.
- Brandtstädter, S. (2003) 'With Elias in China: Civilizing Process, Local Restorations and Power in Contemporary Rural China', *Anthropological Theory* 3(1): 87–105.

- Bray, F. (1997) *Technology and Gender: Fabrics of Power in Late Imperial China*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Carsten, J. (2004) *After Kinship*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chen, Hsien-ming (1992) 'Yige shanhuojiao yucun de shengcai: Penghu Niaooyu de yanjiu' ('An Ecological Approach to the Fishing Community of a Coral Island: Study of Niaooyu, the Penghu Islands'), *Dili yanjiu baogao (Geographical Research)* 18: 109–58.
- Chiang, N. L. and Yenlin Ku (1985) 'Past and Current Status of Women in Taiwan', Women's Research Program Dissertation No. 1, Taipei: Population Studies Center, National Taiwan University.
- Cohen, M.L. (1976) *House United, House Divided: The Chinese Family in Taiwan*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Collier, J.F. and S.J. Yanagisako (1987) *Gender and Kinship: Essays toward a Unified Analysis*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Croll, E. (1978) *Feminism and Socialism in China*, London and Boston, MA: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Faure, D. (2007) *Emperor and Ancestor: State and Lineage in South China*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Freedman, M. (1958) *Lineage Organization in Southeastern China*, London: University of London and Athlone Press.
- (1966) *Chinese Lineage and Society: Fukien and Kwangtung*, London and New York: Athlone Press and Humanities Press.
- Fujian sheng shuichan xuehui (1988) *Fujian Yuye shi (History of Fujian's Fishing Economy)*, Fuzhou: Fujian kexue jishu chubanshe.
- Gal, S. and G. Kligman (2000) *The Politics of Gender after Socialism*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Gates, H. (1989) 'The Commodification of Chinese Women', *Signs* 14(4): 799–832.
- Goodman, B. and W. Larson (2005) 'Introduction: Axes of Gender: Divisions of Labor and Spatial Separation', in B. Goodman and W. Larson (eds) *Gender in Motion: Divisions Of Labor And Cultural Change In Late Imperial And Modern China*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Graeber, D. (2001) *Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value: The False Coin of Our Own Dreams*, New York: Palgrave.
- Guo, Yuhua (2001) 'Daji guanxi zhong de gongping luoji jiqi bianqian: dui Hebei nongcun yanglao shijian de fenxi' ('The logic of fairness and its change in cross-generational relations: an analysis of cases of elderly support in rural Hebei'), *Zhongguo xueshu (Chinese Scholarship)* (4): 221–54.
- Honig, E. (2002) 'Maoist Mappings of Gender: Reassessing the Red Guards', in S. Brownell and J.N. Wasserstrom (eds) *Chinese Femininities/Chinese Masculinities: A Reader*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.
- Hu, Jianwei (1961) [1759] *Penghu jilü (Chronicle of the Penghu Islands)*, Taipei: Taiwan Yinhang jingji yanjiu shi bianyin.
- Jacka, T. (1997) *Women's Work in Rural China*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Judd, E.R. (1994) *Gender and Power in Rural North China*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Kipnis, A.B. (1997) *Producing guanxi: Self, Sentiment and Subculture in a North China Village*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Kung, L. (1983) *Factory Women in Taiwan*, Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press.

- Lin, Hao (1963) [1893]: *Penghu tingzhi* (Penghu subprefecture local gazetteer), Taipei: Taiwan Yinhang.
- Martin, E. (1988) 'Gender and Ideological Differences in Representations of Life and Death', in J.L. Watson and E.S. Rawski (eds) *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Moore, H.L. (1988) *Feminism and Anthropology*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Pine, F. (2007) 'Dangerous Modernities? Innovative Technologies and the Unsettling of Agriculture in Rural Poland', *Critique of Anthropology* 27(2): 183–201.
- Potter, S.H. and J.M. Potter (1990) *China's Peasants: The Anthropology of a Revolution*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Read, R. (2007) 'Labour and Love: Competing Constructions of 'Care' in a Czech Nursing Home', *Critique of Anthropology* 27(2): 183–201.
- Sangren, P.S. (2000) *Chinese Sociologics: An Anthropological Account of the Role of Alienation in Social Reproduction*, London and New Brunswick, NJ: Athlone.
- Smart, A. (1993) 'Gifts, Bribery and *Guanxi*: A Reconsideration of Bourdieu's Social Capital', *Cultural Anthropology* 8(3): 388–408.
- Stafford, C. (1992) '“Good Sons and Virtuous Mothers”: Kinship and Chinese Nationalism in Taiwan', *Man* 27(2): 363–78.
- Ward, B. (1985) 'Varieties of the Conscious Model: The Fishermen of South China', in Barbara Ward (ed.) *Through Other Eyes*, Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 41–60.
- Wilkerson, J.R. (1990) 'Other Islands of Chinese History and Religion', PhD thesis, Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia.
- (1995) 'Rural Village Temples in the P'enghu Islands and their Late Imperial Corporate Organization', in *Simiao yu minjian wenhua yantao hui lunwen ji* (*Proceedings of the Conference on Temples and Popular Culture*), Taipei: Center for Chinese Studies, 471–521.
- Wolf, M. (1972) *Women and the Family in Rural Taiwan*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Yan, Yunxiang (1996) *The Flow of Gifts: Reciprocity and Social Networks in a Chinese Village*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- (2003) *Private Life under Socialism: Love, Intimacy, and Family Change in A Chinese Village, 1949–99*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Yin, A.C. (1981) 'Voluntary Associations and Rural–Urban Migration', in Emily Martin Ahern and Hill Gates (eds) *The Anthropology of Taiwanese Society*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 319–37.
- Zelizer, V.A. (1994) *The Social Meaning of Money*, New York: Basic Books.

Part 3

State, Body and Civilization

8 **Becoming a mother in late imperial China**

Maternal doubles and the ambiguities of fertility¹

Francesca Bray

‘You were an embryonic dragon, nurtured temporarily in a dog’s belly.’²

In this chapter I explore the articulations between social dimensions of bio-power and theories of fertility and natural kinship in late imperial China, asking how important a woman’s capacity to give birth was to her status and security. Margery Wolf (1972) issued a feminist challenge to the anthropological models of Chinese kinship, which mirrored orthodox patrilineal ideology in treating women as little more than ‘borrowed wombs’.³ Arguing for the importance of ‘uterine families’, Wolf showed how the women in the Taiwanese villages where she conducted her fieldwork compensated for their lack of formally endorsed social agency by working to create close and enduring emotional bonds with their sons. These intimate attachments gave them influence over and through their sons, constituting a source of power and protection. Wolf’s woman-centred concept of uterine families, and the dimensions of female agency it suggested, have been extremely influential in shaping feminist rethinking of kinship and gender relations in China, past and present. The concept did, however, echo both traditional Chinese doxa and the patrilineally framed anthropological models it challenged, in implying that a woman’s natural fertility determined what bonds of relatedness she could build for herself.

So was biology destiny for Chinese women? ‘While everywhere social arrangements attend to the production and rearing of children, it is not everywhere that the facts of procreation are taken to be of prime significance’ (Strathern 1999: 23). In our own society, reproductive technologies such as artificial insemination or surrogate motherhood have recently forced us to rethink what ‘real’ relatedness might be when the ‘facts of procreation’ expand to include more than one mother or father. The resulting conflicts and tensions are not eased by the exclusionary principles of modern Western legal and administrative systems, which normally recognize one, and only one, official parent of each sex.

Late imperial China was a patrilineal, polygynous society with its own forms and practices of surrogacy or multiple parenthood. Multiple fatherhood

was not unusual, most commonly resulting from the adoption of a son. Not surprisingly within a system of strict patrilineal descent, adoption was not easy to accommodate institutionally and was always considered fundamentally problematic (Sommer 2005; Waltner 1990). Multiple maternity, on the other hand, was comfortably accommodated within the moral, legal and ritual institutions of an officially polygynous society. It was condoned and commonplace, and unproblematic in principle if often very painful in practice. There were thus several legitimate social techniques for overcoming what we might see as biological impediments to the smooth path of patrilineal descent, and it is interesting to consider how such arrangements were naturalized, how the 'facts of procreation' were construed and how 'real' relatedness was evaluated in late imperial society.

I draw here on medical and social sources from the Ming and Qing period, from about 1500 to 1750, to explore how parent-child bonds were conceptualized and produced, and how biological and social contributions were likely to be ranked. I focus principally on motherhood, outlining the spectrum of maternal roles and the range of resources available to more privileged women to achieve desirable forms of relatedness. I suggest that the institution of polygyny legally and ritually facilitated, while medical theory naturalized, a form of maternal 'doubling' whereby a pair of women of different social status could jointly fulfil the biological and social roles of ideal motherhood, at very different costs to each of the women.⁴ I conclude by asking whether any traces of this late imperial reproductive culture have resurfaced in contemporary debates about surrogacy in the People's Republic of China (PRC).

The concept of doubles

Let me begin with a literary fable, a case of doubles drawn from the eighteenth-century novel *A Lantern at the Crossroads* (*Qilu deng*) (see Borotová 1992). The antihero of the novel is a feckless rake, Tan Shaowen, who shares his affections between his wife, the lady Kong Huiniang, and his concubine, Bingmei. Kong Huiniang is tall and slender with an oval face, the late imperial ideal of refined femininity. Bingmei is plump with a round face, a healthy country girl. Bingmei was brought into the household as a slave-girl and seduced by Tan, giving birth to a son. Tan subsequently marries his childhood fiancée, Kong Huiniang, but her distress at his debauchery leads her to fall ill and she loses her ability to conceive. However, Kong Huiniang is devoted to Bingmei's baby, who in turn prefers her to his birth mother. On her deathbed, Kong Huiniang urges the grieving Bingmei to make sure that the boy is educated to study for the examinations.

Lucie Borotová (1992) has remarked that throughout the novel its author, Li Lüyuan (1707–90), makes frequent use of doubled characters; in each case one is a member of the gentry, the other is a commoner. The archetypal double in the Western literary tradition is Dr Jeckyll and Mr Hyde: here one

person is to be perceived as two – a conceit that translates in popular psychology into the notion of a split personality. But in Chinese novels, notes Borotová, two persons are to be perceived as one. Here Borotová is building on the insights of another literary historian, Andrew Plaks, who ties the ubiquitous use of doubling in Chinese literary expression to the long tradition in Chinese thought and aesthetic expression of parallels, *dui*, paired objects or forms of expression which match or correspond, thus constituting a semantic whole. The full character or meaning of the pair emerges through a complex interplay of echoings or complementarities, contrasts or contradictions between the elements of the pair's twinned components. Paired inscriptions, *duilian*, a ubiquitous feature of the Chinese environment, whether pasted up on the doorposts of village houses at New Year or ceremonially hung at the opening of a new restaurant, offer a familiar if often underappreciated example of the potentially many-layered subtleties of this meaning-making device (Delahaye 2002).

Plaks notes that the polysemic power of parallels in Chinese expression stems from the inherent ambiguity of *dui* as a concept: '[*dui*] expresses precisely the idea of the confrontation of similar yet separate units, which can carry the semantic value of either conjunction, *xiangdui*, or opposition, *fandui*' (Plaks 1988: 47). In his exploration of parallelisms in the structures of opera and novels, Plaks notes the importance of stylistic or emotional contrasts whereby, for instance, a crude and rustic comic episode is counterposed with a refined expression of ideas or emotions, often within a single scene or chapter. This aesthetic tactic can be extended into a dialectical leitmotif in the plot, here achieved through the pairing or doubling of characters, *dui'ou*.⁵ The *Cihai* (*Sea of Words*) dictionary explains that this literary device derives from the fact that the human heart/mind (*renxin*) naturally composes its ideas from counterposed (*xiangbei*) roles. Examples of such conjunction and/or opposition, says the *Cihai*, would be that a father feels compassion while a son feels filial piety, or that spring brings flowers and autumn fruits. Plaks notes that in the great Chinese novels, doubles are framed in such a way that 'a simplistic contrast of conceptual opposites ultimately gives way to a sense of interpenetration and complementarity.' Thus in the great eighteenth-century novel *Honglou meng* (*The Dream of the Red Chamber*), the finest attributes of the two heroines, the frail and sensitive Lin Daiyu and the serene and disciplined Xue Baochai, are resolved into complete perfection in chapter 5, where the two young women are combined in a prophetic dream-vision into a single figure, Jianmei (Combined Virtues). 'The prevailing sense is one of complementary aspects of the self-contained whole' (Plaks 1988: 59, 49).

As a further example of doubles, *dui'ou*, the *Cihai* dictionary cites the *Yijing*, the *Book of Changes*, on the complementary cosmological and physiological roles of male (*yang*) and female (*yin*) principles. Plaks, too, relating the subtlety of Chinese literary uses of parallelisms to 'the predominance of dualistic thinking in Chinese philosophical discourse', offers *yin yang*

thought as a striking example of this characteristic ‘bipolar logic’ (*ibid.*: 49). According to *yin yang* thought, the stuff and the forces of the cosmos are continually transforming manifestations of *qi* energy. The generative force of all phenomena is the fertile pairing of *yin* and *yang*, which shapes the myriad mutations of *qi*. At the human scale, this principle of generation is expressed through sexual congress. Conception results from the fertile commingling of *yang* and *yin* manifestations of *qi* energy in the form of male semen and female blood – here the self-contained whole is the male–female couple.

It is often assumed by those unfamiliar with the theory that something is either *yin* or *yang* by nature, and that men are intrinsically *yang* whereas women are intrinsically *yin*. But *yin* and *yang* are in fact relative and shifting characteristics, and their productive pairing can assume complex forms. The grading of *yin yang* relations is often subtle and even ambiguous, for the terms apply to relations, trends and processes rather than to essential attributes, not only in cosmology but also as applied to differences between or within the sexes (Furth 1999). Within any natural cycle, be it the sequence of the seasons, the life-course of a living creature, the evolution of a sickness or the routine physiological processes of the body, as *yang* grows *yin* declines, and once *yang* has passed its zenith *yin* begins to prevail. A mature, potent and self-controlled man is *yang* relative to his wife during sexual intercourse, but a man who has overindulged in sex may have insufficient *yang* energy to impregnate his partner. An old man is physiologically *yin* relative to a younger man. The greedily expanding *yang* forces of a developing fetus threaten to overwhelm the healthy *yin* equilibrium of the pregnant woman’s body. In the metaphorical terms of social status, authority and cultivation, a mistress is *yang* relative to her maid, but in the case of Kong Huiniang and Bingmei, the delicate mistress’s declining health is a *yin* process, while the maid’s sturdiness and flourishing fertility are *yang* by comparison. Furthermore, as Borotová notes, their division of maternal labour allows the social mother, the lady Kong Huiniang, whose chief concern is represented as giving the child a good upbringing and education, to remain pure from the *yin* taint of female sexuality and from the pollution associated in popular Chinese culture with the *yin* blood of childbirth (Ahern 1978; Overmyer 1985; Seaman 1981). These negative burdens, along with the other material tasks of motherhood, are assumed by the biological and socially inferior mother, the concubine and former slave-girl Bingmei, who also cheerfully accepts as natural her little boy’s preference for her mistress.

‘The rich get children’⁶

The contrasts and complementarities between Kong Huiniang and Bingmei, the charming idyll of mistress and maid willingly sharing the burdens of motherhood, are clearly a literary conceit, a male fantasy of emotionally serene pairing between the two consorts of a single man. Although it was seldom quite so trouble-free, in real life the doubling of motherhood was a

routine occurrence in late imperial Chinese society. First and foremost, it was facilitated by the social institutions of polygyny and adoption.

The imperatives of patrilineal descent meant that a man's greatest obligation was to provide his lineage with at least one heir, a male child who would inherit his forebears' *qi*, continue the ritual offerings to the spirits of the ancestors, and contribute sons to the lineage in his turn. Childlessness was an offence to one's parents and to the principles of filiality; the severing of the family line was a tragedy. In early China the ancestral cult had been organized according to aristocratic values and honored primogeniture. The neo-Confucian reformulation of kinship that began in the eleventh century included all family branches in the joint ancestral cult. The proportion of the Chinese population incorporated into such patrilineal webs expanded steadily; a significant effect was that this revised and more egalitarian system of patrilineality 'made every elder the potential ancestor of his own individual line of descent' (Furth 1990: 189). The failure to produce sons was seen in late imperial times as not just a private but also a public problem. The founder of the Ming dynasty, the Hongwu emperor (r. 1368–99), ordered that village altars should be set up to solace those without heirs, and the Ming code 'stipulated that a man who had reached the age of forty and had no sons by his wife could take a concubine', although under other circumstances concubinage was punishable by 'forty blows with the light bamboo' (Waltner 1990: 17, 22). Furthermore, failure to bear sons was a legitimate reason for a wife to be divorced.

It is usually said that women in China married up. However, to enter a formal, ritually and legally endorsed marriage, the young woman needed a dowry (Ebrey 1991; Watson 1991), and it was the burden of supplying a respectable dowry that disapproving officials almost invariably cited as the reason for cases of female infanticide (T'ien 1988). A bride entered the groom's family house accompanied by her dowry chests; she was presented to the ancestors at the family altar, and after making offerings to the ancestral tablets and serving wine to her parents-in-law, she became a legal wife, *qi*, and a participant in the ancestral cult. Once she had a son, she herself became a family ancestor-to-be and was permanently incorporated into her new family; if she had no son, and had not either nursed her husband's parents through sickness or mourned her husband's or one of his parents' death, she might legally be divorced – provided she had a home to return to and the groom's family could afford to return her dowry. A man could only have one legal wife, *qi*, but he might also take one or more concubines, *qie*. A concubine brought no dowry, instead a negotiated sum was paid to her family – or, if she was a courtesan or servant, to the owner of her establishment. No gifts were exchanged, a concubine was not presented to the ancestors and she never became a ritual member of the man's family; therefore if a legal wife died, her husband could not promote a concubine to take her place. Unless she had given birth to a son, a concubine could be dismissed. If a man had sons by a household maid, he could choose whether or

not to recognize them, thus promoting her to the status of concubine (Ebrey 2002; Watson 1991).

Not surprisingly, then, all Chinese women yearned for sons as a guarantee of security in this life and the hereafter. But was biology destiny? Was a fertile womb (and a potent husband⁷) your only hope of acquiring a son who would legitimate your position within your husband's family? If you were a concubine or maid, giving birth was indeed your only hope.⁸ If you were a wife, however, alternative options were open to you. Adoption and polygyny have generally been viewed as institutions serving the reproductive interests of men and of powerful lineages, moving women up the social scale and increasing the number of children born to wealthy or powerful families (Harrell 1985). What has been less remarked is that they also moved children up the female hierarchy, enhancing the prestige of legal wives. Dennerline (1986) cites various Ming and Qing cases where wives or widows took adoptive sons on their own initiative. A wife who had not borne any sons might urge her husband to take a concubine, or go so far as to choose one for him herself (Ebrey 1993: 22). Such occurrences were much praised by men as examples of true wifely virtue, and it may seem that these women were simply acquiescing in their own oppression. Yet such actions also offered the promise to a childless woman of a child who was formally hers. For a wife without sons of her own, adoption and polygyny were both preferable to divorce or childlessness. Adoption quite clearly benefited childless wives as well as husbands (Dennerline 1986: 202; Waltner 1990: 90–99). Concubinage, too, could benefit a wife who had been unable to bear a son of her own, for in polygynous households the wife was not only the mistress of all the concubines and maids, but also the legal and ritual mother, *dimu*, of all her husband's recognized offspring. Regardless of who had given birth to them, they mourned her and worshipped her as their full parent.

As discussed below, in their public declarations, and no doubt to a large extent in their own emotions, concubines' sons expressed a devoted attachment to their formal mother, *dimu* (Hsiung 1994). Contrary to the story of Kong Huiniang and Bingmei, the pain of concubines obliged to renounce their son's affections in the boy's own interests must often have been extreme, although such subversive sentiments could not be expressed freely. A son might rebel against the iron logic of propriety, but late imperial society condoned a social mother's claims to a concubine's children as perfectly natural:

The late nineteenth-century Governor-General of Fujian, Xu Yingkui, was the son of a concubine. When his mother died, he requested that her coffin be taken out through the main gate of the house as if she were a legal wife. All his relatives thought this both unorthodox and unreasonable; his father's principal wife pointed out that Xu's own eminence did not affect his biological mother's status: 'You were an embryonic dragon, nurtured temporarily in a dog's belly.'

(T'ien 1988: 9)

Concubinage and adoption thus served legal wives as socially approved forms of surrogate motherhood, allowing them to appropriate the biological labour of less privileged women. Let me now turn to the medical literature of the period, to show how medical discourses and practices contributed to the naturalization, translating the social doubling of mistress and concubine into bodily complementarities and justifying the multiplication of maternity.

Medicine, fertility and motherhood

Reproductive medicine was a speciality that expanded enormously during the late imperial period, both in the number of practitioners and publications, and in the social range of clientele and readership (Bray 1997; Furth 1987, 1999). Physicians instructed men and women in medical techniques to enhance their fertility; significantly, they also provided socially acceptable solutions to unwanted or suspected pregnancy. The theories of natural fecundity and of menstrual regulation, *tiaojing*, which form the core of late imperial gynecology, are particularly interesting because their dual image of motherhood implicitly justifies reproductive choices, including abortion, as well as the appropriation of low-ranking women's children through polygyny.

Despite the procreative imperatives of the time, abortion was not classed as a crime in the late imperial legal code, nor did medical writings unconditionally condemn it (although they were very scathing about the abortion techniques practised by female herbalists or midwives). In the following case, a husband requests an abortion for his wife from Xu Dachun (1693–1771), a very distinguished and respectable scholar physician:

The wife [of a junior official]: her fetus was leaking [slight but continuous bleeding]; doctors had treated her but the leaking did not stop. Her husband, given the circumstances, wished to have her abort and consulted me. I prescribed Buddha's hand powder so that if the fetus could be calmed it would, and if not it would abort, but in a natural fashion.

(Xu Dachun, *Yilue liushu*: 1870)

Another physician of the period records that he administered an abortifacient (unsuccessfully as it turns out) to his own wife, pregnant at 40 after several premature births; both feared for her life if she tried to carry the child to term (Bray 1997: 323). Except where a woman's health was seriously threatened, orthodox physicians were reluctant to prescribe drugs for abortion, as this represented the interruption of a natural process and was therefore very damaging to health. But when the continuation of pregnancy represented an unmistakable and severe danger to the woman's health, abortion was definitely the lesser of two evils. The mother's health had clear priority over that of the fetus, and physicians expressed no blame when treating women who had tried to terminate their pregnancy themselves, usually for avowed reasons of poor health (Bray 1997: 324).

An equally profound threat to a woman's health was menstrual irregularity. Regularity of menstruation has been a key diagnostic for female health from the very earliest Chinese medical classics to the present day. Menstrual regularity, *tiaojing*, was believed to be the key to female health throughout the reproductive years. For anyone who could afford it, irregularity was cause to consult a physician or healer immediately. By the late imperial period, almost every work on women's medicine begins with an essay on menstrual regularity. Here is an extract from such an essay published in 1556 by Xu Chunfu:

If sexual intercourse takes place when the menses are regular, there will be a child. If not, it's like trying to lock three fingers into five: this is what is meant by unregulated. If the menses are not regulated then all kinds of disorders will succeed each other, becoming so severe that they cannot be cured.

(Xu Chunfu, *Gujin yitong daquan*: 5373–74)

Menstrual regularity was a sign of mental and bodily health and harmony, a prerequisite for conception, certainly, but not separable from a woman's health as a whole. Menstrual irregularity, or worse still blocked menses, *jingbi*, of course threatened immediate reproductive success, but this was only a secondary consideration in view of the dangers it posed to a woman's overall health and survival. Unless it was treated early, the disorder would be steadily transmitted, *zhuan*, through the organ systems of the body, first undermining the woman's production and circulation of nourishing blood and invigorating *qi*, then destroying her powers of recuperation and drying out her vital fluids, until eventually the fatal wasting diseases of 'bone-steaming and consumption' claimed her life (*ibid*, quoted by Bray 1997: 326).

If a woman wished to be healthy and strong, fruitful but also capable of running her household and raising the children she bore, she had to take care that her menses were regular, for once their regularity lapsed she became prey to debilitating and sometimes fatal diseases. Not surprisingly, therefore, women paid minute attention to their menstrual cycle and commonly resorted to emmenagogues, *tongjing yao*, to restore irregular or absent flow – even though they were aware that blocked menses and early pregnancy could easily be confused. One popular eighteenth-century work on women's health, Wu Qian's *Fuke xinfu yaojue* (*Rhymed Essentials of the New Gynecology*), written in easily memorized short verses, lists seven categories of blocked menses that threaten women's health. The first is 'stagnation of Blood, with retention of Blood in the uterus cause by a Cold pathogen'; the text explains that this condition closely resembles the amenorrhea of early pregnancy (Bray 1997: 328).

Through their reproductive functions, menstruation and childbirth, women were considered prone to depletion through loss of blood and of *yin* vitalities. Many of the drugs used to treat menstrual irregularity belong to

the categories that strengthen or nourish blood or *qi*, or replenish deficiencies; among the most common ingredients are *danggui* (*Angelica sinensis*) and *baishao* (*Paeonia alba*), which nourish blood, and ginseng and *baizhu* (*Atractylodes macrocephala*), which replenish deficiencies of *qi*. But it is noticeable that many prescriptions for amenorrhea rely much more heavily on powerful drugs to vivify blood and disperse stagnation, such as peach kernels, *honghua* (*Carthamus*), *niuxi* (*Achyranthes bidentata*), gadfly, or leeches, explicitly acknowledged as likely to cause miscarriages (Bray 1997: 333).

Menstrual regulation, then, was an ambivalent activity and at the same time a dual symbol. On the one hand it symbolized female fertility, the ability to reproduce life, *sheng*, or to give birth, *chan*; on the other hand, equally important, it symbolized female health and strength, emotional equilibrium and control, the ability to nurture life and to rear children successfully, *yang*.

Late imperial medical texts on gynecology, which dealt primarily with the health problems of the well off, provided a dual understanding of female health and fertility expressed in the ambiguities of menstrual regulation. They also explicitly distinguished between the child-bearing capacities of women of different classes. Women of gentle birth were represented as frail, sensitive and inherently less fertile, likely to suffer terribly in childbirth. Peasants were enviably fecund because of the strength of their desires, and their desires were strong in part because they were illiterate and uncultivated (Leung 1984: 66). Peasant women were naturally fertile and gave birth without trouble – the babies just popped out like ripe melons (Furth 1987: 16). This was the medical image of the young women who were brought into polygynous households as concubines or maids: their fecund constitutions fitted them to give birth, but not to raise the children as gentlefolk. In physiological terms, the concubines and maids were construed as *yang* in comparison with their delicate, *yin* mistresses; in terms of social status, authority and cultivation, the mistresses were *yang* relative to their juniors and servants. A harmonious conjunction between the *yin yang* characteristics of the household women was the basis for fruitful sexual congress with the master of the house.

Theories of natural kinship

Medical theories of generation agreed that the embryo grew from the comingling during sex of male *qi*, embodied in essence/semen, and female blood; the fetus was then nourished through pregnancy by the mother's blood. Blood is the *yin*, materialized form of physiological *qi* energy. *Yin yang* theory held that the father contributed *qi* in its *yang*, energetic forms to the infant's make-up, and the mother in its *yin*, materialized forms: the mother contributed the child's flesh and the bones, while the father contributed the spirit and the intelligence.

The natural bond between father and child was the *qi* transmitted through the father's essence in the single moment of coition. The mother's biological bond was more complicated and took longer to construct. First, she contributed female blood or essence at the moment of coition. But then there was a period of ten lunar months during which her blood nourished and developed the fetus; if she breastfed the child herself rather than hiring a wet-nurse, that also contributed to the child's constitution. This slowly forged bond of flesh, food, maternal responsibility and infant dependence was quite different from the instantaneous transfer of *qi* energy that tied a son to his father.⁹ (See Figure 8.1.)

Despite the fact that the *qi* transmitted at the moment of conception was the essential element in natural kinship between father and son, and through them between ancestors and descendants, the majority of orthodox thinkers believed that upbringing and education could supplant nature and create true bonds of filiation between biologically unrelated people. Following Mencius, many orthodox philosophers held that sincerity was more important than

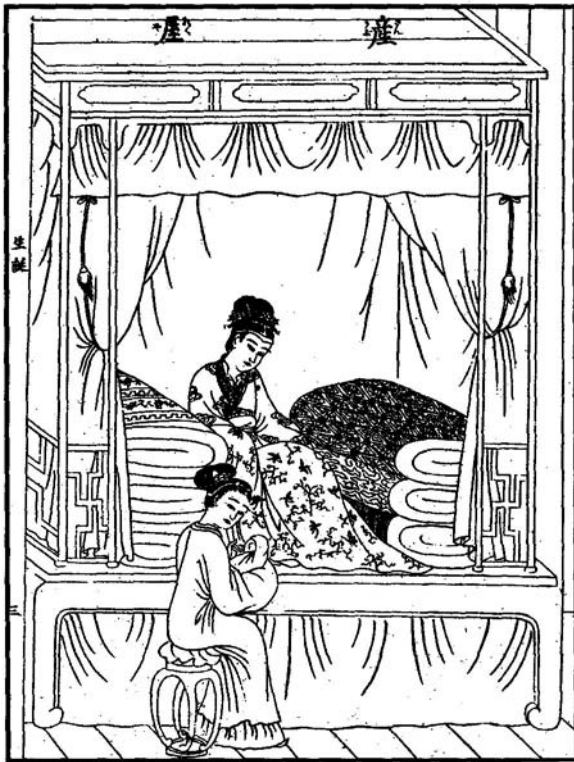


Figure 8.1 Childbirth chamber: the new mother is sitting on her bed propped up by piles of quilts to prevent sudden movement and hemorrhaging; a maid or perhaps the wet-nurse is holding the baby. (Source: Nakagawa, *Shinzoku kibun*: 317.)

inherited *qi*, and that anyone who *acted* as a proper son *was* a proper son, even in the eyes of the ancestors. This transformation, the effect of a proper upbringing, turned an adopted boy gradually into the true son of his social father. But the contending claims of natural and social father were not so easily resolved in practice. Both Waltner (1990) and Faure (2006) discuss the Great Ritual Controversy, *Da li yi*, which arose when the Wuzong Emperor died in 1521 without an heir, naming his cousin as successor in his will. The Ming rules for succession did not allow for a cousin to succeed, but did recognize the rights of younger brothers. The Ministry of Rites therefore advised the new emperor, Shizong, to recognize Wuzong's father as his own father. Shizong, however, saw this as lack of respect to his natural father and refused, causing three years of bitter court controversy. (Eventually he legitimized his position by granting his own father the posthumous rank of emperor.) The big issue at stake was propriety versus sentiment. If it is human nature to respect one's natural parents, can a ritual that goes against human emotions be right? How can a man have two fathers? As Waltner and Faure demonstrate, given the various pressures to adopt children, this was a problem for private citizens as well as emperors. It represented a conundrum that could never be definitively resolved in legal terms, allowing for significant variations in local custom.

How did the calculations of true relatedness apply to the bonds between mother and child? Could a man have two mothers? A birth mother contributed to her child's constitution through the transfer of material substances during pregnancy and lactation. But how essential, how insuperable was this? In the elite reproductive cultures of late imperial China, the belief is clearly expressed that a mother's most important contribution was educating the child, turning it into a social being by inculcating moral values. This was what forged the truest bonds of tenderness and respect. 'The true measure of a woman's greatness, many Song writers seemed to imply, was how well they brought up their children' (Ebrey 1993: 183). The importance accorded to a mother's role as formal educator increased through the late imperial period. A good mother instructed her children how to behave properly and perform rituals correctly; she not only taught them to read the simple classics at home before they went to school, she also expounded the moral messages the texts contained, and – most important of all – she instilled in them a sense of moral purpose and determination, and encouraged them to pursue honourable ambitions. Family instruction books of late imperial times stressed that it was important for a wife to take the education of concubine's sons in hand herself, lest their birth mother's lowly origins taint their character.

As fathers played little direct role in their upbringing, it became conventional for successful men to attribute their achievements to their mother's devotion, intelligence and moral influence, and a concubine's sons expressed their gratitude not to their poorly educated birth-mother, but to the social or formal mother, *dimu*, who had inspired and directed their ambitions. The emotional strength of these bonds should not be underestimated:

The woman who made a vehement loyalist of Gu Yanwu (1613–82), the woman after whom Wang Huizu (1730–1807) wanted to name his collected writings, and the woman who pressed Liang Qi (1859–1918) to reward her with success [were all] their ‘formal mothers’.

(Hsiung 1994: 88)

It would be wrong to think that the ‘biological’ contributions of motherhood counted for nothing. In Chinese thought, the physical processes of gestation, childbirth and nourishing the infant were one end of a spectrum of proper maternal care, a scale of cumulative, attentive contributions that shaded gradually from the material to the moral. Men loved their mothers for having nursed them through sickness as well as for teaching them to distinguish right from wrong. And, in effect, the bond created by education is just as physical as that created by conception, pregnancy and lactation: the latter involve a transfer of material substances, but upbringing and teaching require the transfer of ‘bodily [as well as intellectual] structures of perception and action’; they too are ‘organically embodied’ contributions to the child’s development into a mature adult (Ingold 1991: 363). Chinese thought recognized how closely the two were connected. Du You (735–812) wrote in his encyclopedia *Tongdian* that although an adopted child receives his four limbs from his biological mother, he grows his hair and skin under the care of his adoptive mother. In his *Household Instructions*, Yan Zhitui (531–c. 591) declared: ‘Confucius was right in saying: “What is acquired in babyhood is like original nature; what has been formed in habit is equal to instinct” ‘ (Waltner 1990: 47). In late imperial China, education, moral and intellectual cultivation were the key to male social success. Is it surprising that elite males, and no doubt many elite females too, construed the ideal mother as an educator, and the quintessence of motherhood as symbolized not by giving birth, by suckling or changing diapers, but by giving the child a proper moral upbringing? This hierarchical duality of maternal characteristics, expounded in the medical discourses of reproductive medicine and supported by the attribution of rights and duties within polygynous marriage, justified and indeed depended on exactly the kind of interclass female pairing idealized in the fictional Kong Huniang–Bingmei double.

Legacies and echos?

The reproductive culture of late imperial China that I have just described was inherently inegalitarian. In a world where sons were both status symbols and necessities, the institutions of adoption and polygyny reproduced social inequalities in macrocosm and in microcosm, permitting rich families to exploit poor families, and high-status women to exploit their inferiors within the polygynous household. The discourses of relatedness and the techniques for achieving motherhood that I have described enabled privileged women to consolidate their status, but did not permit low-status women to rise into the

privileged class of legal wives. Where senior women could benefit from the fruits of junior women's wombs, bearing a child did not necessarily make one a mother, nor did infertility necessarily make one not a mother. What was overwhelmingly important, at least among the elite and well-to-do, was not the act of giving birth, but the bond forged between social mother and child during the processes of upbringing and education.

The hierarchies inscribed in late imperial discourses of maternity are, in many respects, reminiscent of those that support the new reproductive technologies in Western societies today. Although some egg donors or surrogates feel quite strongly that they are working in equal partnership with infertile women, or providing them with a gift of love rather than selling them a commodity (Ragoné 1994), the procedures frequently involve purchasing the reproductive tissues or labour of less privileged women to produce babies for more privileged families. Here, too, we find a constellation of reproductive ideologies and techniques that move children (or their raw materials) up the social ladder, sometimes within a society, sometimes between nations.¹⁰ When things go wrong, legal disputes over who is or is not the 'real' parent frequently hinge on which biological contribution to the child (DNA, cytoplasm, gestation) is taken to be primary in determining its identity. Yet since all are recognized as essential in current biological science, those claiming parental status and rights cannot appeal to science alone to resolve the question, but must resort to declarations of emotional commitment¹¹ or demonstrations of their capacity to offer the child good life chances. Observers such as Katha Pollitt have noted that in baby-hungry, rich societies like the USA, the prospects one can offer a child tend to be seen as proportional to wealth and income, while emotional commitment is generally considered incompatible with accepting money for one's reproductive services. This leaves surrogates who have 'rented their womb' at a serious disadvantage in any dispute over parental rights (Pollitt 1987).

Are similar concerns and tensions playing out in the PRC today? In an era of burgeoning middle-class consumerism and new reproductive technologies, how do people now construe surrogacy and other biological or social techniques available to overcome childlessness? What echoes or new formulations of imperial discourses and institutions of relatedness might be discernible in China today, after 60 years of determined effort to root out the feudal past?

As one of its initiatives to re-form its population as modern citizens, the new government of the PRC restricted the biological actors of the reproductive unit to the exclusivity of the modern, western-style, one-husband-one-wife couple. Concubinage and polygyny, which had survived in an uneasy legal limbo during the Republican period (1912–49), were outlawed in the PRC (Tran 2005), and any other transactions that resembled the buying or selling of sexual partners or children were strictly banned.¹² But such bans are coming into question now, as childless people seek recourse to new reproductive technologies, in particular egg implantation or surrogate motherhood.

Until recently, scholarship on reproductive cultures in the PRC focused predominantly on the impact of birth-control policies and the problem of excessive fertility. The health campaigns of the 1960s and 1970s encouraged women to start a family later and space their children further apart, partly to improve maternal and child healthcare, partly to reduce pressure on resources and increase living standards. Because they allowed couples to 'try for a boy', these relatively mild campaigns reduced birth rates dramatically without generating significant opposition. But by 1975, average female fertility was still well above replacement rate, at 3.6 (Banister 1987: 220). In 1979, two new policies were introduced to accelerate China's transformation from an austere socialist economy into an exuberant consumer society and globally competitive super-power: the abolition of the rural collectives, and the one-child family policy (Greenhalgh 2005). By restricting rural couples to a single child, while obliging them to operate as competitive household enterprises whose main resource was family labour, the new policies set the interests of the state, women, children and family groups violently at variance, provoking a dramatic and often distorted resurgence of hitherto muted patrilineal strategies and values (Anagnost 1989; Potter 1987). These included strong boy-preference; treating young wives as baby-makers, conditional members of their husband's families who might be divorced if they didn't rapidly produce the desired son; and the 'disappearance' of baby girls.¹³ Better-off urban families whose incomes did not depend on family labour found it easier to accept the goals and methods of the one-child policy, and soon began to accept that it was modern to have just one child, or even that a girl was just as welcome as a boy (Nathansen Milwertz 1996). By the 1990s the policy had been significantly modified: while urban areas and public work-units retained the one-child policy, a 'one-son-or-two-child-policy' operated in most rural areas (Johnson *et al.* 1998: 475).

As Lisa Handwerker has noted, the emphasis on controlling excessive fertility distracted attention from the problem of infertility under the one-child policy. Its mechanisms, for instance the recording of menstruation and the issuing of birth permits by work-units, brutally exposed intimate aspects of a woman's fertility or infertility to public view. This added, often unbearably, to private pressures and unhappiness. What was in reality an 'everyone must have *one* child policy' pushed many 'hens who can't lay eggs' into a desperate search for fertility treatments (Handwerker 1998, 2002). In the 1980s and early 1990s, they often turned to Chinese medicine for help (Farquhar 1991). In 1988, the first Chinese test-tube baby was born, and today the whole spectrum of biomedical new reproductive technologies is available, though not always officially approved. What are the public and official responses to the new technologies that promise solutions to childlessness for increasing numbers of infertile and desperate individuals or couples?

In its regulation of the new reproductive technologies, the government appears concerned principally to prevent any form of social exploitation, in

particular exploitation that might arise from the commodification of reproductive tissues and services. In the context of a steady decline in fertility, however, the demand for such services is growing inexorably, and the state is often accused of indifference to the agonies of infertile couples.¹⁴ Yet it is clear that the state is not equally opposed to all new reproductive technologies. *In vitro* fertilization (IVF) treatments that involve the combination of husband's sperm and wife's ovum are perfectly legal. Handwerker notes that 'there is no official policy to foster IVF programs' (Handwerker 2002: 298), but although IVF treatments are restricted to approved hospitals, each limited to 1000 operations a year in order to maintain the quality of service, the number of treatments and the number of approved hospitals and licensed personnel is steadily expanding.¹⁵ On the other hand, in March 2006 the Ministry of Health tightened control over sperm banks and banned all commercial donation, supply and use of human ova (*People's Daily* 2006). As for surrogate motherhood, the Ministry of Health banned certified medical establishments from performing such operations in 2001 (*Beijing Youth Daily* 2001). Wu Qiantao, a professor of ethics, puts the official position as follows: 'Once a woman goes through months of pregnancy and bears a child, she is the mother. And a contract for surrogate motherhood essentially asks her to sell her baby' (*China Daily* 2006).

Nevertheless, as even the most sophisticated infertility treatments are not always successful, surrogacy services are increasingly sought in China today. It is difficult to control the many private clinics that have grown up with the decline of public health facilities, and in big cities like Shanghai, would-be parents can consult online agencies to connect with potential surrogates. Young women 'volunteers' receive anywhere between 40,000 and 120,000 yuan (\$5000–15,000) 'for their loving heart'; prospective parents must also pay the young woman's living and medical expenses as well as a fee to the 'non-profit' agency (*China Daily* 2006; Zhang 2006). As annual rural and urban incomes in 2005 averaged below 4000 and 11,000 yuan, respectively (US–China Business Council 2006), this is clearly not an option open to all childless couples. Surrogates may be migrant workers, students or divorcees, and their fee depends on their education, good looks and health. According to interviews with the surrogacy services, there are 'two methods of effecting a surrogate pregnancy; either artificially inseminating the surrogate with both the sperm and ovum of the customer couple, or with only the sperm', and impregnation through sexual intercourse is never used because 'none of the parties would agree to it' (Zhang 2006).

In interviews, the founders of the surrogacy agencies claim that it was the desperation of childless relatives or friends divorced for infertility that inspired them to set up their services. Despite their care to distance themselves from any hint of exploitation, it is instructive to consider the reactions of critics:

On the Internet forums, the topic is also hotly debated with more users voting against surrogacy. Many call it '*renting a belly*', while others have

condemned it as *being no different from taking a concubine* if sexual intercourse is involved. In a recent online survey, 51 percent of respondents said the practice is an *abominable* one, and relevant laws should be drafted to prohibit it.

(Zhang 2006; emphases added)

Such reactions suggest that many young, well educated and well off urban Chinese (the likely participants in internet forums) agree with the state that surrogacy is a form of exploitation, reminiscent of ‘feudal’ institutions like concubinage, that has no place in a modern nation. One suspects, however, that many of those against surrogacy have not experienced the agonies of infertility. A further point worth considering with respect to surrogacy as practised here is that it always uses the male customer’s sperm, and thus poses no threat to the principle of male descent. It is frequently pressures from the husband and his family to ensure the continuation of the family line that drive infertile women (or couples) to seek fertility treatment (Handwerker 2002). Where this is the case, although the child’s biological relationship to the wife is of little importance, the social father must also be recognized as the biological father. This is one reason why artificial insemination by donor is not popular in China:

In my interviews with twenty-three women about their willingness to use and their attitudes toward egg and sperm donation, they were confused about what should count as ‘natural’ and how this might influence kinship relations. On the one hand, the women I interviewed told me they would use an egg donor, as long as the egg was combined with their husband’s sperm. *The use of their husband’s sperm was the most important factor in considering the child their own.* On the other hand, women expressed great ambivalence about accepting sperm from an anonymous male donor out of fear that their husbands or in-laws might reject the child.

In one widely publicized case from Shanghai, a couple secretly underwent artificial insemination by donor. After the child was born, the paternal grandparents became suspicious on the grounds that the child did not look like their son. They accused the wife of having an extra-marital affair. Under pressure, the man admitted that as a result of his sterility his wife had undergone artificial insemination by donor. His parents refused to believe their son was sterile and rejected the child. The husband, *forced to choose between his parents and his wife [and social son]*, decided to divorce.

(Handwerker 2002: 306, 312 note 2; emphases added)

Discussing fetal testing and selective abortion, Frank Dikötter argues that thanks to new reproductive technologies ‘a “new” eugenics, drawing on old cultural principles, has emerged under the guise of modern scientific knowledge in clinical practice’ (Dikötter 1998, cited by Handwerker 2002: 306).

Under the pressures of the one-child policy, boy-preference is one of the 'old cultural principles' that has emerged most dramatically, facilitated by the new technology of fetal scans and the easy availability of abortions: the state allows prenatal screening for birth defects, but in a vain effort to protect female fetuses, it strictly forbids technicians to reveal the sex of the child.

Attitudes towards artificial insemination by donor, IVF and surrogacy reveal that other 'old' cultural principles, here concerning natural relatedness, are also being mobilized in response to new solutions to infertility. It seems that when IVF services were first offered, parents often asked 'Is the test-tube baby my own?' Now they are more likely to ask what the likely success rate is: the couples who can afford such treatments mostly come from social strata that have easily naturalized these forms of assisted reproduction, despite warnings from medical experts, worried about higher risks of complications or deformity, that: 'If you are sterile, modern technology can help you have your own child. But it is not natural, and will not be the same as a natural pregnancy' (ACWF 2007). Yet for many Chinese, including urban as well as rural families, in the case of the father it is still direct biological inheritance through the father's sperm that determines 'natural' or real descent. What, then, builds true relatedness between mother and child in contemporary China?

In most Western countries today, giving birth is a rite of passage into the full experience of womanhood, an essential part of the physical and emotional training and bonding through which one becomes a real mother (Davis-Floyd 1992). It is noteworthy that many Western parents of adopted or surrogate children consider it essential to attend and help with the birth as the gateway to parental identity and bonding. In imperial China, giving birth was the least important part of motherhood: the heart of the emotional bond between mother and son was the extended process of upbringing and education. In her recent research on specialized childbirth clinics in Beijing, Suzanne Gottschang found that the prosperous young urban women who attended them similarly paid little attention to the experience of birth, which they regarded as a chore rather than a transformative experience. They dutifully followed doctors' and nurses' instructions on prenatal care, zoned as much as possible through the unpleasant processes of delivery, and generally took rather little pleasure in breastfeeding. Those who did breastfeed undertook the task on scientific grounds, for the health of the child, rather than as an intimate process of emotional bonding; the majority found it either physically impossible or incompatible with the demands of work, and gladly switched to foreign formula, which they saw as more nourishing and more scientific (Gottschang 2000; personal communication).

Like most ordinary Chinese people now, these women share the government's obsession with improving the 'quality', *suzhi*, of the population, and are anxious to invest in their children's care, upbringing and education accordingly (Kipnis, Chapter 9 in this volume). The ways in which these young urban mothers choose to enhance their maternal bonds and authority

routinely involve the invocation of ‘science’ and ‘being modern’. They repudiate childcare and advice on child-raising from their mothers-in-law and mothers, rejecting it as unscientific and old-fashioned. Those who can afford it hire live-in maids to care for their children while they go out to work, arguing that although these country girls are just as ignorant as their mother-in-law or mother, at least they obey when taught improved, modern practices (Gottschang, personal communication).

The materials on assisted reproduction that I have discussed – a range of services also largely restricted by their cost to well off couples – further support the contention that within China’s rapidly expanding urban middle class, it is not so much the biological bonds of conception, gestation and birth that create relatedness between mother and child, but rather the long-term processes of responsible upbringing. The most significant ‘facts of procreation’ being concerned with paternity, for young women in this relatively privileged group, as for high-status women in imperial China, the making of motherhood is as much social as biological. A true mother today must ensure that her child is well educated, and provide him or her with modern, scientific care. As in imperial times, the elite mother demonstrates her maternal capacity by ensuring the care is of high quality, but she does not need physically to provide it all herself – for this she can hire someone else, whether it be a ‘rented womb’ or a nursemaid, without her natural maternal claims being in any way diminished.

Glossary

<i>baishao</i>	白芍
<i>baizhu</i>	白朮
<i>chan</i>	產
<i>Da li yi</i>	大禮議
<i>danggui</i>	當歸
<i>dimu</i>	嫡母
Du You	杜佑
<i>dui</i>	對
<i>duilian</i>	對聯
<i>dui'ou</i>	對偶
<i>fandui</i>	反對
<i>Fuke xinfa yaojue</i>	婦科心法要訣
<i>honghua</i>	紅花

Jianmei	兼美
<i>jingbi</i>	經閉
Li Lüyuan	李綠園
<i>niuxi</i>	牛膝
<i>ou</i>	偶
<i>qi</i> (wife)	妻
<i>qi</i> (vital force)	氣
<i>Qilu deng</i>	歧路燈
<i>qie</i>	妾
<i>renxin</i>	人心
<i>sheng</i>	生
<i>suzhi</i>	素質
<i>tiaojing</i>	調經
<i>Tongdian</i>	通典
<i>tongjing yao</i>	通經藥
Wu Qian	吳謙
Wu Qiantao	吳潛濤
<i>xiangbei</i>	相背
<i>xiangdui</i>	相對
Xu Chunfu	徐春甫
Xu Dachun	徐大椿
Yan Zhitui	顏之推
<i>yang</i> (to nourish, nurture, rear)	養
<i>yang</i> (male energies or characteristics)	陽
<i>yin</i>	陰
<i>zhuan</i>	傳

Notes

- 1 This article draws on sections of *Technology and Gender: Fabrics of Power in Late Imperial China* by Francesca Bray, © 1997, the Regents of the University of California, published by the University of California Press. I would like to thank the Regents for their kind permission to use the materials in this chapter.

- 2 Qing official's wife to 'her' son, the child of her husband's concubine; T'ien 1988: 9 (see below).
- 3 A term evocative of today's biotechnical surrogacy procedures (see below), but in this context signifying that a woman gave birth to children who belonged not to herself but to the patriline into which she had married.
- 4 This chapter draws from a more extended treatment of techniques and meanings of motherhood in late imperial China in Bray (1997, Part 3, 273–368).
- 5 In early China the term *ou* referred, among other things, to the effigies placed in graves to accompany the deceased to the next world 'The doubles, *ou*, are beings, living or not, with whom one forms a couple', and in Buddhism the term denoted the icons through whose contemplation the double of divinity and workshipper was united (Faure 1998: 803).
- 6 See Harrell (1985).
- 7 Male infertility was recognized in the medical literature, but it figured far less prominently than female infertility.
- 8 Concubines who had not borne a son would sometimes adopt a boy to care for them in old age and make offerings to their soul tablets after their death, but the boys were not incorporated into their master's lineage.
- 9 Although the various arguments that follow could be taken to apply equally to girl and boy children, patrilineal Chinese society was chiefly concerned with the filiation and filiality of sons.
- 10 As in transnational adoptions or transnational ova 'donations' and 'embryo transfers' (Nahman 2007).
- 11 'Ann is my baby, she was conceived in my heart before she was conceived in Lisa's body' ('Cybil', quoted by Ragoné 1994: 126).
- 12 This is one reason why the laws concerning adoption are so restrictive; see below.
- 13 Kay Johnson's interviews with hundreds of families indicate that, under ideal circumstances, most rural couples want at least one son and one daughter. The draconian birth-control regulations drove many families to abandon newborn girls, but many were quickly taken in by other families who had sons but no daughters. However, stringent regulations that allowed only childless couples over 35 to adopt legally meant that all such 'adoptions' had to remain unofficial (Johnson *et al.* 1998).
- 14 *China Daily* 2006. According to a recent survey in Guangzhou, sperm rates have halved in recent years and 10 per cent of men are infertile, while environmental pollution, stress, delayed childbirth and abortions have affected women's fertility (Guang Xiaofeng 2007).
- 15 One of the five accredited Guangzhou hospitals noted a 25 per cent increase in operations, from 800 in 2005 to 1000 in 2006 (ACWF 2007).

References

- ACWF (All China Women's Federation) (2007) 'Test-tube Babies: Are They Unnatural?' *Women of China*, www.womenofchina.cn/focus/health/14461.jsp [accessed 26 February 2007].
- Ahern, E. (1978) 'The Power and Pollution of Chinese Women', in A. Wolf (ed.) *Studies in Chinese Society*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press: 269–90.
- Anagnost, A. (1989) 'Family Violence and Magical Violence: The Woman as Victim in China's One-Child Family Policy', *Women and Language* 11(2): 16–22.
- Banister, J. (1987) *China's Changing Population*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

- Beijing Youth Daily* (2001) 'Regulations on the Management of Human Reproduction', 21 March 2001, www.usembassy-china.org.cn/sandt/estnews0427.htm
- Borotová, L. (1992) 'A making of the *doubles* of character-types in an eighteenth-century novel', paper presented at EACS Conference, Paris, September 1992, European Association for Chinese Studies, www.soas.ac.uk/eacs
- Bray, F. (1997) *Technology and Gender: Fabrics of Power in Late Imperial China*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- China Daily* (2006) 'Surrogate Pregnancy Challenges Social Ethic', 7 January 2006, www.china.org.cn/english/Life/154379.htm
- Davis-Floyd, R. (1992) *Birth as an American Rite of Passage*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Delahaye, H. (2002) 'Les duilian, phrases parallèles et convergentes: quelques aspects sociologiques', *Études chinoises* XXI(1-2): 41-66.
- Dennerline, J. (1986) 'Marriage, Adoption, and Charity in the Development of Lineages in Wu-hsi from Sung to Ch'ing', in P.B. Ebrey and J.L. Watson (eds) *Kinship Organization in Late Imperial China, 1000-1940*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press: 170-209.
- Dikötter, F. (1998) *Imperfect Conceptions: Medical Knowledge, Birth Defects and Eugenics in China*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Ebrey, P.B. (1991) 'Shifts in Marriage Finance from the Sixth to the Thirteenth Century' in R.S. Watson and P.B. Ebrey (eds), *Marriage and Inequality in Chinese Society*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press: 97-132.
- (1993) *The Inner Quarters: Marriage and the Lives of Chinese Women in the Sung Period*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- (2002) *Women and the Family in Chinese History*, London/New York: Routledge.
- Farquhar, J. (1991) 'Objects, Processes, and Female Infertility in Chinese Medicine', *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 5(4): 370-99.
- Faure, B. (1998) 'The Buddhist Icon and the Modern Gaze', *Critical Inquiry* 24(3): 768-813.
- Faure, D. (2006) 'La solution lignagère: la révolution rituelle du XVII^e siècle et l'état impérial chinois', *Annales, Histoire, Sciences, Sociales* 61(6): 1291-1316.
- Furth, C. (1987) 'Pregnancy, Childbirth and Infancy in Ch'ing Dynasty China', *Journal of Asian Studies* 46(1): 7-35.
- (1990) 'The Patriarch's Legacy: Household Instructions and the Transmission of Orthodox Values', in K.-C. Liu (ed.) *Orthodoxy in Late Imperial China*, Berkeley, CA: California University Press: 187-211.
- (1999) *A Flourishing Yin: Gender in China's Medical History, 960-1665*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Gottschang, S.Z. (2000) 'A Baby-friendly Hospital and the Science of Infant Feeding', in J. Jing (ed.) *Feeding China's Little Emperors*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press: 160-84.
- Greenhalgh, S. (2005) 'Globalization and Population Governance in China', in A. Ong and S. J. Collier (eds) *Global Assemblages: Technology, Politics, and Ethics as Anthropological Problems*, Oxford: Blackwell: 354-72.
- Guang, Xiaofeng (2007) 'Ministry names 12 bases', *China Daily* 28 March: 4.
- Handwerker, L. (1998) 'The Consequences of Modernity for Childless Women in China: Medicalization and Resistance', in M. Lock and P.A. Kaufert (eds) *Pragmatic Women and Body Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 178-205.

- (2002) 'The Politics of Making Modern Babies in China: Reproductive Technologies and the "New" Eugenics', in M. Inhorn and F. van Balen (eds) *Infertility around the Globe: New Thinking on Childlessness, Gender, and Reproductive Technologies*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press: 298–314.
- Harrell, S. (1985) 'The Rich Get Children: Segmentation, Stratification, and Population in Three Chekiang Lineages, 1550–1850', in S.B. Hanley and A. Wolf (eds) *Family and Population in East Asian History*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press: 81–109.
- Hsiung, Ping-Chen (1994) 'Constructed Emotions: The Bond Between Mothers and Sons in Late Imperial China', *Late Imperial China* 15(1): 87–119.
- Ingold, T. (1991) 'Becoming Persons: Consciousness and Sociality in Human Evolution', *Cultural Dynamics* 4(3): 355–78.
- Johnson, K., Huang, Banghan and Wang, Liyao (1998) 'Infant Abandonment and Adoption in China', *Population and Development Review* 24(3): 469–510.
- Leung, A. K.-C. (1984) 'Autour de la naissance: la mère et l'enfant en Chine aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles', *Cahiers internationaux de sociologie* 76: 51–69.
- Nakagawa Tadahide (1799 [1983]), *Shinzoku kibun* (recorded account of Qing customs), reprinted Taipei: Dali Press.
- Nahman, M. (2007) 'Synecdochic Ricochets: Biosocialities in a Jerusalem IVF Clinic', in S. Gibbon and C. Novas (eds) *Biosociality, Genetics and the Social Sciences*, London: Routledge.
- Nathansen Milwertz, C. (1996) *Accepting Population Control: Urban Chinese Women and the One-Child Family Policy*, Richmond: Curzon.
- Overmyer, D. L. (1985) 'Values in Chinese Sectarian Literature: Ming and Ch'ing *pao-ch'üan*', in D. Johnson, A.J. Nathan and E.S. Rawski (eds) *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press: 219–54.
- People's Daily* (2006) 'Health Ministry Tightens Control on Sperm Banks', http://english.people.com.cn/200604/10/eng20060410_257223.html
- Plaks, A. (1988) 'Where the Lines Meet: Parallelism in Chinese and Western Literatures', *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews (CLEAR)* 10(1/2): 43–60.
- Pollitt, K. (1987) 'The Strange Case of Baby M', *The Nation*, 23 May 1987, www.thenation.com/doc/19870523/19870523pollitt
- Potter, S. H. (1987) 'Birth Planning in China: A Cultural Account', in N. Scheper-Hughes (ed.) *Child Survival: Anthropological Perspectives on the Treatment and Maltreatment of Children*, Dordrecht, the Netherlands and Boston, MA: D. Reidel: 33–58.
- Ragoné, H. (1994). *Surrogate Motherhood: Conception in the Heart*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Seaman, G. (1981) 'The Sexual Politics of Karmic Retribution', in E. Ahern and H. Gates (eds) *The Anthropology of Chinese Society on Taiwan*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press: 381–96.
- Sommer, M. (2005) 'Making Sex Work: Polyandry as a Survival Strategy in Qing Dynasty China', in B. Goodman and W. Larson (eds) *Gender in Motion: Divisions of Labor and Cultural Change in Late Imperial and Modern China*, New York: Rowman & Littlefield: 29–54.
- Strathern, M. (1999) 'Introduction: A Question of Context', in J. Edwards, S. Franklin, E. Hirsch, F. Price and M. Strathern (eds) *Technologies of Procreation: Kinship in the Age of Assisted Conception*, New York: Routledge: 9–20.
- T'ien, Ju-Káng (1988) *Male Anxiety and Female Chastity: A Comparative Study of Chinese Ethical Values in Ming-Ch'ing Times*, Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill.

- Tran, L. (2005) 'Monogamy and Concubinage under Modern Chinese Law, 1912–53', PhD thesis, University of California, Los Angeles, Department of History.
- US–China Business Council (2006) 'China's Economy', www.uschina.org/info/chops/2006/economy.html
- Waltner, A. (1990) *Getting an Heir: Adoption and the Construction of Kinship in Late Imperial China*, Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Watson, R.S. (1991) 'Wives, Concubines, and Maids: Servitude and Kinship in the Hong Kong Region, 1900–940.' in R.S. Watson and E.S. Rawski (eds) *Marriage and Inequality in Chinese Society*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press: 203–26.
- Wolf, M. (1972) *Women and the Family in Rural Taiwan*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Xu, Chunfu (1978 [1556]) *Gujin yitong daquan* [complete ancient and modern medical compendium], repr. Taipei: Xinwenfeng Press.
- Xu, Dachun (1988 [eighteenth century]) *Yilüe liushu, nūke zhiyan* [medical compendium in six books, experiences in gynecology], repr. Beijing: Renmin Weisheng Press.
- Zhang, Tingting (2006) 'China Grapples with Legality of Surrogate Motherhood', China.org.cn, 5 June 2006, www.china.org.cn/english/2006/Jun/170442.htm

9 Education and the governing of child-centered relatedness¹

Andrew Kipnis

In her book *After Kinship*, Janet Carsten (2004) lays out the aligned dualisms of the 'old' kinship studies that Schneider and others have criticized since the 1960s. The organizing dualism is the distinction between the west, where kinship has supposedly been reduced to the private domain of the nuclear household; and the rest, where kinship indexed a formal, jural, public and male domain that could only be opposed to the household. The related series of dualisms – west, non-west; kinship, household; jural, intimate; emotional, formal; public, private; male, female; code, substance; culture, nature – mapped on to each other all too easily in both common sense and anthropological writing. Along with Franklin and McKinnon (2001); Strathern (1988, 1992a, 1992b) and others, Carsten has practiced a new kinship studies that emphasizes how humans all around the world blend the domains that these dualisms suggest are separated.

While their writings are insightful, I note that these authors have devoted scant attention to the rise of state systems of education. Everywhere, schools are the institutions that explicitly bridge the divide between the concerns of the state (assumed to be formal, public, jural and male) and those of the household (supposedly intimate, emotional, private, nurturing and female). A study of education should have much to tell us about changing notions of kinship, in a manner that should echo the concerns of the new kinship studies.

In China, the spread of formal education from the households of an elite few to a near-universal phenomenon has been one of the most important developments of the twentieth century. Surprisingly, given the series of revolutions China has witnessed, the twentieth century march towards nine years of compulsory education for all was remarkably steady. As Thøgersen (2002) notes for Shandong, significant progress was made during the last decade of the Qing dynasty, during the Republican era, under the Japanese, during the Maoist decades and during the reform era (see also Buck 1974). During the first decade of the twenty-first century, 15 years of education is becoming increasingly common (including three years of pre-school and three years of senior middle school), with 80–90 per cent of rural Shandong children attending school for that long in many parts of the province.

In all modern societies, education gives teachers an important role in the cultivation of personhood among youth. In contemporary China, the desire of the Party-state to cultivate the 'quality' (*suzhi*) of its population, especially its children, is often mirrored by parents and other relatives. Moreover, even as teachers take over much of the responsibility for raising and disciplining children from families, they teach a familial ethics of filial piety and sacrifice. From the vantage point of this ethics, the strenuous efforts of students, parents and teachers to enable the cultivation of quality in children may all be depicted as forms of sacrifice that are worthy of social recognition and reciprocity. Parents labor to provide material funding for their children's education while hoping for filial and successful children. Students study hard to enact a filial gratitude, while teachers' efforts are both a call for further efforts by the children, and public recognition from peers, educational administrators and society at large. As Feuchtwang (2002) argues, sacrifice in China has long acted as a claim on reciprocity. Moreover, this ethics links historically to the ideologies that interwove sacrificial ritual, state legitimacy, familial ethics, and the teaching of literacy in Late Imperial China.²

In post-Mao China, the continuing spread of formal education must be placed in the context of the other main state intervention into intimate family life: the birth-control policy. One of the central tenants of the birth-control policy has been that reducing the quantity of the Chinese population would lead to, or enable, an increase in its quality. At one level, this project could be analysed in cultural or ideological terms. What constitutes a high 'quality' population or person is a matter of considerable ambiguity and tension, and the ability of 'quality' to act as an empty signifier or a sacred value worthy of totemic worship is significant (Kipnis 2001, 2006, 2007). At another level, however, the vision of enhancing the population's quality by limiting its quantity has been much more than 'mere ideology'. It has been a tool of governmentality based both on the calculations of a planned economy, in which providing jobs and education for a large population was more difficult than for a small population, and on the international research demonstrating that children in families with only one or two siblings receive more parental attention, education and resources than do children of large families (Fong 2004; Greenhalgh and Winckler 2005). From the vantage point of this research, the birth-control policy appears as a bit of successful reverse social engineering. Where western researchers found that the emotional and economic costs of successfully raising a highly educated child contributed to a reduction in birth rates and the number of children desired, Chinese demographers reasoned that forcing a reduction in the birth rate might lead to an increased amount of parental investment in each child. If one accepts that life expectancy and years of education are acceptable measures of a 'quality' population, then, in macro terms, the birth-control policy has had some of the effects that its designers envisioned. The only children of Chinese urban families are, by and large, healthy and highly educated.

In post-Mao China, education is closely related to the birth-control policy both because of the quantity/quality conceptual apparatus, and because schools are constantly adapting to local population structures. School closures in years of waning school-aged population, and large class sizes in times of population growth, are both common phenomena, and the education and birth control bureaucracies work closely together at every level of government to plan and coordinate such events. Educational institutions are also sites of the dissemination of much propaganda about what constitutes a normal family and household and a normal relationship to the birth-control policy itself. This chapter examines the practices of relatedness and kinship in the post-birth-control context of small sibling sets and strong educational ambitions in a rural but rapidly industrializing county in Shandong—Zouping. Building on the work of Greenhalgh and Winkler (2005), who give an extensive overview of some of the macro-level effects (both intended and unintended) that the birth-control policy has had on Chinese families, and Vanessa Fong (2004), who provides a more intimate portrait of some of the lives of singleton children in urban families in the city of Dalian, this chapter examines some of the intimate effects the birth-control policy and increasing educational investment have had on kin relations in a rural setting.

Zouping County

Zouping has been developing rapidly since 1995, an economic condition that forms part of the context in which the attitudes of Zouping parents towards education have evolved. Land and local employment opportunities are sufficiently plentiful that most rural-dwellers do not feel the need for out-migration. It is possible to work locally and earn enough to build a new house and even send one or two children to an inexpensive university, although it is certainly not easy to do so. A common pattern for rural households in 2005 would be for one adult to concentrate on farming (from which an annual income of about 10,000 yuan (roughly US\$1250) was possible in most villages) while another worked as a day laborer in one or more nearby factories for about 600–900 yuan a month (roughly US\$100). Some families contracted land from other families in order to focus solely on agriculture, while others specialized in non-farm employment. The villages in the far north of the county (northern Sunzhen township), where land was less plentiful and which were a greater distance from most of the factory work, were perhaps the poorest. Yet even there, very few people left their village for work. Most put up with a longer commute and perhaps 40 per cent less agricultural income to follow the same work patterns as their slightly more wealthy neighbors to the south.

Although local employment was available, no parents wanted their children to reproduce their own identity as ‘peasants’. As in many other parts of the country, rural Zouping dwellers draw a distinction between common people like themselves (who they call *laobaixing*), and people who have steady employment in proper work-units (who they call *danwei ren*), who for

the most part reside in the county seat. Most Zouping villagers feel that their work is dirty and insecure and that their social position is lowly.

In 2005–06, I spent six months carrying out research in Zouping schools, as part of an ongoing project. Two months were spent gaining an overview of the system, interviewing teachers, administrators, cadres and students at both primary and secondary institutions. I also spent one month at three different primary schools: one located in the county seat that served primarily students with urban (*feinong*) household registrations, a second county seat school that served ‘urban villagers’ and in-migrating workers, and a school located distant from the county seat in one of the poorest townships of the county (Sunzhen). The latter school served only rural households. All were large schools, with three to four classes of 50–60 students in each grade. In each school, I spent two weeks sitting in on a year six class, and two weeks hanging out in the year six teachers’ office. On evenings and weekends, I interviewed students from the class I was attending at their homes with their parents and other relatives present. In the rural primary school, there were 58 students in the year six class I attended, and I was able to interview the households of all of them. As the classes are arranged so that each class in a given grade has a relatively equal number of good and poor students, the sample of households I interviewed can be considered relatively representative of rural households in Zouping with a child of that age. In the urban schools, I managed to interview about half of the student households, but I did get a relatively even number of below- and above-average students.

One difference between the rural and urban primary schools is worth noting. Because almost all the urban students lived relatively close to their school, they mostly returned home for lunch. In the rural parts of the county, the Education Bureau has been working to consolidate schools (Kipnis 2006), with the result that most rural students in Zouping no longer have a school in their home village. Instead, they take a bus each morning to the nearest town, where large new primary schools have recently been constructed. The students are served a hot lunch at the school and return home each evening. Typically, they are away from home from 7:00 am to 5:30 pm each day. Rural parents and teachers call these schools ‘closed campuses’ (*fengbi xuexiao*), because they are surrounded by walls that prevent the children from leaving the school without permission from the school authorities.

Although many parents from the rural school district I surveyed were comforted by the apparent safety of this arrangement, a few voiced qualms about the requirement that their children eat lunch at the school. These households were near the school, and wanted their children to return home for lunch. One father was convinced that the school was making a profit on the lunches (with charges of about 1.2 yuan per lunch, he thought the school made 0.1 yuan per head per day profit). The students, however, were more positive about the experience. Almost all the students agreed that it was fun to eat with their classmates. The students were not strictly supervised during

lunch times, and this was the only block of time they had for socializing all day. While there was a cafeteria for the younger students, year six students had their food brought to their classroom, where they ate and chatted (and occasionally screamed and fought), while their teachers ate in their offices, looking in only now and then. Only six of the 58 children disliked the experience, and all these children had dietary tastes, needs or habits that the school could not meet. There were five households in which the student had a more positive attitude towards eating at the school than did the parents, but none the other way around. Given the importance of commensality to family life (see Santos, Chapter 5 in this volume), these attitudes are perhaps not surprising. One might speculate that children are less enamored of potentially hierarchical family mealtime interactions than their parents, although I have not done the ethnography to demonstrate this.

Zouping cultures of relatedness

One of the obvious effects of the birth-control policy on rural households in Zouping is the similarity of family forms. While urban households are generally restricted to one child, rural households are allowed to have two if the first is a girl (Greenhalgh 1993; Kipnis 1997: 138–41). This results in three permissible forms of nuclear family – parents and only child (boy or girl); parents and two daughters; or parents and an older sister with a younger brother. In addition, because birth spacing is also tightly regulated, in households with an older sister, the younger sibling is almost always between seven and nine years younger than the older sister.³ As I was interviewing the households of year six students (with an average age of 12), almost all the rural households had sibling sets that fell under one of the following structures. If the student was a boy, he could either be an only child or have an elder sister who was about 20 years old. If the student was a girl, she could have an older sister of about 20 or a younger sibling (either girl or boy) between three and six years of age. Almost all parents who have a girl as their first child have a second child. Thus, of the 58 rural households I interviewed, only five had a sibling set structure other than an only son or an elder daughter with a younger sibling seven to nine years younger, and only two had violated the birth-control policy.⁴

This degree of compliance with the birth-control policy should not be considered an anomaly. I have conducted household interviews in this part of China four times before, and the number of birth control violations I have come across has always been about five per cent of the households interviewed. At least since the late 1980s, most families in this area have expressed a desire for one son and one daughter as an ideal family form (Kipnis 1997: 138–41). Reports on provincial patterns of birth-control policy compliance suggest that Shandong is an area with a high level of compliance, and that provinces such as Jiangsu and Hubei actually experience fewer births than policy allows (as many rural couples decline to have a second

child when their first is a daughter), while the southern provinces of Anhui, Guangdong, Guizhou, Fujian and Jiangxi are sites of higher son preference and non-compliance (Greenhalgh and Winckler 2005: 226–29).

These regularized sibling set structures were matched by a fairly regular set of employment opportunities for the rural households I interviewed, especially for the older sisters. These twenty-year-old young women were either working in one of the large factories in the county seat (most of which had dormitory rooms for single employees that allowed the daughters to move out of the villages), or were attending university. The large factories in Zouping offer young middle-school graduates an opportunity for relatively permanent employment with housing in either the county seat or the largest town outside the county seat. Young people consider such employment a step towards becoming an urban work-unit person, better than life in the village despite its blue-collar nature.⁵ It cannot compare, however, with the white-collar jobs available for those who are able to attend university.

Educational processes and family relationships

The preference for white-collar jobs is just the tip of the iceberg of desire for university education. When I asked whether they wanted their child to attend university, 100 per cent of the parents I interviewed in both rural and urban Zouping answered affirmatively. Many expressed this desire quite strongly, saying that it would be one of the most glorious dreams they could imagine if their child was able to pass the university entrance exam. Many were even shocked that I could ask such a question: ‘Of course’, ‘isn’t that what everybody wants’, or ‘how could someone not want that’ were common replies. Only three of 58 rural parents even qualified their responses with asides like ‘if I can afford the tuition’, or ‘if [so and so] is bright enough’. Although I sensed that these parents were not all that enthusiastic about university, even they answered in the affirmative.

When I asked parents why they wanted their child to attend university, some would reply with answers of better jobs and more opportunities, but others either could not reply, or suggested that university attendance was an end in itself. In Zouping, anyway, it is not clear to me that university is necessarily a good investment. Many white-collar jobs pay no more than the blue-collar ones available there, and I knew quite a few college educated Zouping residents who, because their work-unit had gone bankrupt, had ended up in a worse financial position than the average factory worker. Moreover, tuition costs have soared over the past decade. Still, few in Zouping question whether a university education is a good investment. The aura of prestige that surrounds a university degree seems to inhibit the application of strict economic reasoning.⁶ As one parent put it, ‘if you attend university, no matter what happens in the rest of your life, no-one can ever take that away from you.’ That many could not articulate a reason for their desire further supports the notion that a university education has become an

object of desire in itself. By erecting monuments to Song dynasty scholars in the county seat's central park (Thøgersen 2002: 1–2), as well as displaying pictures of the high scorers on each year's university entrance exam on bulletin boards at the busiest commercial street, the county government echoes the desires of its citizenry.

The desirability of a university education extends beyond the county borders to most of Shandong Province. Researchers at the Shandong Academy of Social Sciences told me that survey data (which they could not share with me) indicated that Zouping was typical of the entire province in this regard. Statistical data I gathered during the late 1990s likewise suggest that the desire for education in Shandong Province is higher than in many other provinces (Kipnis 2001).

The desire for university education mediates both the relationship between families and the state, and the parent–child relationship. On one hand, the central drive to improve the quality of the population seems to have successfully penetrated the desires of the citizenry. On the other hand, parental desire for university education for their children at times exceeds that of the state, and has become the driving force behind the expansion of university education. In Shandong and in the nation at large, official proclamations encourage more parents to be satisfied with vocational forms of education rather than a university degree *per se*, but parental desires act to force the government to slant expenditure away from vocational education. In Shandong, the official education website declared that in order to respect the desires of parents, all of the money available for expanding university places in 2005 would be focused on four-year universities (*benke*), and none would be available for vocational short-course places (*zhuanke*) (ShandongEducationNet 2005).⁷

In the realm of parent–child relationships, spurring the child on to educational excellence and disciplining the child's study habits become central concerns of both parents and schools. Conflicts over the amount of time put into schoolwork, test scores, and how children should spend their free time are a defining aspect of childhood for many in Zouping. Such conflicts are written about with surprising regularity in both the local press (for a collection of such articles see Liu *et al.* 1997) and in nationally circulating newspapers (for a discussion of such conflicts in Dalian see Fong 2004). Often teachers and school administrators blame parents for the amount of pressure they feel compelled to place on their students in the pursuit of higher test scores (Fu 2005).

Although urban and rural parents share this trait, its expression can take vastly different forms. In Zouping, the urban–rural divide often correlates to educational attainment. Through the mid-1980s, individuals who were successful in their schooling, reaching the level of a specialized high school, short course or regular university (*zhongzhuan*, *dazhuan* or *benke*) were given urban jobs and household registration. Those who remained in the villages were almost by policy design those who never reached this level of education.

Thus, among the rural parents I interviewed, quite a few had never progressed beyond primary school themselves, and did not feel able to help even their year six children with homework. Even many of those who had managed a few years of junior middle or senior middle school felt that they had forgotten much and could not tutor their children directly. Such parents further suggested that the current level of sixth grade math, science and Chinese is above what they had learned in seventh or eighth grade. While I met some interesting examples of self-taught or academically quite confident rural parents, these were a minority. In contrast, the majority of urban parents had enough schooling to feel confident in tutoring their children.

Urban parents were also more likely to have opinions about how to make education better for their children. Many understood the latest debates about education techniques and methods, and were happy to talk to me about how the local schools had changed since they were students, what improvements were being made in the name of 'education for quality' (*suzhi jiaoyu*), and how the education system could be improved further. Urban parents were restricted to just one child, and many took quite an active role in their single child's education. They helped with homework, suggested out-of-class activities that might supplement homework, and lobbied the schools for the types of educational activity that they thought would be of most use to their children.

Most rural parents, despite their lack of knowledge about the latest pedagogical techniques, were also quite concerned with their children attending university. They enacted different strategies to promote their children's education. Many approved of, and had voiced open support for, the county's adaptation of a closed primary school format in rural areas. Such parents were even more pleased with the fact that junior middle schools (in rural but not urban areas) were boarding schools. They reasoned that the more hours their children spent at school under the supervision of teachers, the less their own relative lack of education and cultural capital would mean to their children's eventual academic success. A few years earlier, these parents had pressured rural schools to resist demands from the county education bureau to reduce school hours (Kipnis 2001). In a sense, the social strategy of rural parents here parallels the division of labor between elite and common women in the polygynous families of Late Imperial China (see Bray, Chapter 8 in this volume). The biological aspects of motherhood were taken care of by concubines of peasant origin, while elite wives took charge of the child's education. But in Late Imperial China, this strategy was initiated by the elite, educated mothers, who partially usurped the name and social status of 'mother' from the biological mothers. In contemporary China, rural parents are secure in their legal and social status as parents and, at least in Zouping, it is the biological parents who push this division of labor.

In addition to improving their children's chances of exam success, long school hours became a source of free childcare for many rural households, increasing the number of hours the parents could work. In one household I visited, the parents said they were too busy working to pay attention to their

daughter's schoolwork. These parents said that it was their responsibility to work as many shifts as they could to earn as much as possible while their bodies were still healthy enough to take such punishment. But in most rural households, devotion to earning money should not be equated to parental lack of interest in education. Rather, the purpose of working hard was to save money for university tuition for their children.

In fact, university education has replaced house-building as the most important large ticket expenditure for many rural families. During the 1980s, providing a house for a son was a financial prerequisite for the son's marriage. Zouping brides rarely consented to a marriage to a rural man whose family could not build the new couple an independent house (Kipnis 1997: 84–90). Now, however, the hope of most parents is that their son will not live in the village after he grows up. Rather, his (hopefully university) education will enable him to find a job, housing and bride in an urban setting.

I visited four rural households of two children with an older daughter in university who were living in dilapidated old houses that seemed well below their means. When I asked if they were building a new house, all these parents replied that their strategy was to save everything for their children's education, and that they would build a small new house (for their old age) once both their children had attended university.

Some parents need to borrow from relatives to finance their children's education but, fortunately for these parents, many consider financing the education of a niece or nephew an honorable and worthwhile investment. One man bragged to me how he was financing the education of two of his nephews (he had two younger sisters, each of whom had a son who called him *jiujiu*). He ran a successful pig-raising business in which his own adult son also worked. He said, 'My son didn't get the chance to go to university and now has a good job with me. I am very proud to be involved in the education of my nephews (*waisheng*). If they can get a good job in the city, it will be good for the entire family.'

Almost all rural parents with limited education blame their own lack of education on past family or regional economic conditions. They tell their children that they would have continued further with their education if economic conditions had allowed. For rural households with an elder daughter, one strategy was to expect the older daughter to serve as both a model and an educator for her younger sibling. One mother told me that she herself had not done well in school, but that was because of the poverty of her family at that time. With seven brothers and sisters, all her parents' efforts were devoted to providing enough food. This mother then described how she had told her daughter to serve as an example for the daughter's younger brother, so that he would know that people in their family had the ability to make it into university. The elder daughter had, in fact, managed to secure entrance to a teacher's college, and had spent the summer holiday after her freshman year tutoring her younger brother. As a result, the younger brother moved from the middle to the top of the class in maths.

For some rural parents, relatives (usually brothers or sisters of the parents) who had made it to university and had left the village serve as examples for the children. Because many in the parents' generation had large numbers of brothers and sisters, quite a few had at least one sibling who had succeeded in securing a tertiary education. When these relatives visit over Spring Festival, they are treated as honored guests, paraded before the children and asked to provide advice on study techniques. In this manner, the parents try to prevent their children from thinking that they cannot gain admittance into university just because the parents did not.

A generation gap?

In her classic *Culture and Commitment: A Study of the Generation Gap*, Margaret Mead (1970) suggests that differences between generations can be understood by analysing cultures in terms of whether they are pre-, co- or postfigurative. By postfigurative, Mead meant situations in which children learn from the adults in their families. By cofigurative she meant situations in which children learn from each other and culturally different adults in institutions such as schools. By prefigurative she referred to a utopian situation in which the future was so unknown that children must be allowed to find their own way without any sort of adult guidance. Writing in the aftermath of the western youth rebellions of the 1960s, Mead was addressing a situation in which the gap between the generations seemed to be becoming larger as the world changed at an ever-increasing pace. The benefit of hindsight allows us to note that generation gaps, at least in the wealthy Anglo world, do not seem to have continued to expand.⁸ Nevertheless, much of Mead's discussion of cofigurative cultures seems connected to Zouping today, so it is worth reconsidering her speculations about what happens when parents entrust a large portion of their children's upbringing to institutions run by strangers.

Mead argues that schools encourage cofiguration by placing large numbers of children together (*ibid.*: 41) and, that in nations with large numbers of immigrants, the cofiguration effect is doubled (*ibid.*: 57). In older civilizations such as China, she suggested, cofiguration was muted by the continued presence of grandparents in the family (*ibid.*: 57). In Zouping, none of Mead's arguments directly apply. Fewer than 25 per cent of students in the rural school, and fewer than 10 per cent of students in the other schools, had grandparents living in their household. Class sizes are very large, but the large numbers of children just seem to ensure that more of the teaching is restricted to relatively teacher-centered, rote-memorization methods. Although some children appreciated that their township-wide school enabled them to meet and make friends with children from villages other than their own, a large school is not the same as large numbers of students per class. Thus large class size does not necessarily imply more cofiguration. Moreover, although students in today's Zouping have conflicts with their parents, little

of the generation-oriented iconoclasm of 1960s-style American youth rebellions (or 1920s China, for that matter) seems to exist. As the cultural distance between the parents and their children grows – at least in terms of the forms of knowledge they master and the careers towards which they orient themselves – the bonds between parents and children in many cases actually tighten.

Some parents explicitly state that as they have only one or two children, they purposefully devote much ‘human feeling’ (*ganqing*) to each one so that the child will be filial (*xiao*) when they are older. This feeling does not necessarily involve spending a lot of time with the children, as the above discussion of the desirability of closed schools and boarding schools suggests. Rather, it is a matter of sacrificing (*xisheng*) one’s own life or happiness for that of the child and making sure that the child understands that this sacrifice has taken place. This sacrifice is on display both in the hard physical labor that rural parents do on a daily basis, and in the constraints they place on their own consumption to save money for their children. The schools reinforce this notion of sacrifice with explicit lessons devoted to filial piety in both ‘thought and morality’ (*sixiangpinde*) and literature classes. For example, one of the Tang dynasty poems memorized by all Shandong sixth grade students is titled *Youzi Yin*.⁹ It describes an old mother sewing clothes for her son by candlelight so that he can spend all his time studying and become an official in a far-away place. Students are taught to memorize the poem so that they can read it aloud with feeling, to imagine the sacrifices that their own parents make on behalf of their education, and to write essays about how they might repay their own debt to their parents.

Charles Stafford (1995) describes how textbook examples of filial piety in Taiwan during the late 1990s likewise emphasized parents making sacrifices so that their children may study. As in *Youzi Yin*, the predominant gendered pattern of these examples involved ‘textbook mothers’ making sacrifices for their sons’ academic success (Stafford 1995: 70). But Stafford suggests that in Taiwan, such examples implied sacrifice by the family for the nation. In contemporary Zouping, parents, teachers and students alike understand this sacrifice as a matter of familial self-interest, rather than a sacrifice by the family for the nation. In Zouping, educational success is, above all, a familial success.

Zouping parents, even in rural areas, are very explicit about limiting the amount of housework and farm work they expect their children to do. They tell their children that the most important way to help their parents is by studying hard and succeeding in school, rather than contributing directly to housework. One student, who was not doing particularly well at school, told me that she wished her mother would let her do more housework as she found that more enjoyable than studying. Teachers also constantly make the equation between filial piety and studying hard. In one junior middle school thought and morality class I witnessed, students were asked what would they do if forced to select between death for their father, their mother or

themselves. Most of the students said they would choose to kill themselves, as this sounded like the most self-sacrificing, and thus most moral, behavior. After soliciting the opinions of many students, the teacher concluded the class by suggesting that most parents live for the success of their children, thus for the parents losing a child would be even more painful than death. Consequently, the teacher argued, the students should consider valuing their own life and educational opportunities more highly in order to ensure that their parents' sacrifices had meaning.

Drawing on Herzfeld's (2005) notion of 'cultural intimacy', Vanessa Fong (2004) describes the nationalism of urban teenagers in Dalian as 'filial'. These teenagers see China as a poor and backward nation, and see themselves as well educated, high-quality people whose future belongs in a first world setting, as symbolized by the USA. Their desire for an American future, however, did not mean that patriotism was irrelevant to their lives. Rather, they saw their relationship to their nation in the same way as they saw their relationship to their parents:

Well educated and raised on wealthier societies' images and brand names, [these students] felt that they did not resemble the 'backwardness' they associated with their motherland any more than they resembled their long-suffering, poorly educated parents. Yet teenagers shared with their elders a powerful sense of nationalism based on the belief that they could no more cease to be 'people of China' than they could cease to be their parents' children. When teenagers in Dalian saw the Chinese nation, they were looking at their parents; when they expressed devotion to their nation, they recalled their devotion to their parents, with the uneasy combination of love, ambivalence, frustration and duty that such filial devotion entailed.

(Fong 2004: 644–45)

As in the relationships among parents, children and the education system in Zouping, Fong's depiction of Dalian teenagers suggests that an educational-cultural divide between parents and children does not preclude filiality. But, in part because she focuses on urban teenagers, Fong's discussion elides three aspects of the Zouping situation that I wish to emphasize. First is the extent to which the 'gap' between parents and children in terms of education and career ambitions is constructed as a moral project by both parents and schools. This gap is as much imposed on the children as desired by them. Second is the historical relationship between this moral project and the long history in China of parents finding existential meaning in the successes of their children. Third is the importance of themes of sacrifice to this project.

Critics of China's reform-era governance sometimes accuse China's leaders of sacrificing a generation for the sake of economic development (for a few). Such a notion of sacrifice renders the sacrificial object abject, devoid of meaning. The notion of sacrifice invoked by Zouping parents cannot be

understood in such negative terms. Instead, we should begin with the sense of sacrifice depicted by Agamben, who defines bare life as life that ‘may be killed and not yet sacrificed’ (Agamben 1998: 8). In this sense, the truly abject are not those who simply sacrifice their life for a certain cause, but those whose life is not considered a sacrifice, whose death is not afforded the meaning of being attached to a significant cause. In sacrificing themselves for their children, Zouping parents are rising above bare life, giving their bare life meaning.

Family sacrifice has a long history in China. The type of sacrifice described here – by parents through their labor and children through their educational discipline – evinces both continuity and discontinuity with more classic anthropological analyses of family sacrifice in China, such as that by Francis Hsu (1971[1948]). In Hsu’s depiction of families in a pre-revolution market town in Yunnan province, the dynamic of family sacrifice was ‘under the ancestors’ shadow’. Fathers wielded great power over their children and women were firmly under patriarchal control. Nonetheless, the ancestors’ shadow did not imply a neglect of the young. Rather, a father–son dyad in which ‘the father must provide for the sons when they are young, educate them in the ancestral tradition, and get them suitably married’ (Hsu 1971: 240) emerged. As in contemporary Zouping, a vision of family reproduction, of continuity with both past and future, provides most parties with a possibility of narrating one’s place in the world.¹⁰ In contemporary Zouping, however, the type of patriarchal authority described by Hsu has crumbled. Arranged marriage is no longer the norm, and the luxury of small families allow parents to avoid favoring the interests of one child over another, or boys over girls. Moreover, as noted by Ikels (2004), Yan (1997, 2003) and others, there has been a general power shift from the old to the young, a power shift that is furthered by the generational gap in educational achievement. Daughters-in-law are no longer under the control of their mother-in-law, as most households, even in the countryside, are nuclear. But even if patriarchal authority has declined, the need to find something to which one may sacrifice one’s life and the lack of significance of non-familial reservoirs of sacrificial meaning for contemporary Zouping adults leads many parents (both mothers and fathers) to find significance in sacrificing themselves for their children. The education system has become a central mediating institution in this dynamic of sacrifice.

Teachers as kin

The role of teacher in Zouping, and in China more broadly, invokes a particular culture of relatedness worthy of analysis in its own right. The appellation ‘teacher’ (*laoshi*) is, in many ways, like a kin term. Once someone has been your teacher (and you have addressed them as such), you must continue to address him or her in this manner for the rest of your life. In one Zouping village, I saw 50-year-old men address the 65-year-old man who had been

their primary school teacher 40 years earlier as ‘teacher’. This happened not just once or twice, but every time they saw the man. In Chinese universities, I have likewise seen professors address their former teachers as ‘teacher’ on a daily basis.

In Zouping and beyond, ‘teacher’ has become the preferred form of address for people one does not recognize, especially when asking for assistance from a stranger on the street or in a store. During the 1980s, the term ‘master’ (*shifu*) had replaced ‘comrade’ (*tongzhi*) for this purpose. But during the first years of the twenty-first century, the connotations of ‘master’ as a person without formal educational credentials have become a liability. ‘Teacher’ implies not only that the person one is addressing is a kind-hearted superior who is obliged to help (as does the term ‘master’), but also that this person has graduated from a tertiary institution. One could argue that the entire social history of communist China is summed up by the comrade, master, teacher series (Gold 1985; Kipnis 1997: 159–60; Vogel 1965). But more important here is to note how ‘teacher’ as an appellation evokes sentiments of ethical obligation. One Zouping primary school teacher said, ‘When someone calls me teacher, I feel warm all over and feel that I should help.’

In Zouping boarding schools, teachers occasionally told me that they must act as parents for their students. When asked for examples, one described the steps he took to comfort a student whose own mother was ill, while another described how she intervened in a case where a girl and boy were spending too much time together and were risking what middle school disciplinarians label as ‘premature love’ (*zao lian*). Echoing the elitism of the ‘education mothers’ of Late Imperial China described by Bray (Chapter 8 in this volume), Zouping teachers described how they could do a better job than the parents of raising the children. They claimed that contemporary singleton children are too dependent on their parents. Living at school in the dormitories forced the children to become more independent and to learn how to take care of their own daily needs (such as washing their clothes and body and cleaning their dormitory rooms). Teachers are responsible for making sure their students perform these tasks in a regular and proficient manner. Zouping teachers also were under pressure to act as models for their children. The saying ‘*weiren shibiao*’ is on display in many schools throughout the county. Translatable as ‘act as a person of exemplary virtue’ or ‘be worthy of the appellation teacher’, the saying captures some of the tension between the teacher’s roles as a quasi-family member and as a state or moral agent. Rural teachers can be considered above the ‘peasant’ status of their students’ parents, and they are encouraged to act as models in ways that the parents cannot, by speaking only standard Mandarin, dressing well, and displaying civilized manners. But they are also supposed to demonstrate empathy for the problems of their students and intervene in their personal struggles, as well as to encourage youth to be filial and to take their family obligations seriously.

As an appellation, the term ‘teacher’ does not differentiate between males and females, but the career of teaching itself is in the midst of a gender transformation. During the early and mid-1980s, most teachers, especially in rural areas, were male. Education for sons was a higher priority than education for daughters, and for many young men getting a job as a teacher was a path towards a more prestigious career than being a farmer. Now, however, especially at primary school level, the situation is changing. In the county seat, as in much of urban China and much of the industrialized world, primary school teaching is an overwhelmingly female occupation. In rural Zouping, it has become relatively balanced field with about half male and half female teachers. Ironically, given stereotypes about patriarchy as a rural phenomenon, the result is that rural primary schools have a much more gender-balanced feeling than urban ones. In urban primary schools, a situation in which all the teachers, all the class leaders (*ban zhang*) and all the best students are female is becoming commonplace, and many newspaper columns comment on the lowly place of boys in primary schools. Boys are said to be more fidgety, later-maturing, and have worse handwriting than girls, all of which are said to be traits especially disliked by female teachers (Gao 2005). In fact, being peaceful and quiet (and therefore able to sit and study for long periods) is considered a positive trait for girls in urban Zouping, and I met several girls and two female teachers whose personal name was the single character *jing*, meaning quiet. Moreover, regular newspaper advertisements for drugs to cure hyperactivity (*duodongzheng*) clearly target boys.¹¹ Overall, compared with the urban school, the rural school where I did fieldwork produced fewer well defined gender roles. With both male and female teachers, boys and girls were more likely to partake in all types of recreational activities and chores. As a man, I also noticed that boys in the urban school were more likely to interact with me than girls, while in the rural school boys and girls interacted with me in more or less the same manner.

Conclusions

Education has successfully inserted itself into the dynamics of child-raising in Zouping. It lies at the center of intergenerational relationships, regardless of whether the experience of higher education is a personal one for the parents themselves. The processes by which formal education systems come to mediate parent–child relationships blend all the dualisms that have come to be associated with the ‘old’ kinship studies. They are simultaneously jural and intimate, emotional and formal, public and private. But a complete rejection of the ‘old’ here would likewise be inappropriate. Although the arrival of 12–15 years of universal education in Zouping marks a modernity of sorts, complete with an enforced fertility transition and a newly standardized set of family forms, it is clear that older discourses of filiality and sacrifice still have a place. As Thøgersen (2002) makes clear, even in a county

where the majority of adults have not had extensive educational opportunities, it is still possible to claim that studying hard in order to secure the progress of one's family and community is a long-standing tradition. In contemporary Zouping, the very old sacrificial ethos that interweaves filiality, the cultivation of elite forms of personhood, state and familial ethics, has been reinvented.

The reinvention of this ethos suggests a state/society continuum rather than a state/society opposition. While many historical events in Zouping could be depicted in terms of an authoritarian state imposing its will on a powerless rural society, the rising place of education in Zouping lives does not fit this model. As Gottschang suggests, state and market forces have become more important to processes of social reproduction, but not necessarily in opposition to more local desires (Suzanne Gottschang, personal communication). Children have not left the 'shadow of the ancestors' to fall under the 'shadow of the state'. Rather, a mutual imbrication of state and familial desires has produced a hybrid form of social reproduction. Perhaps more than anything, social reproduction in China is now under the 'shadow of the high-quality child'.

Glossary

<i>ban zhang</i>	班长
<i>benke</i>	本科
<i>dan weiren</i>	单位人
<i>dazhuan</i>	大专
<i>duodongzheng</i>	多动症
<i>feinong</i>	非农
<i>fengbi xuexiao</i>	封闭学校
<i>ganqing</i>	感情
<i>jìng</i>	静
<i>jiujiu</i>	舅舅
<i>laobaixing</i>	老百姓
<i>laoshi</i>	老师
<i>shifu</i>	师傅
<i>sixiangpinde</i>	思想品德
<i>suzhi</i>	素质
<i>suzhi jiaoyu</i>	素质教育

<i>tongzhi</i>	同志
<i>waisheng</i>	外甥
<i>weiren shibiao</i>	为人师表
<i>xiao</i>	孝
<i>xisheng</i>	牺牲
<i>Youzi Yin</i>	游子吟
<i>zao lian</i>	早恋
<i>zhongzhuan</i>	中专
<i>zhuanke</i>	专科

Notes

- 1 Research for this paper was funded by an Australian Research Council Discovery Grant (DP0556422). Thanks to all those at the Shandong Academy of Social Sciences and in Zouping county for their cooperation in this project. Thanks also to Susanne Brandtstädter and Gonçalo D. Santos for valuable input during the revision process.
- 2 In Late Imperial China, literacy was taught through primers that stressed an ethics of filiality, while filiality and ancestral sacrifice themselves linked familial ethics with loyalty to the state. For more on ancestral sacrifice and state ritual practice in Late Imperial China, see Zito (1994).
- 3 This pattern is most common in rural Zouping, where almost all couples are married in their early twenties, have their first child as soon as possible and, if the first is a girl, receive permission for the second about seven years later. Among the 'urban villagers' of the county seat, this pattern is less regular. These people live in villages that were absorbed by the growing city, but retain their non-urban household registrations and thus are permitted to have a second child if the first is a girl. Their reproductive patterns, however, are less regular than those of villagers who live far from the county seat. A greater proportion have their first child later in life and receive permission for the second (if the first is a girl) relatively quickly, as the birth-control policy allows adjustments in birth spacing to encourage women to become pregnant before they reach an age at which the chances of congenital disease increase. In referring to these families as nuclear, I mean to bracket the issue of whether or not grandparents or other relatives live with the household. In fact, even in the rural school district, over 75 per cent of the households were nuclear.
- 4 Two households had singleton girls; one household had been formed through the remarriage of two single parents whose partners had died and who already had children (this household had two daughters from the mother's first marriage and a son from the father's first marriage); and two households had violated the birth-control policy (and paid a heavy fine) by having a second child after first having a boy.
- 5 For a comparative study of such desires among Indonesian youth, see Warouw (2004).
- 6 But see Li (2003) for a description of a village where these calculations have become explicitly voiced.

- 7 David Buck (1974: 197–98) notes that prejudice against vocational schools in Shandong began from the moment those schools were founded in the early twentieth century.
- 8 Journalistic reports suggest that contemporary university children are much closer to their parents than those of a generation ago (see, for example, Lewin 2003).
- 9 The poem and accompanying didactic material may be found in the year six first-semester literature textbook (*Yuwen: Book 11, Shandong: Renmin Jiaoyu Chubanshe* 2005, 77–81).
- 10 On the importance of narrating the self and traditional versions of it in China, see Liu (2002).
- 11 Such articles run regularly in the health and education sections of the *Qilu Evening News*. See, for example, page B4 of the 11 November 2005 edition for a full page advertisement, or page A7 of the 3 September 2005 edition for some shorter sponsored stories and advertisements.

References

- Agamben, G. (1998) *Homo sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Buck, D.D. (1974) 'Educational Modernization in Tsinan, 1899–1937', in M. Elvin and G.W. Skinner (eds) *The Chinese City Between Two Worlds*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press: 171–212.
- Carsten, J. (2004) *After Kinship*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Feuchtwang, S. (2002) 'Remnants of Revolution in China', in C.M. Hann (ed.) *Postsocialism: Ideals, Ideologies and Practices in Eurasia*, London: Routledge: 196–213.
- Fong, V.L. (2004) 'Filial Nationalism among Chinese Teenagers with Global Identities', *American Ethnologist* 31(4): 631–48.
- (2004) *Only Hope: Coming of Age Under China's One-Child Policy*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Franklin, S. and S. McKinnon (eds) (2001) *Relative Values: Reconfiguring Kinship Studies*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Fu, Nan (2005) *Zhuanjia, Qing Buyao Wudao Jiaoyu Gaige, Qilu Wanbao*, Jinan: A2.
- Gao, Yuan (2005) *Xiaoxue Jiaoyu 'Yin Sheng Yang Shuai', Qilu Wanbao*, Jinan: A7.
- Gold, T. (1985) 'After Comradeship: Personal Relations in China since the Cultural Revolution', *China Quarterly* (104): 657–75.
- Greenhalgh, S. (1993) 'The Peasantization of the One-Child Policy in Shaanxi', in D. Davis and S. Harrell (eds) *Chinese Families in the Post-Mao Era*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press: 219–50.
- Greenhalgh, S. and E.A. Winckler (2005) *Governing China's Population*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Herzfeld, M. (2005) *Cultural Intimacy: Social Poetics in the Nation-State*, 2nd edn, New York: Routledge.
- Hsu, F.L.K. (1971[1948]) *Under the Ancestors' Shadow: Kinship, Personality, and Social Mobility in China*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Ikels, C. (2004) 'Introduction', in C. Ikels (ed.) *Filial Piety: Practice and Discourse in Contemporary East Asia*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press: 1–15.
- Kipnis, A.B. (1997) *Producing Guanxi: Sentiment, Self, and Subculture in a North China Village*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- (2001) 'The Disturbing Educational Discipline of "Peasants"', *China Journal* (46): 1–24.

- (2006) 'School Consolidation in Rural China', *Development Bulletin* (70): 123–25.
- (2006) 'Suzhi: A Keyword Approach', *China Quarterly* (186): 295–313.
- (2007) 'Neoliberalism Reified: Suzhi Discourse and Tropes of Neoliberalism in the PRC', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 13(2): 383–99.
- Lewin, T. (2003) New Campus Query: What Generation Gap? *The New York Times*, <http://nytimes.com/2003/01/06/education>
- Li, Quansheng (2003) 'Nongcun "Pazi Chenglong" Xianxiang Fenxi: Yi Dong Kuang Cun Weili', *Qingnian Yanjiu* (6).
- Liu, Linping, Zhang, Rongguo and Wan, Xiangdong (eds) (1997) *Ai de Wuqu: Zhongxiao Xuesheng Chengzhang Wenti Beiwanglu*, Beijing: Zhongguo Renshi Chubanshe.
- Liu, Xin (2002) *The Otherness of Self: A Genealogy of the Self in Contemporary China*, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Mead, M. (1970) *Culture and Commitment: A Study of the Generation Gap*, New York: Doubleday.
- ShandongEducationNet (2005) 'Shandong Benke Zhaosheng Zengjia', Jinan, www.shandong-edu.net
- Stafford, C. (1995) *The Roads of Chinese Childhood: Learning and Identification in Angang*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Strathern, M. (1988) *The Gender of the Gift: Problems with Women and Problems with Society in Melanesia*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- (1992a) *After Nature: English Kinship in the Late Twentieth Century*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- (1992b) *Reproducing the Future: Anthropology, Kinship, and the New Reproductive Technologies*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Thøgersen, S. (2002) *A County of Culture: Twentieth-Century China Seen from the Village Schools of Zouping, Shandong*, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Vogel, E. F. (1965) 'From Friendship to Comradeship: The Change in Personal Relations in Communist China', *China Quarterly* (21): 46–60.
- Warouw, N. (2004) 'Assuming Modernity: Migrant Industrial Workers in Tangerang, Indonesia', PhD thesis, Canberra: Australian National University, Department of Anthropology.
- Yan, Yunxiang (1997) 'The Triumph of Conjuality: Structural Transformation of Family Relations in a Chinese Village', *Ethnology* 36(3): 191–212.
- (2003) *Private Life under Socialism: Love, Intimacy and Family Change in a Chinese Village 1949–1999*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Zito, A. (1994) 'Silk and Skin: Significant Boundaries', in A. Zito and T.E. Barlow (eds) *Body, Subject & Power in China*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 103–30.

10 Disruption, commemoration and family repair

Stephan Feuchtwang

For some time now, history has been part of the study of kinship in general, and of Chinese kinship in particular. The Chinese idea of civilisation, in which all Chinese people share the characteristics of tracing descent from an ancestor and of reckoning degrees of kinship of the bone,¹ has a historical origin. It is tied closely to a ruling ideology forged in the southern Song dynasty (twelfth–thirteenth century), accommodating the impact of Buddhism among common people over the previous centuries (Ebrey 1986), and implemented with great authority after the Great Rituals Controversy in the Ming dynasty under the Jiaqing emperor (Faure 2007: ch. 8). Finer historical detail on more recent centuries, and the more recent medical rationality of the Chinese civilisation of patrilineal descent, are covered by Bray (Chapter 8 in this volume).

In the past 20 years, the emphasis of the anthropological study of kinship has shifted from rules (or norms and structural models) of descent and alliance to the ways in which kin relations are made and maintained among other relations of intimacy and lesser degrees of closeness (Carsten 2000; Stafford 2000). It has returned us to ‘family’, in the flexible Chinese sense of *jia*, referring to both a domestic unit, and other domestic units linked to it through the male line. Having returned to family, we have also drawn attention to the effects of such crucial social historical changes as urbanisation, migration, changing property relations, the individualisation of income, and so of relations between generations, while retaining a sense of the male line and its continuation.²

I suggest here another involvement altogether of kinship with history, requiring sensitivity to what ‘history’ might mean. I shall be concerned with history as material culture and as a narrative of events of change rather than of repeated patterns of event or character (heroes or ancestors). In other words, I am concerned with history characteristic of nationalism and of modern states (Duara 1995). Accompanying the narrative are monuments that commemorate events, marking the national landscape as rallying points of belonging, just as tombs do for families. When names are associated with such monuments, or engraved in them, they are personal rallying points for the families of those named, in addition to their houses and graves. The

material culture of history is not only monuments, of course. It is also writing and other media of narration. Similarly, the material culture of family and kinship, for Chinese people, is not only graves and houses, and the domestic shrines within them. It is also another kind of writing – a genealogy. But among the poorest, with whom I am concerned here, genealogies are rare, so I refer mainly to graves and houses. These constitute a different material culture than that of commemorative memorials, written documents and stories of the events of a people. My subject is the relationship between narrative and commemorative history on the one hand, and graves and houses on the other.

Preamble

To select and share an ancestor is to establish a relationship of kinship. Family life in other traditions is not as governed as it was in Chinese tradition, with the maintenance of a line to be reproduced from ancestors in the male line, including many ways of doing this, even in the absence of sons or their deaths in infancy. A few words of introduction to this cultural drive may be helpful.

Poverty carried the constant threat of the end of a line, a threat to continued settlement in a place of belonging, to fields or plots that parents and grandparents had cultivated, and to the maintenance of the graves of the ancestors in that place. Chuang Ying-chang and Arthur Wolf (1995) have established the prevalence among poor Chinese in Taiwan of ways to maintain a line against the depredations of early death, infant mortality, infertility due to malnutrition, and the labour migration of men. They include adopting brother's sons; adopting little daughters-in-law, who in puberty would be married to a 'brother'; and bringing in a husband to marry a daughter or a little daughter-in-law, which made many domestic altars the carriers of two lines, that of the married-in husband and that of the father of the woman he married, so that it was common for men to have double-barrelled surnames.

The household records of Shiding, where I did my first anthropological fieldwork, are part of the data set that Chuang and Wolf use for their analysis. At the time I had them copied (I paid someone to copy them by hand, photocopiers not being available), toward the end of my fieldwork in 1968, I had no idea of the even more severe threat to family line that had occurred only 16 years before in another part of Shiding township, which was particularly poor. This was the addition of a devastating historical event to the dire poverty that threatened lineal continuity. But not even a hint of it reached my ears, even in the last weeks of fieldwork, when I began to hear details of the membership of local factions within the single governing party, the Guomindang, and outside it hints of sympathy for Taiwanese independence.

It was only in 1995, on a return visit to Shiding (not my first), that Yu Chien, a young Taiwanese anthropologist friend accompanying me, sympathetic to the Democratic Progressive Party (Minjindang – DPP), told me that

there had been a major Incident of White Terror in Luku, a settlement in the mountains at the western border of the township, in 1952. He was astonished that I knew nothing about it and had heard nothing during my 17 months of fieldwork, despite the fact that everyone I knew well must have known about it. He could not believe how dangerous the secret of the event had been until the lifting of martial law in 1987, nearly 20 years after I had left. That is the measure of how things have changed politically, and in the recording of historical events. Now, having heard about it, I immediately roped him into making further inquiries with me. That was the beginning of the research that has resulted in this chapter.

I have always worked with a Chinese anthropological colleague. In Shiding, the next after Yu Chien was Wang Mingming, who came from Beijing University to conduct fieldwork in Shiding on another project, but incidentally uncovered the effects that the newly opened topic of the Luku Incident was having on our chief subject in Shiding for our book *Grassroots Charisma* (Feuchtwang and Wang 2001). But the main research on the Incident, with funding specifically to enquire into the transmission of grievous loss,³ has been carried out together with Dr Shih Fanglong, a Taiwanese researcher resident in the UK. I designed a research programme of interviews with survivors of the Incident, with junior members of their families, and with newcomers to the area in which the Incident took place, as well as with others in Shiding who were not from families affected by it. She did most of the interviews in September–October 2004. There have been subsequent interviews in 2005 and 2006, on visits paid for by other means, and Shih Fanglong has supplemented these by telephone. Altogether, she, alone or joined by me, interviewed 42 individuals, more than half of these repeatedly. The repeats were to follow up facts or topics as they emerged from working through the transcripts and piecing together from them not just the answers to questions about what they knew, and how they knew, about the Incident, but also their lives since then until the present day, about the retention of their ancestral land and about the whereabouts of the remains of their immediate ancestors.

Unlike long-term residence with them, our observations of their immediate context were sporadic and extended over the years of our short visits. The survivor families are dispersed, and our interviews were in several locations in the county of Taipei, not just in the mountains of Luku and other parts of Shiding. The main point to be drawn from this is that what you are about to read is a reconstruction from interviews and from observations, not just of the recounted experience of the Incident, but, just as important, of the family connections that were disrupted and are only occasionally reconstituted – rather than a fully rounded description of their circumstances.

The maintenance of relations through an ancestor is performed in rituals of meeting and separation, and in rituals that turn the dead into ancestors: rituals of burial and then of visits to their graves, and rituals of offering at a domestic shrine. They are also maintained by periodic visits to the ancestral

home from which family units have migrated. The disruption and deaths caused by the Luku Incident were unusual because they were political, and shared by a large number of families from one location. But the disruption was similar to what most families have experienced from labour migration and resettlement. Indeed, the political disruption has been compounded by precisely such ordinary disruption. So this will be a study of both. Crucially, the experience of changed political and economic circumstances creates cohorts of experience on either side of such changes, which are at once historical and familial generations.

The setting before disruption

The mountains where the event took place were settled by people from Fujian province on the mainland in the course of the nineteenth century. Most were poor subsistence farmers, but some introduced tea and others introduced fruit trees. Then coal mines were opened, small horizontal shafts into mountainsides, then larger and deeper ones by larger enterprises. At the same time, transport routes, tracks for small carts, boats on narrow rivers and paths for shoulder-hauled goods were opened for coal, timber, cane, tea, fruit, indigo, camphor and other plants to be taken for trading in the nearest towns on the Taipei plain, Nangang, Xizhe, Shengkeng, Qingmei, Muzha and the two riverside cities that now make up the oldest parts of Taipei city.

The settlements became a place called Luku – the name refers to cave-pools where deer drank, and which were water sources for the Chinese farmers on these high and relatively infertile slopes. The way settlements of the mountainsides sorted themselves out over the four or five generations from the first settlers in these mountains from the mainland until 1952 created small neighbourhoods of dispersed houses and their land holdings, each neighbourhood tending to be of one surname.

To have an ancestor requires first performing death rituals, from burial to eulogy, and the making of merit (M: *zuo gongde*), that establish the dead in three locations: a grave, a name in the ancestral position on a domestic altar, and the small or large social network displayed in the course of the rites of offering and feasting, the spectacle of the procession to burial, and the performance of merit-making rites that provide a passage for the soul out of purgatory and into a celestial residence. The making of merit is the most scriptural element of death rituals, and also, when elaborated, the most theatrical and the most expensive. But it does not mark a spot for an ancestor. Instead, it ensures that the ancestor is not a soul in purgatory. The expenses of burial rituals are already enough for turning a ghost into an ancestor, even without merit-making. But even burial rituals mean borrowing from kin and friends, and so are an important staging of the cycles of reciprocity in which a domestic unit has to be involved.

Into this unpoliced economic, reproductive and ritual life came a reforming and progressive Japanese colonial state, establishing by 1905 its local

police station and its household records.⁴ It paired the police station, as an engine of reliable census records, with a local primary school, or in the instance of the Luku mountains, a branch police station with one policeman and a branch school with one teacher. The only other new, non-domestic institution added during the period of Japanese rule, in 1921, was a small temple for a Buddhist monk and his assistant. The funds for building it came from Luku residents' donations. It was colloquially called the Luku Vegetarian Temple (Luku Cai Miao), indicating that twice a lunar month, or less frequently, local women joined the monk in reciting scriptures and avoiding meat. It must also have provided for the recitation of merit-making scriptures for their immediate ancestors.

Through the school, some men and women in Luku became literate, and if their family had sufficient land or earnings from trade, some men went on to further education. One of them, Wang Shengmu,⁵ became the chief secretary of Shiding township after the defeat of Japan. Two Wu families, who had more land and a larger house than most others in Luku, produced the head of Luku village – called *baozheng* under the colonial state – succeeding to the holder from another relatively well educated, but by then poorer family, the Huang, who were the first settlers in Luku and from whose land the Luku graveyard was bought by subscription organised by Wu *baozheng*. His son succeeded him after the defeat of Japan in the Pacific war. The other branch of the Wu family had already moved to Taipei city, retaining their house in Luku. They produced two brothers who became interested in politics. One of them, Wu Chunming, was the conduit through which the disruptive event occurred.

Two family groups of the Wang and another two of the Wu are the subjects of this chapter. The disruptions noted in Figures 10.1 and 10.2 – ‘executed’, ‘12 years’ imprisonment’, etc. – are explained in the following section. (The figures are far from complete, including only lines and individuals about which we have gained information from interviews. Interview subjects are marked with an asterisk, although they may not be quoted in the text.)

The disruption and its eventual commemoration

When Japan was defeated in 1945, its 50-year-old colonial state in Taiwan was replaced by a Nationalist Chinese provincial government, and Taiwan became a site of unrest that polarised into the civil war between the Nationalists and the Communists, just as the whole of mainland China did. The brutality and corruption of Chinese rule under the military command of the Nationalist Party (the Guomindang) led to an uprising in 1947 against the regime, and a set of demands by an association of many of the most prominent of the Japanese-educated Taiwanese intelligentsia. The Nationalist military suppression of the Taiwanese intelligentsia was lethal and overwhelming. This event has become known as 2:28, after the anniversary of the original demonstration on 28 February 1947.

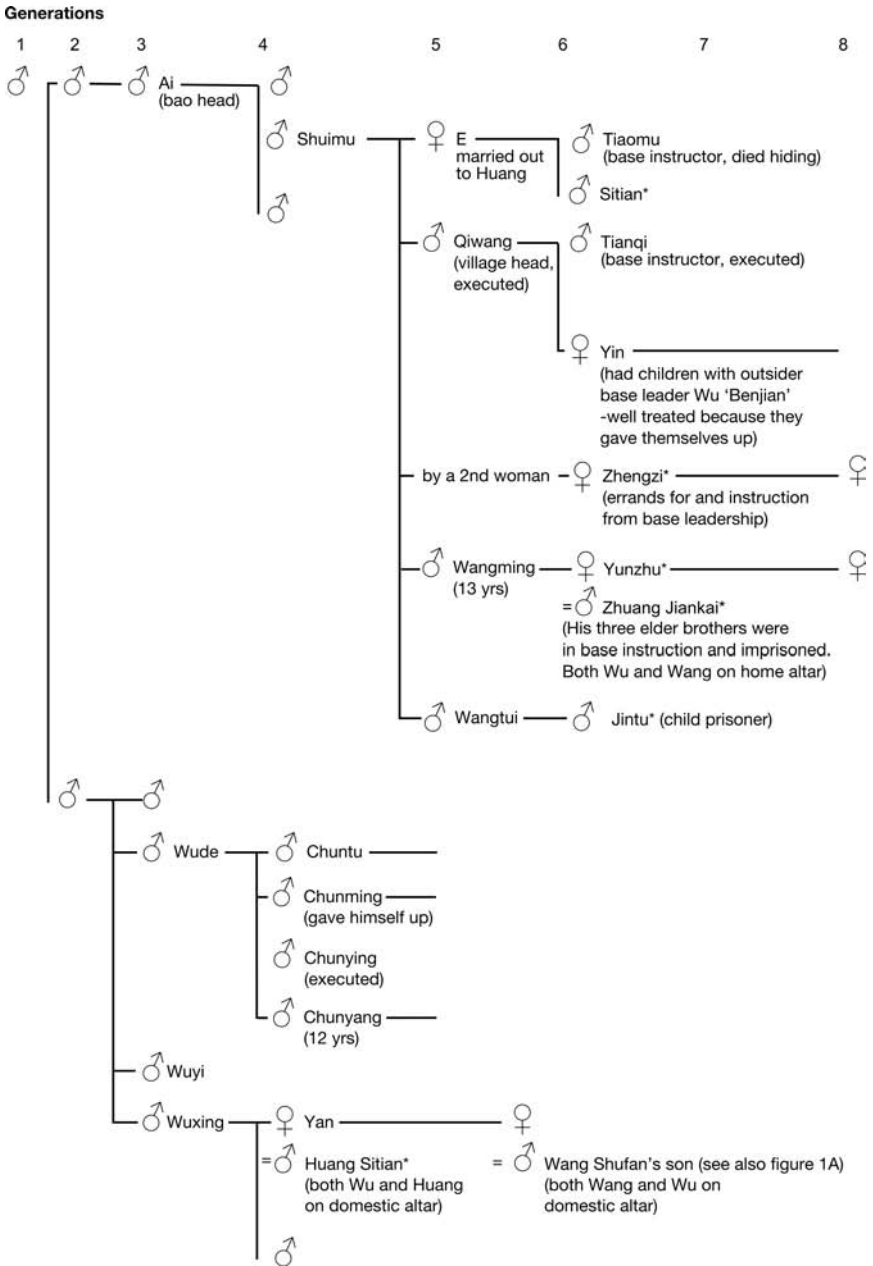


Figure 10.2 Wu extended family network. There may be errors, for example of order in generation. All in same neighbourhood; two Wu groups distantly collateral.

Among those intellectuals were some who sympathised with the Chinese Communist Party. A small group of Communists and sympathisers had formed a study group that met in the city of Taipei. One member of the study group was one of the Wu brothers of Luku, Wu Chunming (see Figure 10.2). In the wake of the repression of the 2:28 protestors, and the retreat to Taiwan in 1949 of the full Nationalist government, they decided to leave the city and form a base for protracted resistance in Luku.

The villagers tolerated the strangers, formally referred to as people from another province – *moshengren* – living in their midst (interview with Wang Shengjin, 3 October 2004; see Figure 10.1b). But most were entirely ignorant of the politics of the civil war. Nevertheless, according to the Nationalist Secret Service (*Bao Mi Ju*, later renamed *Ming Bao Ju*, the Military Intelligence Bureau), the Luku base was an armed base of Communist bandits. On 29 December, 1952, the Secret Service Police and the Armed Forces combined in order to arrest those who were participating in it. They turned Luku into a military zone and imposed a curfew for 23 days. All except the very young and old were detained and interrogated in the small local temple, the *Luku Caimiao*. They were beaten into admitting they had participated and pointing out or naming the leaders – 142 of these ‘participants’ and leaders were then imprisoned. They were tried in military tribunals and found guilty of various degrees of responsibility for insurrection (*panluan*). Thirty-five were executed, and 32 went into hiding or were kept under surveillance but not sentenced. In all, 164 of the economically active men and a few women of the mountain area were removed.⁶ Nineteen children aged 16 and younger were imprisoned in the home of the officer in charge of the secret service operation, and their parents were not informed.

Luku village had been overtaken and depopulated by sudden, extremely confused and terrifying political violence. For the next 35 years, martial law censorship and anti-Communist Cold War rhetoric turned any dissenter into a ‘Communist’, and the accusation meant being sent away for long prison sentences. The Luku villagers, long after the release of their imprisoned family members, could not feel safe talking about what had happened to anyone beyond the closest family and neighbour or ex-neighbour. The isolation of the experience was compounded by having to migrate to the city to find work when, from the late 1960s, all the coal mines – in which women from the families of prisoners now worked – closed down one by one over the next ten years.

Eventually, in the late 1980s, success by non-Nationalist Party (*Dang-wai*) candidates in local elections, and the diplomatic isolation of the Republic of China as the Mainland People’s Republic of China replaced it in international diplomacy, persuaded Chiang Kaishek’s son and successor, Chiang Ching-kuo, to move from repression and military command. He had been in charge of the Secret Service, and the Luku operation had been undertaken with his authority in order to present a major success to his father and a means to promotion for its commanders. In 1987 he repealed military rule

and turned the government of Taiwan toward civil administration and civil liberty. When Chiang Ching-kuo died, the Nationalist Party selected a Taiwanese, Li Denghui, to succeed him. Li's government began a process of revision of history, for monuments and school curricula, which is still continuing. It included a campaign to commemorate and provide compensation to the families of those who were killed in the suppression of the 1947 protests, and those executed and imprisoned for political dissent throughout the period of martial law, including those accused of being Communist bandits. That period acquired the name 'White Terror' (*Baise Kongbu*).

Thorough work on interviewing and publishing interviews verbatim, along with the results of research in the files of the military tribunals, was financially sponsored by the Taipei County government and undertaken by a historian, Professor Zhang Yanxian, of the Central Academy of Research. The two volumes of interviews by Professor Zhang and his two co-authors (Zhang and Gao 1998; Zhang and Wu 2000) include the words of 70 people who were either widows or children of the executed, or who had been prisoners, and of others who had been involved by being in responsible positions and active in the apprehension or release of those rounded up. At the end of the year 2000, the Taipei County government inaugurated a monument to the victims (*shouman zhe*) of the Incident, on the anniversary of the operation, 29 December. It is a huge, chromium-plated blade of steel, twisted to symbolise pain and unjust suffering, set on a large concrete base on the hillside where the road from Nangang reaches another road, circling the Luku hamlets.

For the family members and ex-prisoners, telling interviewers what happened in the round-up and afterwards was part of the process of speaking about their humiliation and extreme hardship in public for the first time, in a much more public way than just speaking to other villagers. Along with talking to Professor Zhang and his co-researchers, they were told that they could apply for compensation – graded according to sentence from execution down to just one year in prison. But in order to receive compensation, victims would have to produce the very document of sentencing that had been a mark of shame and humiliation. Most of them did claim, and were compensated. But the statute of compensation stipulated that if they were found really to have been Communist, they would not be entitled. So the present reformed politics is still haunted by the accusatory 'Communist-bandit traitor', and all Zhang's interviewees profess not to have known about Communism and little or nothing of what they were supposed to have 'joined' (Taiwanese *camka*). In fact the strangers in the Luku mountains and Wu Chunming, the only local Luku man who could be said to have been a knowing sympathiser, if not a member of a Communist Party, had become informers and cooperated with the Nationalists and were not imprisoned, let alone executed.

Let us now consider how some of the families of the victims incorporated this disruption into their own reproduction as families. It is a continuing negotiation of the intersection of state-sponsored history and family reproduction.

Disruption personified: the story of Wang Shufan

One example of the continuing depopulation of Luku is ex-prisoner and retired coal miner Wang Shufan (see Figure 10.1a). He told my colleague Shih Fanglong that before 1952, he shared a small house with his parents, his wife and their daughter. His father had been badly injured in a mine accident. In the first of altogether four television documentaries about the Luku Incident (one made by Lan Bozhou in 1996) he describes how, when his father died and the coffin was standing in the main room, a man and a woman came to pay their respects and placed a 'five-star flag' (the emblem of Communism) on either side of the coffin. He knew they were political instructors (*zhidaoyuan*), but no more than that.

He was usually away most of the time, sleeping in mine dormitories, but in December 1952 he had been at home for a while, recovering from an injury to his foot caused by an accident with a push-cart in the mine. During this time he had been visited one night by a cousin and fellow villager he did not know well, named Huang Xiyuan, offering him lower, more fertile land that belonged to this cousin's father's sister's husband. Wang Shufan was very glad to hear this because his mountain land lacked water, whereas the land offered was well watered and he would get a good harvest from it. With it, he would be able to stay up in the mountain settlement without migrating to mines. The man asked him to put his thumb print on a sheet of paper that he said was an agreement about lending or renting him the land, and Wang Shufan did as he was asked.

On the day the village was surrounded, his foot had recovered and he was on his way back to the mine. The soldiers told him 'nobody is going to work today' and escorted him to the police substation, where they checked him against his household record. Later he and other villagers were kept overnight in a room in what had been a rice mill, and were taken the next day for interrogation in the Luku Vegetarian Temple. He was kept there for 20 days, crowded in with many other villagers. His wife was heavily pregnant with their second child. She was briefly detained and then allowed back home, but he was not allowed to go with her and she gave birth to a son on her own. A soldier took him to see his new child for a few minutes and then escorted him back into detention. His interrogators took him into a small side room and asked whether he had participated, proven by whether he had made his mark on the list of so-called participants. He replied he had stamped his thumb print for farmland, but they did not believe him and beat his back with a long baton, which was extremely painful and he could not stop wetting himself.

Wang Shufan was furious with the man, Huang Xiyuan, for using the offer of land to trick him into putting his mark on a list as if he were now a participant in the base. Later, at the military tribunal that followed his interrogation, he realised that Huang Xiyuan was being groomed as part of the leadership of the base. Wang Shufan was imprisoned for eight years, where he was occasionally visited by his wife and her father. While he was in prison, his wife had become the head of a household of four dependants:

they were their daughter and son, his father, who had been permanently injured in a mine accident, and his mother, also permanently injured from an attempt at suicide in despair at their plight. So she had to find work in the mine, pushing carts. As a result she contracted what he said was a heart disease. After his release, she bore them one more child, another daughter, and then died from the heart disease. His father and mother had also died.

Wang Shufan was now solely responsible for himself and three children. He cut back the weeds from the path to make a way to his fields in order to plant sweet potatoes. But it took too much of his energy and time to be sustainable. So he moved with his three children to Nangang and worked in a coal mine there, leaving his oldest child to look after the two little ones. He did not remarry because he feared a new wife would not like his three children. At school, his children learned another history of China, overturning what their father had learned under the Japanese state. Their children are now learning yet another history, of Taiwan.

Wang Shufan has remained in Nangang. His son and daughter-in-law and their daughter, a university student, live with him. He has used his compensation money to build a storey on the Nangang house they share. At the same time, he has taken to returning to his old house in the Luku mountains during the day to repair it and to plant vegetables on its land. In 2006 he was 90 years old, and had recently suffered a stroke. His daughter-in-law looked after him. She told us in February 2006 that when the weather is good he still takes an early bus up to his old house, returning as usual by early afternoon.

Travelling up to Luku for the day is possible because the same head of Taipei County, who sponsored the monument and the two volumes of interviews, had also, as part of what he called his promotion of Taiwanese culture, had roads built up into the mountains from Nangang. Indeed, several County and Township roads now link the settlements with each other and with the local towns. His promotion of Taiwanese culture has been a scheme of economic revival based on a refinement of tea cultivation and the promotion of the mountainscape as a place to enjoy weekends with fine views and visits to local craft centres, most run by outsiders attracted to the beauty and the good air. There are several bus tours around these sites, in addition to the regular bus that Wang Shufan and other old men who were victims of the Incident take every morning to potter around their ancestral homes.

Wang Shufan had kept the registration of their household in Luku. If there was nobody living there, the house would be demolished (interview with Wang Shufan, 8 October 2004). But the status of his property seems to be uncertain. His daughter-in-law thinks that:

now we do not really have ownership (*yongyuquan*). Because we were too poor to pay tax, so the land has reverted to the government. The land should [since land reform] belong to the tiller, but it's not yourself who can decide to whom it belongs. And because it belonged to the whole family it is difficult to manage [joint decisions for] two or three

generations of the Wang. So many people are involved and they do not share a common idea on how to use the land and it is hard to clarify what piece of land belongs to whom. We also have a family temple (*jiazumiao*) [which I call a ‘tomb’], not a very big one, in the public graveyard, not on our own land but on the other side of the mountain [from it]. (Telephone interview, 22 February 2006.)

The family tomb is still a focus, even though it is up in the mountains and they live down in Nangang. In it are deposited the remains of Wang Shufan’s parents and his wife. The house to which Wang Shufan returns is another focus for more frequent weekend family gatherings. But it reminds his daughter-in-law of the poverty that removed their rights to the land:

Our ancestral house is in the mountains, but because the senior generations were very poor and lacked education they did not know how to design an ancestral home (T: *co chu*; M: *zucuo*). So it’s just a shelter and a store. For us, in the younger generations [self and children], we go for walks and to see how our ancestors (T: *coxian*; M: *zuxian*) lived on this land. (Telephone interview 22.02.06).

The old house may become a ruin again when Wang Shufan dies, because the family cannot agree on its division. But in the meantime, for him it, and the land that was too poor to provide for his family, is still important as his birthplace. His returns are also reminders of his being tricked and imprisoned. But, like the other victims, he does not talk to the tourists who come up and occasionally speculate about the Incident when they see the memorial. He does not talk to his children or grandchildren either about the Incident. But they already know about it through his claim for compensation.

In Wang Shufan’s experience, the disruption figures vividly and he is constantly reminded of it. But for his daughter-in-law, it is far less important than the more immediate fact that he needs her to look after him. They have prospered in the course of Taiwan’s enormous economic change since the Incident. The distance from Wang Shufan’s coal mining days is huge, but they are still relatively poor. The reminder of the far greater poverty of their ancestral home is a reminder of the liability of death and disruption that such poverty brings anyway, of men moving to find work, leaving women and children to cope. It was compounded by the imprisonment of the men. But as a story, the Incident figures much more in the relations between men of the same generation than it does in the family.

An ancestor in limbo: Wang Ming’s elder brother

One of the effects of dire poverty is delay in performing death rites, often for many years after the death of a parent. This, too, was compounded by the disruption in the case of the villagers who were executed.

Wang Ming (see Figure 10.1a) is the third of four sons of a married-in father, carrying on the name of his mother's father, as did his oldest and his younger brothers, leaving his second oldest brother to carry on the name of their own father, Huang. Their father was the older brother of the father of Huang Xiyuan, the cousin who incriminated Wang Shufan. At the time of the Incident, Wang Ming's father was farming, his older brothers working in the mines, and Wang Ming was serving in the army. He was arrested on his way home on leave. His comradeship with fellow soldiers was to no avail. He was accused of being a deserter and a participant, and imprisoned for 12 years. His oldest brother, Wang Shengxi, was eventually executed.

About two years after their imprisonment, their house burned down and the remaining members of the family had to divide. 'Huan+a', the wife of Wang Shengxi, found work pushing mine carts in coal mines in Shiding, living in a small room of the mine hostel with their only child, a son. The remaining two brothers worked in mines in Nangang.

Twelve years later, Wang Ming joined his family in Nangang, finding a marriage partner there. He and his wife have two children, a son and a daughter. Eventually he rebuilt the burned down house and he spends every day there, sometimes joined by his son and the son of his executed brother and their friends, as on 27 October 2004 when we visited him in Luku. Wang Ming is a very vigorous old soldier and prisoner. He is constantly doing some work around the house, trapping animals and skinning them, planting or picking vegetables, all the time with the radio tuned to news and talk. Going to prison politicised him and at the same time made him sceptical of politicians. He picks up issues. At the time we interviewed him, it was Taiwan's arms spending. He makes up his own mind on what is right and wrong. 'I don't vote for parties, just for the person.'

He is very keen that the Incident should be known, but only to people who can fully appreciate what happened. When his wife accused him of not talking to her about it, he told us that he considered his wife to be insufficiently educated to understand. Neither had he discussed the Incident and his imprisonment with his son. But this was for an opposite reason. He considers his son's schooling to have been a Nationalist Party (KMT) indoctrination, as indeed it had been. Nevertheless, both mother and son know about one story, which Wang Ming's son heard again in our presence from his executed uncle's son, even though (we were told) they do not talk much to each other.

The story is that on the day when he was executed, the prison officials had Wang Ming's eldest brother cremated. Huan+a went by foot to collect her husband's ashes and poured them into an oil can when she got there. As she walked back with it into the night, a ghostly fire (T: *guihe*) lit the path. It was the fire of her husband's ghost. He was not an ancestor and was still hanging around. She put the can under the bed on which their young son slept. A school friend of her son (interviewed 29 October 2004) remembers that she had a prominent picture of Chiang Kaishek up on the wall, and

would bow to it every day, as a way of avoiding trouble. Up at the old house, when we spoke to her son in 2004, he told us how the same ghost fire would come to him in the night for two years, and how he could make it go away by a downward gesture of his hand, which he demonstrated to us. His mother eventually found the time to travel up to their burned down house and bury the can nearby, up on a wooded ridge, under a mound covered by a stone as a temporary grave. It is a geomantically auspicious spot. Many years later, in the 1990s, she had the ashes transferred to a family tomb in the Luku public graveyard. They honour him on his death day.

When she died, the son did not include his father in the merit-making performed for her. So the soul of Wang Ming's eldest brother Wang Shengxi is still not saved, but he is an ancestor because his remains are properly entombed and at home he is honoured on his death day.

A friend of Wang Ming's son, a tour bus driver, was with us and said even he had heard the story of the ghost fire at least 20 times. It seems, then, that this story is one of the things that binds together the families of at least two of the brothers, Wang Ming and Wang Shengxi, and that the disruption has in this way been turned into a bond between brothers and their families. But it is not so much a story of the event itself; it is the story of recovering the ghost of someone killed in it.

The family tomb of Wang Ming and their collateral line, of Wang Shufan, are next to each other in the Luku public graveyard, and every year Qing Ming, the festival for the care of tombs, brings both lines together. In this way, a remnant of the Wang neighbourhood in Luku is recreated.

Spiritual replacement and displacement

Let us turn now to the other neighbourhood of families named Wang (Figure 10.1b). Wang Shengjin is the second of four brothers.⁷ Their father, a farmer, had died in 1948. They lived near the houses of their father's younger brother and of their father's brother, Wang Shengmu and his wife and six children. Shengmu had received a relatively good education and worked as one of the two executive secretaries of Shiding township. He went into hiding knowing he would be accused of being part of the leadership. But he came home after four weeks, possibly persuaded by the township head Gao Bineng's shouts urging him to give himself up. As Zhengxiu, his widow, described it, Gao Bineng walked around the mountains calling out to him, like calling ghost-souls (T: *kiou hun*). Another probable reason for his responding to the call is that he was unable to survive in open, high mountains. He was immediately arrested. 'As soon as he came out he was taken away. He did not even have time to wash or eat.' 'What did he say to you?' 'He did not say anything. I think he could not talk. His mind was blank too [as mine was]. He just touched his youngest son's bottom and left.' She continued: 'I did not see my husband again after that. I only saw his corpse after he had been killed. ... I can't help weeping whenever I recall this.'

‘The government suddenly took my husband away and left me with six children, an illiterate woman, working at home as a mother and on the outside trying to be a father. I fed and raised six children until they grew up.’ ‘Did any relatives or friends help you?’ ‘No. No-one came or went. They pretended not to know us. Nobody dared to get close to us. Everyone was frightened, it was as if we had no kith or kin (T: *bou qin bou jia*).’ ‘Did Wang Shengjin’s family visit you?’ ‘His own family was also wretched. They also had problems of staying alive. Live or die, you had to find your own way.’

‘I sold the timber from a piece of land to raise more than 8000 Taiwan dollars, for the expenses of burying him. Because he had been taken from his home to Taipei and killed, we buried him in the public graveyard [T: *gongbo*; M: *gongmu*] in Shidingbu [near, but not in, Luku]. It was very difficult. It was like burying a dog.’ ‘Did you perform merit-making for him?’ ‘With so many children it was hard enough to keep us alive. From where would I have got money for merit-making? Only when my mother-in-law died, about 1981, my children had grown up and we had some money, only then could we perform merit-making. We employed a Daoist [T: *huatsu*; M: *fashi*] to call my husband’s soul, “now we are performing merit-making for your mother, you may join her.” ... For her second burial, her bone urn and Wang Shengmu’s bone urn were put into the Wang family’s reliquary [M: *ta*].’ (4 October 2004)

Through these strenuous efforts, she made her husband an ancestor and a saved soul. But the reliquary is not in Luku. The family united by it is just that of her branch. But she does visit the other branch, Wang Shengjin’s, at what became its meeting place. She is another instance of a woman taking responsibility, alone, for the care of her family and her husband’s line (see Judd and Stafford, Chapters 1 and 6 in this volume).

Wang Shengjin and his older brother were coal miners. They were arrested as they came to work. Both were imprisoned for having participated in the base. Shengjin was already married with one son. The brothers in prison left their mother, their wives and children relying on the third brother, only 16 years old, for survival. The fourth, ten years old, was still too young to earn. The third brother managed for a few years in the mountains, but in 1959 decided to move them all away from Luku to Songshan, Taipei city. The widow of Wang Shengjin’s father’s father’s younger brother, the brothers’ great aunt, kept an eye on their old house, its domestic altar and on it the god Shangdi Gong, whose statue had been brought from the mainland by the family’s first settler in Luku. Shangdi Gong, although literally ‘The Supreme God’, was a local and domestic manifestation of protecting power.

When Wang Shengjin was released, he joined his brothers in Songshan, and eventually he and his wife had three more sons and one daughter. He and the rest of the family were kept under constant police surveillance. But he found work, and three years later, when his older brother was released in turn, their income improved again. Then, after a few more years, the third brother, married now, had to stop working because he was sick – possibly

the after-effects of the strain of looking after three families and a younger brother. Neighbours in Songshan suggested he consult the family god, Shangdi Gong, about the reason for his illness. He did so at a local temple to the god, and was advised that something was wrong with the grave of their common ancestor up in Luku. So he went to see his great aunt, who was, as I have said, still living there. She gave him permission to open the tomb and inspect the bone urn of the first ancestor, in the company of a geomancer. On the next occasion for the Cleaning of Graves (*Qing Ming*), they opened the grave and found water had entered, opened the bone urn, poured out the water, cleaned the bones, which were an auspicious colour red (not black), and reburied them in their urn. At the same time, returning to their abandoned house, third brother saw how covered in cobwebs the domestic shrine was, including the statue of the god. Third brother asked his great aunt whether he might take the statue away for restoration. She told him to ask the god through divination blocks first. They showed agreement and so he took the statue to an expert restorer in Tainan, the old city in the south of Taiwan, where rituals had to be performed to invite the god to leave the statue so that it could be restored, and then to invite him back into it [the rite of the opening of the light – M: *kai guang*].

Third brother's wife was also ill, with a depressive sickness that had driven her twice to attempt suicide. She was with him in Tainan for the ritual of reopening the statue, and she went into a silent trance that lasted two days, after which she spoke as Shangdi Gong, who said he wanted to be present as a healer. This meant another statue had to be made, slightly bigger than the original. In the end a third statue, slightly bigger again, had to be made, and the third brother and his wife took all three back to Songshan with them.

The next task was to build a temple for them. In their search for a site, third brother and his wife went back to Luku, where the brothers had recently prepared some land near their old home for planting fruit trees. Passing it, she fell into a trance again and, through her, Shangdi Gong said he wanted to be housed on that land. And so it was that in 1978 the brothers erected a small, thatch-roof shrine for the three statues on the fruit-tree land. But this did not save her life. Within a year she did succeed in killing herself, and her husband died some months later. Nevertheless, the Shangdi Gong in the small Luku shrine became known through word of mouth for its responsive efficacy. Six years later, a typhoon blew the small temple down. But even this apparent setback to his reputation was ignored, both by the family and by the new residents of Luku who had moved there in the 1970s and 1980s. Over the next three years, the family was able to collect sufficient donations to build a far larger temple on the same site, opened in 1987.

No-one in the family could spend time there, so they employed someone to keep the incense fire burning. Then, in 1991, Shangdi Gong possessed the youngest (fourth) brother, who was on a visit to the temple. He has lived there ever since, serving the god and his clients as a spirit medium. The following year, Wang Shengjin, his children grown up, also moved to live

in the temple. It became their displaced home. No-one repossessed the old house.

In 2002, Wang Shengjin suffered the first of three strokes and had to move out again to be looked after by his oldest son and daughter-in-law in Xizhe, but they all spend every weekend at the temple. The youngest brother has added a new shrine, to Sakyamuni Buddha, where the family and the followers of Shangdi Gong spend the weekends chanting sutras. The temple is the main site of family repair.

Over the years we have interviewed him, Wang Shengjin has talked volubly, with precision and emotion, about his experience of arrest and imprisonment, and his oldest son and other children respect what he has told them. Wang Shengmu's widow Zhengxiu also talks with great detail and emotion about her suffering and how she misses her husband. But their stories have not become part of the family mythology. What does remain, from Wang Shengjin's own point of view, is the slur on his and therefore his family's name of a conviction that he wants specifically withdrawn. He is not satisfied with the generalised statement of wrongful conviction, which is all the Compensation Fund has been able to provide. But this concern is not shared by his son or other children.

Their children try to protect them from their vivid and constant reminders of suffering. At the same time, the children distract themselves from it by attention to current politics and their jobs, or to the family temple's rituals. They have left the ancestral house and its land to neglect and ruin (Wang Shengjin's son, telephone interview, 22 February 2006). The temple is part of a new landscape of Luku, one of several temples built in these mountains in the 1980s and since. For the younger generation, it is a place of family repair, at the same time new and at a generational distance from the Incident. For other regulars at the temple, it is simply a place of ritual replenishment.

The two Wang branches of Shengjin and Shengmu have separate mortuary sites, but when Wang Zhengxiu goes to visit the temple, their unity is rejoined. It is all that remains of the old neighbourhood.

Family connections and disconnections: the two Wu families

The disruption was even more severe for the Wu families (see Figure 10.2).

The first of the two Wu families is the family of Wu Chunming, who brought the strangers to Luku. The other is the family of Wu Qiwang, who succeeded his father as head of Luku village. At his tribunal, he was accused of posing as a future head of Taiwan Province and condemned to be executed. Wu Qiwang's younger brother was jailed for 13 years, and Qiwang's son Tianqi, who had been an instructor on the base, was also executed.

These two collateral Wu families were the most prominent in Luku, and the most closely involved in the historical event as both agents and victims. Qiwang's daughter, Wu Zhengzi, told us that the soldiers who occupied her father's house did not only take money and jewellery. They also took their

genealogy and family portraits that were hanging on the wall. She and her father's sister's son, Huang Sitian, worked out with me that her father Wu Qiwang was related to Wu Chunming and his brothers by a common great grandfather (2 August 2006). This, in itself, was a minor act of repair and at the same time recognition of irreparable imprecision. Agnatic relatedness is recognised, but the event divided them and divided Wu Chunming from his brothers.

When the village was surrounded by troops, Wu Chunming escaped and went into hiding, finding his way down the river to the town of Danshui. After several weeks he gave himself up, and it is thought by ex-prisoners that he incriminated them. In any case, he was not charged because he had given himself up. By contrast, his younger brother, Wu Chunyang, suffered 12 years in prison and his other younger brother was executed. Wu Chunming was freed on the basis of some agreement with the Nationalist Party and the Secret Service. To the ordinary villagers, this is a cause of much resentment. It comes on top of his and other base leaders' being from the start distanced not just by education, but also by wealth.⁸ To the punished members of the Wu families, related both as family and as comrades, the resentment must be much more intense.

As for Wu Chunming's relatedness to his elder brother, Chuntu, it was reported that they led quite separate lives. Chuntu was already in Taipei, remained there, went into business and eventually became wealthy. But much later he built a large house for himself in Luku as a weekend home, and when he died his sons buried him in a tomb on the land attached to this house. By contrast, Chunming's house has remained a ruin. We were told by a man who had lived nearby that Chunming had once sheltered in his house while on a trip to look after the geomancy of their father's grave. But he is buried in the city of Taipei, far apart from his father and brothers. In the collateral Wu family, the house of Qiwang (the executed village head) is also still a ruin, but next to it his younger brother's daughter and her husband have built a house in which they live as a retired couple. The family offered the ruined house as a site for a museum of the Incident. But by then Taipei County had lost interest, having financed the memorial and the two volumes of interviews.

Qiwang's elder sister, Wu E, was married out to a farmer and miner named Huang. But she would often go back up to her natal home in Luku to help the remaining women, taking her baby son Huang Sitian with her. Huang Sitian told us (28 August 2004) that, aged five to six years, he accompanied her when she collected the bodies of Qiwang and his son Tianqi from the funeral home after they were executed. It was also she, again taking him with her, who went to visit her uncle Wu Wangming in prison, walking all the way. Her husband Huang was angry at this and possibly fearful about her loyalty to her natal family. He hated and forbade any mention of the Incident, in which they had suffered deep loss in their own family. Their older son, Tiaomu, had run from the troops and gone into

hiding, his body never found or identified. It is probable that he died of starvation or exposure. The couple remained at loggerheads about this throughout their subsequent lives.

Wu E's solidarity with her natal female kin is evidence of the way the event mobilised the women of the family in many ways, to enter the mines or to aid their mothers and sisters-in-law to survive. When she was near death, she asked her remaining son, Huang Sitian, to visit her younger brother, his uncle Wu Wangming, in Luku where he had returned after his long jail sentence. Huang Sitian brought him NT\$5000. He told us that his uncle told him he had learned a lot about socialism from fellow prisoners with whom he had become close friends. After the end of military rule, he subscribed to a socialist periodical called *Xia Chao* (*Summer Tide*). When he died, people from the *Xia Chao* group came to his funeral. He had become politicised into being potentially the historical agent that he was accused of having been. After his death, the house fell into disrepair, but his niece Wu Yin has returned there on weekends, covered it with a temporary roof and used the grounds to plant a few vegetables (Huang Sitian, telephone interview, 22 February 2006).

In contrast to the separated tombs of Wu Chunming and his brothers, the whole of the branch of the daughters of Qiwang is brought together by a family tomb in the Luku public graveyard. The whole family meet at least once a year for the festival of cleaning the graves. But, unlike the Wang neighbourhood, the event has come between Wu Chunming and his brothers, and between the two branches.

Zhang Yanxian's co-author of the second volume of interviews, Chen Fenghua, told Shih Fanglong that after she had transcribed the recording of the interviews, she checked with each person by reading it to them (if they could not read it themselves) and asked whether they wanted anything deleted. Shih Fang-long asked her what kind of thing they had wanted to be deleted. It nearly always concerned fraught relations (M: *shoufen*) with someone in the village (interview with Chen Fenghua, 12 October 2004). The creation of the base had made relationships within and between certain families hostile, and this carried on into the repair of their Luku home-place, from the distance of their city residences.

In addition, rising prosperity has brought about a great change in the Luku graveyard. Instead of single burials of bone urns, families have pooled resources to build shiny and colourful stone tombs in which to store their ancestors' bone urns together. This has consolidated not just their unity, but also their separation from those who did not join. So the executed Chunying is in a family tomb which eventually his brother Chunyang will join, but it does not include their father. Their eldest brother has a separate tomb because of his greater wealth and status, in the grounds of his Luku house, while the betraying brother Chunming is far off in a city cemetery. The collateral Wu family of Wu E, Wu Yin, Wu Zhengzi and Wu Yunzhu has a separate family tomb to the side of the Luku public graveyard, near where

the old branch school stood. The old Wu neighbourhood is still there in tomb form, but now without Wu Chunming, and with a separation of family tombs.

Historical recognition and family repair

The Luku Incident, as the secret police operation has become known in its historical recognition, caused an immediate isolation and dispersal of the families of the Luku hamlets. Historical repair was done by the two volumes of interviews, which are a published archive for further historical narrative, and by the inauguration of the memorial to the victims in 2000. The victims are collected together as a case in the new narrative of a recovered Taiwanese people, recovered from the older Nationalist Chinese oppression for which the new Nationalist Party has apologised.

Professor Zhang and the Taipei County office in charge of the commemoration of the Luku victims seek explicitly to console the families, as well as to put the record straight and to bring about justice (*pingfan*). This is conducted in the time of narrative history, of Taiwanese culture, and of the restoration of human rights and dignity.⁹ Wang Ming still holds out a claim for more compensation. Wang Shengjin wants the criminal record in his name expunged. They are certainly not indifferent to the question of justice and recognition. But the historians have recovered the event from its secrecy, made it available, and recognised every victim in the record. There has been a thorough state intervention to recognise and to right the wrong done to each of the compensated families. The state and its historians have finished their work of redemption.¹⁰

For themselves as families, the descendants of the victims of the Incident have done other work, the work of familial repair in another medium and reality, that of domestic shrines, land and tomb. Through these, they have forged another sense of continuity. The arduous work over years to give their executed family members a proper burial, and the partial restoration of their presence in or near ancestral homes in their old neighbourhoods, speaks volumes for the strength of their wish to repair or restore ancestral time. This desire mobilised women in particular, as wives, daughters, sisters, aunts and mothers in uterine families, although not sisterhoods (see Judd, Chapter 1 in this volume).

But the disruption of the small neighbourhoods of agnates is permanent. The old houses are visited by each of the now three generational families of the victims, but they are not as fixed or 'permanent' as tombs. They are like the homes abandoned in the poorest areas by migration and the formation of urban households. Some have been turned into weekend or retirement homes, most not. They give the ever-renewed, divided and remade family an appearance of permanence that is in fact provisional, and a sense of unity and continuity that is in fact occasional, not everyday. Even the tombs could eventually lose their focal significance if the current cohort of young

adults chooses the mortuary rites of the newest commercial Buddhist foundations, which emphasise charity to the living and avoid the old rituals of the charity of bringing souls out of limbo, instead storing their ashes in the shelves of reliquary shrines (*ta*), as Wang Shengmu's widow did. The younger generation, such as Wang Shufan's daughter-in-law, if they are not wealthy enough, look at the ancestral house as a sign of past poverty left behind. Wealthier survivors, such as Wu Yunzhu and her husband Zhuang Jiankai, have built a new home on the site of the old, and in their retirement returned to their ancestral land. But their daughter, like others of her generation, thinks the history commemorated in the memorial is too 'political' (2 August 2006).

Each generation has different reasons for keeping a distance from the Incident as political and historical event, while attending to family repair and disrepair in a moving present of continuity without genealogy or distant graveside ancestral gatherings.

Glossary

<i>Baise Kongbu</i>	白色恐怖
<i>Bao Mi Ju</i>	保密局
<i>baozheng</i>	堡正
<i>bou qin bou jia</i> (T)	沒親沒家
<i>camka</i> (T)	參加
<i>cochu</i> (T), <i>zucuo</i> (M)	祖厝
<i>coxian</i> (T)	祖先
<i>Dang-wai</i>	黨外
<i>gongbo</i> (T)	公墓
<i>guihe</i> (T)	鬼火
<i>huatsu</i> (T)	法師
<i>jia</i>	家
<i>jiazumiao</i>	家族廟
<i>kai guang</i>	開光
<i>kiou hun</i> (T)	叫魂
<i>Luku Caimiao</i>	鹿窟菜廟
<i>Ming Bao Ju</i>	冥保局
<i>moshengren</i>	莫省人

<i>panluan</i>	叛亂
<i>pingfan</i>	平反
<i>shoufen</i>	收分
<i>shounan zhe</i>	受難者
<i>ta</i>	塔
<i>yongyuquan</i>	用于權
<i>zhidaoyuan</i>	知道員
<i>zuo gongde</i>	作功德

Notes

- 1 The bone, associated with the eating of rice, is the transcendent *yang* essence, the male line, in mortuary symbolism as brilliantly established by Stuart Thompson (1988).
- 2 For Mandarin speech and printed characters I use the transliteration known as *Hanyu Pinyin*. For Taiwanese speech I use a transliteration based on Nickolas Bodman's *Amoy Hokkien*. Characters for all words in italics, Mandarin (M) or Taiwanese (T) are provided in the glossary.
- 3 This is the title of the research project, funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council, to whom I am most grateful for its generous support.
- 4 For the reforming programme and character of the Japanese colonial state in Taiwan, see Lamley (1999).
- 5 All names are pseudonyms.
- 6 Zhang and Gao (1998: 30–31). The most affected villages were in Shiding xiang, in the upper and middle sections of Luku cun. According to the Shiding population register (*Shidingxiang renkou tongjibiao*), in 1952 there were 820 people in 139 households in Luku cun. If we count half of these to be the young and middle-aged, and half of those to be male, we are left with 105 men. The executed and imprisoned from Luku, according to Zhang and Gao (1998: 32), number 48, all men. So almost half the most active males were removed, and it must have been a higher proportion from the higher parts of the village area. From one interviewee in 2005 there is a strong hint that others were forced to leave the area by police action (Mother Cai, 6 November 2005).
- 7 The whole of this section is based on two interviews with Wang Shengjin (3 and 23 October 2004) and an interview with Wang Shengmu's widow, Wang Zhengxiu (4 October 2004).
- 8 Wu Jintu (28 October 2004), one of the child prisoners, remembers that 'When Wu Benjiang [one of the strangers] and Wu Chunming came up to the mountains they were quite fat.'
- 9 As stated by the Taipei County Government Documentation of the Schedule of the Establishment of the Luku Incident Memorial Park, the aim was to 'transform this particular Incident's tragic implications, lifting it into something about tolerance, strength, and honesty as signs of the spirit of the times. It would offer something of relatively positive significance for social mentality and cultural development.' The memorial park remains an unrealised plan.
- 10 Elsewhere I have elaborated on this act of commemoration, compensation and forgetting, on the ambivalence of victims towards it, and on the two modes of commemoration, historical and ancestral time between which the families move (Feuchtwang 2006, 2008).

References

- Carsten, J. (2000) *Cultures of Relatedness: New Approaches to the Study of Kinship*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chuang, Ying-chang and A.P. Wolf (1995) 'Marriage in Taiwan, 1881–1905; An Example of Regional Diversity' *Journal of Asian Studies* 54(3): 781–95.
- Duara, P. (1995) *Rescuing History from the Nation; Questioning Narratives of Modern China*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Ebrey, P. (1986) 'The Early Stages in the Development of Descent Group Organisation' in P.B. Ebrey and J.L. Watson (eds) *Kinship Organization in Late Imperial China 1000–1940*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 16–61.
- Faure, D. (2007) *Emperor and Ancestor: State and lineage in South China*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Feuchtwang, S. (2006) 'Memorials to injustice' in Duncan Bell (ed.) *Memory, Trauma and World Politics: Reflections on the Relationship between Past and Present*, New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- (2008) 'The Transmission of Traumatic Loss: A Case Study from Taiwan' in Nicolas Argenti and Katharina Schramm (eds) *Violence and Memory*, Oxford and New York: Berghahn, in press.
- Feuchtwang, S. and Wang, Mingming (2001) *Grassroots Charisma: Four Local Leaders in China*, London and New York: Routledge.
- Lamley, H.J. (1999) 'Taiwan under Japanese Rule, 1895–1945: The Vicissitudes of Colonialism', in M.A. Rubinstein (ed.) *Taiwan; A New History*, Armonk, NY and London: M.E. Sharpe.
- Stafford, C. (2000) 'Chinese Patriline and the Cycles of *yang* and *laiwang*', in J. Carsten (ed.) *Cultures of Relatedness: New Approaches to the Study of Kinship*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 37–54.
- Thompson, S. (1988) 'Death, Food and Fertility', in James Watson and Evelyn Rawski (eds) *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Zhang, Yanxian and Gao, Shuyuan (1998) *Luku Shijian Yanjiu Diaocha (The Luku Incident: Investigation Research)*, Taipei: Taipei County Government Publishing House.
- Zhang, Yanxian and Wu, Fenghua (2000) *Luku Shijian: Han Cunde Kuqi (The Luku Incident: Lament of a Winter Village)*, Taipei: Taipei County Government Publishing House.

Afterword

Janet Carsten

It is a great pleasure to add an afterword to this very rich, diverse and stimulating collection of essays on kinship in China. As a non-China specialist, I am struck by a number of cross-cutting themes which emerge from the chapters contained in this volume. These speak both to the importance of kinship within the regional specialism of the anthropology of China, and to the significance of these essays more broadly for kinship studies within anthropology.

In their highly thought-provoking introduction to this volume, Brandtstädter and Santos draw our attention to the prominence of the theme of social transformation in these essays. They also put ideas about counterwork and materiality to use productively to consider how both malleability and constancy are instantiated in the practices and idioms of kinship considered by the authors collected here. Clearly, the history of modern China offers an extraordinary opportunity to consider the effects of massive social upheaval on kinship and family structures, and to think through the ways in which family and state intersect in this context. The emphasis on materiality proposed by Brandtstädter and Santos is suggestive precisely because it allows the drawing together of practices involving labour and property (a classic topic for kinship studies) with ideas about natural substances, such as blood, in the production of kinship. Further, these essays bring together politico-economic processes with the creative and intimate practices of family life, as well as the 'official' versions of kinship with the more marginal versions – including those of women or children as documented by Charles Stafford and Ellen Judd, to take just two examples. And this illuminates the creative potential that is encapsulated in the contrastive mode of kinship that is the subject of several of these chapters.

This contrastive mode, which is most apparent in the several depictions of 'men's' and 'women's' kinship, the emphasis on patriarchal and patrilineal forms together with a simultaneous matriarchal register and an intensity of bonds between a mother and her children, points to several questions. Is there a way in which these forms have a paradoxical tendency to replicate or mirror each other? Can we perceive in both the official patrilineal version of kinship, and in the intensity of women's friendships documented in Sara Friedman's and Ellen Judd's essays a similar kind of emotional weight and

heavy sense of obligation? Or, to take another example, in the intensity of obligation and the extreme invocation of an idiom of sacrifice in the context of state schooling that is described by Andrew Kipnis, can we detect a parallel emotional register to that of the family and the patrilineage? As Brandtstädter and Santos note, the idiom of sacrifice is a prominent theme which we might add to several others, such as work, money, and feeding, that are clearly delineated by various authors in this volume in the way kinship in China is constituted.

If the idiom of sacrifice is common to both family and state, this might suggest, in turn, that the intensity of emotional register that suffuses family life, as evidenced in these essays, is matched by a similarly intense set of obligations in relation to the state. Many of the essays in this volume (for example those of Brandtstädter, Feuchtwang, Jankowiak, Judd and Kipnis) point to a quite extreme sense in which the state makes incursions into the family. The profound historical transformations of the twentieth century – the civil war, the Great Leap Forward, famines, migration, the one-child policy and state programmes of education – have impacted with exceptional ferocity on the family in China, and this is shown with particular clarity in the chapters by Feuchtwang and Kipnis. But we can also see the impact on family forms of a much longer political history in the work of Francesca Bray. And this might open up a zone for further examination between the state and the family – without assuming the causal primacy of either. What possibilities exist for the family to deal with the incursions of the state? How resistant, or how pliable, are family forms? How do families tolerate or transmit disruption? What is the impact on state forms and policies of different ideologies, practices and experiences of kinship? Feuchtwang's essay directly addresses the theme of commemoration and the forms of 'repair work' that are available in the face of profound dislocation. Perhaps one link between the state and the family is the heavy work of both the material and the emotional kind (see Brandtstädter) that is sacrifice. And here Charles Stafford's (1992) work on the links between filial piety and sacrifice for the nation offers some suggestive avenues for exploration.

The issue of transmission of knowledge and the lack of an explicit injunction to remember dislocation, that Feuchtwang describes here, is striking when one contrasts the disruptions of recent Chinese history with twentieth-century European history and the links between memory and the rhetorics of identity in Europe (see, for example, Carsten 2007; Feuchtwang 2007; Lambek and Antze 1996). In the Chinese examples documented by Brandtstädter, Feuchtwang, Jankowiak and others, commemoration of ancestors becomes truncated in the context of major transformations of the state and the family. And this suggests a rich topic for future research in terms of the commemorative culture of China, and the comparative possibilities of Taiwan and the People's Republic, where different kinds of gaps exist between parents and their children – as well as different possibilities for the recognition of parental experiences in the face of radical transformation.

The questions posed by these essays are not just relevant to the ethnography and history of China, but suggest fruitful avenues of exploration for the understanding of kinship more broadly. Contrastive forms of kinship, to take one example, can be found in many different regions (Southeast Asia is just one such cultural area). Documenting the apparent contradictions between opposing forms suggests that we should also ask, what kinds of creative potential do such contradictions generate – both socially and analytically? Is there something particular to kinship in China in these forms? What are the productive – or destructive – consequences of an intensity of emotion, constraint or obligation? The questions about social transformation that are highlighted in the essays of Brandtstädter, Han and Judd, among others, point to discussions that have a long history in kinship studies in anthropology. We might attempt to link the two most striking themes of this volume – is there a sense in which the contrastive modes of kinship precipitate, generate or facilitate a potential for wider social transformation? What links, for example, in terms of the production of values, exist between the different orders of kinship described here? One suggestive possibility offered by Brandtstädter's essay is through work as a production of values, which participates in both orders and provides a path for transformation between one and the other.

For anthropologists of China, I suspect, there is another very pertinent set of questions suggested by these essays – where is kinship in China going? What further changes are likely to be incurred, and to what degree will they be exogenously imposed or internally generated? How will the emerging forms of female friendship or bachelorhood, such as those documented by Friedman and Han, combine with older forms such as the 'stove family' described by Santos? The theme of commemoration leads us to speculate not just on how the past is viewed from the point of view of the present, but also on how future transformations will be absorbed or resisted, and what new forms and experiences of family life will result.

References

- Carsten, J. (ed.) (2007) *Ghosts of Memory: Essays on Remembrance and Relatedness*, Malden, MA and Oxford: Blackwell.
- Feuchtwang, S. (2007) 'Belonging to What? Jewish Mixed Kinship and Historical Disruption in Twentieth-century Europe', in Janet Carsten (ed.) *Ghosts of Memory: Essays on Remembrance and Relatedness*, Malden, MA and Oxford: Blackwell.
- Lambek, M. and P. Antze (1996) 'Introduction: Forecasting Memory', in Paul Antze and Michael Lambek (eds) *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory*, New York and London: Routledge.
- Stafford, C. (1992) 'Good Sons and Virtuous Mothers: Kinship and Chinese Nationalism in Taiwan', *Man* 27: 363–78.

Index

- abduction and sale of women in marriage 33
- abortion 51, 52, 196–7
- access: to basic foods 118; to easy transportation 97; to grandchildren 84–5; to healthcare 18; to labour and irrigation water 130; to schooling 35
- Acheson, J.M. 151n2
- ACWF (All China Women's Federation) 197, 200n15
- Adkins, L. and Lury, C. 163
- adoption 182, 185, 186, 187, 192, 200n10, 200n12, 200n13
- affiliations and connectiveness in urban China 69, 74, 75, 76, 77
- affinal ties 12, 45, 49, 54, 105, 107n6, 108n10, 138, 144
- African Political Systems* (Evans-Pritchard, E.E. and Fortes, M.) 1
- After Kinship* (Carsten, J.) 204
- Agamben, G. 216
- agnatic kinship 99, 139, 173
- agricultural productivity 130; collaborative farming 54
- Ahern, E. 184
- Ahern, Emily Martin 141
- Aijmer, G. and Ho, V.K.Y. 113, 116
- An, Yanming 175n3
- Anagnost, A. 194
- ancestors 50; ancestor rites 161; ancestor worship 112, 115, 122–3, 128, 129, 147–8; ancestral halls and tablets, destruction of 119, 120; family and 185; kinship and sharing of 224–6; in limbo 234–6
- Anderson, E.N. 119, 123, 131
- anxiety, two-fold manifestation of 127–8
- artificial insemination 195–96, 197
- associations and connectiveness in urban China 69, 72, 75, 76, 77, 78
- Astuti, R. 9, 16
- Astuti, R. *et al.* 132
- Atkinson, J. and Errington, S. 9
- Attias-Donfut, C. and Segalen, M. 85
- bachelorhood in Yishala 14–15, 48–64; affinal ties 54; ancestors 50; bachelor life 48; bachelorhood, adaptation to 61–3; birth-control policies 51; bride choice and marital happiness 55; brideprice 57–58; celibacy 60, 62; city life, assimilation of women to 58–9, 60; collaborative farming, need for 54; cross-cousin marriage 54–5; cultural practices 50; cultural tourism 50; *dagong* (migration) 60; demography 51–52; dependence on government aid 51; dowry 57–8; economic development 50; emotionality, concern for 58; female autonomy 54; female hypergamy 57, 58, 59, 63; female infanticide 51, 52; female 'malleability' 60; fieldwork in Yishala 49–50; fluidity of kinship 58; gender behaviours 54; gendered experiences of migration 60–1; genealogies 50; glossary 63–4; group alliances, formation of 55, 59; *guang gun* ('bare branches') 51; Han marriage tradition 54; household income 50, 61; hypergamy 56, 57, 58, 59, 63; individual rights, concern for 58; intermarriage 50, 53; intimacy, concern for 58; lineages 49–50; local kinship and marriage systems 52–8; local marriage market 58–59, 61, 62–3; local naming practices 56; male

- hypergamy 56, 57, 58, 63; marriage, responsibility of 49; marriage and change 63; marriage contracts, historical perspective 56–7; marriage forms and sex ratio, interplay between 54; marriage migrations 62–3; marriage practices, change in 59–60, 62; marriage strategies 58–9, 59–61; matchmaking failure 48–9; men and uxorial marriage 56; natal clan proximity 54; non-standard households 61; parent-daughter attachment 52–3, 56; patrilineality 53, 54–5; patrilocality 53–4, 56; power and control over women 59; premarital pregnancy 59; premarital sex 57; privacy, concern for 58; scarcity of women 58–9; segregation by gender 60; sex ratios 49, 51, 52, 54, 58, 60, 63; sex-selective abortion 51, 52; single life 61–63; sister-brother bonds 55; social mobility 58; social problem of bachelorhood 49; socioeconomic change 59–60, 62–3; socioeconomic conditions, constraints of 59–61; subsistence farming 50; traditional family values 51; uterine family 54; uxorial marriage 52, 53, 55–7, 62, 63, 64n3; vice, violence and 61–2; village endogamy 52–54, 58–9, 62; Yi marriage tradition 54; Yishala village 49–50
- Banister, J. 51, 194
 Barlow, T.E. 165
 barter communities 118
Beijing Youth Daily 195
 Berlant, L. 107n3
 Bian, Y. and Logan, J. 89n2
 bilateral kinship practice 80, 84, 87
 bilateral multigenerational emotional linkage 86
 biology and destiny 181, 186, 192
 bipolar logic 184
 Birge, B. 4
 birth-control 64n6; compliance with policies for 208–9; education and 206; policies for 51, 194, 205, 206
 birth rate decline 35
 Bloch, Maurice 36, 131
 Bodman, Nickolas 244n2
 Borotová, Lucie 182–3
 Bossler, B. 4
 Bourdieu, Pierre 10, 58, 60, 150
 Brady, D. 70
 Brandtstädter, Susanne 1–21, 35, 36, 68, 78, 89n1, 99, 141, 144, 149, 154–75, 220n1, x
 Bray, Francesca 3, 4, 7, 11–12, 13–14, 17, 19, 113, 129, 130, 137, 141, 150, 151n7, 163–4, 168, 181–200, 211, 217, 223, x
 Broaded, C.M. and Liu, C. 142, 147
 Brownell, S. and Wasserstrom, J.N. 20n2
 Buck, David 204, 221n7
 Buss, D. 88
- Cai, Y. and Lavelly, W. 51
 Carsten, J. and Hugh-Jones, S. 8, 9, 13
 Carsten, Janet 8, 9, 10, 16, 21n5, 29, 68, 96, 99, 128–9, 156, 204, 223, 246–8, x
 celibacy 60, 62
 Chang, K.C. 123
 Chao, P. 55
 Chard, R.L. 121
 Chen, Fenghua 241
 Chen, Guohua 107n5
 Chen, Guoqiang 107n5
 Chen, Hsien-ming 157
 Chen, Zhiping 20n3
 Chiang, N.L. and Ku, Y. 165
 Chiang, W.W. 100, 107n8
 Chiang Ching-kuo 230–1
 Chiang Ki-shek 149
 childbirth limits 120
 childcare 35, 37, 42
 childlessness, tragedy of 185
China Daily 195, 200n14
 Ching, D. and Silbergeld, J. 20n2
 Chuang, Y.-c. and Wolf, A. 224
 Chun, Allen 7, 19
Cihai (Sea of Words) dictionary 183–4
 civil war and military suppression in Taiwan 227, 230
 Coale, A.J. and Banister, J. 51
 Cohen, M.L. 7, 29, 68, 113, 121, 162
 collaborative farming 54
 collective solidarity, nostalgia for 74
 collectivist political economy 118
 Collier, J.F. and Yanagisako, S.J. 8, 9, 16, 155
 colonial state control in Taiwan 226–7
 commensal unity 122, 128, 131
 commercialization and commodification of stove-families 130–1
 communication, shared activities and 99
 companionable relationship *see dui pnuu*

- complementarity 183–4
 concubinage 185–7, 193, 200n8
 configuration effect 213–4
 Confucian familism 19
 conjugal families 83
 conjugal loyalty 85
 conjugal residence 99, 102, 108n9,
 108n14; childbirth and 108n9
 conjugal ties 35, 44n8, 45n10
 conjugal unit, status of 142
 connectiveness in urban China 67–89;
 affiliations 69, 74, 75, 76, 77;
 associations 69, 72, 75, 76, 77, 78;
 belonging 69; bilateral kinship
 practice 80, 84, 87; bilateral
 multigenerational emotional linkage
 86; city and hinterland, association
 between 80; city dynamics 67;
 collective solidarity, nostalgia for 74;
 conflicting images of city life 67–8;
 conjugal families 83; conjugal loyalty
 85; danwei social organization 69–70;
danwei socialist era 72–3; *danwei*
 system disintegration 73; domestic
 arena and urban kinship 80–3; dual
 multigenerational family,
 reconfiguration of 83–6, 87–8; ethical
 obligation 74; ethnic affiliation 69,
 75–6, 87; ethnicity 75–8, 87; extended
 families 83, 84; family bonds 86–7;
 family practices, reorganization of
 81–2; family structure 83; fieldwork
 in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia 69, 81;
 folk ideal of family 82–3; friendship
 and interaction 76; friendship and
 relatedness 78; funeral practice 84;
 genetic linkage 89n3; gift-giving 72–3;
 glossary 88; grandparent-child co-
 residence 85–6; *guanxi* and
 friendship, relatedness in 78–80;
 household and nuclear family 83,
 220n3; household relationships 72;
 human connection, opportunities for
 67; ideal family, image of 82–3;
 inclusive relatedness 87–8;
 interactions, caution in 75;
 intergenerational ties 69, 81–2, 85,
 88; intermarriage 76; kinship and
 inclusive fitness 77–8; kinship
 bonds, shrinking range of 82;
 kinship burdens 81; kinship charting
 80; kinship practices and social bonds
 71; kinship terminology 82;
 kinship transformations 10;
 multigenerational families 69, 75,
 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87; mutual help
 network 80; mutual involvement,
 importance of 73–4; naming
 practices 80; natal family as core
 social unit 68; native bonds 75–8, 87;
 native place associations 69, 77, 87;
 neighborhood mapping 71;
 neighborhood relationships 71–2, 73–4;
 neighbourhood bonds 86–7;
 neighbourhood interaction 69–70;
 neighbourhood ties 69; nuclear
 families 83, 220n3; parenting style,
 reconfiguration of 87; patrilineal
 customs 87; patrilinearity 68, 80,
 81, 84, 85; patron-client relationship
 89n2; personal identity 77;
 population control system 80;
 privacy 73; proximity and
 friendship, relatedness in 71–75;
 quietness 73–4; regional cultural
 uniformity 80; regional identification
 77; relatedness and kinship 68–9;
 relatedness and proximity 71, 72,
 73–4; religious affiliation 69, 75, 76,
 77, 87; religious solidarity 75–8, 87;
 residential bonds 86–7; sensitivity
 on neighborly relations 74;
 ‘Shanghai perspective’ 67–8;
 situational needs of individuals 80;
 social cooperation 73–4; social
 networks 68, 73, 79; social
 transformation 87; stem families 83,
 84; Taiwanese temple associations 72;
 urban development and relatedness
 87; urban relatedness 68; urban
 villages 70, 72; urbanism 67; village
 customs and urban order 72–3
 conservatism and matriarchy 146
 consumerism 97, 158–59, 193–4
 Counihan, C. and Van Esterik, P. 131
 Croll, Elizabeth 29, 63, 142, 143, 163
 Crook, Isabel 35
 cross-cousin marriage 54–5
 cultural intimacy 215
 cultural-political values, production of
 165
 cultural practices: distinctiveness in
 97–100; in Yishala 50
 cultural standards and intimacy 96
 cultural tourism 50
 cultural value of labour 163–4
Culture and Commitment (Mead, M.)
 213

dagong (migration) 60

danwei (urban unit): social organization 69–70; socialist era 72–3; system disintegration 73

Davis, D. and Harrell, S. 20n2, 57, 89n2, 141

Davis-Floyd, R. 197

dead and living, linkages between 101–3

Delahaye, H. 183

Deliège, R. 21n5

demography 51–2, 205

Deng, K.G. 129

Dennerline, J. 186

depopulation 34, 230

Diamant, N.J. 7

Diamond, Norma 29

Dikötter, F. 196

disruption, dispersal and restoration in Luku, Taiwan 20, 223–44; ancestor in limbo 234–6; ancestor sharing and kinship 224–6; ancestors and kinship 224; civil war and military suppression 227, 230; colonial state control 226–7; depopulation 230; executions and imprisonment 230; family connections and disconnections 239–42; fieldwork in Shiding 224–6; glossary 243–4; Guomindang government 227, 230; historical recognition and family repair 242–3; history and kinship 223–44; humiliation, memories of 231; Incident of White Terror in Luku 225–26, 231, 232, 233–4, 235, 239, 240, 242–43, 244n9; literacy 227; nationalism and modern states 223–4; personification of disruption, Wang Shufan 232–4; political violence 230; poverty and mortality 224; refugee strangers, toleration of 230; repeal of military rule 230–31; settlements before disruption 226–7; spiritual replacement, displacement and 236–9; Wang, Ming 234–6; Wang, Mingming 13, 20n3, 225; Wang, Shengjin 230, 236–9; Wang, Shengmu 227, 243; Wang, Shengxi 235, 236; Wang, Shufan 232–4, 243; Wang family 227, 228, 230, 232–4, 234–6, 236–9; Wang family network 228; Wu, Chunming 227, 230, 239–42; Wu, Chunyang 240; Wu, Wangming 241; Wu, Yunzhu 241, 243; Wu family 227, 229, 230, 239–42; Wu

family network 229; Wu Qiwang 239–40; Wu Zhengzi 239

divisions of labour 157, 158, 166–7

divorce 31–32, 33, 62–63, 70, 100, 185, 186, 194, 195, 196

Donzelli, Aurora 133n1

doubles, concept of 182–4

dowry 57–58, 115, 169, 185

The Dream of the Red Chamber (Cao, X.) 183

Du You 192

Duara, P. 223

dui pnua (companionable) relationship 95, 107n6, 108n11, 108n14; affective intensity of *dui pnua* bonds 98–9; childhood *dui pnua* 98; female *dui pnua* bonds 95, 98–9; and *hulin* worship 102–3; intimacy and *dui pnua* ties 95–6, 98–9; intimacy of, practice of 100–1, 105–6; male *dui pnua* 103–5; networks 97–8; relationships, explicit distinctiveness in 99–100; social relations and 98

Dyson, T. and Moore, M. 54

Ebrey, Patricia B. 4, 151n3, 185, 186, 191, 223

Ebrey, P.B. and Watson, J.L. 1, 4, 5, 7

economics: and culture, relations

between 13; economic development 50, 113; educational deficiencies and economic conditions 212

education and child-centered relatedness 204–21; birth-control policy 205, 206; birth-control policy, compliance with 208–9; configuration effect 213–4; cultural intimacy 215; demography 205; economic conditions and educational deficiencies 212; education and birth-control 206; education techniques, debates about 211; educational processes, family relationships and 209–13, 218–9; employment opportunities 206, 209; family sacrifice, history of 216; fieldwork in Zouping county 206–8; filiality 214–5; formal education, spread of 204–5; funding education 205, 212; generational differences 213–6; glossary 219–20; kinship transformations 19–20; lunch in school 207–8; nationalism, sense of 215; parent-child relationships 210–1,

- 218; population quality 205; relatedness, Zouping cultures of 208–9; rural and urban primary schools, difference between 207; rural-urban divide 210–1; sacrifice, education and notion of 214, 215–6; school hours 211–2; sibling set structures 208, 209, 220n3; social reproduction, reinvention of 219; state education systems, rise of 204; state/society continuum 219; teachers, role of 205; teachers and gender 218; teachers as kin 216–18; teachers as parents 217; tertiary education, honour of 213; travel to school 207; university education, desire for 209–10, 211–2; work and schooling 214–5; Zouping county 206–8
- educational attainment of women 142–3, 145, 147
- Edwards, J. *et al.* 8
- egg donation 193, 195–6
- The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (Lévi-Strauss, C.) 21n7
- emotional closeness 96
- emotional families 170
- emotional intimacy 17
- emotional support 99
- emotionality, concern for 58
- employment opportunities 206, 209
- Entwisle, B. and Henderson, G.E. 20n2, 36
- ethical obligation 74
- ethnic affiliation 69, 75–76, 87
- ethnicity and connectiveness in urban China 75–78, 87
- Evans-Pritchard, E.E. and Fortes, M. 1
- executions and imprisonment in Taiwan 230
- extended families 83, 84
- family bonds 86–7
- family formation and stove-partition 121–2
- family life: affective stove-anchored dimensions of local families 128; connections and disconnections 239–42; domestic arena and urban kinship 80–3; dual multigenerational family 85; dual multigenerational family, reconfiguration of 83–6, 87–8; extended families 83, 84; familial support patterns 166–7; family, state and economy 34; folk ideal of family 82–3; geographical expansion of 159; grandparent-child co-residence 85–6; historical recognition and family repair 242–3; ideal family, image of 82–3; importance of family 112; intergenerational ties 69, 81–2, 85, 88; labour control and 162–6; life vignettes, examples of resource-sharing 123–5, 126–27; multigenerational families 69, 75, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87; multiple and mobile locations, maintenance of families in 42; parenting style, reconfiguration of 87; practical stove-anchored dimensions of local families 128; reorganization of family practices 81–2; residence change, restrictions on 114; sharing food and establishment of intimacy 131; structure of the family 83; traditional family values 51
- family partition 116, 121, 134n7
- family sacrifice, history of 216
- Fardon, R. 16
- Farquhar, J. 194
- Faubion, J. 8
- Faure, B. 200n5
- Faure, D. 4, 5, 7, 29, 113, 129, 162, 191, 223
- Faure, D. and Siu, H. 19, 20n2, 113
- Fei, Hsiao-Tung 121
- Fei, Xiaotong 6
- Feinberg, R. and Ottenheimer, M. 8
- females: autonomy 54; child mortality 143; *dui pnua* bonds 95, 98–9; female inside and male outside, division between 160–62; homosociality 99; hypergamy 57, 58, 59, 63; infanticide 51, 52, 143, 185; kinship and marriage 96; ‘malleability’ 60; positioning of 165; sexuality of 184; work of, importance of 170–2; *see also* women
- femininity 165, 166, 182
- fertility: controls on 194; medicine, fertility and motherhood 187–9; menstrual regularity and 188–9; status of women, importance for 181
- festival reunions 122–3
- fetal testing 196–7
- Feuchtwang, S. and Wang, M. 225
- Feuchtwang, Stephan 4, 11, 13, 20, 205, 223–44, x

- fieldwork in: Angang, Taiwan 137–9, 148, 149; Cantonese single-lineage village 112, 133–34n4; Chongqing and Sichuan 30–31; Hohot, Inner Mongolia 69, 81; Hui'an county, Fujian 97, 109n16; Niaoyu and Meidao 154–6, 159–60; Protected Mountain, Yunnan 144–5, 148, 149; Shiding, Taiwan 224–6; Yishala 49–50; Zouping county 206–8
- filiality 214–15
- fo-jou* ('stove partnership') 122
- folk ideal of family 82–3
- Fong, Vanessa L. 7, 20, 59, 82, 205, 206, 210, 215
- food-sharing, symbolic prominence of 129–32
- formal education, spread of 204–5
- formal motherhood 191–2
- Fortes, M. 6
- Fox, R. 55
- Franklin, S. and McKinnon, S. 8, 9, 97, 128, 204
- Franklin, S. and Ragoné, H. 8
- Freedman, Maurice 1, 6–7, 11, 29, 113, 119, 128, 130, 140–1, 155, 162
- Friedman, Sara L. 3, 4, 11, 16–17, 95–109, xi
- friendship: *guanxi* and friendship, relatedness in 78–80; and interaction 76; proximity and friendship, relatedness in 71–5; and relatedness 78
- Fu, Nan 210
- Fu, Y. and Yang, G. 20n3
- funding education 205, 212
- funeral ritual 84, 107n7
- Furth, C. 4, 184, 185, 187, 189
- Gaetano, A.M. and Jacka, T. 41
- gagi'e lang* ('one's own people') 99
- Gal, S. and Kligman, G. 163
- ganqing* economies 156–62
- Gao, Bineng 236
- Gao, Yuan 218
- Gates, H. 36, 130, 141, 142, 162
- Gaubatz, P. 70
- gender: gender behaviours 54; gender stereotypes 168–9; gendered nature of kinship structures 43; and kinship, dynamic process of 155–56, 168; and kinship transformations 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 12, 14, 15–6, 18, 19; *nei* (inside) and *wai* (outside), gendered opposition of 155, 156, 157, 159, 161, 162; segregation by 60; teachers and 218
- Gender and Kinship* (Collier, J.F. and Yanagisako, S.J.) 16, 155
- gendered work and production of kinship values 154–75; agnatic groups 173; ancestor rites 161; bride value 172; brideprice 169; cultural-political values, production of 165; cultural value of labour 163–64; divisions of labour 166–7; dowry 169; emotional families 170; familial support patterns 166–7; family, labour control and 162–6; family life, geographical expansion of 159; female inside and male outside, division between 160–2; female positioning 165; female work, importance of 170–2; femininity 165, 166; fieldwork at Niaoyu and Meidao 154–6, 159–60; *ganqing* economies 156–62; gender and kinship, dynamic process of 168; gender and kinship dynamics 155–6; gender stereotypes 168–9; glossary 173–5; Goumindang's Woman Department 165; heterosexual spaces 170; hybrid nature of women's labour 169; industrialization, consequences of 165; inherited patrilineality 169; interpersonal relations 160–1; *jia* (family household) 163–4; kinship-as-property 162; kinship production in Meidao and Niaoyu 166–73; kinship space and gendered production in Niaoyu and Meidao 156–62; labour, control of 162–6; labour, ownership of 172–3; labour-value nexus 164; liberation narratives 166–7; local religion and ritual practices 162; localized lineages 173; male-kinship-property cosmos 171; maleness of socialist 'space-time' 169; marriage, mobility and disruption of 159; marriage, residence patterns in 170–1; Meidao, island community of 154–5; Meidao, reimportation of ritual practices 159–60; Meidao, traditional lifestyle of 158–9; men, traditional work of 157; money remittances, importance of 170; *nei* (inside) and *wai* (outside), gendered opposition of 155, 156, 157, 159, 161, 162; Niaoyu Island, arrival on 154; Niaoyu Island, modernity in 157; patrilineal kinship

- 162; patrilineal ownership 169;
 political involvement 163;
 propertylessness of women 155;
 relationship and material action 156;
 seaweed harvest, rights to 171;
 sincerity 168, 175n3; social
 production, concept of 156; social
 relations, Maoist 'compression' of
 158; social transformations 165–6,
 167–8; socialist collectivization 169;
 wage-labour dependence 169–70;
 women, men and relationships 170;
 women, traditional work of 157–8;
 work and relatedness in China 168;
 work and value formation in kinship
 155; work-point system 164–5
- genealogies: bachelorhood in Yishala
 50; resource-sharing and kinship in
 Guangdong 112
- generational differences 40–1; education
 and child-centered relatedness 213–6
- genetic linkage 89n3
- gift-giving 72–3
- Gilmartin, C.K. *et al.* 20n2
- Ginsburg, F.D. and Rapp, R. 8
- global and local, relations between 13
- glossaries: bachelorhood in Yishala 63–
 4; connectiveness in urban China 88;
 disruption, dispersal and restoration
 in Luku, Taiwan 243–4; education
 and child-centered relatedness 219–
 20; gendered work and production of
 kinship values 173–5; intimacy
 production in rural China 106–7;
 patriarchy 151; motherhood in late
 imperial China 198–99; resource-
 sharing and kinship in Guangdong
 132–3
- Godelier, M. *et al.* 8
- Godelier, Maurice 2, 8, 21n5, 131
- Gold, T. 217
- Goode, William 6, 85, 87
- Goodman, B. and Larson, W. 20n2,
 161–2
- Goody, Jack 57
- Gottschang, Suzanne Zhang 86, 197,
 198, 219
- grandparent-child co-residence 85–6
- Grassroots Charisma* (Feuchtwang, S.
 and Wang, M.) 225
- Greenhalgh, S. and Winckler, E.A. 36,
 205, 206, 209
- Greenhalgh, Susan 19, 194, 208
- group alliances, formation of 55, 59
- guang gun* ('bare branches') 51
- guanxi* and friendship, relatedness in
 78–80
- Guisso, W.L. 140
- Guo, Yuhua 172
- Guo, Zhichao 107n5
- Guomindang government 227, 230;
 Woman Department 165
- Guthrie, Doug 89n2
- Hakka women, bridal laments of 33
- Han, Hua 3, 4, 11, 14–15, 34, 48–64, xi
- Han marriage tradition 54
- Handwerker, Lisa 194–5, 196
- Harrell, S. 7, 53, 57, 59, 186, 200n6
- Harvey, David 21n8
- Hayden, C. 96
- health campaigns 194
- herbalism 187
- Hershatter, Gail 150–1
- Herzfeld, M. 82, 215
- heterosexuality 17, 96, 99; heterosexual
 spaces 170
- history and kinship 223–44
- Holy, L. 8, 9, 21n5
- Hom, M.K. 151n5
- Hong Kong 20n1
- Honig, E. 100, 107n8, 168
- Horst, M. and Miller, D. 79
- house societies 13
- households: division of 44n5; income of
 50, 61; *jia* (family household) 163–4;
 non-standard households 61; nuclear
 family within 83, 220n3; registration
 system for 34, 42; relationships within
 72
- Hsiung, Ping-Chen 186, 192
- Hsu, Francis L.K. 5, 216
- Hu, Jianwei 171
- Huang, Sitian 241
- Huang, Xiyuan 232–3, 235
- Hudson, V.M. and den Boer, A.M. 51,
 59, 61
- hulin* worship 102–3
- humiliation, memories of 231
- hypergamy 56, 57, 58, 59, 63
- ideal family, image of 82–3
- Ikels, C. 20n2, 74, 216
- Incident of White Terror in Luku 225–
 6, 231, 232, 233–34, 235, 239, 240,
 242–3, 244n9
- inclusive relatedness 87–8
- individual rights 58

individualism and collectivism, tension between 130

industrialization, consequences of 165

infertility: state indifference to 195; treatments for 195–6

Ingold, T. 192

inheritance 42

inherited patrilineality 169

interactions: caution in 75; dual multigenerational family 85; formalistic interactions 74

intergenerational ties 69, 81–2, 85, 88

intermarriage 50, 53, 76

interpersonal relations 160–1

intimacy: concern for 58; cultural intimacy 215; and *dui pnua* ties 95–6, 98–9; between living and dead 101–3; production of 16–17; relatedness and 9

intimacy production in rural China

95–109; affective intensity of *dui pnua* bonds 98–9; agnatic kin grouping 99;

bonds across space and time 102–3;

childhood *dui pnua* 98;

communication, shared activities and 99; conjugal residence 99, 102, 108n9, 108n14; cultural standards and intimacy 96; dead and living, linkages between 101–3; distinctive cultural practices 97–100; *dui pnua*

and *hulin* worship 102–3; *dui pnua* (companionable) relationship 95;

dui pnua intimacy, practice of

100–1, 105–6; *dui pnua* networks 97–8; *dui pnua* relationships, explicit distinctiveness in 99–100; emotional closeness 96; emotional support 99;

female *dui pnua* bonds 95, 98–99;

female homosociality 99; female

kinship and marriage 96; fieldwork in Hui'an county, Fujian 97, 109n16;

gagi'e lang ('one's own people') 99;

glossary 106–7; *hulin* worship 102–3;

intimacy and *dui pnua* ties 95–6, 98–9; intimacy between living and dead

101–3; kinship and male *dui pnua*

105; laotong (old-same) relationship

106; male *dui pnua* 103–5; male

kinship ties and natal community 96;

non-kin relations 95, 100; physical

familiarity 96; same-sex ties 95; social

relations and *dui pnua* 98; sociality

and kinship 97

IVF (*in vitro* fertilization) 195, 197

Jacka, T. 77, 156, 164, 168, 169

Jankowiak, William 4, 10, 11, 13, 15, 17, 67–89, 170, xi

Jay, J.W. 139, 140

jia (family household) 163–4

Jiang, Bingzhao 107n5

Jianguo Daily 171

jieshaoren (introducers) 38–9

Jing, Jun 7, 20n2

Johnson, E.L. 33

Johnson, K. *et al.* 194, 200n13

Johnson, Kay 200n13

Judd, Ellen R. 4, 7, 10, 11, 14, 16, 17, 29–45, 95, 96, 113, 141, 151n1, 169, 173, 175n1, 237, 242, xi

kinship: ancestors and 224; bonds, shrinking range of 82; burdens of 81; charting of 80; history and kinship 223–44; human kinship experiences, complexities of 128–9; and inclusive fitness 77–8; kin intimacy and relatedness 128, 131–2; kinship-as-property 162; local kinship and marriage systems 52–8; localized kinship 29–30; 'macro-micro' problem in 10; and male *dui pnua* 105; mothers and daughters, ties between 41; natural kinship 131–2; official kinship structure 42–3; patrilineal kinship 162; practices and social bonds 71; production in Meidao and Niaoyu 166–73; property, women and 175n2; relatedness and 68–9, 128–32; and sharing of ancestors 224–6; sociality and kinship 97; space and gendered production 156–62; spatial variations of kinship 3, 14; terminology 82; ties, struggle for 39–40; urban kinship 3, 15; work and value formation in 155

kinship transformations: bachelorhood 14–15; civilization and kinship 5–7; classic transformations 5–7; connectiveness in urban China 10; disruption, dispersal and restoration 20; economics and culture, relations between 13; education and child-centered relatedness 19–20; emotional intimacy 17; familism 19; gender and 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 12, 14, 15–16, 18, 19; global and local, relations between 13; house societies 13; intimacy, production of 16–17; intimacy,

- relatedness and 9; locality 13, 14; 'macro-micro' problem in kinship 10; marriage and intimacy 15; matriarchy 18; migration 3, 14–15; mobility 3, 13, 14; motherhood in late imperial China 19; new materialist perspective 9–13; parent-child bonds 19; patriarchy 13–14; place, making of 13; power and 3, 5, 8, 11, 15, 18, 19; recent transformations 7–9; relatedness, creation of 11; relations across space 13, 14; resource-sharing and kinship in Guangdong 17; scale 13; sexual intimacy 17; space and spatial relations 13, 14; spatial mobility 10; spatial practices of migration 14–15; spatial variations of kinship 3, 14; state and 18–20; state and society, relations between 13; urban kinship 3, 15; urban-rural divide 14; uterine families 14
- Kipnis, Andrew 4, 7, 11, 15, 17, 19, 113, 151n4, 151n6, 155, 164, 168, 175n3, 197, 204–21, xi
- Knapp, R. and Lo, K.-Y. 20n2
- Ko, D. 4
- Ku, Hok-Bun 113, 116
- Kung, L. 158, 165
- Kuper, A. 5
- labour: control of 162–6; labour-value nexus 164; ownership of 172–3; wage-labour dependence 169–70
- Lamley, H.J. 244n4
- Lan, Bozhou 232
- landholding peasantry 129
- Lang, O. 80
- A Lantern at the Crossroads* (Li, L.) 182–3
- laotong* (old-same) relationship 106
- Latour, Bruno 9
- Lavelly, W. 36, 57, 58, 59, 62
- Lavelly, W. *et al.* 52
- Lawton, L. *et al.* 85
- Leach, E. 7
- Lee, Ching Kwan 41
- Lefebvre, Henri 21n8
- legal and social ties to countryside 42
- Leung, A. K.-C. 189
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude 6, 9, 11, 13, 21n7, 54, 55
- levirate, established custom of 40
- Lewin, E. 96, 97
- Lewin, T. 221n8
- Li, Denghui 231
- Li, J.H. and Lavelly, W. 58, 59
- Li, Quansheng 220n6
- Li, S. and Feldman, M.W. 143
- LI, S. and Zhu, C. 143
- Li, S. *et al.* 143, 144
- Li Lüyuan 182–3
- Lin, Hao 157
- Lin, Huixiang 107–8n8, 107n5
- lineage: bachelorhood in Yishala 49–50; and descent 113, 116, 121, 122, 129; 'lineage-village' in Canton, late post-Mao 114–6; lineage-village organization 113, 114, 115; lineality in rural China 29; localized lineages 112, 115, 173; revival, phenomenon of 115–6; single-lineage 112, 114, 129
- literacy 50, 205, 220n2, 227
- Liu, L. 6
- Liu, L. *et al.* 210
- Liu, Xin 29, 49, 62, 221n10
- livelihood strategies 114, 120–1
- 'living widows' 145
- Lloyd, G.E.R. 21n4
- local embeddedness 33, 36
- local family planning policy, restrictions in 120
- local kinship and marriage systems 52–8
- local marriage market 58–9, 61, 62–3
- local naming practices 56
- local religion and ritual practices 162
- localized kinship 29–30
- localized lineages 112, 115, 173
- Logan, J. 68
- 'looking for food': as epidemiological representation 117–9; practice of 118, 123; preoccupation of village world 116–9; vital resources and 119; *see also* resource-sharing and kinship in Guangdong
- Lu, X. and Perry, E. 70
- lunch in school 207–8
- Macao 20n1
- MacCormack, C. and Strathern, M. 9
- McKhann, C. 55
- McKinnon, Susan 11, 21n7
- males: *dui pnua* 103–5; female inside and male outside, division between 160–62; hypergamy 56, 57, 58, 63; kinship ties and natal community 96; male-kinship-property cosmos 171; maleness of socialist 'space-time' 169;

- sons as security guarantee 186;
 spatial positioning of men 37–9;
 traditional work of men 157; uxorial
 marriage and men 56
- Mann, S. 4, 100
- marital homes, location and negotiation
 of 38–9
- marriage: arrangement of 44–45n9,
 44n8, 45n10; bride choice 55; bride
 value 172; brideprice 57–58, 169;
 bridewealth 115; and change 63;
 contracts of, historical perspective on
 56–7; distance, forms of marriage at
 33; and family creation 30, 31–32,
 33–6, 40; female kinship and 96;
 forms and sex ratio, interplay
 between 54; and intimacy 15; local
 kinship and marriage systems 52–8;
 local market for 58–59, 61, 62–3;
 Marriage Law (1950) 134n8;
 migrations 62–3; mobility and
 disruption of 159; practices, change
 in 59–60, 62; residence patterns in
 170–1; responsibility of 49;
 separation and break of 30; small
 daughter-in-law marriage 32–3;
 strategies 58–9, 59–61
- Marsh, Robert 81–2
- Martin, Emily 16, 162
- Massey, D. 36
- matchmaking 44–45n9, 45n10; failure
 of 48–9
- matriarchy 137–51; actual power of
 women, discussion on 148–51;
 agnatic kinship 139; ancestor worship
 147–8; assertiveness of women 137–9;
 ‘China a matriarchal society’ 139;
 collapse of patriarchy 142; conflicting
 evidence, reconciliation of 143–6;
 conjugal unit, status of 142;
 conservatism and 146; distinctive
 Chinese civility, women in 150;
 educational attainment 142–3, 145,
 147; empress dowager control 140;
 endangered daughters 143; female
 child mortality 143; female
 infanticide 143; fieldwork in Angang,
 Taiwan 137–9, 148, 149; fieldwork in
 Protected Mountain, Yunnan 144–5,
 148, 149; glossary 151; images of
 powerful and autonomous women
 142; importance of women in
 domestic affairs 140–1, 149–50;
 impressiveness of women 137–9, 146;
 kinship transformations 18; ‘living
 widows’ 145; matrilineal descent and
 149; natal families, women’s ties to
 141; patriarchy 137, 142, 144, 145–6,
 147; patrilineal ideology 137, 140,
 141, 147, 149, 150; political activism
 and role of women 150–1; power and
 agency of women 140–2, 145; power
 of ordinary women 140–3; property
 and women 143; reproduction of
 patriarchy? 146–8; sex ratios and son
 preference 143; status of women,
 variations in time and space 144, 146;
 stereotypes of ‘traditional’ Chinese
 women 137; strength in women 139;
 toughness of women 139, 145;
 township endogamy 138–9; uterine
 family and mothers’ influence 141;
 uxorilocal marriage 138–9, 151n1;
 wife-dominated households 142;
 women as disruptive outsiders 141;
 women at the top 139–0; women in
 control 137–8; Wu Zetian, female
 emperor 140
- Maynes, M.J. *et al.* 8
- Mead, Margaret 213
- medicine, fertility and motherhood 187–9
- Meidao: island community of 154–5;
 reimportation of ritual practices 159–
 60; traditional lifestyle of 158–9; *see*
also gendered work and production
 of kinship values
- Meillassoux, C. 119
- meiren* (matchmakers) 38–9
- Mencius (Meng-tzu) 149
- menstrual irregularity 188–9
- migration: and family splits 34–5, 35–6,
 41–2; kinship transformations 3, 14–
 15; postsocialist labour migration
 113–4
- mobility: and continued relations 44n5;
 and fixity in emergent practices 39–
 43; growth in levels of 30, 31, 32, 34,
 35, 36, 114; kinship transformations
 3, 13, 14; social mobility 58, 80;
 spatial mobility 10
- money remittances, importance of 170
 monogamy 33
- Moore, H.L. 163
- Morgan, L.H. 11, 21n7
- motherhood in late imperial China 19,
 181–200; adoption 182, 185, 186,
 187, 192, 200n10, 200n12, 200n13;
 ancestors and family 185; artificial

- insemination 195–6, 197; biological impediments, social techniques for overcoming 182; biological motherhood, natural kinship and 192; biology and destiny 181, 186; bipolar logic 184; birth-control policies 194; childlessness, tragedy of 185; complementarity 183–4; concubinage 185–7, 193; consumerism 193; counterpositioning 183; doubles, concept of 182–4; dowry 185; education, mother's role in 191; egg donation 193, 195–6; female infanticide 185; female sexuality 184; fertility and menstrual regularity 188–9; fertility controls 194; fetal testing 196–7; formal motherhood 191–2; glossary 198–9; health campaigns 194; herbalism 187; infertility treatments 195–6; IVF (*in vitro* fertilization) 195, 197; kinship transformations 19; legacies and echoes of the past 192–8; medicine, fertility and motherhood 187–9; menstrual irregularity 188–9; multiple parenthood 181–2; natural cycles 184; natural kinship, theories of 189–92; one-child policy 194, 197; paired inscriptions 183; parallels, polysemic power of 183; patrilineal descent, imperatives of 185; patrilineality 181–2; polygynous society 181–2; polygyny 182, 185, 186, 187, 192, 193; population quality 197–8; relatedness 191; reproductive choice 187; reproductive cultures 194; reproductive functions 188–9; reproductive ideologies 193; reproductive technologies 193, 194–95, 196–7, 198; selective abortion 196–7; social motherhood 184–7; social transformations 194; sons as security guarantee 186; status of women, importance of fertility for 181; surrogacy 181–2, 193, 195–6; uterine families 181; wealth and motherhood 184–7; womanhood and giving birth 197; womb rental 193; women marrying up 185; *yin* and *yang* 184, 189
- multiple parenthood 181–2
- mutual help network 80
- mutual involvement, importance of 73–4
- Nahman, M. 200n10
- name groups in Shanlin 107n4
- naming practices 56, 80
- narratives: fixity of married woman 37–8; liberation narratives 166–7; one woman's life and marriage 31–2
- natal allegiances 108–9n15
- natal clan proximity 54
- natal families: core social units 68; support from 35, 36–37; ties to 40–1; women's ties to 141
- Nathansen Milwertz, C. 194
- nationalism, sense of 215
- native bonds 75–8, 87
- native place associations 69, 77, 87
- natural cycles 184
- natural kinship 131–2; theories of 189–92
- Nee, Victor 89n2
- Needham, Rodney 8
- nei* (inside) and *wai* (outside), gendered opposition of 155, 156, 157, 159, 161, 162
- neighborhoods: bonds within 86–7; interactions in 69–70; mapping of 71; relationships within 71–2, 73–4; ties to 69
- neolocality 44n4
- new materialist perspective 9–13
- Ngai, Pun 60
- niangjia ('mother's homes') in Shandong 36–7
- Niaoyu Island: arrival on 154; modernity in 157; see also gendered work and production of kinship values
- non-kin relations 95, 100
- non-standard households 61
- nuclear families 83, 220n3
- obedience and womanhood 32
- Ocko, J.K. 143
- official kinship structure 42–3
- one-child policy 194, 197; see also birth-control
- Overmyer, D.L. 184
- Ownby, D. 64n1
- paired inscriptions 183
- parallels, polysemic power of 183
- parent-child bonds 19
- parent-child relationships 210–1, 218
- parent-daughter attachment 52–3, 56
- Parish, W.L. and White, M.K. 7

- Parkin, R. 21n5
 Parkin, R. and Stone, L. 9, 21n5
 patriarchy: collapse of 142; kinship transformations 13–14; matriarchy and 137, 142, 144, 145–6, 147
 patrilineality 53, 54–5, 68, 80, 81, 84, 85, 200n9; customs of 87; ideology of 137, 140, 141, 147, 149, 150; inherited patrilineality 169; motherhood in late imperial China 181–2; patrilineal descent, imperatives of 185; patrilineal descent, kin intimacy and 116; patrilineal kinship 162; patrilineal ownership 169; resource-sharing, kinship in Guangdong and 112, 113, 116, 121, 122, 128, 129, 131
 patrilineality 29, 30, 32, 33, 35, 37, 42
 patrilocal: bachelorhood in Yishala 53–4, 56; patrilocal exogamy 115; women's kinship in rural China 29, 30, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37, 44n4
 patron-client relationship 89n2
 peasantry and state, mutual dependence between 129
People's Daily 195
 People's Republic of China (PRC) 3, 4, 6, 7, 18, 20n1, 20n3, 71, 160, 182, 193–4
 personal identity 77
 physical familiarity 96
 Pine, F. 163
 place, making of 13
 Plaks, A. 183
pojia (marital home) 36, 37, 39
 political involvement 163
 political violence 230
 politico-ritual social incorporation 127
 Pollitt, Katha 193
 polygamy 134n8
 polygyny 181–2, 185, 186, 187, 192, 193
 population control system 80
 population decline 40
 population quality 197–8, 205
 postsocialism: labour migration of 113–4; modernization of 116
 Potter, J. and Potter, S. 113, 116
 Potter, S.H. 194
 Potter, S.H. and Potter, J.M. 29, 168, 169, 173
 poverty and mortality 224
 power: and agency of women 140–2, 145; and control over women 59; kinship transformations and 3, 5, 8, 11, 15, 18, 19; of ordinary women 140–3; parallels, polysemic power of 183
 premarital pregnancy 59
 premarital sex 57
 privacy 73; concern for 58
 property and women 143
 prostitution 61, 64n7
Qilu Evening News 221n11
 quietness 73–4
 Ragoné, H. 193, 200n11
 Read, R. 163
 regional cultural uniformity 80
 regional identification 77
 relatedness: creation of 11; education and child-centered relatedness 19–20; friendship and 78; guanxi and friendship, relatedness in 78–80; inclusive relatedness 87–8; intimacy and 9; kin intimacy and 128, 131–2; and kinship 68–9, 129; material action and 156; motherhood in late imperial China 191; and proximity 71, 72, 73–4; relations across space 13, 14; rice and food, kinship and 128–32; rupture and 32–3; and urban development 87; in urban life 68; Zouping cultures of 208–9
 religious affiliation 69, 75, 76, 77, 87
 religious solidarity 75–8, 87
 remarriage 31–2, 33
 reproduction: cultures of 194; ideologies of 193; of patriarchy? 146–8; patterns of 220n3, 220n4; reproductive choice 187; reproductive functions 188–9; social reproduction, reinvention of 219; technologies of 193, 194–5, 196–7, 198
 residential bonds 86–7
 resource-sharing and kinship in Guangdong 112–34; access to basic foods 118; affective stove-anchored dimensions of local families 128; agricultural productivity 130; ancestor worship 112, 115, 122–3, 128, 129; ancestral halls and tablets, destruction of 119, 120; anxiety, two-fold manifestation of 127–8; barter communities 118; bridewealth 115; childbirth limits 120; collectivist political economy 118; commensal unity 122, 128, 131;

- commercialization and
 commodification of stove-families
 130–31; descent and lineage 113, 116,
 121, 122, 129; dowry 115; economic
 development 113; family, importance
 of 112; family formation and stove-
 partition 121–2; family partition 121;
 festival reunions 122–3; fieldwork in
 Cantonese single-lineage village 112,
 133–34n4; *fo-jou* ('stove partnership')
 122; food-sharing, symbolic
 prominence of 129–32; genealogies
 112; glossary 132–33; human kinship
 experiences, complexities of 128–9;
 individualism and collectivism,
 tension between 130; kin intimacy
 and relatedness 128, 131–2; kinship
 transformations 17; landholding
 peasantry 129; life vignettes,
 examples of resource-sharing 123–5,
 126–7; lineage revival, phenomenon
 of 115–6; 'lineage-village' in Canton,
 late post-Mao 114–6; lineage-village
 organization 113, 114, 115; livelihood
 strategies 114, 120–1; local family
 planning policy, restrictions in 120;
 localized lineages 112, 115; 'looking
 for food,' preoccupation of village
 world 116–9; 'looking for food' as
 epidemiological representation 117–9;
 meaty food toppings in special meals
 123; mobility, growth in levels of 114;
 natural kinship 131–2; patrilineal
 descent and kin intimacy 116;
 patrilinearity 112, 113, 116, 121, 122,
 128, 129, 131; patrilocal exogamy
 115; peasantry and state, mutual
 dependence between 129; politico-
 ritual social incorporation 127;
 postsocialist labour migration 113–4;
 postsocialist modernization 116;
 practical stove-anchored dimensions
 of local families 128; practice of
 'looking for food' 118, 123;
 relatedness and kinship 129; residence
 change, restrictions on 114; resource-
 sharing and incorporation into
 familial system 127; resource-sharing
 (or food sharing) around common
 stove 122–8; resource-sharing
 performances 123–5, 126–7; rice and
 food, kinship and relatedness 128–32;
 sharing food and establishment of
 intimacy 131; single-lineage 112, 114,
 129; social stratification 114;
 sociocultural environment 120–1;
 socioeconomic transformation 113–
 4; socioeconomic inequality 114;
 stove and family, symbolic
 association between 121; stove as
 metaphor of and for family 119–22;
 stove-centred familial system, two-
 fold structure of 121–2, 128; tourism
 development 114; uterine family 122;
 vital resources and 'looking for food'
 119; wet-rice cultivation 130
*Rhymed Essentials of the New
 Gynecology* (Wu, Q.) 188
 Rosaldo, M. and Lamphere, L. 30
 Ruf, G.A. 33
 rupture, relatedness and 32–3
 rural-urban divide 207, 210–1
 sacrifice, education and notion of 214,
 215–6
 Salaff, J.W. 35
 same-sex ties 11, 16, 17, 71, 95, 97, 103,
 106
 Sangren, P.S. 7, 10, 103, 113, 146, 156,
 168–9, 175n3
 Sankar, A. 107n8
 Santos, Gonçalo D. 1–21, 68, 89n1, 99,
 112–34, 208, 220n1, xi–xii
 Schipper, K. 71, 72
 Schneider, David 8, 9, 131, 132, 204
 school hours 211–2
 Schweitzer, P. 8
 Scott, Allen J. 21n8
 Seaman, Gary 141, 184
 seaweed harvest, rights to 171
 Sedgwick, E.K. 99
 segregation by gender 60
 Selden, M. 30
 selective abortion 51, 52, 196–7
 sex ratios 49, 51, 52, 54, 58, 60, 63,
 64n2; and son preference 143
 sex-selective abortion 51, 52, 196–7
 sexual intimacy 17, 96, 184, 188, 189,
 195–6
 sexual partners, buying or selling of
 128–9
 sexual preferences 57
 sexual realities 76
 sexual relations 107–8n8, 108n9
 sexual reproduction 128–9
 ShandongEducationNet 210
 'Shanghai perspective' 67–8
 Shi, Yilong 108n12

- Shih, Fanglong 225, 232, 241
 sibling set structures 208, 209, 220n3
 Silber, Cathy 100, 106, 107n1, 107n8
 Simmel, Georg 67
 Simoons, F.J. 123
 sincerity 168, 175n3
 single life 61–63; *see also* bachelorhood
 in Yishala
 single-lineage 112, 114, 129
 sister-brother bonds 55
 sisterhoods 29, 98, 100, 106, 107n8
 Siu, Helen 82
 Skinner, G.W. 44–45n9
 Smart, A. 78, 79, 98, 156
 social cooperation 73–4
 social life, expression of 29
 social mobility 58, 80
 social motherhood 184–7
 social networks 68, 73, 79
 social production, concept of 156
 social relations, Maoist ‘compression’ of
 158
 social reproduction, reinvention
 of 219
 social stratification 114
 social ties, impoverishment of 39–40
 social transformations 7, 87, 119, 165,
 246, 248; gendered work and
 production of kinship values 165–6,
 167–8; motherhood in late imperial
 China 194
 socialist collectivization 169
 sociocultural environment 120–1
 socioeconomic conditions, constraints
 of 59–61
 socioeconomic inequality 114
 socioeconomic transformation 59–60,
 62–3, 113–4
 Sommer, M. 4, 182
 Sousa, P. 8
 South, S. and Trent, K. 59
 Southall, A. 70
 spatial mobility 10
 spatial positioning of married women
 37–8, 41, 42–3
 spatial practices of migration 14–5
 spatial relations, space and 13, 14,
 36–9
 spatial variations of kinship 3, 14
 Sperber, Dan 117
 spiritual replacement, displacement and
 236–9
 Stacey, J. 97
 Stack, C.B. 97
 Stafford, Charles 3, 4, 7, 11, 12, 13–4,
 16, 18, 20n2, 30, 71, 72, 95, 99, 113,
 122, 137–51, 165, 214, 223, 237, xii
 state: apparatus of, expansion of 114;
 class stratification and state
 organization 113; Communist state
 116, 205; dependence between
 peasantry and 129; education systems
 204, 247; education systems, rise of
 204; family, economy and 34; and
 family, links between 247; imperial
 state 161, 163–64, 165, 173; indifference
 to infertility 195; kinship
 transformations and 18–20; and
 society, relations between 13, 219;
 state-building 4, 18–9, 129, 163; statist
 patterns of control 32, 51, 70, 115, 205
 stem families 83, 84
 Stockard, J.E. 107n8
 Stockard, J.M. 29
 Stone, L. 8, 21n5, 54, 55, 57, 58
 stove family *see* resource-sharing and
 kinship in Guangdong
 Strathern, Marilyn 97, 181, 204
 subsistence farming 50
Summer Tide (Xia Chao) 241
 surrogacy 181–2, 193, 195–6
 Szonyi, M. 4, 68
 Taiwan 20n1, 20n3; Taiwanese temple
 associations 72; *see also* disruption,
 dispersal and restoration in Luku;
 gendered work and production of
 kinship values; matriarchy
 teachers: and gender 218; as kin 216–8;
 as parents 217; role of 205
 tertiary education, honour of 213
 Thøgersen, S. 204, 210, 218–9
 Thompson, Stuart 10, 12–3, 123, 244n1
 T’ien, Ju-Káng 185, 186, 200n2
 Timpanaro, S. 36
 tourism: cultural tourism 50;
 development of 114
 township endogamy 138–9
 Tran, L. 193
 translocality 44n6
 Trawick, Margaret 55
 Tsing, Anna 21n8
 Twitchett, D. and Wechsler, H.J. 140
 university education, desire for 209–10,
 211–2
 urban life: city and hinterland,
 association between 80; city dynamics

- 67; city life, assimilation of women to 58–9, 60; conflicting images of 67–8; relatedness and urban development 87; relatedness in 68; rural-urban divide 14; urban villages 70, 72; urbanism 67
- US-China Business Council 195
- uterine families: bachelorhood in Yishala 54; kinship transformations 14; motherhood in late imperial China 181; mothers' influence and 141; resource-sharing and kinship in Guangdong 122; women's kinship in rural China 29–30, 33–6, 37
- uxorilocal marriage: bachelorhood in Yishala 52, 53, 55–7, 62, 63, 64n3; matriarchy 138–39, 151n1; women's kinship in rural China 30, 31, 37, 38, 44n7
- vice, violence and 61–2
- village customs and urban order 72–3
- village endogamy 52–4, 58–9, 62, 64n3, 64n4, 108n10
- village exogamy 33, 37, 39
- Vogel, E.F. 217
- wage-labour dependence 169–70
- Wakefield, D. 121
- Walder, A. 70, 89n2
- Waltner, A. 182, 185, 186, 191, 192
- Wank, David 89n2
- Ward, Barbara E. 5, 161
- Warouw, N. 220n5
- Watson, J.L. 1, 49, 96, 103, 112
- Watson, R.S. 7, 29, 79, 85, 96, 113, 141, 185, 186
- Watson, R.S. and Ebrey, P.B. 7, 20n2
- wealth and motherhood 184–87
- Weston, K. 9, 96, 97
- wet-rice cultivation 130
- White Terror in Luku, Incident of 225–6, 231, 232, 233–34, 235, 239, 240, 242–3, 244n9
- Whyte, Martin 146
- widowhood 33, 38, 40
- wife-dominated households 142
- Wilkerson, J.R. 169
- Wolf, A. 7
- Wolf, A. and Huang, C.-S. 7, 32, 44n2, 113
- Wolf, Margery 14, 15–16, 29, 33–4, 44n2, 53–4, 56, 95, 113, 121, 122, 141, 155, 181
- womb rental 193
- women: abduction and sale of women in marriage 33; actual power of women, discussion on 148–51; assertiveness of 137–9; asymmetric nature of women's space 37–8; city life, assimilation of women to 58–9, 60; in control 137–8; as disruptive outsiders 141; distinctive Chinese civility, women in 150; educational attainment 142–3, 145, 147; Guomindang's Woman Department 165; hybrid nature of women's labour 169; images of power and autonomy in 142; importance in domestic affairs 140–1, 149–50; impressiveness of 137–9, 146; kinship property, women and 175n2; labour in family support 34; marrying up 185; men and relationships 170; nurturing work in family and community 35; obedience and womanhood 32; political activism and role of 150–1; power and agency of 140–2, 145; power and control over 59; power of ordinary women 140–3; primacy of 139–40; property and 143; propertylessness of 155; scarcity of 58–9; spatial positioning of married women 37–8, 41, 42–3; status of women, variations in time and space 144, 146; stereotypes of 'traditional' Chinese women 137; strength in 139; toughness of 139, 145; traditional work of 157–8; womanhood and giving birth 197
- Women and the Family in Rural Taiwan* (Wolf, M.) 14, 53, 56
- women's kinship in rural China 29–45; abduction and sale of women in marriage 33; asymmetric nature of women's space 37–8; birth rate decline 35; childcare 35, 37, 42; conjugal ties 35, 44n8, 45n10; data from Shandong 31; distance, forms of marriage at 33; divorce 31–32, 33; emergent practices 39–43; family, state and economy 34; fieldwork in Chongqing and Sichuan 30–1; fixity in emergent practices 39–43; gendered nature of kinship structures 43; generational differences 40–1; Hakka women, bridal laments of 33; household registration system 34, 42;

inheritance 42; *jieshaoren* (introducers) 38–9; kinship ties, struggle for 39–40; labour of women in family support 34; legal and social ties to countryside 42; levirate, established custom of 40; lineality 29; local embeddedness 33, 36; localized kinship 29–30; marital homes, location and negotiation of 38–9; marriage and family creation 30, 31–2, 33–6, 40; *meiren* (matchmakers) 38–9; men, spatial positioning of 37–9; migration and family splits 34–5, 35–6, 41–2; mobility and continued relations 44n5; mobility and fixity in emergent practices 39–43; mobility increases 30, 31, 32, 34, 35, 36; monogamy 33; mothers and daughters, ties between 41; multiple and mobile locations, maintenance of families in 42; narrative, fixity of married woman 37–8; narrative, one woman's life and marriage 31–2; natal family support 35, 36–7; natal family ties 40–1; neolocality 44n4; *niangjia* ('mother's homes') in Shandong 36–7; nurturing work in family and community 35; obedience and womanhood 32; official kinship structure 42–3; patriliney 29, 30, 32, 33, 35, 37, 42; patrilocality 29, 30, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37, 44n4; *pojia* (marital home) 36, 37, 39; population decline 40; remarriage 31–32, 33; rupture, relatedness and 32–33; separation and break of marriage 30; small daughter-in-law marriage 32–33; social life, expression of 29; social ties, impoverishment of 39–40; spatial positioning of married women 37–8, 41, 42–3; spatialized practices 36–9; state, family and economy 34; statist patterns of control 32; uterine

families 29–30, 33–6, 37; uxori-local marriage 30, 31, 37, 38, 44n7; village exogamy 33, 37, 39; widowhood 33, 38, 40; women's space 30–32; women's strategies 33–36; Yunnan brides in Sichuan and Chongqing 33, 40 work: and relatedness in China 168; and schooling 214–5; and value formation in kinship 155; work-point system 164–5

Wu Zetian, female emperor 140

Xu, Chunfu 188

Xu, Dachun 187

Yan, Yunxiang 7, 35, 44n3, 57, 58, 71, 72, 75, 79, 98, 101, 105, 113, 116, 130, 142, 144, 155, 172, 216

Yan Zhitui 192

Yanagisako, S. and Delaney, C. 9

Yang, Lien-Sheng 140

Yang, M.C. 29

Yang, M.M.H. 7, 79

Yi marriage tradition 54

Yin, A.C. 158

yin and yang 184, 189

Yishala village 49–50

Yu, Chien 224, 225

Yunnan brides in Sichuan and Chongqing 33, 40

Zelizer, Viviana 67, 175n5

Zeng Yi, T. *et al.* 51

Zhang, Tingting 195–96

Zhang, X. and Gao, S. 231, 244n6

Zhang, X. and Wu, F. 231

Zhang, Yanxian 231, 242

Zhang, Yingjin 67

Zheng, Zhenman 4, 20n3

Zhuang, Jiankai 243

Zito, A. 220n2

Zouping county 19, 164, 206–8, 209–12, 213, 214, 216–8, 219