

UNITY AND DIVERSITY
LOCAL CULTURES AND IDENTITIES
IN CHINA

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Edited by
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Introduction: What Does the Chinese Person Identify With?

Tao Tao Liu and David Faure

Within China, there exists a patchwork of local cultures. Experience on the ground suggests that the traveller in China is more likely than not to be confronted by local opinions that emphasize the local character of traditions, even though such character is often expressed in terms that are common to many parts of China. One cannot stress too strongly how very different some local traditions can be, and yet, if one were to be asked to define the uniqueness of one local tradition as compared to another, it would not be easy to do so. Especially within what is considered to be ethnic Han China, what counts as the uniqueness of a local tradition often turns out to be, upon reflection, a variation of what in many parts of China would be considered common Chinese culture. What passes as Chinese culture, on the other hand, is manifested differently in different areas. Discovering what counts as local culture is, in some ways, similar to debating whether Han Chinese dialects should or should not count as languages. The linguist may be able to divide China into linguistic regions, but there is no ready answer to the question of whether Han Chinese dialects are or are not mere variations of a common Chinese language. The conclusion comes rather naturally that local Chinese culture is part and parcel of the overall Chinese culture: one cannot have a local identity without being part of the greater identity of being Chinese, and one cannot be Chinese and not have come from some part of China (Cohen, 1991).

REALITY AND APPEARANCE

One might suppose that for centuries some process of standardization had been at work. Some years ago, Barbara Ward suggested that the standardization of local cultures was selective. It tended to occur in those aspects of local culture that were looked upon as indicative of its 'Chineseness', just as differences would have been cultivated in other aspects that were indicative of a community's distinctiveness from its neighbours (Ward, 1965). One might ask why funerals are so similar all over China and regional cuisines so different. The answer would be that funerals have to be similar because there are standard ways to pacify the souls of the dead, while even within Guangdong province, Cantonese food has to be different from Hakka food because that is, among other features, what sets the Cantonese and Hakka apart.

Funerals and food are therefore different types of markers of traditions; they must by definition be ad hoc and widely varying in nature from place to place. There is a common belief that the unifying features of local practices are those that relate to an orthodoxy emanating from the centre. This process of what might be termed centrism at work cannot be simply explained by a division between high and low culture (sometimes referred to as gentry and peasant). As Maurice Freedman pointed out in his comments on Chinese religion, the gentry did not practise a different set of rites from the peasant. Rather, gentry and peasant both practised variants of a common corpus of rituals, and observable differences fell not between social classes but between geographic regions (Freedman, 1974). More recently, Myron Cohen has proposed a stronger variant of the argument by relating the spread of standardized rituals to a process of upward mobility: an elite identifies itself with a central body of rituals and the rest of society emulate (Cohen, 1991). This is a stronger version of the argument because while it allows for the possibility of considerable overlap between the rituals of the elite and the rest of society, it also acknowledges the possibility of local variations.

Students of Ming, Qing, and Republican history should be familiar with Cohen's upward mobility argument. The elite educates according to its own stereotypes. This it does by establishing schools, by producing tracts that distinguish the orthodox from the heterodox, and by perpetuating practices sanctioned by the state. Moreover, these measures succeed because the stereotypes of the elite are widely accepted. However, it is implied in this argument that standardization often consists of the substitution of one stereotype by another. Emily Honig's recent book on the low-status North Jiangsu people (*Subei ren*) in Shanghai describes this substitution process (Honig, 1992). Not surprisingly, the stereotype of the North Jiangsu people carries strong ethnic overtones: the North Jiangsu immigrants into Shanghai were uneducated people fitting only for the lowest rungs of the social ladder in Shanghai city, doing the most menial jobs and living in the roughest areas. However, the boundaries created by ethnicity can be crossed through the suppression of identity: the rustic North Jiangsu sojourner in Shanghai who finds himself or herself a job and adopts southern mannerism grows into a refined Shanghai citizen (*Shanghai ren*). The transformation is not complete with this description of their identity. Honig tells us that the North Jiangsu people are fond of the Huai opera: does their taste for Huai opera change when they convert into sophisticated Shanghai citizens, or does something happen to Shanghai opera when many North Jiangsu people convert? There must be a range of answers to such questions, at the root of which one can perhaps find the elements of what came to constitute Shanghai culture. Culture is like language: you speak it, you live in it, the grammarian studies its rules, but only the native speakers, like members of a club, have the prerogative to change it.

There may be a great gulf between reality and appearance, or between reality and its perceptions by different people, just as there is often a gulf between reality and aspirations. Nevertheless one of the decided twists of the mind is that it allows us to see things as we would wish them to be seen and not as they really are, and it comes from the mind's ability to believe that behind an appearance is another reality. The mind knowingly tolerates an image constructed by itself, while being fully aware that it is not the whole story. Cantonese food must *really* be different

from Hakka food (why else advertise Cantonese restaurants?) and the village ceremony performed for the poor man who died yesterday must *really* be like the emperor's (how else do we ensure that the poor man's spirit would depart?). Stereotypes come into being when there is the need to construct an appearance, and having come into being, stereotypes are objectified and are capable of competing with one another. What becomes *really* one thing or another falls within the realm of public consciousness, as every Chinese social historian writing in the West, now emulating Habermas, wants to remind us. Frederic Wakeman and Wen-hsin Ye are right to remind us recently that we do not have to be a Shanghai native in order to study Shanghai's culture, but can we extend the statement to ask if there can be a Shanghai culture to study unless some people, at least, claim to be Shanghai natives (Wakeman and Yeh, 1992). This is why History is so closely tied to the creation of stereotypes, for so often it is the public realm of the self-definition of a community, real or imaginary, that seeks to set itself apart.

It is, therefore, not in ecological differences that one seeks self-conscious stereotypes. Like beauty, self-conscious differences appear in the eyes of the beholder. They need have nothing whatsoever to do with objective differences, however defined. Instead, they become impressions that are fixated, and for this reason, have more to do with the invention of writing, that great unifier of tradition. It is perhaps no accident that Chinese cooks do not learn from written texts, but funeral services are conducted with reference to written documents. Writing, moreover, takes on meaning as when in the course of its development it is associated with religion and power. The belief in orthodoxy that is associated with Confucianism is grounded in texts, and the scholarly classes recruited into administration likewise pride themselves on mastery of texts. Textual differences create more stereotypes than theological rulings. Thus, the Daoist is distinguished from the Buddhist, the Confucian from the neo-Confucian, whatever their common grounds. History documents these sea changes of ideology that sweep China every now and then, that create and recreate traditions. New ideology, new language, new texts come together to shape new identities.

In the twentieth century, the historically conscious May Fourth Movement was a great creator of stereotypes. If its stereotypes do not look very local, that is because supporters of the movement think that they should not be. The May Fourth Movement, in the eyes of its supporters, was a national movement that transcended local interests. In this respect, it was no different from earlier movements that had radiated from the centre. Local cultures found their place only within a unified Chinese culture. However, when the central government was strong, this would have been a view that fitted in closely with centrism. In times when the central government was weak, such as during the Warlord era in which the May Fourth Movement unfolded, a unified Chinese culture was that final article of faith required by the nationalism that was felt by members of the educated elite.

CONSTRUCTING LOCAL CULTURES

Describing culture from the outside is different from defining it from within. From the outsider's standpoint, culture is a part of other people's identity, to which

objective consistency must be applied as the most important criterion. But the right and ability to define culture is the prerogative of the insider, who may not hold to objective consistency. The historian looking in from the outside should respect the insider's rights, but in appealing to History, outsider and insider appeal to the same objectivity. Positing a difference between the insider and the outsider suggests that local cultures are constructs in the articulation of identities, but History is common ground.

This book brings together eleven papers that attempt to describe the processes in which the construction of local culture might be related to the quest for identity. Two of them have been written by insiders: Xiong Yuezhi writes about Shanghai from inside Shanghai and Helen Siu, although no longer resident in Hong Kong, writes about her own generation at a time when she herself lived there. However, no one writing about identity stands apart from the myth-making that cultural processes entail. The authors of the other nine papers in this book cannot claim any affiliation with the subjects they deal with, but whether or not wittingly, they must necessarily contribute to the redefinition of culture and identity that is undertaken each time the subject is expressed in words. Nonetheless, none of the eleven papers in this book claims the insider's licence to define local culture. These papers observe, summarize and comment, but they do so only by attempting to capture the insider's point of view.

One of the themes that will emerge from the papers in this book is the importance of local religious expression in the formulation of local identities. The presence of local deities in China is, of course, as well-known as the centrality of these deities in the organization of common-origin networks of relationships (Jordan, 1972; Weller, 1987; Hansen, 1990; Feuchtwang, 1992; Dean, 1993). An expression of the integration of state and local interests by the absorption of local deities into the state pantheon has also become a common theme in the current literature. In her chapter, however, Susanna Thornton takes the argument further in that she demonstrates how religious integration might cover contested grounds. In the Ming and Qing dynasties, the local people of Hangzhou had taken to the temple on the Wu Hill devoted to the local *chenghuang* god. The imperial government in the fifteenth century appropriated the site by canonizing a man called Zhou Xin, who had in his life been a provincial commissioner in Zhejiang, thus displacing the local *chenghuang* god's prominence. This superimposed a provincial cult in the place of a local one, to the dissatisfaction of the local people who felt that the interest of the prefecture and city was put in second place, even though they were actually also inhabitants of the province, and Hangzhou was the capital of the province. In the eighteenth century, a local family managed to intrigue its way into attaching its own ancestral shrine to Wu Hill. In reaction, the salt merchants of the city, through subscription, built remodelled temple to house the spirit tablets of prefectural, county and city gods, which successfully re-focused the city god cult on the hill. One sees in the account of these events local interests tugging in a different direction from the state interest, and the desires of officialdom supported not by the urban population of Hangzhou but the Zhejiang merchants resident in Hangzhou.

One would have to be able to characterize the whole of Chinese society in terms of many Hangzhous in order to appreciate the ways in which local identities

were enmeshed within bureaucratic practices. However, as demonstrated in the chapters by David Faure and May-bo Ching, the historical evolution of the Chinese state has more to do with the adoption into local practice of language and rituals which were perpetrated by the state.

Faure's chapter on Ming dynasty Guangdong describes the processes in the sixteenth century by which a literati culture came into prominence in Guangdong. Focusing on the Pearl River delta, this chapter argues that the integration of society into the empire had taken place largely in the sixteenth century. The implementation of household registration and local people's successes at the imperial examinations in the fifteenth century provided the background. However, the standardization of rituals was very much an issue that appeared from the end of that century and reached into the sixteenth. Ritual, defined for the most part by Zhu Xi's *Family Rituals*, was standardized, along with an emphasis on the construction of ancestral halls for ceremonial activities within the lineage (Faure, 1989; Liu, 1990; Ebrey, 1991). The attachment to a wider culture through attaching oneself to ancestors and ancestral institutions bridged identification with the state with identification with the home village. This made possible the blurring of cultural boundaries, as a result of which groups of people, who might have set themselves apart for ethnic reasons, redefined their ethnic status. This is the context in which Myron Cohen's discussion of social mobility in the creation of an identity makes ample sense. Indeed, one could not have been Chinese without being also a member of some part of the Chinese empire, and one could not be a member of a part of the Chinese empire without being Chinese.

Chapter three by May-bo Ching remains in Guangdong to examine late Qing and twentieth century assertion of local identity. In different contexts Duara (1988) and Siu (1989) have argued for recognizing the crucial role of the struggle for legitimacy between the village leadership and the state in Republican China. May-bo Ching extends the argument and relates the making of a self-conscious Guangdong culture precisely to the interaction of the Guangdong provincial leadership and the Chinese state. In the early decades of the nineteenth century, there was a high-culture attempt to put Guangdong on the map of classical pursuits with the creation of the Xuehaitang Academy of classical studies. This movement developed side by side with, but separately from, the low culture revelry in adapting Classical Chinese to Cantonese songs and other attempts to establish Cantonese as a written language, this last endeavour being scuppered by the rising tide of Standard Chinese all over China. From the end of the Qing dynasty, it was elections to the local assemblies and the involvement of Guangdong Hakka people in the power hierarchy not only of Guangdong but also of the national government that set the agenda for re-defining what might be considered a Guangdong culture. Whereas in Guangzhou, the view of the early 1800s would have considered the popular practices of the Hakka and Chaozhou subordinate to those of the Cantonese, by the 1940s, the various dialect groups of Guangdong enjoyed an equal status, denied only to the minorities, such as the Yao. The central issue that gave Guangdong an identity had changed. Whereas in the early 1800s it used to be a matter of whether Guangdong had a culture which might be acceptable as high culture, by 1940 what Guangdong people were practising had become recognizable as their 'culture'.

The conclusion from the chapters by Thornton, Faure and Ching may, therefore, be stated differently for contexts beyond Guangdong; where religion was central to the local rituals, the internalization of state interests became coterminous with the integration of local and state religions. The fully integrated local culture disappears, and in its place is provincial identity.

If we juxtapose the maintenance of a religious system independent from the state's with the literati's experience of upward mobility and willingness to be absorbed into the state structure, we might argue that they represented opposing trends in the character of the Chinese state and its relationship to the provinces. This combination of circumstances may be found in those areas of China that in the twentieth century are looked upon as being inhabited by a large number of 'minorities', notably in Xinjiang, and also among the Yao or the Miao in the south (Gladney, 1991; Lemoine, 1991). Like Guangdong, the idea of the province, as an administrative unit of the Chinese empire or as a geographical unit, has been externally imposed on such areas. However, whereas in Guangdong, the Ming and the Qing dynasties had paved the way for isolated groups to convert to Han culture before they became effective components of the province, this was not the case in every region. In Xinjiang, Laura Newby's chapter argues, the Qing conquest of the mid-eighteenth century led ultimately to the creation of an administrative and geographic unit, defined by the regional government. But, it points out, the Qing government's involvement also assisted the spread of Islam. Islam not only played an important role in forging a sense of unity, however tentative, among the various Turkish peoples, it also at times served as a rallying force against the centralized state.

A discussion of the role of religion in local culture may also be found developed in Nicholas Tapp's chapter on the Hmong of Sichuan Province. Tapp questions the use of the word 'sinicization'. He agrees that the spread of elite values might be explained, but wonders how one might explain the spread of 'non-elite' values in China. He does not offer a direct answer for that, but his chapter describes the construction of history through a folklore about kings and battles that is related to place names, and that may, in turn, be related to geomancy, a body of knowledge that the Hmong believe is indigenous to their culture. Religion in this mould has to be broadly defined to include not only ghosts and deities but also the belief in the combination of history and geography. Ancestors come from somewhere: as told by the Hmong, from the Han-dominated areas of Hunan and Hubei provinces, while the unfolding of their history produces the models for the structuring of the state as well as the counter-models for the structuring of their own ethnic character. The stories of the 'kings who fly without their heads', told by the Hmong, capture this unfolding of history. They tell at once of the authority of the emperor as well as the authority of their private knowledge, the patriarchal character of politics as well as the interventionist role of mother, and they seem to cut across the boundary of the elite and the popular. Local culture within the imperial regime rests ultimately on a belief in a common origin. One might say that the belief in a common origin is in effect an expression of a common experience in which state-making had occupied a dominant part. As Tapp indicates, the experience of the Hmong would have been replicated time and again in many parts of Han China. What had made Han China Han is probably less the growth of an elite than the spread of an elite culture among elite and non-elite alike.

METROPOLIS AND MODERNITY: SHANGHAI AND BEYOND

A focus on elite culture in the definition of a regional identity raises questions on how that culture had spread across China. One thinks of the history of printing, of popular entertainment, of the demonstration of the imperial presence in the provinces, of the transformation of rituals and of the participation of the provincial elite in state affairs. It should come as no surprise therefore, that the social and political upheaval from the late nineteenth century that reduced the ability of the state to intervene in provincial affairs, that introduced the language of republicanism into China, and that established a strong urban-based entertainment and publishing industry in Shanghai which made capital of images of a new and modernizing China, should have ushered in changes in the sense of the local identity. Prior to the emergence of Shanghai, there had not been a Chinese city that gave its name to a local culture. After Shanghai, no city in China is prominent unless it can give its name to some such culture. The chapters on Shanghai in this book will not be describing once again the prosperity of that city and the prominence it reached from the 1860s to the 1940s. Shanghai's rapid growth and prosperity is a well-documented subject (Zhang, 1990; Wei, 1987). The three chapters on Shanghai in this book, by Xiong Yuezhi, Catherine V. Yeh and Mau-sang Ng, describe elements of the cultural transformation that left their marks on the Chinese regional identity. They are supplemented by a chapter on twentieth-century 'native soil' literature by Tao Tao Liu, that extended well beyond Shanghai.

Xiong Yuezhi's chapter in this book argues that Shanghai derived its character from descriptions given it by the popular press, in particular, newspapers and magazines. Xiong argues that like Shanghai, the Shanghainese is a modern creation. So modern, in fact, it is not clear at what point the Shanghainese themselves caught up with the idea that they were Shanghainese rather than sojourners from other areas that had moved into Shanghai. In other words, Shanghai gained an image within the national culture before the Shanghainese identity took root. Within the national culture, which was partly shaped by the newspapers and magazines that were published in Shanghai, Shanghai was a symbol of wealth and modernity: Xiong cites as examples of Shanghai's modernity street lamps and tap water. However, the self-conscious Shanghainese came to the fore only in the 1890s and early 1900s when, in popular protest movements, participants identified themselves as 'Shanghai gentry and merchants'. Xiong also feels that in the decades to follow, the Shanghai identity was more clearly recognized by people outside Shanghai than amongst the Shanghainese. The 'internal view' of Shanghai would have recognized differences of origin among native Shanghainese, even as the 'external image' of the Shanghai identity gained strength.¹

The distinction between an 'external' and an 'internal' image of Shanghai, as suggested by Xiong, himself a Shanghainese, dovetails closely with a sizable Western literature that has been growing in recent years on the history of that remarkable city. In a sense, it also repeats the generalization that would have emerged from an examination of the growth of provincial identity in the imperial period, that is, that the local identity that went beyond immediate kin and village was shaped less by the pooling of culture among neighbouring communities than by the definition of

the state. It underscores equally the crucial role of the written word in this process. The provincial identity of imperial China had been propagated by a bureaucratic regime that could rely on an orthodox teaching internalized by its population; the republican regime commanded no central bureaucracy and in its political propaganda faced the concerted subversion of the popular press. Until 1927, Republican Shanghai did not project the image of an easy-to-govern part of China. It was not bureaucratic Beijing, but vibrant Shanghai, that led China's social and political movements. The background for this position was paved in the 1880s, as the Shanghai elite reached out beyond Shanghai in its donations towards the Shanxi famine (Rankin, 1986), in the early 1900s, when with the late Qing reforms the Shanghai City Council became a recognized political force that might represent local interests (Elvin, 1974), and in the 1910s and 1920s, when the Shanghai bourgeoisie might be said to have come into its own (Bergere, 1986). This bourgeoisie, however, did not gain sufficient strength to stand up to the authority of a national government backed by a well-controlled party. The Shanghai Municipal Government in the 1930s, however full of initiative, did not succeed in divorcing itself from the image that it was an agent of the central government. Henriot's conclusion is instructive: 'The mayors were no more than higher civil servants of the state . . . No example has been found . . . of any conflict between them and the national government, whose instructions they followed to the letter' (Henriot, 1993: 232-3). The 'Shanghainese' of the 1930s and beyond was the hollow cultural shell of an urban elite's unsuccessful bid for political power.

The urban identity of the Republican elite was, therefore the identity of dissipation, resignation, and nostalgia. This theme is brought out in the chapters by Catherine V. Yeh, Mau-sang Ng and Tao Tao Liu. Yeh examines a much neglected source for the cultural history of Shanghai, handbooks used by the clientele of courtesan houses that enjoyed their heyday from the last decades of the nineteenth century to the 1920s. As handbooks, these texts publicize the pleasure of Shanghai, but it is their subtexts that Yeh stresses: Wang Tao in the 1860s compared the helplessness of members of the literati like himself to the fate of courtesans, Hu Yuan wrote in the 1880s as the Shanghai sojourner who needed the courtesan house as a diversion from the feverish excitement of the city; and Li Boyuan, describing the courtesans in matter-of-fact manner as only a novelist would, seems in effect to be saying that all of Shanghai could have been one with the courtesan, that making a living is what it is, devoid of respectability or taboo.

The reality of that world, the make-belief world of courtesans, actresses and their clients, is, according to Mau-sang Ng, the world of *qing* and *yi*. Hard to translate like most such evocative words, *qing* is emotion-cum-compassion-cum-romance and *yi* the sort of righteousness that suggests that friends should stand by friends. The world of Shanghai fiction in the early twentieth century dealt with romances, with whether actresses should marry one or another man for whatever reason, and why they might shrink from it in the name of *qing* or *yi*. But, this is Ng's question insofar as it relates to the question of an urban identity: why should the Shanghai reading public have been interested in this literature? Why should they have wanted to read about actresses as ordinary women confronted by decisions that were to change the course of their lives? And the answer, according to Ng, lay

in the large number of women stranded in this strange city of Shanghai. To them, what was appealing was not the May Fourth cry for liberation in the name of Noraism embedded in Ibsen's *A Doll House*, but the practical matter of finding a home. For them, there was no home. Not in Shanghai, and not in the villages they had come from, socially destroyed as they were by the occupations they held in Shanghai. Thus, *qing* and *yi*, the cornerstones of solidarity in traditional thought, would have appeared appealing. Shanghai was a modernizing city, no doubt, but it was precisely in this modernizing that traditionalism was well entrenched.

One can see why, therefore, in the literary world produced by the May Fourth, as Tao Tao Liu reminds us in her chapter, the repudiation of traditionalism was not the repudiation of centrism. For the likes of Lu Xun, and later Lao She and even Shen Congwen, regional identity was not just local identity; it was the backdrop to a personal search to create an identity in the new Republican state for the new literary elite, something to take the place of the old Chinese cultural identity, that operated above provincial identities, that Confucianism had etched out and conferred upon the Chinese literati (Levenson, 1967). This was a process of rejecting the past that had failed them in the modern world, while the countryside was still locked in the anachronistic past.

The new internationalism brought awareness of foreign literary fashions such as regional literature: the world of Thomas Hardy and William Faulkner. Their drive to understand the passion for the native soil was imitated by Chinese writers, who also longed for China, as China, to be able to stand up to the world. They lived as *émigrés* in the cities, self-contained worlds that were set apart from the traditionalism of the surrounding countryside (Lee, 1990). Their own image of the countryside, as inferior to the new cities, prevented them from getting close enough to the people there to articulate a sense of local identity (Siu, 1990). Lao She was possibly the most interesting of the writers of regional literature: a Manchu by birth, he had grown up and lived among the poor of the city, the world of the little men, who saw nothing of the Beijing of the Republican literati, while he heralded the success of the Beijing dialect in *baihua* literature.

WHITHER CHINA?

Post-Second World War politics cast a new character for local culture in China. Republican centrism found itself on Taiwan, Hong Kong substituted for Shanghai as the beacon for modernization as well as the wide road towards moral corruption, and the People's Republic contributed towards an ideal of equality and internationalism, at least in the 1950s and early 1960s, before Cultural Revolution fervour turned into cynicism. In different ways, local identities in these different places picked up from when they left off in pre-war days, but they were twisted and turned in new and unexpected directions.

Tao Tao Liu's chapter strides the pre-war and post-war periods to bring out the continuities and new starts. There might be continuities in the 1950s and 60s, but localism in Taiwan literature from the 1970s emphasized either the predicament of the mainlander migrated to Taiwan since 1949 or the 'native soil' of the small

Taiwan towns and villages. On the mainland, the 'native soil' literature that grew from the 1980s reflected on the peasantry, but did not so much glorify the peasant, as the Party literature would have done in Maoist days, as to expose the reality of life under the political regime. In the process, the mainland writer had had to relearn the ways and means of rural society. When Li Rui (sent down to the countryside as a city youth in the Cultural Revolution) wrote in the 1980s about the ghost-marriage of the young village woman, who in the fashion of a good citizen, was drowned as she tried to hold back flood-water with her own body, local custom was not introduced into his writing as a sign of protest, but as a sign of realism. On both the mainland and Taiwan, a function filled by local literature was to provide the roots for which the young searched. Society had come a long way from the time within the imperial regime when the elite imitated the centre by redefining precisely those quaint rural practices so that they might appear more orthodox.

Questions of the continuation of tradition are raised once again in Stephan Feuchtwang's chapter. In exploring the connection between local religion and village identity, now in the 1980s, Feuchtwang shows that having a ready cultural repertoire to fall back on makes the village population sharply different from the urban population.² Nevertheless, it does not always do so, and it does not always do it in the same way. In the first of Feuchtwang's three case studies, the village of Meifa in southern Fujian Province revived traditional religion and put at its heart the territorial organization to which it had been accustomed. However, in the village of Jinxing in southern Jiangsu Province, traditional communal rituals had not been restored. In the third example, Cuihu village in northern Yunnan Province, the revival of communal rituals had been selective: women's temple gatherings are now held but communal rituals in which the men used to dominate have lapsed. Feuchtwang accounts for the difference between Meifa and Jinxing in relation to the ability of the village government to satisfy social needs. Where the village community, such as Jinxing, has been able to draw from its industrial profit to provide village infrastructure and social welfare, there has been little need to turn to the temple networks for organization. Cuihu is a difficult case to explain. Within Cuihu, the domestic units have expanded: 'Almost every family has extended, renewed or built new houses,' according to Feuchtwang, and yet no clear territorial boundaries had emerged. It might be expected to have followed the path of the weak-village government model of Meifa, but the strength of the family possibly undermined the need for community organization around temple networks.

It should by now be clear that the quest for status is never very far from the search for psychological reassurance in this construction of local identity, which is often referred to as 'discovery'. Both could have been strung together with the same political thread. The quest for identity is a quest for local identity, and that is a quest for power; it makes sense to a wide sector of any population because the concept of power itself, being malleable, could be variously shaped. The colonial situation wherein a class of people might be born and raised to maturity, be given recognizable status and allowed to compete, would be an ideal laboratory to see the concept evolve. The slight complication in the case of Hong Kong derives from the fact that the majority of the population takes it for granted that they are Chinese.

Helen Siu's contribution to this volume, therefore, begins with the question that begs the question: Is there a Hong Kong identity?

In her chapter, Siu finds expression of the Hong Kong identity only in two circumstances: among a rather small body of people educated in Hong Kong who by the 1980s were located in highly responsible positions, and in the context of the interflow of people between Hong Kong and China. The former was elite. It was not the only elite in Hong Kong, but it was the elite that spoke a common language that had been introduced through common education. The latter was popular, and it was popular not only because it kept alive an image that was widely perceived, but also because that was an image introduced and maintained by the media. Visible, vocal, and self-confident, according to Siu, the elite identifies Hong Kong's achievement as its own. The popular view distinguishes the indigenous Hong Konger from the new immigrant, associated with the image of the country bumpkin and the maladjusted. No doubt a class distinction comes into the perception, for in every generation the new comer has filled the bottom rung of the job ladder, vacated by the upward mobility of the previous generation of new comers. A phenomenon that Shanghai had witnessed in the treatment of its Northern Jiangsu people, the marginalization of the new-comer must be now common practice in those few Chinese cities, including Beijing and Guangzhou, that are flooded annually with new immigrants moving in from the countryside. The impact of the colonization of Hong Kong, in the long term, will only be detectable in the safe haven it had provided for an elite to mature. And as a Hong Konger said to Siu, when the safe haven is withdrawn as Hong Kong returns to China, they expect to find themselves foreigners in their own country.

The formula for the return of Hong Kong to China has been promised as 'one country — two systems.' The reality of Chinese local identity is not that there are only two systems, but that there are many, and that if they have not been necessarily created by the state, they have at least responded to its policies.

Questions of identity are complex; layer upon layer of meaning shrouds identity and identities. Past experience, like the human body, wastes first to its bones, and, when the skeleton finally collapses, disappears beneath the paraphernalia of death buried with it in the grave. Ultimately, local identity and the Chinese state meet in the realm of religion, where by an act of faith, history may be revived like the spirit from the grave. Worshippers offer it incense, meat, and wine, knowing fully well that only the incense goes towards heaven, that little wine is ever used in libation, and that the meat is to be consumed by themselves.

NOTES

1. Xiong's conclusion would agree well with Bryna Goodman's observation after studying statements issued by Shanghai native-place organizations in the 1920s. See Bryna Goodman (1992: 101).
2. Numerous studies in recent years have supported this position. Feuchtwang's observations here may be compared with Siu (1990), Wang (1991) and Dean (1993).

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1 Provinces, City Gods and Salt Merchants: Provincial Identity in Ming and Qing Dynasty Hangzhou

Susanna Thornton

This paper examines some of the ways in which the people of Hangzhou in the Ming and Qing dynasties identified with their city. Through a study of the patronage of the main city god (*chenghuang*) temple in Hangzhou during the Ming and Qing dynasties, the paper shows that the Hangzhou people were in the Ming dynasty unwilling to identify with Zhejiang Province, and that it was only in a group of merchants in the Qing dynasty that enthusiastic support for the idea of the province was found.

CHENGHUANG — THE CITY GOD

The word '*chenghuang*' is usually translated as 'the city god', or 'the god of ramparts and ditches'.¹ The god was thought to inhabit the '*cheng*' and the '*huang*', that is, the 'walls' (or ramparts) and the 'ditches' of a Chinese walled city or town.

The city god was looked to for protection of the city from spiritual enemies and bad influences, but the god could also inflict penalties on the city if its people misbehaved. Visitors to the city god temple would pray to the god for rain, for victory over enemies, for cessation of epidemics, and so on; his help was sought in all sorts of cases of public and private misfortune pertaining to the locality. He was seen as the spiritual counterpart of the magistrate, prefect, or governor. The magistrate acted as the protector and regulator of the city in the real world, and the city god in the underworld.

City gods are territorial gods, and as such are part of a wider pantheon of gods of regions. In his article 'The city god cults of Tang and Sung China', David Johnson has argued that the idea of a city god grew out of beliefs in a more ancient territorial spirit, the *she*, the god of the soil.² Johnson documents the first scattered appearances of temples to city god spirits from the mid-Tang dynasty (sixth century AD), when major political, economic and social developments brought about the emergence of a distinct new urban culture. By the middle of the eighth century, the city had become a distinct and special category of territorial space and thus needed a special category of god to protect it. From then on to the end of the Qing dynasty, city god shrines remained important features of the city's landscape.

By the Ming dynasty, the cult of the city god had grown in sophistication, so that it seems each administrative jurisdiction might be equipped with its own tutelary

deity. This meant that in a city such as Hangzhou, which in the Ming dynasty served as the seat of government of four administrative jurisdictions — Renhe county, Qiantang county, Hangzhou prefecture and Zhejiang province — at least four individual city gods might exist, each to look after his particular area. Each would have to be appropriately housed in a shrine or temple, which would stand as the ritual focus point of the geographical area in question.

Because of their strong territorial connections, these kinds of temples constitute a fascinating arena in which to observe attitudes to regional identity in the Ming and Qing dynasties.

CITY AND HINTERLAND: HANGZHOU AND ZHEJIANG

China's modern administrative division into provinces (*sheng*) began its development in the thirteenth century, when the Yuan dynasty set up 'branch secretariats' (*xingsheng*). Hangzhou in Yuan times was the administrative centre of Jiang Zhe Branch Secretariat, which stretched from Yangzhou in the north down through what is now Fujian Province. The Ming dynasty brought to maturity the Yuan dynasty system, and stabilized most of the provinces of China proper in their modern forms. Ming dynasty Zhejiang Province existed across the same territory as modern Zhejiang, administered as in the Yuan dynasty, from Hangzhou. The Qing dynasty subsequently perpetuated the same scheme.

Prior to the Ming dynasty, however, the area now known as Zhejiang Province had been governed as part of various broad regional administrations, of which the seats were at various sites other than Hangzhou.

Suzhou was the key regional centre in the Spring and Autumn period, as the capital of the state of Wu. While Wu territory lay across the lands north of Hangzhou Bay up the Yangzi river, the southern portion of present-day Zhejiang was ruled as the Yue state, with its capital at modern-day Shaoxing.

Suzhou retained its regional preeminence in the Qin empire, when it was the administrative centre of Kuaiji Commandery. The commandery included part of what is now Anhui province, and excluded the Wenzhou area in the south of present-day Zhejiang, which was governed as East Min Central Commandery (*Mindong zhongjun*).

Under the Han, the territory that is now Zhejiang was part of the Yangzhou Region, which stretched as far west as modern Nanchang and from Yangzhou in the north to Xiamen in the south. Kuaiji Commandery, that encompassed the territory of modern Zhejiang, embraced the whole central China coastal strip from Yangzhou to Xiamen. The administrative centre of the commandery was again Suzhou. Later, the southern half of the commandery was split off and administered from Shaoxing.

In the Three Kingdoms period, modern-day Zhejiang belonged to the Kingdom of Wu, of which the territory covered the whole of south east China, and even included a piece of what is now Vietnam. The capital of the Wu state was Yangzhou.

It was in the Sui dynasty that Hangzhou for the first time became an administrative seat, when Yuhang Commandery was set up based at Hangzhou.

The territory of the commandery stretched north of the Zhe River; to the south and over to modern Ningbo was Kuaiji Commandery, based on modern Shaoxing.

In the Tang dynasty, Hangzhou retained its status as an administrative centre, as the capital of Hangzhou Prefecture, which stretched westwards from the city into the lands north of the Zhe River. It was however, only a minor centre in the area known as Jiangnan East Circuit, which stretched from Yangzhou down through modern day Zhejiang and Fujian provinces.

Hangzhou became for the first time the centre of a higher-level regional administration in the Five Dynasties period (the tenth century), when it was made the capital of the Wu-Yue Kingdom. The territory of the state consisted of what is now southern Jiangsu and northern Zhejiang Provinces.

Hangzhou's status as a regional administrative centre was retained in the Northern Song dynasty, when it was the seat of Liang Zhe Circuit, which stretched from Yangzhou down to Wenzhou. In the Southern Song Hangzhou rose to national preeminence as the capital of China.

In the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties, Hangzhou served as the regional capital, in the Yuan as 'branch secretariat' seat for an area that is now divided into Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Fujian provinces, and then in the Ming dynasty, for an area almost identical to modern day Zhejiang Province.

A CITY GOD'S SEAT: HANGZHOU'S WU HILL

The main city god temple in Hangzhou had been situated since the Song dynasty on Wu Hill, a rocky landmass close to the heart of the city. Two aspects of Wu Hill made it an ideal site for a temple to a territorial deity.

Firstly, the name 'Wu' made Wu Hill a landmark in a broadly defined regional cultural geography, as the name echoed ancient states of south east China's past, as outlined above.³

Secondly, Wu Hill was a unique spot in the city of Hangzhou in that it was the place where its site was important to the people and that they were defined by their attachment to a geographical area. Other sites in Hangzhou were gathering places for groups of people defined by class or by particular religious persuasion. For example, the shrines to paragons of Confucian virtue and academia that graced Solitary Hill (Gu Shan) were the cultured precinct of the scholar elite, while the great monasteries of Tianzhu and Lingyin were famous Buddhist sites to which flocked tourists and pilgrims from far and wide. Yue Fei's Tomb, meanwhile, the shrine to the betrayed martyr who fought for the cause of the Song dynasty against the northern invaders, was visited by people united by emotions of loyalty to a greater national identity.

Wu Hill, in contrast to all these, was a place that was important to a group of people defined by region, and all classes of locals would go there regularly, from the local gentry-scholar elite to the riff-raff of the city's brothels.

The educated classes had long enjoyed Wu Hill as a place of rest and relaxation, and years of association with poets and scholars cumulatively enriched its cultural reputation. The rich built walled gardens and estates there.⁴

All manner of local people were attracted to Wu Hill by the chapels and shrines of every sort that had long been a feature of the hill.⁵ By the Ming dynasty there were ‘dozens of temples arranged like fish-scales.’⁶ Drama performances at the temples attracted a broad spectrum of local people,⁷ and visitors to the shrines even included the local prostitutes: an annual festival at the Hall of the Ancestor of Thunder is described as follows:

The worshippers burning incense from the whole town are very many. At the base of the hill there are two lanes, called, ‘The Ding Residence Lane’ and ‘Fifteen Strides Lane’. In those places are gathered many brothels. At many of these, ‘Thunder Feasts’ are eaten, and since it is not far away, the girls take their clients up the hill, and burn incense. This is the rowdiest part of the whole celebration.⁸

Tea-houses and shops sprang up around the temples, to cater to the tastes of all the varied customers. The nineteenth-century text *Hangsu yifeng (Traditions and Customs of Hangzhou)* by Fan Zushu describes how the tea-houses on Wu Hill had developed by the 1800s:

The tea-houses on Wu Hill face directly over the Qiantang River. The shrines of each temple at the back overlook the waters of the lake. In whichever direction one looks, a marvellous view extends endlessly. After Great Snow, some people go to sip tea in the tea-houses; others drink wine in the temples.⁹

Fan Zushu gives a vivid impression of the colourful temples and shops of the hill in the nineteenth century:

The walls of these buildings [‘a large number of tea-houses’ set up by ‘the ordinary people’] are a dazzle of bright colour, the carved beams and patterned wood, inscribed votive tablets, pairs of scrolls and single scrolls and pictures are all of extreme elegance. All kinds of lanterns are hung up, there are porcelain objects on the sills of the glass windows. Everything is beautifully fine and delicate. In addition, there are shops where pottery and china are made to order, where the fittings are likewise extremely bright and new.

The best tea is ‘*Mushan*’, the most famous pastries are ‘leaf-cloak rain-clothes’,¹⁰ and there are also melon seeds, peanuts, pickled plums, dried meats and dried *doufu*. Other things like onion cakes and chicken beans are added to the goods for sale as they each come into season.

As for other establishments, there are sweet-noodle restaurants and wine-shops, but engravers of pictures and texts, sellers of written materials and paintings, and fortune-tellers are the most numerous.

There are also people who use hot wax to dye textiles, and create designs of people, birds, animals, insects, reptiles, fruits and flowers and grasses, all of them marvellous likenesses. And indeed this is only one of the clever things one sees.

All the various kinds of hawkers who lay out for sale all sorts of foreign mirrors and foreign pictures, sometimes gather in great numbers and sometimes disperse. As a rule, they all converge here at the time of the New Year festival.¹¹

People who wanted medical facilities could call in at temple clinics. A temple at the back of the City God Temple acted as clinic and dispensary. Fan Zushu describes the establishment as follows:

The Jiren Palace is the Hall of the Daoist Patriarch Lu on Wu Hill.¹² It also has the name, ‘The Pavilion of the Golden Dragon.’¹³ Every day, two famous medical doctors and two famous surgeons are invited. They serve for a five-day period, after which they are rotated off duty, and the next five day period begins. They arrive in the early morning, and go away in the afternoon. Holding their tallies at the gate, the people with illnesses enter the hall to be examined. Pills, medicinal powders, ointments, drugs and other medicines are dispensed according to prescriptions. My late father Mr Yu Gu was of a philanthropic nature, and carried out medical examinations in the hall for over twenty years.¹⁴

Wu Hill was clearly heavily patronized by the Hangzhou people as a multi-faceted recreation ground. All kinds and classes of locals enjoyed the varied activities to be experienced there.

That the site was of essentially *local* importance is emphasized by the fact that tourists who came to Hangzhou visited other places that had wider fame — the sites of West Lake made famous by poets, and the glories of the monasteries of the city that people called ‘the Buddha-land of the South East’. Wu Hill was not high on a China-wide tourist’s itinerary, but was important to the locals.

Just how important the hill was to the people of Hangzhou can be seen in the attitude to the hill of the writers of local gazetteers. The hill actually lies in the part of the city that belongs to the county of Qiantang. The 1609 *Gazetteer to Qiantang County* (*Qiantang xianzhi*) makes Wu Hill its first entry in its section on ‘Mountains and Water.’¹⁵ Considering that Wu Hill is the only peak within the city walls, perhaps this fact is not in itself necessarily significant. But the attitude of the Renhe county gazetteer author is telling. Renhe county covers the northern parts of the city, suburbs and the countryside beyond. Wu Hill is not a part of Renhe county. However, the compiler of the 1549 Renhe gazetteer included Wu Hill in the gazetteer. He strove to justify this inclusion in the following terms:

All the hills below Wu Hill, whether they are contiguous or stand separately, are within the boundaries of Qiantang county. But surely it is known that as soon as one lifts one’s eyes, the hills are there, massed and green, before one. They are the ‘eyebrows and eyes’ of Renhe.¹⁶

It is no wonder that at this place we find a city god temple. Wu Hill city god temple had stood there since the Song dynasty.

EARLY HISTORY OF THE CITY GOD TEMPLES OF HANGZHOU

The early history of the cult of city god in Hangzhou is somewhat sketchy. A city god temple was in existence in Hangzhou in the Song dynasty: the 1609 *Gazetteer to Qiantang County* says that ‘before the Song, the city god temple was on Phoenix (Fenghuang) Hill.’¹⁷ That site lies to the south of the present site, in a place that was used by the Southern Song court as the imperial palace, and was inside the city walls until the end of the Yuan dynasty.¹⁸

The temple moved to its present site on Wu Hill just after the move of the imperial court to Hangzhou in 1139, where it took up residence on Phoenix (Fenghuang) Hill.¹⁹ The installation of the imperial court apparatus there appears to have caused it to be necessary for the local city god temple to be relocated.

The first contemporary evidence of the city god temple comes from a thirteenth-century text: the *Gazetteer to the Prefecture of Lin’an of the Shunyao Period* lists a city god temple as being in existence among other buildings on Wu Hill.²⁰ There is little information as to the nature of the spirit that was worshipped in the early days of the city god temple. The only information we have is in the writing of the eighteenth century Zhejiang provincial governor Li Wei, who says that the Song temple was built ‘in order to pray for the silk worms, the grain crop, and for rain or for fine weather’.

None of these sources specifies whether the temple was thought to exist for the benefit of the city alone, or whether it was a representative institution for a broader geographical area. Up until the Ming, the city god deity that was worshipped there belonged simply to Hangzhou, without further definition. In later texts, regional jurisdictions would be applied to references to the city god, but in these earlier texts, the characters *chenghuang* are not further defined. No one had yet thought it necessary to distinguish whether a city god might be representative of Hangzhou specifically as a provincial or prefectural seat. The Hangzhou people made their offerings to *chenghuang* in this way for two hundred and fifty years.

But, in the early Ming dynasty, things changed.

MING DYNASTY INSTALLATION OF ZHOU XIN AND THE IMPERIAL PROMOTION OF REGIONAL IDENTITY

In about 1425, a crowd that had gathered at the Wu Hill city god temple witnessed a dramatic event. Lang Ying wrote down in 1520 a description of the scene that his mother had described to him:

My deceased mother once related that as children, my grandparents had seen the following: on the birthday of the city god spirit, a Daoist priest who had been possessed by a spirit, and was speaking to the crowd as a spirit medium, said, ‘I am not the old spirit. I am the Surveillance Commissioner of the province, Zhou Xin. My birthday is the 17th day of the fifth month, the day on which the emperor commanded me, because of my upright steadfastness, once again to watch over the city of Hangzhou.’²¹

At the time, a separate statue of his image was carved, and the old spirit's image was moved to a place in Bao'an district in Qiantang. That place is still today called 'Little City God Temple.'²²

This was clearly a dramatic event, and it was, as we shall see, still a subject of discussion three hundred years later.

To understand what was happening, the first question is to establish who Zhou Xin was.

Zhou was a native of Nanhai county in Guangdong Province, who in the Yongle reign period (1403–1425), became a Censor at court, and then took up the post of Provincial Surveillance Commissioner in Zhejiang. He was most rigorous in his pursuit of justice, and famous for his incorruptibility. His biography says that he did not fear to target the powerful in his disclosure of wrongdoing, and that he often brought order to the cases of the spirits of those who had suffered wrongs that had not been righted. His famous nickname was 'cold-face winter-steel', and his ferocity made him a bogey-man figure whose very name would frighten children.²³ Zhou Xin brought about his own downfall when he accused the Director of the Imperial Bodyguard of extorting money from the people of Zhejiang. The emperor was angry at this criticism of his favourite and had Zhou Xin put to death. Zhou Xin died bravely, insisting to the end that loyalty had been his guiding principle. After Zhou Xin's death, the emperor dreamed that a man dressed in red stood before him. When the emperor asked the apparition who he was, the man replied, 'I am your servant, Zhou Xin.' This prompted the emperor to recognize his virtuous loyalty, and to rehabilitate him. The emperor commanded the spirit of Zhou Xin to go back to Zhejiang, and, as the provincial city god, once more to watch over the soil of that land.

It is possible that Zhou was installed as city god in the Wu Hill temple at popular demand, but the manner of his installation as described by Lang Ying made it seem more likely that authorities with influence at the temple were actually orchestrating events.

By observing the way in which the city god temple was run at the time, and how it is financed, it is possible to work out what was going on.

Throughout the Ming and Qing dynasties, the temple complex was run on a day-to-day basis by the priests who lived in the chapels (*fang*) that encircled the central temple buildings. At the beginning of the Ming dynasty, the organization of the priests into chapels was quite loose, but a sophisticated and highly regulated system of division of responsibility for the care of temple property, and for the performance of rites was to develop by the mid-eighteenth century.²⁴ The system of responsibility also laid down rules for rotation of responsibility for the finances of the temple.²⁵ For their ordinary expenses, the priests must have relied on the offerings of the faithful, as there is no mention of any landed estate belonging to the temple until a donation in the eighteenth century, as we shall see. Repairs to the temple fabric were mostly arranged by the priests themselves, on what appears to be a somewhat haphazard and ad hoc basis. Individual priests in early Hongwu, and again in 1494, made successful appeals for funds.²⁶ When faced with large costs that they could not cope with, as in the case of large-scale repair jobs to the fabric

of the temple, the priests turned to the local authorities for help. This occurred notably in 1505, for which date we have the following record in the temple gazetteer:

The Prefect of Hangzhou gave silver for repairs. It was subsequently discussed that yearly statutory repairs estimates should be made for the City God Temple, along with the altars to the gods of mountains and rivers, and to the soil and the grain, and so on. The articles of agreement were carved on stone.²⁷

Similarly, when the main hall fell into disrepair in 1596, the priests asked prefectural level officials for help:

They asked the Prefect to extend an appeal for funds to the Provincial Administration Commissioner, the Provincial Surveillance Commissioner, and the Salt and Grain Commissioners. They each made contributions. In addition, an official summons to Haining county required that county to transfer a sum of one hundred taels of silver for repairs. This was handed over to the Daoist priests Yu Jiuzhang and Qian Ziyun.²⁸

A separate report, in the same gazetteer, of the same repair operation adds the information that the Prefect ordered the priests Yu and Qian to prepare estimates of the costs involved, and to report to him. The gazetteer entry commends the priests on their contribution to the project.²⁹

Imperial authorities had a long tradition of involvement at city god temples. Local officials would attend their local city god temple on feast days, and new officials sent to an area would pay their respects to the local city god when they arrived at their new posting.

Throughout the Ming dynasty, when extra money was required for funding at the Wu Hill temple in Hangzhou, the priests applied to the local authorities for aid.

Therefore, the parties involved in the running and financing of the temple in 1425, when the Zhou Xin incident was staged, and indeed throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, were the priests of the complex, and the local authorities. These people are thus the ones most likely to have brought about the installation of the image of Zhou Xin.

For a cogent reason why they should stage Zhou Xin's appearance, clues may be found in the development of the cult of city gods in the early Ming dynasty.

It is noticeable in texts from all periods subsequent to his installation as city god that Zhou Xin is referred to recurrently as provincial city god. It becomes apparent that this provincial aspect was possibly what was most important about Zhou Xin: he did not belong just to the city of Hangzhou, nor was his role left vague and unspecified, but he was installed specifically as the provincial city god. Some information about the official imperial policy toward the cult of city god helps to find an explanation for this.

The *Record of the Office of Imperial Sacrifices of the Ming Dynasty* gives some information about how sacrifice to the city god spirit was organized at the highest level. As quoted in the 1789 temple gazetteer, the text says,

In 1369, because the Rites of Zhou had got (reference to) sacrifice to the controllers of the people, a city god spirit was installed at the imperial capital, and sacrifice was made to it . . . In 1388, the emperor commanded Liu Sanwu to pronounce: ‘Our establishment of the city god at the capital is in order to unite the territorial spirits of provinces, prefectures, sub-prefectures and counties, to watch over the good and evil actions of the people, and to grant them calamity or good fortune accordingly, so that the actions of the dead and the living do not escape unnoticed. . .’ In 1530, sacrifice at the altars to the mountains and rivers was discontinued. But each year, sacrifices were still made at the above-mentioned temple [the city god temple]. At the middle gate of the city god temple in the capital were carved statues of the city god spirits of the thirteen provinces. The likenesses were all placed facing each other to the left and right.³⁰

What is evident from these brief notices is that the Ming emperors were very interested in the worship of city god spirits, and a special emphasis was placed on provincial gods.

It appears that the early Ming authorities, keen to reinforce the identities of the administrative provinces under the new regime, co-opted the idea of a provincial city god as a means of bolstering the administrative apparatus of the new empire. Zhou Xin’s installation in Hangzhou was part of this imperial campaign to promote the identity of the province. The local authorities obtained the cooperation of the priests in engineering the appearance of the Zhou Xin spirit before the crowd, and in the carving of a new image to represent him.

RESENTMENT OF THE PRESENCE OF THE PROVINCIAL CITY GOD

Complaint about the Zhou Xin incident, and debate about ritual propriety at the temple, rumbled on down the next three hundred years. A study of reaction to the Zhou Xin incident in the years that followed the installation confirms the argument that the hands of imperial authority loomed large in his installation as city god. The fuss that was made reveals much about the attitude of the Hangzhou people to their regional environment.

The problem stemmed from the fact that it was ritually inappropriate for a provincial god to receive sacrifice from any official of less than provincial rank. This means that on Wu Hill, where the temple had been deemed home of the provincial city god since the Zhou Xin incident, a provincial official was supposed to preside at the ceremonies on important days. It appears, however, that regular users of the temple, presumably local Hangzhou people, resented the fact that provincial officials would take the place of their more immediate representative, the local prefect. Apparently they were concerned that the interests of their immediate locality might be neglected as a result of the fact that the Wu Hill temple had been commandeered for provincial use.

Lu Rong, writing in the mid-fifteenth century, was concerned that the use of the temple for provincial purposes meant that matters pertaining to the local prefecture

were being disrupted. Lu argued that while it was acceptable for a provincial official to preside over sacrifices to universal spirits such as Confucius, when it came to making sacrifice to the gods of mountains and rivers of Hangzhou prefecture itself, it should be the local prefect who was present, not the provincial representative. Lu says,

In Hangzhou prefecture, in the spring and autumn of every year, sacrifice is made to Confucius, and at the two altars, one to the Soil and the Grain, and the other to the Mountains and Rivers. All these ceremonies are presided over by the Provincial Administration Commissioner. Now Confucius is the object of reverence of all under Heaven. In contrast, the two altars pertain to the prefecture. The prefecture in question [Hangzhou] has within its borders, important mountains, rivers, and walls and moats. Despite this, the prefect does not get to preside at sacrifices. The Provincial Administration Commissioner unites under his jurisdiction eleven prefectures. He acts as chief of ceremonies only in the one prefecture in which he has his yamen. This kind of organization of ritual is awkward. I do not know why the officials of this era do not tackle this question in their debates on ritual.³¹

It is clear from essayists that there was much more enthusiasm for the more local prefectural aspect of worship than for the provincial aspect. Tian Yiheng, writing in the mid-sixteenth century, complained that ‘only the prefectural city god spirit is thought of’ and ‘there is no recognition of the province’. Tian thought that this inattention to the provincial cult was ritually incorrect. He says,

In the city god temples in the capital city [of the empire], the city god spirits of the thirteen provinces are all worshipped. This is according to the rites. In the celebrations in the second month of summer, the emperor sends officials to offer sacrifice in Nanjing. In the second month of autumn, in the sacrifices there, the Provincial Administration Commissioner of each province all attend in the city god temple. This accords with the rites.

As for Zhejiang province, if one were to speak of who presides, then the Zhejiang Provincial Administration Commissioner should take precedence in the city god temple, and the spirit of Hangzhou prefecture should be in attendance. The prefectural spirit tablet is placed to the left of the main hall. In turn, one rank further below, the city god spirits of Renhe and Qiantang counties should be in attendance on the prefectural spirit. They occupy the pavilions to the east and west. As such the arrangements would be more or less proper.

But now that only the Hangzhou prefectural city god spirit is thought of, this means that above there is no recognition of the province, and below, there is no recognition of the two counties. This is at odds with the Confucian system of allotting accompanying roles for the prefectures and counties. Furthermore, on the day of investiture of a Supreme Commander, Grand Coordinator, or any one of the Three Provincial Officials, it is

required of them to fast and to keep a night's vigil at the temple. But to carry out the four-bows-ritual before the spirit of a single prefecture means that a high official on a personal visit is making obeisance to the image of a subordinate official. What an upside-down arrangement!³²

Worship at the temple in the Ming dynasty evidently focussed on the prefectural cult, and voices expressing pride in the province are never heard. Throughout the Ming dynasty, and indeed through much of the Qing, the writings of essayists on the subject suggest that the Hangzhou people could not accept that their temple be used for provincial worship for all of Zhejiang, as they feared that Hangzhou itself might lose out. Evidently they cared little about their role as people of Zhejiang and as citizens, indeed, of the provincial capital.

The fact that there was local resentment of the imposition of provincial worship in the Wu Hill temple can also be witnessed in a long-running debate over the issue of whether Zhou Xin had been installed at the will of the people, or if he was an imposition from above. An echo of this debate can be heard even as late as the mid-eighteenth century, in the writing of Li Wei. In the *Gazetteer of West Lake*, quoted in the 1789 temple gazetteer, he contests that it was indisputable that the installation of Zhou Xin had sprung 'from the hearts of the people themselves'. Li says,

The elevation of Zhou Xin to be an object of worship by the people of Hangzhou sprang from the hearts of the people themselves, and no imperial order was given. Mao Jike comments with respect to the county gazetteer, [the 1609 edition of which had indicated that an imperial order caused the installation of Zhou Xin's tablet], that it was because of Xin's astuteness and honesty that he in life ruled over the land, and in death he should preside over the city walls and ditches, as protector of the livelihood of the people, and their safeguard against calamity. Who is to say that this is not fitting?³³

Li Wei's point of view must have stood in opposition to voices that claimed that Zhou Xin was an imposition from above. His words suggest that this interference in the affairs of the temple had been unpopular.

THE ARRIVAL OF PRIVATE CAPITAL IN TEMPLE FINANCES

As the Ming dynasty ended and the Qing dynasty began, the most striking development in the history of the temple is the arrival of private capital in its financing.

In 1617, a fire spread from other buildings on Wu Hill, and destroyed the city god temple all except for the middle gate. Fortunately, due to the premonition of one of the officials of the haul-over embankments, the spirit tablet of the city god had been moved to this middle gate, and it thus escaped being burned and destroyed. But proper shelter for the tablet had to be found.

As in the previous century, when faced with the large expenses of a major repair project, the priests could not manage alone. The temple gazetteer says,

The guardians of the temple were pained that the spirit should be in an exposed place. They were in distress about it, but without the means to do anything.³⁴

It was this predicament that prompted the first appearance of private money in the financing of the temple. The man who stepped in was Jin Xueceng. He is described in the temple gazetteer as a 'gentryman' (*jinshen*).³⁵ Other texts, including Li E's *Mixed Accounts of the East of the City*, and the local county gazetteers, reveal that he was of a Hangzhou family, that he had obtained his *jinshi* degree in 1568, and served as Grand Coordinator for Hunan. When he retired, he returned to his native Hangzhou, founded a poetry society based on Solitary Hill, built a famous estate in the east of the city, and a tower for his wife, called 'Gazing at the River Building'.³⁶ He was the author of an essay in the 1609 *Gazetteer to Qiantang County* describing the funding for the building of the new county yamen buildings in 1603–4.³⁷

To help the priests at the fire-damaged city god temple, Jin arranged temporary shelter for the spirit tablet by contributing one hundred taels of his own money towards the construction of a rough building, and persuaded the Grand Coordinator to do the same. He sent letters to other officials, and received a favourable response from the Supreme Commander, surnamed Liu, who supplied three hundred taels of silver and sent officials to superintend.

Other officials also made contributions. After the project was complete, shrines were set up to honour Jin, and also the prefect Yao Zhilan, who had also 'energetically assisted the cause'.³⁸

As mentioned above, the most significant point about this is the fact that a private individual makes his mark on temple history for the first time. But Jin Xueceng was a retired official, very much a man of the establishment. He was an upholder of the established order, a man who would agree with Tian Yiheng that ritual propriety at the temple should be adhered to, and this was the public cause that his private donation was made for. In contrast to later private individuals that would play a role at the temple, Jin's aim was to contribute to the maintenance of the status quo.

SALT MERCHANTS AND FAMILY SHRINES

Thus far, we have seen that early Ming dynasty authorities imposed the image of a provincial city god on the Wu Hill temple, and we have seen that it was resented or ignored by the local users of the temple throughout the Ming period. We have seen that private capital began to appear in the financing of the temple in the closing years of the Ming without altering the way worship was carried out. Into the eighteenth century, we see how a group of salt merchants became involved at the temple and how they had a decisive impact on the structure both of the temple and

of sacrifice. The salt merchants were the ones who came finally to espouse the cause of the province.

Merchant groups had been active at the Wu Hill city god temple since at least the late seventeenth century. The temple gazetteer says that a part of the temple complex was used as a shrine by ‘those who make their living from salt in central Zhejiang,’³⁹ and another part served the textile trade.⁴⁰

In 1733, the salt merchants started to step up their involvement. To implement a repair project, two merchants, Shen Danwu and Cheng Zhesan asked the Salt Distribution Commissioner, a Mr Zhang, to ‘select merchants to oversee operations and to undertake large-scale repairs.’ But by the 1740s, it was clear that this scheme for the maintenance of the temple by the salt men had not quite worked out. The temple gazetteer says that,

Although piecemeal patching work has been done year by year, a comprehensive restoration has never been carried out.⁴¹
The fabric of the building was deteriorating.

In 1741, builders employed by an official serving as a circuit intendant in the area arrived at the site. They carried out a radical transformation of a part of the temple that had been destroyed by gales. The shrine they built was to a man named Zhao Shenqiao. The temple was large: it had a ceremonial arch, front hall, middle hall, kitchen accommodation to the rear and side pavilions flanking the main buildings. The temple was far more extensive than the shrines that had been put up to local officials like the prefect Yao or the retired official Jin. What is more, this shrine had a landed estate attached.⁴²

Zhao Shenqiao, the man so grandly commemorated at the temple, was a native of Wujin, Jiangsu Province, who had taken his *jinshi* degree in 1670, and who rose to become Provincial Administration Commissioner for Zhejiang in 1701. In 1702, he was made Governor of Zhejiang, but immediately left the post in order to deal with a rebellion of the Miao people in Hunan. He continued to serve in Hunan until 1711, and later moved to a post in Guangdong. He died in 1720, and was given the posthumous name Gongyi, meaning ‘Respectful and Resolute’.⁴³

According to his biographers, he was renowned for ‘extreme respect for frugality’, who allowed himself no comforts, had no assistants, and who ‘despite the fact that Hangzhou is a place of scenic beauty, did not waste time sightseeing’.⁴⁴

He was hardly a colourful or popular figure, and seems a most unlikely character to have been celebrated as a popular hero. Several authors, however, do try to convince us that this is the case.

Everywhere within the seas the story is told of the severity of his discipline, but of all these it is the people of my native Zhejiang who are especially pleased to hear of him, and delighted to talk about him. They say, ‘This is the doing of our lord.’ . . .

Although I am a scholar who studied as a pupil of the venerable gentleman, this essay represents not my voice alone, but the common voice of millions of households along the River Zhe to the east and west.⁴⁵

The people of Zhejiang held him in their thoughts, and constantly planned to erect a shrine on the summit of Wu Hill to make sacrifices to him.⁴⁶

The inspiration for the project is, however, far more likely to have come from another quarter: the circuit intendant who employed the builders was called Zhao Tongxue, and was grandson of the old Governor. Zhao the younger came to Zhejiang to serve as Intendant with responsibility for Salt and Post Stations in Zhejiang in 1740. His concern for the cause of his family name had been shown when in 1737 he gathered together his grandfather's works and published them.⁴⁷ In 1740, he decided to do more by engineering this conversion of part of the Wu Hill city god temple into a shrine to the glory of his family. He said of the project afterwards,

I willingly contributed my salary, and submitted a plan for the conversion project to the Provincial Administration Commissioner. A report was made to the Provincial Governor and to the Governor General, who transmitted their acquiescence to the plans. . . In addition, I spent one hundred and twenty taels on the purchase of twenty *mu* of land. I cut off one half of the land and gave it to the Daoist priest Xu Dashen in order to provide for the sacrifices at the temple to the spirit of the city god, to serve as a small token of my sincere regard. The other half, I handed over to Wang Shouning, Daoist priest of the Yuanqing Chapel, in order to provide for the costs of sacrifice and of the upkeep of the said shrine [to my grandfather], and so that to some extent there is someone in special charge of it, and it may not be abolished or fall into disrepair.⁴⁸

Not long after, Zhao the younger's own ancestral tablet appeared alongside that of his grandfather in the shrine at the temple: the Zhaos had essentially built a private ancestral shrine right at the heart of the Wu Hill city god site.⁴⁹

For the prestige of the Zhao family, this must have been a marvellous coup. The gift of land might well have been instrumental in bringing about their successful bid for influence at the temple. The acquiescence both of the priests and of the public authorities was probably encouraged by the fact that the income from the land might mean that the temple might at last have a stable source of revenue, thus reducing the need of the priests to call on the local government coffers for funds.

But other groups involved at the temple might not have been so happy to accept this new development. Indeed, less than twelve months went by after the Zhaos' conversion project, before Shen Danwu and Cheng Zhesan, the salt merchants, became involved again.

THE UNITING OF THE HANGZHOU-BASED CITY GOD CULTS BY THE SALT MERCHANTS

On the opposite side of the temple to the Zhao edifice, the salt merchants converted an old temple refectory into a city god shrine for the prefectural and county cults,

so that these could stand alongside the main temple hall. They then moved to this Wu Hill site three spirit tablets that they said represented the prefectural and county city god spirits, claiming that these had previously been situated elsewhere in the city. They thus formed a unison of the various Hangzhou-based city god cults at the temple on Wu Hill. This is how the event was described in the 1789 gazetteer:

In 1733, the (prefectural city god) spirit appeared in a dream to Shen Danwu, and said, 'I am not at peace in the nunnery. It would be fitting to expand the provincial city god site, and to accommodate me at the side of the provincial city god spirit tablet.' Thereupon, Shen, together with Cheng Zhesan contributed money for the conversion of the buildings to make a temple. They welcomed the statue of the spirit and installed it there. They at the same time, received the spirit tablets of Renhe and Qiantang counties, and transferred the worship of them to here.⁵⁰

Shen and Cheng appear to have taken action because they were alarmed at the intrusive appearance of the Zhao ancestral shrine inside the city god complex. It seems that they hoped that by relocating the prefectural and county city god cults at Wu Hill, they could counter the Zhao's influence, and reinforce the site as a place of city god worship.

There is evidence that this consolidation of city god cults seems to have worked as Shen might have desired: other city god cults that had been in existence in the city now found it hard to compete. Here is a plea for help from 1747 for the 'Little City God Temple' that had been set up in the north of the city back in the fifteenth century to house the tablet of the old city god spirit that had been moved out of Wu Hill in 1425:

This is the old city god temple by the Dingxiang Monastery set up in the Song. Why do I call it 'the old city god'? In order to set at rest the ancestral spirit. Why do I call the spirit 'ancestral'? Spirits rely upon men. Now, having installed Censor Zhou [Xin] as spirit of the area, the spirit that existed before him surely needs to receive sacrifices. That is why I call this 'ancestral', and why I treat the spirit as an ancestor.

Why are sacrifices made to him? That is in order not to forget what is old. Now, my own ancestor once made obeisance to this spirit. Those who show gratitude for favours still do service to him, with the ritual appropriate for an official residing away from his native place. How much stronger is the case in favour of his worship since the god is the one that our own ancestors made offerings to?

But nowadays in this community, the offerings made to the spirit are not rich. The spirit's surname is Sun. His other name is Mo, and in the twelfth century, he was prefect in this prefecture. He was just and fair, and loved the people. He finally died in office. Thereupon, sacrifices were made to him. He was ennobled in the Song first as Lord Baoshun Tonghui, and then as King Kangji Guangde Xiansheng. Those that made offerings to him did so for two hundred years, until the Yongle period of the Ming

[1403–1425], when he for the first time was treated as an ancestral spirit, and he has been here for three hundred years. Since, in his life, he benefitted the people, it is ritually correct that in death, he should be honoured and receive sacrifice. How could the sacrifices be abolished? Now the monk in charge has asked for subscriptions to repair the temple. The families of the locality were afraid that the passage of time was causing this tradition to disappear. They therefore enjoined me to make the matter known, and so I make this account of the matter in the eighth month of 1747.⁵¹

The piece is by Tang Elian, who appears to have held no official post. In seeking Tang's support, the monks who were asking for money reveal that they were not in a position to call on a prominent scholar to publicize their cause. Tang himself did not call on any officials to help; perhaps he was not in a position to be able to approach an official. He sought private donations of individuals, and not the public money that the supporters of the Wu Hill city god temple made applications to receive. There were not even gentry involved, only the '*lixing*', the 'surnames of the locality'. From Tang's piece, we can surmise that at this stage, in 1747, the Little City God temple was indeed in a precarious state, in danger of being abandoned. It seems significant after the temple had survived for several centuries, that only five years after the initiative of the two merchants, Shen and Cheng to strengthen the status of Wu Hill as the foremost city god location, the north city site should be in such trouble.

If Shen and Cheng were aiming to consolidate worship of the city god deities and focus the cult on Wu Hill, it appears that they were successful. Certainly other city god cults that were separately sited almost immediately fell on hard times.

Already the salt merchants had shown their willingness to support the Wu Hill temple as a provincial cult site. But their involvement at the city god temple did not finish here. The planned visit of the Qianlong emperor to the temple in the 1780s pressed them into action once again.

This time the men who were involved are more specifically identified. They were known as the 'the merchants of the four areas' (*sisuo shangren*) — a group of salt merchants who contracted for the purchase of government salt in Zhejiang and undertook its distribution. They hailed from all parts of the province where salt was produced.⁵²

Worried that the run-down state of the temple would disgrace the city in the eyes of the emperor, the merchants said they 'could not sit by and watch'.⁵³ The long-drawn-out process of their application for local government funds, and the eventual granting of the money, is recorded in the 1789 temple gazetteer.

The project was driven entirely by the merchants themselves, and the priests played only a very minor role.

The sums of public money that were secured for the project were probably in fact the in-payments made into the coffers of the salt administration in Zhejiang, by the merchants themselves. The merchants were in an excellent position to make appeals for the use of the money as they knew exactly how the balance in the local coffers stood, and they were in a good position, close to the officials of the salt administration that they were indeed a part of, to persuade officialdom that their cause was a worthy one.

In contrast to all earlier repair projects, where the priests had been involved, the management, costing and accounting of this project was entirely in the hands of the merchants, closely watched over by the official bodies that had granted them the funds. The Zhejiang merchant group thus asserted its control over a major element of religious apparatus in the city of Hangzhou.

The salt merchants ensured that their contribution to the temple might be remembered by commissioning the compilation of a new edition of the temple gazetteer. The version produced, in 1789, is the one that survives to this day.

With respect to the theme of regional identity, it is most interesting to see how they label the parts of the temple. The central building is prominently marked, 'Provincial City God Temple'.⁵⁴ Here, at last, were new champions of the provincial cause.

CONCLUSION

The imperial administrators who caused the imposition of Zhou Xin in the Wu Hill temple back in 1425 must have hoped, no doubt, that if provincial identity were properly expressed, loyalty to the province might serve as a sure basis for the cohesion of the empire as a whole. But their insensitive approach at the temple antagonized the people of Hangzhou, and throughout the Ming and much of the Qing dynasties, the people who went up to the temple on Wu Hill were happy to ignore the broader regional context of their existence. The ideals of the administrators that the provincial city god spirit should inhabit the Wu Hill temple were thus far frustrated.

Only in the salt merchants of eighteenth-century Zhejiang does a group of people emerge who respond to the idea of provincial identity, and acting as a provincial group label a temple a provincial site.

All the same, while a sense of regional identity, in the right measure, could function as a positive factor in fostering loyalty to the state as a whole, too much independence of the regions could threaten to pull the state to pieces. The ultimate paradox of the situation in Hangzhou becomes apparent in the two hundred years of history that have followed. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, has it not been the areas of China where mercantile interest is strong that have become independent enough to threaten to pull the empire apart? I wonder if the centrifugal tendencies of the coastal provinces in the last two hundred years of China's history do not find an early expression here.

NOTES

1. For a fuller description of the city god, see Werner, (1961: 48–50).
2. See David Johnson, 'The City God Cults of Tang and Sung China,' *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, (1985, 45:2: 363–459).
3. The name Wu echoed not only states, but also statesmen of south east China's past. In fact the origins of the name of the hill are somewhat blurred: authors from the Song

down to the Qing are not sure whether the name ‘Wu’ is a relic of the days of the Springs and Autumns period, when the hill marked the southern boundary of the state of Wu, or whether the name should actually be written 武, and thus be a commemoration of the statesman Wu Zixu, advisor to the Kings of Wu at the end of the Springs and Autumns period.

4. Mao Jike (1633–1708), on a drunken night’s ramble on the hill in the late seventeenth century, visits the homes and estates of several of his friends that were dotted on the slopes. He records the experience in his essay, ‘Wushan jiyou,’ (A record of wandering on Wu Hill, in Wang Xiqi comp., *Xiaofanghu zhai cong chao* vol. 4). Mao was from Sui’an in Zhejiang province; he became a judge in Hebei province. On the visit to Hangzhou he records in this piece, he visits Ye Jihan, who lives at Wu Park, who is asleep, and then knocks up his friend Wu Tingyi, but the latter does not open up.
5. The kings of Wu-Yue had made gifts to two nunneries on the hill in the tenth century, Zhu Peng writes in his *Wushan yishi shi* 1a-b. The thirteenth century Lin’an gazetteer (*Chunyou Lin’an zhi*) records the existence of a host of temples already by the 1200s.
6. Xia Shi, ‘*Qiantang Wushan shenggai ji*’, in *Qiantang xianzhi* 1609, ‘*jiwen*’/ 39b.
7. Stages for drama and opera were part of the structure of several temples, and the 1789 City God temple gazetteer (Lu Song and Zhu Wencao, *Wushan chenghuang miao zhi*) includes passages that describe people coming up the hill to watch plays and performances. For instance: ‘On the following day, I rose early and after breakfast I went with my friend Jin Zhongjia to the Guandi Temple on Wu Hill to watch drama’ (3/17a). The famous playwright and dramatic-theorist Li Yu made his Hangzhou home on the hill, where his household included a troupe of a dozen actors and performers. Zhu Peng records the unusual style of Li Yu’s house in *Wushan yishi shi* 12a-b.
8. Fan Zushu, *Hangsu yifeng*, 4b. No date is given for this text, but internal evidence would put it at about 1850. Zhu Peng, *Wushan yishi shi*, 4b records that back in 1520, a mother who had taken her two daughters to look at the lanterns hung up on the hill, lost one of the girls. The girl had been kidnapped and taken away to work as a brothel madame.
9. Fan Zushu, *Hangsu yifeng* 5b.
10. This name for a kind of snack is supposed to have been coined by Su Dongpo.
11. Fan Zushu, *Hangsu yifeng* 1a-b.
12. The Daoist Patriarch Lu was one of the patron deities of literature. See Werner (1961: 298).
13. Lu Song and Zhu Wencao (1789) shows a ‘jinlong ge’, (‘pavilion of the golden dragon’) attached to one of the temple chapels. This pavilion was indeed at the back of the temple complex, as Fan writes.
14. Fan Zushu, *Hangsu yifeng* 6b-7a.
15. *Qiantang xianzhi* (1609: *jisheng*:1b).
16. *Renhe xianzhi* (1549: 2/13b), ‘*shanchuan, chengnei shan*’ section.
17. *Qiantang xianzhi* (1609: *jizhi*/20a).
18. The city walls constructed in the Sui dynasty took in Phoenix Hill as well as Wu Hill. Phoenix Hill was excluded from the intra-mural area in the mid-fourteenth century, when Zhang Shizhong rebuilt the walls. He re-routed the course of the walls to include the ‘Donghe’ to the east, but cut off Phoenix Hill to the west.
19. *Qiantang xianzhi* (1609: *jizhi*/20a).
20. *Chunyou Lin’an zhi* 8/3b-4a.
21. The anniversary of the date of birth of a spirit would be a day of special offerings and celebration. This date, the 17th day of the fifth month, for Zhou Xin, is also recorded in the *Wanli Qiantang xianzhi*.

22. Lang Ying *Qixiu xugao*, j. 2 in *Ming-Qing biji congkan* pp. 773–4. Lang was born in 1487, and this piece was written probably around 1520. On a late Qing map of Hangzhou reproduced in the *Hangzhou shi dimingzhi* (*Gazetteer of Place Names in Hangzhou*) Hangzhou shi diming weiyuanhui bangongshi, 1990, the ‘Little City God temple’ is still marked as the name of an alley in the north of the city.
23. For Zhou Xin’s biography, see Huang Zuo, *Guangzhou renwu zhuan*, j. 14, *Conshu jicheng* edition, (1936: 123–25).
24. The organization of the chapels in the eighteenth century can be seen in the diagram of the layout of the buildings in Lu Song and Zhu Wencao, (1789: 1/8b-9a).
25. Lu Song and Zhu Wencao (1789: 5/1b-2a).
26. The Daoist priest in charge of the Hungwu restoration was Yan Yiqing, and the 1494 priests were named as Shen Yuanli and Zhang Tefang. See the description of the restoration projects in Lu Song and Zhu Wencao (1789: j.5).
27. Lu Song and Zhu Wencao (1789: 2/7b).
28. *Ibid.* 2/7b.
29. *Ibid.* 5/5a.
30. *Ibid.* 2/21b-22a; Liu Sanwu (1312–1399) was a scholar in the Hanlin Academy, whom the first Ming emperor, consulted often with respect to literary matters, Confucian rites and matters of principle.
31. Lu Rong (1936: 113 j. 10).
32. Tian Yiheng (rep. 1985: 28/1b-2a).
33. *Ibid.* 2/24b.
34. *Ibid.* 2/8a.
35. Lu Song and Zhu Wencao (1789: 2/8a).
36. Li (rep. 1833–49: 36b–37a).
37. *Wanli Qiantang xianzhi* (rep. 1833: *jizhi*/2b).
38. Lu Song and Zhu Wencao (1789: 2/8a-b).
39. *Ibid.* 4/2b.
40. Lu Song and Zhu Wencao (1789) says that the Changsheng chapel, one of the chapels of the temple complex, ‘is the temple of the textile trade’ (5/2a). In 1779, the six ‘Left Chapels’, including the Changsheng chapel, burned down. As the emperor was due to visit, various officials stepped in to repair the various temples. The one who repaired the Changsheng chapel was Provincial Administration Commissioner Sheng, acting Silk Manufactory Intendant. It is surely not coincidental that this one chapel should receive attention from a textiles man? I am tempted to imagine that the silk merchants lobbied their contact in local government in the same way that the salt merchants lobbied theirs. (1/2a)
41. *Ibid.* 1/2a.
42. *Ibid.* 4/12a-b.
43. *Ibid.* 4/12b.
44. See descriptions of Zhao in Lu Song and Zhu Wencao (1789: 4/18a-b).
45. *Ibid.* 4/19a-b.
46. *Ibid.* 4/17a-b.
47. See Hummel (1943–44: 80) under entry for Zhao Shenqiao.
48. Lu Song and Zhu Wencao (1789: 4/23b-24a).
49. Lu Song and Zhu Wencao (1789: 4/20a). In the comments of the gazetteer’s compilers, it is mentioned that, ‘Nowadays, next to the ancestral tablet of [Zhao Shenqiao] sacrifice is also made to the ancestral tablet of [his grandson].’
50. Lu Song and Zhu Wencao (1789: 4/6a-b).
51. *Ibid.* 4/7b-8a.

52. Lin Zhenhan (rep. 1988: *chen*/75–6).
53. Lu Song and Zhu Wencao (1789: 1/ 11a).
54. See the title pages of Lu Song and Zhu Wencao (1789) where the ground plan of the temple has the central halls clearly marked as the provincial temple.

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2 ■ Becoming Cantonese, the Ming Dynasty Transition

David Faure

The word ‘Cantonese’ is a Western word that does not have an exact Chinese equivalent. It was used in the nineteenth century to denote the Cantonese dialect, which in the Ming and the Qing dynasties was referred to Yueyu (the language of the Yue people). But built into the word, obviously, was also a sense of connection with the city of Guangzhou (Canton), where either the Xiguan or the Panyu local variant of the dialect might be thought of as its purest form. S.Wells Williams in 1874 and R.H. Mathews in 1931 both used the word to translate ‘Guangdong *ren*’, the people of Guangdong province.¹ The usage suggests the domination of Guangdong province by Guangzhou and speakers of Cantonese, and in this it reflects quite accurately its historical bias.

A GEOGRAPHIC SHIFT

Two observations need be made regarding the historical position of Guangzhou: before the Song dynasty, the city was known for its commerce in exotics and for its administrative importance on the Pearl River delta, but until the Ming it was culturally divorced from its hinterland.² The theme of sinicized chieftains ruling over tribal barbarians of the hills and marshes is written all over the relics not only of the Han dynasty but also of the Tang. The bronze motif found in the grave of the Nan-Yue king in Guangzhou depicting a feather-capped man standing on a boat holding a human head in his hand may be contrasted with the numerous stories of the Tang about the odd people that might be encountered outside the city, some nesting on trees demanding payment from passers-by.³ Not even allegiance to the emperor might remove the chieftain’s aboriginal origin: King Zhao To (d. 137 B.C.) writing to Han Emperor Wendi referred to himself as the barbarian chief, and Madam Xian, despite her support for the Sui emperors, was known as the tribal chieftain who turned Han loyalist.⁴

Affiliation with the imperial state came early. The literature of the Han describes that as having begun with military conquest. From those early days, a distinction had been made between the administrative and the ethnic. The south was said to have been inhabited by the *baiyue* (the hundred Yue peoples), whom Sima Qian described as the descendants of the mythological Emperor Yu, while the Qin state

established in south China three commanderies, of which Nanhai, with its seat at Panyu (later Guangzhou), was one. The Qin-Han city of Panyu was tiny in comparison with later Guangzhou, but it established early its position as a port of call for ships coming in from southeast Asia, secondary perhaps only to Xuwen and Hepu across the straits from Hainan Island. (For good reason, because the northbound traffic would have gone via Guangxi rather than northern Guangdong.)⁵ By the Tang, Guangzhou was a major international port, with its Indian and Persian communities, its Buddhist monasteries and Islamic mosque. More so in the early Tang state than the Han state, in line with central government policies, local military commanders offered protection in return for profit, as it came to be known that they became rich as soon as they had entered the gates of the city of Guangzhou.⁶ Although it would be incredible that territorial affiliation of sorts did not arise in this setting, as late as the Tang, we do not read of Guangzhou families. The few Guangdong scholars that we read of hail from outside Guangzhou, Zhang Jiuling, the most notable of them all, coming from Nanxiong prefecture in northern Guangdong and being remembered, fittingly, for building the road that crossed the mountain ranges to provide a more direct route between Guangzhou and central China.⁷

If the history of the Nan-Han Kingdom is any guide, it would have been towards the end of the Tang that a local upper class emerged. The Nan-Han kings as well as their officials were of local origin, and their patronage of Buddhist monasteries suggests that royal power was extended far beyond Guangzhou. Under the Tang, the state had recognized local religious cults by integrating them into the state pantheon, a notable example being the transformation of the local deity at Huangbu near Guangzhou into the southern sea god. The advance of imperial favour, nevertheless, produced legends that were not restricted to the temples on which imperial favour had been showered, for other sacred sites in the surroundings of Guangzhou soon came to be featured in state-wide literature. The Dragon Mother (*longmu*) at Zhaoqing, the Zhuming Grotto at Lufo and the Sixth Patriarch at the Nanhua and Guangxiao monasteries acquired a reputation that went beyond Guangdong.⁸ In comparison, favours granted by the Nan-Han kings on Buddhist monasteries were local in character. An iron pagoda cast by King Liu Zhang in 967 and deposited at the Kaiyuan Monastery may still be seen at the Guangxiao Monastery; and land grants were made to the Caoxi Monastery as well as the newly founded Zifu Monastery that possibly was to rival the Daoist Mount Lufo. The wealth of the monasteries in the Nan-Han persisted into the Song, and would have given character to local organization at the time.⁹

However, it was economic growth more than religious intensity that was in the centuries to come to give Guangzhou its central, if not unique, cultural character in the Pearl River delta. Economic growth through the late Tang and the Northern Song would have mattered, but the growth of a market that embraced much of coastal south China following the removal of the imperial court to Lin'an (Hangzhou) would have been crucial. Isolated references may be found to rice export from Guangzhou, and it is not unreasonable to link this to the continuous development, from the southern Song, of the building of dykes for the purpose of land reclamation on the more inland rivers as well as on the foreshore. It has to be recognized that

prior to the wave of dyke-building that was to last from the southern Song into the Republic, the Pearl River delta consisted in the main of a marshland economy following on from the hillsides, neither of which was conducive to large settled populations. Most of what became the wealthier portions of the Pearl River delta, that is, the counties of Nanhai, Shunde, Donguan, most of Zhongshan and Xinhui, consisted of land reclamations conducted in the period beginning in the Southern Song and intensifying in the Ming and the Qing. Until these areas had been reclaimed and settled, Guangzhou was an outpost of the empire, depicted in contemporary literature as being surrounded by barbarians and semi-barbarians. This transformation of the Pearl River delta came essentially in the Ming dynasty.

THE MING TRANSFORMATION

The transformation of the Pearl River delta in the Ming dynasty into a highly productive and densely populated region is associated with a changing perception of local conditions. An indication of this trend may be found in the great abundance of publications on local history beginning from this period. Of course, Guangdong was not by any means unique in exhibiting a scholarly interest in recording local conditions. Much of it was a continuation of a state-wide trend that had followed on from the Song, of the compilation of local histories and the collected essays of notable individuals. Guangdong was merely a late starter in this process, there having been few literati of note prior to the Ming and no local history compiled before the Yuan. Nevertheless, the point has to be made that in the Ming literature, Guangdong was no longer exotic. Its literati wrote about the affairs of state on the same level as the literati of other provinces, and its local histories, like all local histories, took a practical stance on matters of local administration and traditions.

In the writings of Huang Zuo (1490–1566) is possibly the sharpest break with the past in the representation of the Cantonese. Huang was a senior official and the compiler of the Guangdong provincial history that was published in 1561.¹⁰ A taste of his local affiliation, however, predated the Guangdong history. His *Guangzhou Biographies* (*Guangzhou renwu zhuan*), *xu* of 1526, concentrated on the region around Guangzhou city, unlike earlier biographic compilations. He noted that biographies of persons from Annam and Guangxi that had been entered into an earlier biography by one Lu Yin (3rd century A.D.) were only to be appended to entries on persons with known Guangzhou connections, and even Zhang Jiuling was to gain an entry only because he had stayed in Guangzhou and thus qualified as a sojourner (*liuyu*).¹¹ The same emphasis on the centrality of Guangzhou may be found in the chapter on customs (*fengsu*) in the Guangdong history. Following the standard practice in local history compilation, the chapter discusses separately the custom of each prefecture or sub-prefecture in Guangdong province. In a matter-of-fact manner, it produces an account of the enlightenment of the barbarian south by the introduction of scholarship from the north, culminating in the fifteenth century, in the scholarship of Chen Baisha (1428–1500) and, in the sixteenth century, the iconoclasm of Wei Xiao that was directed against illegal temples.¹² In this enlightenment by scholarship, all prefectures in Guangdong had undergone a similar

experience, even though the increasingly civilized Guangzhou contrasted with the segmented character of Huizhou, Shaozhou, and Nanxiong, in which the cities resembled Guangzhou and the countryside were unruly. In terms of language, Cantonese was ‘standard tone’ (*zhengyin*), Hakka went unnoticed, and Chaozhou ‘crude’ and ‘disgusting’ when spoken in front of the official.¹³

Huang Zuo came from a family that had settled in Guangdong only in the Yuan dynasty.¹⁴ It followed a rather typical pattern of having registered for military service in the early Ming, producing a descendant who had won recognition at the imperial examination by the early fifteenth century, and growing by the early sixteenth century into a lineage complete with communal land and ancestral hall. Other members of the senior Guangdong literati in the first half of the sixteenth century would have included Huo Tao (1487–1540), Zhan Ruoshui (1466–1560) and Fang Xianfu (d. 1544).¹⁵ It was characteristic of these men to see themselves as occupying definite positions both within the state hierarchy and the provincial capital. Huang Zuo, for instance, considered that his scholarship was inherited from his father and his grandfather.¹⁶ Zhan, Huo and Fang were closely involved on the same side of the Great Rituals Controversy at the imperial court beginning in 1520.¹⁷ Zhan, the most senior of the three in age, considered himself a student of the philosopher Chen Baisha of Xinhui county, whom Zhan took to be an equal of Wang Yangming (1472–1529), official, military commander and philosopher of the highest order. Huo Tao’s son, Yuxia (1522–1598) who was to succeed him into the senior officialdom, was Zhan’s student.¹⁸ However, it was Huang Yu, Zuo’s grandfather, who recorded the displeasure with Chen’s quest for recognition expressed by Chiu Jun, a native of Hainan Island, an established official and scholar in Beijing.¹⁹ Chiu was an early advocate of state-craft scholarship, and had compiled the papers of Tang official Zhang Jiuling in acknowledgement of Zhang’s achievement as the first official who rose from Guangdong and whose influence exceeded beyond it. Sanctified by temples dedicated to Zhang Jiuling of the Tang, other notables such as Cui Yuzhi and Li Moying of the Song, and that soon included the spirit tablets of Huang Zuo’s grandfather, Huo Tao and the like, the Ming pedigree was well established in thought as well as in monuments.²⁰ Partly the result of increased numbers from Guangdong succeeding at the official examination, the presence of a senior literati in sixteenth-century Guangzhou was a feature that would not have been present in the Song.

What we witness in the sixteenth century was the result of a process of the integration of the Guangdong literati into the state on a scale that had been unprecedented in history. The crux of the matter is that the Ming state was much more powerful than the Song state. It is necessary to begin with the *lijia* system of tax collection, that essentially consisted of a rotation of tax collection duties among registered households within the village. It is often said that the *lijia* was imposed from the centre, but if one would examine the Ming statutes, it should be quite clear that the legal boundaries imposed by *lijia* regulations corresponded closely with the communal boundaries that had pre-existed on the basis of worship of local deities, and that the rotation was not so much an innovation as the recognition of existing village arrangements for religious sacrifice.²¹ It was the incorporation of local society into the state that was the strength of imperial authority in the Ming, and this was

why the official examinations could successfully elevate a class of persons rooted in village society whose vested interests came to be identified with loyalty to the emperor.²¹ It was fitting, therefore, that the ideology that was upheld in this development was the philosophy of Zhu Xi (1130–1200), that provided a standardized ritual that could be used in ancestral worship, marriage and funeral, and that showed deference to imperial authority while it expressed filial piety to the ancestors. This was an ideology that placed at its centre the emperor and the ancestor, in relationship to whom all social order was structured.²²

We know enough about events from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century in the vicinity of Guangzhou to piece together an account of the emergence of the new society. It is perhaps useful to begin with a visual view: a growing city of Guangzhou in the late Song, and outside a countryside in which the most obvious symbols would have been local temples and Buddhist monasteries. An active tracing of ancestors was in all likelihood quite common — the portion of the population known as the Yao people trace them for many generations and even the boat people for several — but ancestral halls would have been all but unknown.²³ Ancestral worship might have been conducted at the graves, and tablets or pictures of the ancestors were kept either on domestic altars or in Buddhist monasteries.²⁴ The Yuan in this area is a period that is largely unknown, but in the early days of the Ming, it was personal allegiance to local warlords and literati authority exercised by persons without degrees that characterized power relationships.²⁵ As there had been no examination in the Yuan dynasty until 1315, imperial awards substituted for examination success in the gaining of recognition. The *lijia* system of tax collection worked in this environment because imperial recognition amounted to recognition of land holding, and because it provided the structure for a patronage network whereby tax might be dodged. Far from imposing imperial authority on rural society, *lijia* preserved the autonomy of the village.

However, backed by a military presence, *lijia* advanced because it continued the trend that had been set in the earlier centuries whereby the Chinese empire might exchange protection for fealty. With the growth of the bureaucracy, however, fealty had been redefined: it was now in the interest of the literati not only to civilize but also to integrate, and the lineage system made it possible for local communities to be so completely integrated into the empire that no trace might be left of spurious origins. In the Pearl River delta, the fifteenth century provided two instances whereupon this process advanced at a rapid pace. The Huang Xiaoyang uprising in 1449 was looked upon as a landmark event in the genealogies of the Nanhai and Shunde area, and the Yao wars of 1460s and 70s for much of Xinhui.²⁶ The uprising of Huang Xiaoyang in Guangdong came close upon the capture of the emperor by Mongol tribesmen in the Tumu incident on the northern borders, and we have an account left by Chiu Jun of the shock with which the uprising was received at the capital among senior officials who had come from Guangdong. A Censor-in-Chief, Yang Xinmin, was appointed to Guangdong to coordinate defence, and he mounted a campaign from Guangzhou to gain the allegiance of local communities. Quite a few communities responded, including among the better known, the township of Daliang that was to become the county seat of Shunde after the suppression of the uprising, and the townships of Foshan and Longjiang. After

the uprising was put down, imperial recognition was granted to the principal temples in the communities at which defence was organized, the households that had collectively maintained the temple thereby becoming the recognized township elite. Some of these households were to produce sons that sat the official examination and succeeded.²⁷

Like the uprising of Huang Xiaoyang, the Yao disturbances also brought about imperial intervention in local affairs. Such intervention led indirectly to the rise of Chen Baisha and his support for ritual standardization. The chain of events came about when Han Yong was appointed to military command in Guangdong. Han had long been known for his military prowess, and he gained lasting fame in Guangdong when he crushed the Yao stronghold at Great Vine Gorge in 1465. The pivotal figure that advanced the teaching of Chen Baisha, however, was Tao Lu, the local military hero who had defended Xinhui against the Yao. Tao had been rapidly promoted from Xinhui county vice magistrate in 1462 to Provincial Surveillance Vice Commissioner in 1477. He had made it a policy to build schools in the areas that he had pacified, and in Xinhui, the temple he built that was dedicated to officials who died in sacrifice for the last Song emperor would have been an institution that both satisfied local sentiments and demonstrated loyalty to the imperial cause. These events were significant for two reasons. First, Chen Baisha was himself to be closely associated with the establishment of temples in honour of the Song imperial family, partly at least, because he was involved in the disputes between the the most powerful lineages of Xinhui that arose out of them. Second, Chen's patron, magistrate Ding Ji of Xinhui, who was appointed in 1479, was to continue Tao Lu's policy, and it was very much in that vein that Ding's simplified step-by-step model village regulations were published. When these events are viewed in close conjunction, the conclusion has to be drawn that the extension of the state in sixteenth-century Guangdong was not a development in the abstract. Quite the contrary, declaration of allegiance and the promotion of rituals to match had arisen from imperial efforts at specific times to restore order.²⁸

Nevertheless, it was in the relative prosperity and more relaxed mood of the sixteenth century that the state ideology was to advance in the particular form it was to take in subsequent centuries, that is, with a specific redefinition of local loyalty in terms of lineage loyalty. In hindsight, it would appear that the transition went smoothly, but indications are that village organizations symbolized by ancestral halls and genealogies had not been anticipated in the late fifteenth century. If handbooks produced for local management are any guide, from the fifteenth to the sixteenth century, notable examples appeared as 'village compacts' (*xiangyue*), the most famous of which was Huang Zuo's *Taiquan xiangli* (the village rituals of Mr Taiquan) published in 1535. The new tradition provided local handbooks in the form of 'family advice' (*jiaxun*), which were incorporated into genealogies rather than openly circulated, but some such as Huo Tao's and Pang Shangpeng's were eventually published.²⁹ The substitution of family rules for village rituals was one of several subtle changes that came about in Pearl River delta society in the sixteenth century.

The more dramatic developments came with an iconoclastic spell guided by senior provincial officials in 1521 and a trend in the building of ancestral halls in

the form of the 'family temple' (*jiamiao*) that began rather abruptly with Huo Tao's building of his own hall near Foshan in 1525. The 'family temple' was a structure that had been defined by law and that until then might only be built by families of aristocrats and senior officials, and it was only from the 1520s that a popularization movement began whereby these structures came gradually to be built by commoner households that did not boast of living senior degree holders. Rather than a slow evolution, the trend had begun almost at the same time as the Great Rituals Controversy broke out at court in 1520 in which Huo Tao and Fang Xianfu (whose hall was built in 1534) took the side of the emperor on the stand of filial piety at the expense of the unbroken continuation of the imperial line of descent.³⁰ Huo's support for the emperor's expression of filial piety for his own father would have been consistent with his support for the movement initiated by Guangdong Assistant Education Intendant Wei Xiao in 1521 that demanded the closure of all illegal places of worship, including many Buddhist monasteries, and that agreed very well with the filial piety that he himself expressed to his immediate ancestors in the building of the ancestral hall. In the coincidence of these various events, there was possibly an element of the substitution of the new orthodoxy on the form of the ancestral hall for the dubious heresy of those temples that had not previously been granted official recognition. The acquisition of temple land might well also have been a consideration: Huo Tao's ancestral estate was built precisely on the land that had been sold by a Buddhist monastery that was closed.³¹

The century from 1450 to 1550, therefore, was quite crucial in the evolution of a social structure that was to find Guangzhou its centre. Through the introduction of *lijia*, the Huang Xiaoyang uprising, the Yao wars, and the local influence of the few officials who were involved in disputes over court rituals, a new landscape was forming that no longer placed at the centre of local organization the Buddhist monastery but instead the ancestral hall of the 'family temple' style. Neither the tracing of descent, nor ancestral worship, was a novel development of the sixteenth century, but the proliferation of an ancestral hall in this style among commoner families was. It is significant that the movement began with the imposition of orthodoxy in local religious worship; but iconoclasm did not deter Buddhism, which in the Pearl River delta was to be revived by 1600 through the charisma of the monk Hanshan Deqing.³² However, the ancestral hall as the centre of village organization had come to stay, and in the centuries after 1525, its popularity increased. By the time Qu Dajun wrote *New Happenings in Guangdong* (*Guangdong xinyu*) in the late seventeenth century, the ancestral hall was a noted feature of Pearl River delta society.³³

A few words are in order about this new society in which the ancestral hall had become the locus of territorial organization. The ancestral hall was an addition to the scene, but the temple dedicated to the deity had not by any means taken second place.³⁴ Many temples continued to be centres of local organization, and they were naturally such centres in those villages where no single surname dominated. However, the ancestral hall in the form of the 'family temple' was introduced as a symbol of status. Despite changes in the law, it signified affiliation with officialdom and scholarship, and the growth of ceremonies conducted in the ancestral hall represented the triumph of the literati over the rustic. That the genealogy was popularized as

writing spread complemented the literati status of the lineage, and writing created a sense of certainty about lineage and kinship connections. The mid-fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries set the directions, the next few centuries added institutional flesh to the symbolic skeleton that had been created, and the literati model of the lineage based on the ancestral hall was to be internalized. By the nineteenth century, no villager could be without an ancestral hall or a genealogy; it mattered little that the building that he thought of as an ancestral hall no longer resembled the ‘family temple’ and that he had never set eyes on, nor would he have been sufficiently literate to understand, the genealogy that he felt certain to be his own.

The ancestral hall and the genealogy did not create the lineage, but they firmly located the lineage in a geographic territory and gave it a place within the imperial order. The settlement of an ancestor in the vicinity of Guangzhou, and the status that some of his descendants attained as testified by the architectural style of the ancestral hall, was all it took to prove that Guangzhou City was no longer surrounded by barbarians, but by proper subjects of his imperial majesty, that is, people of the Han race.

ETHNICITY AND IDENTITY: BECOMING HAN

It is important to see that the Ming transition had implications for the ethnic identity of Cantonese people. In other words, the case being argued here is not merely a case of social change and its definition, but one in which the underpinnings of a sense of identity are transformed. Once the lineage was given a pivotal position in territorial organization, being able to trace one’s ancestors from the centre and having the written documents to prove that became the means by which ethnic identities were ascertained. Understandably, any indication of identity change in documents designed to serve as evidence precisely for its continuity would have to be spurious.

Firstly, the most telling indication of an ethnographic definition of local identity is possibly the well-known legend of migration from Zhuji *xiang*. In the legend emigrants left Nanxiong sub-prefecture in northern Guangdong due to fear of an emperor’s wrath (the imperial concubine having eloped with a local merchant), but stresses that the migrants had obtained documentary permission from the local official both at the point of departure and at the point of settlement. Because the legend is cited as justification for settlement in which household registration was an issue of law, the documents referred to would seem to indicate a Ming rather than Song origin for the legend. In this case, legend makes the case that registration granted right to land.

Taken on its own, the Zhuji *xiang* legend seems natural enough as a memory of migration. Contrasted with origin legends common among Yao people, however, the legend takes on special, ethnic, significance. In contrast to the Zhuji *xiang* legend, the Yao legend of origin cites documentary evidence to prove that the Yao, having been granted immunity by the Han emperor (the Ping *wang*), was exempt from tax. Because the word ‘Yao’ was derived from the term ‘*moyao*’ originally denoting exemption from labour service, it makes the obverse point of the Zhuji *xiang* legend that those people who claimed that they were not registered for tax

might likewise have documentary evidence to prove their claim. The mirror images of these legends indicate that the Zhuji *xiang* legend, aside from making the point that the migrants from Zhuji *xiang* had been registered for tax, also makes the point that having registered for tax, they acquired the status that set them apart from the non-tax paying Yao. That tax payment should be so prominent in ethnic distinction suggests that such distinction was not made in the Pearl River delta until the Ming state implemented *lijia* registration.³⁵

This interpretation of the Zhuji *xiang* legend may be corroborated by Chen Wing-hoi's recent discussion of Hakka genealogies, and by extension, Cantonese genealogies from the New Territories of Hong Kong. Chen has noted that the occurrence of ordination names in earlier sections of Hakka genealogies may be explained with reference to the prevalence of religious ordination along the traditions of the Lushan sect. He argues that the disappearance of such names in later portions of the same genealogies indicates the giving way of Lushan religious practices to other traditions that came to be looked upon as orthodox. The argument agrees well with observation made by Faure on religious traditions in the New Territories of Hong Kong, where village priests consciously distinguish between two bodies of rituals that they perform, recognizing that one but not the other as orthodox. The orthodox, Zhengyi, tradition, traces itself to a practice acceptable to Ming law, and fits in well with numerous attempts in the Ming to standardize religious practices. The transformation of religious rituals, as such, would not necessarily imply an ethnic change, but it could easily become a component of it where the ritual was looked upon as an ethnic marker.³⁶

Written genealogies give few obvious clues of ethnic adaptation, but two instances can be cited. Helen Siu cites one of these, the Chen surname of Tianma *xiang* in Xinhui county, that was considered by surrounding villages but not by themselves to be Danjia. The genealogy records a settlement legend that explains their position: an ancestor in the early Ming had been brought up in a fisherman's household in order to escape from attempts by bandits.³⁷ The other example is given in the Gan surname genealogy of Shangchuan Island, Xinning county, which notes that in the Ming, Shangchuan had been dominated by the Yao, for which reason, it was thought, the Gan family had adopted Yao registration. This status was given up in the early Qing for the reason that the family had never been genuinely Yao. To prove the point, the genealogy suggests a Zhuji *xiang* origin for the lineage. Whether or not the family was truly Dan or Yao is not the issue here; the significant issue is that family history was invoked as evidence of ethnic status.³⁸

Finally, as Helen Siu has also argued, the practice of delayed transfer of wives after marriage might also have had an ethnic origin. The practice has been documented for minority ethnic groups in Fujian as well as in Guangdong and Guangxi. That it appears among the Han on the Pearl River delta and was regarded as a correct form of behaviour suggests that it was a well integrated local tradition that had been interpreted by standards thought to be acceptable to wider society. Far from a fashion that developed out of newly found freedom in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the practice was, therefore, a strategy that had been adopted into the tradition of groups that had moved upward from the lowest positions of delta society, that is, by people known as the Danjia.³⁹

Registration with the *lijia*, genealogical reckoning through the use of writing, the application of standardized rituals, and, in particular, the focusing of village rituals on the ancestral hall built to a particular style as defined by Ming dynasty law, together provided easy transition for all and sundry in the Pearl River delta to claims of a common origin. The sixteenth-century transition in the Pearl River delta was more than a transformation of social structure; it brought about the transformation of an identity that merged the locality into the state.

The question has often been asked how China could have maintained a semblance of cultural unity despite the many variations of local culture. The essence of such a question is captured very succinctly in the example of the Liu surname lineage village of Sheung Shui studied by Hugh Baker in the New Territories of Hong Kong.⁴⁰ The Liu lineage remember themselves as having Hakka origins but speak Punti, refer to themselves as Punti in interviews and were counted as such in Qing dynasty New Territories politics.⁴¹ What has always been problematic is how the ethnic definition might have affected the change in their speech and traditions. A redefinition of ancestry and emulation of upper class culture would not be the entire answer, but must have been significant part of it.

NOTES

1. S.Wells Williams (1874: 478), R.H. Mathews (1931: 531).
2. A useful summary account of Guangdong history is Jiang Zuyuan and Fang Zhiqin, et al. (1987).
3. A reproduction of the motif from the Nanyue grave in Guangzhou may be found in *Guangzhou shi wenwu zhi* (1990: 98). Similar motifs are found on bronze drums in Guangxi and Yunnan, examples of which are reproduced in Li Weiqing (1986: 234–248). On Tang dynasty accounts of strange human beings in Guangdong and nearby areas, see Zeng Manhua (1973: 2–5, 28).
4. An account on Zhao To may be found in Harold J. Wiens (1954: 33–141). His letter to Emperor Wendi is included in Wu Daorong (1973). Material on Madam Xian may be found in Wang Xingrui (1984).
5. For a map showing the historical evolution of Guangzhou city, see *Guangzhou shi wenwu zhi* (1990: 35).
6. Zeng Manhua (1973: 55–73).
7. Documentation on Zhang Jiuling can be conveniently found in Zeng Yimin (1987).
8. Edward H. Schafer (1967: 87–114).
9. Luo Xianglin (1960: 163–187); Liang Tingnan (rep. 1981: 43, 67, 88); *Guangdong tongzhi* (1561: 65/6b–7a).
10. This was not the first Guangdong province local history, being predated by the *Guangdong tongzhi chugao* (A preliminary draft history of Guangdong), 1535, compiled by Dai Jing, Guangdong Regional Inspector (*xun'an jiancha yushi*).
11. Huang Zuo (1936). Huang did not have Lu Yin's *Guangzhou xianxian zhuan* (Biographies of former worthies in Guangzhou) in its entirety, but only those sections incorporated into the Song encyclopedia the *Taiping yulan* (Encyclopedia of the Taiping and Xingguo period, that is 976–984). On the *Taiping yulan*, see Yves Hervoet, ed. (1978: 319–320). On Lu Yin and his *Guangzhou xianxian zhuan*, see *Guangdong tongzhi* (1561: 42/12b, 44/30a–31a).

12. *Guangdong tongzhi* 1561, ch. 20. It is significant that while Huang Zuo retained much of the content of the 1535 provincial history in his own, he excluded the sections recording regulations issued by Dai Jing, the compiler, to reform local customs and instead included the regulations set up by locally famous Tang Yu under Tang's biography (59/47b-48b) which were much closer to the ritual reforms that in Guangdong began with Chen Baisha and Wei Xiao.
13. *Guangdong tongzhi* (1561: 20/32a).
14. Huang Peifang, ed. (1905) includes the biographies of Huang Zuo, his father and his grandfather. Zuo's biography may be found at 4/17a-30b.
15. The biographies of Zhan Ruoshui and Huo Tao may be found in L. Carrington Goodrich and Chaoying Fang, eds. (1976: 36-42, 679-683). A reference to Fang Xianfu may be found in the same source under an entry on Gui O, pp. 756.
16. Huang Zuo, 'Junzhi zixu xianshi xingzhuang' (An account of my forebear written by myself for inclusion in the county local history), reprinted from Huang Zuo's collected works the *Taiquan ji* (the works of Mr Taiquan) in Huang Peifang (1905: 4/1a-9b).
17. Carney T. Fisher (1990: 46-106), and Ann-ping Chin Woo, (1984: 25-30).
18. On Chen Baisha and his disciples, see Jian Yuwen, (1970: 343-353). Zhan Ruoshui's status in the sixteenth century may be gleaned from Huo Yuxia's petition to the emperor requesting the granting of the honour of a spirit tablet in the imperial Confucian temple. This petition may be found in Huo Yuxia (1857: 21/1a-5a).
19. Huang Yu (rep. 1939: 138-139).
20. Temples dedicated to the sacrifice of individual Guangdong notables in Guangzhou city are listed in the *Guangdong tongzhi* (1601: 18/17a-18a). In the Qing, they were collectively included on a side altar at the Temple of the Five Worthies (Wuxian *ci*). See Qiu Chishi: (preface 1806: 3/9a-b).
21. See the example of Foshan discussed in David Faure (1990: 1-31).
22. Patricia Buckley Ebrey (1991: 202-219).
23. David Faure (1989: 4-36).
24. I know of two specific instances in the Pearl River delta and surroundings where in the Ming dynasty ancestral tablets were kept in Buddhist monasteries. One of these examples I discussed in David Faure (1984: 24-42).
25. The best example of this sort of relationship would be He Zhen, whose biography may be found in He Chongzu, (1434).
26. For some examples, see David Faure (1992: 261-296).
27. Chiu Jun, 'Duchayuan zuo qiandu yushi Gonghui Yang gong shendaobei,' (Obituary tablet for Assistant Censor in Chief of the Left of the Chief Surveillance Bureau, the Venerable Yang Gonghui), in Wu Daorong, ch. 65 (1973: 6: 320-322); and David Faure (1990).
28. The documentation for this rather complicated argument may be found in David Faure, forthcoming.
29. Huang Zuo, *Taiquan xiangli*, preface of 1549, included in the *Siku quanshu*; Huo Tao, *Huo Weiya jiaxun*, preface of 1529, reprinted in *Hanfenlou mijì*; and Pang Shangpeng, *Pangshi jiaxun*, preface of 1571, reprinted in *Lingnan yishu*.
30. *Fangshi jiapu* (The genealogy of the Fang surname), preface of 1890, K 0.189/438 in the Guangdong Provincial Library, Guangzhou.
31. Carney T. Fisher (1990) discusses the Great Rituals Controversy. Huo Tao's ancestral hall building and land acquisition are recorded in *Shitou Huoshi zupu* (1902: 1 *ciji*/1a-b, and 1 *yuanyu*, *youxu*). See also David Faure (1989: 18-19).
32. Sung-peng Hsu (1979).
33. Qu Dajun (Preface of 1700, rep. 1974: 464-465).
34. This is the argument advanced in David Faure (1986).

35. David Faure (1989).
36. Chan Wing-hoi, forthcoming, and David Faure (1986: 145–148).
37. Helen F. Siu (1989: 51–54).
38. *Guangdong Taishan Shangchuan fang Ganshi zupu* (The genealogy of the Shangchuan branch of the Gan surname in Taishan, Guangdong), 1935.
39. Helen F. Siu (1990: 32–62).
40. Hugh Baker (1968).
41. The Punti (*bendi*) people of the New Territories, who considered themselves natives of Guangzhou prefecture, speak a dialect they refer to as *waitou*. On this dialect, see Laurent Sagart (1982: 22: 142–160).

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3

Literary, Ethnic or Territorial? Definitions of Guangdong Culture in the Late Qing and the Early Republic

May-bo Ching

CULTURE

The English word ‘culture’ is usually translated into Chinese as *wenhua*. The Chinese word ‘*wenhua*’, like its English equivalent, carries a strong universalist connotation. When its use is altered to refer to beliefs and practices outside the universalist context, for instance, by qualifying it with an adjective so that it becomes a part of such terms as ‘native place culture’ (*xiangbang wenhua*), or ‘regional culture’ (*difang wenhua*), its implications become ambiguous. On the one hand, the restriction placed on the word by the introduction of the adjective might imply recognition that every region has its own unique culture; but on the other hand, because what counts as ‘culture’ within the region must still be selective, it introduces the possibility that local beliefs and practices might still be graded in a way that mirrors universalist standards. While boundaries are arbitrary, ‘culture’ must remain ambiguous; the invention and adoption of terms to describe beliefs and practices must indicate the insider’s self-proclaimed consciousness of the values of his or her own community as well as of his or her understanding of the outside world.

GUANGDONG CULTURE

The perception of Guangdong culture in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was riddled with the same ambiguity as implied in the word ‘culture’ or *wenhua*. In this paper, I would suggest that throughout the two centuries, the term carried at least three connotations. Firstly, it implied that Guangdong as a place of culture counted within the Chinese high culture which was acceptable to the literati in other parts of China. Secondly, it implied that a unique Guangdong culture, identified with the literature of Cantonese vernacular, had Chinese roots. Thirdly, towards the early Republic, the term also included Hakka and Chaozhou traditions within Guangdong culture, challenging the traditional centrality of the Cantonese within Guangdong. The interplay of these three notions of ‘culture’ was closely related to Guangdong’s position within national politics as well as the evolution of politics within Guangdong.

In general, it may be said the attempt to gain recognition for Guangdong as a place of culture in its own right took place as written Cantonese began to appear in

Song lyrics, possibly not very much earlier than the nineteenth century. The politics manoeuvring which placed Guangdong within literati culture in nineteenth-century China was different from the popular interest in Cantonese songs. The two movements went their separate ways even when in the twentieth century, Republican politics sought to create a unified culture for the whole of Guangdong province. It is obvious that written Cantonese did not become accepted as an element of high culture. Towards the 1940s, while classical studies struggled with May Fourth modern literature for respectability, written Cantonese remained beyond its pale. Divergent trends in the interpretation and presentation of what counts as Guangdong culture have continued to this day.

LITERARY GUANGDONG: A PLACE OF CULTURE

One of the most determined attempts to put Guangdong on the map of the Chinese empire as a place of culture was the founding of the Xuehaitang Academy in the early 1820s in Guangzhou by Ruan Yuan (1764–1849), the Governor-General of the provinces of Guangdong and Guangxi.¹ In contrast to other academies in Guangzhou that were established to prepare students for the imperial examination, the Xuehaitang was devoted to classical studies, especially the Han-Learning favoured by Ruan Yuan, its founder.² The position held by local scholars in the national arena of scholarship was, and still is, the measure widely adopted throughout China for evaluating the level of local cultural achievement. In this sense, the founding of the Xuehaitang propelled Guangdong scholarship (*Yuexue*) in classical studies into national limelight, as the late Qing scholar, politician and political commentator, Liang Qichao (1873–1929), had pointed out.³

The Xuehaitang scholars were famous for their compilation of *the Imperial Exegesis of the Classics* (*Huangchao jingjie*). Representing a major tribute to the research carried out by the Han-Learning scholars in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the *Imperial Exegesis of the Classics* was designed as a follow-up to the long admired *Commentaries and Annotations to the Thirteen Classics* (*Shisanjing zhushu*), which covered pre-Song Confucian scholarship. In the contemporary controversy on the correct interpretation of the classics, its publication was widely welcomed by current scholars in Guangdong and elsewhere and regarded as a reaction against those texts which were considered biased towards Song-Ming Neo-Confucian classicism.⁴ In addition to this publication, the Xuehaitang also earned its prestige by producing distinguished scholars who enjoyed a national reputation. Examples of such were Lin Botong (1775–1845) and Chen Li (1810–1882), both of whom were famous for their contributions in synthesizing Han-Learning methods with Song-Learning political and moral concerns.⁵

Despite its reputation, it is somewhat of an anomaly that the Xuehaitang should be accorded pride of place in Guangdong scholarship. The background of the directors appointed to the academy was not really very impressive, even though, unlike other academies in Guangdong, students were admitted to the Xuehaitang only if they had attained at least licentiate status (*gongsheng*). Among the first eight directors appointed by Ruan Yuan in 1826, only two were metropolitan graduates,

and two were licentiates of lower rank. Similarly, of the directors who were appointed after them except for a few who were metropolitan graduates the majority attained only provincial graduate degrees.⁶ Although the lack of a metropolitan degree did not necessarily deter these men from attaining distinguished academic accomplishment, it probably precluded them from climbing up the official hierarchy, especially during a time when the number of qualified candidates probably exceeded substantially the number of vacant government posts.⁷ Many Xuehaitang scholars, therefore, had little alternative to accepting their positions as local Guangdong scholars.

However, the careers of many of the Xuehaitang scholars were shaped not only by scholarship but also by local politics. With the prestige of the academy behind them, the directors of the Xuehaitang were employed by government officials and private sponsors as compilers of gazetteers and scholarly works written by past reputable Guangdong scholars and officials. In the years before the First Opium War (1840–42), many Xuehaitang directors also took an active part in the debate on the relaxation of control over the opium trade.⁸ Moreover, during the Taiping Rebellion and the Second Opium War in the 1850s and 1860s, the character of Xuehaitang directorship changed, for appointed to it were some senior local leaders, who had been involved in the defence of Guangdong by the organization of militia fund-raising.⁹ By the 1880s and 1890s, the directors appointed were also active in assisting Zhang Zhidong (1837–1909), the Guangdong and Guangxi Governor-General from 1884 to 1889, in establishing the Guangya Academy. When in 1903, as the Qing government began reforms in education and the Xuehaitang was transformed into a modern school (*xuetang*), Xuehaitang directors, such as Ding Renchang (1861–1926) and Wu Daorong (1853–1936) continued to be called upon as advisers to the provincial government.¹⁰ Therefore, throughout its history, the directorate of the Xuehaitang served, in fact, as an advisory agent for the governor-general. It was due to its political status and official support that the establishment of the academy came to be a milestone marking the cultural orthodoxy of nineteenth-century Guangdong.

A literary establishment under the patronage of the Governor General, therefore, characterized Guangdong high culture through the nineteenth century. Committed to the classical tradition, the Xuehaitang directorate would have found it difficult to continue after the Revolution of 1911. Those difficulties embody implications for the development of a recognized Guangdong culture, but before turning to that, we should examine the divergent trend in the establishment in a popular Cantonese literature.

ETHNIC GUANGDONG: CENTRALITY OF CANTONESE VERNACULAR

The longing for status and recognition that is detectable in the attempts to build Guangzhou into a centre of learning may also be detected in the social ordering of local dialects. Among the various dialects spoken in Guangdong, Cantonese obviously occupied a central position as it was the *lingua franca* in Guangzhou, the provincial capital. Cantonese, like other regional dialects, was considered by the literati as

inferior to official speech (*guanhua*) but superior to other Guangdong dialects, such as Chaozhou and Hakka.

As the *lingua franca* of Guangzhou, Cantonese was regarded as ‘standard speech’ when compared with other regional dialects. For example, the 1754 edition of *Zengcheng County Gazetteer* (*Zengcheng xianzhi*) states that ‘the pronunciation (*yuyin*) spoken in Zengcheng is similar to that of Panyu’ and ‘scholars, despising the use of the local dialect (*fangyan*), speak in ‘standard pronunciation’ (*zhengyin*) to their visitors.’¹¹ In this usage, by ‘standard pronunciation’ the gazetteer writer probably understands the Cantonese spoken by the people in Panyu. Chen Li from Panyu county, a director of the Xuehaitang, argued in his writings that, compared with the dialects of many other provinces, Cantonese came closer to Sui and Tang dynasty pronunciation, because most Guangdong people migrated to the south from central China in as early as the Tang dynasty.¹²

In contrast, Cantonese scholars commented on the Chaozhou and Hakka dialects in negative terms. The 1561 edition of *Guangdong tongzhi* (*Guangdong Provincial Gazetteer*) states, ‘It is disgusting that the common people (*xiaoren*) [in Chaozhou] who are crude and unrefined, talk about vulgar things in their native tongue even in front of the government officials.’¹³ In the 1820 edition of *Zengcheng County Gazetteer* it is stated: ‘More and more Hakkas have moved into the county. They have not changed their village dialect, which is so noisy that you can tell without asking them [for the place of origin] that these people have come from other places.’¹⁴

Cantonese vernacular appeared in popular entertainment, such as opera performance, throughout the Pearl River delta. It is unclear when the term ‘*yueju*’ (Yue theatre) or ‘Guangdong *daxi*’ (Guangdong opera) was adopted to denote the opera performed in the Cantonese dialect. Since the mid-Ming dynasty, several types of tunes (*qiang*) from other provinces including the ‘*Yiyang qiang*’, ‘*Kun qiang*’, and ‘*Qin qiang*’ had become popular in Guangdong. In the early Qing dynasty, the term ‘*Guang qiang*’ was current, particularly denoting the tunes sung by the troupes native to Guangzhou.¹⁵ By the first half of the nineteenth century, a distinction was made in Guangzhou between troupes that had come from other provinces (known as ‘troupes from beyond the rivers’, *waijiangban*) and local troupes (*bendiban*).¹⁶ However, as Xian Yuqing has pointed out, the nomenclatural difference did not imply an immediate distinction between the tunes sung by Cantonese and non-Cantonese singing troupes, for the local troupes sang in tunes acquired from other provinces, and were set apart from troupes that had come from other provinces only in that they were excluded from performing ‘official opera’ (*guanxi*) by the theatrical guilds.¹⁷ However these tunes were named, textual evidence shows that at least since 1871, Cantonese vernacular had already been adopted in the composing of opera scripts.¹⁸ Towards the end of the Qing, it is quite certain that many operas performed in the Cantonese-speaking region in Guangdong had incorporated local elements such as the use of Cantonese vernacular in dialogue and Cantonese folk song traditions that had existed long before the nineteenth century.

Understandably, the earliest attempts to put Cantonese into writing that we know about came from the writing of songs. The various literary genres in Cantonese

vernacular, including song books known as Yue songs (*yueou*), wooden-fish books (*muyu shu*), southern tones (*nanyin*) and ‘dragon boat’ (*longzhou*), are made up of songs written in seven-character lines. Their contents vary from historical narratives and love stories to descriptions of local rituals and customs. It is difficult to date their origin precisely, but the long-term existence of the custom of chanting ‘wooden-fish books’ can be documented from both historical and textual evidence. Kuang Lu (1604–1650) and Wang Shizhen (1634–1711) mentioned in their poems the practice of singing ‘wooden fish’ (*muyu*) in Guangdong.¹⁹ Qu Dajun’s (1630–1696) *New Happenings in Guangdong (Guangdong xinyu)*, which was first published in 1700, also records that women invited blind musicians to sing the ‘touch-fish songs’ (*moyu ge*) during their gatherings.²⁰ The first edition of one of the earliest extant wooden-fish song texts, ‘The story of the decorated letter paper’ (*Huajian ji*), dates back to 1713.²¹ It seems possible that the *muyu shu* might have been in existence at least from the early Qing, if not the late Ming.

By the nineteenth century, in Guangzhou, Cantonese songs might even locally have achieved recognition as a form of literature. While many of the authors of Cantonese vernacular songs were anonymous, one of them, Zhao Ziyong, who made perhaps the most famous compilation known as the *Cantonese songs (Yueou)*, received much acclaim among his contemporary Guangdong literati. Although Cantonese songs were categorized by many Guangdong literati as ‘music of the vulgar (*baren xiali*)’, Zhao’s verse, with his particular refinement, was regarded as ‘full of affection and taste.’²² As a degree-holder from Nanhai county, Zhao was appointed as the magistrate of various counties between the years 1820 and 1837. It seems that Zhao was personally known to the well-known Guangdong scholars of his time: he had studied with Xuehaitang scholars Zhang Weiping and Xu Rong, participated in many literary gatherings in which scholars like Yi Kezhong took a part and the preface of the *Yueou* was written by Huang Peifang.²³ Zhang, Xu and Huang were all at one time or the another directors of the Xuehaitang. Zhao Ziyong carefully examined the special characters of the Cantonese dialect before he put them into song. Thus the *Yueou* written by Zhao was a literati-polished version of Cantonese vernacular narratives.²⁴

Nevertheless, although the nineteenth-century Guangzhou literati did use Cantonese vernacular as a means of self-expression and for the purpose of entertainment, they never adopted it as formal literature or made use of it in their official writing. Only by the end of the nineteenth century was Cantonese vernacular brought into textbooks. The impetus had come from some late Qing scholars who advocated the use of vernacular language (*baihua*) in the newspapers and textbooks.²⁵ In Guangdong, the most distinguished advocate of the use of *baihua* in teaching was probably Chen Zibao (1862–1922), a scholar from Xinhui county who had enrolled as Kang Youwei’s student in the Wanmu School (*Wanmu caotang*) in Guangzhou in 1895.²⁶ Chen Zibao used Cantonese vernacular to compile various types of textbooks to teach basic characters to women and children, to educate them in knowledge useful for daily life, and to instil in them the idea of patriotism. After the 1911 Revolution, his textbooks were modified by others in order to suit the new political situation. Different editions were published in Guangzhou, Hong Kong and even in Shanghai.²⁷ The books for recognizing characters (*zike*) that he

compiled were popular in counties of the Pearl River delta near Hong Kong and Macau.²⁸

In adopting vernacular Cantonese in the writing of textbooks, Chen Zibao had to design his own standards and criteria. In *Philology for children (Youya)* written in 1897, he explained why and how Cantonese was used to write the book:

It is difficult to standardize the speeches of different provinces. The only thing I can do is to use standard pronunciation (*zhengyin*) to interpret ancient usages. However, for speeches and terms peculiar to Guangdong, I shall use Guangdong characters to distinguish them.²⁹

His point of view was consistent with his interest in reforming classical Chinese. In his essay ‘Newspapers should be published in an easier language’ written in 1899, Chen asserted that the use of classical Chinese had been disastrous for China and said in definite terms that classical Chinese should be reformed in order to widen the knowledge of the people.³⁰ In this respect, Chen Zibao was not alone. This was part and parcel of the vernacular movement that was launched with the popularization of newspapers, of which other students of Kang Youwei, notably, Liang Qichao, were pioneers. The first newspaper in regional vernacular was published in Wuxi in 1898. In Shanghai, textbooks written in vernacular appeared around 1903.³¹

By the last years of the Qing dynasty, Cantonese vernacular was adopted by the revolutionaries to propagate their ideas of patriotism and revolution. As early as in 1900, the revolutionary press, *China Daily (Zhongguo ribao)*, had already printed many short verses written in Cantonese vernacular literary form to ridicule the Qing government. From 1904 to the end of the Qing dynasty, some revolutionaries such as Chen Shaobai (1869–1934) and Huang Luyi (1869–1926) set up their own opera troupes, which performed plays criticizing the Qing government.³² It was said that when the troupe organized by Huang Luyi performed a Cantonese opera, the ‘speech of the central region’ (*zhongzhouyin*) previously spoken on the stage was totally replaced by Cantonese vernacular.³³

Down to the early Republican period, Cantonese vernacular was commonly employed in popular entertainment. The heyday of the Cantonese opera was probably the 1920’s, when overseas Cantonese communities in North America and Southeast Asia also became ready markets. However, Cantonese did not lose its local character and never quite achieved the status of a formal written language. Even when Chen Zibao’s textbooks were used as supplementary teaching materials in schools, they could not compete with textbooks published by the major national publishers located in Shanghai such as the Commercial Press. In 1920, the Ministry of Education formally adopted standard vernacular Chinese for classroom instruction in elementary schools. In 1922, all textbooks had to be written in standard vernacular Chinese, and regional dialects such as Cantonese might not appear in textbooks authorized by the Ministry of Education.

Nevertheless, an interest in Cantonese literature was retained as an academic pursuit. Zhao Ziyong was a much studied subject, by scholars of literature such as Xu Dishan and Xian Yuqing.³⁴ A blossom of interest in folklore studies after the May Fourth Movement allowed the *Yueou* to be reprinted in the *Folklore Weekly*

(*Minsu Zhoukan*), a journal published from 1928 to 1933 by the Zhongshan University in Guangzhou.³⁵ Dialect literature was recognized to be an essential element of regional culture, even though literary Cantonese served only purposes of popular entertainment. Thus in an exhibition on Guangdong culture held in Hong Kong in 1940 by a group of Republican scholars and officials, Cantonese song books, among many other objects of cultural relics, were on display.

TERRITORIAL GUANGDONG: AN ADMINISTRATIVE CONGLOMERATE

Neither in the effort to establish classical scholarship in Guangzhou, nor in the centrality given to Cantonese as a representation of Guangdong culture, was the idea of a provincial culture congruent with the administrative boundaries of the province. It was the constitutional and educational reforms of the late Qing that began a move that might redress the balance of local dialects within Guangdong, and it was the development of late Qing and in particular Republican politics that redefined the idea of a Guangdong culture and gave the Hakka people and the Chaozhou people recognition equal to the Cantonese.

Since the end of the eighteenth century, the Hakkas were known primarily for their feuds with the Cantonese. By the mid-nineteenth century, the Hakka origin of the Taiping leaders only added to their reputation of being lawless. This reputation was retained until the late nineteenth century when the Hakkas began to acquire a pronounced position in Guangdong. In the gazetteers of Gaoyao (1863), Xinhui (1871), Xinning (1893), and Gaoming (1894), the Hakkas were labelled as bandits (*fei*). In the Xuantong (1909-11) editions of the *Gaoyao County Gazetteer (Gaoyao xianzhi)*, the Hakkas were even noted as aborigines.³⁶ Nevertheless, by the late Qing, some Hakka scholars began to make an effort to assert their identity. Wen Zhonghe, a Hakka Hanlin academician who graduated from the Xuehaitang, made a case in the 1898 edition of *Jiaying Sub-Prefectural Gazetteer (Jiaying zhouzhi)* by including an extensive treatise on Hakka customs and rituals to identify the Hakkas with the Han Chinese. Like the Cantonese, he also associated the Hakka dialect with the Sui-Tang speech in order to show the northern origins of the Hakkas.³⁷

Recognition by the Cantonese of the Hakkas as their equals came only in the late Qing in the process of textbook compilation. In the educational reforms of the early 1900s, textbooks on local history were compiled not only to serve educational purposes, but also to complement the local assemblies which had been introduced as a part of the constitutional reform. The Qing government's policy was based on the assumption that the patriotic spirit could be projected from people's love for their own locality, and that this could be promoted through education.

In response to government policy, several textbooks on provincial history were written. In 1905, Huang Jie (1873-1935) compiled *The Textbook of Guangdong Local History (Guangdong xiangtu lishi jiaokeshu)*, which was issued with the approval of the provincial educational authorities for use in the new schools being set up under the imperial reforms.³⁸ In 1906, Huang Yingkui (1855-1929), a student of the Xuehaitang, and his son, Huang Foyi (1886-1946), compiled another textbook

given a similar title (*Guangdong xiangtushi jiaokeshu*). According to Huang Foyi, in writing this textbook, he intended 'to see whether it could stimulate the love for one's native land among students'.³⁹

In line with the interest in evolution and ethnography that was gaining ground in the late Qing, one of the concerns of the two textbooks was the issue of ethnic purity in the province.⁴⁰ Huang Jie's textbook contains a chapter that dealt with the racial composition and origins of the different groups of people, stating 'Among the races of Guangdong are Hakkas and Hoklos; who are not Cantonese and not of the Han racial stock'. The text provoked a storm of protest among Hakka scholars and reformers including Huang Zunxian (1848–1905), Qiu Fengjia (1864–1912) and Zou Lu (1885–1954). A 'Society for Investigation of the Origin of the Hakka People' was formed among the Hakkas from Jiaying, and further actions were threatened to be taken. Eventually the provincial educational authorities compromised by removing the offending statement.⁴¹

What spoke louder than their publications, however, was the prominence of some Hakka people in the 1911 Revolution, in Republican politics and in Guangdong's administration.⁴² When the Republican government was established in 1912, Qiu Fengjia, a Hakka, became the education minister of the Guangdong military government and concurrently Guangdong's representative to the Shanghai conference for the establishment of a central government.⁴³ Another Hakka, Zou Lu, who played a major role in higher education in Guangdong throughout the early Republic, was one of the crucial dissidents among the Guomindang right wing heading the 'Xishan Conference' in 1925, which aimed at ousting the Chinese and Russian communists from the Guomindang.⁴⁴

The combination of an academic interest and a political career may well be exemplified in a twentieth-century Hakka scholar, Luo Xianglin (1906–1978). Starting as a history and anthropology student at the Qinghua University in Beijing in the late 1920's, Luo Xianglin gradually developed into an authority on Hakka studies.⁴⁵ His early interest in Hakka culture, and in particular, Hakka songs, developed into a paper published in 1929, entitled 'A General Discussion on the Ethnic Groups in Guangdong' ('*Guangdong minzu gailun*') that appeared in *Folklore Weekly*. Although this was one of his earliest works, it established Luo's opinions about the ethnic classification in Guangdong, and it quite turned the ethnic order of Guangdong on its head.

In 'A General Discussion on the Ethnic Groups in Guangdong', Luo categorized the ethnic groups in Guangdong into two major types, namely, Han and non-Han. He argued that the extant sub-groups within the Han included the Cantonese, the Chaozhou, and the Hakka. In terms of blood purity, the Cantonese were least pure, for they inherited the blood of many non-Han groups including not only the Miao, Yao, Bai, Dan, but also Negroes, Persians, and Arabs. The blood of the Chaozhou was purer than that of the Cantonese, but even that was still mixed substantially with that of the She and the Dan minorities. Among the three Han ethnic groups, Luo asserted, the blood of the Hakka was comparatively the purest, although it still might possibly have assimilated with the blood of the She.⁴⁶ The conclusion was, therefore, that in Guangdong it was the Hakka that was closest to the Han.

Luo's academic endeavour gradually led him to participate more and more in the administration of higher education and provincial cultural affairs. In 1932, Luo was employed by Yanjing University in Beijing to study the racial composition of south China. In the same year, he became Zou Lu's secretary, when Zou was president of Zhongshan University and a compiler of the Republican edition of *Guangdong Provincial Gazetteer*. An interest in the Hakka and a commitment towards the Republican regime possibly came together in his research on the Hakka origin of Sun Yat-sen.⁴⁷

A missionary who had lived among the Hakkas had once described the Hakkas as 'the cream of the Chinese people.' This statement was then quoted by Ellsworth Huntington in his *Character of Races* published in 1924, and it became a favourite citation used by Luo Xianglin from time to time.⁴⁸

Luo became involved in Guangdong public administration after he obtained a full professorship in Zhongshan University in 1941. In 1945, he was appointed a committee member in the Guangdong Provincial Government and Head of the Provincial Academy of Arts and Science. In the next year he became the associate head of the Guangdong Provincial Historical Literature Committee. In 1947, he resigned from all these official posts, but continued to work in Zhongshan University as a professor of history until he moved to Hong Kong in 1949.⁴⁹

The important positions of the Hakka and the Chaozhou were obviously taken into consideration in the 1940 Guangdong Cultural Artifacts Exhibition. Held in Hong Kong while Guangzhou was occupied by the Japanese army, the political message of the exhibition was clear. The objective of this exhibition was 'studying the culture of the native place; extending the spirit of the nation', a familiar theme which carried the assumption that by arousing people's love for their native place, their love for their country would be promoted, and thus the morale for resisting the Japanese army's invasion would be boosted.⁵⁰ On that occasion, the exhibition committee members regretted that the exhibition had collected mainly articles from Guangzhou but had only a few from other prefectures due to the inconvenience of war time transportation.⁵¹ They compensated for the shortcomings by exhibiting a Bible translated into Hakka, and including an essay on Chaozhou opera in the commemorating volume *Guangdong Cultural Artifacts (Guangdong wenwu)* specially published for the exhibition. It is clear that a balance was already being struck among the three dominant groups by the Republic. The inclusion of the three prominent groups in the exhibition to demonstrate a single Guangdong culture was a result of political compromise. In contrast to these dominant groups, one may ask why the Yao, Zhuang and the Dan living in the same administrative territory did not belong to Guangdong culture, but continued to be regarded as non-Han minorities. They had probably failed in the social game of asserting their Chinese identity, or, perhaps they had chosen not to play it.

EPILOGUE: CULTURE, GUANGDONG, CHINA

After the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911, the Xuehaitang's reputation did not, in fact, fade away. Some Guangdong scholars who formerly participated actively

in provincial politics were unwilling to submit themselves to the new Chinese government. They moved to Hong Kong, and there, claiming to be ‘surviving elders of the late Qing’ dynasty’, they continued the Xuehaitang’s scholarship, often with reference to their Xuehaitang connections. Having given up a lifetime’s engagement in provincial politics, and now looking to culture as a substitute for power, they necessarily held a view of Guangdong culture that was backward-looking. Thus, in the tradition of previous scholars who had compiled collections of essays by Guangdong writers, Wu Daorong published his *Guangdong wenzheng* (*Selection of essays from Guangdong*) in 1915.⁵² It is a significant statement of the Xuehaitang’s achievement that in Wu Daorong’s collection, out of the 183 figures from the Jiaqing period (1796–1820) to the end of the Qing dynasty, more than one-third were former graduates or directors of the Xuehaitang. Alternatively, if numbers are looked at from the point of view of the Xuehaitang, out of the fifty-five directors of the academy since its establishment to its closing in 1903, forty-four were included as representative Guangdong scholars in Wu’s collection.

Ex-Xuehaitang directors who sought to continue the classical tradition in Hong Kong found good company in Hong Kong among other ‘surviving elders of the late Qing dynasty’. Lai Jixi (1865–1937) and Ou Dadian (b. 1877), became the first generation of lecturers in classical studies and Chinese history when classical Chinese (*guwen*) was introduced to the curriculum of the University of Hong Kong in 1912.⁵³ In 1923, Lai established the Xuehai Library (Xuehai *shulou*) in Hong Kong, which was specially named after the Xuehaitang and was intended to imitate the functions of the Xuehaitang as a library for storing Confucian classics and as a centre for classical studies. All the first-generation teachers of the Xuehai Library such as Ou Dadian, Chen Botao (1855–1930), Cen Guangyue (1876–1960), Wen Su (1878–1939), Zhu Ruzhen (1869–1942), were late Qing degree-holders from Guangdong.⁵⁴ Wen Su remained loyal to the late Qing emperor, Xuantong, and was involved in Zhang Xun’s (1854–1923) restoration in 1917.⁵⁵ When the University of Hong Kong established its Department of Chinese in 1927, it appointed Lai Jixi the department head, and Ou Dadian, Wen Su and Zhu Ruzhen as lecturers.

The growth of a new national culture, therefore, went against what the Guangdong people had achieved in their construction of a provincial identity. By the late Qing and the early Republic, they could no longer find acceptable a provincial identity founded upon either achievement in classical scholarship or the adaptation of Cantonese vernacular in popular literature. Nevertheless, now that they were convinced Guangdong an identity, they felt obliged to find for it a territorial base, and it was power that determined what should be included or excluded. Political compromise made the Cantonese literati eventually losers in creating Guangdong culture: they gave up the Cantonese vernacular and submitted to a Guangdong culture that included the Hakka and Chaozhou. Subsequently the 1949 Revolution further drove the Guangdong literati to Hong Kong where they carried on their own discourse on Guangdong culture. Once again, Hong Kong became a shelter not only for refugees, but also for the ‘Republican elders’ — to rephrase the earlier term. They repeated the story of their late Qing counterparts and gradually the significance of a Guangdong culture withered in view of the growth of a Hong Kong culture mastered by the mass media.

NOTES

1. The Xuehaitang Academy began teaching in 1821, but the building was not completed until 1824. See Rong Zhaozu (1934: 14).
2. Benjamin Elman offers a number of interpretations for the term ‘Han Learning’. The most conventional explanation he suggests is that it is ‘usually taken to represent a type of scholarship that, opposed to the Neo-Confucian philosophies associated with the Song and Ming dynasties, returned to a study of the Han interpretations of the Classics.’ See Benjamin Elman (1979: 74 n. 10).
3. Liang Qichao (1936: 41: 78–79).
4. Benjamin Elman (1979: 52), Frederic Wakeman (1966: 182).
5. Benjamin Elman (1979: 62–63), Guangdong wenwu (rep. 1990: 898), Xu Shichang (1962: *juan* 132–139, 174–175), Qian Mu (1937: 506–632, 633–709).
6. Rong Zhaozu (1934: 23–60).
7. Benjamin Elman (1984: 130).
8. Benjamin Elman (1979: 76), Liang Tingnan (rep. 1937: 7), Lin Zexu (rep. 1962: 363).
9. See the cases of Chen Pu and Li Guangting in *Panyu xianzhi* (1911: 20/17b–18a, 19a–20a), and in Rong Zhaozu (1934: 47–48).
10. The fact that Wu was appointed as director of the Xuehaitang was recorded in Rong Zhaozu (1934: 60). Wu’s biography in his essay collection also records that he refused to take up any official appointment including the Xuehaitang directorship after the 1911 Revolution (Wu Daorong, n.d. *xingzhuang*: 2a). He might have served as Xuehaitang director until 1903, when the Academy became a modern school. For Ding and Wu’s participation in the preparation of the provincial assembly by the last years of Qing, see Edward Rhoads (1975: 155).
11. *Zengcheng xianzhi* (1754: 2: 29a).
12. *Panyu xianzhi* (1871: 6: 16b).
13. *Guangdong tongzhi* (1561: 20: 32a).
14. *Zengcheng xianzhi* (1754: 2: 29a).
15. Lai Mingjiang (1988: 8–10).
16. Lai Mingjiang (1988: 12–13) and *Zhongguo xijuzhi* (1987: 1: 16), quoting Yang Moujian (1842: 2: 3b–4a).
17. See Xian Yuqing (1963). Xian’s argument was based on a tablet inscription dated 1759 recovered from a guild formed by the opera troupes coming from provinces outside Guangdong (*Waijiang liyuan huiguan*), supplemented by some other contemporary sources.
18. The only textual evidence that I have seen so far is an opera script entitled ‘A Painting of Hibiscus’ (*Furongping*). Published in 1871, the major part of the verse and dialogues of this opera script is written in classical Chinese. However, when a ‘painted face’ (*huamian*) character appears on the scene, the soliloquy he says is composed in Cantonese vernacular. See *Furongping* (1871: 2: 16a).
19. Tan Zhengbi and Tan Xun (1982: 2); Wang Shizhen (1684: 2/ 3b); Kuang Lu (n.d.: 1/ 29b–30b, the poem was written in 1694).
20. Qu Dajun (rep. 1974: 358–372).
21. Zheng Zhenduo (rep. 1971: 1275–1313). See also Tan Zhengbi and Tan Xun (1987: 5–6).
22. *Nanhai xianzhi* (1872: 20: 3a–b).
23. Xian Yuqing (1947: 70–71, 97).
24. *Nanhai xianzhi* (1872: 20: 3a–3b).
25. In the late Qing period, the term ‘*baihua*’ referred to various regional vernaculars in

- contrast to the official language (*guanhua*), but was not limited to the standard Chinese based on Beijing speech promoted in the May Fourth movement.
26. *Jiaoyu yiyi* (1941: 137a).
 27. The Oral History Project of the Chinese University found that villagers in the New Territories remembered chapters learnt from Chen Zibao's text. See Bernard Luk (1984: 128).
 28. Wang Qile (1983: 220).
 29. *Youya* (1897: preface).
 30. *Jiaoyu yiyi* (1941: 6a-6b).
 31. Ni Haishu (1959: 69, 168–169).
 32. These opera troupes were called '*zhishiban*' (troupe formed by righteous men), see Feng Ziyou (1969: 237–242).
 33. Lai Mingjiang (1988: 27).
 34. Xian Yuqing (1947) and Xu Dishan (1922).
 35. Hung Chang-tai (1985: 39, 53–54).
 36. S.T. Leong (1985: 306).
 37. S.T. Leong (1985: 306–307).
 38. S.T. Leong (1985: 308). The extant edition that I found in the Guangdong Provincial Library in Guangzhou was a revised edition published in 1907.
 39. *Guangdong xiangtushi jiaokeshu* (1906: preface: 1a).
 40. For a discussion on Chinese intellectual concerns about the issues of races and nations in the late Qing and the early Republic, see Dikotter (1992).
 41. S.T. Leong (1985: 308) and Luo Xianglin (1933: 5–6, 27–28) refer to possibly the earliest edition of Huang Jie's textbook. In the revised edition which I found in the Guangdong Provincial Library in Guangzhou, I did not find a chapter on racial composition, nor words of insult on the Hakkas. The *Guangdong xiangtushi jiaokeshu* (1906: 1b) also expresses a similar concern about who could be regarded as Chinese in Guangdong. It states that while 'many Yue people are of Chinese race (*Zhongguo zhong*), those races such as Yao, Lang, Li, Qi and Dan who live in the caves are true Yue people'. As these lines did not offend such outspoken groups as the Hakkas, no controversy arose at the time despite their unfair handling of the Yao and other populations. Similar ideas had previously been expressed by Qu Dajun. See Qu Dajun (rep. 1974: 232).
 42. For details about the Hakka involvement in the 1911 Revolution and early Republican politics, see S.T. Leong (1985: 309–317).
 43. S.T. Leong (1985: 310).
 44. Zou Lu served as the president of the Guangdong Higher Normal School in 1923, and then became the first president of the National Guangdong University (later renamed Zhongshan University) when it was established in 1924. He was expelled in January 1926 by the Guomindang for his role in the Xishan Conference, but resumed his party membership six months later. He regained political influence in Guangzhou in 1931 when Guangdong came under the control of Chen Jitang. From 1932 to 1940, Zou was president of the Zhongshan University. For his biography, see *Guangdong sheng zhengxie wenshi ziliao weiyuanhui* (1989: 104–125).
 45. *Shou Luo Xianglin jiaoshou lunwen ji bianji weiyuanhui* (1970: 2).
 46. *Minsu zhoukan* 63 (special issue).
 47. Luo Xianglin (1933) asserted the Hakka origin of Sun Yat-sen, an argument which was then further elaborated in Luo's *A Study of the Origins of the National Father's Family* (Guofu Jiashi Uuanliukao) Chongqing: Shangwu 1942.
 48. For the source of the statement, see Ellsworth Huntington (1924: 168). This statement

- was cited by Luo in one of his early correspondence sent to the *Minsu zhouban* in 1928, see *Minsu zhouban* 33: 5–25. It was again quoted in ‘A General Discussion on Guangdong’ (*Guangdong minzu gailun*) published in the same journal in 1929; and then in his study *Kejia yuanliu kao* (1950).
49. Liu Shaotang (1987: 3: 375–378).
 50. *Guangdong wenwu* (1990: 211).
 51. *Ibid.* (1990: 1–2).
 52. Similar collections compiled by previous Guangdong scholars include *the Selection of Essays from Guangdong* (*Guangdong wenxuan*) by Qu Dajun in the early Qing, and *Yuedong wenhai* (the Sea of Literature of Guangdong) by Wen Runeng in the late Qianlong period. See Wu Daorong (rep. 1973: 1: 2–3).
 53. Luo Xianglin (1961: 223). Lai Jixi was a graduate of the Guangya Academy.
 54. Deng Youtong (1990: 1–2), Luo Xianglin (1961: 208).
 55. Zhang Jiemin (1985: 33–36).

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4

Xinjiang: In Search of an Identity

Laura Newby

From the mid-eighteenth century to the end of the Qing dynasty, Chinese perceptions of, and policies towards, the Western Regions (*Xiyu*) and its inhabitants underwent a radical transformation. The transition from dependency to province and from barbarian to citizen speaks more of the changing world view from Beijing than of developments in the northwest. However, these changes could not and did not occur without impact on the local identity and culture. The notion that identities, individual and collective, form only in relation or contradiction to other identities¹ raises many questions. What happens when the nature of that relationship or contradiction is altered, to what extent are identities shaped by their locational and historical context, and why do some identities assimilate and others not? On the identity-spectrum, I suspect that regional identity lies somewhere in the middle between 'I am me' and 'I am a member of the human race'. For most of us it has little impact on our daily lives, but for some it goes far beyond identification with a geographic location and becomes a highly charged issue of cultural and political allegiance. From an outsider's perspective, the province of Xinjiang has always possessed a strong regional identity which distinguishes it from other areas of China. The following paper attempts to assess the role that the Qing played in creating the image, and arguably the reality, of the regional identity that came to characterize the diversity of Xinjiang. In a sense, then, this is a study of empire-building and is therefore only concerned with the self-identity of the local peoples to the extent that the Qing accommodated or ignored their differences.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL ENTITY

In terms of creating a geographical entity, the Chinese conquest of the region in 1760 was in effect less important (given subsequent events) than its perceptual transition from a geographically ill-defined dependency to an inalienable part of China. There is little doubt that the region of Xinjiang existed for the educated Chinese (Manchu and Han), albeit as an amorphous concept, long before it did for the native inhabitants. Following the pacification of the Zunghar tribes² in 1755, the Qianlong Emperor commissioned both a commemorative account of the campaign,³ and an illustrated gazetteer of the Western Regions, the second version of which is

the earliest extant gazetteer of Xinjiang.⁴ He was personally concerned by the dearth of Chinese geographical knowledge of the region⁵ and laid particular stress on the need to correct inaccuracies and standardize the transliteration of proper names (*Qinding huangyu Xiyu tuzhi*: preface). Gradually it became apparent that the value of all further research depended on addressing this matter. In 1763, an order was issued for the compilation of a multilingual thesaurus comprising genealogical, historical, and geographical subject matter from north and south Xinjiang, Tibet, and Qinghai.⁶ This mammoth endeavour was not a mere academic pursuit carried out on the basis of existing materials, but went hand in hand with the geographical investigations for the illustrated gazetteer, which involved the dispatch of cartographical survey teams throughout the war-stricken region, as far as Ili to the north, Khotan to the south, Sarikol to the southwest and even beyond to Wakhan, Badakshan, and Tashkent. The two principal surveys, which were carried out in 1756 and 1759–60, were assisted by the Jesuit priests, Felix da Rocha and Joseph d’Espinha (Zhuang, 1987: 58; Hummel, 1943–44: 285–286) and resulted in the first detailed maps of Central Asia.⁷ In conjunction with the military campaigns themselves, they provided essential information for the establishment of *kalun* (guard posts). In the south and southwest, the mountains formed a natural frontier and pickets were simply positioned to guard the strategic passes, but in the north, the task was complicated by the nature of the open pastoral lands and the need to position moveable *kalun* to supervise the seasonal movement of nomads. Though by no means determining the border, these *kalun* were recognized as the demarcation of the Western Regions and of Chinese imperial control in the northwest (Scott, 1971: 237).

While the above-mentioned commemorative works may well have been encouraged by the Emperor’s personal linguistic and geographical interests, they were doubtless necessitated by the realization that the Qing could not hope to administer, or retain, such a vast territory without much improved knowledge. But these works also bore an ideological message which reflected the enduring Manchu concern to legitimize their rule in the eyes of the Han, while retaining their racial distinction. The term *tongwen* in the title of the multilingual thesaurus *Xiyu tongwen zhi* pointedly suggests the universality of language, and the Qianlong Emperor’s preface to that work stresses that however diverse the languages of the subject people, there is no difference in the nature of what they express. In similar vein, the imperial preface of the illustrated gazetteer of the Western Regions notes that different peoples have different cultural strengths — a reference to their skills which had no implications for the Manchu claim to moral superiority. More importantly, perhaps, the pacification was portrayed as the emulation and enhancement of past imperial exploits in the region. The memorials concerned with the execution of these works contain repeated references to the Han and Tang implying that the prime objective of the campaign was to restore the old imperial boundaries and not, as was more probably the case, to secure the frontier with a grandiose demonstration of Manchu military supremacy.⁸ Even references to old place-names, which many subsequently argued should be restored (e.g. Wei Yuan, ca.1842: 12: 6b-7a), had the effect of linking the Qing to the past glory of the Empire and so accentuating its legitimacy.

The pacification of the Zunghars and Muslims was heralded as the most illustrious of the Qianlong victories. In addition to the works of reference, it was commemorated with memorial tablets, poems, many by the Emperor himself, works of art, including the famous scenes of the campaign by the Jesuit missionary Giuseppe Castiglione and his colleagues, and the construction of a memorial hall (the *Ziguang ge*), all of which bound the region closely to the authority of the Qing and gave it a special place in the consciousness of the ruling elite.

The compilation of gazetteers (normally so closely identified with the creation of regional identities) now became a matter of some urgency, but materials were scarce, as was the talent to produce them. Most were undertaken by officials serving in Xinjiang and were primarily functional administrative manuals.⁹ Local people do not appear to have participated in their compilation (whether in the nineteenth or indeed twentieth century) and although some contained biographies, there were no eulogistic remarks about local families or personalities. Evidently, they were not required reading matter for native officials for there were no official translations into local languages. Unlike the gazetteers in the interior therefore, they were not designed to engender local loyalty or boast of local achievements (Chou, 1976: 39). Initially at least, they did more to highlight the divisions in the region, than to present a coherent entity. Given that in many respects the sharp divide between the areas north and south of the Tianshan range is only gradually being eroded in the late twentieth century, this is not entirely surprising.

A clear distinction in the Chinese perception of the geography, ethnography, and the strategic importance of the two regions persisted well after the conquest and both accounted for, and was reinforced by, the different methods of administration. This divide is reflected in the early gazetteers, several of which merely cover one or other region.¹⁰ To the north of Tianshan lay the steppe, home since the mid-fifteenth century to the nomadic Buddhist Mongol confederacy, the Öölöd. Here, in what was known as the Northern Circuit, the Chinese established a military governor at Huiyuan (New Kuldja),¹¹ and a large permanent garrison force. A lieutenant-governor, posted at Urumqi, was responsible for the civilian administration in the north, assisted by two civilian Councillors, one at Huiyuan and one at Tarbagatai. To the south lay the Tarim Basin and the oasis agricultural lands settled by a predominantly Muslim-Turkic peoples. This area, the Southern Circuit, the Chinese placed under the jurisdiction of a Councillor at Kashgar. The garrison troops, supervised by a lieutenant-governor stationed at Yarkand, were rotated and those of the local nobility who were now appointed to serve under the new Beg-system, continued to run the daily affairs of the towns and villages, much as they had done before the Chinese conquest.¹² Unlike in the north, however, where the Mongol princes (jasaks) retained their hereditary authority over their Bannermen, the Begg's status was no longer hereditary. While the north-south divide dominated the region, there was another sub-region which was equally important and, in political terms, was as distinct from the north and the south as they were from each other. This area, on the northern and southern skirts of the east Tianshan range, was almost coterminous with the old region of Uighuristan.¹³ Inhabited by predominantly Muslim and Turkic speaking peoples, the area channelled trade between China and Inner Asia and had a long history of Chinese influence. During

the campaign against the Zunghars and the Muslims, the local rulers of Turfan and Hami had assisted the Qing and in appreciation of this they were allowed to retain their own hereditary and autonomous rulers. These two areas together with Urumchi, Karashahr, and Barkul comprised the Eastern Circuit which was supervised by the lieutenant-governor at Urumchi; for civil administrative purposes the whole area was also loosely incorporated into the prefectural system under the Governor-General of Shaan-Gan.

Nevertheless, despite these clear and persistent divisions, with the final pacification of the south in 1760, the name *Xinjiang* (new dominion) referring to the areas both north and south of Tianshan, including Uighuristan, gradually began to supersede the vague terms for the Western Regions, *Xiyu* or *Xichui*.¹⁴ The notion of Xinjiang as a geographical entity, albeit still with imprecise borders, began to take hold. This notion appears to have been promoted in no small part by exiled officials who were largely responsible for what little unofficial literature on the region was produced.¹⁵ Herein lay a certain contradiction, on the one hand, the region was feared as a place of exile, disgrace, and hardship, on the other, the poetry of the exiled officials, some of whom served both north and south of Tianshan, frequently tended to idealize it and depict it as a place of spiritual renewal, which was of course just what the Emperor had ordered (Waley-Cohen, 1991: 213–215). In a sense, this perpetuated the image created by those officials who in the wake of the campaigns had lost no opportunity to praise the majestic splendours of the Empire's new domain.¹⁶ By the 1820s, the romantic notion of the region had gripped many imaginations. As the Qing struggled against increasing pressures, particularly after the Opium War, Xinjiang was idealized as the promised land which would provide the answer to at least some of China's most pressing problems. Most notably it was suggested that over-population could be solved by mass emigration policies and that Xinjiang could be exploited as a source of raw materials (Wei Yuan, ca.1842: 4: 13a, 50a; Gong Zizhen, 1820). Even as serious a scholar as Gong Zizhen (1792–1841) seems to have been influenced by the notion of Xinjiang as a virgin land which had to be protected from the decadent luxury goods that pervaded the interior (Gong Zizhen, 1820). Perhaps significantly, he never travelled beyond Jiayuguan.

The vast resources which the Qing committed to the suppression of the Khoja invasions from the 1820s to the 1850s¹⁷ and which it could ill-afford, are a reflection of how closely Xinjiang had become associated with the prestige of the dynasty, and the belief that it was an essential appendage to the empire. The defeat and capture of the Khoja Jahangir in 1828 was a cause of great celebration. The lavish ceremonies held in Beijing helped detract from the fact that the Qing had encountered great difficulty in suppressing this badly armed and disparate group of rebels.¹⁸ However, in the course of the following thirty years the disaffected Khojas led another three rebellions and by the latter half of the century, no amount of imperial self-delusion could fend off the reality of the drain on resources that Xinjiang was placing on the government, or the weakening Qing hold over the region. When the Muslim rebellions broke out in neighbouring Gansu in 1862, the rising influence of the sufi orders¹⁹ which went hand in hand with increasing economic hardship and a breakdown in Qing authority, ensured that they would spread to Xinjiang.

For over twelve years from 1864–78, Chinese imperial authority in the region was eradicated. Notwithstanding the loss of the fertile Ili Valley to the Russians, after 1871 the Kokandi general Ya'qub Beq held sway to the north and south of Tianshan. Yet not until 1874, was the possibility of having to relinquish Xinjiang given serious consideration at Court.²⁰ The controversy between Li Hongzhang and Zuo Zongtang on the merits of leading a campaign against Ya'qub Beg focused on security issues and was fuelled by mutual competition. Zuo, who had been strongly influenced by the writings of scholars such as Wei Yuan (1794–1856) and Gong Zizhen,²¹ was convinced that to accept the loss of Xinjiang would do irreparable damage to China's prestige and prompt further Western incursions. After the reconquest he argued equally forcefully that making Xinjiang a province was the only way to pacify the region and was vital for long-term security.²² But here again he met resistance. Tan Zhonglin, the Governor-General of Shaan-Gan, and Liu Jintang, who was to become the first governor of Xinjiang, both suggested compromise positions that would extend the Chinese administrative system without immediately establishing a separate province (Liu Jintang, 1898: 3: 50b-53b; *Qinding pingding Shaan-Gan Xinjiang Huifei fanglüe*, 315: 9b-15b). Others, such as Liu Yunlin, the Councillor at Tarbagatai, were firmer in their opposition and stressed the inhospitable nature of the territory, the low-population density and the inevitability that the region would continue to drain government resources.²³ However, there was another factor that obstructed the proposal to make Xinjiang a province; to incorporate the region into China while the Russians continued to occupy the Ili area would have amounted to acceptance of the status quo. Consequently, only in the wake of the Treaty of St Petersburg (1881), which provided for the return of Ili, did the Court decide to adopt Zuo's proposals.

In the event, the creation of the province in 1884 which the Manchus had resisted for so long served to strengthen the Han Chinese hold on the region. Zuo's appointment as Imperial Commissioner in charge of Military Affairs had broken the policy of reserving the highest official positions in Xinjiang for Manchus and the Han swiftly came to dominate the new administration. By the turn of the century, the careers and fortunes of officials were tied to the region as never before and among the Han provincial officials there began to develop a regionally based nationalism. It was this nationalism with its clearly defined sense of the geographic region of Xinjiang which was to nurture Eastern Turkestan nationalism. Indeed, it may be argued that one of the greatest problems of Eastern Turkestan nationalism in the 1930s and 1940s was that it adopted a territory defined by the Chinese with little regard for the centrifugal tendencies which surfaced as soon as central authority faded.

THE ETHNOLOGICAL IDENTITY

In addition to unifying, and more or less demarcating Xinjiang,²⁴ the Qing was also to a large extent responsible for the ethnic composition of the region.

The dramatic reduction in the numbers of the Öölöd Mongols by the late eighteenth century was a consequence of years of internecine fighting, emigration,

and the small-pox epidemic that ravaged the region in the 1750s, but it was also due in considerable part to the Qing massacres — the extent of which, though remaining debatable, is thought to have accounted for hundreds of thousands of deaths.²⁵ In 1760, the Qing found itself master of a disturbingly underpopulated region north of Tianshan. The immediate problems were to keep the garrison troops supplied and to keep the Kazaks out (Zhuang, 1987: 74); the solution was to promote colonization and agricultural development. Those Öölöd (Khoshot, Khoit, and Dorbets) who had been given refuge in eastern Mongolia during the civil war had already been repatriated (*Qinding pingding Zhunga'er fanglüe, zhengbian*, 13: 32a-33a) and in 1771 the two leagues of Torgut Mongols who had survived their long and tragic journey from the Volga Valley were also resettled in the Ili Valley (Chunyuan, preface 1760: 83a-89b; Schuyler, 1876: 167-172). In addition, several thousand Turkic-Muslim families were moved from the south and resettled in agricultural colonies in the Ili Valley, where they helped sustain the garrison forces. By 1800 these agriculturalists, known as Taranchis (tillers), totalled some 34,000, with their numbers rising to 50,000 by the mid-nineteenth century.²⁶ The garrison forces who settled permanently with their families also contributed significantly to the repopulation of the north. Totalling 15-20,000 in the late eighteenth to early nineteenth century, the garrison comprised Green Standard Han Chinese, Manchu Bannermen, Chahars from Inner Mongolia, surviving Öölöd, Daur, Solons, and Sibo. But in the long-term, it was probably the immigration, government sponsored and illegal, of civilian Han and Hui (Muslim Chinese), which was to have the most profound effect on the region. It has been estimated that by the end of the eighteenth century they totalled over 50,000 (Hua Li, 1987: 124) and their numbers continued to grow.

The ethnic composition of the south was somewhat less complicated, if only because civilian colonization was not permitted until the 1830s. The predominantly Turkic-Muslim population, did not in any sense owe its presence in the region to the Chinese, but it could be argued that its collective identity was fashioned by the Chinese presence (cf. Gladney, 1990: 20). Traditionally, these peoples simply identified themselves as a person of such and such a place, for example 'Kashgarlik' or 'Khotan-lik'.²⁷ Unlike the Mongol and Turkic nomads who had a clear sense of their tribal identity before the conquest, it was primarily Islam and opposition to rule by the infidel Chinese that forged a sense of collective identity among the sedentary Turkic peoples. As Henry Schwarz has argued, the Qing victory was, in a certain sense, a victory for Islam. In the late seventeenth century many communities in the Tarim Basin had still had no contact with Islam, but with the Qing defeat of the Buddhist Öölöd, the Muslim Begs reasserted their hold on the south and 'under their aegis the religious institutions of Islam flourished as never before' (Schwarz, 1976: 290-291). The influx of the Muslim Taranchi and Hui north of Tianshan ensured that the north as well as the south now acquired an Islamic complexion. It was the banner of Islam that was to prove the greatest obstacle to sinicization and one of the strongest symbols of regional identity.

The ethnic mosaic that was and is Xinjiang comprised many other groups, some already settled there before the late eighteenth century, and others who arrived subsequently, with or without the blessing of the Qing — the Kazaks, Kirghiz,

Uzbeks, Russians, Tajiks, Tibetans, Afghans, Dolons, Jews, and Kokandis to name but a few. Clearly even in the immediate aftermath of the Qing conquests, the ethnic mix in Xinjiang was much more complex than that suggested by the early Chinese gazetteers which simply describe the population as comprising Zunghars and Muslims, respectively north and south of Tianshan.

The Manchu policy towards the inhabitants of its north-western dependency was one of disinterested tolerance. Qing knowledge of their customs and mores was limited to basic distinguishing features, such as the Mongol custom of greeting a noble by kneeling to embrace his knees, or the Muslim practice of reciting from the Koran five times a day.²⁸ Although Manchu officials wrote of enfolding Xinjiang within the pale of Qing civilization, in practice this was limited, on the one hand, to a few symbolic gestures (such as allowing the higher ranking Begs to wear a queue) and on the other, to efforts to develop the economy.

Traditionally the nomadic tribes of the north had regarded the southern oasis city-states as a resource to be pillaged and plundered in time of need. Not only did the Qing presence prevent military aggression of this sort, but agricultural colonization and irrigation projects sponsored by the Qing radically altered the economy of the north, and reduced its dependency on the south. Figures indicating the extent of the colonized lands, which were opened initially in the north and east, but subsequently also in the south, vary considerably.²⁹ However, there can be no doubt that even by 1840 the total area amounted to hundreds of thousands of *mu*. Under the relatively peaceful rule of the Manchus, trade in the region also flourished. Chinese merchants flooded to Xinjiang to exchange tea, silk, and porcelain for hides, fur, jade, and gems. Yet, although the movement of Chinese and Central Asian merchants throughout the region may have served to improve communications and establish north-south links, nevertheless, inter-regional trade remained slight.³⁰ Other developments many of which were sponsored by the Qing also stimulated the economy, such as the introduction of new weaving techniques, the opening of mines, and the establishment of a saltpetre company. In that these constituted the first steps towards breaking down the traditional economy which supported local and tribal barriers, they played a tentative role in unifying the region.

After the demise of Ya'qub Beg, the colonization process was resumed, but the decline of Manchu power and the increasing Han involvement in the region led to a marked change in other Qing policies in the region. While on the one hand, Chinese knowledge of the origins and customs of the different ethnic groups was improved, on the other, prejudice and fear, particularly of the Muslims,³¹ flourished alongside the rise of Han chauvinism. Thus, while the strict segregation that had characterized early Manchu policies in the region, such as the restriction on colonization in the south and the building of Manchu cantonments, had been rooted in cautious respect for racial distinction, segregation now became principally an instrument of control.

Zuo Zongtang was one of the first to address openly the problem of ethnic tension in the region and the difficulties of integration. Not only had the wars of the 1860s and 1870s increased animosity between the Chinese and the Turkic Muslims, the rise of the sufi orders had also deepened the division between the latter and the Hui, who now constituted a substantial community, both north and south of Tianshan. Zuo believed that without the spread of Chinese culture through education, integration

would be impossible and to this end he strongly promoted the establishment of Chinese schools. His views were widely supported by many Chinese intellectuals, whose blind belief in the civilizing power of Confucian education left no room for the possibility of local resistance (e.g. Zhu Fengjia, n.d.). Thus the discovery that the local elite preferred not to send their children to the new schools and were even known to purchase the services of mendicants as substitutes, merely confirmed the low opinion that the Chinese had of the local people (*Xinjiang tuzhi*, 38: 4a-b; 105: 16a-b). Moreover, the activities of the Gelaohui and the call for Han and Muslim to unite against the Manchu not only failed to improve relations, but accentuated one more racial divide. By the end of the Qing, the groundwork for the policies of the Republican period had been laid. Whether fostering racial differences as under Governor Sheng Shicai in the 1930s, or promoting sinicization and colonization as in the 1940s, the Nationalist government's policies towards the peoples of Xinjiang would only serve to encourage the consolidation of ethnic identities and nurture anti-Chinese sentiment.

THE COMMON CULTURAL IDENTITY

It was during the Qing that the so-called Turkic-Muslim culture became predominant throughout Xinjiang. Muslim schools flourished in all the major cities (e.g. Shaw, 1897: 64–65), the authority of the Ahungs, spiritual and even temporal, remained almost unchallenged, Islamic law was widely applied (Miao Pufang, 1987: 40–43), believers went on hadj, and pilgrims from Western Turkestan travelled to the region to visit the tombs of saints (Hamada Masami, 1978: 93). But it was not only religious influence that emanated from across the border. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the notion of a common Turkic identity was being espoused throughout much of Central Asia. When the ideas of men such as Gaspirali Ismail (1851–1914), a Crimean Tartar who introduced a new literary Turkic language to be understood 'by the boatman of the Bosphorous and the camel driver of Kashgar', infiltrated Xinjiang they fell on fertile ground (Hamada Masami, 1990: 32; Bennigsen, 1984: 39–40). The wars and rebellions that afflicted Xinjiang in the late Qing undoubtedly contributed to a sense of local unity borne of the intensification of anti-Chinese sentiment. However, neither this sentiment, intense though it often was, nor the spread of the Turkic-Muslim culture had eradicated the deep-rooted divisions within the local society.

Qing officialdom appears to have regarded the pacification of the Western Regions as one conquest, but despite the tentative hold that the Öölöd had maintained over the south, for the Mongols and Turks their subjugation was not a common experience. The banner-system proved effective in keeping Mongol society divided. Those Mongols who survived the conquest dwelt under the watchful eye of the Manchu military establishment and posed no threat to Qing rule. It was in the south that opposition was concentrated — though rarely co-ordinated.

Although the revolts of the exiled Khojas, played a significant role in weakening the Manchu rule, the rallying power of these jihads was much impaired by the fact that there was no religious suppression north or south of Tianshan. Not only were

local people allowed to worship freely under the Manchu, but as mentioned above traditional Islamic education continued and Islamic law was applied even in disputes between Chinese and Muslims (Dowson, 1850: 383). Thus although many of the Turkic-Muslims may indeed have supported the jihads out of what one Chinese official termed a 'fanatical worship of the Khojas' (*Qinding pingding Huijiang jiaoqin niyi fanglüe*, 49: 24 a-b), once the Manchus had been ousted, the new rulers had little to offer their subjects and the antagonism between supporters of the two Khoja lineages, the White and the Black Mountain branches, inevitably resurfaced.³² Moreover, the looting, pillaging, and butchery that was wont to accompany the arrival of the Khojas and their various, though often Kirghiz, supporters was such that by the 1840s their charisma was fading. Embittered by experience, the local people became reluctant to rise in response to their incursions.³³ Neither is there any firm evidence that the Taranchi in the north supported the Khojas, despite a story still circulating in the Ili Valley in the mid-nineteenth century which purported that Khoja Jahangir was alive and residing in Beijing (Saguchi Toru, 1968: 13). The passivity of the north may, of course, be explained in terms of the geography of the region and the strong garrison presence, nevertheless, the effect was to ensure that the Khoja revolts centred on Kashgar and remained local. Thus although, in the south at least, the exiled Khojas posed an alternative to Chinese rule, their revolts did little to unite the region in a common cause.

In addition to the geographical, ethnic, and religious divisions which militated against the sharing of a common historical experience, Xinjiang was by no means free of social and economic divisions. It was not only the Turkic leaders of Uighuristan who had assisted in the subjugation of the south in the mid-eighteenth century, many Begg, particularly those of the Black Mountain lineage, saw the Khojas as a threat to their authority and also aligned themselves with the Manchus. This continued to be the case during the Khoja incursions of the nineteenth century.³⁴ By co-opting the hereditary princes and Begg to assist in the administration of the region, the Qing had ensured that the local elite had a vested interest in Manchu rule. Not only did the Begg receive a stipend, land, and bondsmen according to their rank, they also enjoyed considerable power.³⁵ In the first fifty years of Qing rule, Xinjiang was for the most part a prosperous region³⁶ and so where there was economic hardship, it was usually a result of exactions by local officials.

The only serious revolt to take place in the region between 1760 and 1815, was at Ush Turfan in 1765.³⁷ It did not spread to other areas and was suppressed within eight months. In attributing blame, the Chinese accounts suggest that the Manchu Councillor, Sucheng, and the Hakim Beg, Abd-Allah, younger brother of Prince of Hami, were equally responsible for the oppression and ill-treatment of those under their jurisdiction.³⁸ The problem was not that the Court turned a blind eye to corruption in this remote region, but simply that the difficulty in communication and the collaboration between Manchu and Muslim local officials often made it hard to detect. In the well-documented case of Gao Pu, the Imperial Agent at Yarkand (1776–78), for example, it was over a year before the illicit financial activities in which he and local officials were involved were brought to light, despite the fact that they had engaged the forced labour of several thousand local people for jade mining (Torbert, 1977: 155, 158). Given such circumstances, it is

not improbable that by the early nineteenth century widespread and undetected malpractice on the part of both Manchu officialdom and local Begs was such that it was nurturing support for the Khojas.³⁹ The ensuing breakdown in authority was one of the main causes of the plethora of local disturbances from 1840 to the early 1860s.

Economic hardship and a swelling tide of Islamic militancy paved the way for the outbreak of the revolts that brought Ya'qub Beg to power. However, it was six years before he was able to break the hold of Tuo Delin's Hui regime in the North, and despite creating an important historical precedent, the brief period during which he ruled north and south of Tianshan did little to unite the country. Indeed, the Islamic austerity of Ya'qub Beg's rule, the imposition of heavy taxes to support his army, and the concentration of power in the hands of the Kokandis, all lost him local support.⁴⁰ Consequently, despite strengthening anti-Chinese sentiment, in his wake he left only more divisions, most notably between the Turkic-Muslims and the Hui. Thus by the end of the Qing, although the Turkic-Muslim culture was playing an increasingly important role in uniting the dominant nomadic and sedentary groups in their opposition to Qing rule, this opposition was not a universal sentiment and the society remained fragmented and localized.

CONCLUSION

For the peoples of Central Asia in the mid-eighteenth century, borders were still a nebulous concept, not merely for the nomads, but even to some extent, for the sedentary peoples who were periodically forced to migrate in order to escape epidemics or wars and who took for granted the existence of vast expanses of land without owner, or ruler. Under the Öölöd confederacy, the territory north and south of Tianshan had been little more than nominally unified with ill-defined borders. The fact that the Qing came to regard and administer this region as a common geographic entity and gradually to delimit its borders, played an important role in the creation of the identity of Xinjiang. Indeed, but for the Qing occupation, the region might well have been divided, perhaps falling to the military aggression of one or other of the Central Asian states before being incorporated into the Russian empire.

In that the Manchus had curbed the power of the Mongols, they were also indirectly responsible for the ascendance of Turkic-Muslim authority in Central Asia. Meanwhile in Xinjiang itself, the fragmentary nature of the repopulation policies and the *laissez-faire* attitude towards the culture of the local peoples, ensured that during the hundred years of Qing occupation, prior to the region's incorporation as a province of China, no challenge was posed to Turkic-Muslim culture. Ironically, the consolidation and development of the Turkic-Muslim identity, which was to some extent fostered, or at least made possible, by the Manchus, further alienated the region culturally from China and hardened resistance to subsequent Chinese assimilation policies.

Yet despite the strong Turkic-Islamic influences emanating from the Central Asian heartland, despite the anti-Chinese sentiment engendered by the occupation,

and despite the brief period of unification as an independent state under Ya'qub Beg, even by the end of the Qing it is unlikely that the common people of Xinjiang had any notion of their regional identity, in the modern sense. This paper has drawn almost entirely on non-local sources and must inevitably reflect an outsider's perspective; whether Chinese or Western. Yet in the eyes of the impartial outside observer and impassioned Eastern Turkestan nationalist alike, the most significant legacy that the Qing bestowed on the region must surely be that of a dualistic, and hence distinct, identity. On the one hand, Xinjiang was a province of China which for historical, geographical, and cultural reasons would remain very different from provinces of the interior and indeed other border provinces. On the other hand, the role played by the Chinese in its creation, its alienation, by 1911, for more than one hundred and fifty years from the common political experience of the rest of Central Asia, and its complex ethnic composition, including large numbers of Han and Muslim Chinese, distinguished it sharply from other regions of Central Asia.

NOTES

1. For an recent exposition of this thesis in the field of Chinese studies, see E. Honig (1992).
2. The terms Zunghar (*Zhunga'er*) and Eleuth (*Elute*) are both used in Qing sources to refer to the Öölöd (Oirat), a confederacy of the Western Mongols.
3. The *Qinding pingding Zhunga'er fanglüe* (1772) covers the Kangxi conquest of Qinghai and Tibet, as well as the pacification of the Zunghar and Muslim regions in the Qianlong period.
4. The extant *Qinding huangyu Xiyu tuzhi* was completed in 1782, but an earlier version was presented to the Emperor in 1761. A *Xiyu tuzhi* was also compiled to commemorate the Tang conquests in the Northwest, but was lost at an early date (Enoki, 1964: Introduction, p. iii).
5. The Emperor gave two reasons for this, first the fact that foreign tribes had not produced their own records and second that oral accounts in local dialects had led to confusion (Enoki, 1964: Introduction, p. iv; *Qinding Xiyu tongwen zhi*: preface).
6. The languages of the *Qinding Xiyu tongwen zhi* (1782) are Manchu, Chinese, Tibetan, Mogolian, Todo (Öölöd Mongolian), and Eastern Turkish.
7. These provided the basis for the relevant sections of the *Shisan pai ditu*, ca.1770 (Enoki, 1964: Introduction, pp. vii-x).
8. In the edict to the officers of the Manchu banners announcing the Emperor's decision to launch the campaign, the objectives are stated to be to teach the Mongol leader, Davatsi, a lesson, and to allow Manchu troops to demonstrate their martial supremacy. However, this point is omitted in the address to the Grand Councillors, where emphasis is placed on the restoration of political control (Scott 1971: 179).
9. For example, a large part of the *Qinding Xinjiang shilüe* (1821) comprises an account of the administration of Ili and the military organization. In the preface to the *Xinjiang tuzhi* (1923), Yuan Dahua notes the existence of earlier treatises, but implies that the *Xinjiang tuzhi* is the first real gazetteer of the region.
10. For example, the *Huijiang tongzhi* (1804) and the *Sanzhou jilüe* (1805), both compiled by Hening, cover the south and north respectively, while the *Qinding Xinjiang shilüe* (1821) maintains a clear distinction between the Northern and Southern Circuits with

- emphasis on the former. Even towards the end of the 19th century when the subject of making Xinjiang a province was being debated, there were still those who suggested that it be divided into two regions, north and south of Tianshan (e.g. Zhu Fengjia, n.d).
11. Huiyuan was built by the Manchus in 1764, prior to this Kuldja (Ningyuan) was the centre of the Qing regional administration.
 12. Prior to the Qing conquest the title 'Beg' was afforded to all members of the local nobility. Under the Qing it was used specifically for those local people who had been appointed to an administrative post. For an account of the Beg-system see Saguchi Tōru (1963: chapter 3).
 13. N. Elias suggests that this area may have continued to be known as Uighuristan from the ninth century to as late as the fifteenth century (Elias, 1895: 99–114).
 14. For example, a later draft of *Xichui zongtong shilüe* (1808) was entitled *Qinding Xinjiang shilüe* (1824).
 15. See Waley-Cohen (1991: 155–162) for the role of exiled officials in promoting interest in Xinjiang.
 16. See, for example, the reference to the Western Mountains as the resting place of Fei Lian, the Wind God, in the preface to *Qinding huangyu Xiyu tuzhi*. The Kunlun Mountains were, of course, designated as the home of the gods in Chinese mythology.
 17. The Khojas belonged to a family who claimed descent from Muhammed and regarded themselves as the rightful rulers of Kashgaria, the southwestern region of Xinjiang. They were divided into two opposing lineages, which are commonly referred to in Western literature as the White and Black Mountain branches. After the Qing conquest the descendants of the White Mountain Khojas found sanctuary in Kokand, which on at least two occasions actively supported the Khoja attacks on Kashgaria.
 18. Some twenty years later legends of the campaign and the capture of Jahangir were still being recounted, see R.E Huc (1962: 487–489).
 19. See Kim (1986: chapter 2) for an account of the sufi orders in Xinjiang.
 20. As late as 1866, the Court was still defiantly rebuking those officials who so much as hinted at giving up Xinjiang. See Chu Wen-Djang (1966: 163–166).
 21. See Chou (1976: chapter 4) for an account of the influence of Wei Yuan and Gong Zizhen on Zuo Zongtang.
 22. Zuo made five such proposals to the throne. One in 1877, two in 1878, one in 1880 and one in 1882.
 23. See Li Yunlin (1968: 45–46) and also a memorial from Liu Hai'ao, a Hanlin compiler, arguing in the same vein; *Qinding pingding Shaan-Gan Xinjiang huifei fanglüe*, 315: 23b-26a.
 24. The Treaty of Beijing (1860) specified that China's western border with Russia should follow the mountains, the major rivers, and the existing line of permanent Chinese pickets. It would run from the beacon at Shaban-Dabeg southwest to Lake Zaisan, from there to the mountains south of Lake Issyk-kul, and finally along these mountains as far as Kokand. It was on the basis of this line that the Treaty of Tarbagatai (1864) set out a more detailed demarcation. However, when the Ili Valley was restored to China under the Treaty of St Petersburg (1881), a small area west of the Holkuts River was ceded to Russia and in subsequent border agreements concerning the region (1882, 1883, and 1885), the Qing ceded a total area of over 15,000 sq. miles.
 25. Chunyuan (preface 1760: 70a-b) puts the figure at more than a million, but this should not be taken literally. Valikhanov cites a figure of half a million (see Michell, 1865: 187), while Schuyler (1876: 168) states that 'before the conquest there were in Jungaria 24 uluses with a population of 600,000 souls, at the end of 1756 not one Jungarian remained, those who had not been killed having sought refuge among the Kirghiz or the Russians'.

26. In the Republican period, under Governor Sheng Shicai, the Taranchi were designated as a distinct minority group.
27. These non-nomadic Turkic-Muslims were originally referred to as *Hui* in Qing sources, but after the rebellions of the 1860s, the term *chantou* (turban head) was more generally used to distinguish them from the Chinese Muslims (*Han Hui*). It was not until 1921 that the non-nomadic Turkic-speaking peoples of Xinjiang were given the common name of Uighur. See Fletcher (1968: 364).
28. See, for example, the *Fengsu* section of *Qinding huangyu Xiyu tuzhi: juan 39*.
29. The discrepancies probably occur because many sources do not stipulate whether figures include only some, or all of the various categories of colonizers and reclaimed lands (i.e. military, Banner, criminal, civilian, and Muslim). For a recent attempt to calculate the area settled in the period 1716–1840, see Fang Yingkai (1989, 563–569). Fang gives a grand total for the entire region of 301,9600 *mu*.
30. See Wei Liangtao (1992: 82) for reference to north-south trade in the Ming, and Fletcher (1978: 61–62) for the different monetary systems that existed in the north and south.
31. Fear of Muslim fanaticism was widespread after the rebellions in Gansu and Xinjiang. See, for example, Anon, n.d., ‘Huibu zheng su lun’.
32. This appears to have been an important factor in the collapse of Khoja Jahangir’s regime (*Qinding pingding Huijiang jiaoqin niyi fanglüe*, 73: 10). The Khojas responsible for these invasions belonged to the White Mountain branch, while many of the Black Mountain branch sided with the Qing. According to Miao Pufang (1987: 45) the Manchus subsequently exploited this division.
33. See Ross (n.d.: 6–20) for a native account of how the local people assisted the Chinese against the forces of Wali Khan Tora and condemned the violence and destruction caused by the ‘brigands’.
34. The Hakim Beg of Aksu, for example, was made a prince of the second rank for his part in the capture of Jahangir. See Wei Yuan (1842: 4: 41a).
35. Although in theory the law of avoidance was applied for Begg of the third-fifth ranks, it was not strictly adhered to except for those of the third rank. Moreover, Begg were often drawn from the same families even though efforts were made to ensure that a son did not succeed to his father’s post.
36. This is borne out in the accounts of most travellers to the region, as well as Chinese official sources. However, affluence was by no means universal, see for example Chunyuan (preface 1760: 16a, 19b).
37. A significant, but much less serious revolt took place in the northern district of Chang Ji in 1767 (Wei Yuan, ca.1842: 4: 33a-b; Zeng Wenwu, 1936: 298).
38. For the earliest accounts of the Ush Turfan Rebellion, see *Qinding pingding Zhunga’er fanglüe, xubian: juan 28–32* and Chunyuan (preface 1760: 79a-82a).
39. In 1828 Nayancheng, Imperial Commissioner at Kashgar, took steps to prevent the practice of buying and selling Beg titles and official extortions (Pan Zhiping, 1991: 33). However, the problem of corruption among local officialdom, Manchu and Muslim, was not solved and was subsequently cited by Zuo Zongtang and others as a major reason for abolishing the system and establishing a province (e.g. Zhu Fengjia, n.d.).
40. See Kim (1986) for a comprehensive account of Ya’qub Beg’s regime.

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5

The Kings Who Could Fly Without Their Heads: 'Local' Culture in China and the Case of the Hmong

Nicholas Tapp

INTRODUCTION

The notion of a local culture, like that of a unified religion in China (Feuchtwang, 1991), implicates notions of ethnicity. Enough has been written on the notions of ethnicity and 'nationality' in China to make it clear that different understandings of ethnicity to our own may prevail in China, and almost certainly did prevail in the past. Despite Dikotter (1992), who argues for a historical 'racial consciousness' in China, Thierry (1989) emphasizes that notions of 'civility' were more important than those of 'ethnicity' at least until the end of the Yuan dynasty.

The practice of *feng shui* (or 'Chinese geomancy') by the Hmong, one of the ethnic minorities within China who are officially classed as 'Miao', is a case which can easily be read as the influence of one cultural group upon another. The *feng shui* of the Hmong is often seen, historically, as a clear example of the sinicization of a minority people within China, of an order with the Daoist influences discernible in their practice of shamanism (Lemoine, 1987) or the adoption of Chinese loan-words into the Miao language (Downer, 1967).

However, ethnographic research on the Hmong shows that the simple interpretation, in terms of the spread of aspects of a quintessentially 'Chinese' culture, sharply differentiated from an ethnically quintessential 'Hmong' culture which it then dominated, may have to be rethought. The Hmong, for example, assume *feng shui* to be an entirely Hmong practice, which just happens to be also practised by the Han Chinese and other neighbouring peoples; they tell geomantic tales to explain how their own ethnic differences from the Han came about after two original brothers, the ancestors of the Hmong and Chinese respectively, worshipped at the same ancestral grave, but at different times. Here common ethnic origins and resemblances are stressed rather than strict ethnic distinctions. Classic tales of Chinese heroes such as Guo Zhongfu in Fujian (Feuchtwang, 1993) or Han Xing in Yunnan have become subverted into tales of Hmong messianic heroes who resisted Chinese influence, while the Hmong practise *feng shui* without any reference to the written authority which commonly underlies the system.¹

So the actual practice of *feng shui* by the Hmong demands an explanation of a completely different order to one merely couched in terms of 'sinicization', the influence of one radically isolated cultural group upon another, or the influence of

dominant literate models upon an oral tradition; an account which must be made in terms of a local culture which is situated and 'topian' in the sense that is inextricably embedded in a particular locale, to which ethnicity is secondary. Yet at the same time one must beware of the way a category of so-called 'local beliefs' may actually be constructed by the terms of an official discourse, the kind of 'folklorization' of the countryside which De Certeau (1986) refers to as occurring in early nineteenth century France, or which may have occurred recently in Indonesia (Fukushima, 1991).² An adequate account of the cultural influences upon the Hmong must therefore recognize a wider Hmong ethnicity which extends into parts of Southeast Asia, and at the same time fully take into account the context of 'Chineseness' in which such processes of annotation and censorship might have happened in the Hmong use of 'Chinese' geomancy.

The notion of a 'local culture' inevitably raises these questions of ethnicity and cultural influence, and the degree to which cultural differences between Han Chinese populations and those classified as 'minorities' in China may in fact be seen as 'ethnic'. Recent attempts to deal with such issues in the Chinese context have talked of 'sub-ethnic cultures' (to describe groups such as the Hakka), or stressed the notion of 'community' over that of 'nationality', as Fei Xiaotong argues in his critique of the exclusion of research on the Han from ethnological studies in China (Fei, 1991).³ Fei (1989) has also recently stressed the intermingling of different cultural and racial stocks and traditions which has gone to form the 'Chinese people', an argument often used by certain minority specialists in China to prove that ethnic interpenetration and interfusion, at socio-economic and cultural levels, has now reached such a level of complexity within China as to render unfeasible any possibility of self-determination or federated autonomy in, for example, the Tibetan region (e.g. Qiu Pu, 1989).

The concern here is of course not merely academic, philosophical, or anthropological, but also political and historical, since the relationship of ethnic minorities within the borders of China to the Chinese state, and the extent to which they acquiesce in or reject dominant models of 'Chineseness', is a matter of urgent current inquiry and debate. And it may be true that, as Chinese ethnologists often allege, foreign researchers tend to reify ethnic essences within China and exaggerate the importance of ethnic differences, systematically minimizing the extent of local articulations and accommodations between the members of different cultural groups, and assuming culturally relativist holisms of culture within China which are not fully cognizant of local contexts and the power of local, regional identities which subsume ethnic distinctions. In confronting such criticisms, one has to draw very careful lines between literate cultures and those without a literate tradition in China, and between different measures and understandings of 'Chineseness'.

More recent distinctions between textual and oral traditions in the study of culture may in some ways have served to perpetuate a much earlier, 'great/little tradition' type dichotomy, although usually attempting to elaborate a post-structuralist position (Bell, 1989). Johnson, Nathan and Rawski (eds.) *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China* marks a conscious attempt to come to terms with the integration of 'elite' and 'popular' culture in China and, as its preface says, to 'account for the integration of this extraordinarily diverse culture'. Bell (1989), however, remarks

how Johnson's article in this collection finds it easier to specify how *elite* values came to dominate late imperial popular culture than to account for how elements of *nonelite* values came to penetrate elite culture; and it is true that Johnson is mainly concerned to account for what makes the varieties of thought in that period 'all Chinese', and how the texts of the elite become transformed into more popular forms. For me what is remarkable about this piece is its concern with how the permeation of popular consciousness by the values and beliefs of an 'official culture' actually occurred, and its recognition of the importance of regional dialects and ethnicity as barriers to the communication of ideas. Similar concerns with the actual process of the distribution of dominant ideas and values in China can be seen in Faure's consideration of the dissemination of an authorized model of the lineage in the religious centre of Foshan (1986), and possibly also in Ward's early work on drama and story-telling in Hong Kong (Ward, 1977).

What is important here is the general current concern with a popular consciousness which has not been, particularly or prominently, textually oriented; associated with a culture permeated by values, ideals, symbols, emblems, figures drawn from a literate discourse, yet which had no direct access to those texts through the means of literacy. The diffusion of dominant conceptions of the social and natural order often discussed for China must have encompassed, therefore, not only those non-Han minorities who became 'sinicized' through the long process of cultural expansion, but also affected most of the non-literate population of traditional China — and is it really feasible to separate these populations as sharply as they have usually been separated?

Surely a study of the historical sinicization of 'non-Sinitic' peoples within China should be able to illuminate and reveal the diffusion of dominant ideas within the 'Chinese' population itself — who shared with them a predominantly oral culture, as well as in most cases the necessity of adapting to central models of social and political organization.

My concern here, then, is to place studies of the Hmong, which have mostly taken place outside the confines of China, within a Chinese context, through a tentative approach to some of my data on the Hmong people of Sichuan province where, by contrast with their situation in Thailand, I found the Hmong embedded in a local culture, immersed in a local history which seemed to represent and provide evidence of a kind of ethnic intermixture, interfusion and blending of cultural traditions which may be *characteristic* of local cultures and regions in southern China rather than unique.

LEGENDS OF SETTLEMENT IN GONGXIAN

Gongxian and neighbouring Xingwen counties in the Yibin district of Sichuan province are characterized, together with some counties in Yunnan, by the presence of the 'hanging coffins' associated with a vanished people known as the Bo, and locally as Ha or A.⁴ The Bo disposed of their dead in wooden coffins carved out of whole pieces of timber, which they deposited in natural and artificial caves in the limestone cliffs in the southern part of Gongxian (Luobiao), but also by suspending

them on pegs inserted into holes bored into the sheer sides of the cliffs in quite a remarkable way which has attracted the attention of local researchers and tourists. Various ceremonial and household articles besides pieces of clothing have been discovered with the skeletons, and the province has undertaken research on these articles and the remains.

Early records of the Bo such as the *Lushi Chunqiu* refer to them as part of the Di and Jiang people in the Qin dynasty, when a principality was established for them in Yibin. They were said to be an impoverished population often carried off as slaves and known therefore as *bo tong* (Little 'Slave' Bo). Under the Han dynasty a Bo prefecture was established in Dianchi of Yunnan and Xichuang of Sichuan. Then there are references to the Bo Man (now pronounced Bai or Bei) in the Tang dynasty, while the *Yunnan zhilue* referred to these peoples' practice of hanging their coffins during the Yuan period (*Zhongguo da baike guanshu* 1986: 54). The Bo are commonly supposed to have been the ancestors of the Tibeto-Burman speaking Bai people of today, who were formerly referred to as Minjia (see Hsu, 1948), and are thought to have descended from the ancient rulers of the kingdom of Nanzhao in Dali (see Yokoyama, 1992).⁵ Whether or not the historical Bo were related to the Bai, the Bai today are among the most sinicized groups of southwest China, and it is clear that a lengthy and complex process of their assimilation into Han Chinese society has also occurred. There are no Bai people in Gongxian or Xingwen today, where the population is predominantly Han and Hmong, although there used to be Yi landlords and farmers.

According to local records based on the county gazetteer, the Hmong of this part of Sichuan originated from Yunnan province and arrived in two major migrations, in 1573–74 during the Ming period, and in the reigns of Yongzheng (1723–36) and Qianlong (1736–96) of the Qing period, when a policy of abolishing the power of local minority officials and establishing central administration was being pursued. Some of the Hmong migrants to Sichuan must also have been later refugees from the great eighteenth and nineteenth century rebellions which took place in Guizhou, the last of which coincided with the Taiping movement.

Regarding the first migration, the gazetteer records that in the first or second years of the reign of Wanli (1573–74), a *tusi* official named He En commanding a Miao army captured Jiusicheng (now Jianwu) and took the 'Ah' Kings Ahda and Maojiaogan prisoner, for which he was awarded a merit of the third degree and a considerable fortune. The chronicles of Gongxian and Xingwen disagree as to whether the Ha leaders were killed in Liupansan of Guizhou or not, but concur that the Ming soldiers captured more than 300 Bo prisoners. Some of these prisoners surrendered and joined the army, while others were released and nobody knows where they went — which suggests their assimilation into the present-day population. The local Hmong surname group of Wang are said to claim that their paternal ancestors were Han Chinese, who accompanied the Ming army at this time to suppress the Ah, married Hmong women, settled down in the county, and became Hmong.⁶ Historically, then, the Hmong have associated themselves with the Han Chinese against the indigenous people.

For example, the story of the ancestry of the Wang lineage at Wangwuzai, the largest Hmong village in Gongxian, is given in a local collection of stories as follows:

‘Wang Wu was a Han Chinese. His home was in Fujian province. During the Wanli era of the Ming dynasty, he distinguished himself by putting down the revolt led by the Bo leader, King Ha. After which, he travelled from Jianwu (now in Xingwen county) to the mountain behind Luoxingdu ferry point. Later he married a young Miao girl. The couple were very much in love and agreed on this: should the husband die before the wife, their descendants would all be Miao people, but should the wife pass away before the husband, then their descendants would be Han. In the end, it was Wang Wu who died before his wife, so that all their descendants became the Miao people. And the stockaded village built by Wang Wu came to be known as Wangwuzai’ (*Fan Zhongchen* 1988: 83).

These stories seem to imply that there were Hmong settled in the area before the historical suppression of the Bo, and that Hmong ethnicity has somehow been inherited matrilineally. The reference to an original home in Fujian here is interesting, since most of the Hmong lineage origin legends I collected in the region refer to their passage, through Yunnan, from ‘Huguang’ (Hunan and Hubei, although understood as Hunan and Guangxi by local informants). For example, in a village I visited in Xingwen, the Ma family told me they had lived there for 200 years, before which they had come, through Weixin county in Yunnan, from ‘Huguang’ — as could be seen from the wrinkles below their elbows. They distinguished themselves by these wrinkles from another Hmong lineage in the village, the Gu, who they saw as the aboriginal inhabitants of the locality, and who were said to be very tall, and very strong. Quite often Hmong in Gongxian and Xinwei would pull up their sleeves to demonstrate these not very remarkable wrinkles when telling stories of their origins from ‘Huguang’. There seems, then, to be a distinction between earlier and later Hmong settlers, marked by the historical suppression of local leaders known as ‘Bo’, which divided Hmong from Hmong.⁷

Graham (1954: 28) records a story of how the Chinese, rather than being allied with the Hmong, defeated the ancestors of the Sichuan Hmong in Guangdong, who were then forced to march to Sichuan with their hands tied behind their backs, leaving the wrinkles which Graham himself had witnessed. It does seem possible that Ming militia might have included minority conscripts who could have left descendants, and such stories, behind them. On the other hand, claims of northern or easterly origins are widespread in southern China, and have been noted for example for the Yao minority people of Guangdong and elsewhere (Fortune, 1939). Faure (n.d.) examines Cantonese and Yao lineage origin myths as possibly associated with the twelfth century southern withdrawal of the Song court or the thirteenth century Mongol onslaught. It was Schafer (1967) who referred to the entire population of southern China as ‘creoles’, and claims of northern lineage origin characteristic of the later Hmong settlers may be seen as representing an aspiration to Han Chinese status which would have been an aspect of the general southern spread of Chinese culture and ‘sinicization’.

In an odd reversal of the textualized version of the story of Wang Wu given above, which associates the ancestors of the Hmong with the Chinese suppression

of earlier inhabitants, the oral version I was given by a Hmong Wang of Wangwuzai implies that Wang Wu was originally ethnically *Hmong*, who took a Han wife:

‘In the second year of the reign of Wanli, Wang Wu joined the army to suppress an uprising of the First and Second Flower Kings (*hua da wang* and *hua er wang*). He went to southern Sichuan, first to Xingwen, and the army conquered this place. He left the next year and settled in Wangwucun (now Jianwu in Xingwen) . . . His wife’s surname was Li, a Han who had married him before he arrived in Sichuan. Wang Wu found Xingwen was not a suitable place to live in, because the mountains were too high and the water was too cold. So he decided to move to Fanjiadong, Luodu. Later their descendants moved here, which was named Wangwuzai after their founding ancestor. Here the Wang family cultivated land and settled permanently’.

Here, too, the Hmong Wang are associated with the suppression of the original inhabitants of the locality. The Hmong member of the Wang lineage who provided this account added that they had originated from Jiangxi province. An informant of the Tao lineage thought the Hmong could only have settled permanently in the region after the recorded conquest of the Ha City of Nine Silk Threads (Jiusicheng) and that before then warfare would have been so prevalent there could only have been a few Hmong living there. Again here is the idea that the Hmong formed part of the original population of the region, prior to the settlements of the Ming and Qing. This informant, however, who was conversant with the printed history of the locality and steeped in the local folklore, maintained like the printed version of the story, that Wang Wu had been originally Han.

It may be significant that the narrator of the printed version, in which Wang Wu is Han, was a member of the Liu lineage who are closely related by marriage to the Tao. The Liu lineage have been the main rivals of the Wang lineage, who are their former landlords, in the village for several decades. Currently this rivalry is expressed in a conflict over whether to declare Wangwuzai an autonomous *xiang* under that name, as the Wang lineage would wish. Their main opponents in this are the Liu and other lineages such as the Tao, who argue that since Wang Wu was a feudal suppressor of peasant revolts, it would be unsuitable to name the village after him. It may be, then, that the important differences between more literate and oral versions of the story of settlement represent a local struggle over power expressed in lineage rivalries between the Wang and the members of other surnames, who deny a genuine Hmong ethnicity to the Wang owing to their historical association with the suppression of local populations. In recent years it will have been the views of the Liu and Tao, formerly tenant farmers, which have achieved written authorization — although there is certainly some historical accuracy to their views, since we know from the Hmong ethnography of other areas that Hmong clans and lineages have often been founded by male Han Chinese who married local Hmong women. Here there is a localized conflict over power in which history is appealed to in different ways, and the discordance between printed and oral versions of history can be seen to reflect the fierceness of lineage conflict. Many of the lineage

conflicts in the village are expressed in terms of rivalries over pieces of land suitable for the burial of ancestors, and legends of settlement and origin such as the above are importantly related to geomantic motifs, as I shall show below.

Graham, who worked predominantly in Wangwuzai in the 1930s, gives a related story of the arrival of the Hmong there, but one in which the Liu and Tao figure prominently as early settlers:

A Miao, Liu I Mbai, came and reported to the official that he would occupy Shih T'i Chai (Strong Ladder Stronghold) and make clearings. Another, T'ao I Guai (or Kuai) also went and reported about the wilderness and occupied the Ch'iao Ch'ang Pa (Long Bridge Flat). This was certainly at a very early time. Later, in the first year of Wan Li (AD 1573), they went again and reported (that they would occupy the wilderness). In the third year of Wan Li the Chinese came and conquered the Miao at Chiu Shih Ch'eng (Jiusicheng) near Xingwen xian. At that time Ha Ta Wa and Ha Er Wa rebelled. Ha Ta Wa at Chiu Shih Ch'eng put yellow clay inside bamboo tubes. He said, 'This is what I passed out of my bowels'. He used leather four feet long to make leather shoes and told people these were the shoes he wore. He could put two winnowing baskets under his armpits and fly. He used a broom as a tail. In the second year of Wan Li he was killed. His two winnowing baskets fell below Chien Wu Ch'eng and that place is called Po Chi Hsia (winnowing-basket gorge) (Graham 1954: 29).

Here it is the Hmong who were rebelling and being conquered by the Chinese, rather than the 'Wang' stories, which paint the Hmong as suppressors of the 'Bo' in alliance with the Han Chinese, yet again the earlier presence of the Hmong in the region is referred to. Probably, then, the stories, in their oral and literate versions and in the differences between lineage accounts, do refer to historical divisions within the Hmong population introduced by the conquest of local leaders in 1573 and the establishment of central authority. What is most remarkable in these stories, however, is the association of a present-day and living landscape with a remembered, part-mythical history. What is involved is a contested history which nevertheless invests and imbues a living present with meaning and significance; a living history, which is readily appealed to rather than sought with difficulty, moulded perhaps in the image of present realities but also fashioning and moulding that present. This is a history which is present, and presentable, in such a way as to form a genuinely *local* culture — one that is situated and toplan as well as topical. More recent (late Qing dynasty) history, is remembered in still more vivid detail; how particular Hmong were captured by bandits and then officially entitled to suppress them, and how local Hmong militia were established. Local legends of Hmong settlement in Gongxian are, then, inseparably intertwined with historical processes of assimilation and conquest, resistance and betrayal.

THE KINGS WHO COULD FLY WITHOUT THEIR HEADS

According to local Hmong informants of the Tao lineage, in 1983 a hanging coffin was discovered in Luobiao containing pieces of wood with the name ‘A Mu Dan’ on them, which showed that the Ha or A, of whom so many local tales were still told, were surnames of the Bo people. The suppression of the Bo is supposed to have taken place at the time of the two Ming generals Liu Xian and Zeng Xingwu, who in 1573 led an army to attack the First and Second Ha Kings, who were brothers. Liu Xian’s son, Liu Ting, is said to be buried at Jianwu and his name written on a memorial tablet there. Hmong informants told me that the First Ha King was able to fly in a dustpan, and established the ‘City of Nine Silk Threads’ (Jiusicheng). The first site he chose for this city was at ‘Flying Eagle Village’ (Feiyingzai), where there are now two sub-villages, but although it took three ounces of silken threads to encircle this site, it was still too small for him, so a new site was chosen which only nine ounces of silken threads could encompass; Jiusicheng, or Jianwu.

At first the Ming generals had been unable to defeat the Ha Kings because the city of Jiusicheng was so strong, but finally Liu Xian took advantage of the Double Ninth Festival, when the Bo like the Chinese were worshipping their spirits, to attack:

Only one road led up the mountain but Liu Xian got his soldiers to pile up wood behind the mountain, and one of his spies among the peasant soldiers sent a signal to him when they were all drunk, so then they set fire to the wood and the Bo all ran out, and there are fossils of burnt rice to prove it. After the city was taken and the First Ha King had been killed, he picked up his head and flew in a dustpan⁸ to a place where he saw there was an old woman planting vegetables. He said to her, ‘You are planting green vegetables. If your vegetables have no head, can they still live?’ And the old woman replied, ‘Without heads, they cannot live’. Hearing this he stamped on the ground, threw his head away, and died — and that is why the place is called Boshaxiang (killing the Bo), and you can still find the footprint where he stamped at Jiaobangan (Footprint Rock).

Extraordinarily, these tales and legends, so apparently local in origin and embedded in the contours of a local landscape and a specific history, are in fact a part of a much wider genre of geomantic tales which seem to have played an important role in the articulation of minority relations with the dominant Han majority and can be found in a number of minority areas in southern China.⁹ A remarkable example of this is the account of the Earl of Dongguang in the New Territories of Hong Kong collected by David Faure (1990), an area where a blending of Cantonese, Fujianese, Hakka and minority Yao populations has taken place. He Zhen (the Earl of Dongguang) was an official gifted with the talent of flying, whose wife became mysteriously pregnant, and who was threatened by the Emperor with decapitation — after an unfortunate intervention by his mother — unless he could name ‘one hundred objects that could grow again after their heads had been chopped

off'. After another unfortunate intervention by his mother (who answered him that a chicken could *not* fly without its head), his head dropped off — but yet bamboos (a sign of lineage strength) grew up at his grave and nearly killed the Emperor. Here the relation of magical flying with headlessness is encountered again, as in the stories of the Bo, and too the oral riddle wrongly answered, and the story relates directly to rebellion against the Ming Emperor.

Faure quotes a similar story from the Li minority people of Hainan, about a boy who challenged the Chinese Emperor (to whom he was *maternally* related) in various ways (after the Emperor had taken the book he was reading away : a clear attribution of the lack of literacy to imperial domination), and again was beheaded — but walked home (again, the *survival* of decapitation) and asked his mother 'Would a chicken head live if it were fixed onto a melon? Would an onion bulb live if it were fixed on to green vegetables?' When the mother answers in the negative, again he dies — and bamboos grow up where the head is buried, the big bamboo often saying 'kill the Emperor, kill the Emperor' (Faure, 1990).

The theme of fault on the part of an old woman who is often the mother is a striking constant in all these stories (cf. Tapp 1989: 134), which in some way must refer, I feel, to the imposition of the Han system of patrilineal descent upon minority populations and the long process of intermarriages there has been in the south between Han Chinese men and minority women, which contributed eventually to their subjugation or assimilation. So in the printed story of Wang Wu given above, the Hmong are associated with matrilineal descent, while the oral version of the Wang also refers clearly to Han intermarriage with the Hmong. Yet Faure's versions demonstrate clearly that these stories were part of a generalized discourse of sovereignty and rebellion, which in Gongxian we can see as having become inscribed in a local landscape.

Thus my informant's hometown was Caoying (Cao's Camp). As he told me, it was named so because one of the Ming generals called Cao who had besieged Jiusicheng had camped his soldiers there. The sub-village he lived in is locally known as Makan (Horse Ridge) because, as he told me, while the First Ha King's home was in Matangba of Luobiao *xiang*, Jiusicheng was so far away that he had to ride into it every day across Makan:

From Matangba to Jiusicheng ran a cave called Makuadong (Horse Leap Cave) shaped like the hoofprint of a horse. Beneath this cave was a valley called Taojiawanzi (the Tao Family Valley), and so whenever he left the cave he would ride across this valley, and that is why it was later called Makan.

I was also told that the Second Ha King had also escaped on a wooden 'horse' to the borders of the counties of Gongxian, Xingwen, Jianwu and Shibei, where he had been killed by Ming soldiers at a place therefore called Sharengou (the Valley of Slaughter).

Graham (1954: 36) includes three short tales of the Ha Kings under the strange title of '*The Pai Yen, "Short People" (T'ai People ?)*' (*sic*) which echo some of the themes in the Gongxian account but without most of the place-names.¹⁰ In his account

there were three Ha Kings, born in Xingwen, who grasped winnowing baskets under their arms and used brooms to fly. The accounts mention Jiusicheng and how the Chinese tricked the Ha into defeat after feasting with them (which is also a common theme in other Hmong legends of their defeat by the Han). Graham's accounts include a quite similar account of the Ha leader's encounter with an old woman, except that in Graham's version she is not old and is planting red peppers. The only two local place-names explained in Graham's versions are Po Chi Hsia (*bo qi sha*) mountain, where Ha Ta Wa sat down and left two large footprints, and Ha Chien T'ien, or the Field of Ha's Spear.¹¹ We can see how this kind of intermingling of popular and textualized accounts, history with the landscape and the origins of peoples and lineages, contributes to a unique local culture which is not really reducible to any one of its constituent elements. The story of Wang Wu traces the local origins of the Hmong directly to intermarriage between the Han Chinese and Hmong, while the Bo are locally thought to have become 'extinct' but were probably assimilated into the present population. Ethnicity seems to play an important but not predominant part in this solution; probably a historical interfusing of Bai, Yi, Hmong and Han cultures has taken place in Gongxian to which the legends point, but this is expressed and inscribed in a landscape and a history which is common to all. In both Gongxian and Xingwen, the population is predominantly Han and Hmong, but clearly, as Chinese ethnographers often argue generally for Han-minority relations in China, relations between the two were close, if by that one understands common economic enterprises and local understandings and accommodations, a shared past in which the vanished Bo people had played a dominant part, and a shared topography.¹² The Hmong would pay respects to statuettes of Guan Yin at the tops of hills and had no hesitation about inviting a local Daoist priest to perform rites for an unfortunate deceased after the main Hmong rituals had taken place. And other examples of local 'sinicization' (if this is still an appropriate term), could be given, such as the drawing up of written genealogies after a Han model, or plans to construct an ancestral hall, which are outside the limits of this paper.

From the legends considered, it seems clear that the Hmong of this part of Sichuan, sometimes known as Hmong Bo (explained by Graham as 'old Hmong'), Hmong Dleb (White Hmong), or Han Miao on account of their sinicization, and who were already losing such elements of their traditional culture as weaving and costume in the early years of this century, have suffered a particularly violent past of almost endemic warfare and fighting in the course of which their ethnic identity has contributed to, and become rooted in, a particular regional identity. While the sense of Hmong ethnicity, culture and language, remains strong, morality, knowledge and locality are closely interrelated in a type of social order we may describe as situated, or 'topian'. There were no less than three still quite distinctive styles of dress and varieties of dialect among the Hmong of Gongxian alone, which corresponded to different sub-cultural groupings in the past. Extraordinary local fusions and fissions of cultural groupings have taken place which have resulted in the ethnic distinctions of today. It is also clear that segments of the Hmong have in the past supported the causes of rebels while others have been engaged on the side of the authorities, and that Hmong consciousness of the past, which we can see as a kind of popular consciousness or local knowledge in China, is pervaded by the

presence of the ghosts of the vanished Bo people as much as that of the Han. From such stuff are local cultures made.

DISCUSSION

The topic of a 'local' culture or cultures suggests a reconsideration of what Redfield (1956) saw as the 'great' and 'little' traditions within peasant societies. In Chinese studies, as we have seen, it has been common to differentiate sharply between elite and folk culture, the scholarly tradition and its popular variants, and further between minority studies and those of the Han. In a seminal article, Catherine Bell, drawing on the work of Natalie Davis (1974, 1982), argues that the first generation of modern scholarship on Chinese religion was characterized by three related dichotomies, between the elite and folk, the 'great' and 'little', 'rational religion' and 'superstitious supernaturalism'. Freedman's (1974) reading of Yang's (1961) study of Chinese religion, however, represented a 'second-stage position' which challenged this early dualism of approach, and attempted to recognize an underlying unity behind the terms of the dichotomy (Bell, 1989).¹³

Thus Freedman refers to the 'systematic coherence' between elite ideas and those of the common people which he finds elaborated in Yang's work. Certainly Bell's characterization of Freedman's position as concerned with as Freedman put it 'the unity of a vast polity' is correct, and Feuchtwang (1991) has recently also stressed this point.

Feuchtwang's recent appraisal of Freedman's approach to the study of 'Chinese religion' emphasizes Freedman's concern with the assumption of unity and a system of underlying order which informed both formal rules and actual practices, and questions the necessity of assuming such a coherence and systematicity in Chinese religion (Feuchtwang, 1991). Feuchtwang points out that Freedman's debate with Wolf (1974), while seemingly about the priority of unity over heterogeneity, is in fact marked by both writers' acceptance 'that there is a framework ("a country" or "a society") within which both the coherence and differentiation exist'. As he puts it, 'Between Freedman and Wolf, the only point at issue is whether they are dealing with one big Chinese ethnicity or a number of related but different ethnicities'. It follows that the question of ethnicity is crucial to discussions both of the unity of Chinese religion and of the political unity of the Chinese state.

It may now be possible to see Freedman's work as part of a generally structuralist attempt to search out underlying unities and elevate the cultural homogeneity emphasized by earlier functionalist approaches onto an ideal plane at which it becomes logically unassailable. In a post-structuralist world, then, not only Freedman's postulation of a unified category of 'Chinese religion' may need re-examining, therefore, but also the more general discovery Freedman (1974) refers to when he says that 'elite culture and popular culture . . . were versions of each other'. However, unless one returns to the earlier sharp distinctions between great and little traditions, elite and folk culture, marked by the presence or absence of literacy, the form that this re-examination has to take must be one of the recognition of inherent cultural variety expressed in the strength of local cultures.

Even Freedman, as Feuchtwang points out, was concerned with, rather than dismissive of, the ‘differences between villagers and officials and the possible opposition between village and state’ (Feuchtwang, 1991). In many cases one senses that ethnographers such as Freedman and Topley, while continually stressing underlying structural continuities, were still working within a framework haunted by Redfieldian shades.¹⁴

Catherine Bell argues that a ‘third-stage position’ is now emerging, or has now emerged, in historical studies, in which ‘historians appear to have sought a notion of culture that would recognize how a society produces both differences and unities within its cultural categories and social organization’. Her succeeding review of five recent contributions to the study of Chinese religion and society recommends an emphasis on ‘religious cultures’ rather than ‘popular religion’, and argues strongly that the holism of culture must be appreciated within a comparative and regional context, since culture involves the ‘internal generation of both distinctions and unities’.

This is a general argument for a more emergent view of ‘culture’, and for the final emergence of a model, long suppressed by functionalist and structuralist formulations, in which conflict over meanings, dissonance and dissensus, variety and diversity, are taken as *fundamental* rather than as derived or secondary. We then start from the ‘difference’, the Daoist multiplicity, cultural variety and conflict of the kind *feng shui* is so importantly concerned with; what becomes problematic is the emergence of order, and the assumptions of cultural holism and sharply bounded ethnic entities which have been made.

With regard to historical approaches, the emergent view of culture might be taken as signifying a Foucauldian concern with discontinuities, ruptures and disjunctions; the sort of challenge to continuist histories, or ‘histories of the centre’, which has been remarked in recent Thai historiography (Reynolds, 1992).

Of course it is precisely this sort of challenge to the written authority of the past which has been classically presented by those societies ‘without history’, or without writing, of whom Levi-Strauss wrote, and who have been the traditional focus of anthropological inquiry. Inevitably this brings the study of marginalized peoples and peripheral regions into increasing prominence in Chinese studies, as elsewhere.

This is why it is important that Feuchtwang (1991) raises the issue of ethnicity in his analysis of Freedman’s work on ‘Chinese’ religion; the notion of a local culture, like that of a unified religion in China, *does* implicate notions of ethnicity, as we have seen in the case of the Hmong of Gongxian. Here, then, it is the strength, extent and limits of that ‘Chineseness’ which Feuchtwang reveals as one of Freedman’s basic assumptions about the nature of religion in China with which we are concerned. Feuchtwang too envisages the break-up of such assumptions of unity in the field of ‘religion’ and their replacement by ‘discontinuities, conjunctions and effective combinations of juristic rules and agents’ as an ‘intellectual heritage . . . blocked by the notion of *ethnicity* and by its carrier, the notion of *religion*’.

In particular it has been Anagnost’s work on counter-representations of the state in popular consciousness which has been crucial in raising such questions as how ‘mythic/historic images such as this emperor can be drawn from the consciousness of the modern Chinese peasantry to express present-day political sentiments

unacknowledgeable in the official order' and 'how history can be used to express an alternative conception of the world' (Anagnost, 1985). Although emphasizing the extent of cultural integration achieved in China, Watson's (1985) study of contrasting local interpretations and the official authorization of the figure of Tien Hau also focused attention on the processes of censorship and subversion; the creation of orthodoxy (or orthopraxy) and the role of the heterodox. Watson's later (1991) analysis of local myths of the dragon-emperor emphasized how far popular understandings could be at variance from official or received models, showing how in oral culture, the emperor was seen as a dangerous and vengeful ruler of a state based on terror. Feuchtwang's recent study of Chinese religion is similarly also concerned with counter-representations of authority; '... an alternative version of the cosmos altogether'. The emphasis here, then, is on 'rival identifications, different histories, different traditionalities of a universe' (Feuchtwang, 1992), of the kind we find in the Hmong versions of local history given above. It is not the opposition of popular culture to that of an elite with which we are concerned, so much as the variety and flexibility of popular religious cultures representing a variety of local situations and contexts, understandings and representations of authority.

Legends of decapitation and magical flight, linked with the theme of maternal fault, form an important genre of geomantic tale which seems to have been associated, particularly in south China, with minority identity and challenges to imperial authority which have often taken messianic form. Beliefs in the power of geomantic sites to assure the fortune of descendants, and the strength of the patrilineage as an index of power and status, are importantly implicated in these legends, in which ethnic distinctions appear to be subordinated to those of local, and regional, cultural identity. The tale collected by Faure (1990) refers to the Earl of Dongguang whose descendants were beheaded by the Ming Emperor and charged with conspiracy against the state, and the genre as a whole is central to the formation of a southern Chinese identity. It is appropriate, then, that we should find such tales so clearly linked with the emergence of local cultures in particular parts of south China.¹⁵

NOTES

1. These points on Hmong *feng shui* are made in Tapp (1986) where there is a preliminary description of *feng shui* as practiced by the Hmong, but at that time I was merely concerned to counter models of sinicisation and not to account for them.
2. De Certeau (1984) refers to the kind of 'tactical' knowledge associated with everyday practices, and the way in which a belief in magic and miracles has historically challenged and undermined structures of power and 'reason'. This is still a fashionable, but not I think wholly accurate, viewpoint.
3. Fei (1991) argues that community (*shequ* or as he says *gongtongti*) studies derived from the Chicago school through Yenching University gave rise to both sociology and ethnology in China, and criticizes the long separation of ethnological studies (*minzu yanjiu*) from social science studies (*shehuixue yanjiu*). In 1989 he stressed the intermixture and blending of different elements (*duo yuan yi ti geju*) which has formed 'the Chinese people' (*zhonghua minzu*). Pan Naigu (1992) points out the utility of the kind of 'community studies advocated by Professor Fei' for development and poverty alleviation.

4. The word 'Bo' may correspond to the 'P'ou' or 'Boa, the name the Naxi used for the original inhabitants of the Lijiang plain, according to Peter Groullart, *Forgotten Kingdom*, London: John Murray, (1955, p. 112). Goullart describes the Boa as wearing black clothes and often claiming to be Naxi.
5. 'Bo' seems to have been the archaic pronunciation of modern 'Bai', whether written with the character for 'white' or 'hundred', and both of which are in any case pronounced Bei in Chuanqiandian (the Sichuan-Guizhou-Yunnan region). Here it is the character for 'white' which concerns us, since this is used for the name of the modern Bai people and for the people who were described as hanging their coffins in the Yuan and Tang.
6. Undated speech given in Gongxian, 1981; cf. Yang Zhengwen: 'Some Issues on Miao revolts during the reign of Emperor Yongzheng and Emperor Qianlong'. *Miaozushi Wenji* (Collected Works on Miao History). Hunan Daxue Chubanshe 1986.
7. Most of the Hmong in Weixin county of Yunnan, however, where many families in Gongxian said they had settled before coming to Gongxian, claimed to have arrived there from Wenshan in the far south of Yunnan. I was also told that the wrinkles, or 'threads', dated from the peasants' uprising of 1644 and the establishment of a kingdom of Dazi at Chengdu which was taken by the Qing, after which settlers were imported from 'Huguang' to repair the devastated local population.
8. I do mean 'dustpan' here; *ciblaug* in Hmong, but *boji* in Chinese; a 'winnowing basket' would be *vab* in Hmong.
9. I am very indebted to David Faure at the BACS Conference (and prior to the Conference) for drawing this to my attention. The versions of the tales he has collected (1990) show clearly the relations between the Bo-related legends told by the Hmong of Sichuan, and the type of geomantic tale about messianic rebellion which I had previously collected among the Hmong of North Thailand (1989).
10. This 'Pai Yen' must refer to the Bai *ren* or 'Bai people', since Baiyi (formerly written Pai-Yi) was how the Dai (Tai or T'ai) of Xishuangbanna were formerly identified.
11. In another of Graham's accounts (Graham 1954: 35), a Chinese general named Wang is said to have suppressed the uprising of the Taiping in Lo Piao (Lobiao in south Gongxian).
12. The Hmong in Gongxian accounted for 12,868 against a Han population of 298,444, and in Xingwen for 11,850 out of a total population of 138,101.
13. Bell bases her views on the historian Natalie Davis' (1974) critique of Keith Thomas' *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (1971), where she argues against a model of European Christianity which sharply differentiated magic from religion, and folk from official religion.
14. Perhaps the same might be said of Barbara Ward, who was concerned to account for the variety of local practices while focusing attention on the coherence of ideal models.
15. Fieldwork was conducted with funding from the British Academy for 6 months on the Hmong of Gongxian, Sichuan, in 1989, with a further month in Xingyi in Guizhou in 1990 and a further month in Weixin of Yunnan in 1991 during periods of leave from the Chinese University of Hong Kong. I am grateful to both of these institutions for their assistance and also to my hosts in China, who were respectively the Minority Affairs Commission of Sichuan, the Nationalities College of Guizhou, and the Social Science Academy of Yunnan.

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6 The Image and Identity of the Shanghainese

Xiong Yuezhi

The Shanghainese (*Shanghai ren*) is a modern term that has appeared with the emergence of Shanghai as a metropolis.

Shanghai was only a town (*zhen*) in the Song. It became a county (*xian*) in the Yuan. Its city walls were built in the Ming. Among Chinese cities, this does not count as a long history. It is, in terms of historical depth, not comparable to Xi'an, Kaifeng, Loyang, nearby Suzhou and Hangzhou, and not even Songjiang that now comes under its jurisdiction. Before it was opened as a port for foreign trade in 1843, within the standards of political, economic, or cultural importance, Shanghai did not enjoy a noticeable position. It was not among China's famous cities, not even in the lower Yangzi.

Before 1843, there were no Shanghainese. That is to say, there was no image of the Shanghainese that stood out in either the national or the local consciousness. In the county local histories, the people of Shanghai county city were said to have 'admired the fashions of Suzhou and Yangzhou'. It was not Shanghai that stood out as the leader of fashion in the lower Yangzi. It was even said of Shanghai in neighbouring Songjiang that 'the rough manners there were found to be wanting'.¹

The present-day view of the Shanghainese has emerged with the ascendance of Shanghai as a political, economic and cultural centre. A contemporary Shanghainese writer has described this view in the following terms:

[The Shanghainese] share many common understandings, life rhythms, and mental references. They become a coherent psychological and cultural order. To put it boldly, we may call it 'Shanghainese culture.' In Shanghai, an outsider can be spotted very quickly, on the bus, in the shops or on the street, not because of his looks or his speech, but because he does not fit the Shanghainese culture. By the same token, when several Shanghainese go somewhere outside Shanghai, they are also very noticeable, even when they do not necessarily speak in Shanghainese.²

Nowadays, the Shanghainese give the impression that they are knowledgeable, open-minded, quick of mind, and practical. These characteristics, added to the mixture of Suzhou, Ningbo, local and Subei dialects that has become the Shanghainese tongue, have given the Shanghainese a personality that stands apart from the crowd.

Certainly, there is another description of the Shanghainese that sees them as proud, boastful, free and easy, reaching for the novel for the sake of being novel, and worldly. This negative view merely suggests that the characteristics of the Shanghainese evoke value judgements from their observers. That is confirmation that the Shanghainese have come into their own.

FORMATION OF THE SHANGHAINESE IMAGE

How the Shanghainese acquired an image within the national culture is a question that has been much debated in recent years among Chinese historians. Opinions on this matter are varied, but may be summarized in three observations.

Firstly, Shanghai was exposed early to Western technology. A process of transition may be documented during which the Shanghainese learnt about Western culture. The process consisted of initial bewilderment and its gradual conversion to appreciation and assimilation. The early sense of wonder is best brought out in contemporary limericks, an assortment of which is given below.

A limerick on street lamps noted their glory in the following terms:

To east and west, a thousand lamp posts,
Running fires beyond the skill of man.
Why boast of burning oil to steal another day,
When by night you may be walking by moonlight?³

Another limerick described running tap water:

Huangpu dust on the wave,
Distilled, it becomes pure water.
And that black dragon, sucking Shanghai's water,
Can make it flow up the tall building.⁴

The clock tower made its impression with the midday gun:

Down the street sounds the chiming clock,
Twelve strikes are carried across the wind.
Upon the sudden gunfire, all raise their heads,
To see the midday sun high above.⁵

Such poems glorifying civic improvements brought by Westerners were abundant in contemporary sources. Such improvements were also connected in popular consciousness to the city government set up among Westerners. One source wrote in admiration, 'In the international settlement, the roads reach everywhere. In the [Chinese] city, the roads are narrow. The international settlement is exceptionally clean. Its cars do not leave a cloud of dust. People who live there think of it as paradise. In the city, although there is a street-cleaning bureau, the stench from the river attacks the nose, and latrines lie adjacent to one another in quiet districts. The

difference between [the city] and the international settlement is that between heaven and earth.’⁶

As a result of the admiration and imitation of Western ways, the gentry of Shanghai set up their own gas company, electric power company, and public works department. Their self-governing movement, their participation in politics, the organization of public opinion, the consciousness of the rule of law and public order, were all strongly affected by Western practices.

Secondly, Shanghainese people were also affected by the pragmatism of commercial society. Shanghai’s commercialism began before the city was opened to foreign trade. However, as a result of foreign trade, it became the most prosperous city in all of China, and a consequence of that was the breakdown of traditional status.

In modern Shanghai, wealth determined status and power. Wealth mattered more than origin, family background, or official titles. Not only merchants embraced profit, but farmers, officials, and even artists were motivated by profit. Well-known artists such as Zhu Xiong, Ren Xiong, Ren Xun, Hu Yuan and Xu Gu lived in Shanghai and openly sold their paintings for money. Their commercialism was such that popular topics were repainted time and again. The notable scholar Zhang Taiyan criticized the declining morals of the day, but was not above selling his calligraphy openly in Shanghai.⁷ The pragmatism of commercialism cut away many of the complications of traditional life and contributed to the Shanghainese people’s single-mindedness for economic success.

Thirdly, Shanghai was a migrant society, and the result of that was that the influence on Shanghai came from many quarters.

According to the censuses conducted between 1885 and 1935, over 80 percent of Shanghai’s residents were not Shanghai natives. In 1950, 85 percent of the population was non-native. Immigrants into Shanghai had come both from other parts of China and from abroad. At its highest, the foreign population of Shanghai amounted to 150,000 people.⁸

It is widely acknowledged that in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries Shanghai was China’s most cosmopolitan city. Within the international settlement of Shanghai, and, for that matter, even the French and Japanese settlements, gathered people from all parts of the world who were engaged in all manners of occupation. There were English, French, American, German, Japanese, Russian, Jewish and many other peoples living in as well as passing through the foreign settlements. There were merchants, missionaries, intellectuals, politicians, ruffians, rich as well as poor people. Shanghai was a centre from which goods, culture, and news from all over the world might be disseminated. There were examples there of food, clothing, architecture and customs from many parts of the world. Whatever the origin of this international atmosphere, however much shame and struggle had been brought by it, and however complex its background, the fact is not altered that it made an impact on Shanghai culture. It is a consequence of Shanghai’s international character that Shanghainese people were considered knowledgeable, broad-minded and defiant.⁹

Besides, because Shanghai came to be China’s industrial, commercial and financial centre, Shanghai was also a gathering point for China’s most well-known

brand names and most famous people. In the years immediately after 1949, there were times when Shanghai contributed between a quarter and a sixth of the central government's total revenue. These features also added to the sense of superiority attached to Shanghainese people.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE SHANGHAINESE IDENTITY

From the end of the nineteenth century, the Shanghainese identity was recognizable. This is to say that, on the one hand, the Shanghainese already acquired characteristics that set them apart from people of other places, and on the other hand, that such differences were noticed.

An example of the special character of Shanghai may be found in the history of foreign language acquisition. The foreign language school appeared in Beijing and Shanghai at approximately the same time (1862 in Beijing and 1863 in Shanghai). Moreover, the teaching programmes of the Beijing *Tongwen guan* and the Shanghai *Guang fangyan guan* were almost identical. However, the public reaction to the two colleges was very different in the two cities.

In Beijing, the *Tongwen guan* faced considerable difficulties when it began. There was a lot of opposition, and it failed to recruit a large number of students. Many scholars were ashamed of learning foreign languages. Nevertheless, in Shanghai, many young people enrolled, many of whom had already learned some English before they did so. The two colleges were closed at approximately the same time, but in general, the *Guang fangyan guan* produced more notable students. In the late Qing, of the nine graduates of these two colleges who served in various diplomatic capacities, eight of them, including Wang Fengzao, Lu Zhengxiang and Liu Shixun were students at the Shanghai *Guang fangyan guan*.¹⁰

In the 1870s, a wave of enthusiasm had come about in Shanghai for learning foreign languages. At the time, there were more than twenty language schools in Shanghai, most of them teaching principally practical English, that is, conversation, letter-writing, and accounting documents. The most popular classes were those lasting from three to five months. In the earlier years of the 1870s, the students came from the lower classes, merchants or preachers' families. By the end of the 1870s and the early 1880s, wealthy people and officials sent their children to these schools. In 1881, the Zhongxi (East-West) College admitted more than two hundred students in its first enrolment, most of whom had come from wealthy families and families with official connections. Y.J. Allen, founder of the college, was very proud of this. By the mid-1880s, in order to gain a place in the Shanghai *Guang fangyan guan*, it was necessary to give presents to the college organizers. Among the upper class of Shanghai, it was said, 'When the *fangyan guan* recruits students, Mr. Shu cheats you of coppers'. Mr Shu was a foreign instructor at the *Guang fangyan guan*. It was said that he made a rule to demand certain sums from applicants to the college. That students were prepared to pay a bribe in order to gain a place in the college makes it very clear that these places were in demand.¹¹

Because of the popularity of English, some English words found their way into Shanghai daily speech. The stick was the *sidike*, cement was *shuimenting*, the

telephone *delufeng*, and so on. The English spoken on the Shanghai Bund consisted of an even greater combination of Chinese and English.

In contrast, scholars in inland cities continued to consider it shameful to have to come into contact with Westerners. Few students enrolled in the *Tongwen guan*, and those who did continued to aspire to the traditional official examination. Such an attitude was very different from the attitude towards foreign culture in Shanghai.

By the 1860s and 1870s, the ability of Shanghainese people in acquiring foreign languages was well-known. Between 1868 and 1898, on five occasions, the *Tsungli yamen*, the Qing government's equivalent of a foreign ministry, recruited foreign language specialists in Shanghai for work in Beijing or for further training. Promoters of new enterprises also recruited from Shanghai. One has only to turn the pages of the *Hand-written Letters of Wang Kangnian's Teachers and Friends* to see the many requests Wang received from all over China for recommendations of capable people for new enterprises.¹²

At the end of the Qing, a contemporary wrote:

After the *jiawu* year [1895], people with a sense of righteousness have gathered in Shanghai. They wear their angry hearts on their sleeves, and every move they make affects the entire country, shaking even the government. For this reason, all new enterprises begin in Shanghai before they spread inland. The Shanghai of today is the hope of the entire nation, the model of the new China.¹³

This passage shows clearly that at the end of the Qing dynasty, Shanghai had firmly established an impression.

In the establishment of the Shanghai identity, the media played an important part. Towards the end of the Qing and in the early Republic, many Chinese newspapers and magazines were published in Shanghai, including such famous ones as the *Shenbao*, the *Xinwenbao* and the *Dongfang zazhi*. An important part of their coverage was Shanghai news. Because of the importance of Shanghai, and also the impact of these newspapers and magazines, publications from other parts of China also made it a point to include reports on Shanghai. A section on 'important news from Shanghai' was often considered only secondary to the selections from the *Peking Gazette* or Beijing news. During the anti-Russian movement of 1901 to 1903, and the boycott of American goods in 1905, the almost daily speeches, gatherings and telegrams of Shanghai gentry and merchants were publicized by the newspapers and through them reached the entire country. The Shanghai elite provided the leadership, but the newspapers added weight to a consciousness regarding this leadership. The publicity promoted a sense in many parts of China that Shanghai and the Shanghainese were the model of the future.¹⁴

THE INTERNAL VIEW

An external recognition of the Shanghainese character must be distinguished from the self-recognition of a cohesive identity by the Shanghainese. Many Shanghai

residents had come from other parts of China and regarded themselves as short-term sojourners in Shanghai; for this reason, they did not look upon themselves as Shanghainese. For example, the instigators of the Small Swords uprising of 1853 to 1855 were said to have been Cantonese or Fujianese resident in Shanghai, and neither the contemporary government, nor local Shanghainese, nor Westerners regarded these people as Shanghainese.¹⁵ When the uprising was suppressed, the Qing government ordered that the Guangdong and Fujian guildhalls be located outside the county city, setting the Cantonese and Fujianese apart from other residents. However, they were not unique in identifying themselves with their places of origin. In 1874, when the Ningbo people of Shanghai clashed with the French settlement authorities in the Siming guildhall incident, local participation was limited to Ningbo people. Neither local Shanghainese, nor residents from other places took part.

A noticeable change came after 1900. In January 1900, when the Dowager Empress tried to force the Guangxu emperor from the throne, 1,231 civic leaders in Shanghai signed a petition in opposition to her. Most of these signatories were not native Shanghainese. Their leader Jing Yuanshan had come from Shangyu county which was in Zhejiang, and another leader, Zhang Taiyan, from Yuhang county also in Zhejiang. However, they signed themselves as the ‘gentry and merchants resident in Shanghai.’¹⁶ From 1901 to 1903, during the anti-Russian movement but before the incident of the *Subao*, Zhang Taiyan, Wu Zihui, Zou Rong, Cai Yuanpei, Huang Zongyang and others often gathered at the famous Zhang Family Garden to make speeches. These people referred to themselves likewise as ‘Shanghai gentry and merchants’. Moreover, significantly, they began with the term ‘gentry and merchants resident in Shanghai’, and gradually changed that to ‘Shanghai gentry and merchants.’ The slight difference in the terminology hides the transition in their status.¹⁷

Towards the end of the Qing dynasty and in the early years of the Republic, a number of directories were published in Shanghai of reputable Shanghai people. Many entries in these directories consisted of biographies of people who were not Shanghai natives. Among the three well-known leaders of the Green Gang, only Du Yuesheng was a native Shanghainese. Neither Huang Jinrong nor Zhang Xiaolin was. However, whatever their origin, the three of them and other people would have had no trouble thinking of them as Shanghainese. It is obvious that with the passage of time, many sojourners became native.¹⁸

After 1949, with the implementation of household registration, migration into Shanghai came under control, and the Shanghainese became a stable category. This strengthened the Shanghainese self-image. In 1961 to 1962, when some Shanghainese factories were moved inland, local people in their new environment referred to their workers as Shanghainese and to the city of their origin as Shanghai City. Between 1968 and 1976, when educated young people from Shanghai were sent down to the countryside in Jiangxi, Yunnan, Heilongjiang, Xinjiang and other places, whatever their origins were, they were described as ‘educated young people from Shanghai’, and they thought of themselves as Shanghainese.

Two points, therefore, have to be made in a discussion of the self-image of the Shanghainese. First, the self-image changed through history; and second, it did not always accord with the image they projected to people outside Shanghai. After

1979, when the policy of economic reform was implemented, because Shenzhen and Zhuhai in Guangdong grew very rapidly, while Shanghai, remaining more faithful to economic planning, grew more slowly, Shanghai came to be thought of as lacking capability and being narrow-minded. However, now that the development of Pudong has been made a central policy, Shanghai is once again developing very rapidly, and the image of Shanghai to the outside world has gathered momentum. These events show that objective achievement affects the image that may be accorded the Shanghainese.

Nevertheless, whatever the view accorded the Shanghainese from without, and however much a Shanghainese now may identify with Shanghai, among Shanghainese, the place of origin is never abandoned. The Guangdong, Fujian, Ningbo, Subei people in Shanghai are concentrated in different parts of Shanghai, and have preserved their own cuisines, theatres, guildhalls, and even their own networks. The Shanghainese identity is closely blended with their sense of native-place origin.

NOTES

1. Fan Lian (1593: 5/10b).
2. Yu Qiuyu (1992: 143).
3. *Shenbao* 18.5.1872.
4. Cixi Chenqiao (1887: 2).
5. *Shenbao* 28.5.1872.
6. Li Weiqing (1907: 4).
7. Tan Zhijun (1979: 939).
8. Zou Yiren (1980: 141).
9. Zhang Zhongli, ed. (1990: 712–731).
10. Xiong Yuezhi (1988: 196).
11. *Ibid.* p. 192.
12. Wang Rangqing (rep. 1986–89).
13. *Minli bao*, 12.2.1911.
14. Zhang Zhongli, ed. (1990: 1066–1072).
15. See, for instance, Shanghai shehui kexueyuan lishi yanjiusuo, ed. (1980, pp. 961).
16. *Qingyi bao* 20.2.1900.
17. Zhang Zhongli (1990: 687–694).
18. Such biographies may be found in Chen Boxi, ed. (1919), and *Haishang mingren zhuan* (*Biographies of well-known people of Shanghai*) 1930.

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7

Creating a Shanghai Identity — Late Qing Courtesan Handbooks and the Formation of the New Citizen

Catherine Yeh

THE CITY AND THE COURTESAN HANDBOOKS

Shanghai is an oddity. Essentially a new creation by foreigners, the city was from the very beginning laden with contradictory options. It was indefinite and therefore had to be defined. This definition was controversial from the outset. The foreign business community, the Chinese officials who represented the Qing court, and the city's intellectuals manning the city's publishing, educational, and social welfare sectors, had different interests to promote, and different problems to resolve. A newly emerging commercial port city will always have to articulate its own importance and establish its own image, but Shanghai's case is greatly complicated by the political and national crisis which brought the city into being in the first place. Among the various groups the hegemony in defining the city was contested.

An unlikely source, the Shanghai courtesan handbooks, guides and texts, often written by famous intellectuals of the time such as Wang Tao (1828–1898)¹ and Li Boyuan (1867–1906) offers us a unique insight into this struggle for hegemony.² But why should such towering intellectual figures devote themselves to writing about the trivia of courtesan life? Why would these men who were fully aware of China's internal crisis and external challenges and who were also writers of social criticism and advocates of political reform, spend their spare time in courtesan houses and write biographies of courtesans?

Could it be that coded in this courtesan literature is another purpose familiar to both writers and readers at the time, a purpose which provides a different strategy for writing and reading these texts and adding some different layer of meaning?

These courtesan texts share one common feature. They are set in Shanghai and most of them are even part of Shanghai's city guides. What these texts want to convey is a portrait of Shanghai and an understanding of the spirit of the city, yet they do this through a depiction of the city's courtesan life and courtesans.

In terms of genre, these texts show a great formal variety, ranging from Wang Tao's 'brush notes' (*biji*), to novels like *Lives of Shanghai Flowers*, (*Haishang hua liezhuan*, Han Banqing, 1892), or *Flower in the Sea of Retribution* (*Niehai hua*, Zeng Pu, 1895), from connoisseur handbooks which go back to Ming texts like *The Hundred Beauties of Nanjing* (*Jinling baimei*, Li Yunxiang, 1618) and *Fun* (*Xian xian bian*, Deng Zhimo, late Ming) and found successors in the late Qing like

Ranking for All of Shanghai's Courtesan (*Haishang qunfang pu*, Xitianyi jushi, 1886) or *The Poetic History of Cozy Quarter* (*Rouxiang yunshi*, Zhan Kai, 1907); some give lithograph-illustrated depictions of courtesans and courtesan life-style like *The Illustrated Description of Shanghai Courtesan Houses* (*Haishang qinglou tuji*, Jiaochuan zizhu shanfang zhuren, 1892) to be followed by those which included photographs of the courtesans like the *Photographic Record of Shanghai Flowers* (*Haishang huaying lu*, 1915). There are city guides which devote a sizeable part to courtesans, collections of poetry written in the traditional style by clients for the courtesans like *Ranking Shanghai Beauties* (*Hujiang yan pu*, Liangxi chilian jushi, 1881) or *Assessment of Shanghai Flowers* (*Hushang pinghua lu*, Liangxi chilian jushi, 1881), there are specialized courtesan guidebooks such as the *Record of the Spring River Lantern Festival* (*Chunchiang dengshi lu*, Liangxi xuaoxiangguan shizhe, 1885), *The Guide to Shanghai Courtesan Life* (*Haishang yeyou beilan*, Banji sheng, 1891) or *The Guide to the Courtesan Houses of Shanghai* (*Hujiang seyi zhinan*, 1908), and finally there are newspapers devoted to courtesan life like Li Boyuan's *Entertainment* (*Youxi bao*, Li Boyuan, 1897) and *Vanity Fair* (*Shijie fanhua bao*, Li Boyuan 1901). Quite apart from a possibly different layer of meaning, these materials provide a uniquely rich and detailed record of an important aspect of late Qing attitudes and social life, and allow us to explore some of the fantasies and anxieties of Shanghai intellectuals at the turn of the century.

PATRIOTIC CONCERN AND COURTESANS HANDBOOKS — YU HUIAI'S 'RANDOM NOTES OF THE WOODEN BRIDGE'

To understand the particular relationship between Shanghai, Shanghai intellectuals and the courtesan literature, we must find the proper reading strategy for these texts. The courtesan and the courtesan-patron relationship have a long tradition as a literary topic and a rich spectrum of metaphorical meaning. The late Qing text explicitly links up with this tradition. For our material, the most important precedent is Yu Huai's (1616–1696) *Banqiao zaji* (*Random Notes of the Wooden Bridge*) which was written in 1654 after the Ming Dynasty had collapsed.³ In this work, Yu Huai establishes the courtesan as the metaphor for the transitoriness of dynasties and the fallen empire trampled over by invading foreign powers. The work delves in the memories of the past splendours of Nanjing's courtesan life prior to the Manchu conquest. In his preface, Yu Huai is explicit in establishing this connection and claims that there is no better way to write about the demise of the former dynasty than to write about the fate of the courtesans in its capital:

Someone asked me: 'Is there [actually] a higher purpose for which you have written [your] *Random Notes of the Wooden Bridge*?'

'It definitely is written for a higher purpose,' I replied.

'But there is no end of things to be sung and written about in the rise and fall of a dynasty and the sadness of a millennium, but all you talk about are narrow side-lanes and all you transmit are seductive scenes. Is that not a bit profligate?' the other continued.

Upon hearing this I just smiled, saying: ‘This [*Banqiao zaji*] in fact deals with the rise and fall of a dynasty and the sadness of a millennium! Nanjing was once famed as a beautiful place. Its gentry and men of letters which surpassed all else in Jiangnan, its refinement and fashion which ranked highest in the empire, the Green Valley River and the round fan [poems] by Tao Ye these were seductive scenes. . . .

. . . Since the advent of the [Qing] dynasty, times have shifted and things have changed. My dreams of yore have for ten years held on fast (to that area of Nanjing which was once like) Yangzhou; [but even] that single strip of an area of delight is now overgrown with weeds. The wondrous dances and the pure melodies [coming from] the hand castanets of carmine ivory and the green-stringed [musical instruments] can no longer be heard; the patterned silks of the nuptial chambers and the embroidery of the speckled bamboo screens can no longer be seen; the famed flowers and fragrant grasses, the brocade-adorned zithers and the rhinoceros-horn girdle ornaments can no longer be appreciated.

I passed by now and then. Weeds and brambles filled one’s eyes; the courtesan houses have been reduced to ashes and the beauties to dust. Can there be any other scene [capable of evoking] deeper lamentation over the rise and decay of a dynasty?⁴

Yu Huai identifies the core feature of the courtesan metaphor, her glorious beauty and her existence are as short-lived as the fate of the last court. Although it is within the rhetorical tradition of prefaces to emphasize the moral foundation and purpose of a given work, the preface of Yu Huai’s work has to be taken seriously. It provides a clue for reading the courtesan texts by establishing the connection between the courtesan and the national crisis, and by reminding the reader that while the work is dealing with the past, its full meaning emerges only if the dismal present with its weeds and brambles is kept in mind.

With *Random Notes of the Wooden Bridge*, Yu Huai establishes the tradition of treating the demise of dynasties and the intellectuals in its service through the treatment of the courtesan. The collapse of the dynasty also meant the disintegration of the intellectual’s own identity as the servant of this dynasty. Inserted into the trope of the courtesan is the helplessness and weakness of the intellectual during such national crisis, as the courtesan is helpless in the effort to preserve her youth and beauty. She becomes the literary medium through which the intellectual reconstructs his own past, praises his own virtues, and ponders over his weakness and destiny. That this medium should be the courtesan also reflects his self-doubt, his self-pity, his self-irony and sometimes even his self-hate.

In this portrayal of the courtesan, Yu Huai uses the traditional *jiexie* principle of metaphorical writing. The full impact of one’s true sentiment towards the lost dynasty, one’s own past, to that which is precious beyond words, can best be conveyed and evoked through other images and events. Thus, the *jiexie* principle also requires a *zhiyin*, that is, a like-minded reader who shares the values and sentiments of the author; only then can the full power of the text be realized.

In the preface, Yu Huai advises the reader in the proper reading strategy. His

interest in describing the late Ming courtesan quarters of Nanjing is in evoking a feeling of nostalgia. Reading the courtesan texts thus means deciphering a complex structure of different layers of meaning and intent. Only in their concreteness and in their interaction with the present will these stories convey the writer's melancholy mood in all its richness. The joys and feelings of the past cannot stay, happiness can only be felt in those few fleeting moments. It is the genre for the sadness of aging, both personal and political.

WANG TAO

Wang Tao is one of the earliest men to be identified as a Shanghai intellectual (*Shanghai yanjiu ziliao*, 1936: 671–692). Like most of the early members of this emerging class, he was not born there, but he moved to the city in 1848 at age twenty from his birthplace in Jiangsu province to work for the English missionaries (Cohen, 1974: 11–23). His work *Record of Visits to the Courtesan Houses in a Distant Corner of the Sea* (Haizou yeyou lu) is one of the earliest accounts of Shanghai courtesan life and entertainment. In its preface dated 1860, Wang Tao mentions that the text was written during his illness in the winter of 1853 at the time when the Chinese walled city has fallen to the Small Sword Society. He laments the fact that this calamity has destroyed the old city and with it, the 'flowers' and beauties he had described. In the same preface, however, he reports that after the fall of the old town a new and more prosperous courtesan life has sprung up in the foreign concession.

As a result of the Taiping rebellion, thousands of refugees came to Shanghai during the 1850's, among them courtesans from major courtesan centres such as Nanjing, Suzhou, and Yangzhou as well as many rich merchants and intellectuals from the Jiangnan area (Sun Guoqun, 1988: 1–21; Xue Liyong, 1988: 150–158; Ping Jinya, 1988: 159). These three groups together made Shanghai courtesan life flourish. Thus while his early report mostly deals with life in the walled city of Shanghai, his account also has to be read in the context of the reemerging and thriving courtesan life in the concession during the 1850's, where Wang Tao worked and resided.

In his *Record of Visits to the Courtesan Houses in a Distant Corner of the Sea* Wang Tao not only gives an enthusiastic and lively account of courtesan life during this period, but his preface establishes a second layer of meaning by linking up with the courtesan trope established by Yu Huai. Wang argues that like fleeting moments of bliss, the might of empires is short-lived. The preface conveys a sense of personal sadness and even despondency. In a comparison with the famous courtesans of the past, and the grand capitals of earlier dynasties, Wang Tao admits that the Shanghai courtesan and the city itself are no match for them (Wang, 1936: 2–3).

For Wang Tao, however, the figure of the courtesan is even more complex. Yu Huai wrote after the demise of the Ming about courtesan life in Nanjing, the capital. Wang Tao's courtesans did not reside in the grand capital but in a treaty port controlled by foreigners: the present, from which his work looks back to the past of his years in Shanghai still sees the Qing dynasty in power. What can be the nature

of sorrow which the work claims to communicate? Could it be that he sees Shanghai as the harbinger of the dynasty's demise? His work reflects these complexities. His preface ends with the diffuse warning:

While it is true, alas, that Shanghai is in some outlying corner, it still is a key port benefitting the country and a strong barrier on the sea shore. How can [in view of the fact that here] the bewitching fashions [of the courtesans] stir each other to a frenzy, and the ultimate splendour is such that it can hardly continue, a man with a heart [concerned with his country's fate] avoid being deeply concerned? (Wang, 1936: vol. 2:2f)

The same Shanghai he will depict with its bustling streets and entertainments, seems to be in danger in this passage to lose its nationally important role due to these very luxurious splendours. At the same time both the intellectual and the courtesan in this city are bemoaned in this preface as the 'lonely sojourners,' the *piaoling zhi ke*, in need of each other's company and support. The question whether the Shanghai courtesans are worth writing about begs the question whether Shanghai is worth living in, and whether an educated Chinese intellectual should live in this place.

Like *Random Notes of the Wooden Bridge*, the work starts with a description of the prosperity and glamour of Shanghai and its courtesans, a prosperity which Wang Tao claims is due to the fact that Shanghai by now has become a wealthy commercial centre with visitors and travelling merchants from all the corners of the earth.

When night falls, [the city's] endless brightly lit streets are full of criss-crossing richly decorated carriages, and the smell of perfume permeates the air. The gentlemen and wealthy merchants who are on their way to visit the courtesan houses form an endless stream. No foot is resting. This is truly the grand sight of seductive beauties and the glories of dissipation (Wang, 1936: vol. 1.1).

Using ornate and colourful language, Wang Tao describes the elaborate set-up of the courtesan houses in the city. In Hongqiao, the courtesans from Suzhou dominate the scene with their beauty and fashionable clothes; and in Tangjia *nong* we find the residences of more sophisticated courtesans. As night falls, one can hear music flowing out from their windows. The rich merchants love to visit these houses and throw grand dinner parties there. Some quiet and secluded houses are situated in Meijia *nong*, where the courtesans are proud and hold themselves with dignity. With their elegant manners and clothing they set themselves apart from other courtesans. On the river, there are even brothel ships with Western courtesans. Their attraction is not lost on Wang Tao.

As to those Chinese who can speak some foreign language, they should change their clothes and pay a visit to these ships [with Western courtesans]; the fee is not too high, only 20 dollars. What beauties! What Western

beauties! One should not be stingy with money and should go and experience this 'strange fragrance' (Wang, 1936: vol. 1.2).

What follows is a rich description of the different kinds of food offered by the courtesans, of the festivals held by them, of the furniture in their chambers, of their rules and customs, their clothes and make-up, and of those most gifted in playing music and in singing (Wang, 1936: vol.1. 2–5).

When Wang Tao turns his focus from the city to the stories of individual courtesans and his relationships with them, his tone alters greatly, from the rich ornate language which exudes warmth and vigour to that of moody contemplation and fatalistic sadness. We will analyze a few of these stories to identify some of the organizing principles of the courtesan motif. The story of Yunqing goes like this:

Yunqing comes from the Chen family in Lanling. When she was a courtesan in Suzhou, her fame was tremendous. In the fall of 1844 she came to Shanghai to avoid the flood. When her father temporarily resided in Guangdong, he married a local woman of unsurpassed beauty. She bore him Yunqing, who at age four already had a talent for music, and when she had grown up, she joined a house where they teach [the arts].

Her voice was pure and beautiful. Yunqing's looks can only be considered mediocre, but her character and style are particularly winning. Her arched eyebrows and subtle glance captivated those who saw her.

After she had arrived in Shanghai, she refused to see visitors and led a retired life. She dwelled in a sidelane where no one came. But she was very intimate with Shen Lize. So one day I accompanied Shen and went to visit her.

Evening had already set in. A banquet had been arranged on the second floor. That day Yunqing was suffering from a toothache. Her delicate brows were lightly knit, which enhanced the enchantment of her looks; she seemed so fragile, I was deeply moved with compassion.

After some drinks, she performed a song. Her voice was like passing clouds, clear and soft, flowing in the air, I simply found no words to express its beauty. Yunqing was happy, she wanted me to write her biography. I promised, but it was a promise which until now I did not fulfil.

Later I heard that a gentleman had paid 500 taels of silver to buy her freedom, and that he built a house to keep her.

Today, Shen lives an impoverished life by the Yangzi River, and I am 'begging for food' in Shanghai. I yearn to return home but I cannot. Yunqing, however, has already realized her dream — how come that her fate and ours ended up so differently?

It is already deep in the night, and the candle has burned down. Having wetted my brush to record these [events], I am seized by a feeling of lonely sadness (Wang, 1936: vol 2. 6–7).

The story depicts the juxtaposition of the *wenren* and the courtesan. Their fate

is treated as parallel to each other. Their common frailty and mutual dependence are measured against the forces which dominate their lives, and, finally, are measured against each other. In this case, the courtesan seems to have won out. At the end of the narrative, the author contemplates the unreliable surface of things. While the courtesan has achieved her goal of marrying someone who has the means to provide for her, the intellectual is down and under, crushed by the burden of life. Out of favour and means, the two former clients now live an impoverished life. The juxtaposition of fates betrays no bitterness towards the courtesan but signals the transient nature of all things.

Besides Yu Huai, Wang Tao's preface also mentions the poets Du Mu, Bo Juyi, Li Shangyin. The three Tang poets are in part famous for their poems on courtesans and in particular, for their depicting the courtesan as the counterpart to the poet/official's own sad fate, unfulfilled aspirations, and demotion to lowly offices in distant regions. Their poems evoke the crisis of the intellectual's self-identity as he meditates the fate of the courtesan.⁵ These are poems of self-pity and self-satire. As Bo Juyi bemoans his banishment from the capital or Du Mu being an unrecognized talent, he weeps for the courtesan in whom he sees the image of himself. As Wang Tao's stories turn inward towards his private experiences, he projects his own existence as the 'exile' living in Shanghai under pressure to make a living into the fate of the courtesan, making the two images inseparable.

In the story of Chaofu, Wang Tao depicts the eternal contradiction in the fates of courtesan and intellectual. The yearning for purity, eternal love, and self-respect is forever challenged by the necessities dominating the courtesan's life. Chaofu has fallen in love with an opera singer, and declares that she loves him beyond all else. But in the end she accepts a marriage with a tea merchant, who is wealthy enough to pay a 1,000 taels of silver to buy her freedom. The story of Chaofu ends with:

. . . the day she was to marry, she was still together with Xiushan (the man she loves), both of them wept until the evening [when the wedding was to take place]. They pledged to be with one another in the afterlife (Wang, 1936: vol. 2.6).

The story operates on the basis of the hidden juxtaposition between the fate of the intellectual and that of the courtesan. They are torn between the purity of feeling and the power of money. The story reveals the helplessness of the courtesan who is unable to control her destiny. Although she is capable of true emotions (*zhenqing*), she and the singer have no real means to purchase their freedom, and the courtesan has to accept her true condition. The story conveys a sense of irony as well as sadness. The high moral standards claimed by true love give way to the needs of securing a living. In the unspoken subtext of the story the fate of the courtesan is also that of the intellectual. Both have no real choice between their true sentiments and a powerful patron.

The courtesan also becomes a means for the author to express his lament about the bygone days and to idealize his memory. In the story of Xuangu, the author focuses on one particular visit he made on a rainy afternoon.

Xuangu, a concubine patronized by a Cantonese, has carious teeth and a gloomy countenance. [But] she is good at the art of seduction. She rented a room in the southern part of the city, and took Madam Wang as foster mother. She occasionally takes up being a prostitute. I have known her long. In the summer of 1852, the Cantonese received an official appointment. [As a consequence] the courtesans of Madam Wang's establishment all scattered, except for Xuangu who stayed on. [That day when I visited] Xuangu she was just recovering from a major illness. With her hair loosely tied, she sat silently by the window. I saw her through the bamboo screen, she was like a peony enveloped in mist. Evening approached, Madam Wang arranged an exquisite meal by the west window, and invited me to drink. Our love talk went on late into the night, when the rain changed into a bad storm, preventing me from going home. The candles went out with a light smoke, and the incense brazier went cold. I then lay with Xuangu in rapturous attachment. It was dawn when we parted.

The past is gone except for some traces. It is the small things that evoke our memory, the love making amidst the sounds of rain (Wang, 1936: vol. 2. 9–10).

These stories evince a sense of nostalgia which at times turns almost tragic. Even when Wang Tao talks about the most lovely of women and the most spirited of characters, he always manages to insert some sense of grief. In the way in which he describes the fate of these women, the fate of their love for him, or his love for them, Wang Tao is dealing with the conflicts of his own life. His choice of the courtesan as the topic of his writing gave him the framework for expressing his own self-criticism and self-doubt.

But how does this self-portrait fit into the Shanghai which he paints for the reader? Wang Tao's Shanghai is self-confident, full of energy and vitality, and at the same time firmly grounded in Chinese traditions. In the scenes of merry-making, the courtesans and patrons seem to pursue unchallenged a way of life firmly rooted in the past. There is no sign of displacement or rupture with the old order of the Chinese empire, and no foreigners seem to exist except for the few western prostitutes on the river boats. The scene is timeless. Wang Tao's Shanghai could have been any grand capital of the past, and his courtesans fit the same mould. The literary effect is obvious, there is no visible break with traditional culture. Shanghai now provides the pleasures of the capitals of earlier times, while at the same time marking the displacement earlier coming with exile. Moreover, Shanghai is no Song or Ming capital at the height of their glory, the Qing has run its cycle, the courtesans reside in a treaty port and the *wenren* of old times are hired hands for missionaries or foreign-owned newspapers. The foreigners are present in the writer's and the reader's mind even if they do not make it into the text. Shanghai, the emblem of China's defeat, and Shanghai the glorious city of splendid entertainment, are ill reconcilable in the mind of the intellectual. We know from Wang Tao's letters and his diary of the period that he was greatly irritated by the foreign presence in Shanghai and the opening of the treaty port (Wang Tao, 1987: 81). The tension shows up in the two

dramatically different pictures of the self and the city, with a particular sorrow and sadness about this inalterable state of affairs permeating each line.

To live in Shanghai was more a direct challenge to self-esteem for Wang Tao than for many others. The conflict between the idealized past and present-day Shanghai, between the city and himself was a hard one. Being employed to come to Shanghai in 1849 by foreign missionaries was a status which caused him great pain and agony. The stress of this situation is visible in the glaring absence of the foreigners in his depiction of Shanghai. The structured fatalism in the courtesan stories effectively undoes the image of uninterrupted happiness enjoyed by the Shanghai sojourners.

ZOU TAO AND HIS 'SHANGHAI ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE'

Wang Tao's work on the courtesan shows the different mental layers of the Shanghai literati's existence. It also shows their conflicts, compromises and accommodations when they deal with their troubled identity resulting from the life they live in Shanghai. Moreover, their interaction with the newly emerging city with its stunning modernity and the traditional mould in which many of these sojourners grew up created a kind of transitional personality. The inner conflicts of this personality are lived out in the presentation of the city from the pens of these sojourners. The struggle for the proper definition of the city's identity and that of its citizens as carried out through the guides to the city's courtesan life is in the last count the struggle for a self-definition.

Zou Tao (1850?-?) was a writer with some reputation in his time. He came to Shanghai in 1881, and was the editor-in-chief and political commentator of the first newspaper there owned by Chinese, the *Yi bao*, *The Beneficial News* (Liangxi xiaoxiangguan shizhe, 1885:1). He is the author of *Haishang chen tian ying* (Images of high and low in Shanghai), a novel based on Shanghai courtesan life in the 1880s. (Zou Tao, 1993) The novel was prefaced by Wang Tao in 1896, who mentions two other works by Zou Tao.⁶ Under the pen name of *Xiaoxiangguan shizhe*, he wrote two works dealing with the city and its courtesan life, and is the commentator for a third.

His *Shanghai Entertainment Guide* (*Haishang dengshi lu*), presents the city as something *qi*, strange and exotic, and compares it with other cities in the world which have won such legendary fame (Liangxi xiaoxiangguan shizhe, 1885: 1). The guide begins with a general introduction to the city. The author focuses on the roles and regulations under foreign management. He is full of admiration for the city's electricity, street lights, and clean avenues, the horse racing track etc . . . (Liangxi xiaoxiangguan shizhe, 1885: vol. 1. 1-7; 14-16). In this introduction, the author takes pains to inform the reader what to expect from the city and how to behave there. Shanghai is conscious of being different, is proud of it, and expects the newcomer to adapt. But the focus of the work is on entertainment, with the courtesan quarters featuring prominently.

Zou Tao begins his introduction of the courtesans by first describing their hierarchy.

There are different kinds of courtesans. The top ranking are the musicians, *shuyu*.⁷ [The *shuyu* are houses for story-telling with musical accompaniment, the expression refers to both the performers and their place of residence]. The next ranking are ‘the long three’, *changsan* [the top courtesan, for which a visit is three dollars], followed by the ‘two/three’, *ersan* [two or three dollars] and the ‘one/two’, *yao’er*. The lowest rank is occupied by the [prostitutes serving in the opium dens] the *huayanguan*. Furthermore, there are also [singing girls with their own residence] *shuyu zhujia* as well as, ‘long three’ and ‘one two’ with their own residence. There are so many ranks, that they are truly hard to remember for the newcomer to the courtesan houses (Liangxi xiaoxiangguan shizhe, 1885: vol. 2.1314).

After this list, the author details the particulars of these different classes of courtesans and of the services they provide. With his detailed descriptions, the work functions as ‘how to’ book. It stresses the uniqueness of courtesan practices and customs in Shanghai, and it teaches the rules of the local game.

The author opens his introduction of the city’s courtesans with a lengthy note on the Westerner’s Sunday. He mentions its Christian origin, and states that all businesses are closed and that Sunday is ‘a day for all classes of people especially devoted to play and rest’ (Liangxi xiaoxiangguan shizhe, 1885: vol. 2.1–2). This well illustrates the author’s attitude. He sees no great difference between the Western sense of leisure in taking a stroll in the parks or going to the races, and that of spending an afternoon with courtesans in the tea houses. In Shanghai as well as in the eyes of the author, these are all legitimate kinds of entertainment in a multicultural city.

Zou Tao’s open-minded and worldly perspective is remarkable compared to Wang Tao’s, who actively excludes any reference to the international nature of the treaty port. The cultural and political possibility of Zou Tao’s position, however, hinges on his casting the city into the role of an entertainment centre. In this way, the city no longer needs to be dealt with historically or politically. As it is a centre of entertainment, no one can truly call it his or her place of abode. With this turn, the author extricates himself from the quandaries of having to identify his own life with this city. One cannot be a resident of an entertainment centre, only a visitor. As a visitor, one has no responsibility for the city.

But Zou Tao is not just a visitor to Shanghai, he lives and works in the city. In presenting the image of Shanghai as exotic and strange, he eliminates the need to confront either a national or a personal crisis. Still, both intrude into this very work. In his courtesan biographies *Flowers from the Spring River (Chunjiang huashi)*, he writes:

I had no intention of living a life spent on wine and women, but to take them as means of diversion of my sad moods; like [Du Mu] Fanchuan, and [Bo Juyi] Jiangzhou, my visits to the courtesan houses were my way of bitter weeping (Liangxi xiaoxiangguan shizhe, 1885: 1).

Like his precursors, Zou Tao makes use of the courtesan trope in this statement to express his sense of personal and even national tragedy. He rejects Yu Huai

(although some commentators maintain that his work must be read and understood in that tradition), and deals with the transitoriness and powerlessness of his own existence in the feverish excitement of Shanghai through the literary image familiar from Bo Juyi. Zou Tao here gives a glimpse of his own uneasy condition like Bo Juyi who, in exile, contemplated the likeness of his fate to that of an old courtesan he chanced to meet. Zou Tao is a sojourner in Shanghai and prefers to think of it as a source of entertainment, as wonderland, but never as home.

LI BOYUAN AND THE COURTESAN NEWSPAPERS

More than anyone else, Li Boyuan personifies the contradictions felt by Shanghai intellectuals during the late Qing period. He belongs to the first generation of newspaper editors and journalists who benefited directly from the city's liberal publishing policies and foreign financing that had become part of this modern industrial centre. On the other hand, he can be considered as one of the principal architects who contributed to the further refinement of Shanghai's image as an entertainment centre.⁸

During the period from the 1880s to the late 1890s, Shanghai became a model of modernity, not only in commerce and industry but also in terms of life-style and city culture (Zhang Zhongli, 1990: 1021–1023; Murphey, 1974: 19–20; Wei, 1987: 64–103). Also during this period, however, China was faced with a new national crisis. In 1895, China lost her war with Japan, and by 1898, the attempt at political reform had failed. As the foreign concessions were protected by foreign laws, those reformers who did not go abroad came to Shanghai.⁹ Intellectual life flourished in the city, as Chinese men of letters tried to search for solutions to the national crisis. Newspapers and journals became a major vehicle for the free exchange of ideas. Interestingly, the turn of the century also saw the high point of courtesan literature and courtesan handbooks.

Li Boyuan came to the city in 1896. As a political novelist, newspaper editor and journalist, he also managed to put out two courtesan dailies, the *Entertainment (Youxi bao)*,¹⁰ and the *Vanity Fair (Shijie fanhua bao)*,¹¹ to compile a city guide entitled *Shanghai Entertainment Illustrated (Haishang Youxi Tushuo)*,¹² and to write at least one courtesan novel.¹³ One of the pen names he gave himself for the purpose was 'Master of entertainments', (*Youxi zhuren*) (Wei, 1980: 3). *Youxi* means 'to play, to have fun'. Judging by his pen name, Li Boyuan seems bent on making himself out as a flaneur in that big vanity fair of Shanghai. His courtesan newspapers sold as well as did his political novels, in which he satirized the ills of the Qing government and the corruption of its officials (Wei, 1980: 2).

How then could a man of such political stance and such talent as a writer, a founder in 1903 of *The Illustrated Novel (Xiuxiang xiaoshuo)*, one of China's earliest literary journals for the promotion of modern literature, at the same time spend much of his time in courtesan houses, be intimate friends with many courtesans, initiate courtesan contests, and devote himself to courtesan literature? How could a man who saw the political crisis of the country, and advocated political reform, reconcile these two seemingly very different kinds of concern and devotion?

Li Boyuan explains it thus:

The title *Entertainment* [for a paper] comes from the West. Yet, is [this my paper] really devoted to entertainment? Hidden within it there is a profound sense of helplessness. The world we live in today is dismal, our country is more impoverished by the day, our people are ever more downtrodden, and the calibre of the intellectuals is deteriorating ever more; at the same time, business activity is rising to ever new heights.

For those who are concerned with the course of events, there is hardly enough time to keep up, how could anyone have the leisure for merry-making, and use having fun as a pretext, without being aware of it [this crisis]? But if you want to tell those who persist in their ignorance, what the affairs of the state and the country have come to, this will be as though gathering together the deaf and the dumb and forcing them to devote their attention to [reading] essays on economics. People will of course laugh at such a stupid and ineffective course of action. Therefore, there is no other way but to take on 'entertainment' as a pretext, and use allegorical means to exhort and warn. This is also a way to enlighten the world (Wei, 1980: 453).

According to these remarks the term 'entertainment' (*youxi*) is used half ironically as a literary as well as political strategy. Irony is used when one desires action but feels powerless. It is one of the few weapons left to those who feel that they have been deprived of the power to initiate change. Yet, one might ask, what it is that makes Li Boyuan so critical of people of his time, and what fuels his sense of helplessness? His assessment of where true power lies is connected with his view of Shanghai, a city which provides his livelihood and evokes his hatred. This is how he describes the city:

Due to its being an important treaty port open to the world for trade, Shanghai's arrogance, extravagance, vainness and prosperity has no rival in the five continents. It is a place of influence and profit, a refuge for criminals. There are a great many people here under the sky, muddle-headed and still in their slumbering dreams, yet no one from the outside is there trying to sound the clarion call in order to awaken the public to the lurking dangers. They are unaware that the stage full of singing and dancing is but a place of bitter tears; that the tasty meats and delicious wines are but poison; that the bed-chambers [of the courtesans] are places which while providing momentary solace only bring greater disasters later on; that the richly bedecked carriages with gorgeous horses are but the harbingers of paralysis and collapse. . . I will say only this much: these are the things that worry me, and from this stems my motivation to create the *Youxi bao*. In it I make use of allegory or satire with one single purpose, namely to awaken the ignorant, and wipe away worries. I will present [my] ideas in a simple manner using colloquial language, so that workers, peasants, merchants, women and children all can read it (Wei, 1980: 453).

This statement reads like a political manifesto, and the courtesan daily *Entertainment* is presented as the grand bell to awaken the slumbering people. Shanghai is poison and disease. The 'great entertainment centre' functions as a narcotic, where the population only believes in money and the power represented by money. The helplessness of the political reformer leads him once again to seek out the traditional literary trope, the courtesan, to protest and vent his anger towards this state of Chinese affairs.

Both *Entertainment* and *Vanity Fair* are arranged with different fixed columns for advertisement, editorials, political jokes, and daily reports on the city's courtesans. In the *Entertainment*, there is news on stage performances, and *Vanity Fair* for a long time carried the 'Day-to-Day Observation of Shanghai Flowers' (*Haishang kanhua riji*). The stories carried in the latter read like this:

Wang Xiaoxiang's eyes swollen from tears

When Xiaoxiang went out yesterday, her eyes seemed somewhat swollen. No one, however, dared to inquire the cause from her for fear that she might curse him. Finally a friend secretly asked her witty and keen-eyed maid and learned that one of [Xiaoxiang's] clients had died. With her eyes swollen like this from tears, she definitely has a good heart (*Fanhua bao*. 1901.11.30).

The man who married Gu Xiaobao

The man whom Gu Xiaobao from the Qinghefang [courtesan house] married is said to be very generous. He gave ample gifts to the servants. On account of this the maidservants and the elder sister were much pleased (*Fanhua bao*. 1901.6.20).

Supernatural beings appear in Shen Guiyun's bedroom

Around midnight yesterday an undefined number of supernatural beings emerged in Shen Guiyun's bedroom. One looked vaguely like [the demon repelling] Jiang Taiye, one like the son-in-law who married into the village of Gao. But someone said: 'Nothing of what you say is true. What I have seen was the pair of man-eating tigers subdued by the Heavenly Master Zhang [Daoling] (*Fanhua bao*. 1901.6.20).

The narrative of these courtesan stories abandons the traditional personal voice of the *wenren* or literati. Instead, Li Boyuan created a new non-personal journalistic style for the depiction of the Shanghai courtesan. With this new style of factual reporting, Li undermines the idealized image of the courtesan in previous literary works, where she reflected the intellectuals' self-pity and self-aggrandizement. In

so doing, Li Boyuan in fact talks back to this literary tradition and turns it on its head. In his newspapers, the courtesans have become commonplace women having their petty concerns just like any one else (especially the intellectuals of the town).

But Li Boyuan is no revolutionary. His ironical challenge to the traditional courtesan trope remains half-hearted because he too uses the courtesan to express something else, namely his mood about his own status and role and that of his peers. Furthermore, his use of the courtesan as a literary subject once again stresses the motif's features of helplessness and weakness. The courtesan newspapers show the paralysis of Shanghai intellectuals who choose to continue in their traditional lifestyles. At the root of their paradox is the ambivalence of their very lives. They come to Shanghai because of the opportunities offered by its liberal institutions and its booming economy, and they condemn it because it represents their own inability to shape China's destiny.

THE END OF THE COURTESAN TROPE

Li Boyuan's courtesan newspapers also depart from the traditional use of the trope by developing an unmistakable Shanghai identity. The *Entertainment* daily news is for Shanghai residents. It uses the Shanghai dialect, cracks insider jokes, gives insider tips, and calls for the active participation of local readers and connoisseurs in contests evaluating opera singers and courtesans. While retaining a dialogue with the tradition of the courtesan trope, these papers also helped to popularize writing on courtesans without the ponderous implications of tradition. These changes signal greater transformations in the courtesan genre. By the 1910s and 20s, the number of courtesan handbooks decreased and those that were published were of a different kind and for a different purpose. Complex introductions about Shanghai disappear, courtesan life is presented without nostalgia as part of today's life, and glossy photographs of the courtesans give these handbooks and guides a distinctly more market-oriented character. The individual author and his voice disappear into the collection of titbits from anonymous hands, like the *Photograph-illustrated Record of Shanghai Flowers* (*Haishang huaying lu*, 1916) or the *Pictures of Hundred Beauties from the Flowery Kingdom* (*Huaguo baimeitu*, 1981). These works are like special issues of magazines, featuring the famous courtesans of the day with a short biography or a poem in their honour, while the 'courtesan guide notes' explain the rules and principles of courtesan life. These works no longer contain personal experiences and individual opinions but rather, cater to popular tastes and the information needs of potential courtesan clients.

By the 1920s the courtesan as a literary trope seems to be a thing of the literary past. A few references to *Banqiao zaji* can still be found, but they lack substance. The courtesan trope seems to have died with the old life-style of Shanghai intellectuals. The younger generation who grew up in the modern city of Shanghai after the 1911 Revolution and later the May Fourth Movement brought the new literature movement which began during the late Qing to full fruition. At the same time, they espoused a new set of values. Young writers now wrote stories denouncing the courtesan system and bemoaning the sad fate of these women. The courtesan

trope based on the *jiexie* principle was by and large replaced by more directly political and social writing.

Seen from this later perspective, the late Qing courtesan literature is unique in capturing the mood and the apprehensions of Shanghai intellectuals in this transitional period. By using what was to them a well established and familiar literary trope, these intellectuals tried to situate themselves within a high tradition, and to define their own feelings in its terms. The focus of this trope is more on a mood of powerlessness against a new world order than on social criticism. Whether this mood mainly grew out of a revulsion at the unbridled craving for money in a city built without the constraints of the Confucian loathing for the crassness of sheer wealth, out of a feeling of gloom concerning China's fate in the newly opened international arena, out of the frustrating helplessness of the intelligentsia in the face of these challenges, or finally out of a deep ambivalence of Chinese intellectuals about living a new and modern life in a foreign enclave on Chinese soil, which they found both rewarding and revolting, are questions which cannot find an unequivocal answer from the courtesan texts, if a simple and single answer can be found at all. For the late Qing intellectuals, the courtesan as a social institution became the bridge linking their own past with the city's future. The courtesans built their sumptuous quarters in the very streets where the big publishing houses and newspapers were set up (Liangxi xiaoxiangguan shizhe, 1885:18). They needed the intellectuals to maintain their status in the public esteem as much as the intellectuals needed their company in this threatening and challenging new environment where both shared the weakness that comes with just having beauty or education, and the need to find a patron.

NOTES

1. For details on the life and works of Wang Tao see Cohen (1987).
2. For details on the life and works of Li Boyuan, see Wei Shaochang (1980).
3. In Howard Levy's translation there is a short biography of Yu Huai; see Levy (1966: 7–9).
4. Translation in part based on Howard Levy. For comparison see Levy (1966: 33–35).
5. Wang Tao refers in the preface to his Record of Visits to the Courtesan Houses in a Distant Corner of the Sea to Bo Juyi through quoting his famous poem 'The song of the Pipa' (Pipa xing) (Bo, 1979: vol. 12 241–243), where the poet who was at the moment out of favour with the court, meets an old courtesan and finds his own sentiments and fate reflected in her music and person (Wang, 1879: 1).
6. In Wang Tao's preface to the novel in 1896, he mentions *Wanguo jingzheng kaolue* (*A Study of Overseas Contemporary Government*), and *Yangwu zuilian* (*Guilty Words on Foreign Affairs*).
7. The term *shuyu* in this work refers to both the locale of the story-telling houses and the story teller. For details on the ranking of Shanghai courtesans see Gail Hershatter (1989).
8. For details on the history of Shanghai newspaper publishing and publishing houses see Ge Gongzhen (1955: 65–112); Li Zhan (1979: 351–360); *Shanghai yanjiu ziliao* (1936: 379–396).
9. For details on foreign laws governing Shanghai, see Elvin (1963: 131–159), (1974); Johnstone (1937: 129–152).

10. The *Youxi bao* came out between 1897–1901. For details see A Ying (1958: 58–62).
11. The *Shijie fanhua bao* appeared between 1901–1910. For details see A Ying (1958: 55–57).
12. The pen name of the author of the *Haishang youxi tushuo* is Shanghai youxi zhu.’ Li Boyuan’s pen name is ‘Youxi zhuren’. Judging from the content of the work it is my opinion that this work can be attributed to Li Boyuan.
13. The authorship of the courtesan novel *Haitian hongxue ji* is still controversial. What may be safely said is that Li Boyuan was at least involved in some aspects of writing the novel. See Wei (1980: 234–258).

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8

Women, Work and Identity: A Study of two 1930s Novels on the Opera Singer

Mau-sang Ng

INTRODUCTION

In October 1932, the Shanghai Supplement of the *Xinwen bao* carried a comment on a recent incident in Nanjing by a reader named Fu Hongmiu. The incident was about an opera singer/singsong girl Wang Yurong who enrolled as a student in the Jinghua Middle School. When the headmaster of the school, Fu Kuanglin, got wind of this, he had Miss Wang dismissed because of her occupation. The *Xinwenbao* lamented that if the headmaster found it fit to frequent opera houses, then a student had every right making a living singing there. Other newspapers, like the *Zhongyang bao*, maintained that it was no use blaming the headmaster nor the singer. There was only God and the fate of women to blame.¹

Many questions can indeed be asked. As reader Fu put it succinctly: why should an opera singer be denied the opportunity to better herself? What does this act of denial represent? Has she been denied the fundamental right of a Chinese citizen (*guomin*)?² The fact that such questions as diversified as the fate of women and the right of a citizen have been raised show the different ways of thinking on women, work and gender. In this article, I propose to study in detail two popular works of fiction of the 1930s which dealt with this phenomenon through the depiction of opera singing in Republican China. I will study the reality constructed in these texts and relate it to the everyday life of Shanghai in 1930s to attain an understanding of how popular fiction constituted the transformations taking place in urban China. The first, *Gechang yeshi* by Wang Zhongxian, was serialized in the *Shehui ribao* on 10 October, 1931 and published in book form in 1935.³ The second, *Tianhe pei* by Zhang Henshui, was entitled *Huanxi yuanjia* when it was serialized in the *Shanghai chenbao* before its publication in book form in 1931. This work, like many other popular works by Zhang Henshui, was made into a film shortly after it appeared in the newspaper.⁴

WANG ZHONGXIAN: *GECHANG YESHI*

The story

The time was the 1920s. The place was Shanghai. The story began with sister and

brother Yang Liuqing and Yang Xiaohong, who had sung to full capacity audiences in Shandong province, being persuaded to sing in Shanghai, their native city. No sooner had they achieved fame in Shanghai, brother Yang succumbed to the lures of Miss Seven, the lonely concubine of a powerful businessman and became romantically involved with her. On the other hand, Liuqing retained her innocence and purity despite being chased after by many fans, notably one wealthy merchant Jin Ba. Rather, the presence of a young man, Lin Shaoyun, made an impression on her. Soon Xiaohong's affair was discovered and he was thrown into jail. Desperate to rescue her brother from prison, Liuqing married Jin Ba as his fifth concubine, believing that Jin would secure her brother's freedom. Jin reneged on his words and soon Xiaohong died of VD, a death followed by that of her mother shortly. After repeated maltreatments from Jin, Liuqing finally fled from the Jin family. She united with Shaoyun and resumed her singing career. Her refusal to succumb to the sexual demands of her patrons saw a fall in her career. After many hardships, she landed a job in a small city in Anhui province. Lin Shaoyun, who had been cheating on her all along, left her for a prostitute. Finding herself all alone, Liuqing rebelled and took revenge on men. She took up gambling and opium smoking and got involved in a kidnapping plot. When the plot failed, she was arrested and sent to prison for five years. She became a bag woman when she got out of prison. Alone and penniless, she soon died in the freezing Shanghai winter.

The world of *qing* and *yi*

There is no doubt that *Gechang yeshi* is a devastating account of the tragic life of opera singer Yang Liuqing. In her evolution is shown the life of an innocent opera singer who began life in the text with tremendous promise, only to see her innocence chipped away, career ruined and love betrayed. She tried to revolt against her own ethical principles and took revenge on society which took advantage of her.

The narrative is thus organized around two main discourses. The first, which occupies the first part of the text until Liuqing's revenge, evolves round the personal consciousness of the heroine. Signs are embedded early on in the text to show her traditional frame of mind. For example, despite being a Shanghai girl, the narrator details the fact that she was brought up in small cities in the north and singles out her innocence and inexperience. This is how he describes her first appearance:

She is a girl of seventeen or eighteen . . . with a handsome face the shape of a melon seed. Clad in a thin layer of face cream, the skin of her face is as smooth as a boiled-egg without its shell. She has not used any lipsticks on her little mouth, although her lips show a natural reddish tinge. Her whole complexion exudes the beauty of a virgin.⁵

What the text conveys is the image of a woman distinctly different from the 'modern' Shanghai girl wearing western make-up and clothing. Again, her inexperience and credulous nature are highlighted when stage manager Wu Dahui, whom she has never heard of, poses as a friend of her father and tries to persuade her to sing in Shanghai:

Wu: . . . Is this Xizi (Liuqing's nickname)? Oh, I have not seen you all these years, see how pretty you have become. Do you still remember me, your uncle? Yang Liuqing invited him to sit down and after looking at him carefully, still does not recognize having met him. But since he calls himself uncle, she feels obligated and says to him: 'Uncle, you are early this morning' (*Gechang yeshi*, p. 73).

It is this single-minded way of looking at things, including human and social relationships, which makes her 'a natural and spontaneous' person both on and off stage, as the narrator says. When urged by her mother to befriend her fans and accept their invitations to wine and dine with them, she responds with a remark which sums up her perception of herself as an opera singer:

'Although opera singing is an inferior profession, it nonetheless enables us to earn superior money. Now that brother and I can earn three to five hundred dollars a month, that is already a substantial sum. If we can work harder on stage, in the hope that the business of our boss will thrive, then our earnings will increase and we will not be poor any more' (p. 115).

All these markers show the image of a frugal and contented woman holding high the values of proper behaviour.

Liuqing's exemplary behaviour and her traditional virtues are further marked by the subplot of her brother's illicit affair with Miss Seven and his subsequent arrest. Apart from triggering the series of events which led to Liuqing's abandoning of the stage and marrying Jin Ba, the subplot signifies how easy it was for opera singers to be led astray, reinforcing the commonly held belief that opera singers were no better than prostitutes. At the same time, by juxtaposing Yang Xiaohong's wayward behaviour with Liuqing's refusal even to accept gifts from her patrons (Mrs Yang: 'My daughter is very stubborn. If I take this from you, she will definitely blame me', p. 113), the text brings home the point of her chaste and upright nature. Her nobility of spirit is further seen in her giving up her virginity and career to become the concubine of Jin Ba. As the narrative develops, it is Yang's *qingyi* — to do the appropriate thing for the family or for the people whom she cares for — that is exalted in the person with whom she has fallen in love:

Yang: I know I have wronged (*fu*) you. But men like you fare better than women. Unlike me, you will not be made to marry a woman in her fifties and spend your life with her . . . I told you before, I am marrying this old man to save my brother and to keep my mother alive. I am willing to endure a life of hardship for them. If I am allowed to follow the wish of my heart, I want to marry you. However, I do not have this luck. I will not in this life be able to repay you for your good deeds to my family or your *qingyi* to me. I can only wait to repay you in my next life . . .' (*Gechang yeshi*, p. 273)

Governed by the *qingyi* to her family, which she puts ahead of her personal

well being, she curbs her feelings for Lin and instead besieges him to take care of her family. She has only ‘wronged’ him on the level of *qing*, in that she cannot be his wife as they both had hoped. Instead, like an act performed frequently on stage, she shows her gratitude by kneeling down and kowtowing to him. When Lin suggests he has a request to make, Yang’s response is interesting to see:

Immediately her sense of duty is alerted. Liuqing suspects that he may entertain some injudicious thought. She stands back in horror and asks: ‘what is it that you want? Don’t even mention the one that you have requested before’. Lin laughs: ‘I have already given up thought on that. I just want to ask you for a souvenir . . .’

Through this step-by-step movement of Yang’s development as well as the way she denies herself, the text shows the strong grip, in the name of honour, shame and duty, that society exerts on an individual woman. For Yang Liuqing, her only response is to comply and to infer what happened to her to *ming* (fate). This strong grip is further reined in when she is forced to become Jin Ba’s concubine. Though she is resigned to be a dutiful wife and yearns to be a mother, she has the misfortune of failing to give birth to a boy — a daughter is born instead. Thus, when Jin Ba maltreats her — the infant girl dies because of lack of parental care — and when her brother and mother have both passed away, she reasons that her *qingyi* to Jin Ba has come to an end and with great determination frees herself from his grips.

Liuqing’s dogged adherence to *qingyi* — this time her single-minded dedication to Shaoyun — brings her further trouble. The text shows that she is harrassed everywhere she goes to sing. She could have made a good fortune and a ‘success’ in her career had she complied with the demands for sex from her patrons. Thus, her personal text reaches a high point when she discovers that at the lowest point of her career, Lin Shaoyun leaves her for the older Miss Ma. Her conversation with Miss Ma is worth quoting here.

Yang: ‘When I marry a person, I try to dig my heart out for him. Even though I married the first one with great reluctance, I reasoned that since I was married to him, I would stick with him for better or for worse . . . Have I done anything wrong to treat people with goodness of heart?’ Miss Ma laughed: ‘If you devote yourself wholeheartedly to your husband, you do not know the secret of being a wife. Because a man regards marrying a wife as buying new clothing, they will become tired of their clothing after wearing it for a while . . . If men see us as clothing, we should treat them as shoes . . . We will wear them for a few more days if they are comfortable; if not, we’d better throw them away and spend a few dollars to buy a new pair.’ (*Gechang yeshi*, p. 405–406)

As the narrator comments, ‘She has been converted to Miss Ma’s outlook on life to use men as playthings. The principle of *qingyi* is not worth a penny to her . . .’ (p. 41–8). Indeed this conversation marks the transition in the narrative of the discourse on *qingyi* to the discourse of revenge.

The point of interest about this latter discourse, however, is not so much her downward slide, but the clash of this discourse with that of *qingyi*. The reader, who has been won over to Yang Liuqing's nobility of character and informed all along of Lin Shaoyun's deceitful acts, feels much for the plight of the heroine. The codes of *qingyi* have already been firmly embedded in the text. Her acts of trying to disown her past and to exert her repressed and oppressed self come into direct conflict with these embedded codes. By juxtaposing her moral degradation with her former exemplary self, the text impresses upon the reader that it is the dark forces of society which coerce her into exerting herself, bringing about her own destruction. By exposing the pathos of the situation, a transformation of values takes place on the textual level. Instead of censoring her for her vengeful acts, the reader blames society for her actions. Simple-minded as some of her acts of *qingyi* are, they are much more preferable than her later acts of excesses which are symptomatic of modern consumer society: greediness, heartlessness and self-gratification. Thus, instead of advocating the breakdown of the traditional practice of *qingyi*, the text suggests the need for such a world to be reinvented, for it to be made more flexible and rational for modern society. Her final recognition, after having been released from jail, of trying to find her mother's tomb and her brother's remains, further shows the importance of old family values. Such feelings of filial piety are deeply rooted in the Chinese consciousness. They may have been diluted over time, but they cannot be swept away by China's cultural modernization. This phenomenon of *qingyi* and family is also treated succinctly in Zhang Henshui's *Tianhepei*.

ZHANG HENSHUI: *TIANHE PEI*

The Story

The novel opens with woman opera singer, Bai Guiying, who has become tired of acting on stage, actively courting for a husband. After some failed attempts, she meets Wang Yuhe, a petty official in the Department of Transport. The two quickly fall in love, and despite the financial instability of Wang — who has just lost his job — and over the objection of her mother, they get married. For a while, the newly-weds live in bliss. Frustrated in all his attempts to find a job, Wang asks Guiying to accompany him home to the countryside of Anhui province. Life in the countryside proves to be very difficult for the city couple, although Guiying is psychologically prepared to bear the hardships. The jealousy of her sister-in-law only makes things more difficult. Guiying, however, summons up untold courage to endure this hardship, until her baby girl is born. When life becomes impossible in the countryside as the people cannot accept Guiying's past as an opera singer, they leave for Nanjing. Yuhe tries every means to find a job, but to no avail. Ultimately they return to Beijing to stay. Depressed at his inability to find a job, Yuhe leaves to do engineering work in the Yellow River basin. Meanwhile, Guiying resumes her singing in order to make ends meet.

Work or Honour?

There is no doubt that *Tianhe pei* can best be described as a problem novel. Through Bai Guiying's action to quit singing, the work raises such questions as the plight of the opera singer, the clash between work and home, city and country, and above all, the position of women in the workplace.

The text opens with the central question about work and home for the opera singer: Guiying's decision to quit singing and find a husband. As Guiying says to her backstage manager Tian Sanbao, who wants to dissuade her from quitting: 'I am twenty-five years of age. A few years from now when I get older, I will not be welcomed as an opera singer nor will I be able to find a husband. What am I supposed to do?'⁶ Her question is immediately given sharper focus by the conversations of the chorus girls: 'Famous actresses like them will be snatched by people. For little-known people like us, when people hear that we sing on stage, they will think that we do not know how to care for the family, and do not want us. What can we do but to sing all our life?' (p. 10). The intensity with which Guiying tries to find the security of a home is foregrounded in the text by two sequence of events. First, Guiying is willing to become the concubine of Provincial Governor Wang, an elderly bureaucrat from Zhengzhou, and second, when she is given the cold shoulder by Wang, she is prepared to marry Lin Zhishi, a faithful fan whose overtures she has turned down several times. Seen against this background, Guiying's love affair with and subsequent marriage to Wang Yuhe, a petty official in the Department of Transport, is intriguing. It shows her willingness to forsake the pursuit of wealth and comfort for *qing*. In fact, the text shows Guiying's transformation from a somewhat wilful actress to a contented homemaker through the focalization of different participating agents.

First, the narrator underlines this point by showing her willing acceptance of her new role — she cooks, goes to the market, worries about the household accounts, and cares for her husband (p. 241–3). Second, the narrative achieves its effect by juxtaposing Guiying's present with her former self as well as her fate with that of Qiuyun, her former colleague. Previously all Guiying's daily needs were attended to by an amah, now she takes care of all the household chores; Qiuyun, her former colleague, wearing big diamond rings, then comes to visit her and Guiying is seen holding high the ladle in the kitchen. Juxtapositions like these drive home the latter's model behaviour as well as her pride as a homemaker. The reader is thus given to understand that the love relationship between Guiying and Yuhe is not built on vague romantic ideals, but on a rational understanding of the demands of establishing a small family. It is this pride and sense of duty that have prompted her to follow Yuhe to his native village when he fails to find a job in Beijing.

Guiying's hardships in the country highlight, on the physical level, the enormous differences between city and country. The text describes in graphic detail the poverty and backwardness of the country: that there is no proper transportation, no sanitation or tap water. There is even a lack of food — people seldom eat meat. Their staple diet is pickled vegetable, garlic, onions, and beancurd. Food is fried with little oil. Everybody has to labour, and Guiying is made to grind wheat with her sister-in-law (p. 305). The text thus works to dispel the romantic notions of the populist

intellectuals about returning to the country. It is in the poverty of the country that Guiying's courage and resilience are most patently shown. As Yuhe says: 'If she resists and blames me, I will feel better. But she has endured all the hardships without uttering a word, this makes me feel even worse' (p. 352).

What makes the hardships unbearable, however, is the cultural bias of the country people about her immediate past as an opera singer. This perception is shown through the focalizations and interactions of various agents. Most prominent of all is the perspective of Yuhe's sister-in-law, who complains to her husband:

What a disaster it is to our family that Yuhe has married such a woman. Nobody has ever said anything bad about our family. Now generations of good name have been destroyed in the hands of such a woman. I have heard that families of opera singers have no right to become officials or have their names entered in the family genealogy. So this is what is going to happen to our family members (p. 318–9).

This ingrained prejudice against opera singers finally forces husband and wife back to the city and Guiying's reluctant return to the stage. As she desperately pledges towards the end of the novel:

All right, I will try to swallow this and sing until my contract ends. Are you not asking for six months? Six months from now, I should be getting my freedom back. I have thought this through, I will not have my husband here when you people are around, and you people will not be here when my husband is here. Now that my husband has fled, I am contracted to work for you. Do what you want to do, I will endure another half a year in hell.' (p.463)

In her pledge, the crunch of the issue is revealed: where is home for the opera singer? Fundamental to the sad plight of Liuqing and Guiying is the way society perceived opera singers. While people might secretly admire or envy the attention opera singers got and the money their work could fetch, the profession of opera singing was in general much despised. Both texts demonstrate Liuqing's and Guiying's desire for a normal home life. Their ability to dedicate themselves to the man they love, to act with their heart and according to what they believed was appropriate, even to the extent of going through untold sufferings, made them characters for admiration. By eulogizing their moral conduct as well as their selfless behaviour, both texts exalt the importance of the traditional Chinese concept of *qingyi* — a code of conduct that has been re-enacted numerous times on stage and in *tanci* stories, both of which had become even more popular in 1930s Shanghai because of the proliferation of the radio, which soon became a standard equipment in many Shanghai homes.⁷ Through the central characters' plight and negotiation with forces of the modern society are exposed the crassness, lack of feeling and lack of a sense of community in the world they live in. When they tried to act in accordance with the demands put on them by society — honour, chastity and obedience — they came into conflict with another commonly-held belief: that

opera singers were but playthings of men. Ironically, the clash between the personal discourses of both opera singers and the two commonly-held discourses by society share the same root — that of the subservience of women to male domination. By coding the inhumanity of such traditional concepts through the rebellion of both heroines, such as Liuqing's challenge of the undifferentiated practice of *qingyi* as well as the limits of self-exertion that the text sanctions, and Guiying's resolution to join Yuhe in the Yellow River basin, throwing the world of opera singing behind her once and for all, both texts acquire new meaning through a kind of rebonding of the fragmented codes. The unfulfilled yet just actions of the heroines come as a powerful denunciation of the hypocrisy and double standards of the traditional male-dominated Chinese society.

Having shown how both narratives produce meaning through their textual construction, the question arises as to why works about the opera singer that dealt with traditional concepts like *qing* and *yi* should have kindled the interest of the Shanghai readers? In order to answer this question, it is important to look at the socio-cultural environment in which these works were produced. One way of reconstructing the social context of the time is by reading the daily newspapers read by the large number of Shanghai residents, notably the *Xinwenbao*, the most widely-read daily in Shanghai of the time.

SOCIAL FICTION AND POPULAR CONSCIOUSNESS

It is not surprising that these two novels which describe opera singers should captivate the interest of the Shanghai common people readers. In fact, a good number of novels on the opera singer were written from the 1910s through the 1940s, culminating in Qin Shouou's *Qiuhaitang* (Begonia), which became an all-time bestseller in wartime Shanghai.⁸ The point of interest is not that novels about opera singers were written, as they became very important cultural symbols of modern China. Newspapers of the day, be it quality papers like the *Xinwenbao* in Shanghai, the *Shijie ribao* in Beijing or tabloids like the *Jingbao*, were filled with reports on the opera singers, often to the minute details of their daily lives. For example, many fans were so attracted to Mei Lanfang that they happily said of themselves 'zhongle Mei du' (being poisoned by Mei — *meidu* is also a pun on VD). Many of these writings fantasized on the beauty and art of the female opera singers and female impersonators, mostly from a male perspective, so much so that the mystifying, eulogizing, and sexualizing of, as well as the gossiping about, their personal lives became a ritual in the daily press. Moreover, the proliferation of newspapers and magazines made the world of the opera singers more accessible to the urban reading public, which were able to digest the reports in the relative privacy of their homes or work places.

Such being the case, the question is not why works about women opera singers were written, but why they treated the topic in a particular manner. Instead of depicting the larger-than-life world of opera singing, as Bao Tianxiao did in his work *Liufangji*,⁹ both Zhang Henshui and Wang Zhongxian de-glamourized their heroines, and approached their subject in a matter-of-fact manner. They chose to

show their heroines simply as women workers living in urban China, trying to make a living through their expertise. Their depiction of the modern woman, it is worthy of note, differs considerably from the May Fourth writers', although both May Fourth and popular fiction share a similar interest in the position of women in modern Chinese society. It is common knowledge that Ibsen's 'Nora' became an important symbol of the liberated woman in May Fourth literature. In their own ways, Lu Xun's Zijun, Ding Ling's Miss Sophie, or Mao Dun's Zhang Qiuli¹⁰ have become celebrated prototypes of the liberated woman. However, when we ask how widespread was the phenomenon of 'Noraism' — the cry for women to break with the family and seek individual freedom — among the common urban reader, the answer becomes less clear. If the pages of the daily newspapers of Shanghai, notably the popular Shanghai Supplement of *Xinwenbao*, can serve as an indicator of the reading habits of the readers, both in terms of the information channelled through to them, and of their communication to the newspapers recounting their ideas and feelings, one can safely say that 'Noraism' was not a problem of concern among these urban readers. There was little mention of Ibsen's heroine in the newspapers, nor the liberated heroine of the May Fourth writers. And when we turn our attention to the popular tabloid *Jingbao*, the lack of interest towards the 'modern' liberated woman is even more marked. In fact, 'modern' — *modang* — was treated with great scepticism both by contributors to the newspapers and by the newspaper editors.¹¹

While 'Noraism' was seldom mentioned in the newspapers, it does not mean that the problem of women was side-stepped. In fact, the Shanghai Supplement of *Xinwenbao* carried an abundance of readers' contributions and correspondence on women in modern Shanghai from the late 1920s onwards. Much of it was actually contributed by women working in Shanghai, who related with much frankness the heartlessness of modern Shanghai, and the unjust treatments they were made to undergo in the workplace because of the gender divide. Let me illustrate this point with some correspondence from the readers. In an essay entitled 'On behalf of the domestic helpers', the author wrote that one of the commonest types of work for women was domestic work. However, society in general looked down upon these domestic workers. 'Why should these women, who earned their living through their sweat and blood, be despised by society?' the author was prompted to ask.¹² His question touched on the idea of respect for working women, especially those doing lowly jobs, which had become a major concern for many readers. This was borne out by the testimonies of many women contributors. One of them, a waitress in a restaurant related to the editor how, because of poverty, she was sold to a restaurant owner when she became an orphan. She was forced by her boss to 'attend to the needs' of her customers and lost her virginity as a result. Labelling herself as someone who had been usurped of her freedom and security, she appealed to fellow readers to have compassion on and to help other women in the same condition.¹³ A similar appeal was made by another reader, who also worked as a waitress in a restaurant. She had to leave her family after her father died and found her job in Shanghai. Because she had to make a living and support her family back home, she was made to endure taunts, insults and sexual advances from her customers.¹⁴ Such unpalatable treatments prompted another woman worker, an attendant in the cinema

to ask: 'We are proud of using our strength to work and to make a living. Why should we be made to endure such bias from society?'¹⁵

Such unfair treatment was not only hurled against those who had to do lowly jobs. In fact, some of the most bitter experiences came from the ones who were better educated, as the following testimony from a young midwife shows. After many years of study and having successfully obtained the qualification of a midwife, she found that she could not get enough patients. She finally ended up being a dance hostess because she had to remit money to help her impoverished family back in her native village. To disguise her shame, she used a false name in the dance hall and bitterly asked: 'What is the way out for women? What can I do now but to follow the tide and cater to the needs of my clients? . . .'¹⁶

What is the way out for women? This was the question asked in many readers' letters to the *Xinwen bao*. It is true that many posed the question of respect and equality, but it suffices to say here that many women readers did not seek to be freed from the so-called autocratic family, as May Fourth fiction would have it. Rather, the problem for them was that many were forced to leave their family behind to work in Shanghai, as well as to support their family with the meagre income they get in the city. Many ended up being 'Shanghai sojourners.'¹⁷ Surviving the economic hardships of the big city, coping with the loss of community and inhabiting a world which habitually saw women's place either at home or in the leisure quarters, life became wretched for many women workers. As a woman primary school teacher complained to the editor of the Shanghai Supplement: 'It appears that if a woman wants to find a decent job in society, she would have to be prepared to be insulted by the people around her'. So dismayed was her by the bias against her in the work place that she could not help asking: 'Why should people be staring at me with strange looks whenever I talk to a male colleague?' To this the editor Xiao Jizhe could only come up with a tepid reply: 'Forget the prejudices and do the work that you should do.'¹⁸ The fact that this letter appeared in the Shanghai *Xinwenbao* in the mid-1930s shows the strong resistance in Chinese society to accepting women in the workplace, let alone treating them with equality. The problem did not escape the attention of Yan Duhe, influential editor of the *Xinwen bao*. He appealed to his readers in his column *Xin yuanlin* (New Garden), which served as an editorial for the newspaper, to respect women who worked, because both husband and wife should find jobs in society and at the same time devote time and energy to their family.¹⁹

It was within this social and cultural milieu that works like the *Tianhe pei* and *Gechang yeshi* were produced. It is true that both narratives captivated the imagination of their readers by dealing with the life and plight awaiting women opera singers. But it is equally important to see that underneath the glamour of opera singing is the subtext which dealt with some very real problems of modern day China, problems confronting many readers of the *Xinwen bao*. In fact, as both narratives develop, the main texts of opera singing become subverted by the subtexts as the questions of *qingyi* and bias towards women workers assume central importance. In fact, the opera singer becomes a composite figure, who, on the one hand, embodies certain residual elements in Chinese culture that the modern reader aspires to — such as reinvented ideals of filial piety, loyalty, and righteousness. At

the same time, their bitter experience also encapsulates in grand proportion the various bias and prejudices awaiting the women worker. Both embraced the conventional ideas of *yi* — to do what is appropriate — and sacrificed their individual well-being for the family. Liuqing's revenge can be seen as her final protest against the crass modernized relationships that she could not cope with. And Guiying's saga of quitting the stage exalts the importance of home life — the domestic bliss between husband, wife and daughter. Their tragedy is that even their modest search for a home — a small family based on the simple ideal of feeling, trust and frugality, and their request for being treated with respect and dignity, was denied. It is the irrationality and lack of feeling of modern society that both narratives denounced.

Seen in this light, the problems confronting both Bai Guiying and Yang Liuying become most real to many readers facing the hostilities in the workplace and the loss of community during their sojourn in the big city. They appeal to the Shanghai reader — and other urban readers by extension — by constituting or structuring for them the practical realities of living in Shanghai, at the same time probing or giving expression to those problems that the average Shanghai reader is familiar with. By reinventing such conventional values as appropriateness, righteousness and feeling, these texts effectively forged a link with China's cultural past. At the same time, by deriving their materials from the rudiments of daily life and articulating them to the lives of the readers, they signified to the imagined readers a collective of people living together under the same cultural space, albeit in private and in anonymity, sharing similar experience and the same destiny. By constructing a world which recounts a shared history and projects a collective fate with its imagined readers, these works tell stories not only to make sense of the present, but to make common sense of the present. Unlike their May Fourth counterparts, neither Zhang Henshui nor Wang Zhongxian offered solutions or guidelines for their readers — a case in point is that both works ended with the heroines feeling unaccomplished. What their works do show, however, is a sense of togetherness — that the fictional subject, narrator or reader — share the same root and are bound up with similar social and political problems. These works thus appeal to the commonality of their readers and suggest that it is this togetherness of the common people — their ability to withstand suffering — which empowers them to confront their difficulties in modern China. They thus touch on the present-day social anxieties only to use them to instil a new ideology, symbolically urging their readers to form a new, albeit differentiated fraternity with the old order and to respond to new trends. They work to displace the differences between rich and poor, city and country by replacing them with a new kind of fraternity — the shared consciousness of being fellow urban citizens having significant links with China's cultural past, working to define their position in China's modernization. It is the ability of these works to fuse the different horizons of expectation of surviving modern urban Chinese society — between reader and fictional subject, reader and narrator and tacitly among the readers themselves — on the one hand, and the historical horizons of the readers on the other that they are able to involve readers of different classes and occupations. In other words, it is the openness of these narratives, rather than the preachy social realism of May Fourth fiction, that accounts for the enthusiastic response of their

readers. Writers like Zhang Henshui do not provide ‘false consciousness’ to their readers, as many leftist critics have claimed. What they do show, however, is a differentiated look at China’s cultural tradition as well as the forces of modernization at work. By showing the common people living their ordinary lives — the details of their everyday life, as well as their joys and fears, loves and hates, aspirations and selfishness, as well as their anxieties and sufferings — these works give expression not only to the culture of everyday practice, but also to the feelings and strivings of the common people in the wake of China’s modernization.

Sadly, Dr Mau-sang Ng died before being able to revise the original draft of this chapter — editors.

NOTES

1. Fu Hongmiu. ‘Genu bu yinggai jiuxue ma?’ (Shouldn’t an opera singer/singsong girl go to school?) *Xinwenbao* (hereafter *XWB*), 1932.10.3 p. 16.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Also known as Wang Yiyou, Wang was a well-known opera singer as well as actor of modernized drama (*wenming xi*). He turned his attention to fiction writing in the late 1920s, and *Gechang yeshi* was one of his first novels.
4. The film *Huanxi yuanjia*, produced by Tianyi Gongsi, one of the three main film studios in Republican Shanghai, was shown with great fanfare to the Shanghai audience on Friday, 29 June, 1931. The company took out a whole page of advertisement on page one of the Shanghai Supplement of the *Xinwenbao*. The heroine Bai Guiying was played by the famous actress Chen Yumei.
5. See Wang Zhongxian (1935: 72).
6. See Zhang Henshui (1948).
7. For a discussion of the tastes and preferences of the Shanghai residents, see Mau-sang Ng, ‘A Common People’s Literature: Popular Fiction and Social Change in Republican China.’ Forthcoming in *East Asian History*, Institute of Advanced Studies, University of Canberra.
8. For a study of the novel and its relation to Shanghai’s urban culture, see Mau-sang Ng ‘Popular Fiction and the Culture of Everyday Life: A Cultural Analysis of *Quihaitang* by Qin Shouou.’ Forthcoming in *Modern China*.
9. Bao Tianxiao was one of the most prolific writers in twentieth-century Shanghai. He began his career as a journalist in *Shanghai shibao* (Shanghai Times) around the turn of the century, and was active in the Shanghai cultural scene until his departure for Taiwan in 1949. He moved to Hong Kong in the early 1950s and kept writing until his died in 1972. *Liufangji* (1921?), which literally means to leave behind a good name, is a pun on Mei Lanfang’s name. It eulogizes on Mei’s virtuous character and his friendship with the most important politicians, generals and men of letters of the day. This novel of two volumes was never finished.
10. The emancipated heroine of his novel *Dongyao* (1930).
11. See ‘Popular fiction and the Culture of Everyday Life . . .’
12. Gu Shengda. ‘*Wei niangyi nahan*’ (*Outcry for the women domestic helpers*). *XWB*. 1934.10.17, Shanghai Supplement p. 2.

13. Li Yinshu. 'Yige nuzhaodaide tongyan' (The bitter words of a waitress), *XWB*, 1935.8.27, Shanghai Supplement p.2.
14. Shenyu. 'Yige nuzhaodaide zibai' (The confession of a waitress). *XWB*, 1935.10.5, Shanghai Supplement, p.2.
15. Weiwei. 'Dianying nuzhaodai' (Women attendant in cinemas). *XWB*, 1935.11.17, Shanghai Supplement, p.6.
16. Muzhi. 'Guanyu wunu' (On dance hostesses). *XWB*, 1936.9.24, Shanghai Supplement, p.2.
17. See Fred Wakeman Jr. and Wen-hsin Yeh eds. (1992). See especially the introduction on the discussion of the problem of Shanghai identity.
18. Yiming, 'Yige nujiayouande kuzhong' (The agony of a women teacher). *XWB*, 1935.7.30, Shanghai Supplement, p.15.
19. Yan Duhe. 'Funu yu jiating' (Woman and family). *XWB*, 1935.3.9, p.17.

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9 Local Identity in Modern Chinese Fiction and Fiction of the Native Soil (*Xiangtu Wenxue*)

Tao Tao Liu

The creators of Modern Chinese Literature in *baihua* (vernacular Chinese) during the May Fourth era had a vision for a new literature that would help forge a progressive and cosmopolitan identity to embody a new nationhood. They were mostly members of what had been formerly scholar-gentry families — the class which had previously produced generations of government administrators through the civil service examinations. They were in inclination a strongly centrist group of people. In the past they had been educated to rise above locality and regional loyalties. For centuries, centrist governments had promoted the unity of the empire, and have ensured their own prestige and survival, by buttressing centrism through Classical literature and the examination system. As Levenson said, Confucianism had asserted the wholeness of China: ‘not in the name of nationalism but of Confucian universality’, this form of centrism acknowledged local contributions, but ‘the pride was for localities as centres of illumination for the whole intellectual world’.¹

The May Fourth intellectuals lived and wrote largely in the coastal cities, mainly in Beijing or in Shanghai, where they had gravitated from all over the country, in search of the knowledge and learning from the West and Japan. If they considered the provinces and the countryside at all, it was out of a desire to bring the backward ones into line with the civilized centres, which were the new cities. As Leo Ou-fan Lee says,

The treaty-port city, particularly Shanghai, constituted a ‘spatialization’ of ‘modernity’ — a configuration of space which crystallized the present moment, a self-contained world cut off and set apart from the traditionalism of the surrounding countryside.²

They now attacked Confucianism, the Classics and the imperial system³, the foundations of traditional centrist Chinese culture. However, although these new men repudiated the tradition, they were still locked into the mechanisms of centrism, and still conditioned to be centripetal in their inclinations. For people like Lu Xun, regional identity was purely social identity: the dialect you spoke, the food you ate, the customs that you practised⁴, and a set of friends and associates, or even a social and professional clique. Lu Xun was regarded as head of a Zhejiang literary ‘clique’, but he himself would have set the interest of the nation above that of the province, and he wrote to promote a pan-Chinese identity.

They adopted the new medium of written modern Chinese, that of *baihua*, based on Standard Chinese, derived from the spoken northern dialect; it was the most homogeneous and widespread dialect of China, though it was not the native tongue of the everyone. It was as near a lingua franca that could be achieved, which nevertheless did require acquisition, though not nearly on the same scale as Classical Chinese. It had also had a history of being a written medium, used as a vehicle for popular fiction, such as in the *Dream of the Red Chamber* and many others. Nevertheless modern written *baihua* was to all intents and purposes a new language and part of a new order. The new literature to be produced in this new language was intended to take the place of the old classics, with the aim of producing a new nation.

Interestingly enough the most energetic writers in taking up the cause of creating a new national literature were those whose native dialect was not the northern dialect; the best known early May Fourth writers such as Lu Xun and Zhou Zuoren were natives of Zhejiang, as was Yu Dafu; Guo Moruo was a native of Sichuan; numerous others were not northerners by birth or upbringing, and spoke a variety of dialects. Their commitment to the new national literary language was total, and they would not have dreamed of using local dialect for their works to any serious extent; such works would be marginalized, believing that it would have no appeal except to other speakers of the same dialect. This was a centrist concept, taking up from where Classical literature left off. Not only was it in the new written medium, but it drew heavily in style and content on Western realist fiction, a conscious move to emulate the West not only in science and technology. In this they succeeded: although the 'New Literature' (*xin wenxue*) had a limited circulation among the intellectuals to begin with, it achieved considerable social and political prestige, and retained it. It was not a matter of supplanting the traditional Chinese style of fiction, which remained and still is very popular, such as the traditional Knight Errant fiction (*jianxia*). Rather, it took the high ground of serious intent that had been reserved for literature in Classical Chinese. What is more, this style has become the norm for printed fictional works of the twentieth century in China.

The consciousness of the need for China to catch up with the rest of the world put social progress at the top of the agenda of the May Fourth writers. The pioneering centres of new culture on the coast were leaving behind the ordinary people and the uneducated, who actually never left its regional and traditional roots, especially in the arts, with performance orientated entertainments. The educated elite were not interested in the existing local identities, or their arts, which they felt reflected a backward and anachronistic way of life with limited aspirations. Theirs was to be a new instrument in the service of an old ideal, still embodied in the old phrase *wen yi zai dao*, 'Literature is the vehicle of the Way', though not articulated in the same language. Serious literature in the centrist tradition had always carried with it a sense of social responsibility, so Liang Qichao saw new fiction as a major means of social change at the end of the Qing dynasty, so that people could be moved through their emotions to promote the kind of social changes that moral-minded authors articulated.

Although doubt was already being expressed in some quarters, as Zhou Zuoren, Lu Xun's brother said in 1923,

However, because the people of our generation have reacted against the kind of nationalism that is narrow-minded, they have cultivated the attitude of a kind of ‘citizens of the world’, which easily reduces the flavour of our native soil (*xiangtu*) . . . so our poetry has all along articulated protest but not creativity; in resisting nationalism, we have lost local colour.⁵

They ignored the likelihood that a combination of centrism with utilitarianism was likely to emasculate artistic efforts to depict individual people and locality. Citizens of the World, or ‘Kosmopolites’ as Zhou called it in English in the original text, have more ambitious aims beyond literary creativity alone.

REGIONAL LITERATURE

Regional literature was becoming a worldwide phenomenon by the end of the nineteenth century. Such works dealt with what Americans might call the ‘plain folk’, ordinary people living close to the earth, and deriving their living from it, a way of life usually remote from that of the city folk at the centres of their culture, with their easier access to wealth and leisure. Western fiction was beginning to focus on regional and provincial life from the beginning of the nineteenth century, away from the cultural centres, from centrist and elite existence, to deal with a view of life that had local preoccupations, such as the works of George Eliot, Thomas Hardy and William Faulkner, a direction in literature that it has gone on sustaining until the present. In the West, as such writings developed, they began confidently to embody a distinct flavour and identity of a region, a place, ‘a habitation with a name’. The term ‘regional literature’ in English demanded that the genuine flavour of a particular locality should emerge, or as R.D. Draper says in *The Literature of Region and Nation* to give a place

enough imaginative realization and peopled with enough distinctively local inhabitants, possessing their own speech and their own custom of the country, for it to become in the reader’s mind and autonomous artistic territory with its own entirely credible way of life.⁶

Regional literature had risen when urbanization and industrialization had drawn the majority of the people away from living in the countryside, which then became a remote place to most people. First came a realization that there was a divide between city and countryside, with different morals and *mores*, already noted by authors like Jane Austen at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Then came a stronger sense of regional identity.

A sense of region in literature, unlike a sense of nation, is the product of social change; it comes with the awareness of disruption and dislocation — for instance, the change in Victorian England was due to an unprecedented change in communication, the railways.⁷

It is one of the contradictions of life, that people have little awareness about their existence until change takes place. Regional literature deals with the identity of a society just as it is disappearing: Hardy knew that, so did Faulkner, as did the Chinese writers. This happened in England in the nineteenth century with the Industrial Revolution, and the experience was being repeated with the Chinese later in time.

However, fiction is a product of the imagination. The sense of the soil, of the land, that most primitive of emotions, has a great grip on the city dwellers who had quit it. Even when a place in a story is completely identifiable, there hovers around it a glow that does not quite belong to real life. As the character Ishmael said in *Moby Dick*, of Queequeg's native place: 'it is not down on any map, true places never are'. The territory, that writers create in their fiction from their memories of their native home, of their native soil, may not be a true historical entity, but readers are often happy to accept it as a true record, as long as the author has created an 'autonomous artistic territory with its own entirely credible way of life', and one that is different and distinctive from the life led at the centre.

There is no one word in Chinese that is the equivalent of the 'regional literature'. The nearest is *xiangtu wenxue*, 'native soil fiction', but *xiangtu* does not always mean regional fiction, nor does regional fiction always bear the name of *xiangtu*.⁸ If one looks through any Chinese critical work on twentieth century fiction, one would find the headings of *xiangtu wenxue* blazoned across three types of writing: the recollections of writers of their place of origin and their childhood there by Lu Xun and his followers in the twenties, the stories of the lower classes in rural and small town Taiwan, and the new *Xiangtu* of the eighties in the PRC, which encompasses stories about rural and city life among the ordinary people. In general, not only does the term imply rural areas, or at least small town, but it also implies a special relationship of that area to the speaker. This is more restrictive than the English 'regional literature', which need not be about rural areas, though it often is, and need not refer to the author's own native place. I shall attempt to examine the rise and development, and their context, of the Chinese genre of *xiangtu* and regional fiction this century.

THE CITY AND COUNTRY DIVIDE: NATIVE SOIL FICTION (XIANGTU WENXUE) OF THE REPUBLICAN ERA

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, a divide was steadily growing between the coastal cities and the countryside in China. The new urban centres, with their foreign concessions, had modern facilities and consumer goods, and also access not only physically to the outside world but also provided conduits of new ideas, such as the western-styled universities and the publishing houses; these were magnets to men who wanted to find an alternative to the old civil service advancement. Materially and spiritually in the eyes of the urban educated elite, the rest of the country in the hinterland languished. This may not have been the whole picture, as the countryside was not, barring pockets of areas of sudden natural disaster, necessarily in such a parlous state, and from 'the 1870's up to the 1920's the rural

economy in Jiangsu and Guangdong, especially in areas that produced export crop, saw considerable prosperity'.⁹ Shen Congwen in the 1920s¹⁰ did describe the countryside of his native West Hunan as a perfectly viable place to live, in sharp contrast to many other Beijing-resident authors' depiction of rural areas at the time. Nevertheless this was not the image of the countryside that these people had in their minds, their aspiration was for the modernization that had taken place in Shanghai to spread all over the country. They hankered after the 'enlightenment' from the West, translated through the Japanese as *wenming*, first used possibly by Liang Qichao, which expressed all Western advances from principles of democracy to modern plumbing¹¹, and they were inclined to believe that it would rescue China from all its ills.

This rejection of the countryside was a new phenomenon. When late Qing fiction started the process of describing the new identity of cities like Shanghai, they did not despise the countryside with the same bitterness that someone like Lu Xun showed. As F.W. Mote has stated, the idea 'that the city represents either a distinct style or, more important, a higher level of civilization than the countryside is a cliché of our Western cultural traditions. It has not been so in traditional China'.¹² The centrism of imperial China, especially as exemplified by its main buttress of the Civil Service examination (*keju*) had less of a geographical identity. Examination candidates were drawn from every province; the lowest level of examinations were held in local prefectures, gentry status was acquired by association, every small town could in theory have its scholar-gentry family that produced the examination candidates. While the metropolitan officials with their physical nearness to the emperor were a cut above all others in terms of power, small towns remote from the capital could still have their community of cultured people, who were happy with their base in the provinces. Fiction from the late Ming and Qing, like *The Scholars* (*Julin Waishi*), shows a wide dispersal of the elite throughout the country.

In the twentieth century, a disparity developed between the new coastal centres and the rest of the country, that destabilized this equilibrium. Migration to cities increased, and the city and countryside divide became acute and painful. It was emigrants who were most aware of the identity differences of different places. It is not surprising that, even before the rise of the new fiction, Shanghai, the largest immigrant city, as it was in the process of evolving a separate identity, was portrayed in novels like *Flowers in Shanghai* (*Haishang Hua*, 1894), which was about a series of relationships affecting courtesans in the red light district, told in the style of traditional Chinese fiction and also in the local Wu dialect¹³, which had an enormous local circulation in Shanghai, but did not really reach the whole country except among the cognoscenti of fiction. As Catherine Yeh shows in her chapter in this book, material exploring the newly created identity of Shanghai was being produced at all levels.

As the cities evolved their own identity and way of life, the difference between them and the rural area was felt to be more conspicuous than the differences between individual regions or provinces in China. Modern Chinese fiction, the product of these cities, reflects this divide. Most May Fourth writers were first generation emigrés to the cities, and most if not all could remember a childhood in the countryside, and still had close contacts with those who lived there.

The term *xiangtu* was first used without any explanations by Lu Xun in his introduction to the second volume of fiction of the *Compendium of New Chinese Literature (Xin Wenxue Daxi)*, devoted to fiction¹⁴, written in 1935, which seems to indicate that it was already familiar to his readers. No earlier written use is documented, though the term ‘regional literature’ was current in the West as a literary critical term by then. Lu Xun also used the word ‘Emigré literature’ (*qiaomin wenxue*) a term he borrowed from one of his favourite critics from the west, Georg Brandes.¹⁵ His grouping of these stories, as illustrated by the pieces he selected in the *Compendium*, takes in many kinds of accounts of the countryside, as long as the content was focused on the relationship of the author with his native place in an rural area, which he had left to lead a life in the cities. The attitude to the native places is regretful, the emphasis is on awareness of change. Far from the depiction of robust provincial life, such as the regional fiction in English writings, the Chinese stories saw only decay. As their own aspirations lay in the cities, they had no incentive to identify with provincial life.

This was particularly noticeable in the first person narratives; the author returning to his old home experiencing a personal sense of loss and alienation, as in Lu Xun’s story called ‘My Old Home’ (*Guxiang*, 1921).¹⁶ This story of Lu Xun’s is a seminal work in the development of modern Chinese fiction. In it the author recounts his own return to his home town in order to sell up the family house, and bring his family to live in Beijing. It is an emotional leave-taking with his childhood, which is recalled by the encounter with the peasant whom he remembered as a childhood friend and playmate. The peasant, now prematurely aged from the worries of ‘numerous children, famine, taxes, soldiers, bandits, officials and local gentry’ which had numbed him to ‘a wooden puppet’, is distanced from the author by a huge social gulf. Lu Xun built into the story the contrast between his own privileged and forward looking life in the city and the poverty-stricken and inhumane society as existed in his home town. The focus is on the exposure of China’s social problems.

When Lu Xun castigates the *mores* of his native Shaoxing, he invents the name of Luzhen in those stories. But it would be hard to distinguish it as a recognizable place with a specific location or character. Lu Xun almost implies that China had two nations and only two: the city and the country/small towns. In spite of snatches of local colour, if we did not know that it was Shaoxing that he was referring to, it would be hard to identify it. Most of Lu Xun’s stories of the countryside, based on his own native place of Shaoxing such as ‘Kong Yi Ji’ (1919)¹⁷, ‘Medicine’ (1919)¹⁸, ‘Tomorrow’ (1920)¹⁹ and ‘The New Year’s Sacrifice’ (1924)²⁰ and to a milder extent ‘My Old Home’ (1921) can be read at least on one level as utilitarian literature in the service of a leftist ‘liberation ideology’, which has been the only reading tolerated under the Mao era, as indictments of an oppressive society, class-ridden, and permeated with harmful superstitions. Although affection and nostalgia play their parts in some of his pieces, the most obvious reason for portraying these places was to show that they were unsatisfactory, and needed to be changed as part of the reforms that should produce a new China.

The comments of his brothers, Zhou Zuoren²¹ and Zhou Jianren²², on his fiction show that the stories were based on many actual events and characters, yet they were a subtle blending of the real and the fictional.²³ The effect was, however, that

the countryside was a land of Lu Xun's mind, a representation of the inhumanity and isolation of Chinese society. In other words he looked back in anger at his native place, and used it as a symbol of all that was wrong with Chinese society, and castigated it in an effort to raise the consciousness of his readers for social reform. In this objective he was later followed by writers of a Left-wing inclination, in particular of the League of Left-wing Writers, but their 'political strait-jacket prevented them from getting nearer to their subject-matter'²⁴, and they failed to convey a convincing sense of individual identity of people or place.

The works that Lu Xun designated as 'Native soil fiction' (*xiangtu wenxue*) in the *Compendium of Modern Literature*, that he edited, were the lyrical, emotional works of emigré writers looking back to their native place, such as 'Father's Garden'(1923)²⁵ by Xu Qinwen (1897–1984), which describes the pleasures he remembered from his childhood when his father took much loving care over the garden behind the house where he cultivated rare flowers, which had now gone to rack and ruin since his father was obliged to take a job in a different area in order to support his family. Implicit in such accounts is the evocation of childhood certainties now gone. Moreover, not only does childhood image belong to the past, but present day reality shows a vastly deteriorating circumstances. The predominant impression is that of loss of paradise and alienation. The locality itself had little clear identity, rather it had a shadowy existence as a backdrop.

Fei Ming's (1901–1967) 'A story from the Bamboo Grove'²⁶ (1925) is also included, which has a different tone: it describes the author's affection and appreciation of the guilelessness of country people, superior to the go-getting city-dwellers. This story is imbued with a sense of yearning for a pastoral ideal that the author felt still existed in the countryside as opposed to the cities. In addition to the country/urban polarity, there is the child/adult polarity. A strong yearning for the pastoral ideal, a 'golden age', even if it only existed in childhood, harked back to not only the myth of the golden age, which existed in both Confucianism and Daoism, but more especially to the ideals of innocence and simplicity at the heart of Daoism, especially the 'childlike mind' (*tongxin*). It also underlies a desire on the part of the author not to forget his roots. Such a view provides a contrast to the decrepitude pictured by Lu Xun.

Pastoralism is to be also found in the works of Shen Congwen (1902–1988), the author of a large repertoire of stories about his native West Hunan, which he turned into an 'autonomous artistic territory'. From the late twenties and thirties, other authors took up the theme of local events and characters, the most effective being Lao She (1899–1966). These two authors are comparable in their willingness to portray their native region as localities that function in their own right, rather than the shadowy provinces from the author's own past. Chinese critics called Shen a writer of the 'Beijing School' (*Jingpai Xiaoshuo*), partly referring to his residence in Beijing, and partly because of the controversy that Shen became involved in later with writers from Shanghai.²⁷ By not grouping his works as Native Soil fiction (*xiangtu wenxue*), these critics²⁸ were either following Lu Xun in his designation of literary genres, or implicitly recognizing that his works were different from those so designated by Lu Xun.

Neither was Lao She thought of as a *xiangtu* writer in his day, for though he

wrote about the 'plain folk', they were the lower class of Beijing, which is a city, and though it was losing its cultural pre-eminence to Shanghai in the late twenties, was still a most important cultural centre, so in no way can it be called rural, or *xiangtu*. However, in terms of his subjects' remoteness from the cultural centre, even though they shared the same streets as the editors of *New Youth*, the city of the poor could be as far away as West Hunan. Few of the May Fourth writers had been particularly interested in the urban poor; they possibly did not really know them, and those that they did know tended to be domestic servants or rickshaw pullers, who like as not quite possibly came from the country. However, Lao She's forays into the landscape of the urban poor created a precedent that authors were to return to in the 1980s, and caused him to be acknowledged as the father of a new genus of *xiangtu wenxue* of urban areas.

Neither Shen Congwen nor Lao She had their origins in the scholar-gentry middle class. Their experience of life was much harder; Shen was born in a military family in West Hunan. He spent between his thirteenth and nineteenth year in the army that was the local garrison against the Tujia aboriginals in that area.²⁹ He alleged that he was barely educated at all in the formal way, and he took pride in his autobiography to tell of his experience of nature in the countryside which he claimed to be his only schooling. He came late to centrist culture, even then in an undisciplined form; he alleged that he could not actually even tell the difference between classical Chinese (*wenyan*) and Modern Chinese (*baihua*), when he first came to write.³⁰ Shen's background meant that he actually had been more in touch with the marginal regional culture in West Hunan, than with the Chinese centrist culture. He himself still retained much of that regionalism in his own make-up as a native of West Hunan; he had lived and grown up with ordinary people in the area, the ones who were almost untouched by centrist Chinese culture.

The stories about West Hunan were those he had remembered from his childhood and early adolescence, after he had made his way to Beijing at the age of nineteen. His fiction is 'émigré literature': only after he had left his own native land was he really able to write about it, and it is not surprising that there were elements of nostalgia, and some idealization in his depiction of his native land. Shen also appeared to have shared in Fei Ming's Zhuangzi-like admiration for the *tongxin*, the innocent and those who live near to nature, who obeyed their natural instincts, and were free from hypocrisy. Poverty in the unspoiled environment of the countryside, in their small self-supporting communities, was not a bar to happiness or even wisdom. Far from seeing the countryside as poverty-stricken and barbaric areas that had to be dragged kicking and screaming into the Westernized civilization of the twentieth century, he wished it to remain untouched.

In Shen Congwen's story called 'Xiaoxiao' (1930)³¹, he gives the account of a child bride (*tongyangxi*), a social system easily abused which could be a source of great physical and mental torture to unfortunate young women, a custom that many including Lu Xun had inveighed against it. However, Shen did not paint such a black picture of Xiaoxiao's fate; without being a glorious happy life, she nevertheless passed her days, growing up into an adult, busy at her domestic work during the summer months in spinning, weaving and housework, deliberately contrasting it with what he considered frivolous summer activities that occupy her city counterparts,

such as hanging around soda fountains and choosing flimsy clothes. In the same story, he also describes a group of 'female students' who in passing through the village on their *shuijia* ('water vacations', the locals' misunderstanding of the term *shujia* 'summer vacations') they provide a nine-day wonder with their strange appearance and manners, thus throwing the manners of the centre into sharp relief against the manners of the regions. These observations show that Shen had a centrist audience in mind, the modern urban readers of *baihua* Chinese fiction. The identity of West Hunan in his fiction was created for the benefit of people who are in places like Beijing and Shanghai, and not for the locals of West Hunan, who did not have any interest in this kind of fiction.

Lao She was a Manchu. His father was a guardsman in the Imperial army and died in the siege of Beijing, after which his mother brought him up on meagre handouts from the palace, and later through taking in sewing, helped by his married sister.³² As a member of the old despised aristocracy, Lao She did not have a natural affinity with the new republicans, and he never went to university, or joined the groups and cliques of writers that thronged Beijing and Shanghai. Lao She's description of the underclass of Beijing emphasizes the local identity of his characters, as opposed to the 'Kosmopolites' attitudes of the middle-class intellectuals. His picture of the poor people of his native city, even when lightened by farce and humour, exposed poverty and oppression. His depiction of the beauty and loveliness of the city itself is constantly put in sharp contrast to the suffering of its poor. During the twenties and thirties, Lao She only lived occasionally in Beijing after he started his writing career, which happened in London. After he had returned to China, he was employed at different universities in Shandong. He idealized the physical city of Beijing, with an emigrant's love of his native place. His attachment to home reached aching proportions, especially during the Sino-Japanese war in the 1940s. At the time, he was in the interior of China, his descriptions of the city were bathed in the golden light of nostalgia, in the novel of Beijing under Japanese occupation, *Four Generations Under One Roof* (1944–6).

Lao She's use of the Beijing dialect was a special triumph of that sense of regional identity. Since written standard Chinese was based on the spoken standard northern dialect, with the Beijing dialect considered its most elegant form, Lao She exploited his advantage. Regional dialects in Chinese literature had had a place, albeit minimal: writers throughout the Classical literary tradition had used snatches of dialect, intended for special effect as part of the spoken dialogue and for characterization. This is paralleled in Britain, where in Thomas Hardy's novels there are only about a dozen dialect words³³ while the author manages to convey a pervasive air of authenticity of dialect in the dialogues. Lao She's incorporation of Beijing cadences into the dialogue not only created a sense of authenticity and earthiness, but also gave the banal style of standard Chinese a liveliness and character that is seldom found in the writing of non-native speakers of the Northern dialect.

Lu Xun's view towards his own native place is as the 'Kosmopolite' against Shen's view as a romanticist of his native place, and Lao She somewhere between them. While Lu Xun is quite obviously a man of the centre, Shen projects an image of a man of the provinces, yet he actually straddles both worlds. He is physically in the centre, and writes in the centrist language of *baihua* and the style of realist

fiction. He brings out the local identity and special characteristics of his native place, only after leaving his native region, and becoming aware of other identities. Lu Xun wanted to repudiate that regionalism, and bring about a new Chinese identity based on cosmopolitanism, while Shen, perhaps out of necessity since he did not fit in with the society of the centrist intellectuals, reasserted his local identity. One of the battle lines in that pugnacious period was between city and country. Most of the Beijing-and Shanghai- based intellectuals had no doubt as to where the future lay.

If one were to characterize the fiction of the early Republican era, many would point to it being issues-led, conceptualized and tending to a Chinese version of 'liberation theology'. Moreover, the leftist fiction of the exposure of social injustice were to be given more prominence in days to come by the Communist Party publicity machine, even though orchestration by the Party through the League of Left-wing writers in the thirties had weakened creativity. However, it was only one of many themes explored at the time. Local identity was one of the identities; other important themes were the identity of self and the meaning of individualism, especially the individuality of an artist. The Sino-Japanese war and the later Civil War put a stop to the natural development of literature; war effort stunted its growth severely, and slowed down the artistic initiatives of the early Republican era.

In literary terms 1949, like in all other aspects of China, was a watershed. Immediately post-1949 the control of the two political parties on either side of the straits in literature was severe and oppressive. Only gradually did literature resume a life of its own.

REGIONAL FICTION IN TAIWAN

In terms of the centrist/regional divide, Taiwan offers an unique, and ironic example for Chinese literature. Cultural centrism in post-1949 Taiwan society was weak, isolated as it was from the old centres of Chinese culture, even though it was the seat of the Nationalist government; yet it was acknowledged as a provincial capital at best, therefore, to write about Taiwan was really to write about the provinces. Literary centrism was a pale shadow of its former self; there was little point in aspiring to some national identity and statehood, when the political reality on Taiwan was a beleaguered island. The literary figures who had moved to Taiwan still claimed inheritance from the May Fourth, but the issues and the authors they could look up to was rather restricted. The realist fiction with the left-wing agenda from Shanghai had already been targeted for suppression on the mainland well before under the Nationalists. Some authors remained locked into a relationship with places on the other side of the Straits. Even in 1960 Lin Hai-yin published *Memories of Beijing*³⁴, which was a very popular book, strongly evocative of the Beijing of the 20s and 30s, and an exercise in personal nostalgia.

One result of the political restrictions in Taiwan was that people looked beyond national identity and culture, towards an international culture, which paradoxically caused them to turn to a nearer home. International culture in the form of Modernism

was borrowed from the West; every issue of the influential literary journal *Modern Literature* (*Xiandai Wenxue*), first published in February 1965, contained articles introducing Modernist writers such as Kafka, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, or Jean-Paul Sartre, in a similar manner to that of the May Fourth literary journals introducing western realist fiction to the Chinese about half a century earlier. The Modernist writers helped to forge a new sense of purpose in literature in Taiwan, and though many did not meet with government approval, they were not censored out of existence.

Pai Hsien-yung, one of the founders and long-serving editor of *Modern Literature*, is the author of the collection of short stories, *People of Taipei*, (*Taibeiren*, 1971)³⁵, most of which had first appeared in *Modern Literature*, and these stories show the influence of Modernism in its emphasis on the mental state of its characters and its depiction of alienation and loss.³⁶ While the narrative angles and the psychological insight bespeak a broadly Modernist influence from the West, and the book has been compared with Joyce's 'The Dubliners' (1914), yet the realist tradition of the May Fourth is by no means dead in Pai's writings. The people depicted in *People of Taipei* are the Mainlanders transplanted to the island of Taiwan, mostly as families of officers and men of the Nationalist army, many of the men are missing in action. They are disorientated, poor, humbled by recent events and alienated from their surroundings, the rag-tag remnants of a middle class citizenry, still tied emotionally to their native place on the mainland. Dispossession is the hallmark of Taipei Mainlander society in the late fifties, centrist people exiled to the periphery. In 'Restaurant Hua Qiao Rongji'³⁷, a school teacher from a respectable family in Guilin has followed the Nationalists to Taipei, leaving behind a much loved fiancée. The story is narrated by a fellow native of Guilin, a garrulous army wife, whose husband was missing in action, and who had opened a restaurant serving Guilin food in Taipei, gathering an incongruous group of men, natives of Guilin washed up in Taipei, among whom was the teacher. The teacher's efforts to bring his fiancée clandestinely across to Taipei failed because the intermediary cheated him out of all his money, and the blow triggered schizophrenia, and he finally died in madness and sordid poverty. This is also emigré literature, but the writer is not looking back at his native place. In most of the stories of *The People of Taipei*, it is the emigrants themselves who are being scrutinized in their new environment. The sense of physical environment was palpable and the world created in these stories had a clear identity.

The success of the Modernist literary movement in Taiwan released much fresh energy into fiction writing in the 60s and 70s, not just among the Mainlanders who had emigrated there, but also among the local Taiwanese. The local Taiwanese, of earlier waves of immigration from Fujian, had evolved an identity distinct from the Fujianese on the mainland since Taiwan had been ceded to the Japanese. Taiwan had remained aloof from the Revolution on the mainland, which is not to say that the Chinese population did not identify with their compatriots there. During the May Fourth, the Chinese writers in Taiwan were as caught up in the movement for writing in the vernacular as the ones on the Mainland were. Their support for it was as much a patriotic and anti-Japanese move as a purely literary move, since they were battling to maintain a sense of Chinese identity in the face of Japanese

occupation, when Chinese was not allowed to be taught in the schools, and in 1937 after the beginning of the Sino-Japanese war, publications in Chinese in Taiwan were forbidden. Their argument was actually whether in their situation it was more appropriate for them to attempt a written version of the Minnan dialect. Lai Ho (1894–1943), who has been seen as the father of Taiwan literature, did write in *baihua*. But in the early thirties he began to write in Minnan dialect, yet these works were judged as difficult to understand.³⁸ It was in such circumstances that the term *xiangtu wenxue* first appeared in Taiwan. It was almost certainly borrowed from the mainland, but with its terms of reference adapted. It was used to refer to fiction in *baihua* about local Taiwan people and events, without distinction between the towns and countryside of Taiwan, and it symbolized opposition to the Japanese domination.

After 1949, the local Taiwanese ended up feeling just as dominated by a foreign power under the Nationalist martial law as they had felt under the Japanese. The Taiwanese voice was muted, *xiangtu wenxue* had lost its *raison d'être* as an instrument of resistance against the Japanese. The local Taiwanese were regarded with suspicion by the Nationalists, a suspicion that turned into mutual hatred by the clumsy handling of a riot shortly after the Japanese withdrew, which resulted in a massacre of the Taiwanese by the Nationalist army in 1947.³⁹ The divide between Mainlander and Taiwan locals was exemplified in speech and cultural affinities; the Mainlanders brought with them the pan-Sinic culture of centrist China with its emphasis on Standard Chinese or Mandarin, while the Taiwanese had been under Japanese occupation since 1895 and spoke the Minnan dialect or Hakka. The Mainlanders had the political power and controlled the financial institutions with their headquarters in Taipei, while the rural areas, on which the economy depended, were peopled by Taiwanese peasants.

With the renewed literary activity spearheaded by the Modern Literature (*xiandai wenxue*) movement, the local Taiwanese found a literary voice, it was to articulate the people of their 'native soil', the small towns and rural areas of Taiwan, as opposed to the city of Taipei, the seat of government and administration. Quite appropriately these authors took up the old rallying call from the days of Japanese occupation and called it *xiangtu wenxue*, (usually translated into English as 'Nativist fiction' in English by critics such as Sung-sheng Yvonne Chang)⁴⁰ as one of its authors, Chen Ying-chen said,

Of course the situation today is quite different. While the previous *xiangtu wenxue* contained a strong political intention to resist Japanese imperialism, today's writers are resisting Western culture's influence on Taiwan society and the dictates of commercialism, alongside resistance to Western and Eastern imperialism and cultural imperialism.⁴¹

Ostensibly it was a rallying cry against Modernism in the arts, which they seriously felt to be too much of a movement of art for art's sake, and remote from contemporary social issues, a controversy sometimes called the 'Nativist Literature controversy' (*xiangtu wenxue zhanlun*). Instead they promoted the realist tradition in the style of the May Fourth writers, but additionally the hidden agenda was the assertion of

Taiwan local identity, not just in literature but also in politics against the Mainlander domination. The stories began as accounts of the little men in the small towns and rural areas. Huang Ch'un-ming (born 1939) was one author seen as one of the leading, and very popular, Nativist writers of Taiwan. He shares similar attitudes to those of Lao She in the thirties in Beijing. Lao She's characters were the dispossessed sub-strata of Beijing society, who had a glimpse, but with no understanding, of the modern advances that were being imported from abroad. They were so bewildered by the new environment that they were in danger of being made aliens in their own land. A similar unease pervades village society in Huang's works, such as in 'The drowning of an old cat' (1967).⁴² The elder statesman of the village of Clear Spring protested against the designating of his village as a developing area by central government. He opposed the building of a swimming pool with the water from the spring on both geomancy and moral grounds. The villagers at first supported him, but soon became tired of him and melted away. He committed suicide by plunging into the swimming pool and died on the opening day. On the day of the funeral, when the government had out of respect decreed the closing of the swimming pool, the sound of children, who could not be restrained from climbing into the pool, was heard.

The story is rich in humour and strong in local identity, and Huang used dialect words in his dialogue, but like many of the 'native soil' fiction, dialect was used sparingly, and the narrative passages were in *baihua*. Wang Chen-ho (1940–1990), another Nativist writer, sometimes wrote in a Taiwanese local dialect that was largely made up by himself.⁴³ This is a step that is completely in line with the Modernist experimentation of language in literature, while at the same time upholding the political agenda. For in Taiwan the use of dialect assumes greater significance than merely local colour or personal style. Since the Nationalist educational policy forbade the use of the Minnan dialect in schools (shades of the Japanese), children were taught entirely through Mandarin which was also promoted as the official spoken language. While the written language, *baihua*, had gained universal acceptance by default, the denigration of the spoken Minnan dialect was seen as oppressively hostile to local culture and its people, and therefore assertion of the right to use the local dialect meant assertion of their other rights.

However, by the eighties, the social scene in Taiwan was quite different. Economic growth. Changes in political leadership had brought prosperity and democracy to a degree undreamt of earlier. More importantly the role of literature as a substitute for political action faded in the face of greater democracy and wider opportunities both at home and abroad. Some Nativist writers in the 70s such as Chen Ying-chen and Wang T'uo had both spent time in prison for seditious activities, and the latter quit literature for political activities as soon as political opposition to the Nationalists was permitted. While *xiangtu wenxue* lost the urgency and stridency it had in the 70s, it established the validity of local and regional literature, which led to the continuation and growth of regional Taiwan fiction from the late seventies onwards, including historical fiction of Taiwan's past as in the *Cold Night* (*Hanye*) trilogy by Li Ch'iao.⁴⁴ Although the literary scene does not have the same vigour as in the 1970s in the days of the 'Nativist Literature Controversy', it is healthy, and regionalism is in a vibrant and dominant form. The sequence of events parallels that

in England; when early nineteenth century fiction in works of authors like Jane Austen was acutely aware of the country/city divide, but it was the mid-nineteenth novelists who moved further on to realize the potential of local identity of the regions.

The development of Taiwan local fiction is in part a response to the isolation, and the virtual self-sufficiency that Taiwan found itself in. This has helped produce a marked local identity which is different from the rest of China. The island has become more and more homogeneous in itself through modernization and adaptation of modern technologies from abroad, and more different from the rest of China. After all, fifty years of separation and political history cannot but have an effect. Its isolation from the Mainland has fostered a more intense form of localism than in China, which is apparent in its literature; the social and cultural ebb and flow between centre and provinces on the Mainland, which defines and re-defines local identity, has had only a marginal effect on Taiwan.

REGIONAL FICTION IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC

Since the beginning of the May Fourth era in China, Leninist theories on literature were already espoused by many writers on the left, among whom the Party line was being actively enforced by cadres like Zhou Yang in Shanghai in the League of Left-wing Writers in the thirties. It is undeniable that many authors might be recalcitrant and awkward to the Communist Party. However, they were equally committed to and colluded with the Party's view of literature as handmaid to politics and morality, a marriage of Confucian ideals and socialist centralized control. The literature of the sixties to late seventies, during the period of the extreme Leftist domination, manifested this imposed cultural centrism, which was highly suspicious of regionalism and local identity, fearing it as an assertion of individuality and dissidence. Dialect had become suspect, and traditional local opera was suppressed. Although Mao had called for the glorification of the worker, the peasant and the soldier, he was really only interested in glorifying a stereotype peasant who could be incorporated into the Communist Party order, that is, in a homogenized Chinese countryside like that of Hao Ran's *Glorious Golden Paths*⁴⁵ that had little individual identities and no local loyalty. The resultant products in the form of socialist realism, following the Soviet model, was not only to ignore regional difference, but actually to see such regionalism as dangerous heterodoxy. However much the peasantry deserved respect, they were also often seen as recalcitrant members of the socialist order, with too much respect for 'feudal values', who had to be forcibly kept in line. It is not dissimilar from the same fear that had existed in many May Fourth writers, that Chinese peasant culture was a bar to progress.

Peasant literature of the communist area before 1949, such as the works of Zhao Shuli (1907–19) in the late forties, like 'The Rhymes of Li Youcai' (*Li Youcai de banhua*, 1947)⁴⁶ had a naïve, primitive charm, and reflected a local identity. Zhao employed dialect to a large degree, and having been an actor in his time, he skilfully mimicked and exploited a certain quaintness of his subjects. His works were centred on the Taihang base area in northern Shanxi under the Communist control. Zhao was born in a peasant family in a village, and grew up

there. He had a little formal education and joined a group of itinerant players. Then he became a school teacher before joining the *New China Daily* (*Xinhua ribao*) as a journalist. Zhao said⁴⁷ that he based his stories on his encounters with the local people, and that he was familiar with the traditional fiction of China. Zhao seemed to follow a pattern discernible in the writers of fiction that reflected local and regional identity, such as Shen Congwen and Lao She, who all originated from the lower classes, and had little formal education in the traditional centrist elite Chinese classics. His fiction was christened with the affectionate, if slightly condescending, name of 'Potato style' (*'Shanyao dan pai'*) referring to the homespun nature of his stories, but the realism of his depiction of village life, the humour and variety of his characters, drew down the wrath of the authorities during the Anti-Rightist Campaign, to be followed by more severe condemnation, even of his use of local dialect, during the Cultural Revolution. What had begun and been welcomed as products of local talent, reflecting the genuine peasantry, came to be regarded as dangerously idiosyncratic and uncontrolled.

At the beginning of the eighties, after the death of Mao and the rise of Deng, the erosion of central power in China saw a change of attitude in literature, with the lifting of the heavy censorship imposed since the end of the Hundred Flowers movement. Whatever energy in creativity had been suppressed during the previous decades, it seemed to burst out in the mid-80's as part of what came to be called the 'New Wave Literature' (*Xinchao wenxue*). It bears comparison with the May Fourth period, or indeed with the Taiwan experience in the late sixties and seventies, in both the fecundity and variety. The assertion of regionalism, as the central government became less strong, became fashionable; regional fiction became another way of breaking away from central control. To deal with non-centrist themes, especially other ways of life than the one under socialism, became a method of asserting a long suppressed individualism.

The Party line in literature had been to glorify the peasants, but their real plight was often ignored. Writers now took pleasure in exposing the harsh reality of peasant life and giving back regional variations. Of the many new literary fevers (*re*) that proliferated from the mid-eighties, 'Native soil' (*xiangtu*) was one of them. But no longer were the city dwellers and the intellectuals, after the battering of the years under Mao, so confident that they had the right answer to the advancement of China. The old prescriptions and prohibitions had lost their credibility. Literature was losing its role as a substitute for moral texts or political action. So writers branched out in all directions in the New Wave fiction, the countryside was re-discovered as a new geological seam, which was there for full exploitation, and from which all kinds of ideas were mined. Liu Shaotang, a long established writer on rural themes, in the introduction to a book published in 1984 called *Native Soil* (*Xiangtu*)⁴⁸ described how after the thirteenth Party Congress that gave limited freedom to writers, the writers who had in the past made rural areas their speciality, had felt pessimistic about their domain. But with the agricultural economic reforms the villages had prospered.

Although the movement of people around China was controlled, emigration to the cities, had continued especially by cadres from rural areas, who formed the new middle-class under socialism. Many of the New Wave writers are actually the

children of, or are themselves, the first generation emigrants from rural areas (echoes of the May Fourth writers), and had rural roots. At the same time, some were city youths despatched to the countryside during the Cultural Revolution, who came to know the rural areas which otherwise they would never have.

Li Rui (b.1950) had been sent as a Beijing youth to Shanxi, and his stories, collected together as *Solid Earth* (*Houtou*, 1988)⁴⁹ bring village communities brilliantly to life. As befits the new openness, he occasionally steps into territories that would have been taboo in socialist literature, such as sexual obsessions, including incest. He tells of villagers in the depth of the mountains, of strange happenings, revealing what little difference the socialist government has made in the real beliefs of such people. In 'Joint Burial' (*Hefen*, 1986) the story is told from the view of an elderly childless village couple, who had taken under their wing one of the girls sent down to the countryside during the Cultural Revolution fourteen years ago. She was drowned when the young tried to imitate what they had seen depicted in films of young revolutionaries holding back flood water through their faith in Communism, purely by linking hands against the flood water. The drowning incident itself is vividly told as a strange event. For years the old lady felt unhappy about her lone grave and the single state of the dead girl. Now that old practices were tolerated, she found the remains of a young man who had died at about the same age, and with the help of the villagers and her husband, a former local Party Secretary, they re-buried the dead girl in a joint grave with that of the young man in a ghost marriage.

Far from the hostile attitude expressed by the May Fourth writers against local religion, Li Rui has come a long way and shows tolerance and respect for the country people with their traditional practices that had once held the local community together. He implies for all its primitiveness that the countryside had roots that the city had forgotten. The collective amnesia that Mao had sought to impose on the Chinese provoked after his death a hunger for roots, and the so-called 'root-seeking' (*xungen*) literature of the eighties was preoccupied by the Chinese countryside.⁵⁰

Zheng Wanlong, one of the 'Root-seeking' writers,⁵¹ had been brought up in Beijing and spent the first years of his literary life writing about fashionable subjects such as the contemporary city youth. He then broke out and wrote about his native place of Heilongjiang, in 'Strange Tales from a Strange Land' (*Yixiang Yiwen*, 1984–5).⁵² It is full of eccentric characters in weird situations, and is pitted against the hostile forces of nature. New influence from abroad came to stimulate the exploration of the countryside. Some critics have said that the example of Gabriel García Márquez, or the Russian Village Prose movement,⁵³ had considerable influence on the Chinese. As in Márquez' acceptance of the strange, the sense of mystery of local religions and religiosity had brought a new dimension to the hitherto enforced rationality of socialist fiction. Their form was modernist and surrealist, such as the story by Han Shaogong (b.1953) about a village idiot, 'Ba, ba, ba'.⁵⁴ These authors were not necessarily interested in an identifiable place, their main preoccupation was to explore the 'culture' of the rural areas, in which they believed the roots of Chinese culture still lay. They were also fascinated by the minority people who retained their pre-modern life-style, especially those leading a

pastoral life, pitching themselves against natural elements, rather than against other people in bureaucratic Chinese society that had so emasculated the individual. While *xiangtu wenxue* offered a picture of the countryside in realistic and identifiable terms, the 'roots seeking' fiction was symbolic and conceptualized about the countryside and it offers us a parallel with the fiction during the May Fourth: Shen Congwen's West Hunan was an antecedent to the present-day *xiangtu*, while the Luzhen and Weizhuang ('No village') in the satires of Lu Xun presaged the nightmarish countryside in 'root seeking' writings such as '*Ba, ba, ba*'.

These writings were part of a much broader development of contemporary literature, and are in parallel with Taiwan about a decade earlier. As Chinese society increased its opportunities with economic reforms, the world of fiction became more pluralistic. Writers were losing their pre-eminent positions as leaders of society, where the centrist culture had placed them as a hangover from the literature-based imperial civil service examination, and where Mao had obliged them to stay shackled by his talk at the Yen'an Forum on Arts and Literature. Their prestige was disappearing, and their work was read less. But in losing that position, they also lost the burden of that role, bringing to fruition what Liu Xinwu had hoped for earlier in the eighties, that literature would become ornaments to society, just like fountains in public parks.⁵⁵ With the erosion of this important aspect of centrist view of literature, regionalism as a subject has been genuinely undergoing a resurgence. The gradual divesting of the social responsibility of fiction has meant a greater emphasis upon its art, and its content as artistic creations, and its sense of individual identity, whether of person or locality, as regional literature in the West has been doing and growing from strength to strength. These stories carry with them a genuine interest in the activities of local communities, and inspire a similar interest in the reader.

CONCLUSION

Modern Chinese fiction since its creation by the May Fourth writers has been a centrist activity, as much by intention as by virtue of the medium in which it is written in, the *baihua*. When the centre dominates, through the preoccupations of those who are setting either the cultural or political agenda of the nation, such works of fiction will tend to express a hostile or stereotype view of the life of the regions, in order to promote the aims of the centre. But in a more pluralist society, especially in the political arena, regionalism will rise, whether as political, social or cultural forces, and literature will reflect that trend.

Regional literature remains marginal unless the centre adopts it; fiction with entirely local appeal or in local dialect tends to be marginal, and will only result in local consumption. The very act of writing fiction for publication in Modern Chinese (*baihua*) presumes some identification with the centre. Depiction of local identity took place against the backdrop of a much bigger Chinese identity: when criticism of the countryside was expressed, an implicit reproach against the centre for its failure to improve the lot of the peasantry. In the country/city divide that has been a main preoccupation of Modern Chinese fiction. Perhaps Lu Xun had got it right

in the first place, emigré emotions play a large part, and the Chinese for the last century have been emigrants in large numbers: internal emigrants, overseas emigrants, and spiritual emigrants. Emigration from the countryside to the urban centres has been the experience of the upwardly mobile since the last century. Emigrants, unlike tourists, find that not only do their journeys change them, but that the place they have come from will have also changed in the meantime.

The experience of Taiwan does not buck the trend; as a peripheral region its relationship with the centre was bound to be more awkward, whether the centrism was on the motherland that they were deprived of under the Japanese occupation, or once returned to Chinese sovereignty, a centrism that had no credibility. Taiwan *xiangtu wenxue* asserted local identity more loudly than any other region by force of its political situation, and as the political agenda ebbed away, it settles into conveying the sense of local identity that Taiwan's recent history has given it.

The new *xiangtu wenxue* from China retains the divide between the cities and the country, the elite and the plain folk, as the May Fourth fiction had already presented, but the attitude from the centre shows a marked sea change. The cities under Communism had not flourished, and even if they were superior in their standard of living to the countryside, they had not offered a panacea to the ills of China, contrary to the vision of the May Fourth writers. There is more respect for rural communities among intellectuals, especially among those who had been sent down to the countryside, and the violence engendered by the Cultural Revolution made city dwellers insecure. The trauma of the Cultural Revolution caused people to question Chinese culture in a way that had never been done before, and the act of self-examination (*fanxing*) brought many back to the roots of Chinese society in the countryside.

NOTES

1. Joseph Levenson (1967: 282).
2. Leo On-fan (1990: 121–122).
3. Myron Cohen (1991: 113–134).
4. Myron Cohen (1991: 121).
5. 'One's own garden' (*ziji de yuandi*) (First published 1923 rep. 1987: 117–8).
6. R.D. Draper (1989: 4).
7. Robin Gilmour (1989: 51–60).
8. One may also note the use of the term 'earth' (*tu*) as meaning both local and Chinese, and often used in the pejorative sense of 'inferior' or 'countrified'. *Xiangtu* on the other hand stresses the 'nativeness' without the pejorative sense.
9. David Faure (1989: 202).
10. A return journey there in the 1934 saw a different picture, and although his *Discursive Notes on a Trip through Hunan* (Shanghai, Shangwu, 1936) does not give the full picture of his disillusion, yet nevertheless his rural idyll had been destroyed.
11. A concept bitterly ridiculed by Lao She in his short story *Liujia Dayuan* (The Big House of the Lius, 1985: 83–93), who felt that it was these ideas that disenfranchised the ordinary population, and gave carte blanche to swindlers and charlatans, who took advantage of ignorance and awe of modern advances on the part of the general public.

12. F.W. Mote (1977: 102).
13. Hu Shi (1926).
14. *Xinwenxue Daxi*, vol. 2, ed. Zhao Jiabi (1963: 9).
15. Here Lu Xun quotes one of his favourite critics from the West, Georg Morrison Cohen Brandes (1842–1927), a Danish Jew by birth, who lived his life in Berlin, and was accounted by many to the greatest literary critic since Taine. He published a six volume work between 1901 and 1905 (translated by D. White, London) called *Main Currents in 19th Century Literature*. The first volume called ‘Emigrant Literature’ was about the beginnings of the Romantic Movement, which Brandes saw in the diaspora of exiles from the Reign of Terror and the Empire in France. Lu Xun must have been attracted by the term ‘Emigrant literature’, for his apparent aim in mentioning Brandes is to borrow that term, though not to use it in the way that Brandes did, but rather to apply it to the Chinese version as *xiangtu wenxue*.
16. Lu Xun (1981: 476–486).
17. Lu Xun vol. 1 (1981: 434–39).
18. Lu Xun vol. 1 (1981: 440–49).
19. Lu Xun vol. 1 (1981: 450–457).
20. Lu Xun vol. 2 (1981: 5–23).
21. Zhou Zuoren (1967).
22. Zhou Jianren (1988).
23. William A. Lyell (1976: 144–263).
24. Helen Siu (1990: 24).
25. In *Xin Wenxue Daxi*, Zhao Jiabi (1963: 265–267).
26. *Yusi* 14 (1925, 2).
27. See Kinkley (1987:194–202) a long running controversy from 1934 when Shen complained that literature was controlled by the Shanghai types, picking up on the connotations of gimmickry in Shanghai interpretations of Beijing Opera, though Shen was referring to contemporary leftist writers who lived in Shanghai. See also Yang Yi, vol. 2, (1988: 586–604).
28. Yan Jiayan (1986).
29. His autobiography *Congwen Zizhuan* (Diyi Chubanshe, Shanghai 1934), was written after he had attained literary success.
30. Kinkley (1987: 65).
31. Shen Congwen (1983: 220–35).
32. *Under the Red Banner* (1979) was his posthumously published autobiography, which was like Shen’s autobiography written after he had achieved literary fame.
33. Raymond Chapman (1990: 112–124).
34. Lin Hai-yin (1960).
35. Pai Hien-yung (1983) .
36. Martin and Kinkley (1992: 181–5).
37. *Xiandai wenxue* 30, (1966,12), also Pai Hsien-yung (1983: 163–184).
38. Lin Jui-min (1993:344–348). Lai Ho was accepted as a speaker of Minnan dialect, but he was actually of Hakka origin and like most Hakkas on Taiwan, spoke the Minnan dialect as well.
39. Known as the *Er-er-ba* Incident, open discussion of which only became possible after the lifting of martial law in 1987.
40. Chang (1993).
41. Chen Ying-chen (1991: 129–30).
42. First published in 1967 in *Wenxue Jikan* 4. Also Huang, vol. 1 (1985: 121–148).
43. Joseph S.M. Lau (1976: 74).

44. Written between 1977–79 (Yuan-ching, Taipei).
45. Hao Ran (1972).
46. First published by Taihang Xinhua Shudian, Shanxi, 1943.
47. Preface to Zhao (1958: 1–3).
48. Ed Meng Xinlu et. al. (1984).
49. Li Rui (1989).
50. After an article by Han Shaogong, ‘The roots of literature’ in *Zuojia* (1984, 4).
51. Kam Louie (1992: 1119–1135).
52. First published in *Shanghai Wenxue* 1984, 5 and *Beijing Wenxue*, 1985, 9 and 12.
53. Under Stalin, the peasants had had a very raw deal, but after Brezhnev, a new literature arose which sought to re-discover the rural world. Most Russians always have had an enormous yearning for the countryside, going there from the towns, keeping dachas, and enthusing about nature. This new movement was more, for it tried to explore a primitive, even atavistic world that few really knew about, not only rural society living close to the soil but also its spiritual and religious experiences, such as shamanism. The movement in Russia featured all these aspects, in particular the fear of losing oneself, and losing one’s nature through forgetting one’s real self. See David C. Gillespie (1986).
54. First published in *Renmin Wenxue* (1985, 6).
55. In ‘Reform, opening up to the world and the growth of literary creativity’, *Renmin Wenxue* (1988, 5:103–7).

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10 ■ Local Religion and Village Identity

Stephan Feuchtwang

In Chinese rural settlements, the most prominent buildings are likely to be factories, local government offices, and schools. These buildings and the new houses, which most families even in poor regions have been so busy building in the last decade, are the physical features of local distinction, pride, power and rivalry. Before Communist government, the most prominent buildings in a village or a vicinity of villages would have been a school, a temple, an ancestral hall, or the houses of the most prestigious and wealthy local families. The distinctions achieved through each would have been the source of pride and mutual identification or disaffection for the various status groups and categories of the village residents. In many villages temples and halls have been built again, adding to the new features of prominence, revivals or senses of an older historical tradition. Local identities are being made and re-made before our eyes, whether as revival or as innovation, whether by agricultural or by commercial and industrial wealth.¹

The least selective and most communal sense of a common village or wider identity would have been performed in lantern and other similar festivals, with opera and procession. They would have been the high points of the year or possibly of a period of several years, as well as representing a place and its residents' identification with it. That place would have been a village or a vicinity of villages, but it would also have been that village or those villages in a wider area centred on one or more locally famous temples, out in the countryside, in a nearby village or within the local market town.

The way a village or vicinity celebrated its communal festival, the groups of musicians and other procession arts it contributed, the name of its most local deities, shared with some but not other places, and several other ways by which such communal days were celebrated, would have linked as well as marked off localities from each other. I want to look at changes in this, smallest sense of local identity.

There are of course more intimate senses of identity and mutual identification: by immediate neighbourhood and the selection of some of these neighbours for close reciprocal aid; by family name; by peer-group friendships based on shared childhood, school, apprenticeship, work or armed service. These are identities made in social networks governed by senses of reciprocity (*ren qing*), warmth (*gan-qing*), or filial duty (*xiao*). Reputations for social honour (*lian* or *mianzi*) are made and

unmade by these rules for identifying someone and his or her family (He Ruifu, 1993). Festivals are occasions for hospitality and for making and displaying public donations, and so are party to these more intimate senses of mutual identification.

I want to present some case studies of villages for whom communal festivals and temples had been the focus for various kinds of association and ask what has happened to whatever were the forms of local identity manifested in them before Communist government and in particular before the twenty-five or more years of collectivization when they and their means of representation were thoroughly dismantled and replaced with teams, brigades and communes (these studies should at least add to the corpus of comparative studies started so admirably by Helen Siu 1989, 1990).

The differences between the villages I shall describe could also be construed as their distinctive identities. Certainly I want to demonstrate how different the histories and cultures of localities in China can be. But they are only differences between local cultures in China. They are not identifications, unless villagers were to meet and use the differences to distinguish themselves from each other. In the cases which I shall present they did not, even when that was practically possible. So the differences are those of local culture identified only by the far-off observer.

That observer could be an academic or a policy-maker with an eye to the history and unity of a China in which many local cultures exist, discerning in them all versions of one common identity. Conversely the local might through such a reflection be made known to other localities, and their differences be reflected and recognized through such a unifying point of vision. Even if the point is forever vanishing and changing in perspective, according to the time and context in which it is offered, now it is that of a nation-state called China. What I offer here inevitably collaborates in the same unifying possibility. Perhaps therefore I should, but I cannot be conscientiously critical of such a perspective. Instead I offer only these remarks. Other chapters in this collection make the important point that local identities are also always greater identifications, in these cases with being a Chinese at least culturally and usually politically. It remains open to question that there must be some common sense of what are the minimum requirements of such a greater identification. When there is such a common sense does it denote a set of norms of conduct which can be specified? Do all self-identified Chinese share the same idea of what is the minimum requirement of being Chinese? One thing at least is true: that there is a political entity with a centralized government called China and that it claims to be and serves as the focal point for claims and counter-claims to being truly representative of 'China'.

I shall introduce three village and township cultures as cultures. All I mean by 'culture' in this context is representation by which residents can feel that they are part of a place. In each case I shall ask how local culture has changed — comparing pre-collectivization with the current, post-Commune situations. All of them were studied by Chinese colleagues in a project which I designed and supervised.²

An obvious point to be pursued in these studies is that the answer to what has happened to earlier forms of local identity is closely bound up with the nature and operation of village government, and in particular how it has changed from the late dynastic and Republican *bao* to brigade and to village. I shall not, however, go into any detail about the operation and functions of village governments, but will indicate

in broader outline the great differences which are now to be found among village governments, what powers they have and what they can provide to villagers. Village governments differ greatly in the zeal with which they implement higher-level policies. But the most important differences among village governments are in their economic powers of management and control. These include their use of government authority to collect levies and to claim and distribute more central funds. But more important than these is their involvement or lack of involvement in the development and continuing control of enterprises. Upon this, more than on anything else, depend whether and what utilities and social insurance services village governments collectively provide their residents (for a similar point see Nee and Su 90: 22).

It is these differences as well as the differences among pre-Communist local traditions which account for the current differences of local history and culture which I shall sketch.

All three villages are administrative villages. They include sub-units, which are distinguished by name and which could be called natural villages, or hamlets or neighbourhoods. The unit and name of the governed entity have in each case changed a great deal in this century. The question I am asking is whether and why some pre-Liberation communal festivals, identifying the villages as they were then, and which are now combined into an administrative unit, have been revived.

Another point to establish before we come to the village studies themselves is that I am presenting facts as they appeared in 1991–1992. The date is an arbitrary slice into an ongoing process. The process of reviving or re-inventing local festivals continues. There is no necessary end-point of completion. Comparison with what records and memories can tell us existed earlier this century, shows either what has taken longer to be revived into practice, or what has been changed in the revival, and what is completely new. It does not show what will or will not be revived.

SOUTHERN FUJIAN

The most inclusive communal rites are territorial. Territorial rites and cults were part of popular religious life everywhere in China (Feuchtwang, 1992). But more than anywhere else in China, territorial cults, their temples and festivals were and are again an elaborate feature of the social life of southern Fujian. So as a benchmark for contrast and comparison I will start with a ceremony in a village called Meifa near the capital of Anxi, an inland county of southern Fujian.

Excepting the attachment of a small village of another surname, Meifa is a single-lineage village, as identified before 1949 by its ancestral hall and its local territorial cult and temple. Sub-lineage settlements are in some cases cut across by 'teams' but they have not been amalgamated. They are still identifiable settlements.

Village government in Fujian and Guangdong enjoys a greater licence than do other local governments in interpreting a central government encouragement to nurture local culture. These pre-eminently emigrant provinces have a strategic importance for attracting a greater Chinese diaspora to re-attach itself to the homeland, through the graves, temples and halls of ancestors. So cadres are closely bound up with the revival of local tradition and the promotion of economic enterprise

at the same time. Both the village temple and more recently the ancestral hall of all but one of its settlements have been rebuilt with much cadre involvement. Most cadres and ex-cadres in some degree look to local history and tradition for their authority as well as to the official discourse of government. Since de-collectivization, they retain considerable economic powers through links with higher levels of state and their investment in enterprises, and through the disposal, including sale, of land. But these powers do not include those of collective management of enterprises. Rather they are powers of encouraging, sponsoring, and benefiting from private investment, if possible from overseas Chinese compatriots.

We asked householders in our surveys whether they were proud of their village, and to give us reasons.³ In Meifa, most said they were. But not one of the answers, whether positive or negative, identified the village with its government. In answers to other questions, village government was identified with more central government — for instance in not providing relief to the needy, in demanding too much tax, or controlling fertility too strictly, or, more positively, in promoting a good economic policy. But the village as an object of pride was associated with its climate, its convenient closeness to the county capital (for wage employment and transport services) and, in a frequently repeated answer, with the acquisition of wealth. This was also a cause for disaffection. The poor said they were not proud and that only those with money can feel proud of the village.

In official discourse, team (or small group) leadership and village government are distinguished from state administration by the term ‘collective’ (*jiti* or *gongyi*), implying a sense of mutual responsibility among those who come within it. From their answers, it appears that if they made this distinction in verbal usage, Meifa villagers did not use it to attach themselves to the village government as more their own than central government. Logically, they might have attached themselves to the broader state through the village as beneficiaries or victims of a political centre which determines personal destinies. They may have felt this during collectivization. Now, most respondents felt they had to fend for themselves, and many liked the opportunity to do so. The benefits and costs of paths, electricity, land management, and enterprises with which they were involved through village government came in their perception through a distant agency. In contrast, they contributed liberally to and directly enjoyed the building and festivals of village temples.

In Meifa as elsewhere in southern Fujian, local festivals are a major expenditure in which villages choose to show themselves off. The village leadership gains some of its authority from participation in them, and they — temples, festivals, and the local leadership — are closely associated with finding investments and the making of wealth. Wealth in the form of patronage was also displayed, and social connections were made and consolidated at communal festivals before 1949.

Before the land reform of 1950, one of the biggest festivals involving the whole village took place in the eleventh lunar month on a divine day. On that day one of the neighbourhoods or, as they are called in southern Fujian, ‘corners’ (*jiaotou*) which constitute the village was host for a village-wide ‘viewing of lanterns’ (*guan deng*). Every household kept a pair of lanterns. For this festival, an egg and a paper figure for each member of the household were prepared and carried with the lanterns to the host corner. The host corner provided offerings of eight pigs, as well as large

amounts of golden spirit money, which were presented first to the gods of heaven, and then to the god of the village temple. The villagers and their lanterns were directly involved only in a third rite, late in the evening: the invitation and feeding of ghosts and their guardians. First they took their lanterns to the nearby riverside, inviting ghosts to attend. Then the ghosts, lit along the paths by the flickering pairs of red lanterns, were led back to the open space where the previous offerings had been presented. There, one of the Daoists (*fashi*) who had performed the previous rites was joined by a spirit medium. The Daoist read out a list of the territorial gods of different places in the surroundings beyond Meifa, guardians of their ghosts. Each household then presented a bundle of spirit money. The spirit medium named one of the gods, and the money was then despatched to that god by fire.

The rite ended with the presentation of the paper figures. The old cadre explained that these were substitute bodies (*ti shen*) of the bad side (*huai*) of a person, the source of wrong conduct and illness. The Daoist led the villagers round and round a bench standing in the open space. When he stopped, he instructed the villagers, their heads spinning, to burn their substitute bodies. Leaving the ashes, they then carried their lanterns home and ate their eggs.

Thus in the one ceremony, the village, its sub-divisions, its households and each member were identified and involved in the pacification of malign influences from within themselves and from the surrounding places, which are also the places with which Meifa marriages were arranged.

The usual China-wide month for the pacification and salvation of ghosts is the seventh. In Meifa too, seventh month offerings were made. But the eleventh month lantern festival was its own, additional village tradition.

There was another annual festival, for the village territorial cult on the fifteenth of the first month, when the lanterns were again paraded down every path in the village. Both lantern festivals were partially financed from the rent of temple lands. When these were redistributed in land reform, they had to depend entirely on household subscriptions, a ritual tax which had itself been taxed under the Guomindang's *baojia* system. The Eleventh month lantern and paper figure festival ceased after land reform, and the other lantern festival some years later. Seventh month offerings to ancestors and ghosts, depending entirely on domestic activity, and the First month lantern festival depending on ritual tax were revived in the mid-eighties.

The Eleventh month lantern festival for the whole village has not so far been revived. But in 1992 two viewings of lanterns were held in Meifa. One was to inaugurate the rebuilt ancestral hall. This was equivalent to the lantern festival in the First month, for the territorial cult, uniting the whole village except for the added settlement of another surname. The second was part of the rites for the opening of a new temple in honour of the territorial guardian of one of the corners within the old Meifa. Only the households of that corner took part, and instead of just their representatives, every household in the corner offered a pig. The village head, who lived in this 'corner' of Meifa, was in charge of keeping order. He calmed the intense rivalry among households for precedence in making their offerings, by using his authority to summon each from a list he had prepared. Each pair of lanterns was handed to the Daoists and carried through dancing steps of presentation.

All but the two most senior Party cadres of the Meifa government attended as guests, and so did representatives of many of the ordinary households of the settlements of Meifa.⁴ Thus was set in train what could become a rivalry among the settlements of Meifa to show the munificence of their offerings to their own territorial guardians. Every corner has its own territorial guardian god, in addition to the god for the whole village, but until 1992 they had not had their own temples.

In sum, a system of careful ritual representation and identification in nested territorial subdivisions has been revived, but with a new emphasis on the subdivisions of the village.

SOUTHERN JIANGSU

Jinxing, like Meifa, is very close to the local town, in this case the capital of Zhenze township, in Wujiang *xian*, Suzhou prefecture, one of the most industrialized rural areas in China.

Jinxing is an administrative village made of three natural villages which were divided into thirteen natural hamlets altogether. Though their pre-Liberation names are still remembered by older people, they are now more often referred to by their number — First, Second, Third ‘group’ (formerly ‘team’) — since that is how they have been known since collectivization for more than thirty years.

Before Liberation, each hamlet, the local term for which is *cunfang* (village branch), was dominated by one or two surnames. Often but not always each surname was identified by a nameable ancestor and referred to as a *menfang* (gate-branch). ‘The people of one *menfang* were called *zimenzhong* (self-gate species)’, according to Z, aged 64, a retired township cadre. ‘People of the same *menfang* were obliged to help each other. A wealthy household was particularly expected to help fellow *menfang* members.’

Tenth month demon festivals (*gui jie*) in the county and four city god temples in the township are mentioned in the printed records of the county. But our informants mentioned none of them. The festivals may have ceased before they could themselves have experienced them as children or as stories of them told by their parents. But they did remember nearer and more rurally based cults.

An old woman spoke of a temple in a village near Jinxing which housed a number of gods, including a thousand-arm Guanyin. This might well have been the temple in Shuangyang, the neighbouring township, mentioned by another informant, to which wealthy families pledged opera performances for favours of healing, posterity and prosperity. Retired cadre Z remembers having gone there for three days in 1946 to watch opera.

This level of festivity represents the social links among villages in a vicinity in which marriages and the consequent reciprocal exchanges and visits would have been arranged. But the core of such a vicinity would have been the villages which now make up Jinxing.

According to Z and another retired cadre, there were temples in each of the three villages which now constitute Jinxing. Two of them were for cults attended by women vegetarians for the chanting of Buddhist scriptures. A third was for a

god whose festival was a feast held in the temple, exclusively for the wealthy and prestigious villagers.

Apart from these, there was a more open festival based on a temple in the village which became the centre of Jinxing administrative village. It was called a 'green seedling assembly' (*qingmiao hui*). The main image from the temple, accompanied by musicians, was taken in procession around the village ('*cunfang*' was the word used by our informant, but by the description it appears to have involved the whole village of Shengli, not just the hamlet in which the temple stood). The statue was then placed on a stage in the fields. All the villagers feasted and after they had eaten, the statue was accompanied back to the temple. When the harvest was bad, there was no *qingmiao hui*.

According to another source, one of the temples in Jinxing housed a statue that was taken to a makeshift stage, not at harvest but earlier, by the new paddy fields after transplanting rice shoots, for an assembly to invite the rice to grow (and also called *qingmiao hui*). Statues from the temple were paraded through the village streets.

These memories indicate separate festivals for the protection of crops in at least two of the three villages which make up present-day Jinxing.

Mutual support of various kinds, organized on the various bases of agnatic kinship, locality, and craft were focused on other temples and their festivals. It appears that a good deal of social association beyond family in Jinxing had a ritual focus. But none of that focus has been revived. For a few years after Liberation, at the time of *qingmiao hui* some hamlets would feast and shout, as our informant put it, but without theatre or procession. Now there is not even feasting and shouting. Despite the memory being there for realization, there are nevertheless no statues, no revival of communal festivals in Jinxing or any other village in the region. Within domestic doors, offerings are presented to ancestors at New Year. In Jinxing people also make dumplings (*huntun*) in the Seventh month to offer to ancestors with incense and spirit money. It is said that ancestors whose descendants have wrapped dumplings for them will not have their ears cut off by the King of Hell. There is a strong hint here of a rite to exorcise demons, which might formerly have been a more openly held territorial cleansing. But none of the rich pre-Liberation communal rituals and their temples have been restored.

'Every household is busy with its own business' commented Z. after comparing the present with the former multiplicity of associations and neighbourhood loyalties. But there is another collective identification. Village government, as a collective tied to a state hierarchy and its service is now the main focus of dependent attention, in addition to the household and its family line.

For a secure future, respondents in Jinxing, unlike those in Meifa, placed reliance not only on their children but also on hopes that there would be increasing medical and labour insurance and pension schemes for old age. Formerly, when such schemes were not available, anxieties about accidents, illness and care in old age would have been expressed in divination, and help would have been available only through neighbourhood, informal associations and kin groupings. In Jinxing their availability is now by means of village and township government.

Southern Jiangsu prides itself on its model of enterprise development, as well

as on its achievements of rural industrialization. The model is one in which village and township governments retain a strong managerial function.

Village welfare is to a large extent funded from the profits of village enterprises, the rest is from fees. Jinxing villagers' welfare includes running water, electricity and gas. The township medical insurance scheme covers medical expenses in the village, but not outside. The township also maintains an old people's home in the village.

Whether their funding comes from enterprise profits or from households' fees, most public facilities are provided through the village and township governments. This is also true in Meifa, if you discount temples and festivals. But Jinxing has many more public facilities, including budding schemes of social insurance, and the village government is much more involved in the management of village enterprises.

Fast industrialization has built on the collective foundation of the brigade since 1981 and created a substantial entity, in what had been a rather arbitrarily constructive 'collective' in 1956. Jinxing as an administrative form has become itself. The identities of its three constituent villages and thirteen sub-villages are now less substantial; they are sub-identities. Most households have a member working in the new village enterprises, and some in the town. The village enterprises are still to a great extent collectively managed by what was the brigade. The most influential residents are those who manage the enterprises and those who do their marketing and purchasing. Their networks go well beyond the township. Jinxing is increasingly identified in its economic relations and consumer habits with the local town, and much further afield, through the supply and marketing activities of its residents. Its own identity is bound to the factory which is now the most prominent building in the village, if not the most beautiful, as well as with the grand new houses of its residents.

How did Jinxing respondents answer about pride in their village? Eighty-six percent of the Jinxing sample said they were proud, but the interest in the answers lies more in the reasons they gave.

Those who were not proud, were mainly indifferent to the village rather than negative. They acquired no benefit from employment in its factories nor gained much from its facilities. The head of one of the two poorest households in the sample felt no pride because 'the life of our family is difficult and we have nothing to be proud of'. The household could not be proud of itself, and so it could not be proud of the village. This is similar to the answers in Meifa, though here it is the only one. The head of the only other equally poor household among our respondents in Jinxing expressed pride in the village out of gratitude: he had gone into debt, to banks and the village government, to invest in a chicken farm which had failed. He was demoralized but grateful to the village for not insisting on repayment and for easing his burden of taxes and levies. The head of the third poorest household said: 'My family is poor, but this village is good. There are gas, running water, and electricity. My family do not use gas because we have to pay for it [and cannot afford to]. But water and electricity are very convenient.'

Those who expressed pride gave a number of reasons. One was pride in the village's reputation as a village which had achieved recognition in the *xian* for its fast-rising prosperity. 'Many years ago this village was among the most backward

in the township, people's life was hard. These last few years, collective welfare has been good and the village has become well known. Being a member of the village my face shines (*lianshang wu guang*).’ Another reason, mentioned in the quoted response, is the extent or quality of the village's facilities, such as its electricity, water and gas. A third is the success of the village's factories. A fourth, linked to all the others, is pride in the village leaders.

Here is now, as before collectivization, a great deal for which households must find their own resources, for the care of the aged and the injured or ill, for the marriage and housing of children, for loans and introductions. Social networks of kinship and friendship are active as never before, in Jinxing as in Meifa. The principle manifestation of private wealth has been housebuilding, the two and three-storey houses of which villagers are self-consciously proud, not as a joint collective project but as the collective result of keeping up with their neighbours (Feuchtwang, forthcoming).

On the other hand, investment in public facilities and social security, formerly undertaken by lineage, by other associations and by patronage, often focused on temples and their festivals, are now the responsibility of a centrally recognized administrative leadership, in Meifa as well as in Jinxing. But in Jinxing ‘village pride’ meant pride in an historically recent entity, which had started as a brigade and which remained significant as an entity because of the substantial economic powers of its leadership. Elsewhere in China, such as Meifa, there may well have been substantial non-agricultural developments, but without the controls and the responsibilities for local welfare being retained by brigade, now ‘village’ leaders. In such areas, it would seem, other forms of authority than those of centrally recognized governmentality, forms including those of genealogical and historical tradition, ancestors and temple cults possibly with newly invented grafts onto them, will have been invoked to establish local identity and its patronage of new wealth.⁵

NORTHERN YUNNAN

I come now to the third case study, in a cut-off mountainous region of northern Yunnan. Like Meifa and Jinxing, Cuihu village is near a town, but it is simply a market town and transport from there to more central places is very much more time-and effort-consuming than it is for the residents of Meifa and Jinxing. It should be a test of my hypothesis that pre-Liberation forms of organization and authority would be used where village organization is not strong or economically important. There is no collective enterprise in the township. Increased wealth has come with the opportunities for sale of agricultural produce and for sidelines including contract labour in the off-season. Very little has come from full time and year-round wage or service employment.

Cuihu village is in a large rice-growing basin, the Three-River Basin, whose people are proud of feeding themselves well. An ordinary household may eat meat two or three times a week. Every household sells some of its produce and buys some of its food (e.g. about a fifth of its meat), but something close to self-sufficiency in food is very important to them.

Even so, as everywhere in China, village administration is more substantial than was the *bao*, which relied on the patronage of local landlords and voluntary organizations for most things. As one old man commented, before there was the law of the family (*jia fa*), now there is the law of the state (*guojia fa*). It manages the irrigation and track systems built during collectivization. It provides or channels state funds for households in hardship and for relief to old people without family support, though their daily care is contracted out to neighbours. More negatively, it does, in the end, have to support state cadres from the township when they impose the planting of tobacco as a cash crop. But, unlike Jinxing, the brigade level, far from having been strengthened has been considerably weakened and there is no water supply, let alone gas, to each house for which to be thankful. Medical clinics are entirely private and there is no subsidy to their clients. School teachers who do not receive state salaries are paid not from village funds but directly from the school fees paid by the parents of their pupils.

Most respondents said they were proud of their village, like those of Meifa and Jinxing. But the reasons they gave were because they could eat well, that this was their home village, and that the mountains are beautiful and the waters plentiful and clear.

In Cuihu's village government much of the work has been delegated to the leaders of the natural settlements, formerly teams. Villagers frequently complained about the levies raised for the salaries of village accountant, women's (family planning) leader, and team leaders, and fees to crop-watchers and supervisors of irrigation and settlement of water disputes. When some were asked how they thought tracks, paths, canals, channels, electricity and other public facilities, whose condition had deteriorated since collectivization, should be maintained they said that was not their business and it should be done by the state. What was 'collective' (*gongyi*) and understood to be a locally shared responsibility is now assumed to be the responsibility of the more remote 'government' (*zhengfu*).

So, if village government is not a strong focus for identification, were there other ways of identifying and being identified with the village, vicinity or township, as in Meifa?

There certainly was a sense of Three-River Basin identity. Many of the natural settlements in the basin still have names suffixed *guan* after a family name. *Guan* is the Ming administrative term for a small garrison and refers to the time when troops from Hunan were sent to put down Muslim rebellions in the fourteenth century. The Hunan origin of the basin residents is noticeable in an accent distinct from the Han residents of other places in the prefecture and in diet — a stupendous (for an outsider) use of chillies.

It is said that many of the Hunan soldiers, when ordered to fetch their families from Hunan and settle where they were garrisoned, in fact started families by capturing local Yi women for wives. This was understood by our informant to account for the low status in which women were formerly held and why women still do not eat at table but in the kitchen. Behind this interpretation of what is in fact an exclusion of women from table throughout China, there is of course a view of the Yi people as inferior. But the view has other feelings than simple superiority. The capture and incorporation of Yi women is admitted alongside a recent fear of

being captured by Yi men. A retired teacher remembered his father telling him how before Liberation well armed Yi came down from the mountains on raids to capture people working in the fields. The captives would be sold to other Yi or held for a ransom. The raiders would also come at night to steal domestic animals by drilling holes through the walls of their sheds.

The Yi penetrated Han homes, and the Han of each hamlet in the basin set up watch-towers and militia bands to warn of the danger and defend land and home. Some of the towers were built by landlords to defend their own land, others were financed by village collections instigated by the *bao* but organized by the village elite. The *baojia* system also raised levies for the building of bridges.

Now there are crop-watching militia organized by the village administration and paid from levies on each household. The danger of Yi raids is in the past. The distinction between the mountain-dwellers and the valley-dwellers may in any case have been ethnicized, since both were mixed Han and Yi, if in different proportions. In any case, now other outsiders, far more likely to be Han though from other parts of the basin or from poorer villages in the mountains might be blamed for theft, such as those who come down to the market to sell firewood and buy rice. But the stories of the Yi narrate the past of a continuing differentiation of the basin dwellers as relatively distinct and prosperous, self-reliant farmers.

A mixture of Buddhist and Daoist scriptural traditions informs the popular religion of the Han population, while Catholic and Protestant Christianity have made some inroads to the shamanistic religions of the Bai, Misu, Naxi, Yi and other non-Han nationalities of the region. Incidentally, shamans — called Dongba — are also consulted by Han.

In the Three-River Basin before Liberation, temples would have been the most prominent buildings, but the ones which have been rebuilt are the ones which were near but not in the villages themselves. They are also almost entirely the province of village women, assembling to hear scriptures chanted by nuns and other dedicated women trained by the nuns. The women cook their offerings and fold their spirit money in the temples and eat the feast afterwards as a communal picnic on the spot. The staging of opera, which had marked the main annual festivals at these temples before Liberation, has not been revived.

Local tradition here was not so exquisitely territorial nor as festive as in Meifa. One of the two schools in Cuihu used to be the temple of the largest of its constituent settlements. This is certainly situated within a settlement. But it seems not to have housed the cult of a territorial guardian. It was for local literati and Buddhist-inclined women: its deities were the star guardian of literature (Kui Xing), a female goddess (a *niangniang*) and Qi Lang (Monkey?) according to our only informant on this temple. Incense was burnt in the Eighth month for Confucius.

What must have been the biggest local temple was in Jin'guan, the township capital and the marketing centre of the middle and upper parts of the basin. This temple — the Jiu Long Si — is now the residential quarters of the staff of a vast grain station. Preservation of local culture here simply means that the building is listed for preservation. The Jiu Long Si, or another temple mentioned in the records but no longer standing, which honoured the Three Officials (*Sanguan*), may have housed statues which were taken out at New Year or Seventh or Tenth month

processions, as in Jinxing's county capital. In any case one of the two remaining professional ritual experts, called Gao Gong (literally High Master) in the township regretted that he could no longer perform as he did before Liberation the rites of a General Salvation (*pudu*), which would have been performed as a territorial cleansing, at the inauguration of a temple, at a funeral, and which on his own account occurred every three years in the Seventh Month in each village of the area where he lived with financial support coming from the rents of temple lands. He had been his elder brother's assistant in these rites, and so had not committed the rites to memory as had his brother. The manuscripts for them were destroyed and so when his brother died, the rites for general salvation died with him.

These would have been rites in which men participated, which took place within settlements, and which had a territorial definition. One such rite, not associated with a god, was in fact maintained during the years of collectivized work. Teams used to hold feasts on Duan Wu (the fifth of the Fifth lunar month). But this in turn ceased, when land reverted to households.

Just outside the village is Cuihu's scripture-chanting temple, the Long Hua Si. It used to house a deity known as the ancestral lord (*zujun*), also identified as Yu Huang Shangdi (The Jade Emperor), who was taken in procession on the first year of the sixty-year cycle throughout the local villages. Now it houses only a minor *pusa*. Some people thought of holding the sixty-year festival of procession and theatre when the cycle began again in 1990, but it came to nothing for lack of subscriptions.

Nevertheless, the temple itself had been rebuilt by means of private subscription with some village government help. The village provided some of its timber, and the space in front of the temple had been cleared at village expense. This was not for the staging of opera. It is to be a basketball or team croquet ground for the village Old People's Association — which has an entirely male membership, mainly of retired cadres.

The juxtaposition of old men playing and old women praying repeats a division of labour through which they have lived. Women are usually responsible for the everyday acts of domestic worship and consultation of diviners, here as elsewhere in China. Men would have been prominent outside the house in communal festivals. But what has been revived are women's temple gatherings, not men's communal festivals. To make better sense of this female communal association, we must look further at Jin'guan gender relations. They have a distinctive slant, beyond the usual ritual and domestic divisions of labour.

When something has happened to you and a friend wants to comfort you by saying it could be worse, in Jin'guan what they say is 'It's not as bad as losing your wife.' Asked about this expression a man explained (to my colleague, Ms Guo Xiaolin), 'if you lose your wife you will have no *jia* (home) to return to'. She manages the home, does most of the work of production as well as cleaning and cooking, and she bears and cares for children. Women asked about the domestic division of labour would say that all the work is shared. And it is true that there is no task which the man of the house cannot and has not done. But it is also true that women always do most of the domestic and farm work, and often prefer the men to have work outside the family farm and outside the house. The women are, therefore,

unusually identified by men and women alike with the *jia* — which is the land, the house and its contents as well as its residents and their kin.

Women are indispensable, and fully recognized as such by men. Men have leisure, women never until they are older. They spend some of their spare hours from domestic work at temple meetings with other women. The male side of this description of gender relations includes an association of women with Yi, which I have already mentioned, and of course the fact common throughout China that very few women have become cadres. The power of women, recognized in this superior way, lies, therefore, in the domestic realm. But in addition to the domestic realm women have created for themselves in scripture-reading assemblies their own public realm.

It was a frequent custom before Liberation for an oldest daughter to remain unmarried in her natal home, either on her parents' wishes to be ensured of someone who would look after them, or out of her own choice not to get married. In either case spinsterhood was sanctified by her studying Buddhist scriptures and becoming a *zhai-po*: an abstinent 'aunt'. The scriptures would be taught by nuns, or less often by monks. When the abstinent aunts died, their gravestones would be marked with the title *lienu*, associated more often in other parts of China with virtuous widowhood, not spinsterhood. Other women of virtue, married but abstaining from all or certain meats on the first and the fifteenth of every lunar month, would join them in the temple meetings.

Now, when the temple meetings have been revived, the pre-Liberation young *zhai-po* are the leaders, joined by very many other old and middle-aged and a few young ladies, all of whom are married or will be.

A noteworthy development underlying this selective revival is the increase in the number of domestic units. Since decollectivization, and in the same period during which the temples were rebuilt, almost every family has extended, renewed or built new houses. As in Jinxing, this has not been simply an increase in the number or size of houses. It has also been an increase in separate domestic units, because sons now divide from their parents much sooner than they did before Liberation and during collectivization. They can now afford to, and they do. Parents help sons build, as part of the costs of getting them married. A mother starts buying and saving building materials, doing with less meat and selling the domestic pig, for years before her boy reaches the age of marriage.⁶

Decollectivization and relative wealth have increased the pleasure and pride of the Three-River Basin villagers in being self-sufficiently well fed and well housed. They are rarely dependent on the village government, and there are few collectively provided public facilities. The temples are some of the few, and they are non-governmental. They mark an association among older women of this end of the basin. These women are now simply old women (*lao mama*), not the old aunts (*lao popo*) who dominated the assemblies before Liberation.

A peculiarly *jia*-centred communality has been revived, which has no clear village or other territorial boundaries other than a manifest sense of locality in the Jin'guan section of the Three-River Basin.

JINXING, MEIFA AND CUIHU

In contrasting Jinxing with Meifa I proposed that where village government has few economic powers and its residents have few expectations from it and are thrust upon their own resources, other forms of communal authority would flourish using the cultural resources of pre-Liberation local traditions. On the basis of Meifa I had expected these to include traditions of territorial cults. But Cuihu seems to have abandoned precisely these, while reviving others. I think this shows that I had not take into sufficient account two important and new ingredients of the current situation.

One is that in all three villages, as throughout rural China, the resources upon which households have been thrown are now far greater than they were before Liberation, and that the household itself as an independent unit of economic activity is now far more common and prevalent. Couples divide from their family households sooner than they did, a trend which accelerated during the Communist era, particularly in the late 'seventies (Cohen 1992: 370; Lavelly and Ren 1992: 378). All three villages show us that one selective principle in the revival of pre-Liberation traditions is an emphasis which is probably greater than before Liberation on the display of household wealth, whether it is in the form of pigs, houses or the devotions and feasts of the women in charge of domestic production.

But that is not the end of the matter. Village governments may vary, but everywhere they are stronger in every way — tax collecting, policy implementing, local resource managing — than were pre-Liberation village governments and non-governmental associations and systems of patronage. The selective revival of territorial cults and the political opportunities and penalties they offer raises large questions of micropolitics and local political cultures which I cannot yet answer. What does seem clear from these three case studies is that regional differences in policy implementation have brought about cultural differences. In Fujian and Guangdong, temples, halls and their festivals were revived as elements of local culture to a greater extent than elsewhere. In southern Jiangsu, collective economic management was retained, even though Jiangsu had had as rich a culture of local temples and festivals. But there are great variations within these regional political cultures, which need to be explored. Instead I have to leave you with the foregoing sketch of three very different local traditions and village governments: Meifa with its festivals of households identified in their localities and the close involvement of local cadres; Jinxing with its collective enterprise, infrastructure of utilities, rival splendours of housing and the complete absence of pre-Liberation communal traditions; Cuihu with its festivals of older women, pride in their own agricultural production, and ex-cadres playing team croquet on village-provided grounds.

NOTES

1. 'Village' is a flexible word. In geography, it can be a distinct, nucleated settlement, or a number of such settlements, or the focal point of a scattering of homesteads (Jin and Li, 1992). The important thing for identification is, of course, whether such a settlement has a name, what the history of that name is, how institutions of kinship and territorial

definition have invested it with a history. Walls, watch-towers, temples, and halls have been the foci for such institutions and of course for the ruling activities of local elites. On the other hand, as the smallest of administrative units, rural settlements have been garrisons, units of taxation and surveillance, and units of rural contract and imperial rituals for the teaching of virtue. The definition of administrative unit rarely coincided with the historically identified unit, but it could over time lose its administrative function and become an historically established 'natural' settlement. As units of government which raise their own revenue as well as levying taxes for more central governments, villages are a twentieth-century, Republican novelty.

2. I visited all the villages myself, but did little of the work of investigation. So I am deeply indebted to my Chinese research associates. In the cases I shall present, they are: Shen Guanbao, Lu Feiyun and Lu Yinghao (southern Jiangsu), Guo Xiaolin (northern Yunnan) and Wang Mingming (southern Fujian). I am sincerely grateful to them for their fruitful work, but they are not responsible for the facts as I present them here. I am also grateful to the UK Economic and Social Research Council for the financial support which made our work possible.
3. The question was: *zuowei bencunren, nin juede zhihao ma?* (Being a member of this village, do you feel pride?)
4. The village Party Secretary distanced himself from such proceedings, but he may also have been distanced by birth. He had been adopted into a Meifa family.
5. A question remains on why in southern Jiangsu collective management remained important, but not in southern Fujian. It may be the result of a long history of interaction between government and local elites in southern Jiangsu which has at the same time, from the Ming dynasty onwards, been a region of economically prosperous and extensive commercial relations. Southern Fujian, on the other hand, in the Ming and Qing dynasties after the closing of trade with foreigners and the decline of the city of Quanzhou was more like a frontier region. Emigration to Taiwan and further afield made it even more 'frontier' in the sense of having independent and external sources of economic power. My thanks to Wang Mingming, for starting this train of historical speculation.
6. This tendency to earlier division is found throughout rural China (Cohen 1992: 270; Lavelly and Ren 1992: 378).

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11 Remade in Hong Kong: Weaving Into the Chinese Cultural Tapestry

Helen F. Siu

IMAGES

Visitors to Hong Kong are often intrigued by its kaleidoscope of cultural images.¹ One feels a nostalgic colonial elegance when sipping afternoon tea at the lobby of the Peninsula Hotel. One also enjoys world class performances by Emmanuel Ax, the Bolshoi Ballet, and the like, at the Cultural Centre across the road. Wandering past the expensive boutique shops at the Ocean Terminal, one reaches the French cafes and Southeast Asian buffets at the Marco Polo and Omni Prince Hotels. Turn at the pier at the end of the arcades, if one is not boarding a ferry for China one reaches the mosque standing side by side with the last remaining barracks for the Gurkhar regiments. Two streets further north lead to Temple Street, where the underworld of drugs, gambling bosses and prostitutes mixes with the colourful Cantonese, Shanghainese, Thai, Vietnamese food stalls, Pakistani and Nepalese street hawkers. If one ventures further, one reaches ‘Women Street’ (*nuren jie*), a clothing market providing exclusive styles, colours and sizes for cadres now visiting in tens of thousands from China.²

These multi-cultural images may be natural by-products of present-day Hong Kong, a world metropolis and financial hub. But one might not have been surprised to find parallel images when ‘Hong Kong’ began its existence in the mid-nineteenth century. The history of the rural population that inhabited this undistinguished island broke with its past as Hong Kong began as an outpost for the British Empire. Local fishing and farming villages had never transformed themselves into the world metropolis. Their eventual absorption into urban Hong Kong came only a century later. In a more realistic sense, oil paintings in the mid-nineteenth century depicting merchant ships and Chinese junks illuminated the symbiotic nature of the relationship between the British and the Chinese at the time. From the very start, the Hong Kong experience was an urban commercial happening. The British government took aggressive steps very early on to ensure, on Victoria Island, an infrastructure of property rights and political privileges conducive to such development.³ British traders who established themselves in Hong Kong were originally the same ones trading with the many *hong* (*hang*) in Guangzhou.⁴ Their Chinese partners and those who eventually transplanted themselves in Hong Kong grew prosperous with Western businesses. Their lives, tastes, interests were inseparable from those of

the traditional literati to whom the merchants aspired; but they were also intimately tied to the Western experiences. The interplay of elements East and West in Hong Kong from the late Qing through the Republican decades is well illustrated by a volume of papers which focus on a broad range of aspects of daily life: the rice trade, regional associations, labour movements, the rise and decline of city neighbourhoods, the abolition of the *mui-tsai* system, and the revival of the Hong Kong University.⁵

Today, a walk from the Admiralty up the hill along Garden Road takes one past St Joseph's College and St Pauls' Co-educational College, two prominent missionary schools which have provided elite Western style education to generations of Chinese in Hong Kong. The St John's Cathedral and the government administrative buildings at a street level below the Governor's residence stand solemnly on the right. One eventually reaches the Indian trading companies, the Victoria prison and the Man Mo (*Wenwu*) Temple along Hollywood Road. The walk allows one to wander into history when a racially mixed expatriate community and an equally complicated world of Chinese merchants and migrant labourers have woven into each another to initiate an historical happening we now call Hong Kong.⁶

ISSUES OF IDENTITY

The images beg the question: Is there a 'Hong Kong' cultural identity? If identity arises from affiliation with ways of life and values related to a particular locality, different individuals or groups in the territory clearly have nuanced and minute ways of differentiating among themselves. Ethnic stereotypes abound: the British colonial, the Indian Shylock, the Shanghainese show-off, the Chaozhou coolie gangs, the Cantonese food connoisseur. But until recently it has been difficult to pinpoint a 'Hongkongnese'. It is in fact a 'life and death' matter. Historian Elizabeth Sinn notes that in the Hong Kong cemeteries, one has yet to find a 'Hong Kong *yan*' (*Xianggang ren*). When posterity is involved, one ironically looks back to primordial origins. The cultural reference point is often the imagined native place of the deceased carved in stone, be it China, India, or Britain. Hong Kong remains a transient place where one passes through. Seldom does one identify with it in any characteristic ways or invest much emotional commitment.⁷ In fact, as Susan Naquin once put it, Hong Kong acquires its identity almost by default — as 'what it is not'.⁸

Competing claims of identity do confront Hong Kong residents in larger political turn of events originating beyond the locality, when distinct lines of inclusion and exclusion are drawn by ideological forces which have great impact on individual perceptions. Identity can be tackled at three levels. It has become popular to grapple onto Habermas and to treat identity as a form of public discourse about 'we' and 'they' in relation to collective rights and responsibilities. At a more complex level of experience in everyday social life, blatant political agendas behind claims of identity can easily be neutralized and naturalized. At the individual level, public images and relationships are reworked, improvised to provide meaningful guides for commitment, action, and psychological comfort. In other words, behind the

totalizing cultural images are social relationships which are fluid and multifaceted, encompassing individual choices and ambivalences. As David Faure asserts, the search for a distinctly 'Han' identity through the manipulation of local culture in Lingnan can be a historical development in the Ming and the Qing involving the rise of self-conscious regional literati elites, just as the denial of local culture can be an element of identity among eager May Fourth intellectuals in the nationalist Republic.

Crucial historical junctures which have made Hong Kong culturally porous also pose problems of identity for its residents. The Treaty of Nanjing created a historical space between two sovereign countries. The relationship will end in 1997 with the fortunes of over six million people hanging onto it. A cultural kaleidoscope which has settled into remarkable patterns at every political turn of events, Hong Kong faces yet another crucial moment. Although Hong Kong began as a British outpost, its colonial touch, maintained up to the early 1970s, eroded as quickly as the British impact in the global economy diminished. China has loomed increasingly large over the horizon as a polity, an economic entity, and a cultural-historical experience for many local residents. Through the century, many emigrants from the mainland have settled in the territory. What happens in China creates tensions in the ways these emigrants relate to it. The tensions are based on several factors: the nature and composition of the 'Chinese' population in Hong Kong, the consequent lifestyles and aspirations they pursue, and the ways successive governments in the mainland have used the issue of national identity to claim the commitment of 'Chinese' populations spilling over their political boundaries.

Nevertheless, it is meaningless to refer to 'Chineseness' in static terms. Lingnan, and especially the Pearl River delta where most of the Hong Kong population trace their origin, has been a highly commercialized, affluent, open, and plural society since the early Qing. Although the livelihoods of its population are distant and dangerously fluid by Beijing standards, commercial wealth in the last few centuries have ironically made them most able to 'buy' orthodoxy in the rituals of everyday life and to establish crucial affiliations with the political centre. Therefore it is important to appreciate the symbiotic relationship between an intensely unifying 'cultural identity' and the differentiating 'cultural experiences' which were equally intense.⁹

For successive waves of emigrants from the mainland during the first half of the twentieth century, China has been their centre of attention and source of identity. Many who emigrated to Hong Kong were elites who in one form or another were linked to the Lingnan region. These merchants and the 'surviving' elders (*yilao*) of the Qing and Republican eras were unusually tuned to the world in real life, but their identification with the cultural and the political centre was particularly strong. They were receptive to modern ideas and might successfully blend into the multi-cultural environment of Hong Kong, but their cultural reference points remained in China. This was particularly visible among educators in the first half of the twentieth century as revealed in their numerous works and biographies.¹⁰ Chen Zhibao, a native of Xinhui, promoted schools (including schools for girls) in China, Macau, and Hong Kong. Lu Xiangfu, was equally known for his Chinese-style private

school in Hong Kong, for his compilation of *Chaolian District Gazetteer (Chaolian xiangzhi)* in 1946, and the several revisions of the Lu lineage genealogy to which he belonged.¹¹ According to sociologist Choi Po-king, Hong Kong Chinese schools during the Republican period were institutionally linked to the education departments in Nanjing and Guangzhou. English language schools began to surpass the Chinese ones in number and impact only from the 1950s on.¹²

At the turn of the century, the political and economic boundaries between Hong Kong and the mainland were not distinct. Not only were the self-identities of Hong Kong's residents oriented toward China, the social realities of the two places were intimately linked through a regional network of urban places. Shanghai, Guangzhou and Hong Kong were three nodes in a well traversed nexus of business culture, people and capital. Among numerous other family empires, the Kwoks of Wing On spanned Australia, Hong Kong, Shanghai and Guangzhou; likewise for the Zhang Zhushan family on the trading of Western medicine. Founded in 1933, the Hang Seng Bank thrived on the large volume of money-changing business between China and Hong Kong.¹³ The merchants, together with the literati and the courtesans who lived lavishly off their patronage, shared a fashionable spectrum of conspicuous consumption. The architecture as well as the ethos of the merchant's quarters in Shanghai, Guangzhou, Foshan, Jiangmen, Macau, and Hong Kong displayed common characteristics. There was also the movement of theatrical groups, leading actors, actresses, and famous courtesans serving the same clientele.¹⁴ The Hong Kong experience involved a large regional system. It was part of a prosperous, 'coastal' if not entirely 'treaty-port' cultural complex made in the late Qing and early Republican era.¹⁵

These experiences were relevant to the working people whose livelihoods were attached to the merchants' enterprises and who aspired to the standards and styles of the merchants for social mobility. During fieldwork in the Pearl River delta, I often discover that most of the men sixty and over whom I talk to have spent some time working in Guangzhou or Hong Kong. My conversations with two elderly farmers were particularly revealing. On the seemingly isolated island of Chaolian off the coast of Jiangmen Municipality, they vividly described to me how a fire in the silk warehouse in Japan during the 1920s enabled them to sell their silk cocoons several times the normal market prices in the neighbouring county of Shunde.¹⁶ They were obviously rational in outlook, informed about the affairs of the larger world around them, and resourceful in their economic strategies.

As I have argued in a recent paper, although the political centre in Beijing would like to remind culturally Chinese populations outside the mainland that they owe the motherland patriotic commitment, it is when these resourceful southerners took their Chineseness seriously that regimes in Beijing have been most troubled.¹⁷ Throughout the Ming and Qing dynasties, imperial officials had directly intervened in large-scale local unrests such as the Huang Xiaoyang Uprising and the Yao Wars in the fifteenth century. Yet so often the very imperial manoeuvres were shrewdly used to legitimize local social status and to further political agendas. Furthermore, from the works of Liang Qichao and the manoeuvres of Dr Sun Yat-sen, to the tearful protests in Victoria Park in the wake of June Fourth 1989, southerners have, in the name of China, seriously challenged the Beijing regimes.¹⁸

A CHINA PROBLEM FOR A HONG KONG GENERATION

The latest addition to the list of problematic political landmarks involving 'Chinese identity' is the change of sovereignty in 1997. It is no secret that through the post-war decades the Chinese presence has been increasingly felt in Hong Kong. However, when faced with the issue of sovereignty in the early 1980s, China abruptly rigidified a fluid social, political process into clear political stands. Understandably, no Chinese official would bear the historical responsibility of renewing an unequal treaty with Britain. When challenged, they insist on the integrity of China's national boundary. At times, they go as far as fanning a xenophobic condemnation of 'imperialism' and 'international intrigue'¹⁹. Quite naturally, patriotism and Chineseness emerge as hotly debated concepts, whether in the tranquil university campuses or in the political limelight of the Legislative Council of Hong Kong. What language one speaks, what political terms one empathizes, and what passport one holds become issues of identity. Are you patriotically Chinese or do you consider yourself a marginal member of the British empire in a changing global order? If one assumes a particular stand about democracy, what are the political consequences on being 'Chinese' after 1997? These issues began to preoccupy Hong Kong people in the early 1980s when Britain and China started negotiations on the future of Hong Kong. Divergent voices were heard during the drafting of the Basic Laws. Emotions peaked in the wake of the June Fourth upheaval in 1989, and resurrected after Governor Chris Patten's policy proposals in October 1992 triggered an avalanche of criticism from China.

It is difficult to fit an ideological cap on a complex cultural historical process, but the questions of identity and its political implications have become almost an obsession among a visibly elite sector of the population approaching middle-age, whose Hong Kong experiences were relatively shielded from that of the mainland but whose fortunes will surely extend beyond 1997 to face China's encroachment.

Baby-boomers of post-war Hong Kong, the Western educated, jet-setting professional backbone of the territory's financial miracle find themselves farthest away from the China orbit in every sense of the word.²⁰ From the deadlock about the pace of democratic reforms in Hong Kong, it is obvious that behind the demand for institutional guarantee is a lack of trust in the Chinese political process. For the proponents not to have raised the issue of democracy during British rule and to raise it only in anticipation of the change of sovereignty is a particularly irksome issue to the Beijing government.²¹ Few Hong Kong residents would choose to deny their 'Chinese' ancestry. However, if the estimates were right that one out of every six persons marched against the Beijing regime in the wake of the June Fourth incident in 1989, they presented a troublesome message to the Chinese government: cultural identification could not automatically lead to unquestioned political commitment. From efforts by various groups to prepare for the future of the Special Administrative Region, 'Hong Kong people governing Hong Kong' (*Gangren zhi Gang*) will not be an empty political slogan, but the identities of these 'Hong Kong yan' remain ambiguous.²²

THE POST-WAR BABY-BOOMERS

Contrary to popular belief, not all residents in Hong Kong feel that Hong Kong is only a temporary abode. As early as the turn of the century, there were established Eurasian and Chinese families who claimed roots in Hong Kong. Some were prominent, many more contributed to Hong Kong's prosperity without leaving their names in the history books, and the cultural focus and the economic interests of most were by no means narrowly confined to Hong Kong. Their fortunes were extended to a wider regional network of which Hong Kong was a node and yet a small group had lived for several generations in Hong Kong even before the Second World War.

Pre-war Hong Kong belongs would have known of the Guangzhou-Hong Kong nexus. The Guangzhou connection for the pre-war predominantly Cantonese population of Hong Kong was cultural, commercial as well as political. The children of those who crossed the border in and around 1949 knew of a less intimate China and a different Hong Kong. Persecution from warlords, the Japanese military, the Guomindang, and finally the Communists, coloured the tales told. A friend explains his earlier hopes for a new China by his childhood memories of fleeing from the Japanese soldiers and Guomindang secret police. Another remembers how he, as a child of three, clutched the loaf of bread where his family's entire fortune was hidden, as he and his intellectual parents made the eventful journey by sea and land to Hong Kong in 1949. Still another recalls how her family, branded as landlords in Shantou, were forced to return all the possessions with which they fled to Hong Kong in order to free grandparents held and tortured by Communists during the land reforms of the 1950s. The early years in Hong Kong were lean for everyone. In the aftermath of the Great Leap Forward, hundreds of thousands of desperate farmers fled over the border. The mainland remained mysteriously poor and hungry when the main business of corner stores in Hong Kong was to send care packages to China. As social contact between the two places shrank, ideology stood out. During the xenophobic explosions of the Cultural Revolution, there was little ambivalence: one was either for or against China. Ironically, the 'refugee' families had only minimal emotional attachment to the very place they were experiencing a rare degree of rootedness after decades of war and social dislocation on the mainland. Most pursued the survival strategies of what Siu-kai Lau termed 'utilitarian familism' — culturally and economically conservative, with a strong dose of political apathy toward the larger society which they helped make.²³

In the relatively sleepy colonial environment known for its benign neglect, the young people who were bright and hardworking enough eventually became the two percent who benefited from the elitist education system largely run by foreign missionaries and the government. By the time this post-war generation graduated from the two universities in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Hong Kong government made some crucial political decisions: to invest heavily in the territory's future. For the government, it was a lesson learned from the riots during the upheavals in China spilling over the border and triggering long-neglected social problems. For the baby-boomers, the political decision to build new infrastructure created timely opportunities for careers in government, business and further education. During the

next twenty years, a generation typically made in the increasingly cosmopolitan environment of Hong Kong matured into the movers and shakers of the 1990s. In a word, Hong Kong has left the China orbit, both in terms of ideology and social reality, and turned to the world on her own almost by default.

If there was a time when it mattered little to Hong Kong that it survived as a borrowed place on borrowed time, to paraphrase the well-known epithet, it would have been the decade of the 1970s.²⁴ The impact of the development of Westernized education in the previous two decades could not be underestimated. Most of the successful among Hong Kong's post-war generation went to missionary schools, the number of which had grown dramatically. In 1948, there were 23 schools operated by missionaries, taking in about 12,000 students. In twenty years, the number of these schools have grown to 454, with 400,000 students.²⁵ Student numbers in English secondary schools correspondingly rose, from 16,809 in 1952 to 277,658 in 1976.²⁶

Furthermore, as university students, the baby-boomers were most exposed to the social and political upheavals of the late 1960s worldwide. Ironically, the progressive critics of governments came from the Western language media, a source of social awareness the students had privileged access. Triggered by the various student movements ranging from the French student riots in 1968 to the anti-Vietnam War protests, they turned their attention to the particular social problems of Hong Kong. They had expectations for a more responsive and accountable government.

Their restlessness towards social injustice around them and the newly acquired sense of responsibility were fuelled by a renewed curiosity toward a 'motherland' they hardly know. Their turn to China was motivated less by primordial concerns and more by leftist politics worldwide, combined with an almost religious fervour to believe. Revolutionary pilgrimage trips were eagerly pursued and messages related back to fellow students at home. Precisely because of the total lack of understanding of China's complex political reality, it was easy for the students to fall for the 'leftist' calling coming from it. They relate at the level of ideological images. The debates between the 'patriotic' faction, and the 'reformist' faction dominated the activities in the universities as well as the Hong Kong Federation of Students.

Paradoxically, the most idealistic of the student activists who looked towards the Chinese revolution for a way to resolve the world's problems have, very naturally, become most critical of the Chinese political processes. The ideological energies of the 1970s have had long-term impact. Many of the student activists have eventually become core members of the fledging political parties today.

For true believers, June Fourth 1989 was only the most traumatic revelation. Starting with the late 1970s, the flood of new immigrants from rural China and their immediate problems of adjustment made this Hong Kong generation realize how different they were from the '*Ah Chan*' and the '*biaoshu*'. For the first time, pejorative images were heaped upon immigrants from China. Seeing the numerous false starts in China's reforms which eventually brewed the urban unrests in Beijing and Shanghai, the rising Hong Kong elite began to seriously think about the future of their Westernized, liberal assumptions, about Hong Kong's future and their own future. In a word, the ideological bubble collapses as they gain increased exposure to the daily workings of the mainland.

Their cultural reference-points are as ambiguous as their political orientations. Affiliation with things timelessly Chinese have not come as naturally to them as to their parents. Native-place is only an abstract term. At times, it could even be hostile, as relatives in China with 'overseas connections' were hounded out during political campaigns. This partly explains why many react with a degree of revulsion against the primordial patriotism China demands of them. As teenagers in the 1960s, members of this educated stratum were trained in classical Western music and drama. They were the winners in the school music festivals. They were versed in Shakespeare and T.S. Eliot. The adventurous ones gathered around the folk ensembles of Samuel Hui and Michael Kwan who started with Western popular music and whose improvisations initialized the tide of Canto-pop for the 1970s and 1980s. Their musical genres combined at least three elements: concern for the plight of the common folk (as illustrated by Sam Hui's music and lyrics), resonance with Chinese heroic eras and their characters (as shown in Michael Kwan's music), and a soft touch for personal liberation and romantic love (as in George Lam's). The musical trends paralleled the new directions in film-making in the 1970s. Together, they signalled a definite departure from the Mandarin popular songs and films of the 1950s dominated by rigid and moralistic Taiwanese or Chinese art forms. The indigenization of popular music and film have reinforced and made visible the outlooks, aspirations, and expressions of an increasingly distinctive culture of a generation made in Hong Kong. With families experiencing drastic social mobility within one generation or less in post-war Hong Kong, such cultural expressions cut across classes. With the rapid spread of these cultural products to Taiwan, overseas Chinese communities, and eventually China, the popular culture industry has become technically sophisticated and cosmopolitan.²⁷

The careers of the baby-boomers have followed Hong Kong's projection into the world orbit as a financial metropolis in the Asia Pacific. Scholars try to define them as Hong Kong's 'new middle class'.²⁸ One of my friends, for example, had chosen to be an accountant for the student union. After graduating from Hong Kong University in 1973, he joined the banking industry. At 40, he is the Chief Corporate Officer for an American bank in Hong Kong and Division Head for the entire North Asia Region. Another student activist graduated from Hong Kong University in 1970 in philosophy and comparative literature. Dissatisfied with the limited horizon of a local education, she pursued her studies overseas. In the next fifteen years, she picked up a doctoral degree in Boston and a law degree in Hong Kong and Britain. She went into journalism and headed an influential Chinese newspapers corporation. In her mid-40s, she has served a few years in the government policy think-tank, settled into the role of a woman barrister, while continuing to write for the prestigious English local newspaper, the *South China Morning Post*. With impeccable English, she remains one of Hong Kong's most scrutinizing interviewers of foreign dignitaries. Yet another friend, a former student union president at the Hong Kong University finished a higher degree in politics in England and joined the British Broadcasting Corporation in London for a few years before returning to Hong Kong to head the Chinese University Press. Well known for his liberal views, he conducted a weekly current affairs programme in the territory's English television channel. He is a man of complex cultural emotions. He fulfilled the duties of a Chinese filial son by

supporting his younger brothers through university education. He does not doubt China being his 'motherland' but has no regret leaving her when he finds her 'abusive.' When pushed, he quotes Julius Caesar, compares himself with Lord Jim, and admits that he ultimately values 'the individual' facing his fate high-noon style.

I also have friends who early in their student years identified with the Chinese left in Hong Kong. One such friend graduated from Hong Kong University in English in 1972 and pursued a higher degree in England in applied linguistics. Although she settled back in Hong Kong as a lecturer in English, she joined the political movement to promote Chinese as the legal language in Hong Kong. In the late 1980s, she directly involved herself with the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of Hong Kong, a new political party consisting of the Chinese left. It could not have been an easy emotional choice for her, as her family had fled the Communists. Furthermore, she still carries the stamp of the idealistic 1970s. As the corruption of power reveals itself everywhere in China, she finds it frustrating to advise and oppose at the same time. Despite being branded as 'pro-China', she does not consider herself blindly following directives from Beijing. She is keenly aware that the traditional Chinese way of hoping for a good leader is arbitrary and nothing less than religious. Her ambivalence is clear but she clings to a faithful vision. 'What China needs are rational institutions to which leaders are held accountable. Our mission is to bring the world to China, in order to bring China into the world,' she acknowledges. Few would doubt that her generation, educated to take the global order for granted, is best positioned to do that.

Hong Kong's achievements in the last twenty years can be closely linked to the careers of this generation. Undoubtedly there is inherited wealth.²⁹ Family businesses have successfully turned corporate and expanded into the world. Among the visible examples are the Li Ka-shing empire, the Chengs of New World Development, the Lees of Henderson Development, the Kwoks of Sun Hung Kee Properties, the Hses of Hang Seng Bank, the Y.K. Pao's, and numerous others. They compete and collaborate with British, American, Japanese and now Chinese capital to reign as the 'blue chip' companies. The post-war elite have matured with these business empires, and have occupied key positions in trading, industry, finance, law, accounting and telecommunications. They are visible, vocal, and self-confident. Identifying Hong Kong's present achievement as largely theirs, they do not play their parents' role of the silent majority. They feel the presence of China differently from either their parents' or their children's generation who have taken for granted China's relative openness in the 1980s. Among the ranks of the fledgling political parties, the pro-business ones join the Liberal party, and others belong to the United Democrats, Meeting Point, and independents. It will not be easy for the Chinese government to claim their cultural identity, especially the latter group. They are most likely to face China on their own terms. Some of the appointed and newly elected members of the Executive and Legislative Council are notable representatives: Emily Lau (journalist), Christine Loh (business), Anna Wu (law), and Edward Chen (academic). Over the last year or so (this paper was written in 1993), they have vocally challenged China's concept of convergence. They see China's criticism of Governor Chris Patten's political proposals as unnecessary interference. They debate with China over the legality of the Hong

Kong Government granting operation rights for Container Terminal Number Nine. They press the government to gazette political proposals for debate in the Legislative Council. The latest political uproar involves a libel suit raised by two leading United Democrats, Martin Lee and Szeto Wah, against Simon Li, a former judge who is a member of the China-appointed Preparatory Committee for the Special Administrative Region. The United Democrats readily point to the alarming fact that eighteen legal firms in Hong Kong refused to take on the case for Lee and Szeto. This widespread self-censorship, they argue, is but the tip of an iceberg in a process that is fast eroding Hong Kong's legal foundation.³⁰

RE-SINICIZING HONG KONG: FROM 'AH CHAN' TO 'GANG CHAN'

As this generation consolidated themselves as a visible, worldly social force, the question of class naturally follows. To what extent is this cosmopolitan identity a specific class phenomenon? How would the population outside of the wealthy and Westernized professional circles relate themselves to the baby-boomers in particular, and to Hong Kong and China in general?

To answer these questions, we have to remember that Hong Kong in the post-war decades experienced an unprecedented rate of social mobility. Jet-setting professionals may easily have illiterate parents who have been street-hawkers and siblings who are clerks and blue-collar workers.³¹ Class, generation, and family are as intricately tied as they are pulled in different directions. So are cultural and political orientations. The silent majority who are less visibly elite do not necessarily close their minds to the world. In fact, they might be the parents who shrewdly see the value of a Westernized education for their children to get ahead in Hong Kong. Parents live frugally and sisters work hard in order to save enough for their sons and brothers to go abroad for further studies and to emigrate. But their relationship to China as a social entity is not clear-cut. Many have maintained contact with families in the mainland. As working people, they had less to fear during political campaigns, and relatives were needy. Nevertheless, they now face China's reopening with as much ambivalence as they left it decades ago. A fast-growing Guangdong economy and a renewed politics of native roots present great opportunities in every way. Many have taken advantage of the cheaper land and labour in their 'native places' to build themselves houses which they could not possibly afford in Hong Kong. As potential investors, they are treated with respect and rewarded with favours they would never expect to enjoy elsewhere. Yet, they worry about the rapid movement of manufacturing capital across the border because their jobs in Hong Kong are at stake. It is interesting to note that master craftsmen responsible for setting new workshops in the mainland will withhold crucial skills in order to avoid being made redundant in Hong Kong.³²

As the post-war baby-boomers and their parents are adjusting themselves to a rapidly changing landscape in the larger Hong Kong region, a new wave of immigrants from China began their sojourn. As I have argued in another paper, Hong Kong has always been a land of immigrants and emigrants. However, the emergence of the 'new immigrant' (*xin yimin*) concept in the late 1970s with all its

negative images was not coincidental. It was closely related to the maturing of the local-born generation in relation to the sudden opening up of a China that has experienced decades of Maoist closure.³³

The fixated term 'new immigrant' glosses over a fluid and complex social-political process involving a significant proportion of Hong Kong residents. The latest upsurge of immigrants from China started as early as 1972 when the frenzy of the Cultural Revolution subsided.³⁴ The general impression is that those who came then were of urban, professional and artisan backgrounds. Some tried to escape political persecution, others came with families, and many more had relatives in Hong Kong to help them settle down. They were not able to pursue former professions as their qualifications were not recognized in Hong Kong. But after a few years, having learnt English and taken courses for retraining, with the help of family networks they were absorbed into the upwardly mobile working population in Hong Kong. In the eyes of the local-born, these immigrants have become culturally and legally 'Hong Kong residents', part of an evolving and not-too-silent majority. Their children enter local English schools. Like the emigrants of the 1950s, they opposed the ideological stances of the Chinese government and, as a means of eventual escape, did not hesitate to send their children abroad for study if opportunities arise.³⁵

A great deal of attention has focused on those who came during 1978–80. By the time the government imposed new restrictions on legal entry, over half a million had already landed, many illegally. According to an editorial in *Ming Pao* (4 April 1980), from December 1974 to 1980, 81.7 percent of the illegal immigrants were farmers in communes, only 4.6 percent were artisans, and 5.2 percent were students. Eighty-five percent were between the ages of 15 to 30, the majority being male. They came to Hong Kong to look for economic gain. Cut off from the world for over thirty years and lacking resources, these single men from Guangdong's rural counties found Hong Kong's pace of life as well as its multicultural energies most perplexing. Their ill adjustment to the volatile Hong Kong environment invited discriminating treatment from the local-born, who were just beginning to be anxious about their own future. *Ah Chan, dai huen chai* (big-circle lads) depicting the poor, country-bumpkin and underworld crime became household terms and familiar in the popular media.³⁶ Faced with a hostile host society, their problems of adjustment were serious. While the intolerance of the educated circles towards these new immigrants might have arisen from an imagined encroachment from China, those from the working public were tied to some real threats these newcomers posed to livelihoods. This had come at a time when manufacturing was being moved across the border to avoid the increasingly high costs of land and labour in Hong Kong. Middle-aged workers who did not have the education for high technology or service jobs found themselves redundant. For those who maintained their jobs, low wages and low standards were blamed on the immigrants who would accept any working conditions. The desperate manoeuvres of the newcomers, their general lack of social grace, and alleged disrespect for law and order, rapidly cut into everyday social life in the territory. These characterizations became ways for the post-war generation in Hong Kong to draw boundaries between 'we' the Hong Kong *yan*, and 'they', the 'new immigrants'.

In the 1980s and 1990s, even though the media depicted the Vietnamese boat people as Hong Kong's major immigration problem, the stream of legal and illegal immigrants from China had continued unabated.³⁷ The illegal immigrants (abbreviated in the media as IIs) came in spurts, mainly from eastern Guangdong. Waves of immigrants were often triggered by rumours about changes in Hong Kong's immigration laws. For example, after October of 1986, boatloads of very young children from Fujian were smuggled by gangs into Hong Kong, their journeys paid for by parents who wanted to be reunited with them. The Hong Kong Police finally traced the movement to rumours of a pardon surrounding the visit by the Queen of England to Hong Kong.³⁸ Police record also shows that in 1990 they caught 13,000 IIs, or 3,000 in the month of July alone, a three hundred percent rise over that of a similar period the previous year. The motives of the adult IIs were short-term economic gain. They or their relatives in Hong Kong paid several thousand yuan³⁹ per person to gangs which openly organized illegal traffic of labourers in fishing communities along the coast of the Pearl River delta.⁴⁰ Many worked for up to a year in the most menial jobs. If they were not 'settled in' by the gang leaders or relatives, they hid in deserted village enclaves throughout the New Territories. After they made enough to pay off their debts and to accumulate some savings, they would contact the very people who had organized their entry into the territory in order to slip back to China. Some were engaged in predatory activities such as smuggling, gang-organized robbery and piracy.⁴¹

The number of legal immigrants from the mainland continued to rise in the 1980s, averaging 20,000 to 50,000 per year. They came from all walks of life and a variety of geographical areas. The relatives who sponsored them could have been in Hong Kong since the 1950s. Among them were the wives and families of those who had come in the late 1970s. Many of the 'new immigrants' had taken wives in their native places because their low financial positions and restricted social networks had made it difficult for them to get married in Hong Kong. These family members came mostly from rural districts and were poorly educated. Their children encountered a great deal of difficulty in school, and displayed clear learning problems and poor social skills. Social workers found these students prone to associate with gangs and violence.⁴² The increasing number of immigrant families became the new silent majority. They congregated in the lower middle income areas in Kowloon, or the new towns of the New Territories.

Nevertheless, the step-by-step economic liberalization of China in the 1980s brought unprecedented opportunities for the various types of newcomers to Hong Kong. The ones with skills and contacts have quickly become the crucial links between businesses in Hong Kong and China.⁴³ Currently, enterprises in Hong Kong and joint ventures with local governments employ over three million workers in Guangdong. There are 50,000 technicians and managers from Hong Kong who are regularly stationed there. The enterprises make windfall profits from the low wages and rent, tax benefits, and relaxed industrial rules, not to mention illegal and speculative manoeuvres with foreign exchange and customs. In China, without a competitive market, with a shortage of modern business law and culture, and with government cadres still reigning supreme, resourceful means to get around or to link up with local power structures are absolutely necessary for profitable

businesses.⁴⁴ In this regard, the returning new immigrants have been in the best position to offer their service as economic and political brokers. They create profitable niches for themselves. One such entrepreneur I have come to know about is the son of a cadre who came to Hong Kong in the late 1970s and had had several rough years. His lot improved greatly with the increasing integration of Hong Kong with the Pearl River delta. He now operates a profitable lorry company transporting goods across the border. In another case, two brothers who came to Hong Kong in the late 1970s found jobs in the carpentry and construction trades. With savings, they bought a small apartment and rented half of it out to cover mortgages. Today, the property value has soared many times. One now drives a taxi and the other a container lorry which transports goods across the border. Other success stories of new immigrants who started as factory workers and who have become factory owners and managers of expanding trading companies are carried in popular magazines in Hong Kong. The through train to Guangzhou and the boats to the river ports of the Pearl River delta have, in recent years, become increasingly congested. It is not difficult to pick from the passengers new entrepreneurs and their business partners. They are the regular commuters.⁴⁵

Although they have paid a heavy personal price to obtain a Hong Kong identity card, the new immigrant does not overnight develop an identity with Hong Kong, and the card is more a means than an end. Hong Kong residence provides a range of opportunities for economic gain. It also allows the new immigrant to travel frequently in and out of China, an increasingly important source of their economic wellbeing, social networks, and family pride. Their fortunes have risen with the mushrooming of small and medium-sized factories in the market towns of the Pearl River delta and the associated trading, subcontracting interests in Hong Kong and Macau.⁴⁶ Those who have made enough from the 1980s bank on the property market in Hong Kong, pushing up prices continuously. They also enthusiastically buy into the emerging property markets in the Mainland, contributing partly to the highly speculative building boom in the towns of the Pearl River delta, Huizhou, the Chaozhou-Shantou area and Shanghai, where most of the immigrants have originated.⁴⁷ Their investments in an increasingly connected Hong Kong and China bring them proudly back to their native places. They are part of the very process of economic reintegration.

The process has profound cultural and political implications. The return of the new immigrants has made a great impact on Guangdong. As a result, Guangdong has enjoyed a decade of relaxed post-Mao development. The ideological reversal is very visible. The highly Mandarinized structure of power associated with the Beijing regime has faded. In the 1970s, it would have been difficult to find an official from county level and up who spoke Cantonese. In the 1990s, even provincial leaders struggle to speak this dialect. The influx of wealth, consumption goods and exposure to popular Hong Kong television mould the local population to identify less with the ideological machinery in Beijing and more with Hong Kong television shows. In fact, the new immigrants and their counterparts in the delta have created a new common language shaped to a great extent by the popular Hong Kong media and a lingering rural twist. But their draw towards Hong Kong is tenuous and contradictory at times. In the wake of the June Fourth events, the hot conversation topic in the

towns and cities of the delta was whether there should be an autonomous Guangdong-Hong Kong region. When it comes to China's appeal for patriotism in the recent political row with Chris Patten and the democratic forces in Hong Kong, most people take for granted China's political prerogatives.

Their lack of identification with Hong Kong's political concerns results from a push-and-pull process where class, education and politics intertwine. Up to the 1970s, although Hong Kong was less global in its economic structure, upward mobility for the local population had brought about the refinement of a cosmopolitan culture and professionalism. Ironically, the process was linked to an elitist English education with Chinese literati touches. It enabled a generation to join an affluent international professional community. But in the recent decade, the social mobility of the new immigrants in Hong Kong is intimately tied to the explosion of speculative greed and manoeuvres of a previously deprived rural population in post-Mao China. Lavish banqueting, gambling, prostituting, drugs, and fancy karaoke nightclubs are popular and yet distinctively 'low-brow' symbols of the good life on the fast track. Representing the good life as presented by the Hong Kong media and the returning entrepreneurs, expensive villas fully equipped with private karaoke bars are everywhere in the boom towns and villages. Along the dirt roads in the delta, one also finds an increasing number of Mercedes Benzs with Guangdong/Hong Kong licence plates taking the new breed of entrepreneurs and power-brokers to their factories. In the towns as much as on the streets of Hong Kong, one finds smartly dressed '*da laoban*' (big boss) and their cadre partners shrewdly in command with their cellular phones. Ironically the most prosperous areas of the Pearl River delta are where people seem to have the least motivation for further education.⁴⁸ The term '*xiahai*' (going down to the sea) which had been used in the Republican era to describe young women joining dance halls to make a living, has now assumed a general meaning in China of leaving one's profession for economic gain.

This sudden spurt of entrepreneurial energies, together with a steep rise in the number of cadres sent to administer the vastly expanded mainland businesses in Hong Kong, has made the territory look more visibly 'Chinese' than ever before.⁴⁹ But this is a much transformed 'Chineseness', different from the refined elitist touches of the literati-merchant of the pre-war era or the stark Communist ideologues of the 1950s and 1960s. The current visitors from China are very much in a world of their own. Cadres who have worked in Hong Kong for over ten years would still not know that the territory has several universities, nor set foot in the City Hall or the Performing Arts Centre. The knowledge of Hong Kong which the lower level cadres visiting from the rural counties possesses is limited to fancy Cantonese seafood restaurants, 'Women street', the 'Tin-Guang *hui*' (morning market) at Yau Ma Tei, the electrical appliances shops in Mongkok, pornography at Sham Shui Po, or the casinos and massage parlours in Macau. Tens of thousands of administrative units and businesses from the mainland have established bases in Hong Kong, concentrating in the highly commercialized Causeway Bay and Mongkok areas. A typical '*biaoshu* (uncles') *saloon*' is a business-cum-residential unit where cadre visitors congregate. It is often decorated in the style of a Cantonese restaurant or guest house (an environment the visiting cadres in Hong Kong are most familiar

with), equipped with fancy television, video and karaoke fixtures. An evening of entertainment involves watching pornography and comical farce, or drinking and dancing with call girls at nightclubs. The high level 'guanshang' (bureaucrat-merchant), coined 'the red chips' by the media, brandish their own paraphernalia of conspicuous consumption and new-found power in the five-star hotels and race tracks. Together with their lower level counterparts, they have brashly emerged to share public space in Hong Kong with 'the blue chips'.⁵⁰ Increasingly, travellers from Hong Kong to China who can neither afford the HK\$10,000-a-bottle cognac or the Mercedes Benzs are now branded as 'Gong chan' (the Hong Kong 'Ah Chan').

THE LAST TANGO IN HONG KONG?

'The horses will race as usual and the people will dance as usual' (*Ma zhao pao, wu zhao tiao*) is the statement that depicts the two things Chinese officials expect Hong Kong people to most value. Repeatedly made by the Beijing leaders, and echoed by the new entrepreneurs, the statement is meant to reassure. But for the Hong Kong elite-generation who matured in the 1970s, the statement reveals how little the mainland Chinese understand the history and culture of Hong Kong or the fluidity of its social configurations. It strips them of their cosmopolitan cultural identity as 'Hong Kong yan' although it offers tremendous economic opportunities. The rise of the new immigrant entrepreneurs, *nouveaux riches* who are culturally, socially and economically tuned to the mainland, is coupled with the aggressive presence of the official 'red chips' in the financial and political arena of Hong Kong. Hence the ambivalence: in the decade ahead, to what extent can the generation of 'Hong Kong yan' choose to dance to their own tune? Many have made the decision to emigrate to the West precisely because they find Hong Kong increasingly unfamiliar, although they are comfortable with a global cultural image of the territory. As one puts it, 'It is agonizing to anticipate being a foreigner in one's own native place'. 1997 is imminent, but to many, the countdown has long begun.

Hong Kong as an historical space encompasses vastly different cultural affiliations, social and political fortunes. The varying predicaments of the post-war baby-boomers and the new immigrants caution us against treating cultural identity as statically rooted to a locality. Seen as a meaningful discourse, it continues to fuel ideological battles between polities, reconstitute family and work relations, and capture individual imaginations. Who the 'Hong Kong yan' are will remain ambiguous, as cultural identity is continuously remade by human agents who move across social, cultural, and political boundaries set by historical events quite beyond anyone's prediction.

NOTES

1. I spent the academic year of 1992–93 teaching in Hong Kong. During this time, Professor Liu Zhiwei of Zhongshan University and I ‘walked the streets’ to prepare for field research. In June 1993, we were joined by Professor William Kelly and students from Yale and the Chinese University of Hong Kong who attended a workshop ‘Cultural identity in an age of diaspora’, funded by the Cheng Yu-tung and Lee Shau-kee Fund in Chinese Studies. This paper is based on our shared observations and intuitive responses. I thank the participants of the BACS Conference at Oxford and members of the Modern China Seminar at Columbia University, in particular Myron Cohen, for helpful comments.
2. In 1982, the Chinese and Hong Kong governments reached an agreement on the number and types of entry visas for Chinese residents: 75 each for emigrant and return visas per day. Over the years, the number of emigrant visa holders has remained stable, but the number of return visa holders has increased drastically. Together with those holding tourist visas (Tour Groups to Hong Kong), the number exceeded 170,000 in 1987. This number includes cadres who come to Hong Kong to work in Chinese organizations. See *Jingbao yuekan*, 1988 (August) 16–17.
3. The Deng surname at Kam Tin in what became the New Territories held land rights on the island and had tenants. It lost these claims when the British government took over Hong Kong Island.
4. See Bard (1993).
5. See Sinn (1990). On education, see Ng (1984).
6. I was taken to ‘the walk’ by David Faure in June 1991.
7. Ironically, the Eurasian community were probably the ones most identified with Hong Kong. Dr Elizabeth Sinn notes the elaborate family cemetery of the Hotung family at Mount Davis Road. See also the biography of Ho Kai, the first appointed legislator in Hong Kong.
8. This was a comment by her at the Modern China Seminar at Columbia University, October 1993.
9. See an explication of the idea in Siu 1990. I thank Myron Cohen for making explicit the distinction between identity and culture in the Modern China Seminar at Columbia University.
10. See chapter by Ching May-bo in this volume.
11. For linkages through education, see Hong Kong Museum of History 1993. See also Choi 1991.
12. See Choi Po-king, ‘Xianggang jiaoyu’.
13. See Hang Seng Bank (1991).
14. Most visible is the traffic of prostitutes in the merchant’s gay quarters in the three cities. See Lo (1963); Song (1989).
15. I thank Myron Cohen for making this point explicit in the Modern China Seminar in Columbia University. I would, however, argue that these coastal urban nodes were far more tied to the residents’ native places than scholars have portrayed them.
16. Fieldwork in 1991, Chaolian *zhen*, Jiangmen Municipality.
17. See Siu (1993: 19–43). For a small number of prominent Chinese statesmen who received a westernized education in Hong Kong, see Ng (1984).
18. See David Faure’s chapter in this volume. A few examples of southern challengers: Yung Wing of Xiangshan county was one of the very first scholars from Guangdong to study in the United States in 1852. He came back advocating new educational directions. Tang Tingxu, born in Xiangshan in 1832, was educated in missionary schools in Hong Kong. He became a powerful entrepreneur and chief agent with foreign firms such as

Jardines Matheson and Company (1863–73). Gaining the confidence of both foreign economic interests and Chinese self-strengtheners in Guangzhou and Shanghai in the late nineteenth century, he was appointed by Li Hongzhang in 1873 as the chief administrator of the Zhaoshang *ju* (better known in English as the Chinese Merchants' Steam Navigation Co.) According to historian Liu Kwang-ching (1990), Zheng Guanying (born 1842 in Xiangshan) followed a similar career. Agent for Butterfield and Swire from 1873–82, he too joined the Zhaoshang *ju*. He was one of the few new style merchants who were also as scholar and political commentators. The topics of his writings ranged from innovations in business and finance, to reforms for the bureaucracy, humanitarian pleas for women and prisoners, and new diplomatic strategies. He had a deep understanding and respect for Western learning. What he advocated challenged every aspect of a tradition held by the conservatives in the Qing court. Others took up drastic political actions: Liang Qichao of Xinhui county participated in the abortive Hundred Days Reform in the 1890's. Dr Sun Yat-sen, a native of Xiangshan county and trained as a medical doctor in Hong Kong, orchestrated the 1911 revolution. Major political leaders in the Republican, Nationalist or Communist, were members of the military academy in Huangbu near Guangzhou (among them Chiang Kai-shek and Zhou Enlai). The institute where Mao Zedong taught activists to organize peasant associations was also based in the city. Numerous political radicals and writers took shelter in Guangdong when the Communists were driven underground during the turbulent decades of civil war and Japanese occupation in the 1930's and 1940's.

19. During the recent row over Chris Patten's policy proposals, Li Ruihuan's speech best represents such an attitude shared by Chinese leaders and citizens.
20. See 'Power to the Baby-boomers', *South China Morning Post*, 1993.
21. See Chen (1992: 165–69).
22. For a strong statement that poses a 'Hong Kong identity' against the 'patriotism' promoted by the Chinese government, see Chow (1991).
23. See Lau (1985).
24. The phrase was the title of a book by Richard Hughes (1967). See Hong (1993: 18–24).
25. Chan (1991: 68–86).
26. See table in Choi (1991, 'Xiang Gang jiaoyu': 98–116). The ratio of students in Chinese secondary schools to those in English schools changed from 100/92.1 in 1952 to 100/442 in 1976.
27. See Choi (1990: 537–563).
28. See debates on the definition, nature, and political role of this new class by the same generation of local scholars, e.g. Chang Bing Leung, et. al. 1989.
29. See He (1993).
30. See *South China Morning Post* July 27–29, 1993.
31. See He (1992).
32. This statement is based on observation I made in the Pearl River delta on factories for manufacturing gold jewellery.
33. See Siu (1988: 1–14).
34. See table 1, in Lo (1986).
35. It is difficult to determine the boundary between legal and illegal immigrants. Before the new immigration law adopted in 1981, immigrants from the mainland who had not legally entered Hong Kong but who could land in the city area and find a place to live in would have been given Hong Kong resident status. My impression is that this group of emigrants do not ideologically identify with the Chinese government, have little emotional attachment for Hong Kong, and aspire to send their children abroad.
36. See Siu (1988).

37. See table below, taken from Xu Huaiyuan (1987: 40–41), referring to immigrants from the mainland:

<u>The number of illegals immigrants arrested</u>	
1983	4,667
1984	9,653
1985	12,616
1986	16,832

<u>The number of visitors' visas issued by the Hong Kong government:</u>	
1983	30,000
1984	46,000
1985	53,000
1986	65,000

<u>The number of tourist visas issued by the Hong Kong government:</u>	
1984	22,000
1985	52,400
1986	65,400

38. See Liu (1986: 18–20).
39. In the mid-1980s, 1 yuan RMB was equivalent to approximately HK\$1.5 or 20 cents U.S. at the official rate of exchange.
40. See Jida (1990: 14–17); Xu Chuwen (1988: 46–47).
41. The media plays up the implicit cooperation of the public security forces and local militia in these acts of violence. See *South China Morning Post* in the last few years.
42. See Bao (1989: 11–12).
43. For analysis of economic integration between China, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, see Sung (1991(1), (2); 1992).
44. See 'China battles with the cadres of corruption', and 'Angry drivers call off blockade', on pp. 9 and 4 respectively in *South China Morning Post*, July 25, 1993. For the two days, lorry drivers at the Shenzhen border staged a blockade in protest of the numerous inspections and fees levied by Chinese border officers. They called off the blockade only after Shenzhen government officials gave assurances that they would investigate the allegations of corruption and a pledge to ensure smooth passage check points.
45. The easiest way to tell a new immigrant from a long-time Hong Kong resident is by detecting his or her speech. Many speak with a strong rural accent. Unlike the refugees of the 1950s, the illegal immigrants who came to Hong Kong in the late 1970s and early 1980s were largely from the rural areas.
46. See Wong and Sit (1989). For comparison with new immigrant entrepreneurs in Macau, see Wong, Sit and Cremer (1991).
47. During the height of the boom in the second half of 1992, trains were particularly congested. With the help of travel agents, seats on the various river boats to the ports in the Pearl River delta were reserved in blocks by Hong Kong developers and their mainland partners to facilitate the traffic of their potential clients. Regular travellers had to pay up to twice the price of tickets in order to get a seat.
48. The education crisis in China is well recognized but the government has done little to face the problem. The percentage given to education in the national budget is pitifully small.
49. See Cheng (1988: 66–68).
50. See a survey of the top 'red chip' companies listed on Hong Kong's stock exchange, *South China Morning Post* 1993, July 25: page 1 of the China Business Review section.

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Glossary

A	阿
Ah Chan*	阿燦
bai	白;擺
<i>bathua</i>	白話
<i>baiyue</i>	百粵
<i>Banji sheng</i>	半疾生
<i>Banqiao zazhi</i>	板橋雜記
<i>bao</i>	保
Bao Tianxiao	包天笑
Bao'an	保安
Baoding	保定
<i>baojia</i>	保甲
Baoshun Tonghui	保順通惠
<i>baren xiali</i>	巴人下里
<i>bendiban</i>	本地班
<i>biaoshu</i>	表叔
Bo	燹
Bo Juyi	白居易
Bo Man	燹蠻
boqi	簸箕
Cai Yuanpei	蔡元培
Caoxi	曹溪
Cen Guangyue	岑光樾
<i>changsai</i>	長三
<i>chantou</i>	纏頭
<i>Chaolian xiangzhi</i>	潮連鄉志
Chen Baisha	陳白沙
Chen Botao	陳伯陶
Chen Li	陳澧
Chen Pu	陳璞
Chen Shaobai	陳少白
Chen Zibao	陳子褒
Cheng Zhesan	程哲三
<i>chenghuang</i>	城隍
<i>Chengnan jiushih</i>	城南舊事
<i>Chunjiang dengshi lu</i>	春江燈市錄

* Romanized in Cantonese pronunciation

<i>Chunjiang huashi</i>	春江花史
Cui Yuzhi	崔與之
<i>cunfang</i>	村坊
<i>da laoban</i>	大老板
<i>dai huen chai*</i>	大圈仔
Dan	蛋
<i>daxi</i>	大戲
<i>dazayuan</i>	大雒院
<i>delufeng</i>	德律風
Deng Zhimo	鄧志謨
<i>difang wenhua</i>	地方文化
Ding	丁
Ding Ji	丁積
Ding Renchang	丁仁長
Dingxiang si	定香寺
<i>Dongfang zazhi</i>	東方雜誌
Du Mu	杜牧
Du Yuesheng	杜月笙
<i>ersan</i>	
Fan Zushu	范祖述
Fanchuan	樊川
<i>fang</i>	房
Fang Xianfu	方獻夫
<i>fangwai</i>	方外
<i>fangyan</i>	方言
<i>fashi</i>	法師
<i>fei</i>	匪
Fei Lian	飛廉
Fei Ming	廢名
Feng Wenbing	馮文炳
Fenghuang	鳳凰
<i>fengshui</i>	風水
<i>fengsu</i>	風俗
<i>fu</i>	負
Gan	甘
<i>Gangren zhi Gang</i>	港人治港
<i>ganqing</i>	感情
Gao Pu	高朴
<i>Gaoyao xianzhi</i>	高要縣志
<i>Gechang ye shi</i>	歌場野史
Gelaohui	哥老會
<i>Gong chan*</i>	港燦
Gong Zizhen	龔自珍
<i>gongsheng</i>	貢生
Gongxian	拱縣
<i>gongyi</i>	恭毅

<i>gongyi</i>	公益
<i>guan</i>	關
<i>guan deng</i>	觀燈
<i>Guang fangyan guan</i>	廣方言館
<i>Guangdong minzu gailun</i>	廣東民族概論
<i>Guangdong ren</i>	廣東人
<i>Guangdong tongzhi</i>	廣東通志
<i>Guangdong wenwu</i>	廣東文物
<i>Guangdong wenxuan</i>	廣東文選
<i>Guangdong wenzheng</i>	廣東文徵
<i>Guangdong xiangtu lishi jiaokeshu</i>	廣東鄉土歷史教科書
<i>Guangdong xiangtushi jiaokeshu</i>	廣東鄉土史教科書
<i>Guangdong xinyu</i>	廣東新語
<i>Guangqiang</i>	廣腔
<i>Guangxiao</i>	光孝
<i>Guangya</i>	廣雅
<i>Guangzhou renwu zhuan</i>	廣州人物傳
<i>guanhua</i>	官話
<i>guanshang</i>	官商
<i>gui jie</i>	鬼節
<i>Guo Moruo</i>	郭沫若
<i>Guofu jiashi yuanliukao</i>	國父家世源流考
<i>guojia fa</i>	國家法
<i>guoyu</i>	國語
<i>guwen</i>	古文
<i>Guxiang</i>	故鄉
<i>Ha</i>	哈
<i>Ha Da Wa</i>	哈大娃
<i>Haishang chentian ying</i>	海上塵天影
<i>Haishang dengshi lu</i>	海上燈市錄
<i>Haishang hua</i>	海上花
<i>Haishang hua liezhuan</i>	海上花列傳
<i>Haishang huaying lu</i>	海上花影錄
<i>Haishang kanhua riji</i>	海上看花日記
<i>Haishang qinglou tuji</i>	海上青樓圖記
<i>Haishang qunfang pu</i>	海上群芳譜
<i>Haishang yeyou beilan</i>	海上冶遊備覽
<i>Haishang youxi tushuo</i>	海上遊戲圖說
<i>Haiyou yeyou lu</i>	海陬冶遊錄
<i>Hakka* (kejia)</i>	客家
<i>Han</i>	漢
<i>Han Hui</i>	漢回
<i>Han Xing</i>	韓信
<i>Hangsu yifeng</i>	杭俗遺風
<i>Hefen</i>	合墳
<i>hong* (hang)</i>	行

<i>Houtu</i>	厚土
Hu Shi	胡適
<i>Hua Da Wang</i>	花大士
<i>Hua Qiao Rongji</i>	花橋榮記
<i>Huaguo baimeitu</i>	花國百美圖
<i>huai</i>	壞
<i>Huajianji</i>	花箋記
<i>huamian</i>	花面
Huang Ch'un-ming	黃春明
Huang Foyi	黃佛頤
Huang Jie	黃節
Huang Jinrong	黃令榮
Huang Luyi	黃魯逸
Huang Peifang	黃培芳
Huang Xiaoyang	黃蕭養
Huang Yingkui	黃映奎
Huang Zongyang	黃宗仰
Huang Zunxian	黃遵憲
Huang Zuo	黃佐
Huangbu	黃埔
<i>Huangchao jingjie</i>	皇朝經解
<i>huayanguan</i>	花煙館
Hui	回
<i>Hujiang seyi zhinan</i>	滬江色藝指南
<i>Hujiang yan pu</i>	滬江艷譜
<i>huntun</i>	餛飩
Huo Tao	霍韜
Huo Yuxia	霍與瑕
<i>Hushang pinghua lu</i>	滬江評花錄
<i>ja</i>	家
<i>ja fa</i>	家法
<i>jamiao</i>	家廟
Jiangzhou	江州
Jiaochuan zizhu shanfang zhuren	蛟川紫竹山房主人
<i>jawu</i>	甲午
<i>jiaxun</i>	家訓
<i>Jiaying zhoushi</i>	嘉應州志
<i>jexie</i>	借寫
Jifu	積福
Jin Xueceng	金學曾
<i>Jingbao</i>	晶報
Jingpai	京派
<i>Jinling bamei</i>	金陵百媚
Jinlong	金龍
<i>jinshen</i>	縉紳
Jiren	濟仁

<i>jiti</i>	集體
<i>Jiu Meng</i>	舊夢
Jiusicheng	九絲城
Kang Youwei	康有為
Kangji Guangde Xiansheng	康濟廣德顯聖
<i>kefei</i>	客匪
<i>Kejia yanjiu daolun</i>	客家研究導論
<i>Kong Yi Ji</i>	孔乙己
Kuaiji	會稽
<i>Kunqiang</i>	昆腔
Lai Ho	賴和
Lai Jixi	賴際熙
Lang	狼
Lang Ying	郎英
Lao She	老舍
<i>lao popo</i>	老婆婆
Li	黎
Li Boyuan	李伯元
Li E	厲鶚
Li Guangting	李光挺
Li Hongzhang	李鴻章
Li Moying	李昉英
Li Rui	李銳
Li Shangyin	李商隱
Li Tiaoyuan	李調元
Li Wei	李衛
<i>Li Youcai de Banhua</i>	李有才的板話
Li Yu	李漁
Li Yunxiang	李雲翔
<i>lian</i>	臉
Liang Qichao	梁啟超
Liangxi chilian jushi	梁溪池蓮居士
Liangxi xiaoxiangguan shizhe	梁溪蕭湘館侍者
<i>lianshang you guang</i>	臉上有光
Liao	獠
<i>lienu</i>	列女
<i>lijia</i>	里甲
Lin Botong	林伯桐
Lin Hai-yin	林海音
Lin'an	臨安
Lingyin	靈隱
<i>Liu fangji</i>	留芳記
Liu Sanwu	劉三吾
Liu Shaotang	劉紹棠
Liu Xian	劉顯
Liu Xinwu	劉心武

Liu Zhang	劉鋹
Liu* (Liao)	廖
liuyu	流寓
lixing	甲姓
Longjiang	龍江
Longmu	龍母
longzhou	龍舟
Lu Rong	陸容
Lu Song	盧崧
Lu Xun	魯迅
Lu Yin	盧隱
Lu Zu	呂祖
Luo Xianglin	羅香林
Luofu	羅浮
Lushan	廬山
Luzhen	魯鎮
Ma zhao pao wu hao tiao	馬昭跑, 舞昭跳
Mao Jike	毛際可
meidu	梅毒
menfang	門房
mianzi	面子
Miao	苗
Ming Pao* (Mingbao)	明報
ming	命
Mingtian	明人
Minsu zhoukan	民俗周刊
modang	摩登
moyao	莫徕
moyao	莫瑤
mu	畝
mui tsai*	妹仔
mu yu shu	木魚書
Nahan	呐喊
Nan Han	南漢
Nanghai	南海
Nanhua	南華
nan yin	南音
Nanyue	南越
niangniang	娘娘
Niehai hua	孽海花
Nuren jie	女人街
Ou Dadian	歐大典
Pai Hsien yung	白先勇
Pang Shangpeng	龐尚鵬
Panyu	番禺
Piaoling zhu ke	漂零之客

Ping wang	平王
Pipa xing	琵琶行
pudu	普渡
Punti* (<i>bendi</i>)	本地
pusa	菩薩
Qi	岐
Qian Xian'ai	蹇先艾
qiang	腔
Qiangtang	錢塘
qiaomin wenzue	僑民文學
Qin	秦
Qin Shouou	秦瘦鷗
qing	情
Qinghua	清華
Qingmiao hui	青苗會
qingyi	情義
Qinqiang	秦腔
Qiu Fengjia	丘逢甲
Qiu Jun	邱浚
Qiuhaitang	秋海棠
Qu Dajun	屈大均
Renhe	仁和
renqing	人情
Rouxiang yunshi	柔鄉韻史
Ruan Yuan	阮元
Shangchuan	上川
Shanghai chenbao	上海晨報
Shanghai ren	上海人
Shanghai shibao	上海時報
Shanyaodan pai	山藥蛋派
Shaoxing	紹興
She	畚
she	社
Shen Congwen	沈從文
Shen Danwu	沈丹五
Shenbao	申報
Shijie fanhua bao	世界繁華報
Shijie ribao	世界日報
Shisanjing zhushu	十三經注疏
shujia	水假
shuimenting	水門汀
shujia	暑假
shuyu	書寓
shuyu zhujia	書寓住家
sidike	司迪克
Sima Qian	司馬遷

Siming	四明
<i>sisuo shangren</i>	四所商人
<i>Subao</i>	蘇報
<i>Subei ren</i>	蘇北人
Sun Mo	孫謨
<i>Taipeiren</i>	台北人
<i>Taiquan xiangli</i>	泰泉鄉禮
<i>tanci</i>	彈詞
Tang Elian	湯萼聯
Tao Lu	陶魯
Tian Yiheng	田藝衡
<i>Tianhe pei</i>	大河配
<i>Tianma xiang</i>	大馬鄉
Tianzhu	大竺
<i>tshen</i>	替身
<i>Tongwen guan</i>	同文館
<i>tongwen</i>	同文
<i>tongxin</i>	童心
Tuo Delin	妥得璘
<i>tusi</i>	土司
<i>Waijiang liyuan huiquan</i>	外江梨園會館
<i>waijiangban</i>	外江班
Wang Kangnian	汪康年
Wang Shouning	王壽寧
<i>Wang Tao riji</i>	王韜日記
Wang Tao	王韜
Wang Wu	王五武
Wang Yangming	王陽明
<i>Wanguo junzheng kaolue</i>	萬國近政考略
Wanmu caotang	萬木草堂
Wei Xiao	魏校
Wen Runeng	溫汝能
Wen Su	溫肅
Wen Zhonghe	溫仲和
<i>wen yi zaidao</i>	文以載道
Wendi	文帝
<i>wenhua</i>	文化
<i>wenming xi</i>	文明戲
<i>wenren</i>	文人
Wong Zhong Xian	汪仲賢
Wu Daorong	吳道鎔
Wu	吳、伍
Wu Zhihui	吳稚暉
Wu Zixu	伍子胥
Wu-Yue	吳越
<i>xiahai</i>	下海

Xian	洗
<i>xian</i>	縣
<i>Xian xian bian</i>	灑灑編
Xian Yuqing	洗玉清
<i>Xiandai Wenxue</i>	現代文學
<i>xiang</i>	鄉
<i>xiangbang wenhua</i>	鄉邦文化
Xianggang ren	香港人
<i>xiangtu wenxue</i>	鄉土文學
<i>xiangtu wenxue zhanlun</i>	鄉土文學戰論
<i>xiangyue</i>	鄉約
<i>xiaoren</i>	小人
<i>Xiaoxiao</i>	蕭蕭
Xichui	西陲
Xiguan	西關
<i>xin xiangtu shijing</i>	新鄉土市井
<i>xin yimin</i>	新移民
<i>xingzhuang</i>	行狀
<i>Xinhua Ribao</i>	新華日報
<i>Xinwen bao</i>	新聞報
Xitianyi jushi	溪田宜居士
<i>Xiuxiang xiaoshuo</i>	繡像小說
Xiyu	西域
Xiyu tongwen zhi	西域同文志
Xu Dashen	徐大伸
Xu Dishan	許地山
Xu Qinwen	許欽文
Xu Rong	徐榮
Xuehai shulou	學海書樓
Xuehaitang	學海堂
Xungen	尋根
<i>xungen wenxue</i>	尋根文學
<i>yan*</i>	人
Yang Xinmin	楊信民
Yao	葯
Yao	搖/搖
Yao Zhilan	姚芝蘭
<i>yao'er</i>	么二
<i>Yi bao</i>	益報
Yi Kezhong	儀克中
yi	義
<i>yilao</i>	遺老
<i>Yixiang yiwen</i>	異鄉異聞
<i>Yiyangqiang</i>	弋陽腔
Yonggu	永固
<i>Youxi bao</i>	遊戲報

Youxì zhuren	遊戲主人
youxì	遊戲
Youya	幼雅
Yu	禹
Yu Dafu	郁達夫
Yu Gu	魚谷
Yu Huai	余懷
Yu Jiuzhang	俞九章
Yuanqing	元慶
Yue	越, 粵
Yuedong wenhai	粵東文海
Yuedong zhi feng	粵東之風
Yuege	粵歌
Yueju	粵劇
Yueou	粵謳
Yueren	粵人
Yuexue	粵學
Yueyu	粵語
Yusi	語絲
yuyin	語音
Zeng Pu	曾僕
Zeng Xingwu	曾省吳
Zengcheng xianzhi	增城縣志
zhai po	齋婆
Zhan Kai	詹塏
Zhan Ruoshui	湛若水
Zhang Henshui	張恨水
Zhang Jiuling	張九齡
Zhang Taiyan	章太炎
Zhang Weiping	張維屏
Zhang Xiaolin	張嘯林
Zhang Zhidong	張之洞
Zhang Zhongxian	張仲賢
Zhao Shenqiao	趙申喬
Zhao Shuli	趙樹理
Zhao To	趙佗
Zhao Tongxue	趙侗學
Zhao Ziyong	招子庸
Zhe	浙
zhen	鎮
Zheng Wanlong	鄭萬隆
zhengfu	政府
Zhengyi	正一
zhengyin	正音
zhenqing	真情
zhishiban	志士班

<i>zhivin</i>	知音
<i>Zhongguo ribao</i>	中國日報
<i>Zhongguo Xin Wenxue Daxi</i>	中國新文學大系
<i>Zhongguo zhong</i>	中國種
<i>zhongle Mei du</i>	中了梅毒
<i>Zhongxi</i>	中西
<i>Zhongyang bao</i>	中央報
<i>zhongzhouyin</i>	中州音
<i>Zhou Jianren</i>	周建人
<i>Zhou Xin</i>	周新
<i>Zhou Zuoren</i>	周作人
<i>Zhouli</i>	周禮
<i>Zhu Peng</i>	朱彭
<i>Zhu Ruzhen</i>	朱汝珍
<i>Zhu Wenzao</i>	朱文藻
<i>Zhu Xi</i>	朱熹
<i>Zhuang</i>	僮
<i>Zhufu</i>	祝福
<i>Zhuji xiang</i>	珠璣巷
<i>Zhuming</i>	朱明
<i>Ziguang ge</i>	紫光閣
<i>zike</i>	字課
<i>zimenzhong</i>	自門中
<i>Zou Lu</i>	鄒魯
<i>Zou Rong</i>	鄒容
<i>Zou Tao</i>	鄒弢
<i>zujun</i>	祖君
<i>Zuo Zongtang</i>	左宗棠
<i>zuowei bencunren, nin jue de zihao ma</i>	作為本村人,您覺得自豪嗎

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