

STUDIES ON ETHNIC GROUPS IN CHINA

Stevan Harrell, Editor

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Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers

Edited by Stevan Harrell

Guest People:

Hakka Identity in China and Abroad

Edited by Nicole Constable

GUEST PEOPLE

Hakka Identity
in China and Abroad

Edited by

NICOLE CONSTABLE

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TO THE HAKKA AMONG WHOM WE HAVE BEEN GUESTS

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Note on Romanization

Most of the Chinese terms in this volume have been romanized in Mandarin pinyin with several exceptions: The terms Hakka (Mandarin: Kejia) and Punti (Mandarin: Bendi) are written according to their most familiar English spellings rather than in their less-common pinyin forms. Place names outside the People's Republic of China generally follow local custom (e.g., Hong Kong, not Xianggang), and personal names follow either individual or personal preferences or the standard recognized spelling (e.g., Sun Yat-sen, not Sun Zhongshan). Unless otherwise indicated, oral colloquial expressions are cited in the dialect in which they were spoken. A glossary of Chinese characters appears at the end of this volume.

GUEST PEOPLE

Hakka Identity

in China and Abroad

Introduction

What Does It Mean to Be Hakka?

NICOLE CONSTABLE

The term Hakka, which literally means “guest people” or “strangers,” is the name of a Chinese ethnic group whose ancestors, like those of all Han Chinese, are believed to have originated in north central China. Estimated to number in the tens of millions today, Hakka now reside mainly in Southeast China, Taiwan, and regions of Southeast Asia, but the Hakka diaspora extends to virtually every continent in the world.

The main question we pose in this volume—“What does it mean to be Hakka?”—may appear deceptively simple. The easy answer—which has been accepted and even preferred by many scholars who have worked in Hakka communities—is that Hakka are simply those who call themselves Hakka or who are so labeled by others. While we agree that this is an important starting point, it has too often been assumed that to merely “know” that a person, a community, or a custom is Hakka is sufficient. As we argue in the course of this volume, this is not enough. We need to examine the cultural and historical construction of Hakka identity, and its social, political, and economic relevance in different locales and particular contexts.

The number of English-language anthropological works based on field research in Hakka communities in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and in other regions has greatly increased during the past two decades, but most of this literature does not pose questions pertaining to Hakka identity. Important and interesting though such studies of the Hakka may be for their contributions to sinology and anthropology (e.g., Myron L. Cohen 1976, Pasternak 1972, Strauch 1984), the fact that the subjects of the study are Hakka as opposed to members of other ethnic or dialect groups has not been considered of great importance. Although there are some important exceptions (cf. Blake 1981, Myron L. Cohen 1968, and Lamley 1981),¹

1. This includes the majority of the very interesting papers that were presented at the first International Conference on Hakkaology, held at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, September 24–26, 1992.

Hakka has generally been treated as an essential, unchanging, unproblematic label—a given or objective truth, rather than a topic for analysis in and of itself. Thus scholars of Hakka language, religion, or community structure, for example, have been less concerned with the Hakka factor of the equation than with the topic in question. They largely gloss over or ignore the question of *who* exactly the Hakka are, and *what* Hakka means in different contexts.

In the chapters that follow, Hakka ethnicity is not treated as a given. In our attempt to develop a more complex understanding of Hakka identity, we do not neglect issues of who is labeled Hakka, or of Hakka self-ascription. These issues have long been acknowledged to be of central importance to the study of ethnicity. Nor do we avoid popular notions and generalizations about Hakka origins and history. These, however, we take as starting points in an attempt to separate objective Hakka history and experience from the more localized constructions and expressions of Hakka identity.

The contributors to this volume have also been influenced by the growing number of anthropological works on the cultural and historical construction of identity that emerged in the 1980s and 1990s (e.g., Blu 1980, Comaroff and Comaroff 1992, Daniel 1984, Kondo 1990, Michelle Rosaldo 1980, Eric Wolf 1982), as well as those that emphasize both the experiential side and the symbolic expressions of various types of identities (e.g., Alter 1992, Behar 1993, Lavie 1990, Renato Rosaldo 1986, Turner and Bruner 1986). In this volume we collectively describe the diverse histories of Hakka communities, the way Hakka identity is culturally constructed and symbolically expressed in different contexts, and the sociological significance Hakka identity takes on in each setting.

It is not enough to speak of a monolithic Hakka identity. The Hakka diaspora reaches well beyond the geographic borders of mainland China. Although their estimates are judged as high, members of various international Hakka associations claim that there are as many as seventy-five million Hakka worldwide today, with thirty to thirty-five million residing outside mainland China.² Since the seventeenth century, and particularly during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Hakka who came mainly from Guangdong agricultural communities emigrated to Taiwan, Malaya, and other regions of Southeast Asia, and as far as South Asia, Africa, Oceania, Europe, the Caribbean, and North and

2. Many scholars consider these estimates, particularly the ones for Hakka outside the mainland, excessively high. For further estimates, see Erbaugh (this volume).

INTRODUCTION

South America. Hakka emigrated for a number of reasons, but their motives were mostly economic and, in some cases, political.³ They often worked as manual laborers, taking up opportunities created by capitalist and colonial expansion. They built railways, labored in mines or plantations, worked as farmers, or set up small businesses. The descendants of these early Hakka immigrants speak different languages, eat different foods, and belong to different economic classes and political parties, yet they may retain the name Hakka and identify themselves as such.

In and of itself, this cultural diversity does not create a significant problem for anthropologists, whose models have long rejected the naive equation of an ethnic group as a cultural unit.⁴ But this does raise the practical and theoretical question of what these Hakka share with one another, with those who still reside on the mainland, and those who have emigrated in recent years, besides the label Hakka.

As we see in this volume, Hakka identity is of widely varied political, economic, social, and personal significance. Its relevance varies depending on time and place. The settlers of the Hakka communities we examine left mainland China at different times—as early as the seventeenth century and as recently as the twentieth—and Hakka now live in extremely diverse situations. But Hakka communities are not so endlessly varied and infinitely distinct from one another that they preclude any useful analysis. The communities we describe in this volume are distinct, but they share historical origins in South China. Moreover, they share certain ethnic processes that are of more generalizable significance. We do not, in other words, simply accept the Hakka claim that Hakka all share an *innate* bond, nor do we acquiesce to the postmodern dilemma that there appear to be such infinite subjectivities of Hakka identity that they defy wider social or cultural patterning. As John Comaroff and Jean Comaroff have argued for anthropology in general, “If our models are supple enough, they should make sense of even the most chaotic and shifting social environment. . . . Absence and disconnection, incoherence and disorder, have actually to be demonstrated”

3. Following the Taiping Rebellion (1851–64), for example, many Hakka—including those who were not involved in the uprising—fled South China for fear of political persecution. At about the same time, and following the Hakka-Punti Wars (1850–67) and the turmoil of the late nineteenth century, members of many Hakka Christian congregations are also known to have fled to Hong Kong, North Borneo, and elsewhere in order to escape religious and ethnic oppression (see Constable 1994:37).

4. See Bentley (1983:2–3) for a critique of the equation of social groups with culture units.

(1992:24). Our challenge is to make sense of shifting Hakka collective identities, their similarities, apparent discontinuities, and divergences.

A central question that this volume raises is the extent to which common mainland cultural origins—not to say Hakka identity—explain the similarities we find among Hakka communities, or whether some of the patterns we witness arise from more general processes of social change or ethnic interaction in the new setting. We need to account for the common stereotypes found in many of our cases regarding, for example, hardworking Hakka women, political patriotism, cooperativeness, and agricultural or working-class occupations, and we also need to question the extent to which these ideological patterns are reflected in social reality. In the diverse ethnic contexts in which Hakka now reside, they may be recast in a subordinate social and economic position or find themselves in different situations of hierarchy or inequality. These may replicate, to some extent, earlier ethnic hierarchies from mainland China, or they may be quite distinct. Thus one question we raise relates to the connection between Hakka ethnic consciousness and class or other systems of inequality.

Because many of our observations regarding the Hakka contribute to understanding ethnicity and ethnic processes in general, I have found it particularly useful, throughout this introduction, to refer to some of the general propositions and patterns regarding ethnicity described by Comaroff and Comaroff (1992:49–67). In general, the contributions to this volume support the Comaroffs' view that ethnicity is the product of historical processes but is not primordial; that ethnicity is not "a unitary 'thing,'" but it "describes a set of relations and a mode of consciousness" (1992:54); that ethnicity originates in systems of political and economic inequality; and that ethnicity "tends to take on the 'natural' appearance of an autonomous force, a 'principle' capable of determining the course of social life" (*ibid.*:60). Our cases also clearly illustrate the way ethnicity "may be perpetuated by factors quite different from those that caused its emergence, and may have a direct and independent impact on the context in which it arose" (*ibid.*:61).

Whereas Comaroff and Comaroff draw mainly on examples from Africa, the Hakka cases in this volume support and further illustrate many of their points. The social patterns we observe in Hakka communities generally have more to do with the wider ethnic processes and sociological patterns of which they are a part than with the "fact" that they are Hakka. On the other hand, some of the cultural patterns upon

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which the idea of social differences is inscribed appear to be more uniquely Hakka, despite differences in the social contexts in which they occur.

HISTORY AND THE EMERGENCE OF HAKKA CONSCIOUSNESS

One answer to our central question, as many Hakka are likely to suggest, and the contributors to this volume would agree, lies in Hakka history. Hakka are not only those who define themselves or are so labeled by others; they are those of whom it can be said that their ancestors shared a real or imagined history. There are two types of history in which we are interested in this volume. One is the collective history that Hakka believe they share, and that is often the most basic theme in the rhetoric about what it means to be Hakka. The second refers to the particular *historical forces* out of which Hakka ethnicity first emerged. These forces may have since caused Hakka ethnicity to diminish, to be perpetuated, or, possibly, to become a potent force in its own right. These two histories are not necessarily the same, but they may overlap.

The first history is fairly easy to collect or solicit from Hakka informants, and because it is simply a subjective point of view, we need not necessarily be concerned with its accuracy or “factual basis,” or with reducing it to one authoritative version. Its importance is primarily in the belief by Hakka themselves that it is true and based on fact. As such, it can take on a special power in the mobilization of ethnicity as a social force. This type of history is reflected in the quotations from my own informants and those cited by Ellen Oxfield, in Howard Martin’s citations from spokespersons in the Taiwan Hakka movement, and in Sharon Carstens’s translations from Hakka association (*huiguan*) volumes.

The second kind of history, which, as Myron Cohen, Mary Erbaugh, and other authors illustrate, may be derived in part from the first, is far more difficult to critically and accurately ascertain. It involves an attempt to identify the historical forces through which Hakka ethnicity is constructed. Through this type of history, as Comaroff and Comaroff propose, our objective is “to show as cogently as possible . . . how realities become real, how essences become essential, how materialities materialize” (1992:20). This second kind of history is, of course, like the first, a mental construct claiming a basis in fact. But it is perhaps best described as a “second order” construction of history, one that attempts

to explain how the first view of history came about, and one that aspires to be more consciously critical and analytical. As Comaroff and Comaroff suggest, it requires a “historical imagination.”⁵

The idea that history provides the key to ethnic identity is not new (cf. Keyes 1976, 1981:5). But when Charles Keyes discusses ethnicity as a “cultural interpretation of descent,” as a kind of descent writ large, this glosses over significant distinctions between ethnic and totemic groups who also share a collective identity. As Comaroff and Comaroff explain,

while totemism emerges with the establishment of symmetrical relations between structurally similar social groupings—groupings which may or may not come to be integrated into one political community—ethnicity has its origins in the asymmetric incorporation of structurally dissimilar groupings into a single political economy. (1992:54)

The asymmetric or unequal relations between ethnic groups is of central importance, as it is from an awareness of inequality, not merely cultural difference, that ethnic consciousness develops. “The emergence of ethnic groups and the awakening of ethnic consciousness are . . . the product of historical processes which structure relations of inequality between discrete social entities” (ibid.:55). The inequality between groups comes to be viewed, at least by those who belong to the group in a superior position, as justified by the ascribed, intrinsic character of each group. Thus Cantonese and Hokkien have accused Hakka of being uncivilized barbarians, while each of these groups claims to be “more Chinese than the other” (Blake 1981:4), and “Hakka, in turn, view the Cantonese and Hokkien . . . as descendants of aboriginal barbarians” (ibid.:5).

Assertion of the importance of history should not be mistaken to mean that ethnicity is merely a function of primordial ties. As the Comaroffs have written, “Contrary to the tendency, in the Weberian tradition, to view it as a function of primordial ties, ethnicity always has its genesis in specific historical forces, forces which are simultaneously structural and cultural” (1992:50). As they go on to explain, “It is the *marking* of relations—of identities in opposition to one another—that is ‘primordial,’ not the substance of those identities” (ibid.:51). Many

5. This is not to say that the first kind of history cannot influence social change as well. See Comaroff and Comaroff (1992:3–48) for their detailed discussion of the importance of history to what they call “neomodern” anthropology.

INTRODUCTION

Hakka themselves, of course, present Hakka identity as primordial, factual and essential—it did not emerge, it persisted. Many scholars share this view. However, this Hakka history, which begins centuries ago, in time immemorial, paradoxically predates the existence of the name Hakka, of Hakka ethnicity, and the existence of the Hakka as a social group distinct from other Chinese. It should thus be clear that this history was not *experienced* at the time as Hakka history, regardless of later Hakka sentiments, because Hakka had not yet emerged as an ethnic group. And, significantly, this history is in many ways indistinguishable from Chinese history in general. Nonetheless, this history has been claimed as their own by many Hakka and provides the ideological basis for the notion of a universal, shared Hakka identity (see Constable 1994:20–38).

Versions of both histories converge momentarily with the widespread belief that Hakka are the descendants of Han Chinese people who migrated southward from north central China before the fourth century C.E., and who, by the fourteenth century or so, had settled in China's southeastern provinces (see Cohen, this volume). From there they spread farther south and overseas to several of the communities described in this volume). As discussed below, the particular dates and stages of migration have been a topic of debate (cf., Myron L. Cohen 1968, Constable 1994, Hsieh 1929, Kiang 1991, S. T. Leong 1985, Lo Wan 1965, Luo Xianglin 1933, Moser 1985, Jerry Norman 1988, Ramsey 1987), but it is well accepted that the main body of those who later became Hakka migrated from north central China.

Han Suyin, herself descended from Hakka ancestors, colorfully describes in her autobiographical family history how Hakka fled southward to escape the advance of Chinggis Khan and the Mongol invasion during the thirteenth century:

The Hakkas were driven further south, or to mountainous poor areas. . . . Because of their mobility, hardihood and fierceness, the dynasties began to regard the Hakkas as potential pioneers, good for resettling the sub-populated areas. . . . Circumstance thus defined their group character: clannish, thrifty, loyal to each other, bad neighbours and ready fighters, the name Hakka stuck to them and they became proud of it. (1965:24)

Like Han Suyin, many Hakka writers associate Hakka “character” with their historical experiences, and here again the history with which

Hakka define themselves—in the form of character and qualities—may be separated from the actual forces that created the identity itself. Hakka historian Hsieh T'ing-yu explains:

The character of the Hakkas is shown quite clearly in their name and history. They are a strong, hardy, energetic, fearless race with simple habits but a very contentious and litigious disposition. Self-reliant and active, their rapid expansion and fondness of property have often brought them into conflict with their neighbors. . . . The Hakkas are proud of the literary accomplishments of their ancestors; they claim many well-known literati. . . . The Hakkas are a “people of the future,” unhampered by the prejudices or the easy-going slackness of the old land owners. . . . Fundamentally the Hakka is a farmer, forced by poverty to struggle with the unproductive soil. . . . They usually occupy the hilly and less fertile districts, while the Punti [earlier Chinese inhabitants]⁶ remain in possession of the fertile deltas and plains. . . . The sexes are not so strictly separated in domestic life as in the case with some of the other Chinese. The women folk are strong and energetic, and have never adopted foot-binding as a custom. (Hsieh 1929:203–5)⁷

These quotations illustrate how ideas about Hakka history permeate a Hakka self-image. As passages from James Michener's historical novel *Hawaii* illustrate, popular images of the Hakka hard work and industriousness are not found exclusively in Hakka texts and Hakka association publications.

6. Punti (Mandarin: Bendi) are the earliest Han Chinese inhabitants of a region. This term is often translated as “natives” or “indigenous” inhabitants. Even though there may in fact have been earlier non-Han inhabitants in a particular region, they are not usually referred to as Punti. In Guangdong the Punti are Yue (Cantonese speakers); in Fujian they are Min (Hokkien). In both cases this distinguishes the Chinese who were already settled in the area from Hakka and other later arrivals. In Hong Kong Punti are legally classified as those who resided in the New Territories before 1898; thus, members of a number of older Hakka lineages are classified as Punti. In Hong Kong, in certain contexts, the term Punti may be used to refer to Cantonese natives. As Elizabeth Johnson (this volume) describes, Hakka who are descended from those who were resident in Hong Kong before 1898 may distinguish themselves as *venturen* (also meaning “indigenous people”).

7. For a revised and slightly modified version of this article, which was one of Hsieh's bachelor's degree requirements at Yenching University, see Char and Kwok (1969), which includes a collection of Hakka mountain songs.

INTRODUCTION

In one scene of the book, set many generations ago, a Cantonese man named Uncle Chun Fat is helping the American Dr. Whipple recruit Chinese laborers to work on a Hawaiian sugar plantation. Chun Fat wants to enlist Punti laborers from his natal village, but Dr. Whipple will agree only to an arrangement in which half of the men are Hakka. Chun Fat wonders how Whipple has heard about the Hakka and asks:

“Why you want Hakka? No good Hakka.” Dr. Whipple looked him sternly in the eye, and his forty years of trading for J & W fortified his judgement. “We have heard,” he said slowly, “that Hakka are fine workmen. We know that the Punti are clever, for we have many in Hawaii. But Hakka can work. . . .” Chun Fat began cautiously, “Maybe Hakka work well but too much fight.” (1959:397)

Dr. Whipple and Chun Fat then proceed to climb from Low Village, the Punti village, to High Village, where the Hakka reside. The climb to High Village is strenuous, but as Dr. Whipple approaches, he experiences a feeling of identification with the Hakka.

Whipple looked about him as if he had come upon familiar terrain and thought: “The climb was worth it. This feels like a New England Village. I’m home again, in China.” The feeling was intensified when strong, sullen and suspicious Hakka began cautiously gathering about him, and he could see in their conservative faces portraits in yellow of his own ancestors. (1959:398)⁸

The particular historical forces out of which Hakka ethnic consciousness emerged, and the period during which Hakka ethnicity was generated are debated. If we accept the proposition that ethnicity involves “subjective classification, by the members of a society, of the world into social entities according to cultural differences” and “the stereotypic assignment of these groupings—often hierarchically—to niches within the social division of labor” (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992:52) or, as Fredrik Barth (1969) proposed, that ethnicity requires at least two groups in

8. Swiss missionaries who worked in Hakka regions of Guangdong in the early twentieth century described to me the same feeling of being “back home” in that mountainous region of China, which was similar to the Alps. They also spoke of the honest, hardworking, rugged Hakka who reminded them of pious European villagers.

competition over resources, then Hakka identity could not have emerged earlier than the seventeenth century. It was at that time, S. T. Leong asserts, that Hakka came into contact with other Chinese, who were culturally distinct and with whom they competed for resources (1980:14).

When the ancestors of the present-day Hakka arrived in South China, their language and some of their customs distinguished them from other Chinese whom they encountered. In this new environment the Cantonese label Hakka (Mandarin: *Kejia*) which, as mentioned above, translates literally as “guest people” or “stranger families,” or less literally as “newcomers” or “settlers,” may have first served as a way to differentiate in population registers the newcomers from the local inhabitants (S. T. Leong 1980). Hakka ethnic affiliation is thus likely to have originated from an attribution of ethnic identity to them by other Chinese. But the term Hakka has since become accepted by the people themselves as a group or ethnic label, as “an emblem of common predicament and interest” (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992:53).⁹

Exactly when and where Hakka cultural differences coalesced into an expression of social group differences is difficult to say. It is clear, however, that a conscious, collective group identity did not form in all regions where Hakka speakers existed, and its relevance clearly shifted in the different regions to which Hakka populations emigrated.¹⁰ As one Hong Kong Hakka man explained to me, it was not until he left Meixian (known as Jiaying or Kaying until this century), the region of eastern Guangdong where he grew up, and came to Hong Kong in the 1920s, that he realized that he was Hakka. Back home, he explained, everyone was Hakka, so he never really thought about it. In some regions of Fujian, Guangdong, and Guangxi, Hakka speakers worked as tenants or farmed and settled in the less fertile, hilly regions, while the Punti among whom they lived maintained their hold on the more fertile plains. In these new social situations, Hakka and Punti gradually became integrated into a single political economy (see Cohen, this volume).

As was mentioned above, the date of the emergence of a Hakka ethnic consciousness—as opposed to their existence as a cultural category of

9. Unlike other Chinese, such as the Cantonese, Chaozhou (Teochew), and Shanghainese, whose identities and languages correspond to the name of their place of origin, the Hakka, whose place of origin is a topic of debate, generally accept the label Hakka (S. T. Leong 1980).

10. Hakka consciousness and Hakka-Punti conflicts in areas of Guangxi where the Society of God Worshipers (*Bai Shangdi Hui*) first made inroads are discussed by Kuhn (1977); see also Constable (1994: chap. 2).

INTRODUCTION

people or a dialect group—has been widely debated. But certainly before the nineteenth century Punti rhetoric about the Hakka bears “the assertive stamp of protectionist ideology; a legitimation of [their own] control over economy and society. Concomitantly, it involves the negation of similar entitlements to others, often on putative cultural or ‘civilizational’ grounds, and may call into doubt their shared humanity” (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992:52).

Punti exhibited their protectionism, for example, in their attempts to prevent Hakka from participating in the Chinese civil service examinations, thus attempting to prevent them from achieving positions of authority in the government hierarchy (Lo Wan 1965:95–96, 113). As early as 1789 a separate examination quota was set up in certain parts of Guangdong in order to reduce the competition and the conflicts “between the minority groups and the rest of the population” (Chang Chung-li 1955:81; see also Lamley 1990, S. T. Leong 1985).

By the early nineteenth century Hakka rhetoric had begun to reflect a strong and growing ethnic consciousness. Hakka asserted their own legitimacy and espoused their views of exclusive Hakka history (S. T. Leong 1985:302–307). Of course, unlike the Punti, they attempted not to protect their position, but to improve it. By the end of the nineteenth century Hakka consciousness had blossomed, and there is little doubt that for many Hakka—especially those living in ethnically mixed or urban areas—ethnic identity had assumed both “experiential” and “practical salience” (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992:53).

Since the middle of the nineteenth century, due to the local wars between the Hakka and Punti in Guangdong and Guangxi, and the prominent Hakka involvement in the Taiping Rebellion, Hakka drew the attention of foreign scholars, missionaries, travelers, and writers. Many of these writers were influenced by Hakka converts or informants they encountered, or by Hakka written sources, which flourished by the beginning of the twentieth century and exuded Hakka pride (see esp. Hsieh 1929, Luo Xianglin 1933). Still other Europeans echoed the statements of non-Hakka Chinese informants who doubted that the Hakka were “true Chinese.” They often cast the Hakka as even more “strange and exotic” than other Chinese, suggesting that they were “backward” or “primitive” like the mountainous “hill tribes” of South China.¹¹

11. Regardless of their particular bent—whether they viewed Hakka as more or less Chinese than others they encountered—Western sources nonetheless projected what Edward Said (1979) has described as an Orientalist discourse on the subject.

In the early twentieth century a number of English-language publications contributed to the competing version of Hakka history, which suggested that Hakka were “less Chinese” than other groups in South China. The *Encyclopedia of Missions*, for example, described the Hakka as a “peculiar race or tribe, inhabiting the mountains near Canton and Swatow, who are a lower social rank than the local Chinese” (cited in Campbell 1912:474). The 1920 edition of *Geography of the World*, a text book by Roger D. Wolcott published by the Commercial Press of Shanghai, also suggested that Hakka were a “backward people” (Hsieh 1929:207). Wolcott’s views of the Hakka were derived from the work of Timothy Richard, a nineteenth-century Welsh missionary who wrote *Comprehensive Geography of the Chinese Empire* (S. T. Leong 1985:311). As Hsieh explains, Wolcott’s entry on the Hakka was translated in “Kaying [Jiaying] Magazine,” a local Hakka publication, and the statement that the Hakka were “a wild and backward people” set off extensive protests from Hakka organizations around the world (1929:20). Thus European historical texts influenced the process of history, and generated social action in the form of a mass meeting of Hakka concerned about their identity. The conference was held in 1921 in Guangzhou (Canton) and included over a thousand representatives from five provinces. Resolutions were passed and Wolcott was forced to retract his inflammatory statement (*ibid.*). Yet as late as 1945 the *Encyclopedia Britannica* still reported that the Hakka might not be “true Chinese,” but might instead “be related to the Burmese and Siamese” (Moser 1985:236).

As was mentioned above, this theory has been repeatedly criticized in the work of Chinese and non-Chinese scholars, as well as many European missionaries, who draw primarily from genealogies and local histories to document Hakka origins and migrations from north central China (e.g., Eitel 1873–74, Hsieh 1929, Luo Xianglin 1933, Piton 1873–74. See also Cohen, this volume, for an outline of these migrations). Linguistic evidence, although not in agreement about the exact time of “proto-Hakka” migrations, supports the claim that Hakka language has some unmistakably northern features (cf. Hashimoto 1973, Moser 1985, Jerry Norman 1988, Ramsey 1987, Sagart 1982, Paul S. J. Yang 1967). Jerry Norman classifies Hakka language as part of the “southern group” of Chinese languages, which have existed since the first to third centuries C.E. (1988:222). But rather than refuting the idea of northern origins, this only suggests an even earlier period of migration than Luo Xianglin’s (1933) earliest wave (during the fourth century)—one more

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compatible with Hsieh's (1929) scheme of classification (see also Cohen, this volume).

In keeping with these views of northern origins, Hakka often identify themselves, and are officially counted in the People's Republic of China, as Han *ren* (Han persons), descendants of the Han dynasty (206 B.C.E. –220 C.E.), members of the ethnic Chinese majority (see David Yen-ho Wu 1991). More to the point however, is that the Hakka are undoubtedly as Chinese as the Cantonese and Fujianese, who also developed from northern Chinese populations. Like these other groups, Hakka are likely to have mixed to some extent—both genetically and culturally—with other southern non-Chinese populations with whom they came into contact and, like these groups, they continue to assert their identity as preeminently Chinese (Blake 1981:4–5; Kiang 1991; Carstens, Constable, and Oxfeld, this volume).

But despite the academic and anecdotal arguments to the contrary, the idea that the Hakka might not be “pure” Chinese has persisted in some quarters, particularly in situations where ethnicity is viewed as the vehicle through which power struggles are expressed or articulated.¹² This is not surprising when we consider how ethnicity is related to power. As we shall see, although Hakka ethnicity arose out of the group's subordinate position within the Chinese economic and social structure during and perhaps earlier than the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in many of the cases we discuss occupations or class differences no longer break down along ethnic lines. Hakka ethnicity no longer strictly corresponds to economic or class differences. Nevertheless, derogatory images of Hakka, which were generated during times of greater conflict and competition, may persist and produce an ideology of class hierarchy.

CASE STUDIES AND APPROACHES

The contributors to this volume address the question “What does it mean to be Hakka?” from a number of theoretical vantage points and in a variety of sociocultural, political, geographical, and historical contexts. Some are more concerned with meaning and interpretation, and others with history and social organization. Yet all deal with issues of

12. A belief in the persistence of these ideas exists in and around Shung Him Tong, in the New Territories of Hong Kong, but not in Kwan Mun Hau (see Johnson and Constable, this volume; Blake 1981).

power (symbolic or more explicitly political) and with the historical and situational relevance of Hakka identity, and all would agree that Hakka identity, as with any ethnic label, ought not to be treated as an essential permanent or unchanging category, although it may present itself as such. One contributor (Mary Erbaugh) is a linguist and the other six are anthropologists who have conducted intensive field research within Hakka communities in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, India, and the People's Republic of China.

Myron Cohen's chapter was originally written in 1963 and published in 1968. It is presented here, three decades later, for several reasons: to make this landmark study more widely available to sinologists, China anthropologists, and Hakka scholars in particular; to provide important contextual and background material for the rest of the volume; and for the sake of its subtle contribution to intellectual history and the history of anthropological thought.

Although the overall picture Cohen presents is still widely accepted, the article may in some ways seem outdated. It was written in the more "objective" and "factual" mode of the time, which did not question an objective existence of group identity. Dialect, for example, is treated by Cohen as a given, not as constructed. The original article also predates G. William Skinner's influential work on locality and marketing regions (1964), and since it was written, more information regarding Hakka migrations has become available (notably S. T. Leong 1980, 1985; Lo Wan 1965).

Cohen's article is nonetheless still a very significant piece. It provides useful historical and sociological background material—both for the study of the Hakka in general and for the chapters in this volume—focusing primarily on the Hakka in Southeast China during the nineteenth century. Most important, perhaps, is how it documents the emergence of dialect as a sociocultural variable, one that went beyond the social categories of kin, class, or locality, and that provided the basis for social alliance and social action. In many ways this article demonstrates the instrumental and political use of Hakka identity in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although Cohen wisely avoids reference to the Hakka as a self-conscious ethnic group, the material he presents can be used as a clear example of what is referred to as the instrumental or circumstantialist approach to ethnicity, which was characterized by the work of Abner Cohen (1969, 1974) and Fredrik Barth (1969).¹³

13. See also Bentley (1981, 1983, 1987, 1991) and Keyes (1976, 1981) for discussions of various approaches to the study of ethnicity.

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Cohen demonstrates how nineteenth-century conflicts and collective action aligned with Hakka/Punti dialect differences, thus illustrating one part of the process by which Hakka identity became the basis for motivating collective action.

Elizabeth Johnson focuses in her chapter on the Hakka identity of the people of Kwan Mun Hau, in the New Territories of Hong Kong. At the turn of this century Kwan Mun Hau was a two-surname village located in a relatively isolated region comprised of twenty Hakka-speaking rural villages. It has since become incorporated into the largely Cantonese-speaking industrial city of Tsuen Wan. Johnson asks what it means to be Hakka for people whose ancestors settled in the New Territories during the eighteenth century, and who are officially acknowledged by the Hong Kong government to be Punti—original inhabitants of the area and acknowledged as an “indigenous” New Territories population. Kwan Mun Hau people, however, refer to themselves as *benturen* (indigenous), and reserve the use of the term Punti for the Cantonese-speaking indigenous population.

As Johnson explains, Hakka identity is not perceived as being particularly important in Kwan Mun Hau, nor does it take the same form as in other cases described in this volume. Unlike the Calcutta Hakka described by Oxfeld, the Kwan Mun Hau Hakka do not consider themselves “still guests.” Unlike the perception of the people of Shung Him Tong, which I describe in chapter three, Kwan Mun Hau people are not defensive of their Hakka identity, nor do they consider it stigmatized, or something they must preserve. Moreover, Hakka identity in Kwan Mun Hau is not the basis for political action, as is the case in Taiwan (see Martin, this volume).

The form Hakka identity takes in Kwan Mun Hau can be explained by the historical background, social organization, and political context of Tsuen Wan. For the people of Kwan Mun Hau, Hakka identity is of far less importance than their status as Punti or, as they would specify, *benturen*, or as Tsuen Wan people. They derive economic and political benefits from both their Punti and Tsuen Wan identities, but not from being Hakka. Yet despite a decline in the use of Hakka language in the Kwan Mun Hau region, and despite the fact that many of their purportedly Hakka practices have disappeared, there is still some sense in which people identify themselves as Hakka and consider themselves culturally distinct from other dialect groups around them. As Johnson illustrates, Hakka identity is expressed mainly through private and domestic rituals. But overall, for the people of Kwan Mun Hau, being Hakka is

“neither a matter of shame nor pride, but simply one aspect of their being, acknowledged, but not asserted” (Johnson, this volume).

My own chapter is also based on fieldwork in Hong Kong, but the people among whom I conducted research belong to a community very different from that described by Johnson. On the whole, the people of Shung Him Tong (a village in the northeastern New Territories founded after the turn of this century by Hakka Christians) have a much stronger sense of Hakka identity than do the people of Kwan Mun Hau. Unlike Kwan Mun Hau, which was established in a predominantly Hakka region, Shung Him Tong settlers arrived in an area dominated by a powerful Cantonese lineage.

I describe how ideas about Hakka identity in Shung Him Tong are expressed verbally and symbolically, through gender roles and the construction of a Hakka Christian cemetery. In contrast to the people of Kwan Mun Hau, the people of Shung Him Tong are in a sense doubly stigmatized by their Hakka and Christian identities. Unable to escape Hakka identity in the narrow confines of the local rural face-to-face community in which they live, they have chosen to interpret it in a positive light, and in a way that is compatible with their Christianity. Hakka identity in Shung Him Tong is maintained not because of the way it is tied to earlier economic or political struggles between Hakka and Cantonese, or because of any particular class structure, but because of Christianity. Christianity has influenced Hakka identity in at least three important ways: it created a social context in which Hakka identity was considered important, it provided a reason to perpetuate Hakka identity, and it influenced the form Hakka identity could take. Most important, perhaps, is that within the context of Shung Him Tong, asserting Hakka identity became a way for people to link their Chinese and Christian identities, and to claim that they could be both. In Shung Him Tong, as in Taiwan and Calcutta, we find that Hakka ethnicity is “perpetuated by factors quite different from those that caused its emergence” (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992:61).

Sharon Carstens’s chapter is based in part on her fieldwork in the Hakka Chinese community of Pulai in Malaysia. For most of her discussion, however, Carstens casts her net further afield so as to analyze the connection between social and cultural patterns found among Hakka in Malaysia and Hakka patterns that existed centuries ago in China. Pulai villagers, like many Hakka Malaysians, are descendants mainly of Hakka men who emigrated to Malaysia during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in search of gold and who, largely unsuccessful in their at-

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tempts, turned instead to subsistence rice farming. Among Pulai Hakka in Malaysia, Hakka identity seems secondary and of far less significance than a broader Chinese identity, which stands in juxtaposition to ethnic Malays.

Carstens asks whether, despite the apparent lack of concern for Hakka identity and culture among most Hakka in Malaysia, certain social and cultural patterns found among them can still be considered Hakka. She identifies three distinctive characteristics of Pulai villagers—economic conservativeness, egalitarian political orientation, and distinctive gender roles—and asks whether these are peculiarly Hakka features transmitted from China, or whether they might be more simply explained by the rural socioeconomic environment in which Pulai Chinese found themselves. Utilizing Bourdieu's (1977) concept of "habitus," Carstens argues (as does Bentley 1987, 1991) that one need not necessarily be aware of, or consciously able to articulate, one's ethnic identity in order to reproduce ethnic cultural patterns. Thus Carstens suggests that Malaysian Hakka have unconsciously reproduced Hakka cultural patterns despite their disinclination to emphasize Chinese dialect-group differences.

The Hakka community of Calcutta is described by Ellen Oxfeld (see also Oxfeld 1993). The Hakka are the largest of the three Chinese ethnic groups in Calcutta, some of whom arrived in West Bengal as early as the end of the eighteenth century. The Hakka tanners among whom Oxfeld studied, however, arrived only during the First World War, and have since overwhelmingly adopted the polluted but lucrative occupation of leather tanning. Oxfeld takes an interactional approach to Hakka ethnicity in Calcutta and shows that to understand it, we must consider the wider context of state and local politics, the stratified economy, and the socioreligious principles of the host society—primarily the Hindu concepts of purity and pollution. Oxfeld shows how Hakka define themselves vis-à-vis other Chinese and the wider Indian community, and also how they are perceived by others.

Although Calcutta Hakka live and work in an Indian community, they still define and identify themselves as Hakka. In contrast to Malaysia, where Chinese are also a minority, but where Hakka downplay Chinese dialect-group differences, Calcutta Hakka maintain a clear distinction between themselves and other Chinese. Calcutta Hakka express a hierarchy of "otherness" with non-Chinese referred to as *gui* (ghosts), non-Hakka Chinese as *lao* (fellows), and themselves as *ren* (persons). Their identity, again in marked contrast to Hakka in Malaysia as well as on the Chinese mainland, is tied to an image of Hakka as sharp business

people with a strong entrepreneurial ethic. Their dominance and success in the tanning industry is linked with their view of wealth as the basis of power and the measure of success. Among Calcutta Hakka, we again hear the claim that they are the loyal bearers of Chinese tradition. Cantonese, in contrast, are considered either more Westernized or more Indianized than are Hakka.

Several Hakka individuals encountered in the chapters by Johnson, Carstens, Constable, and Oxfeld express a perception or expectation of decline in Hakka identity, often as a result of decline in use of Hakka language and decline in knowledge of Hakka customs or the perceived relevance or awareness of Hakka identity. Yet as the example of the Hakka movement in Taiwan suggests, these concerns are not necessarily indications that Hakka identity is disappearing or diminishing—merely that the outward manifestations and expressions are changing.

In his chapter Howard Martin shows that what may appear on the surface to be a marked lack of relevance of and concern for ethnic identity may be significantly revitalized within a short period of time. Martin describes the recent resurgence of Hakka identity in Taiwan. This Hakka movement was not in evidence during the early 1980s. While it is too soon to tell exactly what direction the Hakka political movement will take, or to predict what longer-lasting impact it may have, it is clear that while the overt political relevance of so-called ethnic identities waxes and wanes, their existence—aside from their overt political significance—is far more complex. Identities that appear to have faded or diminished may well resurface as political factors or other variables change.

Martin outlines the development of three trends in the Hakka movement in Taiwan since the mid-1980s, which political leaders label loosely as traditionalist, moderate, and radical, and he explains briefly how the wider issue of political liberalization has allowed for the emergence of ethnic politics. Each faction within the Hakka movement has different ideas about what it means to be Hakka, different goals, and different visions for Taiwan's political future. Traditionalists look to reunification with the mainland, while radicals oppose Chinese reunification. Traditionalists draw on images of the old and glorious Hakka past before they arrived on Taiwan during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and they view themselves as one with all Hakka worldwide. In contrast, the younger, more radical faction of the Hakka movement in Taiwan appeals to Hakka in a "Hakka anthem" to "stop repeating that Hakka are so extraordinary, . . . so remarkable" and to instead "struggle

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with uplifted heads for freedom, and recreate Hakka spirit” in Taiwan. This anthem asks Hakka not to focus on former Hakka glory, but to construct a new identity based on “migration from China, suffering, shedding sweat and blood, pioneering, and establishing roots in Taiwan.” The “New Hakka,” Martin writes, “do not intend to borrow the greatness of the old to create a sense of ethnic solidarity.” And yet, even these “new” images of the Hakka and their history on Taiwan clearly draw on and echo many of the traditionalists’ themes.

Mary Erbaugh looks at the recent reemergence of Hakka studies in the People’s Republic of China today and asks why—since the early decades of this century until very recently—so little was said about the Hakka and the important role of Hakka-speakers and individuals from Hakka regions in Chinese revolution. Basing her study primarily on written sources and historical documents, and supplementing it with interviews, Erbaugh illustrates and substantiates what has long been claimed by many overseas Hakka: that an overwhelming and disproportionate number of Hakka have been involved in the process of communist revolution, the Chinese Communist Party, and the top levels of Chinese government. Most of these public figures, however, kept silent about their Hakka identity. And despite the important role of Hakka, the communist revolution has not been perceived as a Hakka ethnic movement.

Erbaugh describes several important factors that, until very recently, helped to obscure the importance of the Hakka in China. Perhaps the most important involves the Chinese national ideal of Han unity, to which Hakka and non-Hakka alike are committed, especially those who were active in the communist movement and who attained high offices in government. Hakka who succeed in politics take pride in their achievements as Chinese, Erbaugh notes, rather than as Hakka. Another factor is the importance in matters of ethnicity of official historical categories, such as locality or place of origin, which tend to obscure the importance of the Hakka, since they do not belong to any one region or locale. Another is the stigmatized nature of Hakka identity.

Most interesting about this case is that the rapid emergence of public discourse about the Hakka corresponds to the declining political role of Hakka individuals. Paradoxically, at what might have been considered the peak of Hakka political power, Hakka identity was kept silent. An important question raised by Erbaugh’s essay is Why, just as Hakka leaders are dying off and Hakka distinctive traits are disappearing, are Hakka studies beginning to flourish in China? According to Erbaugh,

mainland scholars date the recent burgeoning of Hakka studies to Deng Xiaoping's return to power in 1977, when "reformers reduced central control, encouraged local market economies, and aggressively solicited overseas ties." Linked to these changes are growing contacts with more ethnically aware overseas Hakka, and also the increasing acceptability of minority differences and "otherness." Like Martin, Erbaugh shows how the expression of ethnic identity can be either impeded or promoted by state policies.

SOME RECURRENT THEMES

Despite the geographical, historical, and cultural diversity of the Hakka groups described in this volume, much of the discourse about Hakka identity revolves around a set of remarkably homogeneous themes. These themes may be said to help structure the history and/or collective memory of particular Hakka communities in such a way as to maintain the integrity of certain key ethnic concepts. While there are numerous recurrent themes and further comparisons that can be drawn from the case studies described in this volume, I will limit my discussion here to the following key issues: the widespread notion that the Hakka are poor and rural, their reputation for unique gender roles, the problematic relationship between Hakka identity and Chinese identity, differing degrees of ethnic consciousness among Hakka communities, and the importance of Hakka language to ethnic identity.

Poverty and Rural Occupations or an Entrepreneurial Ethic?

Hakka are widely thought of as poor and hardworking farmers. As should already be clear, in most cases this image relates more to *perceptions* about the Hakka, or to the Hakka past, than to present reality. The articles in this volume show that the actual socioeconomic positions of the Hakka today are many and varied. In the Christian community of Shung Him Tong we find a broad spectrum of occupations and class identities: a highly educated group of Hakka who work as teachers, scholars, and bureaucrats (some at the highest level of the Hong Kong government), as well as factory workers. Only a small minority are farmers. In Calcutta the Hakka primarily are successful entrepreneurs, tanners, and shoemakers, and they are also found in the restaurant and haircutting businesses. Their occupations set them apart from Calcutta Cantonese, who predominate as carpenters, and Hubeinese, who gener-

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ally are dentists. The Hakka of Kwan Mun Hau are now mainly landlords and small business owners. In mainland China before the communist revolution, as Erbaugh points out, Hakka were far more likely to work in sideline industries than to be landlords. Many worked in mines, or in urban areas as ricksha pullers, barbers, or teahouse clerks. After the revolution Hakka regions of the mainland remained poor, but a number of Hakka individuals attained high government posts. In Malaysia and Taiwan, as in China, Hakka are still well represented in agriculture, but they are involved in other occupations as well.¹⁴

Although Hakka may once have been tenant farmers on the mainland, they no longer are exclusively poor and powerless, and they span various economic classes. Yet in many settings this has not altered their reputation. As a man in Hong Kong explained, one reason this stereotype persists is that successful Hakka readily pass as Cantonese. Certainly in most parts of Hong Kong, and also in Malaysia, this often appears to be the case.¹⁵ Sharon Carstens observes that Malaysian Hakka who became economically successful “seemed especially interested in investing themselves with the credentials of proper Confucian gentlemen and displaying their loyalty to general symbols of Chinese high culture” (this volume). This is also suggested by Mary Erbaugh’s analysis of Hakka who reached positions of power in the People’s Republic of China. Upper-class or successful Hakka are better able to escape the stigma of being Hakka, and are therefore more likely to present themselves as successful Chinese than successful Hakka. As Comaroff and Comaroff describe this process, “on leaving the underclass” those who become successful “must either seek to discard their ethnic identities—which, after all, mark the predicament from which they contrived to escape—or sustain the contradiction of being a member of a group whose primary class position is different from their own” (1992:63). For the prominent mainland Chinese leaders who came from Hakka regions and spoke Hakka but who never presented themselves as Hakka in

14. Chua and Tan describe how Dabu Hakka dominate the pawnbroking trade in Singapore (1990:67–77). See also Clyde Kiang (1991:38–47) for a list of notable Hakka politicians, entrepreneurs, and professionals.

15. Shung Him Tong provides a notable exception. Regardless of their degree of economic success, Hakka Christians of Shung Him Tong are very likely to continue to identify themselves as Hakka and to be regarded as such by others, at least within the local context of the church and village. In the wider context of urban Hong Kong, however, most Shung Him Tong residents could easily pass as Cantonese (see Constable, this volume).

public, however, political considerations and ideals of Han Chinese national unity were also important factors.

Why, then, do some successful Hakka continue to identify themselves as Hakka? In Shung Him Tong the answer lies in the fact that they are also Christian. In Taiwan it may be that upwardly mobile Hakka have identified their group as a potentially powerful social force. In other situations, such as in Kwan Mun Hau, upward mobility has been accompanied by a decline in the importance of Hakka identity (if, indeed, ethnicity was ever consciously articulated there).

Calcutta Hakka are in a very different situation. There, economic success does not serve to blur the boundaries between Hakka and other Chinese (or Indians), nor does it cause the Hakka to present themselves as Chinese instead of Hakka. On the contrary, ethnic distinctions are strengthened by the inversion of the hierarchy that existed in mainland China. In Calcutta Hakka economic success depends in part on maintaining ethnic boundaries to protect monopoly over the tanning industry (cf. Barth 1969, Abner Cohen 1969). As Ellen Oxfeld suggests, citing Eric Wolf, ethnicities are "historical products of labor segmentation" (1982:381). Similar to the competitive situation between Hakka and Punti out of which Hakka ethnicity first emerged in China, Hakka ethnicity in Calcutta is related to the segmentation of the labor market. In the new setting, however, Hakka are in a position of power relative to other Chinese, and Hakka consciousness can only contribute to maintaining their position.

In contrast to the Hakka of Calcutta, with their entrepreneurial ethic, Pulai Hakka told Carstens that "Hakka have no head for business." Carstens suggests that lack of business success along with mainly rural residence and rural occupations (such as plantation work and mining) among the Hakka of Malaysia may be explained primarily by the legacy of rural occupations and economic conservativeness back in China. Yet if this is the case, the legacy clearly takes on new meanings in the new context. The Hakka of Kwan Mun Hau do not frame the issue in terms of Hakka versus non-Hakka business ability, but in terms of newcomers versus natives. The newcomers, they suggest, are forced by their circumstances to be "more capable and enterprising" than Kwan Mun Hau natives, who are more economically conservative and rooted in the place. In Shung Him Tong we find yet another permutation. There Hakka insist that it is not that they are unable to succeed in commerce, but that because they are Christian, they have little desire to do so.

Although the Hakka of Calcutta are the most explicitly entrepreneurial

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of the cases we examine, and they appear unique in their expression of an entrepreneurial ethic, this ethic is associated with and supported by similar notions about the Hakka that appear in other locales. According to Oxfeld's Hakka landlady, Cantonese in Calcutta are less financially successful than Hakka because they are overindulgent. "When Cantonese make money, they get lots of servants, eat with ivory chopsticks, and use tablecloths, . . . but Hakka keep working hard" (Oxfeld, this volume). The idea of Hakka frugality and thrift is also expressed by the Hakka Christians of Shung Him Tong. According to a young Hakka schoolteacher from Shung Him Tong, "Hakka people are very good people—hardworking, thrifty, and practical. Not like the Punti, who like to have a good time and are not hardworking. When they [Punti] make money they just become opium addicts, in contrast to [Hakka] people like my grandfather, who was poor and saved a little bit of money so he could buy some land" (Constable, this volume). In these vastly different contexts, similar statements distinguish Hakka from other Chinese. In one case the emphasis is on entrepreneurial success, in the other, morality and piety.

Unique Gender Roles

As is noted in several of the chapters of this volume, the belief that Hakka women are particularly hardworking and that Hakka gender roles mark them off from other Chinese is extremely widespread among scholars and among Hakka and non-Hakka alike. During the nineteenth century westerners traveling in Hakka regions of China observed that women worked very hard in the fields, did work that non-Hakka often assigned to men, and were less likely to have bound feet than were other Chinese women. Hakka women's contributions to agricultural work and the custom of leaving girls' feet unbound are often unquestionably linked with the poverty and greater demands for agricultural labor that existed in the harsher regions of China in which Hakka often resided. However, in many Chinese agricultural regions, including many Cantonese areas in Guangdong, regardless of the degree of poverty, daughters' feet were bound at an early age and women worked only within the confines of their homes. In Hakka regions this was not usually the case. It is widely believed that even girls who were born into wealthy Hakka families were unlikely to have their feet bound, and that Hakka women who married into wealthy families often continued to participate in manual labor outside of their homes.

Nineteenth-century Hakka gender roles are often regarded simply as

logical economic adaptations and as essentially Hakka. Such assumptions neglect the fact that this particular gendered pattern of labor represents only one possible response to economic circumstances, and also fail to ask how such characteristics came to be widely identified as uniquely Hakka, although they are not. The practice of footbinding, for example, originated in the north as a marker of elite status, and was later emulated by members of the lower classes in many other regions of China. Scholars believe that by the nineteenth century footbinding was practiced to some extent throughout the country, but that it was least popular in the southern provinces of Guangdong and Fujian (Carstens, this volume; Gaw 1991:12-13; Levy 1966; see also Anagnost 1989). In the wealthy silk-producing regions of the Canton Delta footbinding was not widely practiced, and although it was not a Hakka area, women there shared Hakka women's reputation for independence, diligence, and making important economic contributions to their households (Stockard 1989:175).

Female participation in agricultural work, unbound feet, and the greater degree of freedom attributed to Hakka women are features that are characteristic of non-Han minorities as well (Constable, this volume). Such cultural practices have therefore been used to support the view that Hakka were at best very unorthodox Chinese, at worst not Chinese at all. The association of these practices with Hakka and other low status groups is also likely to have further fueled the perceived need for poor non-Hakka Chinese to bind their daughters' feet and to restrict their public roles.

Because of the widespread persistence and extreme uniformity of the stereotypes of Hakka gender roles today, it is tempting to conclude that these stereotypes maintain a strong factual basis. Specific research on the economic roles of Hakka women, however, points to the problem with such broad generalizations. In Calcutta, for example, Ellen Oxfeld found that Hakka women are widely recognized as an important source of labor in the tanning industry and that their hard work and economic contribution is regarded as uniquely Hakka. However, Hakka women in Calcutta who belong to wealthier and more economically successful families are less likely to participate directly in the daily operation of the family firm (Basu [Oxfeld] 1991; Oxfeld 1993, and this volume).

While it is certainly likely that in the Hakka (or pre-Hakka) past, at least during the last century, Hakka women played a very active and visible economic role in the public sphere, in contrast to many of their non-Hakka Chinese neighbors in the immediately surrounding regions,

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this is far less likely to be the case today. Undoubtedly, Hakka women continue to make important economic contributions, but many, as in Hong Kong, find themselves in new, more urban, and socially heterogeneous situations where the pattern of female extra-household work has become far less of a uniquely Hakka pattern than it once was.

Moreover, to acknowledge the important economic roles of Hakka women in particular contexts is not to say that Hakka women actually work harder than other women. All we can say is that in some contexts they appear more likely than other women to participate in extra-household work, and that when they do, their work is often perceived in ethnic terms. In Hong Kong, among the people of Shung Him Tong, one commonly hears the assertion that Hakka women work harder than other Chinese women and are given a greater public role. But, as in Calcutta, it does not appear that all Hakka women work equally hard, or that they categorically work harder or more often outside of their homes than non-Hakka women in the region. According to Sharon Carstens, there is some indication that in Malaysia Hakka women have played a greater role in extra-household production—in tin mining and rubber tapping—than have women from other dialect groups. Hakka women in Pulau still commonly participate in agricultural work and are thought to have particularly “strong backs” and “strong wills” compared with women from other groups. As in Shung Him Tong, however, their hard work does not appear to translate into greater power or influence in community affairs. Kwan Mun Hau people also believe that Hakka women have a distinctive role, although it is not as explicitly economic, and that Hakka unity, inclusiveness, and egalitarianism distinguish them from the non-Hakka in the region. These features are all expressed in their ancestral hall worship. In contrast to Cantonese halls, in which only the tablets of certain prominent male ancestors are installed, Hakka halls display only one tablet, that of the founding ancestor, so that in theory and belief all ancestors—rich and poor, men and women—are included.

The persistence and uniformity of Hakka gender stereotypes may suggest the reproduction of older patterns in new contexts, but more likely it is explained by a more general, more universal, growing pattern of female labor participation in the formal sector of the economy worldwide, paired with a constructed and widely articulated idea about essential Hakka gender roles. What still requires further explanation is why, as female labor outside of the home becomes less and less exclusively Hakka, the stereotype of hard-working Hakka women and unique gen-

der roles should persist. And why, even in Calcutta, where financial success is associated with a decrease in women's participation in family enterprises, do we still find such a stereotype?

One possibility is that Hakka gender stereotypes today are not linked to any actual numbers or percentages of Hakka working women, but to the idea that characteristics that at one time served to identify Hakka and other groups as poor or backward can now be interpreted in a very different way. In many societies, including mainland China, allowing women to participate in the paid work force has gained political currency. Indeed, as I assert in my chapter, the idea of Hakka women's involvement in the public sphere, at least in Shung Him Tong, has come to be associated with modernity and progress. Ideas pertaining to Hakka gender roles now help lay claim to a type of Hakka protofeminism, women's liberation, and gender equality that is historically constructed as having been far ahead of its time. As was discussed in the previous section, when members of an ethnic group become increasingly upwardly mobile, we would expect, following Comaroff and Comaroff, at least some members to discard ideas and practices that distinguish them from other elites.¹⁶ Such may be the case for wealthy Calcutta Hakka. In other cases, however, leaving the underclass may not be accompanied by a need to repudiate Hakka gender roles, because they can be adapted and transformed to fit a new rhetoric of gender equality.

The connections among Hakka identity, class mobility, and gender roles deserve further research. The essays in this volume suggest that despite changes in the economic and social position of Hakka in various settings, and despite the fact that greater numbers of non-Hakka women have entered the public work force in many regions where Hakka live, the idea or perception of distinctive Hakka gender roles persists (see also Blake 1981, Pasternak 1983). Even in Calcutta, where Hakka women's roles vary with the family's economic status, this reputation endures (Oxfeld, this volume). In some cases—perhaps those most closely resembling the Hakka rural past—Hakka gender roles are still articulated as an economic necessity. In others, ethnic patterns may be giving way to ideas about class mobility. In yet others, particularly those in which Hakka seek to actively transform and legitimize Hakka identity, gender roles may be transformed into a modern discourse of gender equality—one that does not necessarily reflect social reality.

16. See Erbaugh (this volume) for a discussion of the fascinating example of Sun Yat-sen's family.

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The Hakka as Chinese

In several of the cases in this volume, Hakka claim to be both distinctly Hakka and preeminently Chinese. This is a bit of a paradox. Mary Erbaugh explains that the Hakka as a whole have seen themselves as the preservers of traditional northern Han culture. The Hakka of Calcutta claim that they are more faithful bearers of Chinese tradition than are other Chinese, and the Hakka of Kwan Mun Hau have couplets outside their ancestral hall that read “The descendants of those who came from Henan continue / The customs of the North are retained.” The Hakka of Malaysia—both rich and poor—insist on being respected as “true [Han] Chinese” and are determined to preserve their Chinese cultural traditions (Carstens, this volume). The Hakka of Shung Him Tong do not claim to have preserved all of the customs of the north, since many conflict with their Christian beliefs and practices, but they do claim that Hakka are the purest Chinese. As was mentioned earlier, the idea that they are the most Chinese of all is not unique to the Hakka. Ethnicity commonly involves a claim to purity or authenticity.

While it would be easy to say that these cases all share the fundamental feature of equating Hakka identity with being Chinese, if we look more closely, we can see differences in the ways Hakka and Chinese identity are related. To the Hakka of Kwan Mun Hau and Pulai, Hakka identity is only of secondary importance to the fact that they are Chinese. We have seen that for the successful Hakka of Malaysia wealth provides the means to express Chineseness, not Hakkaness. For the people of Kwan Mun Hau, secure in their status as Punti (or *benturen*) and Tsuen Wan natives, there is little question in their minds, or those of others, but that they are Chinese. In contrast, in Shung Him Tong to be Hakka is to assert one’s Chineseness, despite possible accusations that one is no longer Chinese because one is Christian. In Shung Him Tong there is also a desire to defend the preeminence of Hakka Chineseness. In Calcutta Hakka identity appears to be even more exclusive. Calcutta Hakka view themselves as Chinese, but place an emphasis on their superiority as Hakka. In Taiwan there appears to be little doubt that Hakka are Chinese, but in recent years Hakka identity has taken on far greater importance and the distinction between Hakka and others is now being emphasized.¹⁷

17. Cantonese, both in mainland China and overseas, assert that they are people of the Tang dynasty, rather than the Han dynasty.

What is shared in all of these cases is the provision by Hakka history of means to argue that Hakka are the most Chinese Chinese. As one missionary writer aptly put it, Hakka history is essentially “nothing else than an outline history of the Chinese in general” (Piton 1873–74:225). On one level we cannot deny that this is true: all Chinese claim to have north central Chinese origins and the Hakka are no different (Blake 1981). We should also note that many of the characteristics with which Hakka describe themselves (diligence, honesty, hard work, etc.) also reflect archetypally Chinese values. But although in many significant ways the history and culture of the Hakka resemble those of other Chinese, Hakka are at the same time regarded as distinct. It may be precisely the flexibility of Hakka history—that it is at once distinct from and the same as Chinese history—which makes it adaptable to a variety of different claims and situations. The same view of Hakka history is shared by those who choose to emphasize their distinctiveness and by those who choose to emphasize their connections with other Chinese.

Hakka Consciousness

Most of the Hakka communities described in this volume are comprised of populations that descended from emigrants who, originating in different villages and regions, left China at different times. One question this raises—which is impossible to answer, but interesting to speculate about—is whether there is any correlation between the time and place from which people migrated and the importance of Hakka identity in the new immigrant community. For example, would communities founded by later emigrants exhibit a stronger degree of Hakka consciousness than those established by seventeenth- and eighteenth-century emigrants?

While this question presumes that Hakka communities in China became increasingly conscious of their Hakkaness through time, we know that the pattern, more accurately, also varies from one location to another. The more isolated and homogeneous Hakka-speaking communities (such as Meixian) seem less likely to be ethnically aware than those in which Hakka and Punti live interspersed, such as the Shenzhen or Bao’an regions of Guangdong, which adjoin the New Territories of Hong Kong. As we have already asserted, a sense of ethnicity originates in an environment in which competition between groups comes to be understood as ethnic. But we have also suggested that by the end of the

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nineteenth century Hakka consciousness in Guangdong and Guangxi had reached a peak and was fairly widespread.

Since we have little specific information concerning the degree of Hakka consciousness in different mainland communities to begin with, or even enough information to say much about the particular communities in China from which immigrants came, our answer can only be speculative. But the question itself raises some important issues. While we would not expect the ethnic sentiments of early immigrants to be perpetuated over centuries except under certain conditions, the stronger sentiments of later immigrants are more likely to persist over a short period of time, despite their possible lack of—or changed—relevance. Thus what deserves attention is not so much the mere perpetuation of Hakka identity, but the specific conditions in which it continues to be of relevance or in which its significance declines.

Of the cases described in this volume, the most recent immigrants are the Hakka of Calcutta, who arrived around the time of World War I, followed by the Hakka of Shung Him Tong, who began to arrive after the turn of this century. Indeed, these two communities exhibit a much stronger sense of Hakka identity than do the Kwan Mun Hau Hakka, who arrived mainly during the mid-eighteenth century, and the Hakka of Malaysia, who arrived mainly during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The Hakka of Taiwan, who arrived there at about the same time as Hakka went to Malaya, present an interesting exception. In Taiwan Hakka identity most clearly takes the form of an ethnic political movement, but this is most likely a modern development that has emerged out of local political history.

The Hakka in Malaysia are certainly far less conscious of their Hakka identity than are those in Taiwan, Shung Him Tong, or Calcutta. In the new context other allegiances, based on local or on Chinese (as opposed to Malay) identity, have taken on greater relevance. In Kwan Mun Hau and Malaysia people acknowledge when pressed that they are Hakka, but show little concern for their Hakka identity. Their more relevant identity is Punti. Although not Cantonese, they, as early settlers in the New Territories, have more in common in terms of status with the New Territories Cantonese Punti than with later Hakka immigrants, such as the people of Shung Him Tong.

The Shung Him Tong Hakka have come much more recently to Hong Kong, many of them from linguistically mixed Hakka and Punti regions of southern Guangdong. In contrast to the socioeconomic position of the people of Kwan Mun Hau, Shung Him Tong people arrived

in a region dominated by powerful Cantonese-speaking Punti lineages, and in which they were a Hakka minority. Today the memory of the animosity and competition between Hakka and Cantonese-Punti plays a role in the maintenance of Hakka identity, and Christianity provides the key.

Hakka identity in Calcutta is not maintained merely as a remnant from the past, but, as we have suggested, with renewed and vital significance in the new context. In Calcutta, where Hakka dominate the tanning industry, they maintain social boundaries between themselves and other Chinese and, as in Shung Him Tong, they declare their superiority over other Chinese. In Taiwan, as Howard Martin suggests, it was only after the government lifted martial law and the political climate allowed for the emergence of opposition politics that a Hakka political movement was mobilized. Similarly, Mary Erbaugh demonstrates the importance of political change in the recent reemergence of interest in the Hakka in the People's Republic of China. These cases suggest that time of migration is only a minor factor, alongside a number of other, far more important issues, including the new ethnic landscape, political climate, and other, less predictable, issues.

Language

Hakka language is an important consideration in each of the chapters, but particularly in those of Cohen, Martin, and Erbaugh. According to Martin, the common thread that ties together all Hakka in Taiwan—whether they be traditionalists or radicals—is their concern for Hakka language. Erbaugh also emphasizes the historical importance of language among the Hakka in China during the Taiping Rebellion and also during the Long March (1934–36) and its aftermath, and she hints at the possibility of Hakka language serving as a badge of Hakka identity at a time when other public expressions of ethnic distinctiveness were officially criticized and publicly denounced.

In Hong Kong in particular Hakka language is on the decline (as it appears to be in Taiwan and Malaysia) and for many Hakka this is perceived as a threat to Hakka identity. To some this threat is not such a serious one, but, as in Taiwan, it can quickly become transformed into an important and volatile political issue. Despite the decline in Hakka language in many regions, the contributions to this volume do not support the view that there is necessarily a direct and predictable correla-

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tion between linguistic and ethnic demise. Although language may be a sociocultural variable (see Cohen, this volume), it is clearly not coterminous with ethnicity; nor does a language or dialect group automatically or necessarily form an ethnic group. Language as a cultural characteristic may become a powerful ethnic symbol, as has Hakka language in Taiwan, or as in the cases described by Benedict Anderson (1983). But the existence or persistence of Hakka language does not, as in the case of Kwan Mun Hau and many regions of China, suggest the necessary coexistence of a correspondingly strong sense of Hakka identity. The reverse is also true: as several of the chapters here illustrate, the demise of Hakka language does not necessarily point to the decline of Hakka ethnicity.

CONCLUSION

This volume demonstrates that there are few, if any, actual observable cultural differences that distinguish Hakka from others across the board. Hakka language is diminishing in a number of settings, Hakka mountain songs (*shan ge*) are rarely sung, and Hakka clothing is no longer worn. But ideas about Hakka distinctiveness—that they have distinctive gender roles; that they are cooperative, hard working, egalitarian, or frugal; and that they share a common past—persist.

Hakka identity was first formed at a time when the Hakka were an underclass. Today it is clear that not all Hakka are poor, but the stereotype of Hakka poverty continues to shape identity. Hakka individuals can respond to such a stereotype in a number of different ways and can consider it as either a negative or positive quality. Like Hakka leaders in the People's Republic, they may choose to ignore it, or even cease to identify themselves as Hakka. Alternatively, like many overseas Hakka and recent Hakka scholars in the People's Republic, they may embrace Hakka identity and transform or resist negative stereotypes. In some cases, where there appear to be contradictions between the real-life economic situations of Hakka and the existing stereotypes, the discrepancy may be attributed to individual differences, or to differences between the Hakka past and the Hakka present, or, as in Kwan Mun Hau, Hakka identity may simply lose much of its salience. Such responses are likely to vary among communities, among individuals within the same community, and even for the same individual in different social contexts or periods of the life cycle. What is clear, however, is that many of the

stereotypes Hakka are faced with are relatively consistent, although the applicability of the stereotype to particular situations, and the response to it, vary widely.¹⁸

Many of the contributions to this volume also suggest that there *are* some patterns, tendencies, or differences that are not merely unfounded beliefs of or about the Hakka. They propose that Hakka identity is not merely an ideological construct. While on the surface this position may seem to imply a return to an essentialist approach to ethnicity, the authors in this volume attempt to escape this pitfall through careful attention to history, the use of Bourdieu's concept of "habitus" (1977; see also Bentley 1987, 1991), and careful concern for the different settings, situations, and ways in which people define themselves and experience their identity. Hakka in different situations may share certain characteristics as a result of their common past—consciously or unconsciously transposed into the new setting—but, more often, new meanings take shape against the backdrop of a new cultural environment.

The challenge is to explain how these themes have come to be related to the Hakka, bearing in mind that common patterns do not imply a primordial identity; their persistence and reappearance during different times and in different places need to be explained and accounted for. We describe in this volume the genesis, persistence, and transformation of Hakka ethnic consciousness in China and other settings, and the reasons that Hakka identity in places such as Kwan Mun Hau and Pulau seems to be breaking down, why it has reemerged in Taiwan and mainland China, and why, in Shung Him Tong and Calcutta—for very different reasons—it persists. Much work remains to be done.

Although several of the authors in this volume have made a conscious attempt to include explicitly Hakka voices in their work, I must agree with Comaroff and Comaroff that we do not speak *for* the Hakka; rather, we speak *about* them (1992:9). In this regard we heed the Comaroffs' warning:

If we take our task to be an exercise in intersubjective translation, in speaking for others and their point of view, our hubris will cause us no end of difficulties, moral and philosophical.

18. As Vincent Crapanzano has written, "One of the characteristics of stereotypic thinking is the reduction of movement through time to a symbolic instant that is perhaps psychologically satisfying to the thinker but is rarely sufficient to the subject of his thought" (1980:32). Such is also the case for stereotypes about the Hakka.

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And if we see it to lie in the formal analysis of social systems or cultural structures, statistically or logically conceived, we evade the issue of representation and experience altogether. But if, after an older European tradition, we seek to understand the *making* of collective worlds—the dialectics, in space and time, of societies and selves, persons and places, orders and events—then we open ourselves to conventions of criticism widely shared by the nonpositivist human sciences. Then, too, we may traffic in analytic constructions, not in unverifiable subjectivities, and can acknowledge the effects of history upon our discourses. (1992:12)

This volume necessarily presents only a “partial truth” (Clifford 1986) about the Hakka, and we are also, unavoidably, co-opting others’ voices.¹⁹ Yet we do not claim to have the final word on Hakka identity. In keeping with current works in anthropology that argue against the imposition of essential categories, yet acknowledge the importance of their existence for those who live them, our hope is for the essays in this volume to become part of a growing and ongoing dialogue on the subject of Hakka identity.

I am especially grateful to the Hakka individuals among whom we have worked over the years. Without them this volume would not be possible. The project as a whole has also benefitted in various ways from the help of Nancy Abelmann, Joseph S. Alter, Andrew Y. L. Cheung, Charles Chung, Pei-yi Guo, Lorri Hagman, Stevan Harrell, William A. Shack, Robert Sundick, James L. Watson, Rubie S. Watson, and Robert Weller. I also wish to thank the outspoken individuals who attended the panel “What Does It Mean to Be Hakka?” at the 1989 meeting of the Association for Asian Studies; Myron L. Cohen, who served as the discussant for the panel; the contributors to this volume; and several colleagues and students at the University of Pittsburgh and Western Michigan University.

19. On this theme see Clifford (1983), Clifford and Marcus (1986), Marcus and Fischer (1986), Said (1989), and Zhang Longxi (1988).

I/ The Hakka or "Guest People"

Dialect as a Sociocultural Variable in Southeast China

MYRON L. COHEN

This essay is concerned with developing the proposition that the linguistic diversity of Southeast China was a variable influencing the social organization of the region. That differences in language were used to differentiate social groupings will be demonstrated through a study of the interaction of Hakka-speakers in Guangdong and adjoining areas of Guangxi with speakers of Cantonese.

An anthropologist may point to several features of Southeast China which marked off that region from the remaining territory occupied by the Han Chinese. In so doing, he may choose to maintain a synchronic perspective, but yet insist upon a flexible baseline so as to enable a sufficient documentation of any points developed. This approach has been adopted by the one work attempting an anthropological analysis of Southeast China as a whole. Maurice Freedman's *Lineage Organization in Southeastern China* is based upon material some of which is "avowedly sociological," but of which "a great part . . . derives from a very heterogeneous collection of books and articles," involving "jumps in space and time" (1958:vi). Drawing upon nineteenth-century and pre-Communist twentieth-century data, Freedman presents a model for the social organization of Guangdong and Fujian. The present essay takes Freedman's monograph as a starting point, and seeks to add another dimension to the image of southeastern Chinese society which has already been presented.

Freedman (1958:2-9) was interested in establishing for Southeast China the significance of the localized and stratified patrilineage in the

Author's note, 1996: I originally wrote this article for a conference in 1962, and a year later it served, slightly expanded, as my master's essay for the Department of Anthropology at Columbia University. In 1968 this later version was published in *Ethnohistory* (vol. 15, no. 3, pp. 237-292) with only a few minor editorial changes. With the kind permission of Duke University Press, on behalf of that journal, it is reprinted here. In preparing this

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ordering of interpersonal relations and the constituting of social groupings. The localized lineage certainly was one of the elements of the Han Chinese sociocultural repertory that saw a great development in the Southeast, and a manifestation of this was the common occurrence of villages inhabited by members of one lineage only.

In regards to regional differentiation, Southeast China possesses yet another distinctive feature. This is the very great number of mutually unintelligible tongues to be found in the area. *Guanhua* (Mandarin), says R. A. D. Forrest:

has largely replaced the original local dialects all over China north of the Yangtze River. But the provinces of the South and Southeast, from Kiangsu [Jiangsu] to Kwangtung [Guangdong], have maintained intact their local forms of Chinese, sometimes called the "dialects" *par excellence*. (1948:10)

Apart from the Wu dialects, spoken in the vicinity of the mouth of the Yangtze, Forrest distinguishes "three main groups of dialects: Cantonese, Hakka, and the Fukien [Fujian] dialects" (1951:673). Hakka and Cantonese are primarily confined to Guangdong, although there are extensions of both into Guangxi. Of the Fujianese group, the Shantou (Swatow) and Chaozhou dialects are also spoken in Guangdong, in the extreme North (*ibid.*:673-74).

We may thus note the interesting fact that Fujian and Guangdong, the very two provinces where "the coincidence of agnatic and local community . . . appears to have been most pronounced" (Freedman 1958:1), was also a region displaying considerable linguistic heterogene-

article for its reappearance in this volume I have limited myself to correcting a small number of typographical errors and revising my translation of one Chinese term.

Author's note, 1968: This paper was submitted in 1963 in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Department of Anthropology, Columbia University. An earlier version, entitled "Dialectical Differences and Social Relations: Cantonese-Hakka Interaction in the 19th century," was presented at the Seminar on Micro-Social Organization in China, held at Cornell University, October 11-13, 1962, and sponsored by the Subcommittee on Chinese Society of the Joint Committee on Contemporary China of the American Council of Learned Societies and the Social Science Research Council.

Editor's note, 1996: The body of this article remains in very much the same form as when it was first published. Minor editorial changes have been made in order to maintain consistency with the rest of this volume. The most significant change is that, as far as possible, Chinese terms in the original article have been changed to pinyin romanization.

ity. But the presence of several dialects in an area of considerable size in itself does not indicate that interaction between different linguistic populations was significant in terms of group formation and constitution, i.e., in terms of social organization. Additional bits of information, however, bring out the point that the linguistic diversity of Fujian and Guangdong was carried down to the local level, and that many of the inhabitants of the two provinces may have found themselves frequently dealing with people speaking dialects other than their own. Forrest finds that the Fujian “dialects,” though “sharply defined against the two great dialects of Kwangtung [Guangdong],” nevertheless do “differ between themselves.” In addition to the Xiamen (Amoy), Shantou, Chaozhou, Jianyang, and Jianning dialects of the Fujianese group, there are others, including the dialect of Fuzhou City, which is ‘said not to be understood further than some forty miles from Fuchow [Fuzhou] itself’ (Forrest 1951:675–76). And when Forrest tells us that in Guangdong “there is no clear boundary between Cantonese and Hakka, as the two peoples tend to occupy separate villages in the same areas” (1951:674), a linguistic fact takes on sociological significance.

The scanty Western-language material relevant to a study of the interaction between the different linguistic populations of Southeast China has, for a variety of historical reasons, almost exclusively dealt with the settlement of the Hakka among the Cantonese, and the subsequent conflicts that developed between the speakers of these two dialects. Indeed, it was the proportions which these conflicts reached during the mid-nineteenth century that initially stimulated Westerners to note and publish facts on the Hakka and Cantonese, their differences, and their disputes. Undoubtedly, a careful examination of Chinese-language material will yield much data on the significance of linguistic differences in

I am most grateful to Howard J. Martin for voluntarily taking on the painstaking and time-consuming task of converting Wade Giles and idiosyncratic systems of romanization to standard pinyin. In cases where original sources did not provide Chinese characters for personal or place names, rather than guessing at the intended character, the original spelling has been retained. Within English quotations pinyin romanization of Chinese terms is provided in brackets whenever possible.

More has been written on Hakka migrations since the original version of this article was written (see, for example, Kiang 1991, Lo Wan [1965], and S. T. Leong [1980, 1985]). On Hakka language, dialect groupings, and linguistic analyses of the origins of Hakka language, see Jerry Norman (1988), Moser (1985), Paul Yang (1967), and Hashimoto (1973). On the relevance of Hakka dialect to the Taiping Rebellion, see Kuhn (1977), Erbaugh (this volume), and Constable (1994: chap. 2). Additional sources are provided in the Introduction to and References in this volume.

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the social configuration of Fujian, and in those parts of northern Guangdong where the interaction was among speakers of different Fujianese dialects or between them and Hakka and Cantonese. But the utilization of Chinese sources dealing with local conditions in all of Guangdong and Fujian would require a research effort beyond that demanded in an essay of this sort. The Western material relating to Hakka-Cantonese interaction has within it information sufficient to suggest the major outlines of a more restricted study. I have therefore utilized data drawn from Chinese sources only to amplify points which otherwise would be inadequately covered, and to provide a historical introduction. While this essay is thus a case study of the interaction between two linguistic populations only, it should be noted that Hakka-speakers were intermixed with Cantonese over wide areas of Guangdong (as well as adjacent parts of Guangxi). A significant part of Southeast China is thereby involved. The full areal extent of Hakka-Cantonese interpenetration will emerge in the following section.

It would be best to conclude these introductory statements with a brief summary of those parts of Freedman's work that relate to the present essay.

Freedman (1958) considers that southeastern Chinese society in the main was given its configuration by the interplay of two modes of organizing relationships. Individuals would be members of landed and stratified patrilineages where there would be access to corporate resources, and where the lineage would operate as a unit for either the defense or the expansion of its corporate holdings and perhaps also the private holdings of lineage members. Given the high degree of localization and nucleation, often resulting in the lineage being congruent with the village, political and economic differentiation would take place within the context of organized communities of agnates, and the advantages offered by membership in a corporate group would be unequally distributed. This indeed was a reflection of the fact that the kin-based lineage was immersed in a larger society, one with strong socioeconomic class differentiation.

All of China was characterized by a gentry-peasantry dichotomy, in which the possession of wealth, mainly or ultimately in the form of land, would enable one to prepare himself or his children for eligibility in the state bureaucracy. And between those eligible for participation and the local representatives of state power there was a mutual bond involving membership in the same socioeconomic class. This bond was manifested in the monopoly which the gentry of any region would

possess over access to the local representatives of the state. In regard to the southeastern Chinese lineage, class differentiation thus had a functional value, for it meant that there would be individuals who could represent the corporation in dealings with the state. But the gentry also represented the state in dealing with the lineage, and this, plus the position of the gentry as landlords and as manipulators of corporate wealth, led to a continuing tension between the gentry and the peasantry. Antistate activity took the form of participation in secret societies, the membership of which crossed lineage lines. This indicated both the inability of the lineage to fully defend its corporate interests against the state and the limitations of kinship bonds in an economically differentiated society.

It can be seen from the above that the model Freedman presents for Southeast China involves a balancing of the principle of group affiliation through agnatic kinship against that of group affiliation through participation in statewide class alignments. In this essay I will strive to validate the assertion that associated with the linguistic heterogeneity of Southeast China was the fact that dialect was a third structural variable, a third means of group affiliation.

I

Evidence relating to Hakka-Cantonese conflicts should be viewed in conjunction with the historical record of the Hakka migration to Southeast China from the North and with certain historical developments which were concurrent with it. In this way it will be seen that there were many specific factors involved in the process by which antagonistic linguistic populations emerged in Guangdong and Guangxi.

The most comprehensive discussion of the sequence of Hakka migration is contained in the works of Luo Xianglin (1933; 1950). Both Luo and other writers on the subject (Campbell 1912; Eitel 1873-74; Hsieh 1929; Piton 1873-74) rely heavily upon data drawn from the lineage genealogies of groups currently recognizable as Hakka-speakers. The use of such data presents two problems of interpretation: (1) whether such sources are uniformly reliable for the entire period with which they deal; and (2) at what point do these sources relate to the Hakka as a linguistically differentiated population?

Hsien-chin Hu (1948:12; cf. Freedman 1958:7; *Chinese and Japanese Repository* 1865:282) has indicated that not until the Song dynasty (960-1279) did the lineage begin to assume its present form; not until then

did the keeping of genealogies as we know them today commence. The unreliability of pre-Song family records has also been attested to by writers of the Hakka. Luo Xianglin's (1933:41) plea that genealogies must be used for research on Hakka migrations even prior to the Song "movement to revise the genealogies" is based upon their importance as practically the only source of earlier data, but involves an acknowledgment of their deficiencies. Hsieh T'ing-yu (1929:211) and Charles Piton (1873-74:225) are disturbed by the similar descriptions of origins and migrations which are to be found in the pre-Song portions of both Hakka and Cantonese lineage records. These similarities may in part be accounted for by the fact that the intensified absorption of non-Han groups in Southeast China, following the removal of the Song dynasty to the south of the Yangtze (Wiens 1954:183), occurred during the very period in which there was a general reconstruction of genealogies. The genealogical records produced by newly arriving Chinese might have served as models for the older inhabitants of the region.

As to the original home of the Hakka, there is only the genealogical evidence as a guide, and this indicates that previous to the Eastern Jin (317-420) the ancestors of the Hakka were primarily to be found in Henan (Luo Xianglin 1933:63).

Luo interprets the present distribution of the Hakka as the result of five successive "migratory movements" southward. The first of these began in 317 C.E. in conjunction with the southward flight of the Jin, and extended as far as central Jiangxi (1933:43, 45). Towards the end of Tang (618-907), the campaigns of Huang Chao gave stimulus to a second migration (ibid.:50). Henan was again affected, from which province there were movements to Jiangxi and southern Fujian, while some of those previously settled in northern and central Jiangxi also entered southern Fujian as well as immediately adjoining parts of Guangdong (ibid.:46). Huang Chao was not active in north-central Jiangxi so that the earliest immigrants there remained unmolested (ibid.:46). It is for this region that George Campbell reports that "the *t'u t'an* [*tutan*, "local speech"] which we readily identify with the Hakka at first becomes less intelligible than the Mandarin, as we go northward, so we are at a loss how to classify the people" (1912:474). The contrast between this northwestern sector of linguistic gradation and the sharp dialect differentiation which elsewhere marks off the Hakka from their neighbors leads us to suspect that during the migrations at the end of Tang, Hakka was not yet strongly differentiated from the speech of contiguous Chinese. The ancestors of the Hakka at this point were in

the forefront of Chinese overland migration, for Xu Songxi has shown that the groups being encountered, and at least to an extent absorbed, by the Hakka in southern Fujian were non-Han (1946:162).

Certainly the genealogical records do attest to the continuity between the late-Tang settlement of southern Fujian and the present Hakka population in that area and in Guangdong. There is even a high degree of specificity: a great many, if not the majority, of Guangdong Hakka appear to trace their ancestry directly to the Fujianese village of Shibi (Shakpiak) in Ninghua County (Nenfa), Tingzhou *fu* (prefecture) (Campbell 1912:474; Hsieh 1929:216; Luo Xianglin 1933:55-57; Piton 1873-74:222). The material relating to Shibi would seem to indicate a high degree of nucleated settlement involving speakers of the Hakka dialect. This concentration and relative isolation of Hakka-speakers in southwestern Fujian and the concurrent absorption of neighboring non-Han groups extended from the close of the Tang through the Southern Song (1127-1279), and lasted perhaps as long as four hundred years (Hsieh 1929:211; cf. Oehler 1922:351).

Although the main impact of Hakka migration was to be felt later, the Hakka "incubation period" in southwestern Fujian already had begun to show signs of ending during the Southern Song. Tingzhou, in the center of the Hakka district, was described as follows in a memorandum of 1171 recorded in the *Fujian tongzhi* (Fujian provincial gazetteer): "Ting-chou [Tingzhou] has the most bandit troubles in Fukien [Fujian]. In a period of ten years, we have been forced to take arms thrice. . . . Many people are out of employment and become bandits" (quoted in Hsieh 1929:212).

Across the border, in that region of northern Guangdong today comprising Meixian and its vicinity, the situation was quite different. There the countryside was comparatively underpopulated, but the inhabitants seemed to have title to all the cultivable lands. Meizhou, the destination of many of the immigrants from southwestern Fujian, was described by the Southern Song scholar Wang Xiangzhi in his *Yudi jisheng* (The wonders of the world). In Meizhou, Wang writes: "The land is neglected and the people are lazy; farmers are few and the cultivators are all sojourners from Tingzhou and Ganzhou [in southern Jiangxi]; therefore no one suffers from a lack of fields" (quoted in Luo Xianglin 1933:57).

These earlier inhabitants of northern Guangdong were soon displaced or absorbed by a growing stream of Hakka from Fujian. During the changeover from Song to Yuan rule Hakka began to enter Guang-

dong in great numbers, deriving from the adjoining *xian*¹ of Ninghua, Changting, and Shanghang, with the majority of persons still departing from Shibi (Luo Xianglin 1933:54). Concurrent with the filling up of the entire northern and eastern part of Guangdong with Hakka-speakers was a steady decrease in the population of Ninghua *xian* (county). The *Ninghua xianzhi* (Ninghua County gazetteer) records a drop in the *xian*'s population from 35,000 "families" in 1253, during the Southern Song, to 12,588 "families" in 1391, at the beginning of the Ming (1368–1644), and to 5,279 "families" at its close (Hsieh 1929:219). These figures, even though their accuracy may be questionable, suggest that while the fierce fighting attendant to the Mongol occupation of the region in 1277 (Luo Xianglin 1933:50–51) might initially have contributed to the depletion of the population, the presence of emptier lands to the south continued the process.

The census figures also suggest that there was not a steady process of population outflow in conjunction with population growth. What we see, rather, is the result of a prior imbalance: overpopulation within a restricted area and underpopulation elsewhere, presuming equivalent ecological carrying capacity. In addition to the isolating factors posed by mountainous terrain, we may assume that a relatively predictable if diminishing food supply might for a time offset any pioneering tendencies within an area of high population density. In addition, the possibility that the inhabitants of a comparatively underpopulated region might hold and have the means of asserting prior rights to some or all potentially usable lands would to an extent limit the quantity and quality of land available to newcomers. But if the population of a given locale would begin to exceed the carrying capacity of the land, a surplus population would be created, and forced to seek new means of subsistence. The new means might take the form of banditry, or would be sought through emigration. In the latter case pioneers would not only be searching for lands for themselves, but might transmit information back to the home region. (George Campbell notes that from the establishment of a school in Meizhou by a Ninghua scholar during the Southern Song, "both places were known to each other" [1912:477].) The involvement of many individuals in the pioneering activities of a few meant that information about new settlement possibilities could

1. A *xian* is an administrative unit below the provincial level. It is usually translated as "county" or "district."

lead to large-scale movements from the overpopulated regions, so that within a short period of time people of diverse origin might be living interspersed with the "natives" of previously sparsely settled areas.

During the very period of the buildup of a large Hakka population in southwestern Fujian, the province of Guangdong was undergoing intensive sinicization. The growing penetration of the Chinese administrative apparatus during the Tang and Northern Song (960-1127) was not initially accompanied by an appreciable increase in the influx of Han Chinese into the area (Xu Songxi 1939:177-78). It was with the transfer of the Song capital south of the Yangtze that the intensive absorption and settlement of the Southeast commenced (Wiens 1954:183).

Now the sinicization at this time of Southeast China, especially Guangdong, set the stage for the encounter of linguistically heterogeneous but Chinese populations. We have already noted that during the Song the development of lineage organization was associated with the spread of Chinese culture. When, at the end of the Southern Song, large numbers of people began to enter Guangdong from the north, they were confronted by a population that had come to possess a cultural repertory quite similar to their own. There were differences, chief among them being dialect. Most of Guangdong was probably now populated by Cantonese-speakers, and it was at this juncture that the inhabitants of the mountainous regions of southwestern Fujian entered Guangdong and became known as the "Guest People"—*Kejia* or, in its Cantonese pronunciation, *Hakka* (cf. Oehler 1931:8). In contradistinction, the older inhabitants assumed for themselves the title of *Punti* (Bendi, "Natives") (cf. Laai 1950:92). In the emergence of Guangdong's cultural landscape it can be seen that, at least in the historical sense, the development of localized agnatic groupings and the establishment of different linguistic populations were associated phenomena.

The movement we have discussed has been classified by Luo Xianglin as the third Hakka migration, and its general direction was from southern Jiangxi and southwestern Fujian to the eastern and northern sectors of Guangdong. It was associated with the flight of the Song across the Yangtze and the subsequent conquest of all China by the Mongols (1933:50). By the end of the Yuan, northern and eastern Guangdong were exclusively Hakka regions (*ibid.*: 58).

The fourth period of Hakka migration is considered to have begun on an intensive scale with the Manchu conquest in 1644. The main route was from northern and eastern Guangdong to the middle portion of the province as well as to its central coastal areas. Hakka-speakers also

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reached eastern and central Sichuan, eastern Guangxi, and Taiwan. Hakka from southern Jiangxi and southern Fujian as well as from the Meixian region of Guangdong moved into western Jiangxi and southern and central Hunan (Luo Xianglin 1950:34).

The resumption of the southward push was conditioned by a process of population nucleation in northern Guangdong similar to that which had occurred in Fujian. Throughout the Ming and early Qing the Hakka population in northern Guangdong had been steadily expanding (Luo Xianglin 1933:59). There is evidence that prior to the Manchu invasion, population pressure in the Jiaying *zhou* (prefecture) region (including Meixian) was already forcing considerable emigration and creating a bandit problem. Government officials might expedite the former to control the latter. The *Tianxia chunguo libing shu* (Merits and faults of all the countries in the world) says that Boluo, in central Guangdong, had

heretofore . . . consisted of the native inhabitants only. The fields were extensive and the people few. . . . During the reign of Kia-Lung [1522-73], there were increasing mountain bandits in the northeastern part of the province, but the district was the least disturbed by the disorders. . . . In the year 1548-49, the people from Hsingning and Ch'anglo [Xingning and Changlou, districts in Jiaying *zhou*] carried their belongings and came. . . . The local inhabitants objected, but the officials said that these districts were crowded and poor . . . and that it was better to let them stay with the natives. After this . . . others from Ting Chou [Tingzhou] and Chang Chou [Changzhou] in Fukien [Fujian] also came. . . . The natives were weaker and the newcomers stronger. Hence disputes and quarrels arose. (Cited in Hsieh 1929:220)

The middle of the Qing saw Hakka-speakers already spread throughout many parts of Guangdong, and by 1730 large numbers of Hakka were in the vicinity of Guangzhou (Eitel 1873:162). There was now a wide area in which speakers of the Hakka and Cantonese dialects lived interspersed, and the subsequent "history" of the Hakka strongly features violence between these two populations.

During the second quarter of the nineteenth century, the continuing expansion of the Hakka population in the region stretching from the northeast to the southeast of Guangzhou, especially in the vicinity of

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Sihui, Kaiping, Enping, and Taishan, led to increasingly frequent conflicts with the Cantonese; the most violent battles occurred after 1856 and lasted until 1867, when the governor of the province decreed the establishment of the subprefecture of Chiqi as a sort of reservation where Hakka displaced by the fighting could reestablish themselves.

TABLE I. I
Agricultural Land and Population Density of Hakka *Xian* and of *Xian* which
Were the Sites of the 1850-67 Hakka-Cantonese Conflicts

XIAN OF THE NORTHERN GUANGDONG HAKKA ZONE (Hakka-speakers the only Chinese [Han] Agricultural Population)				
<i>Xian</i> ¹	Amount of cultivated land (in <i>mu</i>) ²	Percentage of total ²	Population ³	<i>Mu</i> per person
Lechang	207,100	11.00	106,740	1.94
Renhua	194,700	11.00	46,492	4.19
Nanxiong	671,500	16.05	202,943	3.31
Ruyuan	153,100	5.30	87,106	1.76
Qujiang	906,300	12.85	241,904	3.75
Shixing	205,500	5.10	94,454	2.18
Pingyuan	143,600	5.45	101,790	1.41
Jiaoling	111,100	8.75	107,854	1.03
Meixian	380,200	7.25	548,091	.69
Dabu	111,400	3.30	262,104	.43
Lianxian	519,400	17.90	215,872	2.41
Wengyuan	242,000	9.00	134,557	1.80
Yingde	639,000	7.45	288,475	2.22
Lianping	155,500	3.50	86,641	1.79
Heping	216,000	7.50	162,349	1.33
Longchuan	122,400	3.50	317,249	.39
Xingning	86,200	2.40	467,836	.18
Wuhua	139,800	3.65	328,787	.43
Zijin	308,300	6.60	210,284	.47
Lianshan	52,100	1.85	41,885	1.24
Yangshan	318,000	5.80	201,841	1.58
TOTAL:	5,883,400	7.38	4,255,154	1.38

Continued on next page

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TABLE I.1 (Continued)

XIAN IN WHICH HAKKA SETTLERS
CAME INTO VIOLENT CONFLICT WITH THE CANTONESE
BETWEEN 1850 AND 1867

<i>Xian</i> ⁴	<i>Amount of cultivated land (in mu)</i> ⁴	<i>Percentage of total</i> ²	<i>Population</i> ³	<i>Mu per person</i>
<i>Sijiu</i>	857,600	11.35	162,665	5.27
<i>Gaoyao</i>	1,063,600	25.95	479,874	2.22
<i>Gaoming</i>	322,300	33.20	100,941	3.19
<i>Xinhui</i>	1,245,100	44.95	881,605	1.41
<i>Enping</i>	299,900	9.20	233,585	1.28
<i>Zengcheng</i>	824,000	24.00	365,003	2.26
<i>Heshan</i>	308,900	15.40	246,572	1.25
<i>Yangchun</i>	322,300	5.10	288,256	1.12
<i>Kaiping</i>	346,800	15.45	498,988	.70
<i>Taishan</i>	2,254,700	18.35	737,084	3.06
TOTAL:	7,845,200	17.45	3,994,573	1.94

1. Lou Xianglin (1950:53-54).

2. *Chinese Economic Yearbook*, vol. 1, (1935:F50-F53). A *mu* equals 0.0667 hectares.

3. *Administrative Districts* (1947:73-79).

4. Lou Xianglin (1933:3, 62).

Since Chiqi *ting*, formed out of a portion of Taishan *xian*, was too small to hold all of the refugees, many went on to the extreme southwestern tip of mainland Guangdong as well as to Hainan Island and overseas. Luo Xianglin sees in the order of 1867 the commencement of the fifth period of Hakka migration, a migration still in progress at the time of his writing (1933:3, 63; 1950:32-33).

The nineteenth-century Hakka migration into the interior of Guangdong was a regional manifestation of a growing pressure of population upon land resources throughout China. This pressure was felt more consistently in Guangdong than in areas such as the Yangtze Delta, where a brief respite was later obtained due to population losses incurred during the Taiping Rebellion (Ho 1959:167-68).

Surveys and estimates made during the 1930s and 40s indicate that differential population density still prevailed in Guangdong, with the

northern Hakka zone having less cultivated land per person than the *xian* surrounding and comprising the Pearl River estuary, the region of the most violent Hakka-Cantonese conflict. If we view internal migrations as a process of adjusting population distribution to the carrying capacity of the land, the attraction offered by the central Guangdong *xian* becomes clear. (See table 1.1.)

Though Hakka migrations may be said to continue to this day, by the late nineteenth century the spread of Hakka-speakers throughout Guangdong was an accomplished fact. In addition, speakers of southern Fujianese dialects had been settling in parts of the province. The heterogeneous nature of the countryside did not go unnoticed at the time. E. J. Eitel remarks that

the population of the Canton Province is at the present time as mixed as the population of England was some time after the Norman conquest. The first invaders, who now-a-days style themselves Puntis . . . have assumed ownership of the Province, and, on the whole, successfully struggled with the other invaders, two different races . . . who are now-a-days distinguished by the names Hak-ka and Hok-lo (or Ch'au-chow-men) [Chaozhou]. . . . The Hok-los kept for the most part near the seacoast and the banks of the larger rivers, and did not spread far over the interior of the Province; whilst the Hak-kas . . . spread all over the country. (1867:47)

The net result of the successive southward expansions of the Hakka was that by 1950, of the ninety-seven Guangdong *xian*, fifteen were entirely Hakka-speaking in composition while an additional fifty were inhabited by Hakka living in some degree of dispersion among speakers of other dialects. In twenty-eight of the latter *xian*, Cantonese comprised all or part of the non-Hakka population (Luo Xianglin 1950:53-54).

II

The foregoing historical sketch gives an indication of the extent, both temporal and spatial, of Hakka settlement among speakers of other dialects. Available data also allow for an examination of the ways this settlement was carried out among Cantonese speakers in Guangdong and adjoining parts of Guangxi.

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Note initially that departures from Hakka districts could be either on an individual or group basis, and that different emigrating groups would be differently constituted. From what informants born in Meixian have told me, it appears that people leaving Hakka districts for other parts of Guangdong would often go by themselves. They might go together with their families, which could be extended to varying degrees. Business associates or friends might accompany each other, and departing groups could also include remote kinsmen, affines as well as agnates. But whether such groups would all settle in the same locale was problematical, for the dispersion involved in emigration might be carried even further by limited settlement possibilities.

The amount and type of land available for use by newly arrived Hakka immigrants could be conditioned by several factors. The most important of these involved the system of land tenure in Guangdong, which was such that, barring state interference, all land, either cultivated, uncultivated, or waste, would already be part of an individual or corporate estate. When the New Territories were still "new," the British recorded that

all hills and waste lands are claimed by the nearest villages or most powerful clans in the neighbourhood, or even at a distance. Even portions of the sea and the bed of the sea, foreshore, sand beaches and any land whatever which may be turned into use and profit are claimed. (Hong Kong 1900a:17)

According to Chen Han-seng, lands in the making were also claimed by localized lineages in the Pearl River Delta region:

River current and sea tide work daily and incessantly to bring sediments and to form sandy but exceedingly fertile lands; and by protection and the planting of a certain kind of grass thereon, they may be converted into cultivable fields within three years. For such new lands the wealthy clans compete among themselves to pay the taxes, in order that they might claim their ownership. (1936:29)

Eroded hillsides, from which only grass could be procured, might be controlled by either agnatic or territorial groupings. C. K. Yang notes that the poor peasants of Nanching, a multisurname village near

Canton, "could not cut grass that was within the boundaries of neighboring villages" (1959:67). In the Hakka areas of northern Guangdong, localized lineages would have claim to all available grasslands. According to W. Bernard Paton, it was "not uncommon for trouble to arise with a neighboring clan over this grass cutting business. Sometimes the cutters are accused of encroaching beyond their rightful boundaries" (n.d.:67).

Thus, as a result of the historical sequence of settlement in Guangdong, Hakka arriving in a region new to them would find all land already under claim. But to hold title to land is not necessarily to obtain agricultural wealth from it. Hakka entrance into Cantonese-held regions was expedited by the fact that much of the land claimed was not under cultivation. Yet the lands available for lease were of a poorer variety, being less accessible to water for irrigation. The pattern of Hakka settlement would in part be determined by the location of the more valuable lands, for these lands would already be farmed by Cantonese-speakers. In hillier zones, highly productive lowlands would of course be interspersed among poorer hillside plots, so that initial Hakka settlement would involve a high degree of dispersion among Cantonese-speakers. This seems to have been the case over a wide area of Guangdong and adjoining parts of Guangxi during the nineteenth century. In the New Territories, the process of Hakka settlement has been described as follows: "They first settled in the narrow mountain valleys, and there high up in the smallest valleys they laid out their rice fields, where there was to be found only a small stream" (Oehler 1931:15).

A similar situation was reported by a late-nineteenth-century traveler among the "hills in central Canton" who said that "through all the region traversed on this journey I found that the Puntis, or native Cantonese, occupy most of the plains and level arable land, while the Hakkas are taking possession of the upper and less accessible valleys" (Henry 1886:273).

Shortly afterwards, H. Compte Meyners d'Estrey noted that in six of the *xian* of Guangzhou Prefecture the Hakka were still outnumbered by the Puntis:

Here the Puntis . . . have remained masters of the soil. They inhabit generally the fertile valleys and force the Hakka . . . to content themselves with the mountains, where the land is less fertile; there, where the immigrants are less numerous, they pay,

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ordinarily, the rent of the lands to the first inhabitants of the country. (1890:31)

This situation prevailed in other regions where the Hakka were recent arrivals among Cantonese-speakers. A local observer said that during the early-eighteenth-century settlement of Guangxi by the Hakka, "there was much mountain valley and waste land in [Guangxi]. The Hakka people have been hired to cultivate the lands" (quoted in Laai 1950:94).

The limited lands available for Hakka settlement were not conducive to the immediate clustering of large groups of people at one locale. Statements relating to the initial appearance of Hakka on Cantonese-owned lands indicate that the new arrivals would first settle on a very small group or even individual basis. Meyners d'Estrey characterizes the Hakka migration as proceeding "by innumerable little branches who spread out over Kwangtung [Guangdong]." He adds that the Hakka slip into the midst of the Punti "as little families" (1890:32). Later he remarks that they enter Cantonese regions "one by one or by several families at a time" (ibid.:32). That the Guangdong Hakka "live in scattered hamlets or houses" prompted Wilhelm Oehler to conclude that "for this reason they . . . are not as clannish as other tribes" (1922:353).

The association between tenant status and a dispersed settlement pattern was noted in Guangxi. Laai Yi-fai cites the *Xunzhou fuzhi* (Xunzhou prefectural gazetteer): "Those wealthy people who own large areas of land are quite willing to let [the Hakka] cultivate the land in return for rent. [The Hakka's] houses are built in the fields far from neighbors" (1950:96).

The "wealthy people" in the above statement presumably were private owners, and not the representatives of larger corporate bodies; yet there is more specific evidence which indicates that Hakka would settle on lands belonging to individual as well as collective landlords. Johann Heinrich Vömel says of the Hakka that while they show a propensity toward becoming roving peddlers and specialized craftsmen in non-Hakka regions of Guangdong, and in this capacity do not as a rule maintain long periods of residence "in a foreign region," yet,

on the other hand in many places they are in a tenant relationship with the Punti, in whose fields they have settled, so that through the payment of a small sum of rent a kind of dependency-relationship is still expressed, even though they have always been

working the field. Or the dependency-relationship will be maintained through the continuing payment by the Punti of the land tax, even though the field belongs to the Hakka, from whom he still collects the [requisite] sum. (1914:598)

Permanent tenure, with the landlord responsible for tax payments, was also found in the New Territories, where it was recorded that there were

disputes between individual landlords, as distinct from clans, and tenants as to whether rent is to be paid to the landlord or to the Government. These disputes having arisen owing to the tenants having confounded the rent due to their landlords and the Crown rent due to the Government. (Hong Kong 1900a:8)

The confusion which the British saw between rents and taxes was due to the permanent tenure which certain farmers held toward the lands they were working. We would want to know how Hakka newcomers could arrive at such a favorable position on Cantonese-held lands. The tenancy system we are dealing with here was similar or identical to the “joint ownership of land” which Chen Han-seng says was to be found in northern Guangdong. There

the landlord . . . often possesses only the so-called *liang-tien* [*liangtian*] meaning the land for which tax or *liang* must be paid; and the tax responsibility is supposed to justify the rent collection. The tenant often owns what is *chi-tien* [*jitian*], meaning the soil itself, or the surface. (1936:52)

Chen adds that two theories attempt to account for the origin of joint ownership. One would have the original peasant owners placing themselves under the protection of powerful families to obtain tax reductions. Peasant “gifts” to their benefactors eventually developed into a regular rent, which was then fixed through the landlord’s assumption of permanent rights to the subsoil of the land. The other theory was that “the claim to permanent use of the surface of the land derived from a long period of permanent tenancy.” People who would assume ownership of “cultivable but uncultivated government lands” would lease them out to tenants: “Much cost of development and primary cultivation had to be borne by these tenants; a lease contract therefore became

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customary under which the landlord could not transfer the tenancy" (ibid.: 52-53).

Of the two theories, it is obviously the latter which would apply in the case of Hakka settlement. For corporately owned lands there is much more direct evidence that newly arrived Hakka stimulated the activation of dormant holdings for which they received permanent guarantees of tenure. The *Report on the New Territories at Hong Kong* states that

it is noteworthy that the majority of those who bring out-of-the-way plots of land under cultivation are Hakkas. . . . This due to the industry of the Hakkas . . . and also to the fact that the best and most available land had been appropriated by the Puntis before the Hakkas settled in the district. The Hakkas have . . . reclaimed large tracts from the sea, and made many a hillside, hitherto barren, yield good crops. (Hong Kong 1900a:16)

The same source describes very clearly the relationship between the initial cultivation of corporately claimed lands and permanent tenure:

When land is brought under cultivation for the first time, the cultivator . . . applies in the first instance to the clan or village which has taken the land under its protection. Generally, the arrangement with the clan or village results in a lease in perpetuity being made out stating the situation of the land and the amount of rent in grain or local money that has to be paid by the cultivator. (Ibid.:19)

Also note: "The clans have . . . claimed large tracts of land, which they have never occupied, but which they have leased in perpetuity to others, who undertake to bring the land under cultivation" (ibid.:20).

The evidence I have presented allows a reconstruction of the first stage of Hakka settlement of parts of Guangdong and Guangxi already occupied by Cantonese. Initial Hakka settlement was conditioned by the availability of land of a restricted type, which in turn was a manifestation of the differential population density between fairly contiguous areas, which in the past had influenced Hakka emigration. The arrival of Hakka-speakers could lead to the formation of a relationship of benefit both to themselves and their Cantonese landlords. Indeed, if we grant the

term "dialect group" sociological significance, the Cantonese-Hakka relationship at this stage may be described as symbiotic. But I have no evidence to justify calling the Hakka-speakers a dialect group. Nevertheless over wide areas Hakka would be obtaining subsistence in return for which they would increase the amount of wealth derived by the Cantonese from already existing holdings. The Hakka tenants lived interspersed among Cantonese-speakers, some of whom were their landlords. We have seen that some of the landlords would be villages or kin-based corporate bodies. The two linguistic populations at this stage had different settlement patterns; this was reflected in a strict linguistic exclusiveness in Cantonese villages, with the absence of Hakka settlement at village sites already developed. Charles Piton notes that

where the Hakka are mixed up with the Punti, they are considered as intruders, and have very often no share in the local idol and must therefore satisfy themselves with worshipping their ancestors, which they do . . . in want of a proper ancestral hall.
(1870:219)

The lack of an ancestral hall here reflects tenant status and the consequent absence of individuals of sufficient wealth to endow such a structure (cf. Freedman 1958:47). But Hakka nonparticipation in territorial-based forms of institutional worship indicated their physical exclusion from Cantonese villages (cf. Freedman 1958:81).

III

Though initial Hakka settlement was of advantage to the speakers of both dialects, there is evidence that landowning individuals or corporate bodies might display a degree of hesitation before granting the permanent tenure necessary to induce the arrival of Hakka cultivators. In the early eighteenth century, Ho Ping-ti tells us,

Some conscientious provincial officials repeatedly memorialized . . . that unless security of tenure was guaranteed by the government there was no hope of attracting the surplus population of eastern Kwangtung [Guangdong] to develop the fertile land that was plentifully available in the west-central section of the province. (1959:219)

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The concern of the provincial officials was due to an ambivalence on the part of landowners, indicating that the latter perhaps realized the ultimate consequences of permanent Hakka settlement might be very different from the immediate ones. For in any given region, increasing Hakka immigration coupled with an overall increase in population would soon place the hitherto symbiotic Cantonese-Hakka relationship within a very different framework. Numerical increase in the Hakka population was accompanied by an effort to expand and secure, rent-free, the lands which they were farming. Such activities on the part of a population definable in linguistic terms led to the formation by both Hakka-speakers and Cantonese-speakers of groupings the members of which took common dialect as a sign of common interests relating to the securing of agricultural holdings. Moreover, relationships involving mobilization for the defense of aggrandizement of such holdings could be defined on the basis of common or different dialect. Laai Yi-fai recapitulates a development of this sort in Guangxi:

At first the Punti landowners were quite satisfied to allow the Hakkas to cultivate the land in return for rents. Gradually more lands were cultivated by Hakkas who were tenants, and more Punti landowners treated their lands as an investment from which they obtained interest in the form of rents. This process had the effect of consolidating the Hakkas more firmly in the area dominated by the Puntis, for . . . they had to hang together in order to check the exploitation of the Punti landowners. Furthermore, the infiltration of the Hakka population in the Punti area created a situation of constant competition between the Hakka tenants and the Punti tenants. The latter, like the Hakkas, also wanted more land for cultivation. The hatred on the part of the Punti tenants was gradually intensified; and feuds were fought in 1851 between the two groups, as, for example, in the district of Yung-ch'un [Yongchun]. Under these circumstances the Hakka were further drawn together to face opposition of not only the Punti landowners but also of the Punti peasantry. The differences in dialect . . . made the two groups even more hostile to one another. (1950:94-95)

If Hakka-Cantonese conflicts were in fact aligned along dialect lines, it follows that if one or both of the opposing sides consisted of an economically stratified population, resources differentially distributed

but relevant to defense would in some fashion be made available to all the speakers of the dialect concerned. Unless this were the case, we would be hard put to affirm the equivalence of common dialect with common economic interest. This in fact did happen in the Guangxi struggles, for we learn from Laai that the Punti landlords soon began to avail themselves of a group of professional fighters, sometimes known as the *tuanlian* (local militia) (1950:96). Inasmuch as the fighting involved land for rental as well as land for permanent ownership, the actions of the Cantonese landlords aided both their own cause and that of the Cantonese tenants. Piton may have noted the same phenomena in Guangdong, where, he says, "on the outbreak of any local feuding the Hakka takes the field in person" while the Puntis often "hire mercenary troops to do the fighting for them" (1873-74:224).

Since the dispersed settlement pattern of the Hakka precluded structural localized groupings of a large size, the conflicts with the Cantonese in Guangxi necessitated the mobilization of individuals from over a wide area. The *Xunzhou fuzhi*, after relating how the Hakka live in houses "built in the fields far from neighbors," adds that "the relationships among them" are

yet . . . extremely intimate. When there are enemies or feuds against the [non-Hakkas], a call for help is answered by the hundreds who, with spears on their shoulders and shovels on their backs fight so furiously that they have a contempt for death. (Laai 1950:96)

If the violent end of a Cantonese-Hakka symbiotic relationship resulted in the expansion of Hakka holdings, the establishment of Hakka villages soon followed. It is for good reason that the dispersed pattern of Hakka settlement does not tally with the way population distribution in general has been described for Guangdong. It appears that the agricultural tasks which engaged the bulk of the people of Guangdong favored residence in nucleated villages. The strategic value of their sites gave villages greater durability than did the agnatic groupings which might at any given juncture comprise them. I will briefly digress from the main theme of this essay to develop this point.

It is commonly recognized that the population of most of the Chinese countryside, including the Southeast, was to be found settled in discrete villages (Freedman 1958:1, 8; Hsiao Kung-chuan 1960:14, 560). This is clearly the case in the present-day New Territories, where "the

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general pattern of rural settlement is that of nucleated villages" (Tregear 1958:53). In terms of population constitution, however, there emerges no consistent pattern of association between a given village and one or more agnatic groupings. A village, to be sure, might still be inhabited by the agnatic descendants of the village founder. This was the case in the Guangdong village that Wang Xingrui briefly investigated. A single-surname settlement, the village had been founded during the Southern Song by the lineage ancestor (1935:43). Another example is the village of "Pu-lu-wei," founded by a branch of the "Chin" lineage during the Qianlong period (1736-95) (*Chinese and Japanese Repository* 1865:283). It was the nearby village of "Ho-au," however, that was first settled by the Chin lineage, during the Song, and we are told in the same source that

Ho-au was at that time inhabited by two clans of the K'ung and Liang names, but who disappeared in the degree as our number [the Chin lineage] increased. These clans built the Yung-fuh temple, the only public building in and near Ho-au. (Ibid.)

Moreover, other villages were inhabited at different times by different lineages. In the early part of the twentieth century, "Phenix [sic] village," in northern Guangdong, consisted in the main of individuals bearing the same surname. When the ancestor of this group first moved to the village during the later Ming, towards the end of the sixteenth century, it was already occupied by people from other lineages. These latter managed to persist in the village until as late as the Qianlong period (Kulp 1925:68-69, 292). In the village of "Nanching," near Guangzhou, "there seems to have been an ecological succession of clans," and "old villagers said that in the dim past there was a Hua clan and a Fang clan" (C. K. Yang 1959:12).

We may also note that the variations over time in patterns of occupancy were matched by a lack of consistent congruence between lineage and village. While Chen Han-seng initially states that in Guangdong "usually one village is inhabited by one clan" (1936:37), his more specific examples indicate that there was a great deal of variation in village composition. In "Chao-an," he reports, "nearly one-half of the villages of the entire district are inhabited by people bearing the same clan name," and in Huiyang "more than one-half of the villages . . . are so inhabited." Yet while it would certainly appear that single-lineage villages were "clearly very common" (Freedman 1958:3), we will later see

how internal population movements did make for the appearance of multisurname villages in Guangdong.

Descriptions of farming village sites in Guangdong indicate that their location was determined, or at least influenced, by the southeastern mode of agricultural production. The quality of agricultural land mainly depended upon the availability of water for the inundation irrigation necessitated by wet-rice farming, and so there was a strong negative correlation between land elevation and productive value, with steadily diminishing returns precluding any use for rice-growing purposes of land beyond a certain elevation (C. K. Yang 1959:24–25). We would expect that the more productive lands would be left for farming, and that a village would be situated within reach of them; in less level terrain it would have to be located on the side of a hill between the lands farmed and the lands left uncultivated. Such was the case in the hilly sectors of the New Territories (Tregear 1958:84), as exemplified by “Chong Village,” a Hakka settlement there. The location of Chong Village is such that “a low tree-covered hill rises behind the village and in front is a pond and terraced fields dropping away to the valley floor” (Pratt 1960:148). In Guangdong, Eitel noted that Hakka villages “are invariably built each on the brow of a hill or at any rate backed by a small grove of trees” (1867:39).

In the level rice-growing plains, the location of a farming village might also be determined by certain features of the physical environment. In the New Territories, again, villages “situated on the flat paddy plains are almost invariably sited on patches of slightly higher land and stand as islands in the midst of their fields” (Tregear 1958:53). Considerations of flood control as well as the preservation of the most productive lands for agricultural purposes presumably would enter into such an arrangement.

It is clear that the village mode of settlement did not correspond to the kind of Hakka settlement initially required by the poor and scattered quality of the residual lands left to them. Yet village settlement was the best adjustment to the agricultural and environmental demands of the Southeast, and Hakka would soon begin to group themselves into new villages and take over old ones. With the possible exception of the type of settlement discussed immediately below, either peaceful or violent village formation would involve a readjustment of holdings which would engender much hostility along dialect lines.

In certain cases, the peaceful establishment of Hakka villages could come about through state interference in local affairs. Very widespread

in its effect was the series of decrees commencing in 1660, which called for the evacuation inland of the entire coastal population of Guangdong, Fujian, Zhejiang, Jiangsu, and Shandong (Luo Xianglin 1950:27). Of these provinces, Fujian and Guangdong were the hardest hit (Xie 1930:812). The *Chiqi xianzhi* (Chiqi County gazetteer) says that between 80 and 90 percent of the coastal population of Guangdong perished when they were driven inland (Chiqi 1920:8/2a). In 1684, when the order to return was given, "of the people of various *xian* who had been driven inland, not more than two or three could return to each village" (Luo Xianglin 1950:27). Guangdong officials then petitioned that colonists be settled there, and among those arriving were many from the Hakka zone in northern Guangdong and adjoining parts of Fujian and Jiangxi. The gazetteer relates that many of these Hakka settled in the *xian* of Taishan, Heshan, Gaoming, Kaiping, Enping, Yangchun, and Yangjiang, where "many lived interspersed with the natives" (Chiqi 1920:8/3a). When the Hakka arrived in the coastal regions, the level and most fertile lands had already been secured by the Cantonese, for the latter had lived in areas adjoining the evacuated zone and so were able to enter first (ibid.:8/4b). This was the case over a large part of the Guangdong coast extending at least as far north as Haifeng and Lufeng. There, it appears that as late as the 1920s and 1930s Hakka-speakers were still primarily tenants on Cantonese-owned lands (Wales 1952:199; cf. Eto 1961:163-64).

But whether the Hakka were tenants or owner-cultivators, coastal lands available to them were not conducive to the settlement at one locale of newly arriving groups of kinsmen. This is clearly borne out by the following description of the fragmentation of Hakka agnatic groupings entering into the Xiangshan *xian* coast sectors.

Part of the Chen lineage is to be found in the Xiangshan village known as Zhanyong. The lineage founder's descendant in the ninth generation moved from his ancestral home in Xingning (in the northern Hakka region) to Zengcheng, in central Guangdong. He had four sons, the eldest being Yinglue. Then "Yinglue's sons divided into six large *fang*."² In 1732, the *fang* of the three oldest moved to Zhanyong, where they "again divided and dwelt" in Shenwan, Guyou, Shagang, Ziding, and Gouhuan, all of which were in the same *xian*. In 1737 the founder of the Liu lineage also moved from Xingning to Shenwan, where his descendants resided at the time the *Xiangshan xianzhi* (Xiangshan

2. The *fang* is a subdivision of family, lineage, or other agnatic unit.

County gazetteer) was written. This village and Zhanyong in addition were two of the four settled by the descendants of Mao Yuanfeng, who arrived at Xiangshan in 1725, having moved from Wuhua (*Xiangshan xianzhi*, cited in Luo Xianglin 1933:262).

Thus we find that in Zhanyong we have at the minimum members of the Chen and Mao lineages, in Shenwan there are Chens, Lius, and Maos, and that both the Chens and Maos were dispersed among other villages as well. It seems safe to say that the limited settlement possibilities the region offered for arriving Hakka meant that available village sites could not completely absorb extended agnatic groupings. To secure the best of what land was obtainable, agnates would have to scatter across several villages, and this resulted in the formation of multi-surname communities.

A recent account from the New Territories contains another example of the formation of a multisurname Hakka village. Harold Ingrams describes how a Hakka named Kong Tai Kuen arrived at the "Land of the Jumping Dragon," a region consisting of several villages all inhabited by Cantonese belonging to the Tang lineage:

Kong rented a house and became a tenant farmer. He recommended two of his relatives to come along also, but they stayed only three years and then returned to the Kong ancestral village . . . while Kong gave up farming . . . and moved to Fan Ling. (1952:162)

But Kong also recommended another Hakka, Chan Lok Chom, a convert who was a "Reverend of the Basel Evangelical Missionary Society." Chan arrived in 1897 and, "intending to settle down as a farmer, he rented a house" in one of the Tang villages, "but in 1898 he decided that his Punti farmhands were too much for him and his neighbors too difficult, so . . . he made up his mind to return to mission work and rented his land to kinsmen, Chan Kiu and his father" (Ingrams 1952:163).

Chan Kiu arrived in 1900, and "meanwhile other Christian Hakkas, of the family of Lin, had come in . . . to farm." Two of them

built a row of eight houses for themselves and the Chans, forming the nucleus of a Hakka village. The Tangs never did like the intruding Hakkas, and one of them said that the houses would interfere with the Fung Shui [*fengshui*, lit. "wind and water," i.e. geomantic configuration]. (Ibid.)

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But the matter was settled by the district officer, and “the village was founded in 1902” (ibid.).³

The village grew larger and larger. . . . There are about 20 houses or terraces in the village now. . . . Today the village . . . consists of a collection of multiple families. There are Tsuis and Lins and Pangs and Chans and Cheungs . . . and Tangs—about ten different families not related by blood. Herein lies the difference between them and the Punti Tangs, none of whom are Christians. Not all of the villagers are in the Church or on the land, though there is scarce a family not represented in one or the other. (Ibid.)

The heavy Christian influence in this village probably played a part in attracting certain nonagnates to one settlement. But the common denominator of all the villagers was dialect, not religion. Both examples indicate that the “fragmentary and heterogeneous nature of the lineage elements” which made up the Chinese populations migrating to certain parts of the Nanyang or Southeast Asia (Freedman 1957:24) was duplicated by the Hakka in Guangdong itself, and was accentuated during settlement.

It is of some consequence that the incident regarding *fengshui* was recorded in the New Territories, a region in which peace and social order is enforced by a powerful state apparatus. I suspect that had the dispute occurred in those areas of Guangdong or Guangxi where state authority was tenuous, recourse might have been had to violent means of settlement. For it is clear that while both peaceful and warlike measures were employed by the Hakka as they developed their villages, resultant pressures reinforced at the village level the strict linguistic dichotomization of the countryside. Wilhelm Oehler depicts the changeover from Cantonese to Hakka occupancy of villages in quite absolute terms:

It is an impressive sight, that of the old Punti villages, enclosed by ivy-covered brick walls and towers half in ruins and surrounded by ditches, and all about the rows of white houses of the Hakka, into whose hands the greater part of the land has fallen. Soon after the appearance of a Hakka house inside the

3. *Editor's note:* The village described here is Shung Him Tong, the community of Hakka Christians described by Constable in this volume.

walls of a Punti village, the Puntis disappeared completely.
(1922:35)

That the shift in population was as complete as described by Oehler is borne out by a British survey of the New Territories conducted at the end of the nineteenth century. The investigators reported that Hakka villages "are inhabited solely by members of their own race, just as the Punti villages are inhabited only by Cantonese, though there are a few villages in which both races are represented" (Hong Kong 1900b:188-89).

Simple arithmetic shows that the mixed villages were few indeed, for of the 423 villages in the New Territories, 161 were Cantonese-speaking and 255 were inhabited by Hakka (Hong Kong 1900b:188-89), leaving only seven where Cantonese and Hakka lived side-by-side. Fuson, writing in 1926 mentions a village near the New Territories border which thirty years before had been inhabited solely by Cantonese: "Today," he says, "only Hakka live in that village" (1929:12).

Even where Hakka villages had formed, Cantonese villages tended to be larger and wealthier. It must be remembered that an initial condition of Hakka settlement was the fact that the holdings of Cantonese villages were large enough for them to have land to spare. In addition, the poorer lands, which the Hakka farmed, would not allow the maintenance of nucleated populations as large as those of the Cantonese. The 225 Hakka villages in the New Territories were inhabited by 36,070 people, averaging out to 160.3 persons per village; the 161 Cantonese villages contained a population of 64,140, or 398.3 persons per village (Hong Kong 1900b:189). "Since the Hakka in general are poorer than . . . the Punti," notes Hubrig, "their houses and villages are not built or arranged as well, so that even from a distance one can distinguish a Hakka village from a Punti village" (1879:102).

He adds that "Punti villages are closed, surrounded by walls and moats, whereas the villages of the Hakka for the most part are open" (ibid.:103). Cantonese holdings could support larger village populations than those of the Hakka, and they might also be capitalized in the form of fortifications. Indeed, at the village level Hakka-speakers could still be predominantly tenants working Cantonese lands. Hsiao Kung-chuan describes the conflict that could emerge out of such a situation. In 1852 Enping was the scene of a series of fights where "in a number of villages 'all the tenants who cultivated the land of the Puntis refused by force to pay rent. . . .' In some instances Hakka tenants slaughtered their Punti landlords and put the torch to their houses" (1960:431).

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Thus the formation of Hakka villages might not detract from the need for large-scale mobilizations when strife would develop with the Cantonese. The *Chinese and Japanese Repository* describes a Hakka-Cantonese conflict in which many Hakka villages, containing an unspecified number of lineages, engaged in a long and largely successful campaign to expand their holdings at the expense of a single Cantonese lineage, the "Chin" (1865:283). In what is now Huiyang, members of the Chin lineage had come to be the sole inhabitants of the town of Ho-au, and in the early part of the eighteenth century had built in addition, Pu-lu-wei. Pu-lu-wei,

as early as 1737 . . . was surrounded by a wall of about 20 feet high, with sixteen parapets, which gave it the air of an old castle. The length of the wall is about half an English mile, and is surrounded by a ditch from 10 to 20 feet deep, and from 50 to 60 wide. (Ibid.)

The remainder of the description indicates that the Chin holdings had extended considerably beyond the two villages:

After many changes of fortune, Ho-au was in 1843 involved in a conflict with the Hakka, which nearly ruined the entire clan. About three English miles south-west of Ho-au there is a marketplace, which was built by the people of Ho-au. The Hakka, to whom the market was let, refused in that year to pay their taxes, and . . . appeal was had to arms. Both parties fought for about six years, when another market-place, also belonging to Ho-au, gave occasion to a conflict with even more powerful clans.

In 1850 more than 90 villages united for the extermination of the Chin clan. Pu-lu-wei fell by treachery, and the people were stripped of the last piece of dress they had on their person; but though more than 5,000 men surrounded Ho-au, where only from 300 to 500 fighting men were, the Hakka had not the courage to enter the village, but moved off without any booty. Both parties being at last exhausted, peace was concluded, one of the market places lost to the Chin clan, the other submitted, and promised to pay further rent.

In 1856 war broke out anew, and frightful murders would

have been committed, had not the writer of these lines induced the parties to come once more to terms. (Ibid.)

It is interesting to note from the above that arrangements could be made for an orderly transfer of property as a result of victories or defeats sustained in the course of armed conflict. The same held true in the New Territories, for there, we are told, "some land in the Kowloon district is held under a title by capture, where the clans fought and the losing clan gave up a field as the price of the cessation of hostilities" (Hong Kong 1900a:23).

It seems obvious that even in the most disturbed times some security of possession was necessary so that agricultural work might continue.

Fighting at the level of contesting villages of course also could involve more than one Cantonese village or lineage. Meyners d'Estray makes the general statement that

several communities inhabited by members of one single tribe [Hakka-speakers or Cantonese-speakers] often form alliances against the intruders or against the original inhabitants with the goal of dispersing or exterminating the opposing party, and taking possession of its goods. (1890:99-100)

A specific instance of such an "alliance" is taken from the Enping gazetteer by Hsiao Kung-chuan:

During the reign of Hsien-feng [Xianfeng] (1851-1861) the Hakkas caused disturbances. . . . The various clans that dwelt within a radius of ten *li*⁴ organized themselves into a group . . . calling itself Wu-fu Pao. Funds were raised and a building erected at Sa-hu-hsü . . . where meetings were called to discuss matters as they arose. (1960:343)

We should note that this last reference to Enping as well as the conflict at Ho-au seems to have involved the participation, at least on one of the opposing sides, of defined local groupings which united on the basis of common dialect. There seems to have been at Ho-au a steady growth in the number of villages engaging the Chin lineage, and the references to the conclusion of the hostilities indicate that there was

4. A *li* is a measure of distance approximately equivalent to one-half kilometer.

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a structured leadership on both sides which could make decisions affecting the combatants involved. To have an effect such decisions would have to apply to territorially bounded units and at Enping the dimensions of these units and their links are clearly described.

Another instance where the speakers of one dialect all were members of a grouping definable on other than linguistic grounds is to be found in the *Chiqi xianzhi*. By 1855, the gazetteer relates, fighting, which was then current between the Hakka and the Cantonese, had spread to Yangjiang *ting* (now a *xian*), which was on the coast and south of the main area of conflict. Here the Hakka were comparatively few in number. During 1855 and 1856, most of the Hakka living in the Wubao region of the *xian* fled north to certain Hakka areas in Xinning. There was one exception, however, and this exception is instructive. "The various villages of the Lin lineage," we are told, "were quite wealthy and did not desire to flee." They therefore agreed to split their fields with the Cantonese, and the two groups (Lin and the Cantonese) "jointly requested the *ting* office to record the agreement" so that "at that time a calamity was avoided" (*Chiqi* 1920:8/8b).

In Yangjiang, then, the flight of the bulk of the Hakka and the isolation of the Lin lineage resulted in the immediate localization of the conflict. There was no longer a population intermixed with the Cantonese that was definable in terms of dialect only, and which might include persons or groups whose holdings would in varying degrees be vulnerable to Cantonese attack. There was rather an integrated Hakka lineage, one which obviously contained individuals able to represent the group and make the concessions necessary to preserve at least some corporate holdings. This points to the problem with which we must later deal; for we will see that in the areas where Hakka and Cantonese continued to live interspersed, there would be no convenient congruence of a dialect population with a localized grouping, and thus no readily available means by which conflicts involving alignments along dialect lines might be contained or negotiated.

IV

The material I have presented seems to indicate that in rural Guangdong and adjoining Guangxi, village settlement was strictly along dialect lines. One would also assume that the network of affinal ties would by-and-large also be restricted to people speaking the same dialect. But I do not know of any studies of mainland Southeast China which have

devoted attention to this problem, and any statements must remain on the level of conjecture. There is, however, some evidence which indicates that certain features of southeastern Chinese social organization would minimize the effect on dialect distribution of whatever intermarriage between speakers of different dialects did occur. Phenix village, located in northern Guangdong, was inhabited by a group of agnates speaking the Chaozhou dialect of southern Fujianese. The Hakka term for speakers of this dialect is usually rendered in English as Hoklo, though Daniel Kulp writes Holo (1925:79). The situation of Phenix village is described as follows: "In seven [*xian*] round about Phenix village, Hakka is spoken. The [*xian*] in which the village is located is the only one in which no Hakka is spoken." There was thus an entire *xian* from which the Phenix village lineage could presumably draw Chaozhou-speaking wives. Yet, "when exogamous marriages with *Hakka* girls bring these new brides into the village, they are faced with the necessity of learning a new language" (ibid.:79).

Now Kulp gives us no idea as to the extent, if any, that "exogamous marriages with *Hakka* girls" were necessitated by a lack of Chaozhou women from other lineages. What he does tell us of significance is that the virilocal residence demanded by localized patrilineages could act as a force maintaining dialect differences even when speakers of one dialect might be outnumbered by and intermarry with a population speaking another dialect. A group of male agnates could maintain their nucleation and enforce dialect conformity on the part of newly arrived wives. This fact emerges in a stronger way from Lin Yueh-hwa's description of the Hwang [Huang] lineage-village in northern Fujian. The founding ancestor, we are told,

had migrated out of south Fukien [Fujian] up along the Min River and had settled down . . . long ago in this little village of the Hwang lineage. It was his misfortune that at the time of his arrival all the land surrounding the village was already occupied by the earlier settlers. Yet by dint of hard labour, he had gained a foothold in the village. (1948:60)

Ninety-nine percent of the village population now belongs to the Hwang lineage, and only the village inn is run by outsiders (ibid.).

Today the Hwang villagers, all of the same descent, are closely bound together in so fierce an allegiance to each other against

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outsiders that their settlement is named "the barbaric village." Moreover, the clan still retains a special brogue of the dialect of South Fukien which the neighboring villages do not understand. When the Hwang villagers do try to communicate with outsiders, they must use the dialect of the whole district, the Kutien dialect. . . . To this very day the first ancestor's descendants, in their hearts as well as in their language, are truly a clan. (Ibid.)

While it is to be doubted that Hakka is the dialect involved in this case, it is nevertheless clear that here an alien dialect was in fact preserved even though to all women marrying in, it would initially be unintelligible. Lin says that a reason for its maintenance was the mutual reinforcement exercised by lineage solidarity and dialect differentiation. In the context of an isolated lineage this is certainly true. But I will later discuss the possibility that kin-based solidarity might be extended to nonkinsmen speaking the same dialect. For our purposes, the most important aspect of Lin's description is that it illustrates what may be called the "dialect-preserving" possibilities afforded by southeastern Chinese lineage organization.

v

We have seen that in Guangdong and adjoining parts of Guangxi kinsmen or coresidents in the same village might unite with outsiders speaking the same dialect for purposes of defense and offense. Hakka-speakers not localized into villages also might so unite. It is thus obvious that in regions of Hakka-Cantonese intermixture the boundaries setting off localized groupings might be rendered irrelevant in terms of alignments based upon common or different dialect. In an effort to discern structural coherence in large-scale mobilizations based upon common dialect we should examine the one sociological model which takes into account the fact that not all conflict in Southeast China proceeded along kin-based or village lines.

Maurice Freedman has said that in Southeast China, "there would appear to have been two alignments of conflict, which cut across each other. In some conflicts lineages were ranged against lineages; in other conflicts, lineages, or class sections of them, were united in their common hostility to the state" (1958:124).

I have attempted to demonstrate that the first alignment, with the

important qualification that “village” might in certain cases be substituted for “lineage,” could in mixed Hakka-Cantonese areas be involved with alignments based upon dialect. “Common hostility to the state” might mean membership in secret societies cutting across kin lines, and if members were found in highly differentiated lineages we may suspect that they gave expression to the latent opposition of the common people to the representatives within their communities of the centralized government.

If we accept the dichotomization of Southeast as well as the rest of China along class lines, we must add that there is evidence that differences in dialect might qualify the common front presented against the state. I derive this evidence entirely from William Stanton, who, when speaking of the Triad Society in Hong Kong, notes that

in some lodges the members are chiefly Puntis, and as a whole, these are the most lawless. . . . The members of both the Man On and the Fuk I Hing lodges are Hoklos, and these, like the Fukienese and others speaking a similar dialect, combine principally for mutual assistance in sickness or distress, or their quarrels. Some of the Hakkas combine to commit unlawful acts such as piracy, armed robberies and blackmailing, but most of them seem to carry out the precepts handed down and keep the aim in view for which the Society was founded. (1900:28)

A Triad uprising in Huizhou, where Hakka live interspersed among Cantonese, is described by Stanton:

In 1886 there was an insurrection of about three thousand Triad men . . . at Nimshan in the Waichau [Huizhou] prefecture of the Kwangtung [Guangdong] province. This was chiefly amongst the Hakka population and was caused by the oppressive acts of Government officials, several of whom were slain at the first outbreak. On this occasion four hundred men from Hong Kong, principally stonecutters, assembled at Kowloon, armed with swords and revolvers and commanded by two chiefs . . . whose aim was to reinforce the Nimshan army. (Ibid.:23)

It is quite probable that these stonecutters were also Hakka. Occupational specialization in urban centers seems to a large extent to have been divided along dialect lines, and of the many descriptions of this I will

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choose from Rudolf Lechler’s, who quite categorically tells us that “on the island of Hongkong, all the stone cutters are Hakkas” (1878:359).

We see, then, that dialect alignments might be expressed in non-kin based groupings, which as sociological entities were well established in China. But I do not know if membership in such groupings would completely satisfy the organizational requirements of a large Hakka population, which might be socially differentiated. One could deduce from the material I have presented so far that wherever the Hakka population contained individuals of gentry rank, these might unite with commoners in times of great duress. This has been reported by Hsiao Kung-chuan for the fighting in Enping (1960:425), and gentry figure prominently in the *Chiqi xianzhi*’s description of the mid-nineteenth-century Hakka-Cantonese conflicts throughout central Guangdong. In the gazetteer it is claimed that “native gentry” (*tu shen*) caused the spread of the Hakka-Cantonese fighting to Xingning in 1856, by publicizing a false report of an imminent Hakka attack (Chiqi 1920:8/9a). In June of the same year, the following “Hakka gentry” (*Ke shen*) were said to have organized the defense against an expected Punti attack in a region of Xingning *xian*: the *shengyuan* (lowest-level degree holder) Chen Guangzhi, and the *jiansheng* (next-to-the-lowest-level degree holder) Jiang Beijun, Li Zhaolong, Chen Hongdai, and Zhong Hongsi (ibid.:8/13b). In the same source it is protested that gazetteers written by Cantonese invariably give distorted descriptions of Hakka-Cantonese conflicts. In the *Xingning xianzhi* (Xingning County gazetteer),

in reference to the Hakka people [*Ke min*], they are always called “Hakka bandits” [*Ke fei*]. The Hakka gentry [*Ke shen*] are called “rebel chieftains” [*ni shou*] or are called “bandit chieftains” [*zei shou*],”

but,

in this work [*Chiqi xianzhi*] a fair balance is maintained in everything recorded concerning the native populace and gentry [*tu zhong shen min*]. They are always referred to as “natives” [*tu ren*] or “native gentry” [*tu shen*]. (Ibid.:8/10a-10/b)

In regard to secret societies, it can be added that, even if placed in different “lodges,” members of the same society speaking different dia-

lects presumably would have gone through the same initiation rites (cf. Freedman 1958:123), and in many ways feel bound together by common obligations and aims. It may be that the establishment of "lodges" on a dialect basis prevented tensions which otherwise would have arisen in an organization whose hostility was toward the state and the persons representing it, rather than toward different but equivalent sectors of the peasant population.

To return to the question I have posed, if recognition on the basis of common dialect did indeed involve more than kin-based and territorial loyalties during times of Hakka-Cantonese strife, then, barring the interposition of peace from outside sources, it can be expected that conflicts between different dialect populations might in an uncontrolled fashion spread over wide areas where people speaking the different dialects lived interspersed. This is indeed what happened in nineteenth-century Guangdong and Guangxi, and an examination of these events will show us that the structural problems posed were in one fashion or another solved.

At about the middle of the last century, there seem to have been two regions where Hakka-Cantonese conflicts were especially widespread and violent. One was centered in the valley of the Yu River in southern Guangxi, extending from Yongchun through Gui to Guiping. The struggles were most severe in Gui, where one authority, probably in 1848, reported that Hakka-Punti feuding had been going on for five years (Lai 1950:179). By 1850, Hakka-Cantonese conflicts had spread throughout the southeastern part of Guangxi and into adjoining western Guangdong (ibid.). B. C. Henry was referring to this fighting when he observed that "the stockaded villages, forts, and barricades in the mountains [near Hepu, in western Guangdong] bear witness to their [the Hakka's] struggles in the past" (ibid.:1886:144). The disturbances in Guangxi ultimately would have much more than a regional significance, for it was here that the displaced Hakka became adherents to the doctrine advocated by Hong Xiuquan and Feng Yunshan (Boardman 1952:14). But we must for the moment direct our attention to Guangdong proper.

The other zone of Hakka-Cantonese feuding was in central Guangdong, and although the conflict here had no great repercussions on a national scale, it was the cause of much destruction within the province. By 1851, feuding was already endemic in Enping, Kaiping, and Xinning (Taishan), to the southwest of Canton, as well as in Zengcheng, which was to the northeast of the same city (Luo Xianglin 1933:3). A Hakka "informant" of Elisabeth Oehler-Heimerdinger (n.d.:63) told her that

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the troubles in his region began as early as 1851, when his village was burnt by Cantonese.

Bandits were also active in the countryside, and some of them were associated with the Red Turbans. E. J. Eitel supplies a report by W. F. Mayers, whom he says had a position in the English "consular service." According to Mayers, as given in Eitel, Cantonese hostility towards the Hakka reached a climax when the latter assisted the government in suppressing the "Hung-t'ow rebellion."

For very many years clan fights have been common between the two groups [Hakka and Punti], but the mutual antipathy grew to a climax after 1854, in which year the Hakka clans located there remained for the most part faithful to the government, during the rebellion which was largely joined by the Puntis until suppressed by the Viceroy Yeh. At this time, Hakka and Punti clans dwelt interspersed over all the S. W. districts notably [Xinning, Xinhui, Enping, Kaiping, Gaoming, and Heshan]. After the suppression of the Hung-t'ow rebellion, the ill feeling between the races took the shape of an internecine warfare, in which the authorities were powerless to interfere. (Eitel 1873:162-63)

Luo Xianglin adds that Yangchun *xian* was also involved. He notes that Hakka actively assisted in the suppression of the original rebellion, and that in doing this (and here he is quoting from a joint report submitted by the viceroy of Liang-Guang⁵ and the governor of Guangdong), "their motivations were very deep." The fighting became generalized when the Hakka killed several members of the "native gentry," whereupon the Hakka-Cantonese conflict "spread like wildfire" (1933:3).

By 1860, Mayers says, the fighting was so severe that there were "shipments of arms and even the dispatch of armed steamers from Hongkong to assist one or other of the belligerent parties" (Eitel 1873:163). Hakka speakers were gradually driven out of increasingly large areas of the Western Circuit, an administrative district in Guangdong, and formed many "wandering bands." Towards the end of 1862, many of these attacked and occupied the coastal town of Guanghai, "until driven out by an Imperial force cooperating with the Punti clans." During 1864, the remnants of the displaced Hakka, "who had become half

5. The Liang-Guang (lit., "two Guang") refers to the provinces of Guangdong and Guangxi.

banditti, half refugees," gathered in the mountains of the Western Circuit, where

at various points . . . such as [Nafu, Jinji, Wuhang, and Chishui] . . . they established little Republics, in which they tilled the ground, built habitations, and defended themselves as best as they could against the incursions of . . . [the] Punti. (Eitel 1873:163)

In 1866 several measures were taken to end the fighting and resettle the Hakka, and in the following year the Governor of Guangdong ordered a portion of Taishan (Xinning) *xian* set aside exclusively for Hakka settlement. Cantonese in the area, which was constituted as Chiqi *ting*, were ordered to give up their lands to the Hakka, in return for which they received vacated Hakka farms in the interior (Luo Xianglin 1933:62). There are various estimates as to the number of casualties which resulted from the fighting, and Luo says that the total losses on both sides in dead, wounded, and missing were at least five-hundred-thousand (ibid.:3). For our purposes, it is safe to say that many lives were lost, and that the fighting reached very large proportions indeed.

The fighting in Guangxi and Guangdong followed logically from the conditions of Hakka settlement. A discussion of this involves a restatement of some points already covered. That in China kinship was the most obvious force structuring social relationships and binding people into groupings hardly needs to be dwelt upon. For the moment we are concerned with the larger kin-based grouping, the patrilineage. We have seen that Hakka-speakers might be in a situation where, due to recency of arrival and constrictions in living room, they simply would not have localized lineages. At a certain point in their settlement they might not even have villages, so that the defense or expansion of their agricultural holdings could not involve rigidly defined localized groupings. In places where Hakka had been settled for a longer period of time, or where there was more land available, lineages and villages could develop. Both types of groupings, of course, are sociological entities, and in Southeast China there was a good chance that they would be convergent. In general, we would expect that decisions regarding conflicts with one's neighbors would go through recognized channels, and that a resolution, once made, would involve a number of people, all of whom would be units in a recognizable social structure. But the circum-

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stances of Hakka settlement were such that to limit behavior involving defense and offense to individuals encompassed within structured relationships would, in a hostile Cantonese-speaking environment, be highly maladaptive. Indeed, it might even be impossible, for the issue involves a two-sided discrimination of friends and enemies. If, over a wide area, Hakka-speakers would be engaged in expanding their holdings, then Cantonese could regard them all as a common foe. During the fighting in Guangdong a common Cantonese slogan was "Hate the Hakka and differentiate dialects" (*Chou Ke fen sheng*) (ibid.:3, 116; Oehler-Heimerdinger n.d.:64).

Though hostile attitudes and actions need not alter the structure of the group expressing them, under certain circumstances the behavior usually associated with structured relationships may lose its clarity of definition. Thus, alignments on the basis of common dialect could result in ever expanding aggregates of people being pitted against each other. And this is what happened in Guangxi and in Guangdong. An informant has told me that a common saying among the Hakka living in Huiyang, a *xian* shared with the Cantonese, was "Acknowledge one's dialect, not one's surname" (*Ren sheng, bu ren xing*).

Now, although I do not think that Oehler-Heimerdinger's account of the Hakka Cantonese fighting in Guangdong is proper material for analysis, it certainly does depict widespread destruction of Hakka and Cantonese people and villages (n.d.:61-126). The resultant fragmentation of even nuclear families did for a time bring chaos to wide areas. It was under such circumstances that common or different dialect could be the only criterion remaining by which an individual's behavior towards another could be defined. From Mayers's description we may gather, however, that the turmoil did resolve itself, insofar as discernible groupings developed within the Hakka population. And information in the *Chiqi xianzhi* gives us a fairly good idea as to what the "republics" of which Mayers speaks actually were. The gazetteer does not supply much data about the specific locales mentioned by Mayers, except to refer to them frequently as refuges to which many Hakka fled. Other settlements, however, also places of refuge, are described in greater detail.

We have already noted the involvement of Hakka gentry in the conflicts with the Cantonese. The Hakka gentry, whose prestige and power within their own lineages and villages derived from participation in a nonlocalized nationwide upper class, were in a position to direct military activities involving Hakka-speakers from many villages and lineages. Having a tradition of managerial responsibility, they played a key

role in the establishment of fortified bases within which Hakka from over wide areas would seek protection. The gentry would organize the manpower thus assembled into military units. Under these circumstances previously localized agnatic groupings, forced to come together at restricted and strategic sites, were absorbed into larger defense units whose only common characteristic was that of dialect. The gazetteer tells us, for example, that in June 1856, Cantonese in what was then the Chiqi region of Xingning killed a Hakka. The fighting spread, with the Hakka villages in the rural subdistricts (*dong*) of Chonglou, Sijiu, and Wushi undergoing attack. Additional attacks were feared, and two Hakka gentry of the village of Chonglou, the *gongsheng* (holder of the third-highest degree) Yang Zizhao and the *jiansheng* Yang Yuanfeng were concerned “that since the Hakka were dispersed, their situation was such that it would be difficult [for them] to defend themselves.” They then issued a call, and sixteen localized lineages, which had been distributed among eight villages, arrived at Chonglou: the Huang, Wu, and Zhu lineages of Shishan; the Yang, Li, and Zhou lineages of Daxiaoma; the Ye, Yang, Wei, and Zhou lineages of Huangshuihang; the Li lineage of Tonggu; the Zhang lineage of Shijiao; the Tang and Yang lineages of Henglong; the Lin lineage of Shangjing; and the Jiang lineage of Pangbo. The Hakka gathered at Chonglou then “divided into eastern and southern camps, prepared dwelling places, and considered means of defense” (Chiqi 1920:8/15b). Later, after additional Cantonese attacks, the military arrangements were formalized by the “establishment of a bureau” (*sheju*), directed by the two gentry mentioned above and one other man. It was their task “to manage all affairs relating to the mobilization of able-bodied men and preparations for defense” (Chiqi 1920:8/16a).

Another Hakka defense position was established in a coastal region of the Western Circuit. In this area there were over four-hundred Hakka villages, of which the gazetteer specifically names twenty-six: three of these were single-surname villages inhabited by the Zheng, Chuan, and Ye lineages; there were in addition six two-surname villages, distributed across which were the Lin, Xie, Tang, Huang, Chen, Zeng, Long, and Deng lineages or lineage aggregates. At Shenjingxu (Zheng lineage), the following Hakka gentry “established a bureau”: the *wuju* (military *juren*, holder of the second-highest military degree), Zhong Dayong; the *shengyuan* Zheng Rong, Huang Tengfang, and Chuan Tenghui; and the *wusheng* (military *shengyuan*, holder of the lowest military degree) You Qigao. They then “selected able-bodied men to defend it” (ibid.:8/12a).

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Many more examples of the "establishment of bureaus" could be drawn from the gazetteer, and these involved Cantonese as well as Hakka. Indeed, on one page of the gazetteer seven locales are cited at which Cantonese were said to have "established bureaus" (ibid.:8/9a). The two examples I have given, however, suffice to show that in the absence of existing groupings capable of coping with the problems presented by conflicts aligned along dialect lines, new groupings could emerge. Of course, I do not know if the "establishment of bureaus" was the only way by which the Hakka-speakers of central Guangdong would gather for combat. Nevertheless it is clear that the very phenomena of defense and offense which we are discussing must at a certain point involve either a formal or an informal organization. Even an ad hoc arrangement is, after all, an arrangement.

That discrimination along dialect lines involved something less than complete confusion also emerges from work that has been done by Laai (1950) on the formation of the Society of God Worshipers during the Hakka-Cantonese feuding in Guangxi. I have noted that the fighting there probably had been going on since the early 1840s, and that it had spread to adjoining parts of Guangdong. In 1844 Hong Xiuquan and Feng Yunshan arrived in Guangxi after having attained very little success in propagating their ideas among the Hakka of their native *Hua xian*, near Canton. In Zigu Village, *Gui xian*, where a "cousin" of Hong's with the surname Wang lived, they set about preaching an iconoclastic, monotheistic doctrine with heavy Christian and anti-Manchu overtones. Hong returned to Guangdong the same year, and it was not until 1847 that he rejoined Feng in Guangxi. By that time Feng had succeeded in attracting over three thousand converts to a religious society now called the Society of God Worshipers (Boardman 1952:12-14). In this presentation I am not concerned with an analysis of the factors which led to the original conversions in Guangxi or with the transformation of the Society into a revolutionary army. The fact remains that much of the recruitment of its members revolved upon the Society's providing an organizational framework to which a large population of Hakka-speakers, embroiled in a conflict with the Cantonese, might attach themselves on the basis of common dialect.

Laai notes that there were several factors making for confusion in Guangxi. A series of droughts afflicting the area

had the most serious effect on the land of high elevation; this was the land cultivated by the Hakkas. In the lands which the

Hakkas rented from the Puntis, the result of the drought was to cut productivity, so that Hakka tenants had less income and couldn't pay their rent. (1950:184)

During the same period (1846–50), pirate activities in the Guangxi riverine system increased greatly (ibid.:107), and by 1848 “the domination of the Yü River and the Hsün [Xun] River by the . . . pirates . . . virtually isolated the . . . territories south of the rivers from the Kwangsi [Guangxi] provincial administration” (ibid.:143–44). Associated with this and the unemployment resulting from the exhaustion of several large silver mines in and about Gui *xian* was the appearance of many land-based bandits (ibid.:103–104). These bandits, however, formed only one element of what was essentially a rural response to the decline of centralized rule. Larger villages and towns in Guangxi organized gentry-directed *tuanlian* (ibid.:185). Secret societies were also prominent in the area (ibid.:178).

In the midst of this turmoil there remained the basic duality in the countryside between populations speaking different dialects, and so Hakka-Cantonese feuds began to increase (ibid.:172). Most of the larger villages were inhabited by Cantonese-speakers, who were able to organize and finance the *tuanlian* on an independent local basis (ibid.:185). For the Hakka, who were more dispersed, such an arrangement was impossible. Yet throughout the late 1840s an organization which seemed to have been designed to meet the needs of the Hakka had been developing. Although it had bases, it was not localized with respect to membership. Its various branches, indeed, were united by a common ideology which sharply distinguished them from other groupings. But the Society of God Worshipers, which had been introduced into Guangxi by two Hakka-speakers, was also notable for its linguistic exclusiveness.

By 1850 the Society had a large membership organized into units spread over at least fifteen *xian* in southeastern Guangxi and western Guangdong (ibid.:176–77), amounting to one-fifth of the area of the former province, and one-sixth of that of the latter (ibid.:184). The membership of the Society was quite heterogeneous, and included representatives of many specialized occupational classes in addition to “land-owners and members of the lower intellectual class such as clerks and graduates of public examinations” (ibid.:167). Although no “high officials” or “persons of the high intellectual class” joined the Society, it was unusual in that its leadership contained “wealthy persons” (ibid.:168).

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Laai sees in the diverse membership of the Society many persons "whose interests collided." He believes, however, "that the great driving force which welded them together despite conflicts among themselves was the dialect, namely the Hakka dialect, spoken among the groups joining the Society" (ibid.:171).

It was, of course, in the context of Hakka-Cantonese fighting that an organization with such a variegated membership could arise. One instance of a Hakka-Cantonese feud was related to the missionary Theodore Hamberg by Hung Jen-kan (Hong Rengan), a relative and early convert of Hong Xiuquan. After noting that "the . . . Hakka villages are very numerous in Kwang-si [Guangxi], though in general not so large and opulent as those of the Punti," Hamberg tells how

a feeling of enmity has long existed between the two classes [Hakka and Punti], and every new incident only served to augment the hatred. At that time a very rich Hakka of the surname Wun had taken a girl as his concubine, who had been promised to a Punti man, and having agreed to settle the marriage with her parents by paying a large sum of money, he peremptorily refused to give her up to the Punti claimant. . . . Soon after, a civil war commenced between the Puntis and Hakkas of the Kwei [Gui] District, in which gradually a number of villages were involved. The fighting began on the 28th of the eighth month [September 1850], and during the first days the Hakkas had the advantage. . . . Gradually, however, the Puntis grew bolder and . . . as their number was considerably larger, they defeated the Hakkas and burnt their houses, so that these had no resting-place to which they could resort. In this distress they sought refuge among the Worshippers of God, who at this time lived dispersed in several districts, in congregations counting from one to three hundred individuals. They willingly submitted to any form of worship to escape from their enemies, and received the necessary supplies, which they were now destitute of. (1854:48-49)

While the distinctive ideology of the Society made possible its maintenance over the area, it was through its provision of a structure to which embattled Hakka could align themselves that its membership was obtained. But in October 1850, the Society was ordered to mobilize, and became an anti-Manchu revolutionary army. Many non-Hakka joined in

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what was now the Taiping Rebellion (Laai 1950:197), the subsequent development of which is beyond the scope of this essay.

CONCLUSION

I have tried to show that, through specific sequences of migration and settlement, differences in dialect could have an important influence in the alignment and formation of social groupings in Guangdong and Guangxi. I have made only the most qualified attempt to develop a concept of "dialect group." For, if we mean by this term all speakers of one dialect, it clearly lacks sociological validity. If, however, we take dialect to be a sociocultural variable, in the same sense as kinship or territoriality, I think it can be shown that the broad range of social relationships which dialect discrimination could influence makes it a primary force in shaping group formation. The manifestation of this variable in sociologically significant ways depends, I believe, on the prior existence of factors conducive to the formation of groups of many kinds. Overpopulation and weakening imperial control certainly were such factors in nineteenth-century China (Hsiao Kung-chuan 1960:503), and throughout southern China growing rural autonomy led to the establishment of localized groupings of many sorts, and for all of them defense was a basic problem (Michael 1949). Hakka-Cantonese conflicts were part of a larger picture, and I do not think it can be shown that the disorders in Guangdong and Guangxi would not have occurred, albeit in different form, if these two provinces had been occupied by Cantonese-speakers or Hakka-speakers only. The significance of difference in dialect is not universal, and in certain urban contexts there is indeed a tendency for Hakka to give way to Cantonese (Forrest 1951:674). But many specific forms of social activity did directly relate to differences in dialect, and no statements as to the social organization of the area can be complete without taking this into account.

The analysis made in this essay has been limited to a geographically restricted area of China. It would be well to discuss briefly its bearing on Chinese society as a whole. We may mention that in diverse parts of China, and at different times, the juxtaposition of different linguistic populations apparently could lead to primarily hostile patterns of interaction (cf. Hsiao Kung-chuan 1960:421-23) perhaps similar to those which existed between the Hakka and the Cantonese. But whether such interaction and the resultant group formation was of sufficient frequency to warrant consideration as an important theme in Chinese

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society outside the Southeast is, to my knowledge, a question still unanswered. We can approach the matter from another angle, however, and note that groupings and interpersonal relationships based upon any one of a number of possible points of reference shared in common have played an important part in giving Chinese society its configuration. Morton H. Fried has spoken of this as "something which might be called t'ungism ["tongism," from *tong*, "the same; together"] . . . and which might be translated as "togetherness" (1962:20). Tongism

applies to people drawn together because they speak the same Chinese sublanguage, come from the same province, come from the same county, come from the same town, or have graduated from the same middle school or college, or are members of a particular class year or either of these. (Ibid.:25)

The bonds of tongism thus might cut across ties of kin, class, and residence. It is a concept broad enough to subsume groupings resulting from different historical processes, and based upon a variety of functional requirements. Indeed, the presence of such groupings contributed to the complexity of Chinese society. In this essay I have attempted to indicate some of the developments which led the Hakka, as well as the Cantonese, to form groupings differentiated on the basis of dialect. In a general analysis of Chinese society these groupings may be considered examples of tongism writ large.

2/ Hakka Villagers in a Hong Kong City

The Original People of Tsuen Wan

ELIZABETH LOMINSKA JOHNSON

People who identify themselves as Hakka live in a wide variety of contexts, both in China (including Hong Kong and Taiwan) and overseas. Unlike those who are more recent immigrants to their current places of residence, the Hakka villagers of Tsuen Wan, a district on the southwest side of the New Territories of Hong Kong, consider themselves to be the original people of their area. They sometimes use the term *benturen*, meaning "original people of the place," for themselves. This is in contrast to the term *bendiren* (usually rendered Punti), with the same meaning, which is used by and in reference to those early settlers of the New Territories who speak Cantonese. Like the Punti, the Hakka are defined as indigenous by the Hong Kong government, and are allowed special rights.

What does it mean to be Hakka, for people who are long-settled, deeply attached, even now, to their land and the tombs of their ancestors (Hayes 1991, 1993), and who were once the sole occupiers of an area and its first identified inhabitants, sharing it only with the boat people based in its harbor?¹ Their status as original people makes them different from the people of Shung Him Tong (see Constable, this volume) and the other later arrivals who constitute the majority of Hong Kong's population.²

An earlier version of this chapter was presented at the 1991 conference of the Association for Asian Studies, at a panel entitled "What Does It Mean to Be Hakka?"

1. Ronald Ng discusses the symbiotic relationship between the Hakka and fishing people (1969:54). In Tsuen Wan the division was less precise because the Hakka also participated in fishing and seafood-gathering.

2. There may also be significant cultural differences between the two original land-dwelling groups of the New Territories, the Hakka and Cantonese. Although one important comparative study of ethnicity in a market town has been done by C. Fred Blake (1981), existing ethnographies of rural Cantonese and Hakka communities do not permit comparison because those concerning Cantonese people were almost all done in large,

This question, asked now, must have a different and more complex answer than it would have had fifty years ago. The Hakka people of Tsuen Wan now inhabit a predominantly Cantonese-speaking city, and have lost the economic activities that once brought them together in shared enterprise. Some of the visible markers of Hakka cultural difference, acknowledged by them as expressions of ethnic identity, have disappeared. These include features of women's dress,³ the heavy outdoor work done by women, unicorn dancing,⁴ and the singing of mountain songs while working together. They are now virtually gone in Tsuen Wan, although somewhat in evidence in more remote areas of the New Territories.⁵

During the past twenty-five years I have done two periods of field-work in Kwan Mun Hau, a two-lineage village in central Tsuen Wan, visited frequently, and developed close relationships with some families.⁶ Initially, the question of their Hakka identity was of little concern to me, and my field notes show that my informants rarely mentioned the fact that they are Hakka.⁷ More recently, I have begun discussing this question with them and paying closer attention to

single-lineage villages, while the few Hakka ethnographies were done in small, multi-surname villages. Without controlling size and wealth, systematic comparisons cannot be done with confidence.

3. These include wearing a rectangular headcloth and/or a flat hat called a "cool hat" with a black cloth fringe, an apron made of three panels stitched together, and relatively plain, dark clothes. The apron, headcloth, and hat are often fastened on with hand-woven decorative bands with colored patterns (see Elizabeth Johnson 1976). These items of dress, especially the cool hat, may sometimes be worn by others. Clothing is not a strict ethnic marker, especially given the fluidity of the boundaries between language groups.

4. In this region lion dancing is associated with Cantonese people and unicorn dancing with Hakka. See Hayes (1977a:225).

5. Hakka wedding and funeral laments were also distinctive. See Blake (1978) and Elizabeth Johnson (1988).

6. During 1968-70 and 1975-76 I lived and did research in Kwan Mun Hau Village. My first research was supported by Population Council, and my second by the Joint Centre on Modern East Asia. I would particularly like to thank the people of Kwan Mun Hau for their hospitality and help. Yau Siu-kwong, in particular, has given me valuable and carefully-considered advice on earlier versions of this paper. Yau Yuk-lin, Yau Yuk-kuen, Yau Chan Shek-ying, Yau Tsang Yung-hei, Yau Tin-loi, and Kwok Yung-heng and his wife have also been very helpful. I would also like to thank those people who have provided comments and suggestions, including James Hayes, James L. Watson, and Graham Johnson.

7. See Nicole Constable's comments on the question of anthropologists' frequent earlier lack of attention to ethnicity in her introduction to this volume.

some of the problems raised in this volume. For example, do the Hakka of Kwan Mun Hau consider themselves to be “guest people” in the sense of being sojourners? Do they consider themselves stigmatized because of being Hakka, as in the examples described by Nicole Constable and Mary Erbaugh? Is the assertion of their Hakka identity important to them, and something they would use to contrast themselves with others or as a basis for action, as suggested by Howard Martin, Constable, and Myron Cohen? Finally, in the present situation of extraordinary change, is their Hakka identity something they feel they must preserve and defend? I have concluded that most people would give negative answers to these questions, and therefore I must ask why this should be. In analyzing this problem, we must examine more closely the historical background of Tsuen Wan, the nature of the social organization that developed there, and, in particular, aspects of the political context in which Tsuen Wan people find themselves and in which, unlike the majority of Hong Kong people, they actively participate.

THE VILLAGES OF CONTEMPORARY TSUEN WAN

The new city of Tsuen Wan on the southwest side of Hong Kong’s New Territories, with its industrial base and population of nearly eight hundred thousand, might seem an improbable place to find Hakka people, who are often stereotyped as being poor and rural. A walk through the dingy industrial districts and high-rise residential developments of that city reveals the occasional surprise: Hakka villages, their names on entrance arches, their ancestral halls prominent among the houses, and their protective shrines nearby. With some effort, the regional temple to Tian Hou, queen of heaven, can also be found, her view recently changed from a prospect of coastal fields and rivers to a complex of high-rise apartment blocks. There are about thirty villages in Tsuen Wan District, all of them Hakka, as identified by themselves, outside observers, and the Hong Kong government (Hayes 1991:109). Some of the villages remain outside the bounds of the city in their original locations in the foothills of Tai Mou Shan, the biggest mountain in Hong Kong, and on the nearby islands, but the majority of the original Hakka people now live within the urban area. Most of these villages have been moved, in their entirety, to new village-style houses in more peripheral areas to make way for urban development. Such moves, arrived at through protracted negotiations between the Hong Kong government and the

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indigenous villagers, are a common feature of the contemporary development of the New Territories.

Memories of the rural life of more than a generation ago remain, however. In Kwan Mun Hau, the village I know best because it was my fieldwork site, the small shop/mahjong parlor/social center still bears the name Country Village Store. In the small amount of space among the houses, some families have tiny vegetable plots and raise a few chickens. Many material aspects of their former rural life, based on farming, fishing, and firewood-cutting, are preserved in the neighboring village of Sam Tung Uk, which, because of its distinctive Hakka architecture (it is an enclosed compound with a central ancestral hall) has been restored as a museum.

RECENT HISTORY

There were approximately seven hundred villages in the New Territories in 1898, and slightly less than half of the population at that time was Hakka, the great majority of the remainder being land- or water-dwelling Cantonese speakers (Hayes 1983:4). The Hakka people of the New Territories are part of a continuous line of Hakka settlement from Bao'an County (now incorporated into the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone) through eastern Guangdong and into Fujian, these being the most recent points of origin of the Hakka migrants to the New Territories during the Qing dynasty (1644-1911) (Blake 1981:10). There are areas of the New Territories in which the majority of the original population is Hakka, including Sai Kung, Sha Tin, the Hang Hau Peninsula and the Tai Po region (Hong Kong 1957:38). In Sha Tau Kok (Allen Uck Lunn Chun 1985:230) and Tsuen Wan all the indigenous villages are Hakka.

The Hakka people of Tsuen Wan are in many ways different from the others presented in this volume, and not simply because they are now urban, as are those studied by Ellen Oxfeld. They differ also in the fact that they consider Tsuen Wan to be their native place, where they belong to an integrated complex of lineages and villages, a separate social system located within the physical environment of the city. Their lineage and marriage ties extend through the New Territories and across the border into Guangdong. Their tombs, beginning with those of the founding ancestors, who arrived near the beginning of the Qing dynasty, are widely dispersed through the hills of the New Territories. Unlike the Hakka people of Calcutta (Oxfeld, this volume), they do not

consider that they are “still guest people” who might move on, but “Tsuen Wan people” and “original local people.” The memory of their migration to Tsuen Wan, originally from North China and later from adjacent areas of Southeast China, is preserved in their genealogies, in oral tradition concerning the arrival and settlement of ancestors, and, in the case of the Yau lineage of Kwan Mun Hau Village, in the couplet on the boards hung outside the ancestral hall at festivals, which states

The descendants of those who came from Henan continue;
The customs of the North are retained.

Although Tsuen Wan people do not consider themselves to be sojourners, this is not to say that emigration from Tsuen Wan did not take place. From the middle of the nineteenth century through the first decades of the twentieth, Tsuen Wan men went abroad looking for improved economic opportunities. A few found them, but the majority did not return wealthy. The tablet commemorating the 1897 renovation of the Tian Hou Temple records large numbers of donations from Tsuen Wan emigrants in many parts of the world, as widely scattered as Hawaii, South Africa, Panama, the Caribbean, North America, and Southeast Asia, although Tsuen Wan had only about three thousand people at that time (Hayes 1983:115–16). The dispersed nature of the migration and the fact that contributions were sent back suggests that these emigrants saw themselves as sojourners abroad, although some stayed permanently in Southeast Asia and established lineage branches there (Aijmer 1967). In contrast to more remote areas of the New Territories, where emigration has increased during the twentieth century (e.g., James Watson 1975), it has become less necessary in Tsuen Wan because of the new economic opportunities there, although recently some people have sought foreign residence to improve their political security and their children’s educational opportunities.

Most of the earliest members of the Tsuen Wan lineages arrived there in the first half of the eighteenth century. That they settled on land that had once been occupied by others is suggested by the fact that they paid “land tax” to the Tang (Deng) lineage of the New Territories. This implies that the Tang had had earlier tenants there, before the earlier Qing evacuation of the coast (1662–69), although their control could have been asserted after Hakka settlement of the region (Hayes 1983:118–19). Regardless, the rescinding of the evacuation order allowed Hakka people to move onto the vacated lands. Local oral tradition suggests there may

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have been evidence of earlier settlers. One variant of the story associated with the Kwan Mun Hau earth god shrine to the Nine Honorable Grandfathers states that the Chan lineage founder was joined in doing martial arts by the ghosts of nine men who had lived in the area making salt, and who had died defending it from pirates. After his first rice harvest, he is said to have built a shrine in their honor, and they have continued to be worshiped as protectors of the village.

Oral tradition about early settlers also includes Tsuen Wan people's assumption that language affiliation, the basis of their cultural identity, is not fixed, but may change over time. Several people I interviewed expressed the conviction that some of the Tsuen Wan lineages were originally Hoklo or Cantonese, but became Hakka over time. A member of one lineage said that one of its branches became Chaozhou (Teochew) after emigrating to Southeast Asia. A well-known example of language change in the New Territories is the Liao lineage of Sheung Shui, now Cantonese, whose members say they were once Hakka and who still maintain close ties with some small Hakka lineages (Baker 1968:28, 38–41, 195). James Hayes found lineages and villages that claimed to have changed language affiliation over time, and he also reports that there are areas of the New Territories where a mixture of Cantonese and Hakka is spoken, and some villages where there are speakers of both languages (1977a:29–30, 207). In Tsuen Wan local people discussed past changes in dialect affiliation by their own and other local lineages without concern at acknowledging that they had not always been Hakka. This may be because Tsuen Wan people have had little involvement in the twentieth-century Hakka-identity movement, with its concern for asserting the existence of essential and distinctive Hakka characteristics and a unique history.⁸

THE NEW TERRITORIES POLITICAL CONTEXT

In 1898 the New Territories was leased to Britain, joining the original colony of Hong Kong Island, and its later addition of Kowloon. The eighty-four thousand indigenous inhabitants were guaranteed special rights by the Convention of Peking and administrative proclamations made at that time (Hayes 1991:116). Since then these have been defined to include the right to maintain rights to their family and lineage lands,

8. This is in contrast to the village of Shung Him Tong, made up of Hakka people of diverse origins, described by Constable in this volume.

although these were registered and became subject to regulation of use and even the possibility of resumption, with compensation, by government; the right to bury their dead in the hills; the right to manage property and kinship relations according to various aspects of Chinese customary law, as interpreted by themselves and the district officers; and, after World War II, the right to elect representatives to the governing bodies of the New Territories (Hayes 1993:96, personal communication; Graham E. Johnson 1973:110; 1977).

Early in this century, some New Territories villages were moved to make way for reservoir construction. In recent years, as the New Territories development plan has involved the creation of new cities where market towns had been before, old villages have been destroyed and the villagers moved to new housing after negotiations to determine the terms of settlement. These include the costs of the necessary rituals (Hayes 1991). In such situations, agricultural land has been converted through various mechanisms to building land, which often, if wisely managed, has provided villagers with a new source of income from the rental of flats and buildings. Those Kwan Mun Hau families who had larger holdings and who managed to keep their land during and after World War II now have comfortable incomes from rents, and the two lineages of the village, the Yau and Chan, have regular income from the urban property held in the trusts of their founding ancestors and various smaller trusts. In the late 1960s the Yau lineage had the reputation of being the best-managed and most prosperous in Tsuen Wan. The income from the urban property of this lineage now enables the members not only to maintain their hall and tombs and to worship at the tombs annually in impressive style, but also to divide cash profits on a regular basis. The Chan lineage also sends buses of members to worship at the tombs of ancestors during the Chong Yang Festival in the ninth lunar month. Over a period of at least two weeks, both Yan and Chan lineages worship at the tombs of their ancestors in descending order, starting with those immediately above their local founders and ending with recent generations. Large numbers of people and impressive offerings are involved in the worship of ancestors, and banquets follow.

Lineages and villages are not coterminous in Tsuen Wan, as some villages include more than one lineage and some lineages have members in more than one village or hamlet. The villages of central Tsuen Wan are also drawn together by their common worship at the Tian Hou Temple, and collectively sponsored opera performances celebrating Tian Hou's birthday (by Cantonese, not Hakka troupes) have recently

been resumed. A chamber adjoining the Tian Hou Temple is devoted to commemorating twenty-seven martyrs killed in a prolonged mid-nineteenth-century conflict with Shing Mun, a cluster of villages higher up the mountain that were moved in the late 1920s to make way for a reservoir (Hayes 1977b). Despite the temporal correspondence of this battle with the Hakka-Punti wars, these villages were also Hakka, and there is no written or oral record of conflict with people of other dialect groups. Every year at the autumn equinox the Tsuen Wan Rural Committee gathers here, their presence announced by the temple bell, for formal worship first of Tian Hou, and then of the martyrs.⁹ They also worship annually at the collective tombs, where unidentified bones are placed (Hayes 1991:128).¹⁰

The continuation of this practice suggests that Tsuen Wan local leaders still feel loyalty to the region they represent, loyalty that must be expressed through ritual as well as political participation. According to Ronald Ng, "In a Hakka community there does not seem to be a decrease in the intensity of loyalty from family to clan, clan to village, or village to community as is experienced in other parts of the New Territories. This may largely account for the stability of Hakka society" (1969:59). In Kwan Mun Hau people affirmed the close relationship between the two lineages, and the pennant used by the Yau lineage proclaims that "the Yau lineage of Tsuen Wan sweeps its tombs," rather than identifying them with their primary village. Tsuen Wan was originally united by an alliance (*yue*) and a governing body of elders called the Tsuen On Kuk, which met before World War II in the Tian Hou Temple and regulated local affairs (Graham E. Johnson 1977:110). The unity of the locality is now strongly reinforced by the current political system, which gives a degree of political power and considerable eco-

9. John Brim (1974) describes the roots of village-alliance temples in local-level social organization.

10. Responsibility for the occasional worship of affinal ancestors and others with whom those responsible have kinship ties is a topic that merits further investigation. This is not done routinely, but only for those who are apparently special cases, perhaps people without descendants. The Yau lineage of Tsuen Wan worships at a tomb shared by a couple who may be the founder's wife's parents and a long-term servant of their founding ancestor. According to James Hayes, the second ancestral hall of the Ho lineage of Muk Min Ha Village in Tsuen Wan is devoted to the founder's wife's parents, and the Chung lineage of Hoi Pa Village has taken responsibility for the tombs of some unknown people (personal communication, 1992). Allen Chun also describes the worship of affinal ancestors (1985:290-91).

conomic advantage to the indigenous people. Each district has its rural committee, which represents its original people to the government, and the New Territories as a whole has an advisory body called the Rural Consultative Committee (Heung Yee Kuk), a formal system that was instituted in 1948 (Hayes 1991:115; Graham E. Johnson 1973:112). These bodies help to create bonds of common interest among the indigenous people regardless of their dialect affiliation.

Their status as indigenous people of the New Territories is important to Tsuen Wan people—apparently much more important than the fact that they are also Hakka. The Tsuen Wan people I interviewed in the late 1960s in general did not spontaneously compare themselves with those of other dialect groups and rarely made statements about Hakka characteristics.¹¹ Those statements that were made were often not flattering, having to do primarily with the hard work of women as opposed to men. Unlike the Hakka Christians of diverse origins quoted by Nicole Constable (this volume), the Tsuen Wan people I interviewed did not show familiarity with the literature or discourse extolling the superiority of Hakka traits and the historical accomplishments of Hakka individuals.¹² In Kwan Mun Hau in the late 1960s, a few men belonged to the Chongzheng Hui (an international Hakka association), although this may have been a means of expressing their pro-Taiwan sentiments in a time of severe political polarization. The greater portion of the Kwan Mun Hau people were left-wing, and so to join this association would have been a political impossibility. Furthermore, to do so would seem, I would think, redundant, because being Hakka is an assumed part of their identity and there are no apparent instrumental reasons for asserting it. Other aspects of their identity are more salient, and useful, these being the fact that they are Tsuen Wan people and New Territories natives. Both of these constitute defined groups, while Hakka is an unbounded category. The terms “Tsuen Wan people” and “New Territories natives” have political definitions, and both carry political and eco-

11. Sharon Carstens (this volume) found the people of Pulai to show similar attitudes and behavior, in contrast to the people of Shung Him Tong (Constable, this volume).

12. Examples of this rhetoric can be found in the publications of the Tsung Tsin (Hakka) Association in Vancouver, B.C., which includes Hakka people who immigrated to Canada from a remarkable variety of countries around the world. For example, their twentieth-anniversary publication includes this statement: “The Hakkas are considered to be the cream of the Chinese race. They are being described as hard working, independent, patriotic, willing to accept challenges, never satisfied with less than the best in the pursuit of education and a strong cohesive family orientation.”

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conomic benefits. To emphasize language differences within this context, at present, would seem not at all advantageous. In general, Tsuen Wan natives in the late 1960s participated only in the Sports Association and the Chamber of Commerce, both associations of their own creation. The voluntary associations proliferating at that time met the needs of immigrants who lacked the kinship and locality ties of the Tsuen Wan people (Graham E. Johnson 1973).

RELATIONS WITH NON-HAKKA PEOPLE

After an initial resistance to the appearance of non-Hakka outsiders in their district, Tsuen Wan people seem to have developed an open-minded attitude towards them, especially as the economic advantage of the rents they paid became evident. Some people said they learned to understand the dialects their tenants spoke. However, during the process of village relocation, James Hayes observed a clear process of "purification," in which nonlineage property owners were denied the right to move to the new village sites, "to regain the original lineage composition of the settlements" (1991:122). It seems that they were asserting their prior rights as original settlers, and disadvantaging later claims.

The men I interviewed were able, when questioned, to make comparisons between themselves and the immigrants to Tsuen Wan, although they were thinking of themselves as indigenous people, not necessarily as Hakka. Their answers are revealing both in the nature of the self-image they show and in the extent of consensus they reflect. They stated that outsiders were more capable and enterprising than natives, and much better able to earn money. The bitterness of their earlier poverty and the hard work required to survive were very important to them, and were freely acknowledged by both men and women. Hayes says: "The Tsuen Wan area was poor. The local elders never failed to impress this point upon one" (1983:123). C. Fred Blake's work on ethnicity in the town of Sai Kung in the New Territories describes an awareness of a "legacy of poverty" (1981:150) as being characteristic of Hakka people there; this is also the case in Tsuen Wan. Their willingness to state this may be more typical of Hakka people.

The men interviewed also said that outsiders were forced by circumstances to be self-reliant, and that they were free "like birds" to go wherever there might be opportunities, while natives were tied to one place. On the other hand, they said that they themselves were able to depend on the property their ancestors had left them, and that they

were unified when necessity demanded it and would support each other in conflicts. Outsiders were fragmented and had only voluntary associations to bring them together. Nicole Constable illustrates the role of voluntary associations well in her chapter, showing how Hakka immigrants of diverse origins created a village, church, and cemetery that provided them with an identity contrasting with those around them (this volume). In contrast, Tsuen Wan people do not need to assert their Hakka identity because they can draw on their long-established lineage, village, and regional ties for support.

Despite Kwan Mun Hau men's statements that they felt somewhat inadequate in relation to the newcomers around them, I never heard anyone express a sense of being stigmatized because of being Hakka, despite the assertions in the literature that such discrimination exists (cf. Constable and Erbaugh, this volume). According to my observations, being Hakka was neither a matter of shame nor pride, but simply one aspect of their being, acknowledged, but not asserted. Only once was I told a story suggesting discriminatory attitudes on the part of others—it was reported that a man who married a Hakka woman was told that it was like marrying a water buffalo, but the story ended positively with the teller reporting that the woman demonstrated her worth during a water shortage by being able to carry water up six flights of stairs. This lack of sense of stigma may come in part from the fact that Tsuen Wan people dominated their region, and had no nearby wealthy or more powerful members of another dialect group with whom they might be compared. One also has to ask whether it might be a stereotype that has been perpetuated by the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century writings on the Hakka, with little social reality.

EXPRESSIONS OF HAKKA CULTURAL DIFFERENCE

An indicator of whether Tsuen Wan people feel that being Hakka is an important part of their identity, worthy of preservation, is the fate of their language in a situation in which they are surrounded with speakers of other dialects, overwhelmingly Cantonese. These include even their tenants, who are now half the population of Kwan Mun Hau Village. Before the Second World War, Hakka was virtually universal in the region, and the schools taught in Hakka, with the exception of one Cantonese school that existed even then. Those who worked outside the area had to be able to function in Cantonese. One man told me that he and his father went to the Cantonese-language school because it was

appropriate to do so when they were surrounded by Cantonese people. In Kwan Mun Hau, by the late 1960s all except the oldest women and one or two illiterate men were able to speak Cantonese. Today middle-aged and younger people speak unaccented Cantonese and no one would be aware of their Hakka identity outside the village context.

Within the village, however, and when village people are together in public places such as teahouses, those who are middle-aged and older use Hakka by choice. At the 1992 Chong Yang tomb worship of the Yau lineage, Hakka was predominant, although people switched comfortably back and forth to accommodate non-Hakka wives and those children who do not speak it. The ancestors were addressed in Hakka. The previous year, the women I observed making offerings at the ancestral halls and shrines during the Winter Solstice Festival also spoke among themselves in Hakka. Likewise, the men attending the worship at the martyrs' shrine spoke Hakka among themselves and it was the language of the ceremony. Their continued use of Hakka in situations where it would be equally convenient to speak Cantonese suggests that it remains meaningful to them as a familiar mother tongue and a symbol of shared identity. That identity has many aspects, however, including their ties to their locality, villages, and lineages. Tsuen Wan people's general lack of spontaneous assertion of their Hakka identity suggests that the locality aspects may be more important.

One recent development that may help to perpetuate their use of Hakka is the reactivation of ties with related lineages in the Hakka-speaking areas over the border in Guangdong, where most of the people do not speak Cantonese. I have never heard concern expressed that the language should be preserved, however, although young people who do not understand it may be teased within the village. One man who is deeply involved in lineage affairs and local history said that he is making no effort to teach Hakka to his son, because it will be of no use to him and, ironically, because he might be teased by other people if he used it. The fact that Hakka continues to be used at present among the local people, who are equally fluent in Cantonese, suggests that it is considered appropriate in this context and is comfortably familiar, but the realization that it may disappear within a generation does not seem to be cause for concern. One factor mitigating against the preservation of Hakka is the fact that many men now marry Cantonese women or those of other origins, again a situation that does not seem to be cause for concern, even though this may mean that these women do not know how to conduct rituals such as ancestor worship correctly. In the past

Tsuen Wan men obtained wives from within the district, but also from widely dispersed Hakka areas of the New Territories, including Tai Po, Sha Tin, and Yuen Long.¹³ As marriages are no longer arranged, old networks no longer function, and wives come from disparate origins.

Certain foods, made specially for festivals, are identified by local people as being Hakka and are still made for offerings, gifts, and family consumption. These include steamed cakes made for festivals, rice-flour balls boiled in sugar syrup made before a daughter is married, and various special dishes cooked for lineage and wedding banquets. Although these familiar foods are still made and valued, others are being added to the repertoire. The local Hakka restaurant, formerly the site of banquets, is now in danger of going out of business as people choose the more elegant, diverse, and expensive foods offered by other cuisines. Precisely specified foods are presented as part of the bride price to the families of Hakka brides, but adaptations to the requirements of others are made if the bride is not Hakka. Like other changes, this is treated in a matter-of-fact way, without regret for the loss of conformity to local tradition.

As with language and food customs, the details of ritual practice may be defined as “habitus”¹⁴—learned ways of doing important things correctly—and valued, or at least followed, in a private context, but not understood or articulated in a way that makes a public statement of identity. Publicly conducted ancestor worship—the Chong Yang worship at lineage tombs, which is highly visible as the buses set off from the village with flags flying—is not markedly different from that of Cantonese lineages in the New Territories, except perhaps for the extensive participation of women and the simplicity of the paper offerings. Within the villages, however, the visible expressions of hall and domestic worship are distinctively Hakka. The single tablet in the ancestral hall was stated by some informants to be specifically Hakka. Anthropologists also have noted this difference from the local Cantonese (e.g., Blake 1981:92). Domestic worship is conspicuous by its virtual absence. While Cantonese families in the New Territories maintain and worship extensive ancestral tablets at home (e.g., Nelson 1974), Hakka ancestors are represented by soul tablets at home only in those cases in which their souls have not yet been installed in the single collective tablet in

13. About 15 percent of the wives in my 1970 census sample came from Tsuen Wan; the remainder came from widely scattered areas.

14. See Carstens (this volume) and Bourdieu (1977).

the ancestral hall. Very few Kwan Mun Hau homes had ancestral tablets in the late 1960s. The rule generally followed is that a soul cannot be incorporated into the hall tablet while there are senior members of the family still living. At the ceremony held shortly after the death of a senior person, those souls that are waiting can be incorporated into the hall tablet with him or her. The ceremony, conducted by a Hakka priest, involves carrying temporary tablets, with their incense pots, to the ancestral hall, and passing tablets and their incense pots over a red cloth to the main altar, where the incense ashes are added to those in the main hall incense pot.

The single tablet is the focal point of each ancestral hall, in contrast to Cantonese halls, with their many rows of individual tablets, representing the souls of those lineage members wealthy or genealogically important enough to have had tablets installed on their behalf. Each Hakka tablet that I have seen has the following inscription, sometimes supplemented with an additional character on each side: "The spirit place of the ancestral deceased father and deceased mother of the — descent group hall." The tablet stands behind a small incense pot on the altar that is flush against the back wall, under which is an earth-god shrine. In front of the altar is a table, decorated with an embroidered cloth on special occasions, where the incense pot is placed and where there are lamps and other fittings. It is here that offerings and flowers, as well as incense and candles, are placed on special occasions. A knowledgeable senior member of the Yau lineage, Yau Chung-fan, explained several important aspects of the tablet's meaning as follows:

Its real meaning is the founder's soul, but its secondary meaning is for all the people of the Yau lineage who have passed the age of sixty. . . . The main purpose of the tablet is to represent the founder; remembering the rest is only secondary. This is the easiest method to remember the others. It is too complicated to have other tablets in the hall. This is the main difference between Hakka and Cantonese. The Hakka's are almost the same as theirs, but simpler.

People attributed this characteristic of simplicity to themselves in various contexts: simpler foods, simpler rituals and offerings, simpler good wishes on special occasions. They do not organize ceremonies of purification every ten years, for example, nor do they make offer-

ings to hungry ghosts, relying instead on their ancestors to protect them.¹⁵

In Hakka lineages ancestor worship other than tomb worship has a single focus, the ancestral hall, and home worship is both rare and temporary. This corresponds to Myron Cohen's description of Hakka ancestor worship in Taiwan, which also has a single focus, the collective tablet(s) in the compound hall (1969:170–74). In Kwan Mun Hau, ancestors' identities are merged in the context of hall worship, and their birth and death days are not formally recognized. Hall worship is characterized by unity, clarity of focus, and inclusiveness. The emphasis is on the founder, the first person to open the place, and on the merged but acknowledged identities of all those who followed him (see also Aijmer 1967:57). Their individual identities are recognized in the genealogy, but not the hall. In contrast, for Cantonese people in the New Territories ancestor worship normally has two focal points, the hall and the home, and so it has an individualized aspect as well as a collective one.¹⁶ Its hierarchical and selective nature is also significant, in that only the wealthy and important receive hall worship, and oldest sons would, in theory at least, have responsibility for worshiping home tablets.

The practice of hall and tomb worship of ancestors in Kwan Mun Hau appears to be different from that of local Cantonese lineages in that women participate, although comparisons should be made with caution because most research on Cantonese people has been done in large single-lineage villages. Women began to participate after the Second World War, according to one informant. At most major festivals they can be seen carrying offerings to the ancestral halls, and they join in the Chong Yang tomb worship, although they play a secondary role and also do most of the heavy work. Men take charge at New Year and during wedding rituals, and they also have sole responsibility for the conduct of lineage affairs, including the management of lineage property. In contrast to the Christian women of Shung Him Tong, Kwan Mun Hau women, despite the importance of their former economic role, do not have the right to speak publicly in formal lineage or village contexts.

15. C. Fred Blake says that Hakka people in the Sai Hung region of Hong Kong also favor simplicity in the worship of gods, and are critical of the ritual expenditures of Chaozhou people (1981:103), who come from eastern Guangdong and speak a dialect related to Fujianese.

16. Howard Nelson, however, says that small Cantonese surname groups may worship ancestors at small halls instead of at home (1974:263–64).

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The practice of ancestor worship in Kwan Mun Hau has continued despite urbanization, and in fact has been reinforced by the increasing values of the ancestral trusts. A minority of Tsuen Wan lineages are Christian and they minimize hall ritual and conduct tomb worship differently. In Kwan Mun Hau carrying out the worship properly—following traditions that have been learned and whose practice may be beneficial to the dead and the living—seems to be a source of comfort and pride. People who are not lineage members may be invited to participate in the banquets that follow, and having the means to carry out these affairs, and also weddings and funerals, properly and well, must be a source of satisfaction. Unlike the Hakka cemetery of Shung Him Tong, however, they do not seem to be used to assert the legitimacy, worthiness, or identity of the group. Visitors are not taken to the ancestral hall and shown it as a statement of legitimacy. It is maintained because lineage members have inherited an obligation to do so, as they also inherited the ancestor's property.

CONCLUSIONS

Those aspects of the lives of Tsuen Wan villagers that remain distinctively Hakka, particularly their language and the practice of ancestor worship, have been maintained in a situation where it has not been necessary to do so. In addition to the people's strongly felt obligation to worship their ancestors, they still use their language among themselves, although this may not continue into the next generation. These practices can be seen as private and shared symbols of common identity, but not as public assertions of Hakka distinctiveness. They normally are expressed only within a private context, not when Hakka interact with others, and so cannot be seen as maintaining ethnic boundaries.¹⁷

The people of Tsuen Wan seem to accept being Hakka, and the practices that help to express this, as one aspect of their multifaceted identity. This includes, most importantly, the fact that they are Chinese,¹⁸ but also their identification with their locality, as New Territories natives and Tsuen Wan people. The fact that the Hakka aspect of their identity is becoming increasingly limited and situation-specific in its

17. Important theoretical statements on ethnic-group interaction and boundary maintenance are found in Barth (1969).

18. Barbara Ward (1965) presents a clear and thought-provoking analysis of Kau Sai fishing people's sense of their identity in relation to other Chinese people.

expression and visibility does not seem to be perceived as a problem. Until now they have participated very little in the movement to research Hakka history and extol the accomplishments of earlier Hakka people. Their energies, instead, have gone into increasing and preserving knowledge of their own lineages.¹⁹ The Yau lineage has added to its genealogy through contact with related groups in China, and has twice printed revisions for all its member families. Maintaining their villages and tombs and defending them against the incursions of urban development have also been ongoing concerns (Hayes 1991). They have felt little need to draw on their Hakka identity as a platform for social or political action because their lineages, villages, and regional ties provide them with a strong base.

As Howard Martin demonstrates, however, circumstances can change and cultural differences can become the basis for politically self-aware action groups. Various changes are taking place in Hong Kong that may affect Tsuen Wan people's sense of their own identity. One is a growing interest in Hong Kong local history, fostered by the government's allocation of resources to create museums and designate historic sites. Although the Sam Tung Uk Museum was created with little local input, people are at least aware of its existence. One young man told me he goes there from time to time to look around; an older man said he wouldn't go "because I know all about Hakka things!" Still, it is a publicly visible expression of the history of the Hakka people of Tsuen Wan, much-visited by other Hong Kong people. In the last few years one local leader has organized the public singing of Hakka mountain songs during the Tian Hou Festival, an event that apparently is enthusiastically attended, although the singers have to be brought from the more rural area of Sai Kung. The development of local history museums in Hong Kong is paralleled by a growing academic interest in Hakka history and culture. The First International Conference on Hakkaology was held in 1992 at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and a number of such conferences have been held recently in the People's Republic of China, where research on this subject is being supported for the first time in forty years. The attention given to these events in the media may help to increase the interest of local Hakka people in their own language, history, and culture.

The political situation of Hong Kong is also changing, and the future is uncertain, to say the least. This uncertainty may be one reason why

19. James Hayes states that over half of the fifty Tsuen Wan lineages have genealogies, and that twelve more had them until the Second World War (1983:117).

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people seem to be showing increasing interest in Hong Kong's distinctive local history and culture, knowing that they may soon be threatened. The rights—or, some would say, privileges—of the indigenous people have been, and continue to be, questioned (Graham E. Johnson 1977),²⁰ and after 1997, when Hong Kong becomes part of China once again, there may be less tolerance for the system that has supported their special status. Certainly China for several decades after 1949 did not demonstrate support for lineages and their property, but in the years since the open-door policy was implemented in 1978 there has been increasing tolerance that is reflected in the rebuilding of halls and tombs, especially in areas with Hong Kong and overseas Chinese connections (see Woon 1989). If it were to happen that indigenous status no longer gave New Territories people a power base, they might, as Howard Martin (this volume) suggests, turn to their Hakka identity as another basis for organization. Although one would predict that being Hakka would continue to become increasingly irrelevant in contemporary Hong Kong, new circumstances may result in another change in the lives of Tsuen Wan people.

20. See also, for example, an article in the *South China Morning Post*, weekend of January 2–3, 1993, headed “NT Villagers Cash in with Secret Deals.”

3/ Poverty, Piety, and the Past

Hakka Christian Expressions of Hakka Identity

NICOLE CONSTABLE

Shung Him Tong Tsuen, the village of the “hall of humble worship,” is a Hakka Protestant community that was founded in the northeastern part of the New Territories of Hong Kong in 1903. From the time of my earliest contact with Shung Him Tong people in 1984, and again when I conducted a year of field research there in 1986 and 1987, I was struck by the apparent facility (sometimes bordering on a sense of urgency) with which many Shung Him Tong people spoke of being Hakka. They referred to themselves as Hakka with a strong sense of pride, they directed me to books and theories about Hakka history, and they spewed off long lists of famous Hakka people without batting an eye. Although not everyone there could be considered an active bearer of Hakka identity, Hakka is an important element of Shung Him Tong community identity.

The Hakka consciousness exhibited by a number of Shung Him Tong people was very different from the attitude of other people whom I encountered in Hong Kong who claimed that their ancestors were Hakka but that *they* no longer were, or who said that Hakka identity is no longer important or meaningful in Hong Kong, or who admitted when pressed that they were of Hakka ancestry, but who never took it upon themselves to advocate its value or importance.

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The sense of Hakka identity that exists in Shung Him Tong seems to be much stronger and more clearly and self-consciously articulated than that among the Malaysian Hakka described by Sharon Carstens (this volume), or the Hakka of Kwan Mun Hau only a few miles away, described by Elizabeth Johnson (this volume). Unlike the people of Kwan Mun Hau, who have maintained certain Hakka traditions but who do not seem to have a correspondingly strong or conscious sense of Hakka identity, the people of Shung Him Tong lack a number of practices that are sometimes said to characterize the Hakka in Hong Kong. For example, unlike the people of Kwan Mun Hau, they have no ancestral halls that can be distinguished in style from those of their Cantonese neighbors and they do not practice a distinct form of ancestor worship that might be identified as Hakka. Like many Hakka in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, and Calcutta, their Hakka language also appears to be on the decline, and they no longer dress in clothes that were once considered distinctively Hakka, nor do they sing Hakka mountain songs.¹ Yet despite the lack of certain traditional cultural markers, their Hakka identity, in many ways, remains vital, and thus it demands further explanation.

Several factors might account for the striking difference in the sense of importance of Hakka identity in Kwan Mun Hau and Shung Him Tong. The Hakka of Kwan Mun Hau are Punti (i.e., legally classified as “native” or “indigenous” inhabitants, pre-1898 residents of the New Territories) or what they call *bentu*. As such, they receive political and economic benefits as Tsuen Wan people and as New Territories natives. In contrast, the people of Shung Him Tong are relative newcomers, and an ethnic minority in what has been a predominantly Cantonese-speaking Punti region of the New Territories. Such differences in their social status might suggest that Hakka identity is maintained in Shung Him Tong because of its political or economic salience.

Certainly during the early decades of the community, especially during the 1920s and 1930s, this was one part of the picture. At that time, when

1. I found, as Elizabeth Johnson did in Tsuen Wan, that Cantonese is spoken fluently by all but the oldest residents of Shung Him Tong. Some young people speak only Cantonese, but many could understand and also speak Hakka. My research was carried out mainly in Cantonese and English, and thus the spoken Chinese that is cited in this essay is romanized Cantonese following the Yale system in Parker Huang's *Cantonese Dictionary* (1970). Other Chinese terms follow the Mandarin pinyin romanization, while place names in Hong Kong follow the local spellings according to the *Gazetteer of Place Names* (Hong Kong 1960) or *Hong Kong Streets and Places* (Hong Kong 1983, 1985).

Cantonese Punti in the region wielded more economic and political power than they do today, allying themselves with other Hakka-speakers yielded certain advantages for Shung Him Tong people. Many became financially prosperous and some attained powerful posts in the Hong Kong government. By the 1940s and 1950s the conflicts that corresponded to Hakka-Cantonese differences around Shung Him Tong and in Hong Kong at large, however, had greatly diminished, as had the economic differences between the two groups. Today the interests of the people of Shung Him Tong no longer align with ethnic divisions as they may have during earlier decades. Local Punti and other non-Hakka neighbors may be considered allies in opposition to more recent immigrants, for example. Since political and economic factors no longer correspond with ethnic distinctions, they cannot account for the current importance or ongoing significance of Hakka identity in Shung Him Tong.

The single most important factor in explaining the high degree of Hakka consciousness among Shung Him Tong residents is—somewhat paradoxically—their Christianity. Christianity, and the accompanying institutional framework of the church, can be said to have influenced Hakka identity in at least three important ways: it created a social context in which Hakka identity was shared, often ascribed, and assumed to be important; it provided a reason to perpetuate Hakka identity; and it influenced the form Hakka identity could take.

The missionaries from the Basel Evangelical Missionary Society, who arrived in China just after the middle of the nineteenth century, chose to focus their evangelizing efforts almost exclusively on Hakka speakers and in Hakka regions of Guangdong. In so doing, the mission stations, churches, and schools they established created a new social context in which Hakka identity could be expressed. Members of this new social group shared not only their religious views, but also their language and the label Hakka. Regardless of the degree of Hakka consciousness before the conversion of Hakka to Christianity, the church provided a setting in which Hakka identity was assumed, and could be nurtured and articulated. Shung Him church, historically tied to the Basel mission, is widely known throughout the Fanling region as a “Hakka church,” and its members are usually presumed to be Hakka even in the few cases in which they are not.²

2. This helps to explain why passing as Cantonese has not been an option for the people of Shung Him Tong, as it has been for those in other regions of the New Territories (see Johnson, this volume; also Baker 1968).

Conversion to Christianity also helped create a reason to perpetuate Hakka identity. To non-Christian Chinese, especially during the second half of the nineteenth century, but still today, conversion to Christianity was considered an act that alienated individuals from their Chinese roots and thus estranged them from their Chinese identity. Chinese Christians, in the wake of the Opium War (1839-42), at a time when foreign imperialism was particularly abhorred, had, in the eyes of non-Christians, transformed themselves into “barbarians” or “foreigners” by embracing an alien faith. They destroyed their idols, no longer performed the proper death rituals, stopped contributing to local shrines and temples, and, perhaps worst of all, ceased worshiping their ancestors. Without such practices, how could they be deemed proper Chinese? In the context of Shung Him Tong, asserting Hakka identity—an identity that some believed carried with it some very negative implications—became an important way for Hakka to link their Chinese and Christian identities and to claim that they could be both.³

Christianity also influenced and severely limited the form Hakka identity could take in Shung Him Tong. Unlike some less conservative churches in Hong Kong, which allow, for example, Chinese couplets over the doorway of the church and bowing or burning incense at the grave of an ancestor, and which tolerate a certain degree of religious syncretism, Shung Him church, having inherited the stance of nineteenth-century Swiss and southern German pietists, strongly disapproves of such activities. The people have therefore had to devise secular ways to express their Hakka and Chinese identity to themselves, to one another, and to outsiders. The last, while the most difficult to do under such constraints, has also been, in some ways, the most important.

In this chapter I address the question of what it means to be Hakka in Shung Him Tong by focusing on several verbal and nonverbal expressions of Hakka identity and describing the social and historical context in which these expressions acquire significance. The case of Hakka identity in Shung Him Tong illustrates the limitations of both instrumentalist and primordialist (or sentimentalist) approaches to the study of ethnicity, neither of which can satisfactorily explain the continued relevance of Hakka identity in Shung Him Tong, or the particular meaning it has acquired there. Verbal expressions of Hakka identity

3. There were, of course, material advantages to converting to Christianity, especially with regard to education. For more details on this topic see Smith (1985) and Constable (1994).

from Shung Him Tong illustrate how the people there distance themselves from existing negative stereotypes about the Hakka and construct a Hakka identity that is compatible with their Christian beliefs. Both the role of women in the Hakka church and the conception of the Hakka Christian cemetery can be read as symbolic expressions of Hakka identity that are unique to Shung Him Tong and that help mediate the ambivalence and inherent conflicts between Hakka, Chinese, and Christian identities. The particular construction of Hakka identity of the people of Shung Him Tong paradoxically serves both to link them to and alienate them from the wider Hakka and Chinese non-Christian community described in other chapters of this volume.

SHUNG HIM TONG: SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The area surrounding Shung Him Tong is still largely rural, but it is located within walking distance of a small but bustling market town, a modern high-rise housing estate, and the Fanling train station, from which it is an easy commute into Kowloon and other parts of Hong Kong. The church building, with its modern architecture, stands out in this rural setting as the first clue that this is no typical New Territories village, as both insiders and outsiders to the community often reminded me.

Shung Him Tong is unusual for a number of reasons. Of its approximately two hundred residents, well over 90 percent are Christian and an even larger percentage are Hakka.⁴ This is quite striking given the fact that at the turn of this century Lung Yeuk Tau, the larger region in which Shung Him Tong is located, was still dominated by Cantonese-speaking Punti who belonged to one of the most powerful higher-order lineages in Hong Kong, the Tang (see Faure 1986; Potter 1968; Rubie S. Watson 1985, 1982).⁵

4. The population of Shung Him Tong is difficult to pinpoint. Some residents reside in the village only during certain times of the year or the week. The geographical boundaries of the region also vary according to the official boundary, which included some 1,300 people in 1986, or the unofficial social boundaries of the community. The figure I am using here is a rough estimate based on the commonly perceived social and geographic boundary of Shung Him Tong, which corresponds most closely to the traditional borders of the village and the perception of most residents.

5. It is important to note here that in the context of Shung Him Tong, all Punti were Cantonese speakers, in contrast to the Punti of Tsuen Wan described by Johnson in the previous chapter, who were Hakka-speakers. The Cantonese name Tang is often written Teng (pinyin: Deng) in English-language publications.

As several local and Hong Kong-wide government administrators remarked, many of the villagers, beginning with the earliest residents, attained a very high level of education, not at all typical of rural villagers in the New Territories. According to one district official, Shung Him Tong Village has produced more university graduates per capita than even the most urban and elite districts of Hong Kong. Shung Him Tong claims among its most prominent past and present residents one of the founders of Chung Chi College at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the first ethnic Chinese secretary of Chinese affairs in the Hong Kong Government, one of the founders of the Heung Yee Kuk (an important New Territories governing body), the founder of the famous Wah Yan College in Kowloon, and several university professors and government officials. The prominence of many of Shung Him Tong's native's is linked in part to their connection with the Basel mission.⁶

Ling Kai Lin, the recognized founder of Shung Him Tong, was born around the middle of the nineteenth century in the Bao'an district of southern Guangdong, which adjoined what later became the New Territories of Hong Kong. When he was a young man he, along with his father and other members of his immediate family, converted to Christianity. He then worked many years as a missionary for the Basel mission, and his children were educated at mission schools. In 1903, shortly after his retirement, Ling and his sons "purchased" some land in the New Territories from the Tangs (which was in fact leased in perpetuity from the Hong Kong government). They then invited other relatives and Hakka Christian friends to join them. As was common in other parts of the New Territories, poorer kin were willing to work the land as tenants (see Rubie S. Watson 1985), and the wealthier arrivals bought their own land in the area.

By the 1930s Shung Him Tong's population included eleven households of eight different surnames, all of whom were Hakka and Christian. Three of the household heads had worked at one time as missionaries for the Basel mission, many had been mission educated, and several were related to one another by marriage. At first the pattern of settlement in Shung Him Tong resembled that of other local villages, in that

6. Shung Him church is one of about twelve in Hong Kong that are members of the Tsung Tsin Mission, also known as the "Hakka church." The member churches were affiliated with the Basel mission until their independence. Tsung Tsin Mission is now a member of the larger group of Lutheran churches in Hong Kong.

many of the first settlers shared surname ties and came from the same native villages in Bao'an or near what is now the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone, across the border from the colony in Guangdong. But Shung Him Tong's population quickly grew to include people from more distant regions of Guangdong who shared neither surname nor native place. What linked these immigrants to other people in Shung Him Tong were their Christian beliefs—particularly their shared affiliation with Basel mission schools and churches—and also the fact that they were Hakka.

As mentioned above, the Basel missionaries worked primarily in Hakka regions of Guangdong and among Hakka speakers in Hong Kong. After the defeat of the Taiping Rebellion, and in the wake of the Hakka-Punti Wars (see Cohen, this volume), Hakka people in South China were the target of persecution and hostility. During that time the numbers of Hakka converts to Christianity greatly increased. It is likely, given these historical events, that many Basel mission converts already shared a sense of Hakka identity when they joined the church. The missionaries, in their writings, certainly labeled them Hakka (e.g., Eitel 1867, Oehler 1922, Piton 1873–74). One of the main attractions of Shung Him Tong Village, as the Lings and other Hakka Christians recorded in their family and village histories (Pang 1934), was that they expected to have a safer, more peaceful home in the British colony than in their native places in Guangdong, where they had suffered persecution both as Hakka and as Christians.

Here I shall only briefly mention that the establishment of the community was not without conflict.⁷ The earliest struggles were with the local Tangs, followed in the 1930s by those with wealthy Cantonese developers and with new immigrants to the area. These conflicts were generally resolved to the satisfaction of Shung Him Tong people either through the efforts of Shung Him Tong church/village leaders, by activating their connections with the Heung Yee Kuk, through their ties to the British government, or through their voluntary associations. In the 1920s, in contrast to Kwan Mun Hau villagers, several Shung Him Tong people decided to join the Hong Kong-based international Hakka organization, the Chongzheng Hui.⁸ Luo Xianglin, a famous Hakka historian who later joined Shung Him church, was one of

7. For more on this topic see Constable (1994: chap. 3).

8. This, I believe, was viewed more as a useful political link with other local Hakka than as a statement of pro-Taiwan or Nationalist sentiments.

those who was instrumental in the founding of the association. In the 1930s the leaders of Shung Him Tong also organized a Hakka mutual aid association with the main function of protecting Hakka in the Lung Yeuk Tau region from robbers and hostile neighbors. Today few Shung Him Tong people belong to the Chongzheng Hui, and the local Hakka association, which lasted only until the 1950s, has been largely forgotten. A large gong—once used as an alarm to alert neighbors of trouble—stands in an old house as the only concrete reminder of past concerns.

While in the past conflicts between Hakka and their Cantonese or Punti neighbors were quite common, today around Shung Him Tong ethnicity is rarely believed to be the cause or basis of conflicts. During the past three decades the Punti population of the nearby villages has diminished and has been largely replaced by Hakka, Cantonese, Chaozhou, or other immigrants from Guangdong. Some older local conflicts between Hakka Christians and local Cantonese are still known of, but no one mentions them openly. As one older Hakka Christian explained, “We don’t like to bring that up because we don’t want to cause trouble or bad feelings.” More to the point, however, is that the people of Shung Him Tong no longer need to activate ties based on Hakka identity to resolve their conflicts and address their concerns.

Outside of the context of their village, church, and the wider Tsung Tsin Mission to which Shung Him church belongs, the people of Shung Him Tong are very much like other people in Hong Kong today who are unaware of each other’s ethnic identity, or learn of it only by chance. They exhibit no visible markers to identify them as Hakka and their spoken Cantonese is indistinguishable from that of other longtime Hong Kong residents. Their coworkers, clients, business associates, and classmates are not exclusively Hakka. In the village context, however, the situation is quite different. Church members and Shung Him Tong residents are still labeled as Hakka by people from the surrounding regions. Many of their closest friends are Hakka, and over the past several years, most of the marriages I am aware of in Shung Him Tong have been between Hakka Christian villagers. As one man in his forties explained to me, the young people tend to interact most with other Shung Him church members or with members of other Tsung Tsin Mission churches. Although they might invite non-Hakka friends and schoolmates to visit the church, few people from outside the local community join the church because it does not appeal to them. To many people, he explained, it appears to be a rather exclusive Hakka village

church, and outsiders are often put off by the use of Hakka during the Sunday service.⁹

ETHNICITY AND HAKKA IDENTITY

Hakka identity is best understood as historically constructed and, following Charles Keyes's definition of ethnicity, is best defined as a claim to common identity based on putative shared descent—as a type of “descent symbolism” and fictive kinship (Keyes 1981; see also Bentley 1991). Unlike more symmetrical kinship groupings, ethnicity is the product of an awareness of asymmetric or unequal relations (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992:55; E. Wolf 1982). As was pointed out in the Introduction, there is little question as to the importance of economic or political inequality in the *initial emergence* of Hakka ethnicity, during the nineteenth century or perhaps earlier. But ethnicity is not necessarily maintained by the same circumstances out of which it originally emerged. Thus a so-called “instrumentalist” explanation does not adequately explain persistence or maintenance, or the form that Hakka identity takes today in Shung Him Tong.

Instrumentalist or circumstantialist approaches, characterized by the classic work of Abner Cohen (1969, 1974) and Fredrik Barth (1969), and still popular in other fields of social science, tend to overemphasize the instrumental or manipulative use of ethnicity to gain or maintain political power and economic advantage over another social group, and to underplay the historical and ideological construction of ethnicity. A more instrumentalist approach would suggest that if Hakka identity persists, then it must serve some material or instrumental ends. This, however, is clearly not the case in contemporary Shung Him Tong. Hakka-Punti conflicts have greatly diminished over the past few decades around Shung Him Tong, and there are no longer political or economic interests that line up along ethnic lines. In the wider context of Hong Kong in recent years, distinctions based on political views, or between older Hong Kong residents and recent immigrants, have become far more relevant than ethnic ones. The marked decrease in the overt political relevance of Hakka identity since the first part of this century, however, has not been accompanied by a corresponding decline in or disappearance of Hakka identity in Shung Him Tong.

9. In 1986 Shung Him church began translating Hakka sermons into Cantonese, and Cantonese sermons into Hakka, in an attempt to attract more people to the services.

A primordialist explanation for the persistence of ethnicity places the emphasis on shared sentiments, which are passed from one generation to the next and are thought to derive from a shared primordial past (see Bentley 1991, Geertz 1973, Isaacs 1975a). These bonds—based on a common language, religion, or history, for example—are believed to create the basis for ethnic ties, which are maintained or resurface in new social contexts to satisfy sentimental or emotional ties to the past. One problem with this approach is that ethnic identity is almost always *cast as* primordial—that is, as having roots in time immemorial—but as Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (1983) have illustrated in the case of what they call “invented traditions,” what is important is that people *believe* “traditions” to be old, not that they are in fact so. Language, history, or religion may or may not be constructed as symbols of group affiliation, and they may or may not have been inherited from a previous generation. In and of themselves such imagined bonds are not the source of the identity, nor can they explain its persistence, disappearance, or reappearance in a different form and context.

As Charles Keyes (1976, 1981), G. Carter Bentley (1981, 1983, 1987, 1991), and Stevan Harrell (1990a) have pointed out, and as most contemporary anthropologists concur, ethnicity need not be of the either/or variety. An exclusive focus on either the primordial or the instrumental basis of ethnic identities unnecessarily restricts the types of questions to be asked, and cannot sufficiently explain the persistence and the maintenance of ethnic identity in situations such as Shung Him Tong where it has lost its political and economic salience. In order to understand why Hakka identity remains of greater concern and interest in Shung Him Tong than among other Hakka in Hong Kong who live in more anonymous urban areas and who can easily avoid any reference to their Hakka identity, the specific history of the church community must be considered. Shung Him Tong illustrates how ethnicity “may be perpetuated by factors quite different from those that caused its emergence” (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992:61). As members of a community that is labeled Hakka, the people of Shung Him Tong are more likely to become aware of their Hakka heritage. Yet Hakka identity in Shung Him Tong is far more than a mere survival. It maintains its relevance and is distinct from the Hakka identity of people in many other Hakka communities.

As the essays in this volume collectively suggest, there may be some repeated themes, patterns—or, as Sharon Carstens refers to them, “tendencies”—that are associated with Hakka in different regions. But the patterns Carstens identifies as economic conservatism, egalitarian

political attitudes, and special gender roles—regardless of whether one believes they originated from a common Chinese past or a more recently constructed ideology—take on different meanings in the particular contexts in which they are found. The Hakka entrepreneurs of Calcutta are clearly not as economically conservative as some of the other Hakka described in this volume. Where patterns such as these are found, despite their similarities in form, they may take on very different meanings. Economic conservativeness, distinctive gender roles, and egalitarian ideals, for example, may characterize both the Hakka of Pulai and those of Shung Him Tong, but these patterns necessarily hold different meanings for Hakka Christians and non-Christians. Likewise, history, language, and other cultural factors may be used in the expression, construction, and legitimation of Hakka identity, thus creating an impression of essentialism or primordialism, but superficial similarities diminish when they are examined within the different social and historical contexts in which they are produced.

Although no longer directed exclusively towards utilitarian, objective, or material goals, issues of power and domination are central to the contemporary conception of Hakka identity in Shung Him Tong. Power must be understood to include power in the sense described by such writers as Bourdieu, which includes power over “symbolic capital” (1977). The Hakka of Shung Him Tong seek to reappropriate the meaning of “Hakka,” and to contest the stigma they believe is associated with it. Hakka identity in Shung Him Tong is not simply manipulative of material resources or local political power; it involves control over symbolic meanings—in this case, power over the other dominant and hegemonic implications of Hakka identity.

The construction of Hakka identity in Shung Him Tong has involved a continuing, although not entirely successful or satisfactory, attempt to reappropriate it from an assortment of other competing sources. Different meanings of “Hakka” are imposed—or have been threatened to be imposed—on the Hakka from a variety of directions and at different times: by other Han (or ethnic Chinese), by popular rhetoric, by official policy in the People’s Republic of China that attempts to blur the differences between Hakka and other Han, by local Cantonese who imply that Hakka are less Chinese or not Chinese at all, by nineteenth-century missionaries who defined Hakka in relation to Christian qualities, by Hong Kong government tourist brochures, which reinforce certain popular stereotypes about the Hakka, and also by Chinese and foreign social scientists and anthropologists (myself included) who

claim some particular knowledge or authority on the subject of the Hakka. All of these sources provide definitions against which and with which Hakka also attempt to define themselves as pure Chinese, good Hakka, and pious Christians.

REFLEXIVE EXPRESSIONS OF HAKKA IDENTITY

During the nineteenth century “Hakka” sometimes served as a derogatory label that referred to people whose language and customs differed from those of the Cantonese-speaking Punti of Guangdong. As a nineteenth-century missionary wrote, “A thorough-bred Punti [Cantonese],” when asked about the Hakka “would certainly, in the case of his ever condescending to acknowledge that he had ever heard of such people, turn up his nose and tell you that the Hakkas are quite beneath your notice, that they are a kind of semi-barbarians, living in poverty and filth” (Eitel 1867:81). Derogatory stereotypes of the Hakka were often related to the issue of whether they are “really Chinese” or descendants of “barbarian tribes.”

Several cultural differences between Hakka and Punti helped fuel the assertion that Hakka—particularly during the nineteenth century—were different from other Han and that in some ways they resembled so-called “hill tribes” or Chinese “national minorities.” Two key features that were used to support this view, and that are examined in more detail below, are the unorthodox behavior and treatment of Hakka women, and the Hakka’s supposed lack of loyalty to the land and thus to their ancestors—an accusation that is all the more powerfully directed towards Hakka Christians.

In Hong Kong today, as in Taiwan and nineteenth-century China, Hakka are widely reputed to be poor, rural farmers, and Hakka women have a reputation for working extremely hard. These images, expressed by Hakka and non-Hakka, also appear in tourist brochures and in popular media, but rarely make explicit reference to the possibility of Hakka non-Chinese origins. In the People’s Republic of China today the Hakka are officially considered part of the Han Chinese majority nationality, not one of the national minority groups. The question of Hakka origins has repeatedly been “laid to rest” by scholars of the Hakka and by Hakka themselves, who are satisfied that Hakka claims to northern Chinese origins around the fourth century are substantiated by historical and linguistic evidence (e.g, Cohen, this volume; Hsieh 1929; S. T. Leong 1980; Luo Xianglin 1965; Moser 1985; Jerry Norman

1988). But to some people of Shung Him Tong, this is still a very sensitive issue. Any negative stereotypes of the Hakka, and any reference to their “questionable origins,” constitute a grave insult because of the underlying implications about Chinese identity.

The examples below illustrate some of the most common ideas about the Hakka that I heard from Hakka themselves (mostly Christians, but also non-Christians). They all echo the popular view that Hakka are industrious and hardworking, honest, thrifty, straightforward, cooperative, diligent, and practical—qualities that are also, significantly, believed to be essentially Chinese (see Eugene N. Anderson 1968, Blake 1981). These qualities and characteristics, as they were expressed to me in Shung Him Tong, are all embedded in a cultural construction of the Hakka past—a history that contains their connection to north central China—the cradle of Chinese civilization. Hakka characteristics are viewed in a sense as adaptations to the poverty and hardships experienced during repeated historical patterns of persecution, migration, and resettlement. They are also qualities that are very compatible with Hakka ideas about “good Christians.”

Although Chinese interethnic conflicts are infrequent in Hong Kong today, ideas about ethnic differences and memories of ethnic conflicts provide an important backdrop for Hakka expressions of identity. As Keith Basso has eloquently argued in the case of Western Apache and their joking imitations of “the white man” in the United States, people often define themselves by who they are not (1979). Implicit—or sometimes explicit—in Shung Him Tong Hakka expressions of self is a comparison with Punti, Cantonese, or, less often, Chaozhou. Such depictions of “the other” reflect power relations (Said 1979, 1989; Zhang Longxi 1988); those who are culturally dominant control the symbolic capital of the other by controlling their identity. The Hakka resist symbolic domination by asserting their own definitions of themselves.

The discussions of Hakka identity I heard in Shung Him Tong are notably devoid of descriptions of visible markers or customs. Occasionally I was told about Hakka foods that were still widely eaten, but songs, clothing, and other distinctive markers were only rarely mentioned, and then usually in connection with non-Christian Hakka, or Hakka in the past. When during my first month of research in Shung Him Tong I told one man I was an anthropologist doing research on the Hakka, he told me that they were certainly Hakka, and that I would find Hakka history there in the village, but if it was “customs” (*jaahpgwaan*) I was looking for, I was in the wrong place. Shung Him

Tong was a Hakka village, without a doubt, but it was a modern Christian community, he told me. If I wanted to learn about Hakka customs, I should visit some of the older Hakka villages in the New Territories where there still were Hakka ancestral halls, Hakka was spoken more, and women wore Hakka-style clothes and jewelry. Or better yet, he suggested, I should some day go and study Hakka who lived in Sabah or other rural regions of Southeast Asia. There I would find Hakka culture. History, however, he could tell me about, and he began to cite Hakka genealogical connections to north central China of various village families.

The following extract of a conversation I had with a seventy-year-old man demonstrates several typical patterns pertaining to discussions of Hakka identity in Shung Him Tong. First, he compares the Hakka to non-Hakka, in this case Punti (Cantonese). Second, he regards Hakka—especially Hakka Christians—as morally superior to the generally wealthier, politically more powerful, and culturally dominant Cantonese. And third, his depiction of the recent history of Shung Him Tong as having repeated broader patterns of more distant Hakka history serves to strengthen and substantiate various Hakka Christian claims about their identity.

“What makes Hakka different” he began, “is their history, language, and the fact that they are hardworking and honest.” I asked whether the Cantonese are not also hardworking and honest. He thought for a minute and reluctantly admitted that yes, “of course Cantonese parents teach their children to be honest and hardworking, but the Hakka are even more likely to be so because of their history. They have had to be to survive.” As he often explained to me, Hakka have had to struggle, and to live in hilly areas where the land is not so good. “The Cantonese,” he explained, “were in the plains [in Guangdong] longer and are richer and learned not to work so hard. They got lazier.”¹⁰ “The Cantonese,” he once said, “think of Hakka as inferior, aggressive, and uneducated, but Hakka people have shown that they are wrong. . . . Other people may try to be good and honest and hardworking, but Hakka people have *had* to be.”

Making the transition from general Hakka history to the history of

10. On another occasion when I asked him how Hakka people learned to be hardworking, he said it was probably mostly from their parents, but also was “in their blood and inherited.” The church, he said, “may also tell people to work hard, but not in the same way that people work hard because they are Hakka.”

Shung Him Tong, he went on to describe the early founding of the village, how Shung Him Tong people didn't let outsiders "bully them," and how they organized themselves:

The early settlers got education and built a church and a school. The other people in the area have no such organizations. The Hakka people would farm and dig and build buildings and work very hard and show that they are not the way other people think of them. Other people don't have the same capabilities as Hakka people. They [non-Hakka] might smoke opium and gamble away their money. They can't hold on to their money because they are weak. Look at [he names three neighboring villages, and gestures in their direction]—before, there were Cantonese people in those villages, but where have they gone? Now it's largely Hakka people. I don't know where they went! Hakka people are capable and have their culture and traditions.

A young woman schoolteacher in her thirties who is related to one of the earliest immigrants to Shung Him Tong put the same points quite succinctly, again contrasting the Hakka and their Cantonese neighbors:

Hakka people are very good people—hardworking, thrifty, and practical. Not like the Punti, who like to have a good time and are not hardworking. When they [Punti] make money they just become opium addicts, in contrast to [Hakka] people like my grandfather, who was poor and saved a little bit of money so he could buy some land.

The pattern of mentioning one's parents' or grandparents' generation in reference to the Hakka was often a way of connecting the distant past with more immediate and personally known events. A university-educated man in his forties who no longer lives in the village but who was also related to one of the founding families of Shung Him Tong connected the Hakka distant past with his grandmother's way of life:

In the past the Hakka lived on the . . . less fertile land in a naturally harsh environment to make a living . . . and they have somehow developed a kind of diligence. . . . But, observing and thinking about my grandmother [a respected church elder in her time], I somehow have the idea that Hakka are hardworking and

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straightforward people. They aren't as prone to deception. . . .
Maybe this is the mark of being country people, of living a very
simple life.

To each of these three people, Hakka culture and traditions—depicted as qualities and character traits—are best expressed by looking at the past and at Hakka and village history. Rarely did they identify or mention specific customs and practices as Hakka.

Hakka are also well aware of the negative qualities attributed to them by non-Hakka. Like the older man suggests in the first quotation above, Hakka are “not the way other people think of them.” They know, for example, that they are considered poor and stingy. Poverty, however, is not always regarded by Hakka as a negative characteristic and, along with the hardships experienced by them, is considered the basis for a number of their good qualities. As one young man whose family joined the church in the 1940s put it, because Hakka were poor,

there is a strong “we” feeling among [them]. They are supportive and treat each other as brothers. They are hardworking, honest, straightforward, and they stick together even when they live in foreign countries. They are also stubborn. In the past all Hakka people suffered a lot and were persecuted. These are the characteristics that describe Hakka people and they also describe good Christians.

In this quotation, what non-Hakka describe as “clannishness” has been described positively as mutual support, unity, and cooperativeness arising from times of hardship and poverty. Also important in this quotation is that poverty, cooperativeness, and thrift—expressed as one-time characteristics of all Hakka and found in several of the other cases described in this book—are decisively equated with those of “good Christians.” The equation of Hakka moral character with that of pious Christians—in opposition to Punti (Cantonese) non-Christians—is also implicit in the first two quotations above. References to Hakka piety, or the idea that Hakka were already closer to becoming Christian than were other Chinese are also found in some nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century European writings about the Hakka. Some European missionaries viewed the Hakka as more likely than other Chinese to become Christian because their religion was said to be closer to mono-

theism, their treatment of women was “healthier,” and they were more likely to be monogamous.¹¹

Hakka of Shung Him Tong depict themselves as hardworking in contrast to other Chinese. They believe that in the past they were poorer than most others, especially the Cantonese. Another difference lies in the honesty and morality ascribed to the Hakka in contrast to the dishonesty and immorality of others. Such a view is emphasized by the pious and moralistic stance of Hakka Christians. In the following statement the poverty of the Hakka is transformed into wealth. In contrast to the wealth of the Punti, however, which Hakka Christians believe corrupts and leads to immoral activities, the wealth of the Hakka is earned through honesty and hard work. It is implied that Hakka keep their wealth because they do not gamble or squander their money on drugs or prostitutes. As an elderly village man put it:

We [Hakka] were threatened and treated like outsiders; we had a hard time. . . . Well, the [Punti] Tang were lazy. Perhaps they smoked too much opium and played mahjong all the time and gambled and lost their money. . . . The Hakka have the reputation of going through China and usurping the land from the wealthy landlords by working very hard.

On the surface this statement may appear strikingly similar to that of Ellen Oxfeld’s Hakka landlady in Calcutta, who explained that “when Cantonese make money, they get lots of servants, eat with ivory chopsticks, and use tablecloths, . . . but Hakka keep working very hard” (this volume). In both cases Hakka are frugal and hardworking and Cantonese squander their money. But, although the generalizations about Hakka and Cantonese are similar, it is important to note that the specific examples provided by the man from Shung Him Tong of what Cantonese are said to do with their money carry a far more moralistic message. Non-Christian Hakka, even in the communities surrounding Shung Him Tong, are very likely to partake in mahjong and other forms of gambling, which Hakka Christians disdain.

While this man and other people from Shung Him Tong told me that the Hakka are known for “taking over and becoming landlords” (Cantonese: *Hakka jim deihjyuh*), this is not a view I ever heard expressed by

11. For more on this theme, see Constable (1994: chap. 6).

non-Hakka. To non-Hakka, Hakka are often viewed as stingy. What non-Hakka think of as stinginess, however, is to Hakka thrift. In contrast to the wasteful Cantonese, who eat only the leafy greens of the *choisam*, the Hakka, I was told by one woman, eat the whole vegetable, stalk and all. During one conversation at which both Hakka and non-Hakka were present, a Cantonese woman married to a Hakka man said, "The Hakka don't spend their money and they are stingy. But unlike other Chinese who are careful with their money, the Hakka don't get rich." Her Hakka husband defended himself and all Hakka and described his grandfather's thrift and generosity. A little later in the evening he began to expound on the many famous and successful Hakka, to which his Cantonese brother-in-law responded, "But the Chaozhou are even more successful!"

References by non-Hakka to Hakka success (or lack thereof) usually refer to financial success. To defend themselves, the Hakka of Shung Him Tong interpret success more broadly to include academic, moral, political, or social success. Along similar lines, I was directed to a man who is often cited in the village as an example of a successful Hakka. He is a retired politician who has not lived in the village since he was a child. After I very briefly explained that I was conducting research in the Hakka community, he interjected, "Why not study the Chaozhou? They're much more interesting." I asked why this was so, and he answered that they are "much more [economically] successful. Hakka who become successful are no longer Hakka." He considers himself a case in point. As a successful person, he no longer identifies himself as Hakka, and non-Hakka are unlikely to assume that he is Hakka. He lives in an exclusive part of Hong Kong, his children have married non-Hakka, and in public he speaks flawless Cantonese. It is also important to note that, like many other members of his branch of the family, he is a practicing Catholic and rarely attends the Hakka church, only on occasions such as weddings and funerals.

Scholars also perpetuate the idea that "few Hakka became successful in business" (e.g., Moser 1985:245). It is not that there are in fact no successful Hakka entrepreneurs—the Hakka tanners in Calcutta are a vivid example of business success (see Oxfeld, this volume), but, as is suggested by the quotation above, Hakka who are economically successful may better fit the stereotype of successful Chinese entrepreneurs than that of poor Hakka farmers. To people with whom I spoke in Hong Kong—who conveniently forgot that Aw Boon Haw, whose

fortune was based on Tiger Balm medicine, and C. J. Soong, founder of the Bank of China, are both Hakka (*ibid.*)—the idea of wealthy Hakka entrepreneurs seemed as comically incongruous and as much a contradiction in terms as would the idea of rich Oakies or hillbillies in the United States.

Even among the Hakka of Shung Him Tong—who are quick to list many famous Hakka politicians, scholars, and entertainers—one finds a marked lack of Hakka who have achieved commercial success. In part this shortage may be because Hakka are proud of their heritage of frugality and hard work, but such can also be said of the wealthy Hakka in Calcutta. From the point of view of the people of Shung Him Tong there is another explanation. Success in business, they say, requires illegal or dishonest, immoral activities. Gambling, inviting important contacts to the jockey club and the horse races, and living the high life all are—from their Christian point of view—considered corrupt and corrupting, yet necessary for success in the field of commerce.

For Hakka Christians this is in part a rationalization, but it is also true that their success lies not in commercial enterprises, but in education, politics, and civil service—fields that were traditionally and officially held in high esteem both by the Chinese and by their church community. Although Max Weber's Protestant ethic equates business success with grace and salvation, for the people of Shung Him Tong wealth is often thought to be a sign of corruption. Thus, in striking contrast to the Hakka of Calcutta, who view capitalism as a legitimate route to upward mobility, the Hakka of Shung Him Tong believe, and are reassured, not by material wealth but by the thought that "the meek shall inherit the earth."¹² They share with the Hakka of Calcutta an idea of Hakka frugality and thrift as positive characteristics that render them superior to the Cantonese, but they do not consider wealth the ultimate measure of success. Like the Hakka of Malaysia, they believe Hakka are not particularly skilled in business, but it is not, they claim, that "Hakka have no head for business," as a Hakka Malay explained to Sharon Carstens, but rather that they choose not to. The stereotype of Hakka poverty and lack of business acumen articulates

12. As is discussed in greater detail by Ellen Oxfeld (this volume) and Hill Gates (1987:260–61), in late Imperial China capitalism offered an alternative to the state-controlled system of degrees and government office as a legitimate route to upward mobility.

well with their image of being good Christians and their beliefs about their Hakka heritage.

HAKKA WOMEN AND HAKKA IDENTITY

Like many of the women belonging to non-Chinese “hill tribes,” with whom the Hakka were sometimes compared during the nineteenth century, the image of Hakka women did not fit the shy, modest, feminine, Han ideal of the nineteenth century (Diamond 1988). Although Hakka were patrilineal and patrilocal, as were other Han, Hakka women are said to have been allowed more freedom than were other nineteenth-century Chinese women. For Chinese women of that time, freedom was not considered a good thing. For other Han Chinese binding one’s daughter’s feet was a point of pride, status, and wealth—an indication of the strict control of a patriarchal society over women. That Hakka women’s feet were not bound suggested that they were undisciplined, unrestrained, and uncontrolled by Hakka men, who were, by implication, weak and to some extent subordinate to their wives. On a symbolic level, the behavior of Hakka women posed a serious threat to Han patriarchal hegemony.

In many historical and missionary documents from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (e.g., Campbell 1912, Lechler 1878, Oehler 1922, Piton 1873–74), in commemorative publications of the International Hakka Association, and in travel magazines and tourist publications in Hong Kong, one easily finds many statements, generalizations, popular images, and stereotypes regarding Hakka women. Hakka women still capture the imaginations of many observers. In tourist brochures visitors to Hong Kong are told to look for women in distinctive circular, flat, straw hats with black cloth trim. These, they are told, are the famed, hardworking Hakka women. In fact, these hats (as well as darker skin, stockier builds, and larger feet) often serve more as class or occupational markers than as ethnic ones, but women seen doing agricultural or construction work—especially if they are wearing circular, black-fringed hats—are often mistakenly assumed to be Hakka. This reinforces not only the working-class stereotype of the Hakka, but also the reputation of Hakka women as extremely hardworking compared to other Chinese women.

No Hakka or non-Hakka I have ever spoken with has disagreed with the claim that Hakka women are extremely hardworking. Hakka men might deny and resent the stereotype that they are lazy compared to

Hakka women, but both sexes in Shung Him Tong express pride in the fact that Hakka women work very hard.¹³ Their idea of hard work goes well beyond the essentialized image of women farmers or construction workers in the supposed Hakka hat. As one older man said when describing his mother, Hakka women are taught to “be an official’s wife and go out from the drawing room” (*jouhdak gunleung, cheutdak tengtong*). This means, he explained, that Hakka women are expected to be good, proper, officials’ wives as well as being able to cook and clean. “They should be able to talk intelligently to important guests and also do hard work.”

The double requirement placed on Hakka women—that they be competent in both the domestic and public spheres—is interpreted by many Hakka as evidence of advanced or modern views regarding the emancipation of women. The important and visible role of Hakka women in the Taiping Rebellion (as leaders and as military trainees) is also cited to demonstrate enlightened views regarding women. It was not, according to Hakka men (and some women), that Hakka women *had to* work in the home as well as in the fields because they were poor, subservient, or exploited, or because the men frequently emigrated or were lazy, but because they were entitled to work (see also Eberhard 1974). Thus a recent rhetoric of gender equality has come to be associated with Hakka women’s work outside the home. According to missionary records and many Hakka I spoke with, even when Hakka in the past were wealthy enough not to require women to work outside the home, women never had their feet bound. While to other Han this was a sign of Hakka low status, as one man from Shung Him Tong asserted with pride, it is to Hakka an indication that in the nineteenth century they were well ahead of the times in promoting women’s liberation.

I was told by one man that, because of their ability to work hard, Hakka women rarely have become beggars or prostitutes. Such views were presented by both men and women, with one difference. Several Hakka women in Shung Him Tong (including the church evangelist and the daughters of two church elders) explained, with reference to their own and their mothers’ work loads in both the domestic and the public spheres, that “Hakka men are so spoiled that the women have to do

13. Burton Pasternak also found among Hakka men in Taiwan disagreement with the idea that “they spend a lot of time sitting around talking while their wives do all the work,” although they are the first to admit that “their wives are among China’s most industrious” (1983:25).

POVERTY, PIETY, AND THE PAST

everything.” Others put it in terms of male laziness or helplessness, thus casting the labor of women in the realm of necessity rather than privilege or choice. While they agreed with the popular image of the hardworking Hakka woman, many women articulated an awareness of the inequality and the contradictions posed by their “liberated” position.

In Shung Him Tong the roles of women in the operation of the church and in church-related activities reflect what is in retrospect constructed as traditional Hakka approval for the visible and equal public roles of women. While the pastor is a man, there is a woman evangelist who delivers the sermon at least once a month. There is usually a woman translator who renders the Hakka sermon into Cantonese each Sunday, and of the group of four people who are selected each week to collect offerings, two are always women, one older and one younger.¹⁴ The apparent symmetry of the church functionaries, board of directors, and elders is offset by the relative imbalance in the congregation itself—in which women are clearly in the majority. In terms of church decision making, I was told that women often go along with what the male elders and board members (who are often their husbands) decide, but, at least publicly (as in the past), they play a secondary and less vocal role. Women may be visible, but they are not equal. Women in the church are cast in support roles. The treasurer is a man, but Sunday school classes are taught primarily by women, and evangelizing work is also largely performed by women. The power relationship between Hakka men and women is thus reproduced in the context of the church. The pattern of women performing what the man above referred to as “hard work” as well as “intelligent conversation to entertain important guests” is still the rule, and women have become, in a sense, objectified as a symbol of Hakka identity, an embodiment of Hakka qualities, and the basis for a Hakka claim to a rhetoric of modernity.

THE CEMETERY

Although Hakka in the nineteenth century were mainly intensive agriculturalists who were sedentary compared to nomadic groups of North and Northwest China and swidden agriculturalists of the southern hills, or even boat people, Hakka sometimes faced many of the same insults

14. Non-Hakka whom I asked insisted that this gendered division of labor and the conscious attempt at visual balance is unique to the Hakka church, but this question remains open for further research.

and accusations of inferiority from their non-Hakka neighbors. Hakka were accused of being less rooted to the land than the Punti, which also implied that they were less dedicated to their ancestors. As their name suggests, they had a reputation for migrating frequently. Although they were far less transitory than most “hill tribes” or other Chinese ethnic minorities, and Hakka often settled in an area for several centuries, their name and their less elaborate ancestral halls (see Johnson, this volume) suggested to their Chinese neighbors that they were less civilized outsiders who did not show proper respect for their ancestors. Hakka (and other Chinese) who converted to Christianity, and therefore no longer practiced ancestor worship and rites, were even more prone to be accused of no longer being Chinese, having forsaken and deserted their ancestors.

As James Watson (1988) and Myron Cohen (1991) have suggested, “orthopraxy”—the proper *structure* for the practice of funerary, marriage, and other rituals—was more significant in Imperial China as a marker of Han identity than was “orthodoxy,” or the concern for unified *belief* that might underlie any given ritual. The concept of orthopraxy helps to explain why to their non-Hakka, non-Christian neighbors, Hakka Christians are considered to be, in a sense, no longer Chinese: the structure of their rituals appears wrong. But the people of Shung Him Tong place greater emphasis on unified belief, and claim that a continued concern for, and knowledge of, the importance of the ancestors, for example, can be maintained without the traditional heathen practices associated with their worship.

The Shung Him Tong cemetery is a place of great pride for a number of reasons that go well beyond its practical purpose. The cemetery gives testimony to a number of positive characteristics that the people of Shung Him Tong attribute to the Hakka in general and to Hakka Christians in particular, and on a symbolic level the cemetery is an important feature in the claim to their Chinese identity. As such, the cemetery can be read as a material expression of a number of central tenets of Hakka identity, most of which are tied to ideas of Hakka history.

When I first began investigating the information recorded on grave markers, no one in the community seemed particularly surprised or disturbed. On the contrary, a number of people said that it was an important place for me to look if I wanted to learn about the community. The famous Hakka historian Luo Xianglin, who had been a dedicated church member and elder and who was buried in the cemetery,

had also done research there. Each grave marker contained genealogical information including the deceased's place of birth, his or her photograph or portrait, a list of his or her descendants, and the native place of his or her recent ancestors.¹⁵

In addition to a visit to the church and school, virtually every tour of the village included a visit to the village cemetery or a walk to a view of the cemetery. It was clearly a point of pride for a number of reasons. It provided the opportunity to discuss several prominent villagers who are buried there, and was noteworthy because Shung Him Tong is one of the few villages in the New Territories to have the advantage of its own cemetery. According to Hong Kong law, only Punti—defined in this case as descendants of those who resided in the New Territories before 1898—have the legal right to burial in authorized regions of the New Territories. Most others are buried in one of the official public cemeteries. Through the initiative of some of the early village leaders, however, the people of Shung Him Tong petitioned for the land behind the village and, after great persistence and numerous financial contributions from the villagers, permission was granted for a Christian cemetery in 1931. In order to appreciate the significance of such a feat, one must realize the great limitations placed on burials for non-Punti in the New Territories and also the limitations on burial land and land in general in Hong Kong. The cemetery suggests the rootedness of the Hakka in the area, the permanence of their community, and their ability to overcome hardship and local opposition.

Many parts of the Shung Him Tong cemetery are found covered in weeds and overgrown except at Easter time. The usual paper and food offerings presented at the grave sites at funerals and during the Qing Ming and Chong Yang festivals in Hong Kong are forbidden at the Shung Him Tong cemetery, and are rarely seen at the graves. But Easter, which everyone explains corresponds closely to Qing Ming, is the time when the entire church “family,” as it is called, visits the graves, brings flowers, and sings hymns there. Several elderly women mentioned that they would be happy to be buried there because even if their descendants forget them, they would be guaranteed a visit from the church family at least once a year. A similar concern may have occurred to the few early village residents who chose to transfer the remains of several ancestors from Guangdong to the Shung Him Tong cemetery.

15. The spatial arrangement of the cemetery also reflects relative status of members of the Shung Him Tong community (see Constable 1994:104).

Hakka Christians are robbed of the ability to express their Chinese identity—particularly their genealogical connections to a glorious Chinese past—through the usual means of a family altar or ancestral hall. For this reason the cemetery fills an important void. It at once heeds the Christian proscriptions against ancestor worship and clearly and publicly depicts people’s connections to the past. Out of a similar concern that Christians might lose an important link to their past, Luo Xianglin attempted to establish an ancestral hall for the Luo lineage in Hong Kong with one side for non-Christian worship and another for Christian prayer.

Likewise, the cemetery serves as a kind of public genealogy or historical text. This is not difficult to accept if one considers that a mimeographed volume on Shung Him Tong history compiled by the household heads in the 1930s (Pang 1934) is one of the main sources for Luo’s famous history of the Hakka (Luo Xianglin 1965). Luo’s work, which is strongly influenced by his personal and professional connection to Shung Him Tong, has been referred to as a “veritable bible for the Hakka” (S. T. Leong 1980) and provides the basis for the Hakka history that is reproduced in Hakka associations worldwide. In Shung Him Tong even those who have not read Luo Xianglin’s book know of it and know its main points. The book itself is a symbol of Hakka legitimacy. Other Hakka in Hong Kong and further afield who express pride in their Hakka identity often assert—whether they are aware of it or not—many of the central tenets expressed in Luo’s writing (e.g., the *huiguan* quotations cited by Carstens, this volume). That is not to say, however, that Hakka identity is the same everywhere.

CONCLUSION

For the people of Shung Him Tong, Hakka identity is conceived of largely as subjective qualities and character traits that are believed to be rooted in history—a history of temporal and spatial migrations connecting them to the core of China. History, as a concrete text, is memorialized in grave markers, gender roles, and everyday conversations. Hakka identity in Shung Him Tong continues to be expressed and negotiated within the parameters of what is deemed appropriate—pious Christian belief and behavior.

Contrary to what one might expect, and unlike Christian and other types of religious conversion that are said to serve as a means to “escape a stigmatized identity” (Berreman 1979, Juergensmeyer 1982), Christianity has played an important role in perpetuating, transforming, and

strengthening Hakka identity in Shung Him Tong. Like the early settlers who suffered the double stigma of being both Hakka and Christian, the current residents must also struggle to define themselves and construct a positive self image. This helps to explain why their Hakka identity is more often asserted, and more clearly reflexive, and also more defensive at times, than that of other Christian or non-Christian Hakka who live in the more anonymous urban regions of Hong Kong.

This Christian/ethnic identity is an ingenious blend of symbolic forms wherein the prominence of women, the consumption of the whole *choisam*, and the construction of a cemetery all serve to strategically integrate aspects of Christian faith with ethnic stereotypes. Although not political in the way in which the Hakka movement in Taiwan is (see Martin, this volume), Hakka identity in Shung Him Tong still has political implications in terms of the symbolic capital under negotiation. Hakka identity, as it is expressed in Shung Him Tong, both incorporates and resists definitions of the Hakka imposed from outside by Punti, European missionaries, the state, and other sources.

Their brand of Christian beliefs requires that they reject many cultural practices that their non-Christian neighbors consider essentially Chinese. The rejection of “proper” rites, customs, gambling, mahjong, and horse racing, and the introduction of what neighbors perceive as foreign, peculiar, or amusing Christian practices alienates them from other Chinese. Their insistence on a Hakka identity defined as essentially primordial and historical allows them to argue that they are at once pious Christians and more Chinese than their neighbors. By extension, their identity as well educated, successful Hakka challenges the state-perpetuated image of the Hakka as poor, rural folk.

Hakka identity takes on a very particular meaning in the context of Shung Him Tong, but it also echoes certain themes expressed by other Hakka—both Christian and non-Christian—within and beyond Hong Kong. Many of the ideas held by Hakka Christians in Shung Him Tong regarding Hakka history, the role of women, hard work and industry, and a commitment to the land and the ancestors, are themes that appear in the publications of Hakka associations worldwide. It is noteworthy that Luo Xianglin himself popularized many of the stereotypes and images that appear in these publications. Thus, at least on the level of rhetoric, Hakka Christians are linked with all Hakka worldwide. While one could interpret this in a primordialist way, to do so would essentialize the past—a past that is more appropriately seen as the product of strategic imaginings.

4/ Form and Content in Hakka Malaysian Culture

SHARON A. CARSTENS

I began my research for this chapter with a question at once radical and old fashioned: Is there such a thing as Hakka culture? Can we now (or could we ever) identify a distinctive set of cultural characteristics shared by a majority of Chinese who consider themselves Hakka? Certainly Hakka in different times and places have argued for patterns of cultural distinctiveness vis-à-vis other groups, even as they sought wider social recognition in the status hierarchies of Chinese or overseas Chinese society. But can we distinguish core behavioral or attitudinal patterns—beyond matters of detail in dress, food, or ritual observances—that set Hakka apart repeatedly not only in China, but in the communities they established in Southeast Asia and elsewhere in the world? And can these differences help us to better understand the similar socioeconomic positions that Hakka seem to share in many places?

I recognize, as I ask this question, that it would be easier to respond simply in the negative, and to go on to explore quite different and unique formations of Hakka culture and identity as they have developed in response to specific situations and relations with other groups. And I recognize that other researchers, facing a similar question, have argued against such an interpretation (cf. Pasternak 1972). Yet there are certain

Research on the Hakka community of Pulau (1978–90), the Malaysian Hakka Kapitan Yap Ah Loy (1984), and Hakka Malaysians in general was supported by a Fulbright Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship, a Beloit College Cullister Foundation Grant, a Fulbright Faculty Research Fellowship, and a Portland State University Research and Publications Grant, all of which I am pleased to acknowledge. Research and writing of this chapter involved numerous conversations with a variety of people who expressed interest in “the Hakka question.” Their input and enthusiasm have been invaluable, as have the comments of friends and colleagues—including Ed Wickberg, Mary Somers Heidhues, Tom Biolsi, Julie Nemer, Nicole Constable, and John Nausieda—on the chapter itself. An earlier version of this chapter was presented at the 1991 conference of the Association for Asian Studies, at a panel entitled “What Does It Mean to Be Hakka?”

HAKKA MALAYSIAN CULTURE

features of Hakka cultural adaptations in Malaysia that have continued to puzzle me and seem to call for a more thoroughgoing investigation of patterns and possibilities. This chapter is thus an attempt to explore the question of Hakka culture, focusing on Hakka Malaysians but going wider afield as necessary.

HAKKA PATTERNS IN PULAI: 1978

When I arrived in the Hakka Malaysian community of Pulai to begin anthropological research in early 1978, I had just spent sixteen months in Taiwan, where I had studied the Hakka dialect in Taizhong; visited Hakka areas in central and southern Taiwan; attended Hakka weddings, temple festivals, and folk-singing competitions; interviewed Catholic nuns who had worked in Hakka areas in mainland China; and elicited stereotypes about Hakka from my mostly Taiwanese Hokkien students and friends. Keenly interested in “things Hakka,” I carried to Malaysia tapes of Hakka folk songs recorded in Taiwan (which I assumed would be greatly appreciated by the Pulai villagers) and a set of questions to ask them about their Hakka culture.

What I found was a group of people who spoke a version of Hakka quite different from the one I had studied, who claimed not to understand the Hakka folk songs on my tapes, and who seemed to have very little to say about distinctive differences between Hakka and other dialect groups in Malaysia, no matter how hard I probed.¹ Unlike the Hakka of Shung Him Tong described by Nicole Constable (this volume), the Hakka component of Pulai cultural identity was relatively unimportant compared to people’s attachments to the Pulai community (as a historic, geographic, and cultural entity) and a sense of themselves as rural, poor Chinese in a state increasingly controlled by and preferential to its Malay population. A few old people were able to sing some Hakka mountain songs, and certain wedding and funeral customs were identified as Hakka, yet when the old Hakka gentleman who was knowledgeable in these ritual practices died during my time there, several Pulai people commented in an unemotional way that they would now

1. In keeping with terms commonly used in the general literature, I have chosen for the purposes of this paper to refer to Hakka language as a dialect and to dialect groups as both linguistic and sociological categories. While the extent to which linguistic divisions were used as the basis for actual group formation have clearly varied, the term “dialect group” remains a convenient shorthand for Chinese who speak the same language.

have to rely on the Cantonese expert in the nearby town to direct these rituals.

The Pulai villagers were descendants of Hakka Chinese miners who had traveled to Kelantan in search of gold beginning in the seventeenth or early eighteenth century. As the gold supplies diminished, the less successful of these miners did not return to China, but began to engage in subsistence rice farming while they continued to dig for gold on the side. Many took local Orang Asli (aborigine) and Siamese women for wives, creating a settled Chinese community in the fertile Galas River valley a hundred miles south of Kota Baharu, the capital of Kelantan. Pulai Hakka continued to identify strongly with their Chinese heritage as they built temples, employed teachers to educate their children both in the Confucian classics and in the martial arts, and communicated in Hakka rather than Malay or other local languages. Non-Chinese women were incorporated into the community, given Chinese names, and worshiped like other Pulai women after their death along with their spouses at family ancestral altars. The isolation of the area was shattered by the Japanese occupation in the 1940s, followed by the communist-led insurrection known as the Emergency, which drew on the resources and support of rural Chinese such as the Pulai villagers. In 1950, in the wake of several incidents, including the murder by communists of the local headman, all Pulai families were removed from the area and resettled in New Villages (controlled, involuntary, relocation settlements) in Terengganu, Johore, and nearby Gua Musang. A decade later they were allowed to return to their ancestral lands and gradually rebuild the community where I was privileged to reside in 1978.

Although Pulai people were not inclined to identify their cultural patterns and practices as specifically Hakka, certain distinctive features seemed to set them apart from other Chinese Malaysians. First, Pulai people seemed rather conservative in their economic orientation, preferring to rely on subsistence rice farming as the basis for their family's support, and only slowly clearing land for cash-crop rubber plantings. In nostalgic stories about the past, men and women spoke fondly of living off the land, including gathering fruit and hunting in the nearby jungles, and they compared their communal cooperation in agricultural activities, weddings, funerals, and religious festivals in a favorable way with the cold, impersonal social relations of urban dwellers. Most Pulai men, particularly married men with children, chose not to work for the local Chinese logging concerns, whose jobs offered lucrative wages but also considerable physical risks. Pulai sons and daughters were encour-

aged to learn trades such as sewing, auto mechanics, or electrical wiring, but were not directed toward the business world. In clear contrast with the usual stereotypes of Chinese in Malaysia, and the Hakka of Calcutta described by Ellen Oxfeld in this volume, Pulai people were known to remark that they had “no head for business.”

Second, the Pulai area continued to be suspected of harboring communist guerrillas in the nearby jungle. Two years before my arrival about twenty Pulai men, including the Pulai headman, had been arrested and jailed under the Internal Securities Act for allegedly aiding and abetting the guerrillas. The economic conservatism I witnessed was difficult to reconcile with Pulai men’s voluntarily involving themselves in such a risky political enterprise, and a part of me continued to disbelieve the government’s accusations. However, a Hokkien Special Branch officer claimed that somewhere between 50 and 80 percent of the communist guerrillas living in the jungle were Hakka, with Cantonese as the second largest group. He explained that Hakka and Cantonese were more likely to live in rural areas near the jungle fringes. Accustomed to rural hardships, they adapted more easily than (urban) Hokkien to being jungle guerrillas. Although the officer did not remark on Hakka political orientations, he complained repeatedly about the uncooperative attitudes of Pulai Hakka in assisting the government with information on suspicious activities. Given the circumstances, I obviously could not ask Pulai people directly about their attitudes toward or support of leftist politics, but it was clear that the internal political and economic organization of the Pulai community had a decidedly egalitarian orientation. The recurrent leadership crises that plagued the community appeared to be influenced, if not caused, by a pronounced distrust of both specific leaders and powerful people in general. Economic differences between individuals or families were generally denied or minimized, and all adult males were encouraged to participate in community meetings and to serve on various committees with elective membership.

A third distinctive feature related to gender divisions and gender roles. Pulai women routinely engaged in agricultural work, both in rice cultivation and in rubber planting and tapping. Although men usually performed the heavy labor of plowing or felling trees to clear land, women could and did manage such tasks in the absence of available men. The heavy agricultural labor of Pulai women was identified as typical of the Hakka. I was also told, mostly by non-Hakka, that Hakka women were known not only for their strong backs, but also their strong wills. Yet the shared labor in family enterprises did not translate

into shared positions in community affairs beyond the family. That Pulai men and women recognized clear divisions of space and task in public activities was visible in the coffee shops on a daily basis, and in community meetings and temple rituals, where men were considered the proper spokesmen for their families in matters of community issues and representations to the gods. And yet, even here there was a notable exception: a woman's ritual organization known as the *funü hui* collected money from local women and sponsored its own worship of the gods during the Pulai temple festival honoring Guan Yin, the goddess of mercy.

HAKKA PATTERNS BEYOND PULAI

The disinclination to emphasize dialect-group differences among Pulai people in the 1970s appeared to be common among Chinese Malaysians in general during this period. Although comments on dialect-group differences sometimes arose in casual conversations, such remarks seemed to represent more of a shared discourse about being Chinese than an attempt to classify and act upon significant social distinctions (Carstens 1983:91–92; Strauch 1981:83–84). Hakka informants from Ipoh, Raub, and Kuala Krai who were quizzed directly about the distinctive characteristics of Hakka culture and asked whether they could differentiate Hakka from other Chinese in terms of anything other than language usage usually said they could not. One Hakka leader in the Kuala Krai Hakka Association observed that Hakka and Cantonese from Ipoh probably shared more in common than Hakka from Ipoh and Hakka from Kuala Krai. He said that even in China Hakka had been a diverse group, and that one's place of residence in Malaysia was now more influential in shaping a person's character than the place of one's ancestral origins in China.²

Yet even while the evidence of the 1970s pointed to a growing breakdown in the salience of dialect-group identity in the wider social relations of Malaysian Chinese life, a number of more general features of these groups were still discernible. Among the most obvious were patterns of occupational specialization and urban or rural residence. According to the 1970 Malaysian census, Hakka were the second-largest Chinese dialect group in peninsular Malaysia, and the largest group in both Sarawak

2. See Newell (1962:4–5) for a similar observation about Chaozhou (Teochew) in Province Wellesley in 1955.

and Sabah.³ In peninsular Malaysia Hakka were more likely to live in rural areas (57.1 percent) than Cantonese (39.9 percent) or Hokkien (51 percent), but less likely than Chaozhou (Teochew) (61.1 percent). Furthermore, the largest concentrations of Hakka were generally found in the most interior districts of the states, in areas adjacent to the north-south chain of jungle highlands.⁴ Although a larger number of Hokkien (542,318) than Hakka (394,263) were rural, occupational divisions made it more likely that rural Hokkien were shopkeepers or petty merchants, while Hakka worked as manual laborers in tin mines or on rubber plantations.⁵ Hakka were a minority in all of the oldest, largest, and wealthiest cities, such as Kuala Lumpur, Penang, and Melaka. Even in Ipoh, where I was told that Hakka made up about 50 percent of the Chinese population, Cantonese was said to be the lingua franca on the street. Hokkien and Cantonese were identified consistently as the wealthiest and most influential merchants, and their domination of business was used to explain their political and social domination as well. In contrast, urban Hakka were typically employed in artisan-type activities, in drugstores, and in pawn-broking (Cheng 1969:59, 1985:96; Lee Poh Ping 1985:144).⁶ Given their

3. In peninsular Malaysia Hakka comprised 22.1 percent of the Chinese population, compared with Hokkien at 34.1 percent, Cantonese at 19.8 percent and, Chaozhou at 12.5 percent. The other speech groups enumerated were: Hainanese (4.7 percent), Kwongsai (2.5 percent), Hokchiu (1.9 percent), Henghua (.5 percent), and other (1.6 percent). In Sabah Hakka made up 57 percent of the Chinese population, while in Sarawak, with 31 percent of the total, they slightly outnumbered Chinese from Fuzhou (Foochow) (See various tables, Malaysia 1972).

4. See population figures detailed by state, district, and community group (Malaysia 1972).

5. Much of my evidence for this statement comes from consistent reports by both Western social scientists and Chinese observers. See, for example, Cheng (1976:54), Newell (1962:4), Nyce (1973:114), and Strauch (1981:54–57). For evidence of similar patterns in Sarawak and Sabah see T'ien (1953) and Han Sin Fong (1975:76).

6. This is not to maintain that there were no wealthy Hakka, or no successful Hakka merchants, but that these were considered the exception rather than the rule. Nyce (1973:146) reported that in Chinese New Villages in the 1960s, Hakka were stereotyped as workers and “natural” supporters of the Socialist Front, while Hokkien were identified with the “businessmen’s party,” the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA). He argued that this was a class division, rather than one of dialect group, for wealthier Hakka would also join the MCA. Nevertheless, he also admitted that the general division between “socialist” Hakka workers and “entrepreneur” Hokkien held true.

Further proof of the underrepresentation of Hakka in the MCA was evidenced by their minority position on the Central Working Committee of the Party (1949–57), where they were given only six seats out of thirty-two, with Hokkien holding twelve, Cantonese eleven, Hainanese two, and Chaozhou one (Heng 1988:67).

numerical strength, how did one account for the relative economic and political weakness of the Hakka in Malaysia?

One possible explanation might be associated with the types of distinctive characteristics identified for Pulai villagers, including their economic conservatism, their egalitarian political attitudes, and their special gender roles. Such patterns may have not only set Hakka apart from other Chinese, but also hindered the development of a more stratified, capitalist-oriented group whose wealthier members could compete on an equal footing with other Chinese. One needs to ask, however, if these were peculiarly Hakka features, or if they might be more simply explained by the rural socioeconomic environment in which Pulai Chinese found themselves. One way of testing this hypothesis would be to compare the features identified for Pulai with other Hakka and non-Hakka rural Chinese Malaysian communities. Unfortunately, we lack the necessary comparative ethnographic evidence to do so.⁷

Ju K'ang T'ien's work in Sarawak in 1948 provides the only other detailed ethnographic description of Malaysian Hakka (T'ien 1953).⁸ It is noteworthy that his observations concerning Hakka socioeconomic positions coincide with those made in Nicole Constable's chapter (this volume): Hakka in Sarawak accounted for a majority of Sarawak Chinese, yet they were largely rural, mostly rubber farmers, and were dominated at the upper socioeconomic and political levels by urban Hokkien and Chaozhou businessmen. T'ien claimed that occupational divisions between dialect groups had originated, at least in part, in China, where Hakka were mainly rural farmers, while Hokkien and Chaozhou were more likely to have been urban merchants (*ibid.*:35–36). Yet since most immigrants from all dialect groups had come from rural backgrounds, T'ien maintained that it was the urban/rural split in both Sarawak and China, rather than dialect-group differences or origins per se, that accounted for the main variations in social organization and socioeconomic power (*ibid.*:38). T'ien was not interested in probing the possible distinctiveness of dialect-group cultures, but he did note an intense concern with education in the rural areas that were largely Hakka (*ibid.*:72–73), as well as a Hakka tradition of keeping clan secrets con-

7. Ethnographies of other rural Chinese Malaysian communities certainly exist, but they focus on different issues and do not provide comparable data on the socioeconomic patterns and attitudes observed in Pulai.

8. Two student exercises (Cheah 1965, Chee 1971) provide information on Hakka population concentrations and associations in Singapore and Malaysia, but lack the depth and sociological sophistication of T'ien's study.

HAKKA MALAYSIAN CULTURE

cerning pugilistic techniques (*ibid.*:26). Furthermore, his Hakka informants themselves attributed the economic divisions in Sarawak to the different economic experiences of dialect groups. T'ien wrote that "various Hakka informants complained ruefully that they knew there was no possibility of their attaining financial power or even commercial success. The Teochew [Chaozhou] and Fukienese [Fujianese], they said, had all the experience of urban life and commercial enterprise, while the rural Hakka had none." He even admitted that there may have been something to this argument, as he himself observed the chaos of Hakka shops and the business sense of Fujianese and Chaozhou shopkeepers, which Hakka lacked (*ibid.*:58-59).

T'ien was not alone in associating Chinese cultural adaptations in Malaysia with the distinctive backgrounds of the various dialect groups in China. Observations about different types of Chinese holding particular occupational niches in Malaya and the Straits Settlements were repeatedly made by early Chinese and European writers, some of whom even perceived differing physical and personal propensities for Chinese from different areas of China (cf. Newbold 1971:12-13; Pickering 1876:440; Tweedie 1953:217; Vaughan 1854:3). These sorts of interpretations suggest another avenue of investigation: the possibility that cultural patterns and socioeconomic experiences associated with Hakka or other dialect groups had first developed in China, and subsequently shaped their adaptations to Southeast Asia. In order to pursue this line of questioning, it is useful to briefly review the distinctive features of Hakka culture in China, and then ask whether these features enable us to better understand the particular adaptations that Hakka made historically in their work and residence in Malaysia and elsewhere in Southeast Asia.

HAKKA IN CHINA

Most discussions of Hakka in China commence with descriptions of their successive migrations from Central to South China, around the fourth century C.E. from Henan to central Jiangxi, and spreading during the Tang and the Song periods first to southwestern Fujian and then to northeastern parts of Guangdong (Cohen, this volume). By the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, certain areas of northeastern Guangdong were purely Hakka, and many more Hakka had spread across the central part of the province, settling as tenant farmers in Cantonese areas and pushing on into Guangxi, areas of Sichuan, and Taiwan (Cohen, this volume; Moser 1985:236-42). In the areas of Guangdong

where they settled, they became known as “Guest People” (pronounced “Hakka” in Cantonese), and they also came to refer to themselves as “Guest People” (“Hak Ngin” in Hakka) (Eitel 1891–92:265).

In linguistic and cultural terms, the Hakka were clearly Han Chinese, yet they did not tend to assimilate with other Han populations in the areas of Fujian, Guangdong, and Guangxi where they settled.⁹ Hakka spoke a distinctive Sinitic language and exhibited a set of distinctive cultural features that tended to set them apart from the other local populations. While many of these cultural traits could be found among other Han populations as well, their unique combination and frequency of occurrence were seen to describe the special nature of the Hakka character. Certain of these features were related to the relatively poor geographic regions where Hakka had settled, and the need to supplement agricultural income with other forms of employment. Thus, Hakka women took responsibility for many agricultural tasks that in other areas of South China would have been left to men. One might argue that the preference for unbound feet in Hakka women, which made agricultural work possible, and a rather different gendered division of labor were among the most unique features of Hakka culture.¹⁰ Hakka men sought alternative employment in a number of fields, including mining, handicrafts, trade, and scholarship (Wong Tai Peng 1977:49). They also served as professional soldiers (Eitel 1873–74:162; Moser 1985:240). Hakka from Jiaying Zhou were particularly renowned for their scholarly propensities, which enabled many to pass the civil service exams; those who did not receive government employment usually became teachers or looked for other forms of nonmanual work.¹¹

9. Assimilation did occur with some Hakka who migrated to Sichuan. Han Suyin’s Hakka ancestors, for example, became landed gentry in Sichuan, married women with bound feet, and, by her father’s generation, no longer spoke the Hakka dialect (1965:28–35). For a more novelistic view of Hakka history and culture see this same work (pp. 22–28).

10. Although its incidence varied somewhat from region to region in China, foot-binding was an accepted practice for Chinese families who aspired to higher social standing in Fujian and Guangdong during the Qing period (Levy 1966:53–54). The Hakka preference for unbound feet was unique in that it was tied to dialect-group culture rather than social class. Of course, according to the standards of Cantonese culture, this made all big-footed Hakka women low class by definition.

11. A Maryknoll sister now living in Miaoli in Taiwan who worked in Meixian during the 1940s told me that while most Hakka men worked in Hong Kong or Southeast Asia, those who did stay home would never work manually except in dire circumstances. They would sit around at home or work as teachers, civil servants, or businessmen if they had the chance. Meanwhile their wives did the heavy agricultural labor.

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However, a willingness to perform hard physical labor in occupations such as mining was another remarked-upon Hakka feature (Wong Tai Peng 1977:54–59). Hakka were known for their physical stamina in pioneering situations, and these situations also seem to have promoted a tendency among them to stick together and fight when necessary to support their neighbors. Even their style of fighting was said to be distinctive. In the battles that erupted between the Cantonese and the Hakka in central areas of Guangdong in the mid-nineteenth century, Hakka employed more egalitarian fighting styles, with every man, including gentry, taking the field, whereas Cantonese villages were more inclined to hire mercenaries (Cohen, this volume).

It is important to emphasize that none of these “Hakka” traits were totally unique to the Hakka, and that variations among Hakka of different classes living in diverse circumstances were not unknown (Piton 1873–74:225). Nevertheless, it would be fair to say that Hakka as a group were generally poorer than other Chinese in the areas where they lived, and that in acknowledging traits that kept them unique and apart from others, they developed an ethnic consciousness that affected their modes of adaptation when they, like others, began to travel overseas.¹²

THE HISTORY OF HAKKA SETTLEMENTS IN GREATER MALAYA

Compared with Hokkien and Cantonese traders who had done business in Southeast Asia and had settled in small numbers in Southeast Asian ports from at least the sixteenth century, Hakka were relative latecomers to the region.¹³ Mining seems to have been what finally attracted them to the Malayan area. During the eighteenth century Hakka miners became active in gold mining in Kelantan and Pahang (Carstens 1980), tin mining on the island of Bangka (Jackson 1969, Heidhues 1992), and gold mining in West Borneo (Jackson 1970). The largest mining populations were found in Bangka and West Borneo, with more than six thousand Chinese in Bangka in the 1780s (Heidhues 1992:29) and thirty thousand in West Borneo by the 1790s (Jackson 1970:23), most of whom were Hakka.

12. Kuhn (1977) makes a similar argument for Hakka pioneers in nineteenth-century Guangxi.

13. Some Penang Hakka claim that their ancestors left China at the end of the Ming dynasty and traveled to Penang via Siam and Kedah (Wen Zi Chuan 1979:719–20). While a few Hakka may have settled in Malaya prior to the eighteenth century, further evidence of their numbers or economic enterprises does not exist.

Mining operations were usually initiated by local Malay royalty, who invited Chinese miners to develop ore deposits, profiting both through Malay control of food and mining supplies, and by taxes on the ore itself. News of these mining developments seems to have spread quickly in Hakka areas of China; aspiring miners entered the mining areas both singly and in small groups, and organized themselves into working units known as *kongsi*. Most newcomers had to work for a year or more to refund the cost of their passage to a mine owner, but their subsequent employment and payment was, for the most part, based on a share system, with profits divided among all mining workers in the *kongsi* according to an agreed-upon scheme. In the West Borneo goldfields, Chinese miners soon freed themselves from Malay control, organizing larger mining unions and *kongsi*, which included not only mining workers but also artisans, traders, and Chinese agriculturalists who supplied food to the mines. Fellow *kongsi* members cooperated in economic enterprises and swore oaths of brotherhood to each other in a ceremony that took place once a year on the feast day of Guandi. Most *kongsi* were organized according to egalitarian principles, with the election of officials by the shareholders, and the union of *kongsi* into larger federations wherein each unit was given representation.¹⁴

Hakka miners did not organize themselves into *kongsi* and cooperate in mining unions and federations simply on the basis of being Hakka, but were often subdivided in terms of their area of origin in China, with the principle divisions in West Borneo being Guangdong Hakka from Meixian, Dabu, and the Hakka districts northwest of Shantou (Swatow). *Kongsi* organized along subdialect lines often competed with each other for control of water and mining lands, and larger *kongsi* were capable of swallowing up smaller ones or simply chasing them out of an area (Jack-

14. For evidence on *kongsi* organizations and the share system, see Henry Norman (1904:557) for Kelantan/Pahang, Jackson (1969:50–51) and Heidhues (1992:37–40) for Banka, and Jackson (1970:61–70) and Heidhues (1993) for West Borneo. A considerable literature exists on the Borneo *kongsi* systems, including the classic study of J. J. M. de Groot (1885), who relates the *kongsi* in Borneo to the egalitarian orientation of Chinese village society. The most useful sources of reference for my purposes have been Heidhues (1993), Jackson (1970), Ward (1954), and Wong Tai Peng (1977). Wong is particularly interested in the political structure of “*kongsi* democracy,” whose origins he traces back to thirteenth-century share systems in the Yunnan copper mines and the Fujian sea-merchant kingdoms of the late Ming and early Qing. Once again it is important to note that the *kongsi* arrangements were not unique to the Hakka, but that Hakka use of them seemed consistent with broader patterns of Hakka culture.

son 1970:50–57). This pattern of Hakka fighting against other Hakka was to be repeated in the tin-mining areas of the Malay Peninsula in the nineteenth century. Furthermore, there were, with time, growing inequalities among *kongsi* workers and shareholders, particularly within the largest *kongsi* federations (Heidhues 1993).

The wealth earned by Hakka miners in eighteenth-century Bangka and West Borneo was considerable (Jackson 1970:28–30), but when tin and gold deposits began to diminish and other conditions for mining became less favorable, the miners and the profits earned from these mines do not seem to have been transferred to other enterprises within Southeast Asia.¹⁵ There does not appear to have developed at this time a core group of wealthy Hakka entrepreneurs who turned their mining profits to investments in other Southeast Asian endeavors, which might have provided occupational and investment opportunities for future Hakka sojourners. Why this failed to happen is not clear, but some speculations are in order if we hope to better understand Hakka patterns. One possibility is that Hakka may have been more inclined to send their profits home, because of the relatively impoverished conditions in their home areas in China.¹⁶ A further factor may have been the division of profits according to the share system. While leaders certainly earned more than the average worker, the share system more evenly divided the wealth, which may have limited the possibility of large-scale investment for some. It is also possible that the wealthier Hakka miners found it difficult to break into the merchant networks controlled by Hokkien in Southeast Asian port cities. Only with the expansion of the colonial economies in the last half of the nineteenth century did opportunities for investment become more widely available to Chinese from a variety of backgrounds.

15. The period of greatest prosperity in Bangka was between 1750 and 1780 (Heidhues 1992; Jackson 1969:35). Borneo's prosperity lasted into the first half of the nineteenth century. Deposits in the two main mining areas around Montrado and Mandor began to show signs of depletion in the 1820s, but the real end to the industry came with the Dutch abolition of the *kongsi* in 1850 (Jackson 1970:24). Thus, the transfer of investments might have been expected to occur between the late eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries.

16. Jackson (1970:30) records that one observer estimated that between one-half and two-thirds of the gold mined in Borneo was sent back to China, while another observer thought it was higher. Leong Kok Kee (1981:47) claims that, compared to Cantonese and Hokkien, Jiaying Hakka sent comparatively larger amounts of their earnings back to China and were more likely to return to China for visits. He uses this as one explanation for Hakka economic backwardness in Penang.

Former Hakka miners in West Borneo and elsewhere who did not return to China generally turned to subsistence farming or the development of cash crops (Carstens 1980, Chew 1990, Heidhues 1992).¹⁷ Many of these men married local women, establishing families for themselves in the new setting. The unions between Hakka men and local women in West Borneo, Bangka, and peninsular Malaya, however, were quite different from those between Hokkien and native women in other parts of Java and Malaya. Hokkien who married non-Chinese women in Java, Melaka, and Terengganu developed hybrid cultures, known as Peranakan in Java and Baba in Melaka, which incorporated selected indigenous patterns of language usage, clothing and food styles, and/or kinship practices (Clammer 1980, Coppel 1973, Gosling 1964, Li Chung Chu 1975). Hakka, in contrast, generally integrated the local women they married into Chinese-style families and continued to educate their children in the language and culture of their Hakka fathers. Hakka remained more clearly Chinese in their identity, even when they adapted in minor ways to local customs (Carstens 1980, Coppel 1973, Purcell 1967:97).¹⁸ It is not clear whether differences in the gendered divisions of labor between Hakka and Hokkien similar to those seen in China were also reproduced, but the marriage patterns and cultural conservatism of these earlier Hakka immigrants were clearly distinctive.

Hakka settlements and enterprises in the Straits Settlements and the Malay States during the nineteenth century followed common patterns,

17. In Sarawak former Hakka gold miners settled into agricultural occupations, while Hokkien Chinese developed trading relations with native forest collectors in the interior, reproducing once again the division of Hakka as rural producer and Hokkien as trader (Chew 1990).

18. Skinner (1963:104–105) explains the difference in Hakka and Hokkien patterns of cultural mixing in Indonesia by the areas where the two groups settled, suggesting that Hokkien who settled in Java were more “naturally” attracted to the more complex cultures of this area and thus more susceptible to change, while Hakka who lived in Banka and Borneo would have found nothing they cared to emulate in local indigenous practices. One problem with this interpretation is that the same pattern does not hold true for Malaya, where rural Hokkien in Terengganu and Kelantan acculturated and sometimes assimilated with rural Malay culture, while Hakka did not (Carstens 1980; Gosling 1964; Purcell 1967:97). It also appears that Hakka who resided in Melaka from at least the latter part of the eighteenth century and married local women continued to speak Hakka and identify with Chinese cultural practices. For example, the “Baba Chinese” woman whom Yap Ah Loy married in 1865 was born in Melaka of mixed parentage, but, according to her grandson, spoke Hakka with her children (personal interview, Kuala Lumpur, 1984).

with smaller groups of Hakka residing in the more urbanized Straits Settlements, where they were employed largely as artisans (Yen 1986:191), while larger concentrations of workers gravitated to the tin-mining districts in the Malayan interior. In the Straits Settlements, Hakka founded many of the earliest *huiguan*, mutual aid associations with membership based on dialect and area of origin in China.¹⁹ According to Wu Hua (1980:4), the early organization of Hakka *huiguan* was due to the smaller numbers of urban Hakka and their relatively weak economic positions vis-à-vis other dialect groups. It might also be tempting to infer from this that Hakka demonstrated a particularly strong sense of dialect-group cohesiveness in the overseas environment. However, such explanations conflict with other evidence. In Taiping, Perak, the first *huiguan* was erected by Hokkien who were in the minority, while in early Kuala Lumpur, where Hakka miners and traders comprised the dominant dialect group, Hakka established the first *huiguan*.²⁰ It is also important to recognize that *huiguan* were only one possible form of cooperation among Chinese immigrants, who also organized themselves in *kongsis*, temple associations, and secret societies, with membership based entirely or in part on dialect and subdialect loyalties. Thus, any treatment of cooperative, cohesive “in-group” tendencies would have to consider all of the different categories of mutual-aid groups, a project beyond the scope of this chapter.²¹

Hakka predominated in the development of tin-mining areas in peninsular Malaya throughout the nineteenth century, making up the majority of mining workers as well as mining organizers and traders in the towns that developed around the major mining centers in Negri Sembilan,

19. The earliest Chinese *huiguan* in Melaka were organized by Hakka from Huizhou (1805), Dabu (1820), and Jiaying (1821). In Penang the Jiaying *huiguan*, founded in 1801, is also credited as the earliest, while in Singapore a similar group formed in 1823. For a complete list of Chinese dialect associations in Singapore and Malaya from 1801 to 1870, see Yen (1986:322–31).

20. Wu Hua (1980:29–30), in fact, contradicts his own previous explanation for early Hakka associations in Melaka and Penang by crediting Yap Ah Loy’s establishment of the first Hakka *huiguan* in Selangor in 1854 to the fact that Hakka were a majority in the area. Although Hokkien shopkeepers and miners were definitely in a numerical minority in the tin-mining areas of Perak during the 1860s and 1870s (Khou 1972:168–75), the first *huiguan* in Taiping was the Fujian *huiguan* in 1859, followed by the Hainanese *huiguan* in 1869, the Huizhou (Hakka) in 1877, and the Guangdong in 1887 (Xu Yun Qiao 1979:33).

21. See, for example, Khoo’s (1972:75) description of leadership disputes among Jiaying Hakka at Kanching, near Kuala Lumpur, in the 1860s.

Selangor, and Perak. While Hakka obtained mining concessions and recruited the necessary workers, the major financial backing for these enterprises came from Hokkien Baba and European merchants in the Straits Settlements (Khoo 1972:58–67). The system of payment for tin-mining workers in the second and third quarters of the century is not clearly documented, but even later where there was some evidence of share systems, the major profits from the industry accrued to the financial backers, including those who made their money by advancing supplies and opium to the miners (Wong Lin Ken 1965:60–81). In other words, the financial arrangements for the average Hakka tin miner in peninsular Malaya do not appear to have been as favorable as those in the West Borneo goldfields.

As in West Borneo, different Hakka subgroups vied for control of mining areas, with violent clashes between miners organized by *kongsi* or secret societies a common occurrence during the third quarter of the century. Hakka leaders in the interior were often as well known for their prowess in the martial arts as for their business success, their wealth, or their philanthropy (Carstens 1993). Although these leaders were officially appointed by the Malay rulers in the area, their selection seems to have been based on a combination of election and appointment, and would-be mining leaders who lacked the support of the workers would not be appointed *kapitan*, no matter how wealthy they were.

Some Hakka miners in the interior did become very wealthy, yet their success did not seem to translate into increased power for Hakka as a whole. The clearest example of this is seen in the Kuala Lumpur area, which was settled by Hakka miners and traders beginning in the late 1850s. Much of the economic and commercial development of the area could be credited to the efforts of the Huizhou Hakka and their *kapitan*, Yap Ah Loy, who by the time of his death in 1885 controlled both a large area of mining land and two-thirds of the real estate east of the Klang River in Kuala Lumpur Town. In 1891 the Hakka made up 64 percent of the Chinese in Selangor (71 percent in Kuala Lumpur), but by 1901 they had fallen to only 34 percent of Selangor's Chinese population, with Cantonese 29 percent and Hokkien 28 percent (Jackson 1964:52–53). According to Jackson, Cantonese, with their business skills and their capital, often took control of tin mining when the industry "increased in scale, and financial and commercial organization became more intricate" (ibid.:52). A similar tendency was mirrored in a Chinese saying quoted in an article on the history of Hakka in Penang:

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Hakka build a city [*kaibu*]
Cantonese prosper from the city [*wangbu*]
Chaozhou and Hokkien control the city [*zhanbu*].
(Wen Zi Chuan 1979:718)

What, then, of the Hakka miners and merchants who did succeed? Were their patterns of attaining success or responses to this success noticeably different from Chinese of other dialect groups? For the most part, the wealthiest Hakka entrepreneurs of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were self-made men who came from poor or modest family backgrounds.²² Some had family connections in Southeast Asia going back to their grandfather or father, but others arrived in their teens and managed to work their way up very quickly. Having achieved financial success, they sought to legitimize their social standing by contributing to social causes, both in Southeast Asia and back in China. Contributions to the building of *huiguan*, temples, hospitals, schools, and other institutions were a common means by which wealthy overseas Chinese merchants earned honor and respect in the wider Chinese community. Wealthy Hakka followed similar patterns but were disproportionately involved in certain areas. Almost all of the biographies of successful Hakka emphasize the founding of schools, including not only the typical dialect-oriented schools in Malaya and China, but also the first modern Chinese middle school in Penang in 1904 and some of the first schools for girls (Wen Zi Chuan 1979, Xu Yun Qiao 1979). Hu Zi Chuan, known as the tin-mining king, is credited with founding nine different schools in Penang, Ipoh, and his home county of Yongding in Fujian (Wen Zi Chuan 1979:720). Individual Hakka also were especially attracted to attaining official recognition from the Chinese authorities, in the buying of official degrees,²³ in holding office at Chinese consulates in Singapore

22. See the biographies of famous Hakka in Xu Yun Qiao (1979) and Wen Zi Chuan (1979). See also Yen Ching-hwang's (1987) article on class structure and social mobility in the Chinese community of nineteenth-century Singapore and Malaya. Of the five figures used to illustrate social mobility, one is Hokkien, one Chaozhou, and three are Hakka, including Zhang Bi Shi, Yap Ah Loy, and Yao De Sheng.

23. Hakka, of course, were not alone in their purchase of honorary degrees and titles from the late Qing government. However, my own impression, based on the lists of figures in Yen Ching-hwang's (1970) article, is that wealthy and successful Hakka merchants and miners in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were somewhat more likely to purchase these honors than were successful Chinese of other dialect groups.

and Penang,²⁴ and in involvement with economic development projects back in China.²⁵ The group of successful Hakka businessmen who formed the core contributors to Penang's Zhonghua Middle School and the elaborate Buddhist monastery and temple complex, Kek Lok Si, included Hakka from such diverse geographic regions in China as Yongding, Meixian, Zengcheng, and Dabu (Wen Zi Chuan 1979, C. S. Wong 1963). Cooperating on the basis of a shared Hakka identity, they chose to sponsor projects that clearly transcended this identity. Hakka, when given the opportunity, seemed especially interested in investing themselves with the credentials of proper Confucian gentlemen and displaying their loyalty to general symbols of Chinese high culture. Their distinctive marriage practices with native women, which incorporated these women and their children into the Chinese cultural world, showed similar evidence of conservative cultural tendencies.

The involvement of overseas Chinese in programs and causes back in China raises the issue of political leanings. Famous Hakka such as Zhang Bi Shi and some of his compatriots were known for their support of the more conservative reformists in the late Qing government. In contrast, the leaders of the Confucian Revival movement and the Nationalist and Reformist movements in Singapore and Malaya were mainly Hokkien merchants (Yen 1976a, 1976b, 1982a). Yet factors other than dialect group may have been more powerful predictors of choices in political involvement. Chinese leaders who supported the more revolutionary causes leading to the 1911 revolution were generally younger, and did not hold Qing titles or have investments back in China, leading Yen Ching-hwang to emphasize the class differences between radicals and conservatives (1976b:264–86). In fact, the one example of a revolutionary martyr cited by Yen (1976b) was Wen Sheng Cai, a Hakka from

24. Leong Kok Kee (1981:47) remarks that while three out of the five Qing consuls in Penang were Jiaying Hakka, this did not reflect the relative strength of Penang Hakka as a group. "In fact, Chia-ying Hakka had never played leading roles in the Chinese society of Penang. For example, since its formation in 1903, none of the presidents or vice-presidents of the Penang Chinese Chamber of Commerce were Chia-ying Hakka although some of them sat in the committee. Similarly since 1920 when the post was created until 1941, the presidents of the Penang Kwangtung and Tengchew Association were not Chia-ying Hakka."

25. Four of the six major figures identified by Godley (1981) as "mandarin-capitalists" involved in development projects in late Qing China were Hakka. See also Yen Ching-hwang (1982b).

Perak, memorialized in another collection as a famous Hakka figure (Xu Yun Qiao 1979).²⁶

Information on specifically Hakka activities during the twentieth century is generally difficult to locate. During the early decades Hakka women, along with other Chinese women, began to arrive in Malaysia in increasing numbers (Lim 1967). There is some indication that Hakka women were more inclined to work outside their homes, in tin mining and rubber tapping, than women from other dialect groups, with the possible exception of certain categories of Cantonese women.²⁷ The continuation of such distinctive gender roles probably reinforced general attitudes toward Hakka from both within and without their group.

The other intriguing observation often made about Malaysian Hakka concerns their involvement in leftist politics during the Emergency and afterward (Miller 1955:20, Purcell 1967:214).²⁸ Unfortunately, aside from anecdotal comments of the type made by the Special Branch officer cited previously, information on the dialect composition of Malaysian Chinese communists does not seem to exist. It is interesting, in this context, that Hakka in 1960s Indonesia were identified as rightist in political orientation. According to Skinner (1963:116), the relatively poor and marginal status of Indonesian Hakka led them to support the then revolutionary Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT, Guomindang) during the early twentieth century. But as Chinese politics shifted in later

26. Leong Kok Kee (1981:43) similarly notes more conservative and more radical divisions among Penang Jiaying Hakka in their political stands during this period.

27. See Siew (1953:14–17) and Lai (1986:56). Both Hakka and Cantonese women worked as *dulang* (pan) washers in tin-mining areas. Lai identifies the Cantonese female laborers as those who had refused marriage, and mentions their formation of all-female work collectives. Hakka women, in contrast, were more likely to be married and to contribute their labor and wages to the household income. When queried about Hakka employment patterns a middle-aged Hakka woman, raised in Melaka, told me in 1978 that during her youth, Hakka would send their wives and daughters out to work, while Hokkien and men from other dialect groups discouraged this practice. But now, she said, there really was no difference, for all Malaysian Chinese women worked as necessary outside their homes.

28. According to Purcell, “The Hailams, who provided most of the domestic servants in Malaya, are a race somewhat different from the mainland Chinese and are said to have a good deal of aboriginal blood in their veins. They were the first to take the left line in politics, partly, perhaps, to increase their prestige with other Chinese by drawing attention to themselves. Later the Khehs (Hakkas) also showed a disposition to leftist politics. They, too are a type of Chinese distinctly apart from the remainder and with a reputation for impatience of authority and independent views” (1967:214).

decades, traditional Hakka support for the Nationalists, then representing the Republic of China on Taiwan, placed them in a rightist position vis-à-vis the Hokkien merchants, who by the 1960s were more closely associated through trade with the People's Republic of China.

One pattern that does seem discernible in the activities of both wealthy and poorer Malayan Hakka is an insistence on being respected as true (Han) Chinese and a determination to preserve Chinese cultural traditions. From the late nineteenth century on a series of publications issued by both European missionaries and other Chinese authors associated Hakka with non-Han groups in China. Hakka responded by organizing mass meetings in Guangzhou in 1921 and in Singapore in 1936 demanding retraction of such statements. They also publicized their own versions of Hakka history, which focused on their origins in North China (Char 1969:6–7, Ye Zhong Ling 1986). The attraction of wealthy Malayan Hakka in the early twentieth century to investments in education, official degrees, and official offices can partially be understood in this light, as can the special way in which Hakka incorporated non-Chinese women into Hakka families. Part of the attraction of communism to Hakka in Malaysia and to Chinese Nationalists in Indonesia might draw upon a related explanation: both groups encouraged a nationalist orientation that eliminated dialect distinctions in favor of Mandarin and a common Chinese identity.

FORM AND CONTENT IN HAKKA MALAYSIAN CULTURE

Having explored the general information available on Malaysian Hakka, let us return to the questions posed at the beginning of this chapter. In asking about Hakka culture, I noted that my approach was at once old fashioned and radical, and I would like to begin my concluding discussion by clarifying this statement. I would argue that “old fashioned views of culture” of the pre–World War II variety conceptualized cultures as the historical products of peoples united by language, geography, and a distinctive set of customs (cf. Benedict 1934). One could define the core features of these cultures and identify individuals as group members whose behavior conformed to these basic features. This notion of discrete sociocultural units was seriously challenged in Leach's (1954) pioneering study of highland Burma, where fluidity over time better described the relations between social groups and cultural practices. The subsequent interest in questions of ethnic groups and boundaries (cf. Barth 1969), and the possibility of situational maneuvering by individuals claiming

different cultural statuses (cf. Nagata 1974), suggested a very different concept of cultural identity based more on form and political maneuvering than on any specific content.

If one were to apply this notion of cultural identity to Hakka, we would focus on the cultural features Hakka in specific circumstances chose to emphasize as they identified themselves in opposition to other Chinese dialect groups. We would assume that their self-definition would vary in relationship to the groups with which they chose to contrast themselves, leading to similar variation in cultural content. The problem with this view of culture is that it tends to ignore the inescapable historical depth of cultural patterns, and to give conscious ethnic definitions too much weight in the overall understanding people come to have of themselves as cultural beings.

My own approach to the question of cultural definition attempts to combine understandings gained from both the earlier and later approaches. As the historically based product of a complex mix of socio-economic adaptations, the cultural patterns by which people come to understand themselves and live their lives are not always consciously understood (as in Bourdieu's [1977] notion of "habitus"), yet these patterns nevertheless exert a continuing influence on the structures individuals impose on their lives. In this sense, cultural patterns are viewed both as structural and structuring. While individuals and the circumstances they encounter may cause change in these patterns, the most basic understandings and patterns are usually reinforced in numerous ways in the various domains of life and do not change easily or quickly. In fact, the comments made by Ju K'ang T'ien's Hakka informants in Sarawak cited above reverberate with this sort of understanding.

Applied to the Hakka in China, this notion of culture would pay close attention to the manner in which specific socioeconomic environments shaped cultural patterns, most notably the treatment of women, modes of cohesiveness and egalitarianism, and emphasis on physical stamina and martial arts. The patterns exhibited generally fell within the range of Chinese cultural variation. Apart from the emphasis Jiaying Hakka seemed to place on education, most Hakka traits would be familiar to other lower-class, rural Chinese. Yet the fact that Hakka spoke a different dialect and kept themselves separate from other Chinese groups must have made these characteristics seem special.

In migrating to work in Southeast Asia, the cultural patterns developed in China seem to have continued for Hakka in general. This does not mean that Hakka automatically identified themselves as distinct

from other Chinese because they were Hakka, or that being Hakka made them automatically cooperate with others who were similarly identified. There was clearly considerable variation in the consciousness by which Hakka claimed to be distinctive and different from Chinese of other dialect groups. Yet I would argue that a conscious awareness of patterns followed in China that were now, in the new setting, recognized as distinctively Hakka was not necessary for these very patterns to continue. Simply by living and working among others who thought and lived as they did, Hakka would tend to reproduce the cultural patterns developed by their ancestors. Thus in identifying Hakka cultural patterns, I would speak of tendencies for Hakka to follow certain occupations or organize themselves in certain ways based on their historical cultural background. Chinese from other dialect groups, particularly those who came from family backgrounds resembling those of the rural Hakka, may also have followed some of these patterns. Still, I would argue that there is something distinctive about Hakka culture in general in that one could not argue that the same set of features is generally typical for any other Chinese dialect group.

The most self-conscious statements of Hakka identity among Chinese in Malaysia and Singapore are found in the special volumes issued by *huiguan*,²⁹ and it is interesting to note the extent to which the statements they make about Hakka culture correspond to the patterns discussed here. Like the *huiguan* volumes issued by Chinese of other dialect groups, the Hakka publications feature articles on the history of these associations and provide biographies of past and current illustrious members. Many of the volumes include information about the home area back in China, often culled from Chinese gazetteers, sometimes complete with maps and color photos of local homeland scenery. In Hakka volumes interest in the Chinese past is expressed in articles about the Hakka migrations from Central China to the South and translations of (positive) Western missionary views of the Hakka. Very little is written in these volumes about the history of the Hakka in Southeast Asia.³⁰ There are, instead, more general articles about Hakka

29. A quick survey of the titles of articles listed in the *Index to Chinese Periodical Literature on Southeast Asia, 1905-1966* (Nanyang Index 1968) suggests that articles discussing the customs of specific dialect groups such as the Hakka were not common in Chinese periodicals, but were restricted to the specialized *huiguan* volumes.

30. Among the few exceptions are Wen Zi Chuan's (1979) article on the history of the Hakka in Penang. See also Leong Kok Kee's (1981) more scholarly paper on the Jiaying Hakka in Penang.

folk songs, Hakka women, or distinctive Hakka customs.³¹ The issue of what makes Hakka distinctive, from a Hakka point of view, is dealt with in a particularly interesting manner in an article published in two Hakka commemorative volumes in 1965. The following translated segment demonstrates a conscious awareness of core Hakka values, which I would maintain have been repeatedly reproduced in both general and specific ways in Hakka communities in the wider Malaysian region.³² According to Chun An,

The Hakka gentleman has an abundance of natural character. Even if he is so poor as to have nothing to return to, he will not be made a fool of. If anyone treats him with contempt, or acts toward him in an impolite manner, he will swear to oppose him to the death. Or his independent character will be aroused, going from weakness to strength and turning defeat into gain.

In treatment of people he greatly loves "face/dignity." This face includes ceremonies, solemnity, moral character, position, etiquette, reputation. . . . Normally he loves social intercourse and is diligent in entertaining with courtesy and warmth. If he happens upon a ceremony for capping, marriage, or death, he is able to honor the rules according to old forms, to preserve traditional ceremonies. If one has merely wealth and does not have the qualifications for face, even people in remote places will scorn him. Apart from this, [the Hakka gentleman] highly values the literary aspects of social intercourse. One who is able to write essays on ethics and morality is respected by the masses as though he were divine nobility as was customary in preceding generations.

Most Hakka are educated; during the Qing the number of males who were literate approached 70 percent, but most females were illiterate, as this was the custom of the time. After

31. See, for example, Shen (1951), Yang Qiu Hong (1965), Chun An (1965), Zhang Fu Ling (1971), Wen Ji Cheng (1979).

32. Chun An's article is an extensive treatment of the "Hakka question" in eighteen sections: (1) Introduction, (2) A Definition of Hakka, (3) Hakka Reputation (deals with the question of whether the Hakka are Han Chinese), (4) Hakka Ancestors, (5) Hakka Migrations, (6) Hakka Territories, (7) Hakka Population, (8) Hakka Geographic Circumstances, (9) Hakka Climate, (10) Products from Hakka Areas, (11) Hakka Language, (12) Hakka Customs, (13) Hakka Distinguishing Characteristics, (14) Hakka Religion, (15) Hakka Scholarship, (16) Hakka Literature, (17) Hakka Arts, (18) Conclusion.

the Republic was founded people who attended school increased and the educational system of that period was more developed, so that illiteracy was gradually done away with.

The Hakka gentleman has a great spirit of adventure. No matter whether old or young, he considers that as long as he is alive, with this spirit it is hard to slow down even a little, as [friends] lead one another along. Many [a Hakka] goes overseas for development [*fazhan*]. Even if he has no background in an enterprise, even if he must struggle with privation and hardship in the beginning, he is prepared to work for a living, as willing as if it were for sweetmeats, until he gradually has savings. Then he will set up a small stall, which will expand into a shop, and he will build his fortune as before, until finally he becomes a wealthy person. . . . When he has accumulated enough to rely on, he could change from acting as a partner in business to being a shareholder in the manner of most towkays [*toujia*], but not he, for his spirit of adventure would not allow this to happen. Today in overseas Chinese society Hakka who have risen in this way are numerous. If such achievements are great, how could it be by chance?

Hakka like to learn martial arts and fighting skills because of their former environment, in which the aborigines often fought with the Hakka. The aborigines planted and tilled with sword and fire. The most fierce in character of all of the southern barbarians would rely on their power over terrains of strategic importance in order to hold the Hakka hostage. For this reason most Hakka liked to be skilled in fighting as a means of self-defense; they suffered with other native peoples of Guangdong and Guangxi during the invasions of the southern barbarians from Zhejiang, living together in an inferior environment. There were, in truth, multiple reasons for the [Hakka] spirit of adventure. Fifty years ago in Hakka areas those who studied martial arts stood at about 70 percent. Whether one's occupation was farming, wage labor, or business it was all the same—during their vacations the youthful students would practice boxing, which served as a kind of extracurricular activity, both as a form of exercise and as defense against foreign aggression. . . .

The rights and obligations of Hakka males and females are uniformly equal. Already it is fashionable to favor women, and in the village and large family systems there is no custom of men

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working while women do not. The work of plowing and planting is done by women or by one or two men who might be living at home. When there is no agricultural work they do common auxiliary jobs at home, such as spinning and weaving, sewing, weaving bamboo curtains, making paper, and other skilled handicraft work. From early times Hakka women had natural feet, and for this reason they were, compared to women from other groups, more healthy and beautiful; this is the most often remarked-upon feature in the Chinese folk histories. (1965:64–66)

CONCLUSION

What, then, does the future hold for Hakka Malaysians? Under what circumstances might we expect the old patterns to continue? Alternatively, how might certain of these very characteristics encourage transformations of other cultural patterns that have been associated with Hakka?

Let me begin by observing that, although Chinese Malaysians do not generally emphasize cultural differences between members of different dialect groups, dialect and subdialect loyalties continue to be employed in exclusivistic ways for certain purposes. *Huiguan*, based on dialect group and one's ancestor's place of origin in China, have not disappeared from the Malaysian scene. Moreover, there are recent examples of such organizations expanding their activities in economic spheres by forming limited capital-holding companies for the exclusive benefit of their members.³³

Given new systems of electoral politics, it is possible that the larger numbers of Hakka voters could put more of their kinfolk into positions of power and authority. This was Ju K'ang T'ien's (1983) interpretation of political changes in the Sarawak Chinese community between 1948 and the 1980s. Yet the pattern is clearly not uniform, for in Sabah, where Hakka form the majority dialect group, Edwin Lee (1968:323) observed that Hakka leaders in the 1960s, in direct contrast with leaders in other dialect groups, did *not* sponsor exclusive Hakka associations capable of supporting generalized Hakka interests. Lee suggested that dispersed

33. The Chinese-language news magazine *Yazhou zhounkan* [Asia weekly] featured an article on this topic (*Yazhou zhounkan* 1991). Thanks to Chin Siew Ben for sharing this with me.

settlement patterns among the largely rural Hakka, as well as the Hakka propensity for stubborn self-reliance, were the most important factors in explaining this pattern.

Hakka emphasis on education could result in other types of change. Those who pursue higher education in the English or Malayan stream could find their Hakka values subtly and not-so-subtly altered. This appears to be the case with many of the children and grandchildren of the Hakka farmers of Kudat, Sabah, who now work as urban professionals and service workers (Hill and Voo 1990). Anecdotal evidence from Hakka I have met in the United States and Malaysia suggests that Hakka are more inclined than other Chinese to use education (rather than business) as a means of socioeconomic mobility, and that this has resulted in larger numbers of Hakka who are English-educated professionals. These people add that Hakka are also more inclined to educate daughters as well as sons, and it might prove interesting to study female Chinese professionals on this score.

Other features of Hakka culture would seem to have a decreasing relevance in current Malaysian society. A fondness for martial arts and preference for egalitarian modes of organization might fit well with isolated agriculturalists (or leftist jungle guerrillas), but such lifestyles are clearly becoming a thing of the past. Finally, we must note that current marriage patterns, with increasing rates of intermarriage between members of different dialect groups, will affect the cultural patterns of the next generation. In short, I would postulate that clear distinctions between the cultural patterns of Hakka and non-Hakka will continue to erode, and that a shoring up of such patterns in the future would require much more conscious efforts to retain cultural distinctness.

5/ Still “Guest People”

The Reproduction of Hakka Identity in Calcutta, India

ELLEN OXFELD

A small number of Hakka Chinese immigrants to Calcutta entered into the manufacture of leather during the World War I era. This occupation, considered to be polluting by high-caste Hindus and normally left to untouchables or Muslims, proved to be a lucrative source of income. Although the entire Chinese population of Calcutta consists of no more than eight thousand individuals, the Hakka now own and operate the vast majority of tanneries there, and their contribution to the Indian leather industry is far from negligible on a national scale. Calcutta is one of three major centers of the tanning industry in India, exceeded only by the cities of Madras in the south and Kanpur in the north.

The Hakka do not comprise Calcutta's entire Chinese population. Cantonese from Guangdong and immigrants from Hubei have also settled in Calcutta. The Cantonese, Hubeinese, and Hakka have each retained their native language, and each occupies a different economic niche. The Cantonese are primarily known as carpenters, while the major business of the small Hubeinese community is dentistry. The Hakka, in addition to their involvement in tanning, own and operate shoe shops, hairdressing salons, and restaurants. But the tanning industry still engages the largest number of Calcutta's Hakka population, and the Hakka community as a whole is by far the largest of the three Chinese subgroups.¹

This chapter is based on fieldwork conducted during the years 1980-82, and again in the summers of 1985 and 1989, in a community of Hakka Chinese who had found a profitable niche in Calcutta's leather industry. An earlier version was presented at the 1991 conference of the Association for Asian Studies, at a panel entitled “What Does It Mean to Be Hakka?”

1. Although the Calcutta census has never broken down the Chinese population on the basis of language, the numerical dominance of the Hakka is evident. There are two Chinese schools for Hakka students and only one for Cantonese. Furthermore, the Hubeinese and Cantonese are frequently able to converse in Hakka, while few Hakka

The Chinese tanning area is situated on the eastern periphery of Calcutta in an area known as Dhapa (also sometimes referred to as Tangra or Tapsia since it straddles two districts of those names). Approximately three hundred tanning businesses, the majority employing between five and fifty workers each, are found there. Housed in large concrete buildings of two and three stories, or small one-story structures with tile roofs, these factories are connected by a maze of unpaved, frequently muddy paths as well as open sewers through which the byproducts of the tanning process flow. The tanneries in this rust-colored industrial environment serve as both residences and factories for the Hakka.

This chapter investigates the constitution of Calcutta Hakka ethnic identity, utilizing as a starting point Orlando Patterson's definition of ethnicity as "that condition wherein certain members of a society, in a given social context, choose to emphasize as their most meaningful basis of primary, extrafamilial identity certain assumed cultural, national, or somatic traits" (1975:308).

I would add to Patterson's definition of ethnicity an insistence that ethnic identity is not simply a matter of how a group chooses to define itself, but also a question of the identity that others ascribe to it. The manner in which others view an ethnic group may play into the group's self-perceptions in a variety of ways. Group members may incorporate, reject, invert, or ignore the images others have of them. And the images others have of an ethnic group will in turn color the attitudes group members hold toward these others.

Ethnic identity is viewed here as dialogical or reflexive, in the sense that it is created, maintained, and reaffirmed through a continuous set of oppositions between one's own group and others.² To use Fredrik Barth's (1969) language, ethnic interaction creates ethnic boundaries, but the "stuff" these boundaries enclose, the particular diacritica utilized as ethnic boundary markers, can be discovered only by looking at particular contexts of interaction.

learn Cantonese or Hubeinese. Cantonese and Hubeinese informants assert that this is due to the fact that the Hakka now dominate Chinese life in Calcutta. Finally, the number of tanning businesses (approximately three hundred in 1980) clearly establishes tanning as the most important occupation of the Hakka. Only shoe shops come close (one hundred fifty in 1980).

2. Where one of these others is the state, as Stevan Harrell has so trenchantly demonstrated in a paper on Yi communities in Southwest China, the process by which groups create self-definitions is exceedingly complex (Harrell 1990b).

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In the case at hand, three elements seem important in establishing and maintaining Calcutta Hakka identity: state and national politics, an ethnically differentiated and stratified economy, and a host society with a religious system based on the symbolic opposition of purity and impurity.³

I should make clear at the outset that although this chapter emphasizes the interactive nature of ethnic identity, it also acknowledges that the process of ethnic-identity creation is a historical one. In other words, an emphasis on interaction need not lack historical depth. Ethnic identities reproduce "differentiated social formations" (Bentley 1987:42), but changes in social conditions over time may create the need for either investing ethnic identities with new meanings or for dissolving certain ethnic categories altogether. Says G. Carter Bentley, in a recent article on ethnicity and practice, "As individuals develop new ways of dealing with a changing world, old truths erode; as what was formerly inconceivable becomes commonplace, degrees of sharing and affinity, hence ethnic identities, become problematic. At the least, under these conditions ethnic symbolism is likely to take on different meanings for differentially adapted segments of a population" (ibid.:43).

Keeping in mind this potential of ethnic identities to transform themselves in response to changing conditions, and also remembering that the chapters in our book ask what it means to be Hakka, I conclude this chapter with some questions about how the meaning of being Hakka may change for Calcutta Hakka who emigrate to Toronto.

OCCUPATION AND ETHNICITY IN CALCUTTA

Even before I came to Calcutta to do fieldwork, I was aware that it is a city in which ethnicity is a critical social, cultural, and economic force. Located in West Bengal, the great array and diversity of ethnic, religious, and caste groups that comprise Calcutta's population is due partly to its role as the preeminent city of Northeast India.

Despite its teeming population and well-publicized urban problems—poor sewage, overcrowded and polluted slums (*bustee*), multitudes of

3. There is a vast literature that debates the origins of these distinctions themselves. Some argue that they serve to organize exploitative economic relations, and others that they are based on fundamental symbolic oppositions (e.g., Dumont 1970, Kolenda 1985, Mencher 1974). For our purposes here, we will simply note the influence of beliefs about purity and impurity upon Calcutta's Hakka. The debate about the origins of this system itself is far beyond the scope of this chapter.

pavement dwellers, public transportation that is bursting at the seams—and despite the fact that Calcutta has now been overtaken by Bombay as a center of industry, the city continues to be a magnet that attracts migrants from not only the surrounding Bengali countryside, but also from the neighboring states of Bihar and Orissa, from more distant states within India (such as Gujarat, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Tamil Nadu), and from Bangladesh and Nepal. At one time Calcutta hosted a sizeable Jewish community and a smaller Armenian one. This continuous migration to Calcutta has been augmented by the great human waves associated with the partition of India in 1947 and by subsequent wars with Pakistan, culminating with the formation of Bangladesh in 1971, when millions of refugees poured into West Bengal and Calcutta. Indeed, in the years between 1881 and 1961, immigrants from outside West Bengal continuously comprised over 50 percent of the city's population (Chakraborty 1990:11).

Founded at the close of the eighteenth century by traders belonging to the East India Company, Calcutta eventually served as the capital of British India, until political agitation and unrest forced the British to relocate the capital to Delhi in 1911. Calcutta's predominance as a major port and center of trade, finance, and industry has continued since the days of the East India Company (Lubell 1974:3), and indeed the Calcutta region preceded other parts of the country in the process of industrialization (*ibid.*:14). Greater Calcutta is still the most populous city in India (Geib and Dutt 1987:32); in 1981 the population of its metropolitan district was 9.2 million, making it one of the ten largest metropolises in the world (*ibid.*:132). Furthermore, unlike Bombay and Delhi, no other major urban centers are found within hundreds of miles of Calcutta (Lubell 1974:2). Although the growth of the city is now said to be "merely" 25 percent per decade, or the same rate as India as a whole (Stevens 1983:3), the ethnic, caste, and religious diversity of the city continues to be a preeminent feature.

When I refer to ethnicity in Calcutta I refer to several types of groups. First, there are immigrants from outside South Asia, such as the Chinese and the Armenians. Second, there are people from South Asian countries other than India, such as Nepal and Bangladesh. Third, there are people from other Indian states, who speak languages other than Bengali. In addition, many of these groups, all of whom can be referred to as "ethnic" groups within Calcutta, are subdivided along caste and religious lines. Hence, Hindu Bengalis, as well as Hindu immigrants from other states in India, have a multitude of caste affiliations. Not

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only are most of these groups endogamous with respect to marriage, but, in addition, many are also associated with distinct occupational niches. Religion also divides the migrants. Migrants to Calcutta from the state of Punjab, for example, include Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs.

The differentiation of groups in Calcutta is therefore based on several cross-cutting categories, including language, religion, caste, class, and regional origin. And each subdivision created by the combination of one or more of these categories tends to be associated with clusters of particular occupations. For instance, Hindi-speaking people include groups as varied as migrants from rural areas in Bihar and Marwaris, a trading people with origins in central India. While Biharis are industrial laborers and pushcart and ricksha operators, Marwaris are industrialists and businesspeople. South Indians, on the other hand, are commonly associated with clerical and administrative work (Bose 1968:39), while Sikhs are found in large numbers in the transport business (*ibid.*:38). Amongst Bengalis, who share language and ethnic affiliation, occupational differentiation is organized according to caste categories and/or regional origin. (Since Bengalis are native to Calcutta, one would expect a greater differentiation of roles within their group than among immigrants).

Even the leather business is organized according to linguistic, caste, religious, and/or regional categories. The Hakka buy rawhide from North Indian Muslims; they employ scheduled caste⁴ Bihari migrants as laborers and Nepalese as guards; and they sell their leather to Punjabi Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs.

While such ethnic variability might remind one of the ethnic diversity of American cities, such as New York, there is an important distinction. Although ethnicity is certainly a major component of socioeconomic

4. The term "scheduled" caste is usually used to designate those groups who are known as "untouchables," i.e., with whom contact is considered especially polluting within caste ideology. The sociologist R. A. Schermerhorn points out that the term originated during the 1930s when the British desired to categorize for census purposes those castes with whom contact "entails purification on the part of high-caste Hindus," a *dejure* definition. Lists or schedules of such castes were drawn up for the purpose of singling out those groups suffering civil and religious disabilities" (1978:29). There are problems with this definition, since all castes are hierarchically ranked and contact between a relatively higher group and a relatively lower group—no matter what their particular identity—always entails the possibility of pollution for the higher group. Even among groups defined as untouchable, for instance, there is a hierarchy of relative purity. Nevertheless, the term is generally applied to those groups who in a particular region are defined as "the most defiled of all, the ones who can pollute all others" (*ibid.*:30).

status in American cities, particularly in the case of African American and Hispanic populations, there is a wide spread of income within each ethnic group. In Calcutta, however, as Brian J. L. Berry and Philip H. Rees point out in their study of the city's factorial ecology, the occupational differences *between* ethnic groups are greater than those *within* them. The only exception to this is among Bengalis, where castes are connected to occupational roles (1969:490).

One reason for the continuing importance of ethnicity in the social structure of Calcutta is the city's economy of scarcity. As Nirmal Kumar Bose stated, in reference to Calcutta, "Because there are not enough jobs to go around everyone clings as closely as possible to the occupation with which his ethnic group is identified and relies for economic support on those who speak his language, on his coreligionists, on members of his own caste and on fellow immigrants from the village or district from which he has come. By a backwash, reliance on earlier forms of group identification reinforces and perpetuates differences between ethnic groups" (1966:102).

To some extent, therefore, the Chinese are simply one of many groups in Calcutta affiliated with a particular economic niche. As with most ethnic, caste, and religious groups in this diverse city, the Chinese not only occupy particular economic roles, but are endogamous with respect to marriage and social life. On the other hand, their status as foreigners associated with a country that has been engaged in hostilities against India, combined with their association with a particularly degraded occupation (leather making), lend a certain uniqueness to their role and give them an outsider status greater in degree to that of other immigrants to Calcutta.

THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN CENTER AND PERIPHERY

Ethnic, caste, and religious distinctions play important roles in both the Indian leather industry and Calcutta's economy. However, in addition to the strong association between occupation and ethnicity, Calcutta also adds a geographic demarcation. Nirmal Kumar Bose (1966, 1968) examined this phenomenon extensively and charted in a series of maps the social, ethnic, and religious composition of Calcutta. He demonstrated that there was a tendency for higher caste and class groups to be associated with the center of the city, and for lower caste and class groups to be associated with the periphery.

The primacy of the central area in Calcutta has continued since

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British times and results from the interaction of both political and economic forces. When the British founded Calcutta, they built an imperial stronghold, Fort William, near the river and surrounded it with a large open area called the Maidan. They did so as a defensive tactic. The fort was so strategically placed that although British troops inside could easily see attackers (Lelyveld 1975:12), outsiders attempting to close in could not observe the fort until they were within firing range. The British residential quarter adjoined this protected area. Presently the Maidan functions as what the journalist Joseph Lelyveld calls "the city's lungs" (ibid.:12), the only open green space left. This area and bordering sections of the old native quarter continue to be prime real estate, partly because of their proximity to the open space of the Maidan, and partly because the major shopping district is located in this central area. Therefore, the high value of the center in Calcutta is closely linked to its original importance in securing British military, political, and economic power, and to its subsequent desirability for both residential and commercial use.

What is significant is that both spatial and occupational demarcations distinguish ethnic, caste, language, and religious groups in Calcutta. And these distinctions are reflected in and help maintain social separation. Calcutta is not a melting pot. Instead, each of the many groups maintains its separation from the others, rarely intermarrying and conservatively guarding its own customs and ways of life. For instance, Calcutta's schools cater to groups according to the language spoken. One finds Bengali, Hindi, English, Gujarati, and Chinese schools. Furthermore, many groups have their own associations, and few associations are based on a cross-ethnic membership (Tysen 1971). Indeed, in Calcutta questions of assimilation and acculturation are irrelevant. If the Chinese were to assimilate, for instance, with which group would they do so?

The existence of these relatively endogamous, occupationally demarcated, and geographically clustered subgroups, as well as the contrast between center and periphery, bear some resemblance, on a larger scale, to the organization of Indian villages. But while in villages there is a division of labor based primarily on caste, in Calcutta the basis for this division has extended to include not only caste, but also language, religion, and regional origin.

As in a village, however, the economic interactions of groups have not broken down the barriers among them, which are reproduced through social and domestic organization. Indeed, the multitude of

groups in Calcutta resemble the collectivities alluded to by Barth in his work on ethnic boundaries: "Their agreement on codes and values need not extend beyond that which is relevant to the social situations in which they interact" (1969:16). While many of these groups interact in the economic sphere, their separate ethnic identities remain unscathed.

Most striking, both the ethnic organization of Calcutta and the caste differentiation of Indian villages are reflected in an opposition between center and periphery. Just as low castes and classes are associated with the peripheral areas of Calcutta, in many Indian villages the untouchable outcasts are found in distinct quarters outside the village proper.⁵

CHINESE TANNERS: PERIPHERALITY AND IMPURITY

One must be cautious not to stretch the analogy between village India and Calcutta too far, for the historical reasons behind the opposition of center and periphery differed in these two locations; the establishment of British military and commercial power was not a factor in the center/periphery distinctions in Indian villages, as it was in the colonially created city of Calcutta. In both cases, however, a knowledge of the values embedded in caste society is critical to understanding the contemporary social significance of these spatial oppositions, particularly the tanning community's location on the eastern periphery of the city.

The ideology underlying the Hindu caste system is based on a distinction between purity and impurity. Organic waste products are impure and so, therefore, are activities such as eating, sex, defecation, and menstruation. Furthermore, all people, animals, and things may temporarily undergo states of pollution through engaging in such polluting activities or through contact and interchange with others who are in a polluted state (see Kolenda 1985). All beings and things can be polluted, and may be hierarchically ranked according to their relative degree of pollution. Occupation is an important component of such ranking, since certain occupations, by their very nature, expose their practitioners to greater contact with pollution.⁶ For instance, those who deal

5. Neither Indian cities nor villages are unique in terms of the significant symbolic role played by space within them. As Walter Firey pointed out in a pathbreaking study, undertaken over forty years ago, of the city of Boston, "Space may be a symbol for social values" (1980 [1947]:169).

6. There is a broad and vigorous debate about the nature of the caste system in India, and the extent to which it is ideologically based. Some scholars, such as Dumont (1970) assert that the ideology of purity and pollution underlies and orders the social relations

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with human waste—such as sweepers, barbers, and launderers—are always in a more impure state than those whose occupations involve less contact with pollution, such as priests.

Significantly, none of the occupations engaged in by Calcutta Chinese—whether it be the hairdressing, restauranting, tanning, and shoemaking of the Hakka, the carpentry of the Cantonese, or the dentistry of the Hubeinese—is associated with high-caste activities in traditional Hindu thought. In a system in which status of groups is determined by the relative purity or impurity of their occupations, there is no doubt that tanning is viewed as one of the most supremely impure tasks. This is due to its association with dead cattle and the necessity of working with hides; death pollutes by making the entire body a waste product, and the association with slaughter of the sacred cow adds to the impurity.

It is not uncommon for immigrant minority groups throughout the world to engage in occupations that are denigrated by their host societies, or at least by the higher-status members of those societies. The Chinese specialization in vocations in India that are associated with lower castes—even untouchables—adheres to this pattern. What is fascinating, however, is the manner in which Indian society has incorporated the Chinese tanning community. The peripheral geographical position of the Chinese within Calcutta's urban space is in many ways analogous to that of an untouchable community within an Indian village.

The Chinese tanning community is in the eastern corner of Calcutta, adjacent to the city dump. The Indian residents of the areas surrounding it (Tiljala, Tangra, and Tapsia), come primarily from the *chamar* caste, a group traditionally considered untouchable and whose customary occupation was leather work (Bandyopadhyay 1990:79). The peripherality and isolation of the tanning district, as well as the association with an impure task, bring to mind the definition of untouchability employed by Louis Dumont:

that can be observed among castes. Others, such as Mencher (1974), argue that this ideology is not shared by all castes. Still others, such as Marriott (1968), argue that the ranking of castes within villages cannot be explained solely in terms of relative purity and pollution, but must be derived by an analysis of transferal of different categories of food among castes. But while the degree to which the ideology of purity and pollution is universally shared, and the degree to which all occupations can be ranked according to it, has been disputed, no one would deny that work with rawhide and leather is considered within caste ideology to be an impure occupation associated with castes traditionally placed in the category of untouchable.

ELLEN OXFELD

We shall define untouchability in the way that is most current by the segregation into distinct hamlets or quarters of the most impure categories. This feature is pan-Indian, as is the association with a religiously relevant function (quartering of dead cattle and consumption of meat, leather tanning, role in incineration or cleaning of rubbish and excrement, pig rearing and consumption of pork). (1970:134)

Of course, considerations of purity and impurity are not the only factors that prevented the Chinese from setting up their tanning operations nearer to the center of the city. The Chinese themselves emphasize other considerations in the selection of Dhapa as their site for tanning. Dhapa, formerly a marshy and swampy area, had the requisite amounts of available water, an essential for tanning. Furthermore, although close enough to the city to do business with buyers and suppliers, it was still relatively uninhabited and real estate was cheap. Conversely, Chinese shoe shops, whose original clientele was largely European and high-class Indian, had to be situated in the center of the city near the major shopping areas these groups frequented.

While several explanations can be found for the tanning community's peripheral location, there is no doubt that this geographic marginality and their degraded occupation have served to isolate the Chinese tanners even more than other Chinese subgroups in Calcutta.

INDIAN VIEWS OF THE HAKKA

It is important to point out that Indians, including Bengalis, are not aware of language differences within Calcutta's Chinese community. They usually refer to the Chinese as one group, and their attitudes seem to be influenced primarily by the Hindu religious ideology described above and by national politics, specifically by the fact that India and the People's Republic of China went to war in 1962.

There is no doubt that the Sino-Indian Conflict has been critical to Indian attitudes toward the Chinese. A common remark is that India was "stabbed in the back" by China, a reference to the fact that prior to the outbreak of hostilities, relationships between the two countries appeared congenial. While some individuals clearly differentiate between the Chinese who live in India and the People's Republic of China, others do not. One woman, for instance, told me that ever since 1962 she has regarded all Chinese as her enemies. And even those who were

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not alive at that time, or not old enough to remember the events, still seem to be affected by the conflict. Said one young man, "Everybody knows that China stole Indian territory, so Chinese can't be trusted."

At the time of the conflict, many Chinese residents of India were stripped of their Indian citizenship (this was done by a legally dubious promulgation declaring that no one could be an Indian citizen if their ancestors were citizens of a country engaged in hostilities with India). Chinese Indians who had become citizens of China when relationships between India and China were good were now even more exposed, since they were suddenly citizens of an enemy country. Several thousand Chinese Indians were rounded up and placed in a detention camp in the Rajasthan desert, where many remained for several years. An equally large group was deported to China.

However, while the loss of rights many Chinese experienced at that time is often one of the first items of conversation mentioned by Chinese, many Bengalis, as well as other Indians whom I met, claimed that they were not aware that the Chinese were deprived of their citizenship rights on account of the hostilities. When I raised the issue, some insisted that I had my facts wrong, or tried to explain it by saying that those who had lost their citizenship must have done something wrong. There were good Chinese and bad Chinese, one acquaintance argued, and if you were a good Chinese you would definitely be allowed to be a citizen.

But political history was not the only factor that influenced the way Indians, and particularly Bengalis, talked about the Chinese. Dissimilarities in diet were also frequently alluded to. In India diet is an especially significant marker of caste, ethnic, and/or religious affiliation. Chinese are set apart from both Hindus, who generally abstain from beef, and Muslims, who abstain from pork. In a situation in which diet is such a critical concern and symbol, it is not surprising that it is one of the most frequently mentioned items when ethnic groups discuss and define each other. The apparent Chinese willingness to eat almost anything was often cited as proof of their peculiarity. As a Bengali acquaintance put it, "They do eat rice [a staple of the Bengali diet], but I also heard that they eat frogs and snakes!"

To this focus on the impurity of food intake, a trait common to all Chinese from the standpoint of many Calcuttans, a view of the tanning area as particularly unclean was frequently added. While I was doing my fieldwork and my sister came to visit me for two weeks, she fell ill for a few days. This was a rather common occurrence for travelers, but many of

my Indian friends were sure that these health problems resulted from being in the tanning district. Later, one of my friends wrote in a letter to my sister, "Next time you come . . . stay with us. It is difficult to stand TANGRA [Dhapa] environment. Ellen has developed a bit of immunity."

In fact, for most Calcuttans, the tanning area is a place to avoid—a slightly mysterious, even dangerous location. One young college student, for instance, told of his reactions everytime he passed the area on a bypass road bordering it. "Tangra is considered a rather unsafe area for a variety of reasons . . . the moment somebody mentions Tangra the two things you think of are Chinese, and you don't want to be there . . . and people are rather intrigued by the Chinese because they have, you know, they have their 'walled city' [an allusion to the appearance of the tanneries from afar] . . . there are these huge walls, and you can't see inside . . . people think it's mysterious, you don't know what is going on, you kind of wonder what happens there."

Although a range of feelings about the Chinese, and particularly about the Chinese tanning community, are expressed, such comments indicate that attitudes of hostility, avoidance, or at the very least, befuddlement are not uncommon. The conflict between India and China, Hindu ideas about purity and pollution, and the structure of ethnic relations in Calcutta, a city in which economic role and ethnic identity are closely correlated for all groups, all contribute to the maintenance of these ideas.

HAKKA VIEWS OF OUTSIDERS

The suspicion with which Indians view the Calcutta Chinese is reciprocated by an equally mistrustful attitude on the part of the Hakka toward outsiders. From the vantage point of the Calcutta Hakka, Indians, Westerners, and, to a marked but somewhat lesser extent, non-Hakka Chinese, are outsiders, and these distinctions are clearly revealed through Hakka terms for these groups. In fact, these terms are used in situations that, for an outsider, sometimes create almost ludicrous juxtapositions.

Several years after my introduction to the Calcutta Hakka community, when I was conducting research in Toronto, I met two sisters from the community who had recently immigrated to Canada. We got together on a Sunday afternoon for a reunion and decided to visit the CN Tower, the tallest structure in the city. I had my camera with me, and we all thought it would be nice to have a picture of the three of us in the vicinity of the famous structure. As a middle-aged, Caucasian man

passed by, one of my friends shouted in Hakka to her sister, “Oh look, there goes a *fan gui* [lit., “barbarian ghost” or “foreign devil”]. Let’s ask him to take a picture for us!” The *fan gui* in question assented to our request and my friends thanked him cheerfully, remarking afterwards how nice it had been for him to help us out.⁷

Westerners are frequently called *fan gui* in the colloquial speech of the Hakka of Calcutta. Ghosts (*gui*) have frequently been associated in popular Chinese religion with outsiders and undesirables, such as bandits and beggars (see A. Wolf 1974), yet the term *fan gui* is used not only when consciously denigrating a foreigner, but also in neutral or even positive situations such as the one above. Like the residents of the immigrant Chinese community in California described by Maxine Hong Kingston (1975), the Calcutta Chinese use the word *gui* frequently when referring to community outsiders. Indeed, the Calcutta Hakka use the word for “person” (*ren*), only in reference to Chinese people. Thus, Chinese are called *Tang ren* (lit. “people of the Tang [dynasty]”).

Yet when specific subgroups of Chinese are referred to, as opposed to the Chinese people as a whole, the Hakka also make important distinctions. When talking about themselves, they continue to use the appellation *ren*. Indeed, they usually refer to themselves as “people of Meixian,” thereby distinguishing themselves not only from other Chinese, but even from Hakka who do not come from Meixian, Guangdong, from which all Calcutta Hakka originate. But the Calcutta Hakka use the word *lao*, translatable as “fellow”—a word connoting a vulgar person, a hillbilly or hick—when referring to the Cantonese or Hubeinese. Thus, a Cantonese is referred to as a *Guangfu lao*, rather than a *Guangfu ren*.

The Hakka distinguish between themselves and other Chinese groups in other ways as well. From their perspective, the Cantonese do not work as hard, are not as frugal, and, depending on the speaker, are either more Indianized or more Westernized than the Hakka; in all cases, the Hakka are portrayed as more loyal carriers of Chinese tradition than are other Chinese subgroups. “Those Cantonese,” asserted one young Hakka man to me in denigrating tones, “they mix Hindi and English in with their Chinese.” My first landlady in Dhapa, Mrs. Jia, liked to compare Cantonese and Hakka working habits, and would

7. I usually spoke in Mandarin with my informants, many of whom had attended the local Chinese school, where Mandarin was the medium of instruction. Therefore, I use Mandarin transliteration for Chinese words in this chapter.

imply that Cantonese in Calcutta were less successful financially than the Hakka because they were overindulgent. "When Cantonese make money," she informed me, "they get lots of servants, eat with ivory chopsticks, and use tablecloths, . . . but Hakka keep working hard."

The distinctions Hakka make between themselves and other Chinese in Calcutta are replicated in social organization. Lawrence Crissman (1967) has drawn attention to what he calls the "segmentary structure" of many overseas Chinese communities. These societies are divided into progressively segmenting subdivisions based on language, native place, and surname. It is only vis-à-vis non-Chinese that they present a united front. In the internal social structure of the Calcutta Chinese community, non-Hakka Chinese are definitely viewed as a category of outsider.

In referring to all other categories of outsiders, however, a much sharper distinction is made by the Hakka, since in these cases the word *gui*, rather than the less negative appellation *lao*, is used. Westerners are called *fan gui*, while Indians are usually referred to as *wu gui* (lit., "black ghosts" or "black devils"). When referring to an individual Indian man speakers will frequently append the word *gui* to his surname. Thus, Mr. Sen becomes Sen *gui*.

In their speech, therefore, the Calcutta Hakka differentiate themselves from two levels of outsiders: first, other speech groups among the Calcutta Chinese, and second, Indians and Westerners.⁸ While Westerners are no longer highly visible or numerous actors within Calcutta's ethnic landscape, and therefore Hakka ideas about them are not constantly reinforced through interaction, this is not true of Indians.

Chinese interactions with Bengalis, for instance, often occur in settings that, for the Chinese, reinforce negative stereotypes. Chinese are most likely to encounter Bengalis when they have dealings with government bureaucrats. Because many Chinese are still classified as foreigners, such contacts are not infrequent. Registering yearly with the Foreigners Office or making repeated applications for citizenship requires numerous meetings with government officials, and such interactions are

8. The definitions of Westerner and Indian are primarily cultural and contextual, rather than purely biological. This is illustrated by the fact that Chinese families that have had no sons will sometimes adopt babies of non-Chinese descent in circumstances in which it is not possible to find a baby of Chinese descent. These children are raised as Chinese and considered Chinese. On the other hand, the children of mixed Chinese-Indian marriages are not necessarily considered Chinese, even though they have some Chinese ancestry. They are usually classified, instead, according to the language they use at home.

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seldom pleasant experiences. Indeed, one of the most frequent grievances I heard was that the only way to get anything done was to bribe an official. Less prosperous community members complained that because they did not have enough funds at their disposal to bribe effectively, they were at a perpetual disadvantage in securing citizenship papers, or in getting permits related to the conduct of their business, such as export licenses.

Bengalis also meet with government bureaucrats, of course, and they are not strangers to unmotivated, inefficient, or even corrupt officials. But since the officials are usually from the ethnic group to which they themselves belong, Bengalis will not conceptualize such interactions in ethnic terms. Rather, such behavior is often seen as a sign of the times (*shemoi kharap*, “times are bad”) or as a symptom of bad government in general.

When Chinese encounter difficulties in their dealings with bureaucracy, however, they often blame the Bengali bureaucrats themselves, claiming that Bengalis are lazy and that the Bengali government workers will provide services only in return for bribes. Furthermore, they assert that because they are Chinese, they can be taken advantage of more than other groups. After a disappointing inquiry about a delay in the processing of his papers for a passport application, one Hakka acquaintance complained that you could get it done very quickly if you gave extra money to the official in charge. “They all need money for their daughters’ dowries . . . and they know we can’t object because we are Chinese.”

The feeling that Chinese will never be treated fairly only because they are Chinese is quite pervasive. One year before I arrived, a band of *dacoits*⁹ attacked a tannery. Three people were killed before the *dacoits* fled across the marshy area bordering Dhapa. Most Dhapa residents felt that the police had done nothing about the incident and had not tried to apprehend the culprits because the victims were Chinese. Ultimately the police did apprehend some people who they alleged were the perpetrators. Most Dhapa Chinese claimed that the matter was pursued only because they had complained to the Chinese Embassy in New Delhi and the embassy had interceded with the police on their behalf.

While Hakka interactions with Bengalis tend to occur in the bureaucratic sphere, their interactions with most other Indian groups are usually economic or commercial. Hakka tanners sell their leather primarily

9. *Dacoit* (armed robber) is a word commonly used in Indian English.

to Hindu, Muslim, and/or Sikh Punjabis, and they buy their rawhide from Muslims from Uttar Pradesh and/or Punjab. Most of their employees are Biharis of the *chamar* caste, as well as a smaller number of Nepalese and North Indian Muslims. Bihari women are employed as servants-to wash clothes, do household work, or watch over small children (they do not cook since they are unfamiliar with Chinese cuisine, and their Chinese employers do not seem anxious to teach them—one of the many ways in which the ethnic boundary is maintained).

In short, Hakka interactions with Indians occur primarily in bureaucratic or economic contexts, where Indians are officials, workers, suppliers, servants, or customers. These contacts also require that the Hakka be conversant in a number of languages. In their interactions with tanning workers, rawhide merchants, and leather buyers, their primary language is Hindi. Hakka who run shoe shops in the center of the city may also need to know some Bengali. Those who run restaurants or beauty parlors may use a combination of Hindi, English, and Bengali. There are also generational differences with respect to these language competencies. Younger community members, who have attended English-medium schools, are more likely to be competent in English as well as Hindi. Older individuals, whose schooling was primarily in Chinese-medium schools, are still likely to know Hindi, which they speak with their employees; but they are unlikely to be competent in English.

Of course, the fact that Chinese interact with Indians primarily in the economic sphere does not mean that such interactions are totally impersonal or cold. For instance, in order to secure credit on favorable terms, the tanners go to considerable lengths to demonstrate their trustworthiness to their suppliers, particularly the rawhide merchants. Occasionally an extremely important supplier or buyer will be invited to a wedding feast. But attendance at a large life-cycle celebration, at which there are hundreds of guests, is the usual limit to the social intimacy that would occur between a Chinese and an Indian who had important business connections. Few outsiders ever have a chance to enter into close personal relations or interactions with the Chinese.

It is only in the English-medium schools, to which more and more young Chinese are being sent, that interactions that are not primarily economic or bureaucratic take place with different Indian ethnic groups. But even in these settings there is a tendency for Chinese to segregate themselves or to feel that they are excluded by others. One resident of Dhapa reflected on his years in an English-medium boarding school in this way:

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There would be a lot of name calling . . . even in teamwork you are more or less left to the last . . . mind you there were some pretty good [Indian] friends that I still keep in touch with now. . . . It's interesting . . . I would get along better with another minority, such as Anglo-Indian, you know, or somebody they would consider different, such as an Armenian.

While other young people from Dhapa talked of their experiences in English-medium schools in a more positive way, many emphasized that even if they had Indian friends, they would not bring them home. I observed that only on rare occasions did Indian school friends visit.

AN ENTREPRENEURIAL ETHIC

Hakka separation from other ethnic groups is facilitated by the interaction of caste, ethnic, religious, spatial, and economic organization in Calcutta. This separation is reflected not only in patterns of interaction and in Hakka attitudes towards outsiders, but also in the fact that Indian society has exerted so little influence on the substantive aspects of Hakka cultural values. Most non-Hindu minorities in India have been powerfully affected by the caste system. For instance, many tribal groups from the Indian subcontinent have been incorporated into the surrounding society as castes. They have attempted to raise their status not by rejecting Hindu practices, but by imitating higher-caste customs, such as abstention from eating beef. In so doing, they have indicated their acceptance of the basic premises of the caste system (Srinivas 1966:6). Furthermore, Indian Christians and Muslims, whom one might expect to have renounced caste as a result of their ideological traditions, have castelike divisions within their populations (Dumont 1970:206–7, 211). Even groups such as Parsis and Jews, who have immigrated to India from other countries, have come to replicate some elements of caste within their own group structures.¹⁰

10. Parsis not only adopted caste notions about commensality, but also assimilated Hindu notions of purity and pollution. In 1903, for instance, a Parsi judge expressed his opposition to the idea that Parsi priests could admit lower-caste Hindus into the Parsi community without first "making them give up their unclean professions" (Fischer 1973:94).

Among some groups of Indian Jews, castelike patterns were also present (I use the past tense here, because most Indian Jews have now emigrated to Israel and other countries). The Cochin Jews of the South Indian state of Kerala, for instance, were internally

Despite the all-encompassing nature of the caste system, however, none of the Cantonese subgroups in Calcutta has fallen into the patterns described above. They explicitly reject caste ideology in favor of a status system almost exclusively based on wealth. Thus, unlike certain Indian merchant communities (see Bayly 1983), the Calcutta Chinese have not tried to convert their wealth into higher status by entering into business activity that would be judged as more pure from the standpoint of the caste hierarchy. As pariah entrepreneurs, the Chinese have succeeded economically precisely because they have *not* assimilated caste ideology. One member of the community explained this to me in starkly sociological terms during the first few weeks of my fieldwork when he stated, "We don't have castes. Your blood doesn't matter. We have classes. What matters is how much money you make." Indeed, in this community, wealth is the chief measure of status, and owning one's own business is viewed as the best means of acquiring wealth.

This fact was clearly illuminated for me one day, shortly after I had settled into my Chinese landlady's house, when her nephew took me to visit and to introduce myself to some families in Dhapa. On the way home, he told me that under normal circumstances he would not even speak with the families we had just met. "They might know me as my father's son," he remarked, "because my father taught at the Chinese school for so many years. But they're rich people, and they only talked with me today because I brought you along."

This high priority accorded to the achievement of wealth as a measure of status is not atypical of other overseas Chinese societies. G. W. Skinner (1968) has discussed the importance of wealth in Southeast Asian overseas Chinese communities, as a criterion for leadership as well as a measure of status. As he points out, one reason that wealth is the primary component of status in these communities is that most Chinese emigrated in order to better their economic positions. "Unlike the Jews," says Skinner, "the Chinese went abroad in the first place specifically to make money, and unlike the Jewish *diaspora*, that of the Chinese excluded the traditional elite of their homeland. In consequence status for overseas Chinese was almost a direct function of wealth" (ibid.:195).

divided into castelike divisions with prohibitions on intermarriage (Mandelbaum 1939:424) and on entering each other's temples (Strizower 1962:112-13). And the Bene Israel, a Jewish community centered in Bombay, had endogamous subdivisions, one of which was considered particularly polluted in the sense that both commensality and intermarriage with them was forbidden (ibid.:30).

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What is most critical here is that since status within the Calcutta Chinese community is based almost exclusively on wealth, there is no concept, as in caste ideology, that certain occupations or social groups can be compared in terms of relative purity and impurity. Nor is there any sense that social status can be inherited and is not dependent upon one's present social situation. Caste ideology ranks a multitude of endogamous groups in terms of their relative purity and pollution. Furthermore, one inherits one's caste; no matter how one may change one's life situation, one cannot change caste. Unlike other minority groups in India, the Calcutta Chinese have not adapted elements of caste ideology or practice.

Indeed, from the point of view of the Calcutta Hakka, any job is worthwhile if it is a profitable source of income. While tanning is viewed within caste ideology as a polluting occupation, one performed only by a particular untouchable caste, Dhapa Chinese consider tanning a good business because it is so lucrative.¹¹ Tanning is also viewed as far superior to white-collar desk jobs, where salaries rarely amount to more than a fraction of the earnings possible in even modestly successful tanning businesses.

In fact, running one's own business (in whatever line presents the most possibilities) is viewed by the Calcutta Hakka as the ideal economic activity and, unless circumstances make it absolutely impossible, as far superior to salaried employment. Not only do they see this as providing a greater income, but, in addition, they feel that one has more control over one's life. That business means family business is an assumption so deep that it is rarely discussed. But one need only look at the evidence to see that this is the case; of the 297 tanning businesses in Dhapa in 1982, only two were partnerships involving nonrelated individuals.

II. The differences between the Calcutta Chinese view and the stance held by those who accept the premises of the caste system was made clear to me in an interview I conducted at the Leather Research Institute in Calcutta. One of the officers of the organization pointed out that although a certain percentage of seats at the leather technology institute are reserved for *chamars*, few members of this caste apply, despite the fact that admission to a leather technology institute would mean a good-paying job, after completion of coursework, with a large leather manufacturer.

Since the basis for the stigma *chamars* suffer is the polluting occupation they traditionally followed, those who are in a position to apply to an institute of higher education are unlikely to choose such a field. Chinese have not become involved in tanning as the result of training by institutes. These practices make evident the difference between evaluating tanning from within the caste system, as a polluting and stigmatizing occupation, and from without, as a potentially lucrative one.

The high value placed on entrepreneurship as a way of life was one of the themes that was most frequently and explicitly articulated to me. For instance, one of my good friends and best informants, Mr. Zhou, was always perplexed as to why I would want to return to the United States to teach. One day, while discussing the advantages of business as opposed to salaried employment, he asked me, "If you wanted to start a business what would you do?"

"Well, I would borrow money and invest it," I replied.

"There you go, it's taking you so long to do your research, but you would know exactly what to do to go into business." As he shrugged his head, he added, "You'll never do well when you work for others!"

Indeed, for Mr. Zhou, it was difficult to understand why one would choose work other than business if given the option. In his view, salaries were fixed and limiting, while business opened up the possibility of multiplying one's resources exponentially through the application of one's own efforts. One of his favorite sayings, composed of four four-character phrases, was that there were four types of people: those who harmed themselves and others (*hai ren hai ji*); those who helped themselves but harmed others (*hai ren li ji*); those who harmed themselves to help others (*li ren hai ji*); and those who helped themselves while helping others (*li ren li ji*).¹² And, as if taken straight from Adam Smith and Jeremy Bentham, Mr. Zhou would then proceed to expound on the evident superiority of the fourth type—those who help themselves and thereby benefit others. This happy outcome, he would add, can most easily be achieved by engaging in one's own business.

A corollary of this preference for business was the assumption that no one with intelligence would wallow for long in the shadows of an employer. "You can never keep a good foreman," one factory owner told me, "because if he is any good, he'll start a business of his own."

Clearly, for both Mr. Zhou and other members of the Dhapa community, one goal of such business activity was to increase the material well-being of oneself and one's family. But it is not only the pursuit of a more comfortable life that makes wealth desirable in Dhapa—it is also the status that accompanies it and the ability to influence and to be respected by others.

12. The use of such four-character phrases is pervasive in everyday Chinese speech as well as in written texts. They are used for many purposes, including greeting, congratulating, enjoining, and describing recognizable traits or situations. Their compactness and economy of expression are usually lost in translation.

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The importance of wealth can be felt in many ways in the Hakka community. Whether an individual or family is *hen you qian* (very wealthy) or *mei you qian* (poor) is usually the first item mentioned in any discussion about them. The in-betweens excite very little comment. It is the wealthy who serve as community leaders—for example, as heads of business associations. Furthermore, community social life is focused on the ceremonies and celebrations that surround major life-cycle rituals, providing numerous opportunities for wealthy individuals to validate publicly their financial success. The wealthiest families stage more lavish and larger weddings and birthday celebrations than do other families, and the number of tables at a reception (ten people to a table) may be the talk of the town for several days before and after it is held (more than fifty tables is usually cause for extended comment). Likewise, the funerals of wealthy individuals are attended by larger numbers than are those of less prosperous individuals, even though the criteria that supposedly determine who should attend such functions are constant.

Indeed, because wealth is so critical to status, I had to quickly change my graduate-student ways of relatively frugal and simple living. When I first moved to my landlady’s house, for instance, I walked to the local Chinese school where I taught English every morning. It was not far, not even a twenty-minute walk. But several Hakka acquaintances kept urging me to take a ricksha or buy a bicycle or motorscooter. Much to their relief, I finally bought a bicycle. They had worried that because I walked, people would think I was poor, and would look down upon me. Later, when my parents came to visit me in Calcutta, my landlady constantly reminded me to let people know that they were staying in the best hotel in Calcutta.

This emphasis on wealth does not exclude other characteristics from garnering status for a family or individual within the community. Nor does it mean that in all cases a wealthy individual will truly be respected. If community members feel someone gained wealth through cheating, or some other unfair means, they will certainly call him a “scoundrel” (*jian zei*) behind his back; and a person who is not rich, but who works loyally for his or her family will be granted a certain degree of respect. But no one denies the importance of achieving wealth as an ultimate goal, and many other qualities are valued precisely for the part they play in enabling a family to achieve prosperity.

We must not forget that in Chinese society, both on the mainland and overseas, monetary thinking and commoditization have a long history.

As Hill Gates points out, late imperial Chinese society “included important capitalist elements. . . . The Chinese treated the major factors of production—land, labor, and capital—as commodities, with well-developed markets for each” (1987:260). Gates states that capitalism did *not* play a “hegemonic” role in late imperial China, because “capitalist elements were always subordinated to state control” (ibid.). Nevertheless, “a constrained but powerful capitalist worldview was reproduced constantly by the Chinese populace as an alternative to the bureaucratic/feudal vision enshrined in the formal structure and practice of the state” (ibid.:261). That is, capitalism, in its more accessible petty-capitalist or small-scale owner production variant, appeared as an attractive alternative for working people, since it “offered a social model of upward mobility based directly on wealth rather than on connection with the state through the highly limited channels of degree- and office-holding” (ibid.).

Indeed, Chinese society has been monetized to increasing degrees since the eleventh century (Elvin 1973:149). It is a society in which even rural areas have been linked with a national market in some items for almost a thousand years (ibid.:106) and in which “increased contact with the market made the Chinese peasantry into a class of adaptable, rational, profit-oriented petty entrepreneurs” (ibid.:167).

Stevan Harrell argues that there has long been a “Chinese entrepreneurial ethic, a cultural value that requires one to invest one’s resources . . . in a long-term quest to improve the material well-being and security of some group to which one belongs and with which one identifies closely” (1987:94).

Even popular Chinese religious practice reflects a worldview thoroughly influenced by monetary thinking. After the introduction of Buddhism into China, the belief that a person’s soul is reincarnated in another being after death became infused in popular Chinese religious thought. But in a Chinese variant, this belief took on a curiously monetary expression: souls are not just reincarnated, they need funds to do so. The urban Taiwanese whom Hill Gates studied, for instance, explained to her that souls en route to reincarnation borrow large sums from celestial treasuries. This money is “used to purchase a body for reincarnation, the rest defrays the cost of the individual’s particular lot in life, a matter determined prior to birth. Some[,] indebted for large sums, will receive wealth, high rank, and other blessings in life while those who give less must live with correspondingly straitened means” (1987:268).

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As a result, individuals are constantly attempting to pay off these debts throughout their lives. Burning paper money (paper representations of cash, not actual currency) to the gods is one way of paying off this debt, and even after one dies, one's relatives burn large amounts of paper money, for, as Gates explains, one needs to "pay off the account . . . if the spirit is to enter unencumbered into a new and presumably more fortunate incarnation" (ibid.). Thus, "we see the human body, the length of its life, and the quality of that life equated to specific sums of money—as extreme an example of the penetration of a money economy into human existence as metaphor can express" (ibid.:270).

Such religious practices are also quite common in the Calcutta Chinese community, where monetary symbolism is a pervasive part of ritual life. Indeed, among the Calcutta Chinese, the entire process of reincarnation is conceptualized in rather concrete terms in which large amounts of money and material goods are necessary for a fortuitous journey to reincarnation. In order to ease the heavenly travels of the recently deceased, paper replicas of the expensive accoutrements of modern living appear prominently among objects burnt as offerings (on one occasion that I witnessed this included a life-size three-dimensional paper Fiat car). The need for cash is emphasized as an essential element in almost all aspects of the afterlife.

"Suppose you live in India now, but after you die you come back as an African," my first landlady explained to me one day. "How will you get to Africa? By boat? By car? The best way is by airplane, but for that you'll need money, because the ticket is so expensive!"

Thus, in the case of the Calcutta Hakka we have a situation in which a high priority is placed on entrepreneurial thinking for reasons implicit in both their ethnic role in India and in a cultural ethos carried with them from their country of origin and perpetuated in their overseas environment.

This entrepreneurial ethic contrasts markedly with the values evident in some of the other Hakka communities described in this volume. For instance, in the Malay Hakka community described by Sharon Carstens people described themselves as having "no head for business," and the Hakka in Malaysia were weak economically relative to other Chinese groups. Similarly, Elizabeth Johnson cites Blake's description of the Hakka's "legacy of poverty" and comes to similar conclusions about the Hakka in Hong Kong.

Both Johnson and Carstens also suggest that the Hakka among whom they did fieldwork held an egalitarian ethic and that this may be

connected to their poverty relative to other Chinese groups in the area. While Carstens suggests that Hakka experiences of poverty relative to other groups on the Chinese mainland may have influenced their adaptation to their overseas environment, my data on the Calcutta Hakka indicates that any notion of shared Hakka orientations embedded in deep-seated historical memory must be balanced by an awareness of the impact of the local context in which the particular Hakka community resides.

HAKKA IDENTITY AND WOMEN'S ROLES

Interestingly, the entrepreneurial ethic of the Calcutta Hakka has also influenced another feature of Hakka social organization that has been addressed by several of the other essays in this volume—the sexual division of labor. Carstens, Constable, and Johnson all note the prominent economic role played by Hakka women in their communities. This role, they state, is frequently mentioned as a distinctive feature of Hakka culture by Hakka themselves, who often use it to contrast themselves with other local Chinese communities. In the Calcutta Hakka community women's economic roles, in the form of their active participation in the work of running family enterprises, are notable. And, as in these other cases, this is frequently commented upon by the Calcutta Hakka themselves, contributing to their own sense of a distinct identity.

However, unlike women's economic roles in the other Hakka communities discussed in this volume, those of the Calcutta Hakka vary with the family's economic status. Women in families that own larger firms are much less likely to participate directly in the daily operation of their family businesses than are those in families with smaller firms. Furthermore, their access to property and income is not dependent on the degree to which they participate in family enterprise. For instance, in some families, women control the income generated by the sale of tanning waste products, but there is no correlation between this and their participation in the family business.

A woman who works hard in her family enterprise will enjoy the esteem and respect of her community and family. If her family's business is large and successful, she also has status as a member of a wealthy family, and she has access to certain resources within the business.¹³

13. For a more detailed discussion of the sexual division of labor among the Calcutta Hakka, see Basu (1991).

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Thus, the extensive role played by Hakka women in income-producing activities is also influenced by context. In this case, business participation decreases with financial success, suggesting that both Hakka identity and economic resources influence women's roles.

CONCLUSION: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE HAKKA?

Most of the material I have presented in this chapter can be understood in terms of a contextual, interactionist approach to ethnicity. For instance, language differences, one of the most irreducible mechanisms of maintaining ethnic distinctions, are reinforced by Calcutta's ethnically variegated economy and society, one in which there is only the organization of difference, and never a dominant group to which others can assimilate either linguistically or culturally. The fact that Cantonese and Hakka occupy separate occupational niches in Calcutta, for instance, certainly helps to maintain their differences. Likewise, the political situation and dominant religious ideology have deeply influenced Indians' ideas about their overseas Chinese population, and in turn, these ideas have indelibly affected Hakka attitudes toward outsiders.

A number of scholars who have written about ethnicity, however, have criticized this context-oriented approach, stating that it ultimately reduces ethnic groups to mere interest groups and that it underestimates the affective power of ethnic-group identity (see Glazer and Moynihan 1975:19). These scholars point out that "primordial" identifications, based upon shared physical and cultural traits as well as upon shared descent, often bind members of an ethnic group together (e.g., Isaacs 1975b).

Recently, however, the dichotomy between these approaches has itself been questioned. G. Carter Bentley utilizes Pierre Bourdieu's notion of "habitus" to explain the affective power of ethnic attachments. Habitus, he explains, is comprised of conscious and unconscious inclinations and outlooks inculcated and internalized from the earliest years of a person's life, and ethnic identity is integral to these. Bentley shows that it is precisely *because* of their power, because they are part and parcel of one's most strongly internalized behaviors, outlooks, and obligations, that ethnic bonds are so profound a force in the reproduction of social formations (1987:42).

Because ethnic identity is so fundamental in the formation of people's conscious and unconscious understandings of the world, Bentley asserts, individuals may experience "crises of ethnic identity" when they

undergo changed social circumstances (*ibid.*:43). In such cases they may respond with new formulations of ethnic identity, or they may reinvigorate existing notions (*ibid.*:43). For instance, in making sense of their situation, the Calcutta Hakka often draw upon the label that was originally applied to them by the Cantonese in Guangdong—that of “guest people.”

“You know, we are the guest people, and we keep moving from place to place. We even did that in China,” one friend in Calcutta told me. It was a refrain I heard frequently among residents of the tanning community.

But this term has continued potency for them not because of some primordial identification with past experiences, but because it describes their present situation, in which they are clearly an ethnic minority, and still on the move. Indeed, beginning in the late 1970s many Hakka began to emigrate from Calcutta to Europe, Australia, and particularly to Toronto. Emigrants point to a fear that new tensions between India and China will again threaten their security in India, and to a desire to diversify the economic activities of family members as reasons for their decision to leave India.

As one Hakka friend who had migrated from Calcutta to Toronto told me, “We look at what happened to the Sikhs [referring to Indira Gandhi’s assassination in 1984 by a Sikh and the subsequent attacks upon and killing of Sikhs by angry mobs] and we think we are just as noticeable. If China goes to war with India again, it could happen to us.”

In Toronto the Calcutta Hakka once again find distinctions between both Chinese and non-Chinese others to be socially significant. Toronto’s urban geography, with its huge Chinatown and numerous Chinese-run businesses scattered throughout the city, serves as a daily reminder to the immigrants of their own aspirations to succeed in business, and of their present inability to do so.

For although the Calcutta Hakka are successful entrepreneurs in India, their Indian assets do not amount to much when converted to Canadian currency. Most end up working in factories, having—at least for the short term—postponed their entrepreneurial aspirations until they can acquire more capital.

Thus, in addition to comparing themselves with the multitude of non-Chinese groups in Toronto, Hakka from Calcutta frequently, and sometimes resentfully, contrast their situation with that of other Chinese immigrants. Wealthy immigrants from Hong Kong, in particular, are frequently the target of their comments.

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But how will the Calcutta Hakka identify themselves and be identified as the length of their residence and their numbers increase in Toronto? Will the next generation still refer to themselves as "people of Meixian?" Or will they instead see themselves as descendants of Chinese Indians or as members of a more vague and amorphous category of Chinese Canadians? Will they speak Hakka at all? One Calcutta Hakka who had immigrated to Toronto hinted at the potentially shifting nature of Hakka identity when he said to me in the summer of 1986, "When we talk about home, we talk about Calcutta—it's still our root. For our father it's China, and for my children, it's Brampton [an area of Toronto]."

Given the extremely different realities of employment, education, and politics, one might hypothesize very dissimilar trajectories for Hakka identity in Toronto and Calcutta. The signs that this will be the case are already in place: the Calcutta Hakka immigrants in Toronto are employed in a variety of occupations rather than in a specialized ethnic niche associated with a degraded occupation; they reside in areas dispersed throughout the city, rather than in an isolated community at the periphery; and their children, who are educated in Toronto's public schools, are beginning to use English rather than Hakka in interactions with their parents.

As Eric Wolf has stated in an analysis of labor immigration under capitalism, "Ethnicities rarely coincided with the initial self-identification of the industrial recruits, who first thought of themselves as Hanoverians or Bavarians rather than as Germans, as members of their village or parish . . . rather than as Poles, as Tonga or Yao rather than as 'Nyasalanders.' The more comprehensive categories emerged only as particular cohorts of workers gained access to different segments of the labor market and began to treat their access as a resource to be defended both socially and politically. Such ethnicities are therefore not 'primordial' social relationships. They are historical products of labor market segmentation" (1982:381).

The trajectory of Calcutta Hakka identity in Toronto, however, is the subject of another essay.

6/ The Hakka Ethnic Movement in Taiwan, 1986–1991

HOWARD J. MARTIN

This chapter describes and explains the Hakka ethnic movement (*Kejia zuqun yundong*) in Taiwan. Despite the youth and rapid growth of the movement, it has already differentiated into traditionalist, moderate, and radical branches, which reflect variation in ideas of Hakka identity and in responses to political conditions in Taiwan. The material discussed was collected in 1991 and consists of interviews with recognized leaders and publications authored by activists.

As an examination of the early period in a self-defined ethnic movement, this chapter contrasts with several of the case studies in this volume. The Taiwan Hakka movement is an islandwide phenomenon, but has important centers of activity in Xinzhu and Miaoli *xian* (in northern Taiwan) and in Taipei. The fact that the movement does not derive from village- or district-level historical tradition means that history is negotiable, subject to interpretation, and not wedded to particular localisms, traditions, and figures. Nicole Constable, in contrast, shows how village and local history in Shung Him Tong have contributed primary elements, out of which Hakka identity is constructed and affirmed. She also describes how a heterodox religion, Christianity, contributes to maintaining the residents' identity. The movement in Taiwan, however, embraces people whose religious practices are within the Chinese tradition. Unlike the Hakka of Shung Him Tong, those

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involved in the Taiwan movement can call on no particular local history to affirm their identity, since Hakka Taiwanese history is intended to synthesize the experiences of Hakka from all over the island.

In contrast to the residents of Shung Him Tong, the Tsuen Wan Hakka studied by Elizabeth Johnson share susceptibility to many of the forces eroding Hakka identity in Taiwan. Industrialization and its consequences—increased literacy, mass communication, and social interaction (especially marriage) with greater numbers of non-Hakka—have lessened overt signs of ethnic difference and have created an environment in which the bilingual can adapt more readily than those who speak only Hakka. Much of the thinking that guides leaders and activists in the Taiwan movement is a reaction to such diminishing ethnic distinctions. Tsuen Wan people are similar to most unaffiliated Taiwan Hakka; that is, many are unaware of any need to actively pursue or maintain Hakka identity as an adaptive economic or political strategy in life.

Ellen Oxfeld's discussion of Hakka tanners in Calcutta describes cultural, religious, and economic positions in Indian society that contrast with the situations of Hong Kong and Taiwan Hakka. The Calcutta Hakka are culturally alien and remain distinctly Chinese in Indian society, and have adapted as immigrants by occupying an economic niche that is stigmatized in both religion and society. As natives and as fully conversant Chinese, Taiwan Hakka live in a society lacking ethnic boundaries as insurmountable as the ones facing Calcutta tanners. The slight barriers to full integration with Hokkien and mainlanders in Taiwan society are primarily a matter of using language appropriate to circumstances. For the majority of Taiwan's Hakka population this is not difficult. Public-school instruction and most radio and television programming is delivered in *guoyu* (Mandarin, lit. "national language"), the official language of public affairs and politics. Hokkien (*minnanhua*) is the mother tongue of the majority of Taiwan's inhabitants and dominates in the economy.

A few observations can be made from this brief comparison with other chapters in this volume. First, the Taiwan Hakka movement does not have a locus of strength or organization in a well-defined community; one goal of Hakka activists is to appeal to all Hakka on the island. In consequence, neither history nor identity can be strongly identified with particular locales. Second, the movement does not now embrace all Hakka on the island; participation is voluntary and thus premised on personal interest. Third, Taiwan Hakka are members of an increasingly open Chinese society in which least-common-denominator elements of

consumer economics are pervasive. A tendency to assimilate with the majority Hokkien is apparent to many concerned Hakka. The primary public expression of ethnicity in Taiwan is how well—or how poorly—one speaks Hakka, Hokkien, or Mandarin. Violence, alien appearance or culture, practice of heterodox religions, and economic marginalization do not characterize the island's Hakka population.

The Hakka movement in Taiwan arose out of a perception that Hakka interests were excluded from the debate over Taiwan's political future. The goals of the movement are at once ethnic and political: ethnic goals are centered on preserving Hakka values and identity, and political goals are oriented toward creating legal guarantees that protect Hakka interests. The movement is not directed by one structured organization, but consists of various interest groups, which often cooperate but also initiate actions independently. The movement is inventing Hakka identity as much as it is attempting to preserve it. Having for decades lived under regimes (Japanese and Nationalist Chinese) whose strategic goals opposed vigorous displays of ethnic insularity, people in the movement are forced to consider alternate interpretations of what it means to be a Hakka in Taiwan.

PERSPECTIVES AND ISSUES

The issues raised in this chapter could not have been addressed in 1986 when I concluded more than two years of field and library research in Taiwan. The Taiwan Hakka movement did not exist at that time, except in so far as Hakka were interested in their history and participated in opposition politics in concert with Hokkien and dissident mainlanders. The state of ethnic consciousness was such that analysts (Gates 1981, M. Chang 1990) rightly collapsed the different ethnic origins of the Taiwan population. Hakka and Hokkien were counterpoised as native Taiwanese (*benshengren*) to mainland immigrants (*waishengren*), and the analysts' arguments were cast in political and economic terms. Taiwan's marginalized population of aborigines (*yuanzhumin*) did not enter into the analysis of ethnicity until radical activists organized a political movement in 1986 (Yang Changzhen 1991a:58).

This perspective must now be modified; it is no longer possible to discuss ethnicity (*zuqun tezhi*) in Taiwan without distinguishing Hokkien, Hakka, and aborigines from one another and from the population of mainland immigrants. Such once-sensitive issues as Taiwan's history of violent interethnic conflict (*xiedou*), prejudicial ethnic stereo-

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types, and perceptions of anti-Taiwan bias in the ideology of the ruling party are now discussed and analyzed openly, without the cautious circumspection that characterized the voicing of dissident opinions in the past. The reason for this transformation in intellectual life is the gradual liberalization of political expression initiated in late 1986 by President Chiang Ching-kuo. Shortly after Chiang's liberalization, self-declared ethnic movements (*zuqun yundong*) were established. Aborigines founded the first movement (Yang Changzhen 1991a). The Hakka movement followed the aborigine lead; movement leaders date its founding as a popular, mass movement to a large-scale public demonstration held in Taipei on December 12, 1988. The ostensible purpose of the demonstration was to call attention to the decline of the Hakka language; the primary demand was for television programming using the Hakka language (Baozhong Hui 1989:158–59). Active ethnic movements exist now in Taiwan and the political landscape has changed dramatically. It follows that the need for a new perspective on Taiwan ethnicity exists.

The Taiwan Hakka movement is broadly similar to ethnic movements in other countries. It is about issues connected to ideas of the self as a member of a group different from others in society. The movement is concerned with the definition of Hakka identity (*rentong*), how to preserve this identity in a modern state, and how to restructure Taiwan society so that ethnic interests receive the protection of law. By the standards of the ferocious ethnic fighting afflicting formerly communist nations, the Hakka movement does not present a threat of violence. Indeed, one central idea is that ethnic-group interests be protected within a constitutional framework. However, the debate over what constitutes Hakka identity, the proper goals of the movement, and how to influence political life in Taiwan is serious and worth appraising.

STRUCTURE AND IDEAS

Leaders of the Hakka movement describe three factions: traditionalists, moderates, and radicals. Defined by different assumptions about what it means to be Hakka and different political perspectives, these factions overlap, and the intellectual boundaries between them are permeable. People who assume leadership positions or who are spokespersons for the various positions know each other. Although conflicting positions on ethnic issues sometimes lead to personal animosities, relations in public are cordial and cooperative. The movement is not riven by fac-

tional extremes but is rather undergoing a process of clarification in which the relevant issues are identified and variant positions adopted. The Hakka also are positioning themselves politically, for as they create ideas about their identity and Taiwan's future, ethnic issues overlap with political ones.

Traditionalists

The basic assumption of Hakka traditionalists in Taiwan is that the Hakka population of the world is, or should be, a unified whole (*da Kejia zu*), one that ideally is solidary and in constant contact. In order to maintain the ties linking this widely dispersed population, traditionalists look to common origin as the potent unifying myth. The traditionalist view of Hakka history depends heavily upon and derives much strength from mainland Chinese Hakka history. Eminent Hakka of former dynasties, past glories, the history of Hakka migration, and the all-but-unexplored truth that the Hakka language preserves Tang dynasty court language (*guanhua*) are particularly important symbols of unity in the traditionalist view (Chen Yundong 1989).¹

The assertion that modern Hakka speak a more pure, classical form of the Chinese language is an important symbol, for it implies that Hakka were members of the cultural elite in ancient China. By claiming linguistic descent directly from an ancient court language, Hakka symbolically assert a superior position in the hierarchy of Chinese society, although one Hakka scholar has taken claims of this nature as evidence of Hakka ethnocentrism (*minzu ziwu zhongxin pianjian*) (ibid.:12, 1991:44). Yang Xisong (1990:10) makes an assertion that contradicts theories of language change: "It can be said that the language of the Hakka has remained almost unchanged since it formed" in the remote past; this assertion is not accepted by others (Luo Zhaojin 1991a:25). What is important is not the validity of Yang's assertion, but the implication that the Hakka language is a more pure Chinese dialect from which its speakers derive a sense of pride.

The traditionalist view of ethnic unity leads many to support the Nationalist position on Taiwan's political reunification with the Peo-

1. It is revealing to note that the architecture of the proposed cultural center in Xinzhu symbolizes and abstracts the form of a mainland Chinese Hakka roundhouse (*tulou*) (Chen Ban 1991; Chen Yundong 1989:54, 64, and 1991; Lin Huowang et al. 1991). There is no evidence to show that immigrant Hakka in Taiwan built structures of this type.

ple's Republic of China. The deeply felt idea of Hakka unity is expressed as a blood relationship (*xueyuan guanxi*), which is temporarily in a state of disruption due to the bitter disputes between the Nationalists in Taiwan and the Communists in the People's Republic. Traditionalists hope that once the political questions are resolved, the natural state of unity will be restored. Intellectuals arguing for reunification base their positions on the experiences of other divided nations, notably Korea, Vietnam, and Germany. Traditionalists argue that future Chinese reunification should follow the course of Germany rather than Vietnam; the process of gradually warming relations between North and South Korea, and increasing semiofficial contacts between Taiwan and the PRC are discussed with keen interest. Critics of the traditionalist position assert that the German (or Korean) model does not fit the Chinese reality because Taiwan's fifty-year colonial experience under the Japanese and more than forty years under the Nationalists have caused social, political, and economic changes of such magnitude that island society differs too greatly from that of the mainland for successful integration (Yang Changzhen 1991a:60).

In matters of national politics the traditionalists face a dilemma arising from the fact that Taiwan's political liberalization resulted in the legalization of opposition political parties. In practical terms, the only party with the strength to challenge the Nationalists is the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP, *Minzhu Jinbu Dang*). The DPP is internally divided into several major factions, one of which supports national independence for Taiwan (the *xinchaoliu* faction), and one of which advocates a more moderate "Taiwanification" of democratic processes (the *meilidao* faction).²

Neither of these contrary positions compels strong support from traditionalist Hakka. Those in the DPP who advocate independence are a direct threat to ethnic unification. The faction that advocates democratic reforms and increased Taiwanese participation in national politics is viewed with suspicion; many Hakka feel that this faction favors majority Hokkien interests and brushes Hakka concerns aside. Furthermore, a distinction is often made between support for a reunification policy and support for the ruling party as a political entity. Support for reunification is not the only issue that concerns Hakka; the perception of bias

2. The internal divisions of the DPP are not addressed here. A good introduction to political issues and trends in the Republic of China for the period 1986–90 is contained in Leo Y. Liu (1991).

in government policy against Hakka language and culture also enters into political thinking.

Critics of the traditionalists think their political ideas are primitive and unclear. Less moderate critics feel that Hakka who support reunification fail to give due weight to Taiwan's delicate relationship with the mainland and the practical problems of achieving a workable union. Much of the Hakka debate labors under the weight of this evolving relationship; if the relationship develops peacefully, the ethnic debate on Taiwan will proceed smoothly. However, if the cross-straits dialogue lapses into hostility, ethnic interests will be shunted aside so that this larger question may be confronted.

Moderates

Moderates maintain that differences between the Hakka in Taiwan and those in mainland China are too great to bridge. One formulation of this position views Taiwan's political history as a succession of quite different regimes (the Dutch; the Ming loyalists under Koxinga; the Qing; the Japanese; and the Nationalists); in this view, the policies of each regime created social, political, and economic differences from mainland China. The Chinese nature of Taiwan society is not suspect, but Taiwan's history of colonization and external rule is contrasted with an idealized image of China as a monolithic nation that developed relatively free from alien influences. The contrast between Taiwan and the mainland is perhaps a distortion of history, but it is a satisfactory rationale to support the moderate stance on Hakka ethnic unity.

One fact that conditions this stance is that contact between people on opposite sides of the Taiwan Strait was somewhat restricted during the Japanese period and has been prohibited for most of the Nationalist period. Moderates feel that this span of almost one hundred years has created an unbridgeable gap.³ An informant expressed his feelings on this: "If I went back to Wuhua [*xian*, the ancestral home in Guangdong], it would be only to take a look around, to see what's there." He went on to say that although he would participate in kinship rituals with mainland

3. Travel to the mainland to see relatives is not, with few exceptions, now forbidden. The tourist trade from Taiwan has developed with astonishing speed since most prohibitions were eliminated in the late 1980s. Most of those who visit specifically to see kinfolk are post-Liberation mainland immigrants, but Taiwanese do trace relatives who have been separated for generations.

relatives, he would do so only out of an obligation to very remote ancestors, and not as a means of affirming solidarity with people who have no connection to his life in Taiwan. If kinship bonds are weak, ethnic bonds are weaker.

Political positions adopted by Hakka moderates are based on the realistic, yet cynical, view that both the Nationalists and the DPP either ignore or respond to ethnic issues (language, culture, and history) depending on political exigencies. Leading figures think the Hakka are treated as a useful political tool (*zhengzhi gongju*) whose support is sought only when it suits party needs.⁴ Hakka susceptibility to this treatment results from minority status (He 1991:64). The intellectual response to this perception of political marginality is to think of the Hakka as a bloc that can be used to ameliorate inattention. The island-wide Hakka population is conceived of as a swing-vote bloc. Translated into electoral politics, if Hakka can be motivated to vote as one on ethnic issues, they may play a role in excess of numerical strength and achieve positive results.

Motivating Hakka to act in unison is not easy. People active in the movement stated that the Hakka population's indifference and apathy toward ethnic issues (see Johnson, this volume) are the real obstacles to strengthening the Hakka position in government. Activists maintain that Hakka voting strength is linguistic: people vote for those who speak their language. One example is drawn from Xinzhu *xian*, where the population is split between an urban area (Xinzhu City) and a mix of rural villages and small towns. The majority of city residents are Hokkien; Hakka dominate the rural precincts. According to one informant, who is a school principal, it is "natural" that city residents vote for Hokkien-speakers and that country people vote for Hakka-speakers. When questioned about this state of affairs, this reflective and precise schoolmaster said that whether candidates in the hotly contested elections are capable politicians or willing to press ethnic demands is not a material consideration.

The question of unification or independence is avoided completely by many Hakka moderates. One moderate leader attributed this avoidance

4. One local issue that has the flavor of political expediency is the reconstruction of the Hakka Martyrs Temple (Yimin Miao) Middle School in Fangliao, Xinzhu *xian* (see also n. 6, below). Only after a personal visit from a high-ranking government official was reconstruction given serious encouragement. The Martyrs Temple has special significance for Hakka in northern Taiwan, and is a symbolic center of the movement.

to Hakka dependence and weakness. He maintained that if Taiwan takes the step to nationhood, the Hakka minority will be weak in national politics and incapable of pressing for protection. But if unification with the People's Republic of China occurs, the Hakka will be forced to contend with a government and an ideology the majority find alien and ruinous. The view of this moderate is that neither independence nor unification is desirable given Hakka strength on Taiwan, "So our political situation is strange and ridiculous." Moderate leaders are aware that choosing either independence or unification will eventually be necessary, but they will not decide until forced to do so by developments over which they have little influence. Attention is therefore directed to creating a more democratic political system and to local issues that affect the quality of daily life.

The moderate view of ethnic relations envisions a democratic Taiwan in which the equal rights of all ethnic groups are preserved in law and pursued in policy (Liu Guozhao 1990:13).⁵ The thinking of moderate leaders is decidedly unformulated. The eventual structure of a democratic government, the possibility of ethnic conflict in a democracy, and the methods of assuring equal rights receive little attention. But Hakka moderates have not simply adopted the political rhetoric of the post-1986 opposition movement; moderates are conscious of new issues and are in the process of deciding what the ethnic implications are and what positions to adopt.

Radicals

The radical stream of the Hakka movement is more articulate and better organized than its traditional and moderate counterparts. This results from active participation in opposition politics and from the involvement of young intellectuals who have university-learned analytic skills; their fresh perspectives, theoretical sophistication, and aggressive propagation of new views have propelled several into positions of authority at relatively young ages.

The leaders of this stream think of themselves as democrats and ethnic pluralists (*duoyuan*) rather than as radicals; their views are radical only in contrast to those of traditionalists and moderates. Opinions

5. The idea of legally sanctioned equal rights for ethnic groups is also shared by many in the radical stream; the difference is that many radicals support Taiwan's independence from mainland China.

differ on all major issues, but members of the radical stream generally endorse Taiwan's independence, a strong Hakka presence in national politics, and the creation of "new Hakka" in Taiwan (Li Qiao 1991a:3, 1991b).

Ethnicity: The New Hakka

Radical intellectuals and leaders cite their concern over Hokkien chauvinism (*shawen zhuyi*), increasing alienation from Hokkien-dominated opposition politics, an apprehension that Hakka identity faces extinction because of numerical inferiority, and the effect of social mobility in Taiwan's industrial economy as the major factors that precipitated the formal organization of Hakka ethnic organizations (Chen QiuHong 1991:42; He 1991:64). These concerns led in 1987 to the publication of *Hakka Storm* (Kejia fengyun), a magazine organized by writers, teachers, and politically active intellectuals with the expressed aim of advancing Hakka interests (Wu Jinxun 1991:1).⁶ He Xinxing (1991:64) marks the founding of *Hakka Storm* as the beginning of ethnic differentiation within opposition politics. The magazine was the first forum designed to express Hakka positions on social, political, and cultural issues (Wu Jinxun 1991:4). Editorial goals included raising ethnic consciousness, enhancing solidarity, solidifying political influence, and struggling for Hakka interests. *Hakka Storm*, and the interest it attracted, also provided a platform for debate about Hakka ethnicity.

One trend in the radical definition of Hakka ethnicity consciously centers on Taiwan as the point of common origin. Unlike traditionalist views of worldwide unity and moderate indecision, the radical stream rejects the symbolic link of all Hakka through blood bonds to the Chinese mainland. Taiwan is the new Hakka homeland, and the Hakka there are "new Hakka." This concept of Hakka ethnicity is expressed in an anthem written by Zhong Zhaozheng, a well-respected author and forceful voice in the radical stream. Zhong wrote the lyrics for the

6. By 1990 *Hakka Storm* was in economic trouble. New editors were added, the editorial tone was moderated, and new patrons were found; the reinvigorated publication became *Hakka Magazine* (Kejia zazhi). Support from the governing committee of the Martyrs Temple has been especially noteworthy. The temple is dedicated to the souls of loyal Hakka martyrs who fought with the Qing against rebels, primarily Hokkien, in the late eighteenth century. It is the center of a rotating ritual cycle that ties Hakka districts together as a ritual group. Hokkien do not participate.

anthem using vernacular expressions; it is intended to be sung in Hakka.

“The New Hakka” (Xin ge Kejiaren)

Stop repeating that the Hakka are so extraordinary;
Stop repeating that the Hakka are so remarkable.
The suffering and difficulty cannot be fully told;
Crossing the sea from China, coming to Taiwan,
Endlessly drenched in sweat and blood;
Opening the mountains, cutting the forests, establishing roots;
We are the new Hakka.

Don't reject this land for being too small;
Our blood runs in just this land.
Don't reject this land for being too weak;
Our hopes are simply right here.
We are the new Hakka.

Struggle with uplifted heads for freedom, and recreate the
Hakka spirit;
Struggle with passion for democracy, and recreate Hakka
radiance.
We are the new Hakka.

(Taiwan Hakka Association 1991:18; lyrics by Zhong
Zhaozheng, 1990)

The theme that gives vitality to “The New Hakka” is a vision of Taiwan-based ethnicity—a theme that implicitly criticizes pride in former glory as a source of Hakka identity. Migration from China, suffering, shedding sweat and blood, pioneering, and establishing roots in Taiwan are important images.⁷ China, by implication, is no longer home. The “new Hakka” do not intend to borrow the greatness of the old to create a sense of ethnic solidarity. Li Qiao confirms this view by contrasting symbolic images of strength and weakness: “The Hakka need to be Israelis, not Gypsies; Taiwan is the last stop in our migration” (1991b:7).

The new critique of the old strikes at sources of Hakka pride. One

7. For representative works on Hakka pioneering in Taiwan see Zhuang and Chen (1982); Huang Zhuoquan (1989) and Huang Rongluo (1989).

example is revealing. Hakka traditionalists claim modern national leaders (including Sun Yat-sen, Deng Xiaoping, Li Kuan-yew [former prime minister of Singapore], and Li Teng-hui [president of the Republic of China]) as either fully Hakka or as descendants of Hakka ancestors.⁸ As symbols of power and influence, the men in these positions affirm that Hakka participate in national affairs at the highest levels and have the stature necessary to influence national and global events. In this view, borrowed glory reflects on the entire ethnic group. However, reflected glory does not translate into increased respect for the Hakka: “Do those who like to say these kinds of things understand the nature of the times? Are they just comforting themselves? Living among the glories of the past is anachronistic, demeaning, and self-oblivious” (Zhong Zhaozheng, in Taiwan Hakka Association 1991:4).

The ideas that constitute the new Hakka identity were formed not only in reaction to other conceptions, but were also called forth by perceptions of anti-Hakka prejudice and domination by Hokkien and mainlanders. Dominated politically by minority mainlanders and economically by the majority Hokkien, the Hakka risk becoming invisible in the cities and mere bystanders in the countryside (Chen QiuHong 1991:42–3; Li Qiao 1991a:2). Loss of Hakka identity is a process imperceptible to many, who do not participate in the ethnic movement and who may not be aware that they have an ethnic identity (*zuqun rentong*) to protect (Zhong Fumei 1990:20). Twin pressures to conform to Hokkien practices in economic life and to government practices in political life are effective agents of acculturation. Boundaries between Taiwan’s three major ethnic categories are highly permeable and increasingly a matter of speaking the appropriate language. The problem for Hakka, however, is that the boundaries are permeable in one direction only: from Hakka to Hokkien and Mandarin. One activist and author summarizes the problem by stating, “In this state of oblivion you have already turned mainlander! You have already turned Hokkien!” (ibid.:21).

The radical effort since 1987 to formulate a new, Taiwan-oriented ethnic identity resulted from dissatisfaction with the Hokkien domination of opposition politics and from a mounting sense of a loss of identity through absorption into the consumer economy and the mainlander political ideology. The ideological foundation of the new identity

8. Mary Erbaugh’s contribution to this volume is a detailed description of Hakka networks operating before the founding of the People’s Republic. She makes good use of evidence from scattered sources to demonstrate how Hakka gained leading positions.

combines elements that are recognizably ethnic (having to do with origins and boundaries) and political (relating primarily to the structure of government and the debate over Taiwan's future).

Nationalism: The New Taiwan

The radical stream of the Hakka movement favors political reforms that attend to the needs of different ethnic groups on the island. Democratization of political processes is the fundamental goal, but radicals also stress that a liberalized regime should recognize that Taiwan society is multiethnic and multilingual. Whether Taiwan should declare independence or reunify with the Chinese mainland is a question that receives no unanimous answer. Thinking about political issues facing the entire population of the island is mixed; ideas contain elements that advance ethnic interests and elements that are consciously chosen to benefit all the island's inhabitants. The ethnic and political positions members of the radical stream adopt reflect both new political realities and the post-1986 rise of ethnic consciousness.

The political reality is that the Hakka are a minority and cannot hope to achieve through ethnic isolation a position of strength. Therefore, the question is not whether Hakka should participate, but rather how to effectively use limited political strength. Cooperation with Hokkien is a theme that recurs throughout political discussions. "If Hakka who participate in opposition politics want to become influential politicians, they need to transcend their Hakka backgrounds. They will not get elected by depending only on Hakka votes" (Chen QiuHong 1991:41; see also Li Qiao 1991a:2). Short-term expediency dictates that minorities must shun their ethnic identities in public in order to increase political influence. But, after a multiethnic power base has been established, long-term goals may be pursued (He 1991:64).

The most systematic political thinking occurs among movement leaders who support independence and reject reunification. Should Taiwan choose the former, one radical leader has proposed several principles that should guide the new state. First, political conduct should be premised on the rule of law and not of parties or people. Presidential powers should be constitutionally limited, in order to avoid domination by powerful autocrats like Chiang Kai-shek. Second, ethnic equality should be written into a reformed constitution so that the rights of all groups are guaranteed; the goal is ethnic coexistence without oppres-

sion. Third, the ideal new Taiwan is a democracy in which “the people are the rulers, [and] the government is the servant of the people” (Zhong Zhaozheng 1991:1; see also Zhong Fumei 1990; Li Qiao 1991b:7).

How far Hakka should press ethnic issues within the political context is a matter of debate. Two positions have emerged, both of which address the ethnic tensions in opposition politics. One position calls for ethnic politics in which differences between Hakka and (primarily) Hokkien are accented in an attempt to preserve identity and maintain prerogative:

Who, besides the Hakka themselves, will come forth to nurture our own culture, language, and political rights? Thus, to increase respect for ethnic minorities and determine the values of Taiwan’s pluralistic culture, the more that languages and cultures are differentiated, the better; the alternative is assimilation [*tonghua*] and extinction. (Chen Qihong 1991:42)

The argument in favor of preserving distinct identities rests on the understanding that Hakka are a minority; if they would preserve this identity, they must struggle to do so themselves, for other groups will not. An overtly political expression of this position is an argument for political autonomy (*zuquan zaiwo*) in which all ethnic groups “demand equal, reasonable positions and room to develop” (Li Qiao 1991a:3). Finally, an extreme expression of the desire to preserve distinctions through political autonomy is found in the suggestion that Taiwan adopt geographic divisions modeled on the Swiss canton system; Taiwan’s administrative divisions would be realigned to correspond with the ethnic composition of local populations (Yang Changzhen 1991b).

A second position regarding the balance between ethnic and political issues complements the first. This position is based on the recognition that Taiwan is an ethnically plural society. One informant summarized the idea by remarking that “Hakka should identify with Hakka and identify with Taiwan” as a society composed of different ethnic groups. Constitutional reform should proceed so that laws preserving the rights of each ethnic group are enacted, for the betterment of both the state and the groups (Liu Guozhao 1990:13). In this view, it is a serious mistake to create artificial contradictions between ethnic groups; so as to “avoid the ‘historical error’ of interethnic conflict [*xiedou*]” (Li Qiao

1991a:3; see also Harrell 1990a),⁹ new ethnic (Hakka) and national (Taiwanese) identities should emerge. The possibility that ethnic conflict may develop is taken seriously; one author maintains that if economic stability endures, ethnic problems will “become the most important political question once unification or independence is settled” (Yang Changzhen 1991b:49).

ETHNIC SYMBOLS: HISTORY AND LANGUAGE

Despite variation in points of view, movement activists agree that language and history define Hakka identity, and that both are threatened by the economic forces and political structures the movement was established to influence. The sense that the movement is in a state of emergency can only protect and invigorate (*qiāngjīu*) these aspects of identity, rather than fully promote (*tichāng*) Hakka interests. Leaders sense that they are engaged in a rearguard action to preserve Hakka identity. Time for reflection is lacking and little effort can be expended to examine what Hakka identity means. The result is that people treat language and history as emblematic givens and as material for slogans in the movement’s activities. Arguments advanced proceed little beyond the desire to preserve “good” Hakka culture and to allow the rest to disappear (Liu Fuzeng 1991:8).

History

The unique experiences of the Hakka in Taiwan are important aspects of identity to many, but historical knowledge is limited and stereotypical. Hakka are known for their pioneering spirit; many districts bordering Taiwan’s mountainous interior were opened to Chinese colonization by Hakka pioneers. The Hakka are able to withstand deprivation and denial, for the lands they opened were positioned between hostile, unacculturated aborigines (*shengfan*) in the mountains and untrusting Hokkien neighbors on the western plains. Last, the Hakka are known for fidelity; loyalist forces raised to combat antistate rebels and foreign invaders in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries very often came from Hakka centers. The knowledge and application of history typical

9. Pointed references to interethnic conflict refer to the bloody past. Conflicts between Hakka and Hokkien were a major problem for Qing administrators between the 1680s and the 1860s (Dai 1979, Hsu 1980, Lamley 1981, Ownby 1990).

of movement leaders contrasts with the pursuit of identity through history that Nicole Constable (this volume) outlines for the people of Shung Him Tong. Although people who do significant historical research on Hakka subjects publish regularly, no synthesis reflecting the new ethnicity has emerged as a standard.

Stereotypical images of the Hakka experience do not have to be true. It is enough that they are thought to be so, for they reinforce qualities that are prized: the Hakka are conservative, frugal, enduring, self-respecting, and loyal (Li Qiao 1991a:2). Although historical information exists for the Qing period, little is available for the Japanese (1895–1945) and Nationalist periods. People explain this gap in terms of colonial exploitation and Nationalist oppression. The Japanese, it is felt, were not concerned with the events that would comprise Taiwan history; their colonial mentality acted to obscure Hakka history.

It is also thought that the Nationalist government has actively suppressed Taiwan history for political reasons. Educational policy has been marshaled in support of the national goal of a unified China and studies of Taiwan have been suppressed in favor of a continental view of Chinese history. Hakka university students point out that standard texts are devoted to the history and geography of mainland China; one informant remarked, “I studied everything about the provinces that border the Yangtze River but didn’t know anything about Taiwan until after I graduated and began to study Taiwan history on my own.” Taiwan, in this view, is a society with an unknown history, and Hakka history is blank because the Hakka are a minority.

Language

Language unites all elements in the Hakka movement; its status is tied to the fate of the people.¹⁰ It is feared that Hakka, as a spoken language, is declining in Taiwan. The reasons offered for this vary, but many think that the language will become extinct and be replaced by Mandarin and Hokkien. Apprehension over the state of the language led to a significant event in the early stage of the Hakka movement, the “Return My Hakka Language” (Huan wo Kehua) demonstration.

10. This point is made in most of the contributions to this volume. Myron Cohen’s description (this volume) of Hakka settlement and social organization in South China offers compelling evidence that common language has been particularly important in the definition of who the Hakka are.

This demonstration was held in Taipei on December 28, 1988, and was the first Hakka ethnic demonstration in Taiwan. It was also the first peaceful mass demonstration since the Japanese period to present ethnic grievances. Organized by people in the radical and moderate streams, it was consciously designed to appeal to the whole spectrum of the Hakka population. This goal was achieved by simplifying issues and sponsoring the demonstration, in part, through the central Hakka religious site in northern Taiwan, the Martyrs Temple (Baozhong Hui 1989:158).¹¹ According to Luo Zhaojin, the demonstrators placed three concrete demands before the national government (1991a:25). First, Hakka television programming should commence. Second, legal restrictions on the use of dialects in the broadcast media should be repealed. Third, bilingual education in the public schools should be instituted. The authorities have reacted slowly, and the demands have met with limited success.¹²

The "Return My Hakka Language" demonstration was significant because it presented for the first time in public an issue that could unite most Hakka. An equation between language fluency and Hakka identity is expressed in speeches, publications, and interviews (Liu Fuzeng 1991:8; Wang Dehong 1990; Zhong Fumei 1990). The formula is a compact way of expressing an ethnic truth: in order to be a true Hakka, one must speak Hakka, and Hakka should not fear rejection for speaking their language when the situation is appropriate (Liu Guozhao 1990:11). Language, not common origin or shared blood, is elevated as the primordial characteristic Hakka use to identify themselves.

Evidence suggests that spoken Hakka is accepting a great number of loan words and is losing place to Hokkien and Mandarin (Yang Jingding 1991). First, a survey of two hundred Hakka primary-school students revealed that the majority of the youngest students could not pronounce their names in Hakka and that few older students could do so. Second, descriptive statistics strongly suggest that the parents of Hakka school-aged children routinely speak the language between themselves only about half the time (48 percent) and use Hakka with their children even less (21 percent) on a daily basis (Wang Dehong 1990:35

11. See notes 4 and 6.

12. At the time this chapter was written, television news and weather broadcasts in Hakka were scheduled to begin in September 1991 (Luo Zhaojin 1991b:1; Taiwan Hakka Association 1991:7-8). Bilingual education is officially supported by the Xinzhu *xian* administration. Hakka language classes are taught in schools on the basis of voluntary participation; the government "neither prohibits nor encourages" these classes, according to one teacher.

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ff.). The evidence is not conclusive, but does give the impression that unless measures are adopted to revive it "Hakka is headed for a natural extinction" (personal communication from a primary-school teacher, 1991).

Language thus stands as the element that can be emphasized in order to separate Hakka from other groups. The 1988 language demonstration made this point clear, for although it was political in nature, it detached Hakka interests from opposition activity and was an exercise in ethnic politics. The position adopted by politically active Hakka, however, is that the languages and cultures of *all* ethnic groups in Taiwan should be protected in law. The Hakka position is unique because it offers protection to Hakka, Hokkien, and Mandarin; while radicals in the DPP support making Hokkien the sole official language of Taiwan, and Nationalists advocate the sole use of Mandarin. The Hakka position is advantageous because it at once exerts pressure on the government to deal with ethnic concerns and secures a uniquely Hakka position in the political opposition.¹³

INTERNAL CRITICISM

The Hakka movement is not without internal critics. An undercurrent of indecision about whether the Taiwan Hakka constitute a distinct ethnic group exists at the heart of the movement. Chen Yundong argues that if the Hakka are regarded as Han Chinese, they must be thought of as a subcategory created through historical and linguistic processes rather than as a distinct ethnic group (1989:11). Chen's point is that cultural variation among the Chinese is high, but that intergroup boundaries are permeable; given this, the notion of the Hakka as a distinct ethnic group with a categorical identity is not reasonable. One moderate thinker asserted that "the Hakka are not a race [*zhongzu*] or a people [*minzu*], but a dialect group [*yuzu*]." He explained this thought by citing Taiwan's transition from an agricultural to an industrial and service economy, rural to urban migration, and government education policies. In his view, these factors have reduced Hakka and Hokkien cultural differences almost to the vanishing point. Language maintains

13. Resentment over the central government's insistence on the continued use of Mandarin as the national language is openly expressed. The DPP makes a point of using Hokkien at rallies and in the legislature both as a symbolic slap at the Nationalist Party and as a means of communicating the party's Taiwan focus.

group boundaries but does not create segregation, ignorance, and animosity. Sharon Carstens (this volume) makes the same point; similar social and economic forces are acting to reduce distinctions among the Chinese population of Malaysia. Malaysian Hakka may need, in her view, to adopt special measures to avoid full assimilation.

The critics are active movement members and organizers who share a skepticism about the existence of the Hakka as an ethnic group and about the utility of language to unify the group. They are not fully convinced that the movement is an ethnic one and ask whether the Hakka do, or should, have goals distinct from those of other segments of the population. In this paradigm, if protecting Hakka language (or history or culture) drives the movement, it is not an ethnic movement but a linguistic (or historical or cultural) one. They ask why this course should be followed. A response predicated on the instrumental use of ethnicity as a political force is satisfactory to some. The idea is that Taiwan's political future is very unclear and fraught with danger, and Hakka must create opportunities to contribute to the debate and to stake a claim to the future (information from interviews). The movement's most articulate critics align with the radical faction, which invented the idea of the "new Hakka." However, I think that rather than deny that Hakka exist, which their most direct statements imply, the critics are attempting to create an understanding of how to be Hakka in Taiwan.

CONCLUSION

The Hakka movement in Taiwan is not unified; no center of authority or symbolic significance exists. Streams within the movement define Hakka solidarity in various ways. With the exception of rescuing the language from an inevitable decline, common goals do not exist. Internal critics even question whether the Hakka exist as an ethnic group distinguishable from Hokkien and mainlanders.

The structure of the movement reflects the national political debate, and a fundamental question dividing Hakka from Hakka is over the fate of Taiwan. Radicals prefer independence from mainland China, but traditionalists contend that unification is necessary. Those in the moderate center remain uncommitted, and advocate improving the quality of people's lives. Divisions within the movement are not rancorous, however.

History is a potent symbol in the movement as a whole, but does not

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receive a uniform interpretation; what is important to some is not to others. The greatest contrast exists between traditionalist and radical interpretations. Traditionalists emphasize the undisputed links with mainland China to construct an image of overarching Hakka unity. Radicals consciously construct a Taiwan-centered Hakka identity that denies the relevance of former glory.

The single issue that has demonstrated the power to move the Hakka ethnic movement from the realm of intellectual debate to mass appeal is the perception that the Hakka language is in retreat. The common view is that the language is under attack from both within and without, with declining use of Hakka in Hakka homes. The argument that national policies and the Hokkien-dominated economy force minority Hakka to use other dialects has been successfully used to rally support for the movement.

Political liberalization beginning in 1986 provided an opportunity for the Taiwan Hakka movement to develop. However, active promotion of Hakka issues and attempts to reinterpret identity developed within opposition politics, not only as a result of Hakka opposition to the Nationalist government. The process of defining the issues, formulating positions, and debating political alternatives began when Hakka became convinced that the political opposition existed primarily to advance Hokkien interests. Hakka ethnic activity is thus also a product of differentiation within the opposition political movement.

7/ The Hakka Paradox in
the People's Republic of China
Exile, Eminence, and Public Silence

MARY S. ERBAUGH

Most of this book considers Hakka identity outside China. But 90 percent of the world's approximately 37 million Hakka speakers live in the People's Republic, largely in an area referred to by overseas Hakka and by mainland Hakka scholars as the "Hakka heartland," the thirty-three "purely-Hakka" counties straddling the mountains between western Fujian, eastern Guangdong, and southern Jiangxi (Min-Yue-Gan) (*Chinese Encyclopedia* 1988:237). Mainland Chinese are strikingly less vocal about Hakka identity than are their outside cousins, and many still reject the word Hakka. For reasons that are examined below, since the establishment of the People's Republic in 1949 until quite recently, little has been written of Hakka identity on the mainland, and Hakka identity has not been publicly expressed. Hakka language, on the other hand, is frequently discussed in print.

Although common language is not necessarily an indication of the existence of a conscious "ethnic identity" (see Introduction, this volume), it does offer a potentially powerful social bond and may also serve as a badge of identity, especially when it is a language (such as Hakka) that few outsiders learn. As a linguist, I attempt here to place the recent upsurge in contemporary mainland studies of the Hakka within a broader historical context, with a special emphasis on language. My focus is not explicitly on how people on the mainland perceive of themselves as Hakka—since, given their silence, this is very difficult to assess. I am more interested in what those who are often assumed to be Hakka

I thank Dick Kraus and Cynthia Brokaw for much information and many critiques. Much of the political history in this chapter is documented in greater detail in Erbaugh (1992). Kind permission has been granted by *China Quarterly* to duplicate material from "The Secret History of the Hakkas: The Chinese Revolution as a Hakka Enterprise" (*China Quarterly* 132:937-68).

by other mainland and overseas Hakka—by virtue of their language, place of origin, or self-ascription—have done, especially with regard to revolution. In the twentieth century many individuals from Hakka regions of China fought for Communist revolution. Yet within mainland China much of that history remains shrouded in silence, and it is not openly expressed as “Hakka history.”

The word Hakka is a hostile Cantonese coinage, as clear an epithet for impoverished wanderers as “Gypsy” or “Okie.” A defining feature of guests (*ke*) is that they will eventually go home. But Hakka migrants, lacking a viable native place to return to, have been forced to define themselves against an ethnic other. Although their emergence has been uneven, Hakka consciousness and scholarship have been traced back about two centuries by mainland scholars, to the massive migrations to coastal Guangdong, Sichuan, Hong Kong, and Southeast Asia. There, gazetteers first described Hakka language and customs as distinctive in order to refute Cantonese charges that they were “barbarous.” Hakka associations sprang up, especially in treaty ports and in Southeast Asia. Similar ethnic attacks during the 1920s to 1930s, the peak era for so-called “race science,” stimulated a “flourishing stage” of Hakka scholarship, during which Luo Xianglin, a Hong Kong Christian, responded with his pioneering work. A “silent era” followed on the mainland, from the Japanese attacks of 1937 to the end of the Cultural Revolution (1966–76). Mainland writing about Hakka during that time was “as scarce as phoenix feathers and unicorn horns.” Yet during this same silent era, socialist revolution had unusual appeal to land-hungry mainland peasants in Hakka regions. Some became heroes, or even China’s highest leaders, including Deng Xiaoping. But, for a variety of reasons, these leaders did not identify themselves as Hakka. Once contacts with overseas Chinese resumed during the reform era, mainland Hakka created a “flourishing revival” of Hakka scholarship. They are also revising Hakka identity, rendering it with new, positive views of non-Han minority culture and “otherness.”

Stigmatized groups may accept or reject the dominant group’s assessments. The construction of Hakka identity closely follows Henri Tajfel’s (1974) model for intergroup relations. Groups that reject inferior status often assimilate with the dominant group and demand equality. But they may also redefine negative characteristics and create new dimensions for comparison. The most convincing demands for Hakka equality are often voiced by sophisticated, highly educated multilinguals. The process of redefinition is farthest along precisely where Hakka have

assimilated most to prosperous, anomic, highrise urban life in Taipei, Hong Kong, and Calcutta, as the other chapters in this book make clear. Redefining negative characteristics is also easier once they can be safely rendered historical. Public expressions of Hakka culture have long discussed migration and poverty in terms of mobility, thrift, and endurance. Now, in the People's Republic, socialist ideals reinforce emergent comparisons. "Barbarism" is redefined as valuable exchange with minority culture; heterodoxy as openness to reform, including women's rights; and constant fighting as military service that forged a modern nation. What is not voiced publicly, but is a matter of pride within mainland Hakka circles, is the role of Hakka in communist revolution.

The silence is confined to twentieth-century mainland history. Hakka traditions are often familiar to missionaries and Western anthropologists who were forced to concentrate their field research in Hong Kong and Taiwan after 1949. But ethnography has mostly ignored national politics. Many overseas Hakka support the Worldwide Hakka Federation, but its anticommunist and Christian constituencies shun Chinese Communist Party history. Non-Chinese sources discuss ethnicity, but are often uninformed, careless, or vague. And the people referred to as Hakka are little known outside Hakka districts of the People's Republic. "What's a Hakka?" asked a scholar from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. His confusion was not unusual.

Few non-Hakka on the mainland know that Deng Xiaoping is considered a Sichuan Hakka or that in 1984 half of China's highest government body, the Standing Committee of the Politburo, came from Hakka backgrounds. In 1988 individuals from Hakka regions of the country appeared at three times the chance rate among China's 105 highest officials—those at the level of minister (*buzhang*) or above (Li Gucheng 1988). Silence is reinforced by the tangled status of ethnicity in China, the antitraditionalist thrust of the revolution, and its still-painful aftermath. But a paradox exists between the concentration of Hakka on the mainland and their public silence until the late 1980s. Partly, they are overwhelmed by numbers. The 33 million mainland Hakka-speakers are only 3 percent of the population. People of Hakka descent, not necessarily Hakka-speaking, form a much higher percentage of the outposts of "cultural China," in Taiwan (2 million, at least 10 percent), Hong Kong (600,000, 10 percent), and Singapore (700,000, 25 percent). But the actual numbers of Hakka overseas are far smaller than in the People's Republic (table 7.1); and far smaller than their voices might indicate.

Orthodox Communist history describes revolution in seamless, de-

HAKKA IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

TABLE 7.1
Estimated Overseas Chinese Populations

	<i>Percentage of Chinese Descent</i>	<i>Number of Chinese Descent</i>	<i>Number of Hakka Descent</i>
Malaysia	32%	6,000,000	2,000,000
Thailand	14%	8,000,000	2,600,000
Vietnam	2%	1,000,000	333,000
Philippines	1% (?)	690,000	230,000
Indonesia	1% (?)	2,000,000	666,000
U.S.A.	0.7%	1,600,000	533,000

Based on population figures and ethnic breakdowns for each country in Famighetti et al. (1993). Hakka population is estimated at 33 percent of Chinese. Indonesia and the Philippines do not provide figures for Chinese. I estimate 1 percent, based on Tu (1991:11–20).

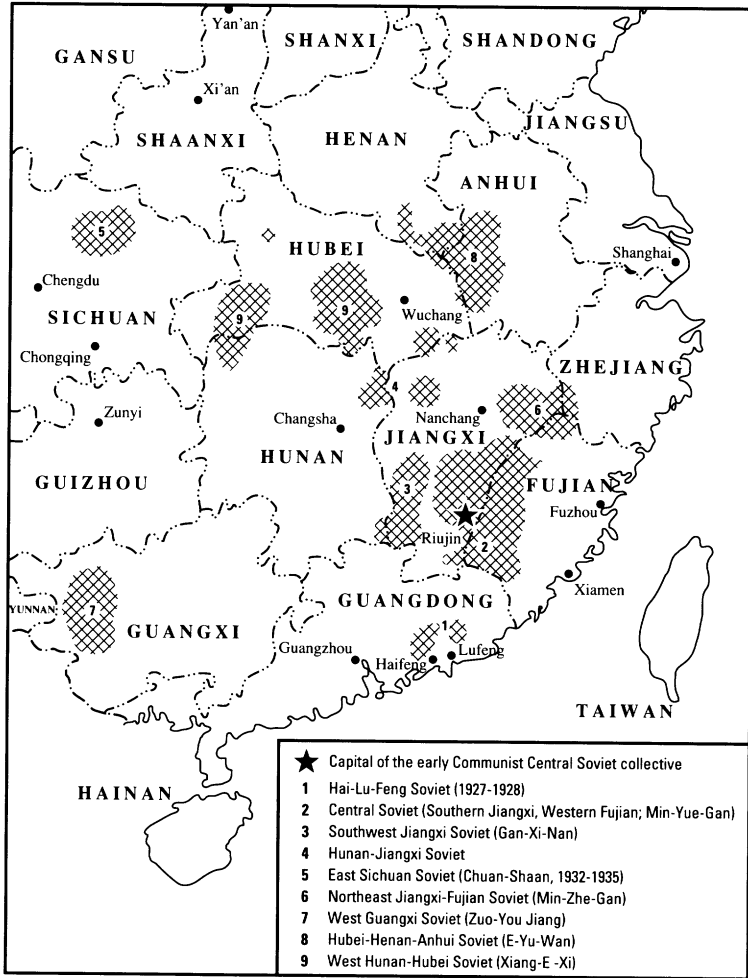
ethnicized terms, moving smoothly from the founding of the Chinese Communist party in 1921 to the labor organizers of the 1920s and the peasant activists of the 1930s, who founded collective governments known as soviet bases. The Red Army then made its heroic Long March from the southern soviets to a new base at Yan'an in the Northwest. Mao Zedong and the Party fought on from there until they expelled first the Japanese and then the Nationalists, taking national power in 1949. The public record does not mention that Hakka were deeply involved at each stage as Party founders, labor and peasant organizers, and military heroes. Six of the nine main soviet bases were in Hakka country. The Long March led largely Hakka-speaking soldiers from Hakka village to Hakka village up through Sichuan (see maps 7.1–7.4). After 1949 the People's Republic had many Hakka leaders, especially in the military. One list of eleven early Communist "national heroes" is 27 percent Hakka, nine times the chance rate. They include two Long March leaders, marshals Zhu De and Chen Yi, as well as Song Qingling, who married Sun Yat-sen before becoming a leader in her own right.¹ Yet mainland publications virtually never mention the Hakka background of these individuals—not even in a forty-one volume set of biographies of Party heroes—in vivid contrast

1. Three other heroes are Hunan natives from the Xiang dialect area: Mao Zedong, Peng Dehuai, and Liu Shaoqi. The non-Hakka non-Hunan heroes are: Li Dazhao (Hebei), Qu Qiubai (Jiangsu), Zhou Enlai (Jiangsu), and Dong Biwu (Hubei).



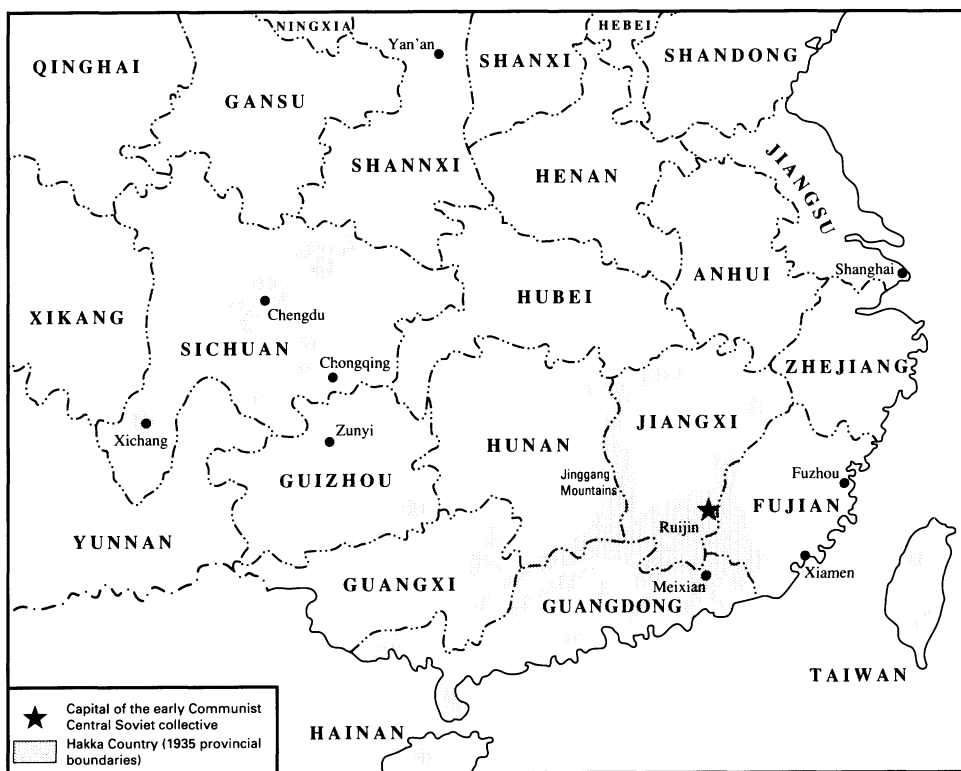
MAP 7.1. Hakka Language Areas

Based on Li Lugeng and Zhang Luhong (1987:7) and *Province-by-Province Atlas* (1977). Hakka areas are drawn according to *Chinese Encyclopedia* (1988:238), supplemented by Luo Xianglin (1933:57–58). The pinyin edition of *Province-by-Province Atlas* offers an alphabetical index of every county seat. Topographic maps add important perspective, as also in Geelan and Twitchett (1974:4–5). Color photos of base areas appear in Lawrence (1986).

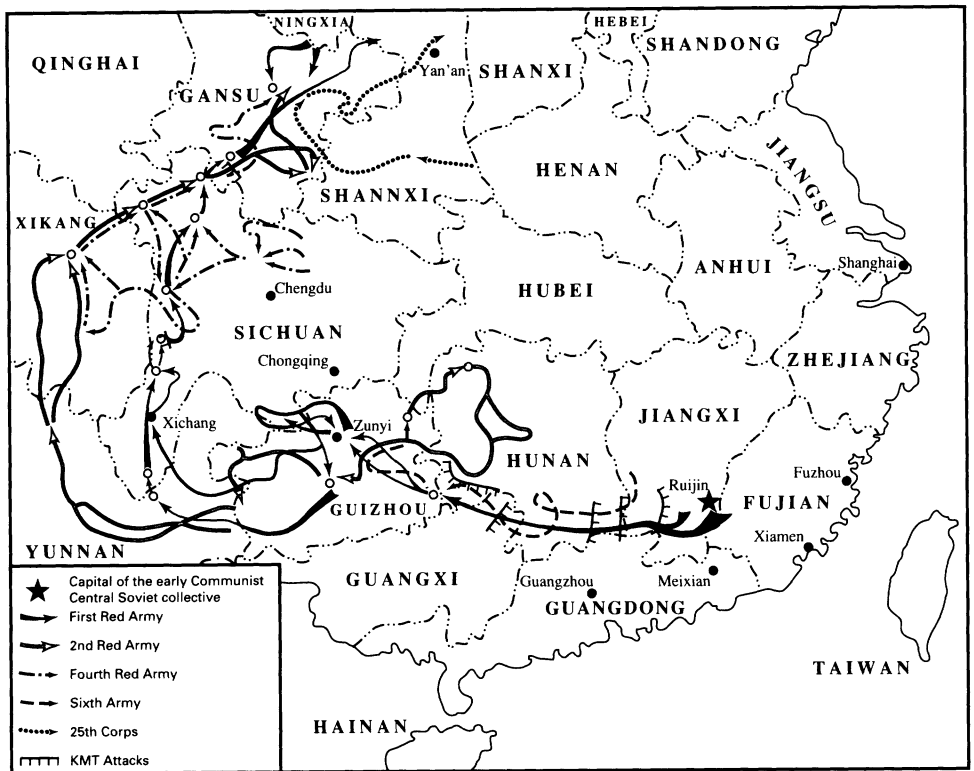


MAP 7.2. Soviet Bases

Supplemented according to *Chinese Encyclopedia* (1989, vol. 2, maps 2 and 3, pp. 1300-1303).



MAP 7.3. Hakka Country and 1935 Provincial Boundaries
 Based on Li Lugeng and Zhang Luhong (1987:9), supplemented by color map 3
 in *Chinese Encyclopedia* (1989, vol. 2, facing p. 1303).



MAP 7.4. Long March Routes

Based on Li Lugeng and Zhang Luhong (1987:9), supplemented by color map 3 in *Chinese Encyclopedia* (1989, vol. 2, facing p. 1303).

to the routine highlighting of the identity of minorities. Memoirs are equally silent. The subject of Hakka participation in the Communist revolution remains so sensitive that a foreign article was among the first to raise it in print (Erbaugh 1992).

OBSCURING FORCES: HAN UNITY, OFFICIAL
CATEGORIES, AND GUEST IDENTITY

Why are Hakka so obscure? Three converging factors mask their presence: ideals of Han unity; official categories that do not easily accommodate Hakka; and the slow, uneven construction of Hakka identity. Seamless cultural unity is a traditional Chinese ideal, one which Hakka defend as ardently as do other Han. Hakka who achieve national success are hailed for their achievements as Chinese. The Taiping rebels of the nineteenth century did not proclaim a Hakka Kingdom, but a Heavenly Kingdom. Rulers from the Qinshi Emperor to Mao Zedong are hailed for unifying the empire, whatever the cost. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Mao never studied abroad. And, unlike them, “he never wasted time worrying about his Chinese identity. . . . He was effortlessly and supremely confident about being Chinese, almost the way Churchill was about being English” (Wang Gungwu 1991a:263). Many campaigns denounce “localism” (*difang zhuyi*), “splittism” (*fenlie zhuyi*), and lack of unity. But “centralism” (*zhongyang jiquan zhi*) has positive connotations.

Many Chinese consider public discussion of local ties to be inflammatory or in poor taste. Discomfort with diversity remains strong. One scholar commented that public discussion of Hakka identity might embarrass them. But local ties are basic to the personal connections underlying the power network. Nominal political position often understates clout, since the legal and legislative systems are weak. Deng Xiaoping resigned all his official posts in 1989, but remained the paramount leader. The backgrounds of leaders remain largely beneath the surface. Revealing the concentration of Hakka leaders could spur charges of nepotism, an offense to both traditional and revolutionary morality. The only mainland leader routinely identified as Hakka was Marshal Ye Jianying, a proud native of Meixian, Guangdong, the Hakka “capital.” But Ye was invoked almost as a token, and tokenism honors the individual as a substitute for attending to group concerns.

Inapplicable official categories pose a second barrier. History and policy are centralized in China, promulgated from northern capitals. Terminology can be archaic or incorrect, such as referring to the Hakka as “the

Cantonese.”² But the basic categories—dynasty, clan or lineage, and province—render peripheral people literally borderline, or marginal. Repeated migration also diluted the Hakka presence in dynastic histories. Multisurname villages may have less interest in writing elaborate lineage histories, and local history is often literally provincial. A study of Fujian revolutionaries, for example, will omit events just across the border in Jiangxi or Guangdong. The Hakka have no province (or rich former colony) to call their own. Yue Cantonese control both Guangdong and Hong Kong, while the Fujian Min dominate both Fujian and Taiwan. But Hakka are scattered athwart at least six provinces. Regional economic subsystems center on lowland market hubs (Skinner 1977a:212, 216; 1977b) whose boundaries are just as unforgiving; Hakka straddle the boundaries of at least five of the eight major systems.

Neither the mainland nor Taiwan publishes even provincial population breakdowns for Hakka-speakers (or any other Han ethnolinguistic group). Table 7.2 offers an estimate, in which percentages are virtually the same as in 1928.

A third issue is the slow and uneven construction of a conscious Hakka identity. No scholar disputes the northern origins of the ancestors of today's Hakka. The issue is when and how Hakka developed a separate identity. How did they come to be distinguished and to distinguish themselves from the millions of other poor migrants and “shed people” (*pengmin*) (Averill 1983)? What did they adopt from their non-Han neighbors, especially the She (a Miao-Yao people who often call themselves Shanmin, “Mountain People”)? And why did they remain distinct from the Cantonese and the Min? Hakka enthusiasts sometimes erroneously apply the rough, binary categories of the Song dynasty population registers—of Han “guests” (*ke*) versus aboriginal “natives” (*zhu*), a drag-net that can include virtually every Han south of the Yangtze. Current scholars conduct increasingly careful debates over whom to include—neither every southern migrant nor only Hakka-speaking residents of the heartland (Wu Fuwen 1992, Wang Hongyou 1992, Wang Tsu-de 1992). Even Chinese popular vocabulary offers finer ethnic distinctions than does English. “Descendants” (*houyi*) of an ethnic group are aware of their ancestry, even though they have assumed a different dominant identity.

2. English readers can be confused by the Hoklo, who are not Hakka at all but Min people from southern Fujian living in Guangdong. Hoklo is the Cantonese pronunciation of the characters for “Fu[jian]” and “fellow,” pronounced *Fu lao* in Mandarin. “Hokkien” (Min for “Fujian”) also refers to people of southern Min ancestry.

TABLE 7.2
Provincial Hakka Breakdown

	<i>Hakka Percent of Provincial Population</i>	<i>Estimated Number of Hakka</i>
Guangdong (including Hainan)	24%	15,000,000
Fujian	24%	6,000,000
Jiangxi	22%	7,000,000
Guangxi	9%	3,000,000
Sichuan	1%	1,000,000
Hunan	0.5%	500,000

Based on 1985 population figures in Xu Meiyu et al. (1987:2), for a national population of one billion. Provincial breakdowns are extrapolated by dividing the population of each province by the number of counties, as listed in *Administrative Divisions* (1981). Counties listed as purely Hakka in Luo Xianglin (1933), Hashimoto (1973), and *Chinese Encyclopedia* (1988:237–39) are calculated as straight percentages of provincial populations. Partly Hakka counties are calculated at 25 percent. The 1928 distribution is almost identical, according to similar projections based on *China Year Book* (1928:42–45). Guangxi figures are from Yang Huandian et al. (1985:184). Sichuan figures are from Cui (1985:10–11). Some Fujian figures come from Li Yuming et al., eds. (1986). Other provincial figures are extrapolated from Xu Meiyu et al. (1987:2).

“Members of a certain bloodline” (*xuetong*), in contrast, remain unaware of their roots.

Many Hakka refuse the Hakka (Kejia) label. Guangdong Hakka prefer the politer forms “guest person” (*ke ren*) or “guest in the population register” (*keji*). Others prefer “person who has come” (*lairen*) (Moser 1985:239). In Guangdong, *Punti* (Bendi) implies Cantonese ethnicity. But Hakka natives of the long-settled Fujian and Jiangxi heartlands also call themselves Bendi.³ Many peasants in 100 percent Hakka areas hold a village-based identity, with no special ethnic label for themselves. If pressed, they may call themselves “Tingzhou people,” for the small Fujian town (since renamed Changting) that 90 percent of Hakka forebears passed through. But in 1992 when some Changting and Ninghua residents were asked, in Hakka, whether they were Hakka, they replied,

3. In Hong Kong, *Punti* defines an important legal status for those whose ancestors settled in the New Territories before the British lease of 1898.

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"No, how could we be? It's those people down in Dabu [Taipei] who are Hakka" (Wu Fuwen 1992).

Native-place identity is central to—and literally worshiped in—the dominant Han tradition. Emily Honig (1992) discusses how native place functions much like race or religion in the construction of ethnic identity. Self-ascribed Hakka, however, ground their identity far more in shared language and culture, arguing that the ancestors fled south in order to preserve the best of northern Han culture. Migrants would dig up the ancestors' bones and carry them in jars to each new settlement. Overseas and treaty port Cantonese and Fujian Min organized mutual assistance associations by clan or native place. But Hakka associations were based on language, and called "associations for those who revere the true [Chinese] tradition" (*Chongzheng Hui*) (Cheng 1992, Yen 1992).

Migration can spur the creation of a new identity, especially in encounters with a hostile ethnic group. Honig (1992) analyzes poor northern Jiangsu peasants who take village-based identity for granted until they migrate to Shanghai. Language is their only major cultural difference from the more prosperous Wu-speakers of Shanghai. Mandarin-speaking, but poor, the migrants find themselves lumped together under a hostile new label as Subei (from "north [Jiang]su"). As such, they face virulent prejudice in work, housing, education, and marriage. Yet recently they have begun to accept the Subei label, and use it to unite in constructing a positive ethnic identity.

The very recent Hakka migration to mixed areas revised the "guest" identity in ways unimagined for those in the heartland. Guesthood gradually became a badge of honor in Southeast Asia, where migrants drilled their children on their Hakka identity. One woman recalls a household routine, shared by many families in Sarawak, of sitting on her grandfather's lap each morning, as he asked, in Hakka:

"Who are you?"

"Ah Kher [her name]."

"What kind of person is Ah Kher?"

"Ah Kher is a guest person [*ke ren*]."

"What kind of guest person?"

"A guest person from Dabu." (M. Lo 1992)

Language is the most important Hakka cultural identifier. Like the Subei people, modern Hakka resemble other Han in almost every custom. But Guangxi Hakka considered the refusal to speak Hakka lan-

guage a betrayal, banning violators from ancestral halls and their names from family tombstones (Yang Huandian et al. 1985:184). Guangdong Hakka say “Go by your dialect, not your surname” (*Ren sheng, bu ren xing*) (Cohen, this volume). Sichuan Hakka still say, “You can sell off your ancestral land, but never sell out your clan’s language” (*Neng mai zu tian, bu neng mai zong yan*) (Cui 1985:10).

Hakka (Ke) counts as one of the seven main Chinese dialects.⁴ Some claim that it is very close to Mandarin. But a thousand years’ residence south of the Yangtze has rendered it a southern dialect, so close to the Gan dialect of Jiangxi that they used to be classed as a single Gan-Hakka dialect (Jerry Norman 1988:210–13; see also Liang 1985). The separation of the dialects may well date to a period of rising Hakka consciousness. Cantonese, Min, and Wu dialects vary so dramatically that villagers often cannot understand their neighbors a few miles away. The fact that Hakka is clearly intelligible across its entire territory is a testimony to recent migration. For example, Sichuan Hakka-speakers visiting Guangzhou in 1982 overheard Hakka teenagers from northern Guangdong speaking a dialect identical to their own (Cui 1985). Hakka can serve as a common language, much as Yiddish allowed Ashkenazi Jews to communicate all across Europe and the United States. But Hakka also offered a valuable natural code in wartime, since it is not mutually intelligible with either Min or Cantonese. Many Hakka have long been multilingual, such as Deng Xiaoping, who learned both Mandarin and French in a Catholic middle school. By now, almost all Hakka speak another dialect in addition to, if not instead of, Hakka.

HAKKA IN REVOLT: A SYNERGY OF SITUATION AND HISTORICAL OPPORTUNITY

Was Hakka participation in revolution a matter of chance? Did it develop only after Shanghai Party leaders fled to the nearest defensible hinterlands, which just happened to be Hakka? Obviously, a synergy developed between Hakka peasants and Party leaders transplanted to Hakka country. But the record shows that Hakka-speakers and peasants

4. The others are: Mandarin (the mother tongue of about 75 percent of mainlanders); Wu (native to 6 percent, near Shanghai); Cantonese (3 percent of the mainland, 93 percent of Hong Kong); Min (2 percent of the mainland, in Fujian; and 75 percent of Taiwan); Xiang (2 percent, mostly in Hunan); and Gan (2 percent, mostly in Jiangxi). See Jerry Norman (1988), Ramsey (1987), and entries for individual dialects in *Chinese Encyclopedia* (1988).

in Hakka regions also participated heavily in the very beginnings of revolution. Although Hakka have a widespread reputation for involvement in rebellion and warfare, their socioeconomic situation undoubtedly made socialist revolution attractive, helped them survive it, and even helped shape its course.

Cantonese and Min antagonists have described Hakka as rootless, poor, barbarian fighters. Stated more neutrally, Hakka were highly mobile newcomers, poor, heterodox, militarily active, and had close links to minorities. As migrants, they had fewer local ties to discourage rebellion, and were more hardened for guerrilla war. But poverty is likely to have been the most important factor in attracting individuals from poor Hakka regions to revolution. As late migrants, they typically lived on the worst, rockiest land, often as squatters in areas devastated by war, famine, or plague. The Hakka heartland includes the poorest counties of Fujian, Guangdong, and Jiangxi. Fujian as a whole is 95 percent mountains, with less arable land per capita than any other province (Benton 1992:124). Guangdong is 70 percent mountains. And Meixian prefecture has three of the poorest counties in Guangdong (Wuhua, Fengshun, and Dabu). The other four Meixian counties are also poor, plagued by bad soil, high mountains, poor transit, little industry, and very high population (Jiaoling, Mei, Pingyuan, and Xingning counties) (Han Suyin 1965:28; Moser 1985:253; Vogel 1989:242). In the early twentieth century so many Meixian men labored overseas that women outnumbered men six to one (Han Suyin 1965:28). Nationwide, Hakka-speakers were much less likely to be landlords, and much more likely to be tenant farmers, miners, soldiers, blacksmiths, masons, or barbers. In western Fujian only 15 percent of peasants owned land; rents ranged from 60 to 80 percent of the crop. Over 25 percent of males were jobless wanderers (*liumang wuchan*) compared to 5 percent nationwide (Longyan Committee 1987:2, 35, 185, 190).

Westerners sometimes ask naively whether the Hakka are an official "national minority" (*shaoshu minzu*). The Hakka themselves traditionally insist that they are Han, preservers of a purer Han culture than that of either the Cantonese or northerners (who have been "corrupted" by the Mongols and Manchus). Persistent claims that the Hakka are not Han are incorrect. All Han Chinese intermarried with non-Han, especially in the South (Jerry Norman 1988:210-13). Hakka have often been outraged by hostile comparisons with the minorities. Guangdong Hakka protested a 1930s government publication describing them as "barbarous" and "speaking a bird-like chatter" (S. T. Leong 1985:316). In

1958 they protested a Beijing University publication calling them a national minority (Yin 1958).

Hakka have, however, often had unusually close, positive relations with non-Han peoples, especially the She. Unlike most minorities, the She traditionally live intermixed with the Han in small dispersed settlements scattered from Zhejiang across Fujian to Guangdong. Many Hakka traditions show a strong She influence, if not direct borrowing. Inter-marriage has long been common, and Hakka with the surnames Pan (pan), Lan (blue), Zhong (bell), and Lei (thunder) almost certainly have She ancestors. Even Hakka mobility may have been stimulated by the adoption She-style swidden agriculture. Both groups relish contests in which “mountain songs” are sung. She women’s status is higher than that of most Han women, with frequent matrilocality and equal inheritance. Hakka women around Changting traditionally dressed much like She, in aprons with colorful embroidered borders, silver jewelry and headdresses, and “boat-shaped topknots” wrapped in red yarn (*chuanzi ji*). Many She speak Chinese, especially Hakka. The She language itself is so strongly influenced by Hakka that it is sometimes mutually intelligible. Outsiders find it hard to follow the distinctive pronunciation, but it is fairly standard across She territory. Before 1949 the overwhelming majority of She were extremely poor tenant farmers or woodcutters (Benton 1992:270; Chen Yuanxu 1992; *Chinese Encyclopedia* 1986:393–95, 1988:239; Jiang Binzhao 1992; Li Mo 1993; Ramsey 1987:285).

Although this reputation may have been in large part constructed in retrospect by ethnically conscious Hakka, Hakka do appear to have been more receptive than other Han to new, heterodox, ideas. Religion and ancestor worship in Hakka regions are reputed to often be less elaborate, and shamanism more widespread. Hakka also disproportionately converted to Christianity, as Nicole Constable discusses in this volume. Xunwu City, a Jiangxi market town of 2,600, had five churches (and thirty brothels) in the 1920s; in nearby Shanghang, Fujian, six churches occupied a sixth of the land in the county seat (Longyan Committee 1987:4; Mao 1990:116, 211). A relative open-mindedness, coupled with poverty, may have made many people from Hakka regions of China more receptive to both Taiping and Communist reforms. Women’s liberation is said to have met less resistance among Hakka. Hakka tradition already encouraged women to avoid footbinding, keep substantial sums from their dowries, and work outside the home for cash, often plowing or doing other heavy work. Ideals also supported female education and discouraged daughter-selling, concubinage, and prostitution.

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Hakka academic achievement is less widely known. Handicapped by a lack of financial networks and isolation from markets, Hakka parents had less incentive to urge their sons toward business, and were more likely to direct them towards academic accomplishment. By the late nineteenth century, an unusually high percentage of Hakka passed the imperial exams. Even in Xunwu County, four hundred scholars (*xincai*) passed, as did Zhu De himself the year they were abolished. Some 80 percent of Meixian males were literate. But the poorer the region, the less schooling parents could afford. Mao Zedong estimated the literacy of Xunwu males at 40 percent in 1934, and half of those knew only about two hundred characters, scarcely enough to keep accounts. Only 10 percent of men were literate in western Fujian. But even this compared favorably to 1 percent literacy around Yan'an (Longyan Committee 1987:190; Mao 1990:191, 194; Moser 1985:240; Smedley 1956:67–69). In addition, a disproportionate number of Hakka studied abroad, including Deng Xiaoping, Ye Jianying, Chen Yi, and Zhu De.

As was described by Sharon Carstens (this volume), Hakka also have a reputation for military prowess. Because Hakka often were at war with their neighbors, even their architecture reflects life under siege. Whole mixed-surname Hakka villages in Fujian, Jiangxi, and Guangdong often lived—and still live—communally in *tulou*, huge, circular, multistory fortresslike complexes. These rammed-earth structures are easy and cheap to build, but elegant and well insulated, with all living units of equal size and shape. Outside windows on the lower floors are mere rifle-slits. But huge central courtyards, some as big as football fields, let in light and air. Courtyards contain the communal ancestral shrine, wells, lavatories, granaries, vegetable gardens, and animal pens. Residents can survive inside for several months.⁵

Land wars with Punti fueled the Taiping Rebellion, led by Hong Xiuquan, the Guangdong Hakka who called himself the “second son of God.” Hakka tenant farmers, miners, and artisans joined in huge numbers. Taiping communalism, land reform, and opposition to footbinding

5. I had an opportunity to visit several southwestern Fujian roundhouses outside Shuyang Village in Nanjing County in 1989, and in August of that year, *Han sheng* magazine devoted an entire issue to the Fujian roundhouses (see also Lung [1991:37–42, 72–75] and photos in Mao [1990]). Many roundhouses were built as recently as the Cultural Revolution, the last time collective labor was readily available. Although they are often called “Hakka houses,” historians agree that the Hakka copied the style from the southern Min, the builders of about a third of the surviving fortresses (Fang 1992). U.S. spy satellites used to scrutinize the roundhouses as suspected nuclear missile silos.

harmonized with existing values, as did the promotion of women officials. The Taiping "heavenly kingdom" also promoted vernacular language reform, using both spoken and written Hakka to reinforce solidarity against outsiders, facilitate communication among Taipings of all ranks, and mislead the enemy (Liu Cun-han 1992; Shih 1967:49, 226–28, 305–306, 315). Taiping law banned regional rivalries and stressed equal treatment for Hakka and Punti (Wang Qingcheng 1992). However, in Guangdong many Punti joined the Taiping rebels, then expelled the Hakka members. Other statutory ideals lapsed as the Taipings occupied ravaged Hangzhou, occupied Nanjing for three years, and devastated fifteen provinces, leading to some thirty million deaths. After the Taipings were put down, the Hakka-Punti land wars killed nearly a million people, including tens of thousands in Taiwan. The government relocated many Hakka away from Guangdong, and set up Hakka quotas for military and civil service exams (Lamley 1990; S. T. Leong 1985:288–90, 295). But Taiping-based paramilitary societies remained common, especially among hilltop Hakka.

By the late nineteenth century, Hakka rebels foreshadowed national revolution with an intricate combination of communal organization, protest, cultivation of sympathizers inside the government, and military strength outside. One Guangdong observer noted:

These scattered [Hakka] settlements form a confederation among themselves, and forthwith demand a reduction of the ground-rent. . . . But, lest the Government should interfere, they are careful to inform the mandarins beforehand that they will pay lawful ground-rent to them. Besides, in many public offices in the Kwang-tung province, the subordinate employees are Hak-kas. As this class of village wars is looked upon as harmless by the authorities, they only interfere to squeeze both parties. The Punti employ bravos to fight for them, while the Hak-kas fight their battles for themselves, and that is why the latter always win. (Eitel in Thomson 1898:77–78)

HAKKA AND NATIONALIST REVOLUTION

As a group, Hakka never came close to Cantonese, Fujianese, or Shanghai financial success. But the role of Hakka individuals in civic leadership has increasingly become a focus of pride. Wang Gungwu argues that

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overseas Chinese Hakka, stigmatized and outnumbered, pioneered a modern Chinese national identity. In the early twentieth century, they downplayed their embattled local history to invoke a broader Chinese heritage as they pressed for the creation of a modern republic. This broader identity spread first among overseas Fujianese and Cantonese, then entered China itself via the overseas activities of Sun Yat-sen (Wang Gungwu 1991b, 1992). Modern revolutionaries also downplayed regional differences as they pushed toward national solidarity.

Hakka regions produced many revolutionary leaders. But they did not appear to readily identify themselves as Hakka. Explicit proof of Hakka background—not to mention an attribution of Hakka consciousness—is extraordinarily elusive. Other subgroups are less obscure. Determining who is a Xiang or a Wu is simple; they live in compact areas where talking about ethnicity is a local hobby. However, because Chinese biographers scrupulously list birthplace, and because most Hakka villages were ethnically homogeneous a century ago, and Hakka today recognize a network of place names as a code, one can surmise the probable Hakka identity of various leaders on the basis of place of origin, language, and/or self-ascription.⁶

Sun Yat-sen provides the ultimate example of a national leader who remained silent about his possible Hakka background. His Hakka roots cannot be documented securely. Non-Hakka southerners would be horrified if they were. Sun is invariably discussed as a national hero, the “father of the country” (*guo fu*), especially in Taiwan, where his “Three People’s Principles” remain the preeminent ideological statement. “Sun the Silent,” as his biographer Paul Linebarger called him, despaired of Chinese unity, and criticized China for being “a sheet of loose sand” (1925:246). Referring to himself as a Hakka would have damaged both his fund-raising and his political base. Yet most Hakka, and many Hakka historians, including Luo Xianglin, claim Sun as their own (Luo

6. In central Guangdong, however, Hakka villages often alternated with Cantonese and/or southern Min ones. The place-name criteria also misses Hakka who were born in major cities. For this study I have examined biographies and memoirs of more than two hundred leaders, collating their birthplaces with dialect maps. I count as Hakka those individuals born in one of the thirty-three Chinese counties that were purely Hakka in 1933, and for whom I find a supplemental reference as Hakka. “Probable Hakka” are natives of purely Hakka counties, or of the additional 150 strongly Hakka counties, for whom I find no additional Hakka documentation. Unless otherwise stated, biographical information comes from Klein and Clark (1971).

1933, 1954 [1943], 1965; Benjamin Yang 1990:160). Sun's descendants are said to disagree, but one son, Sun Ke, headed the Worldwide Hakka Federation.

Details from Sun's life are provocative. He grew up in a mixed Cantonese area of the Pearl River Delta where Hakka were recent migrants, but quite assimilated. His family lived in the mixed-surname village of Choy Hung (Mandarin: Cui Heng), which most men left behind to labor overseas (Linebarger 1925:37–38, 57–62). He attended a village school that was traditional, but admitted girls (Restarick 1931:5). The teacher was a Taiping veteran who inspired Sun with tales of Hong Xiuquan (Schiffirin 1980:22). When Sun went to Honolulu at age thirteen, he was said to have spoken Hakka and been nicknamed “Hong Xiuquan” (Moser 1985:247). He described how, on the times he returned home, the fortresslike village houses were often under attack by marauders: “The first matter for my care was to see my rifle was in order and to make sure plenty of ammunition was still left. I had to prepare for action for the night” (Shinz 1989:369). Sun also trained as an herbal healer, a traditional Hakka profession, which he integrated with Western medicine. He spoke Hakka with Hakka supporters, Cantonese with Cantonese, and was more comfortable with English than with Mandarin. Also suggestive is that the Tongmeng Hui, a secret society closely associated with Sun, liberated Tingzhou in 1911 and named it [Sun] Yat-sen City (Li Yuming et al. 1986:35; Qui 1992).⁷

The chief evidence against Sun as a Hakka reconstructs his genealogy as non-Hakka (Tan 1963). Evidence from language and footbinding is more circumstantial. Scholars at Sun Yat-sen University who analyzed recently discovered phonograph records of his speeches heard a strong Pearl River Delta Cantonese accent in both his Mandarin and Cantonese, but no trace of a Hakka accent (Lin Jiayou 1992). Sun's biographer, a friend who interviewed him over several months, devotes a chapter to footbinding. Sun asked his mother to unbind his sister's feet. She refused, exclaiming in horror, “Would you have your sister as a Hakka woman or a Chinese woman? Would you have her as a stranger or as

7. Luo Xianglin's genealogy uses a copy of a partial family tree supplied by Sun's older sister. It also rests, bizarrely, on Linebarger's romanization of the name of Sun's ancestral village. Unable to find anything corresponding to “Kung Kun” on the East River, Luo argues that Sun used a nickname because of a Hakka taboo on identifying one's ancestral village to outsiders (1954:15).

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one of us?" (Linebarger 1925:81). The biography includes a family photograph showing Sun's mother and two sisters-in-law with bound feet. But neither Linebarger nor other scholars note that it also includes two women relatives with unbound feet. A recent, lavish mainland biography reprints the portrait, but crops it off at the knees (*In Memory* 1981: plate 40). Footbinding was not, in fact, unknown among prosperous, upwardly mobile Hakka in mixed areas of Guangdong and Sichuan. Sun's background probably cannot be resolved. Possibly he had mixed ancestry. Possibly he was a Hakka-speaking Yue Cantonese.

COMMUNIST ORGANIZING

The 1911 republic tried to promote ethnic and political harmony. But even inside the Nationalist Party, the rift between left and right widened toward civil war. Many grew increasingly attracted to anarchism, or to international communism, whose ideals included an eventual "withering away of the state." Different dialects were eventually to give way to one national language.

The founders of the Chinese Communist Party were self-consciously modern intellectuals, enthusiastic organizers of the May Fourth era rejection of Confucian and other traditions. Three of the twelve young men who attended the 1921 founding meeting in Shanghai were Hakka (according to the criteria described above), eight times the chance rate. Almost as surprising, they came as delegates from China's three most cosmopolitan cities—Guangzhou, Beijing, and Shanghai. Zhang Guotao, born in Jishui, Jiangxi, came from Beijing University to represent Beijing. Chen Gongbo, of Nanhai, Guangdong, was a radical journalist who represented Guangzhou. And Li Da, of Lingling County, Hunan, who represented Shanghai, headed a progressive Shanghai girls' school. Many of the founders faced troubled futures; several died very young. But the three Hakka seem especially problematic, further obscuring their history. Both Zhang Guotao and Chen Gongbo represented a losing faction, the Party's theoretical wing, which argued that revolution was premature. Zhang Guotao defected to the Nationalists in 1938. Chen Gongbo looks even worse. The definitive Chinese reference work, the *Ci hai* (Sea of words) (1979), identifies him as a traitor (*hanjian*). Chen, who wrote a Columbia University thesis on the Party founding, joined the Japanese occupation government. China executed him in 1946. Only Li Da led a thoroughly honor-

able life, as a sociology and law professor rumored to have ghostwritten many of Mao's works.⁸

Hakka were also prominent in the labor movement. Orthodox Marxists held that the urban proletariat would lead the revolution. Hakka workers, militant and far from home, organized some of the most successful unions. Peng Pai organized the many Guangzhou ricksha pullers who were fellow Hakka natives of Hai-Lu-Feng (Galbiati 1985:177). Most of the anarchist-organized unions of Guangzhou barbers and tea-house clerks were Hakka as well. And Su Zhaozheng, a probable Hakka from Guangdong's Zhongshan County, organized the highly effective Hong Kong Seaman's strike of 1922 and the Guangzhou-Hong Kong strike of 1925-26; he remained on the Party's Politburo until he was killed in 1929 (Klein and Clark 1971). Many miners were Hakka, and some of the most militant dug coal at Anyuan in northwestern Jiangxi. There, Li Lisan, the most important Communist labor organizer, organized the Anyuan strike of 1922, an icon of eventual Communist victory. Li, a probable Hakka, was an orthodox Marxist, born in Liling County, Hunan, across the border from Anyuan. He retained a faith in worker revolution as he became the most important leader at Party Central in Shanghai. But workers formed less than one half of one percent of China's population; the Communists were nearly wiped out before they finally recruited among the peasants (Shaffer 1982:3).

Peasant revolution struck orthodox Marxists as implausible if not absurd. But peasants made up 85 percent of China's population, memories of the Taiping Rebellion remained strong, and Hakka peasants proved particularly receptive. When radical land reform came to Pingjiang on the Hunan-Jiangxi border in the late 1920s, radicals confiscated land outright, then often farmed communally, in patterns nearly identical to Taiping land policy in the same area (Benton 1992:353). The use of Hakka dialect as a common language helps explain how highly mobile outside activists managed to organize the overwhelmingly illiterate, linguistically splintered South. When Mao reported that about half of Hunan peasants

8. The founders were: Mao Zedong, He Shuheng, Dong Biwu, and Zhou Fohai (all from Hunan); Chen Tanqiu, Li Hanjun, and Liu Renqing (all from Hubei); Wang Jinmei (Shandong); Deng Enming (Guizhou); and Bao Huiseng (Guangzhou) (Song 1986, vol. 1:139-40). Zhou Fohai also went over to the Japanese. Biographical details come from their entries in the *Ci hai* (1979), Boorman and Howard (1967), Klein and Clark (1971), and Zheng Fulin (1988). Party founder Li Da is not the Li Da in the People's Liberation Army. An orthodox Cultural Revolution account of the founders appears in Han Suyin (1972:90-94).

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were organized in 1927, five of the thirteen counties he considered “almost completely organized” were heavily Hakka (Pingjiang, Liuyang, Liling, Leiyang, and Chen). Mao probably spoke very little Hakka, though he may have understood a good deal. His social survey of purely Hakka Xunwu County in Jiangxi, just seventy kilometers up the valley from Meixian, relied on a research team and interpreters. It transcribes Hakka vocabulary, song lyrics about poverty and battle, and dialogue between landlords and peasants who are borrowing grain or selling a son (Mao 1990:37, 40, 164–65, 168, 174–76, 189, 254–55).

Mao and other organizers also had important, early success in the Jinggang Mountains between Hunan and Jiangxi. Gregor Benton describes how the boundary between the Punti and Hakka was “razor-sharp.” The Punti controlled the official government, while Hakka militias and two Hakka bandit chiefs battled constantly over land, schooling, and other resources. The Communists recruited the chiefs, who completely controlled access to the mountains, but then had to placate them. Rifts widened between the more educated Punti Party members and the Hakka fighters; one saying went, “The Party is Tu [Punti (Bendi/tu)], the gun is Ke” (Benton 1992:380–82). Mao’s report from the Jinggang Mountains deplores these conflicts. He politely refers to the Hakka as *keji*, but describes Hakka-Punti hostility as a “peculiar feature” of border regions, one that weakened revolution because it undercut class struggle (Mao 1967:93–94).

Activists also organized rural collective governments known as soviet bases (*suweiai*, a Chinese transliteration of the Russian term for “popular collective government”). During their peak around 1932, the soviets governed some forty million people, seizing landlords, redistributing land, and organizing literacy, health, feminist, and military programs that pioneered many post-1949 nationwide innovations. Six of the nine most important soviets were in heavily Hakka areas (map 7.2). Leftists were under constant attack, so organizers deliberately sited the soviets in isolated areas with poor communication. The use of Hakka dialect offered partial protection for messages to distant allies. These had to be carried or memorized by an often-illiterate messenger; or sent by shortwave radio, often without the use of code. Hakka market women were particularly effective couriers. The first successful soviet was on the Guangdong coast at Hai-Lu-Feng (map 7.2, no. 1, 1927–28) and was organized by Peng Pai, son of a local landlord family so assimilated that it spoke Hakka only on ritual occasions. Peng Pai, who learned more Hakka to become effective, also

worked with Lin Boqu to organize branches of the Peasant Association all across Guangdong. Lin, a probable Hakka from Hunan's Liling County, headed the Nationalist Peasant Department before he became a pioneering communist organizer. The Peasant Association attracted many Hakka, especially unhappy soldiers. The head of the Meixian Peasants Association, Gu Dacun, detained many landlords, was military director of a short-lived East River Soviet, then survived its annihilation to lead five thousand guerrillas (Galbiati 1985:123-26, 180-83; Harrison 1972:142, Lu and Liu 1983).

Revolution also came early to western Fujian. Local reformers, many educated in Xiamen, had pushed for mass education in the vernacular from 1919 on. Organization was unusually strong, especially in Yongding. "Local pragmatists" carried out land reform before the Party ordered it, but tried not to make it too harsh. All men and women over age sixteen could vote (except criminals, landlords, opium addicts, and adherents of any religion, whether Daoist, Christian, or shamanist). A variety of schools and night classes were organized. The women's movement was unusually strong, with campaigns whose slogans included "male-female equality," "freedom of marriage," "don't adopt a baby bride for your baby son!" "abolish foot binding!" and "abolish concubinage!" The indigenously organized Western Fujian Soviet, with its capital at Changting, eventually controlled ten counties. Five were purely Hakka (Changting, Shanghang, Wuping, Yongding, and Ninghua); the remainder had substantial Hakka populations (Qingliu, Guihua, Liancheng, Longyan, and Jianning). Before, the soviet peasants had been able to afford rice only three months a year; by 1933 a ban on rice exports (reinforced by a Nationalist blockade) let them eat rice six months a year (Longyan Committee 1987:7, 14, 120, 185).

Lethal Nationalist attacks, especially the 1927 massacre of Shanghai leftists, forced many leftists to flee for their lives. Party Central moved out of Shanghai to a Jiangxi soviet at Ruijin, a purely-Hakka county just thirty kilometers from Changting, protected by mountains one thousand meters high (map 7.2, no. 2). This became the Central Soviet, controlling twenty counties, four of them purely Hakka (Ruijin, Huichang, Anyuan, and Xunwu). Most of the remainder were heavily Hakka (especially Yudu, Xingguo, Ningdu, Shicheng, and Guangchang). Just two (Nanfeng and Liquan) fell outside Hakka territory. The Southwestern Jiangxi Soviet in the Jinggang Mountains (no. 3), was strongly Hakka (especially Ninggang, Suiquan, Yongxin, and

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Chaling counties). The Hunan-Jiangxi Soviet (no. 4) included heavily Hakka Pingjiang and Xiushou counties. Meanwhile, in Sichuan, Zhang Guotao and his army organized an Eastern Sichuan Soviet (no. 5) around the miserably poor Hakka highland towns of Bazhong and Tongjiang, where one thousand families supported two hundred opium dens (Chang Kuo-t'ao 1971:312-27; Benjamin Yang 1990:134). The Northeastern Jiangxi-Fujian Soviet (no. 6) was largely in Min and Gan country, though many Hakka lived in its capital at Hengfeng. Soviets outside Hakka country included the West Guangxi Soviet (no. 7), the Hubei-Henan-Anhui Soviet (no. 8) and the Western Hunan-Hubei Soviet (no. 9). Hakka were not native to Yan'an or Shaanxi.

Mountain revolution desperately needed good relations with minorities. The She, one of the very few non-Han groups to join in with enthusiasm, brought important strengths. The She had organized centuries of mountain rebellions, and were famed for their solidarity as fierce, stubborn fighters. Class and ethnicity formed an unusually close match among this very poor group. After one She joined the Party in 1927, peasant associations spread widely, most She areas became revolutionary bases, and many villages were sovietized. Revolutionaries with the characteristic She-Hakka surnames Pan, Lan, Zhong, and Lei formed a fair percentage of the western Fujian fighters (Longyan Committee 1987). The She also supported rebellion by providing sentries, safe houses, hospitals, a clothing factory, a weapons repair shop, and a prison. Women and children carried messages using the She language, an excellent natural code (Benton 1992:270-72; Li Mo 1993; Longyan Committee 1987:222-69).

In Vietnam too, a strikingly similar socioeconomic configuration seems to have made socialist revolution attractive to one particular minority. The Tay (Tho, Dairen) are an ethnic Tai subgroup, related to the Thai. Their cousins across the Chinese border in Yunnan include the Zhuang (who also showed early enthusiasm for revolution), as well as the Dai, Nong, and Liao. Like the She, the Tay faced grinding mountain poverty, but had relatively good relations with a dominant group, widespread bilingual skill, a fairly complex economy, and considerable contacts in town. The Tay carried out land reform in 1945, hid Ho Chi Minh and other guerrillas, and fought with the Viet Cong. Many became heroes, and a Tay now serves as president of Vietnam's National Assembly (*Chinese Encyclopedia* 1986:87; A. Terry Rambo, personal communication, 24 February 1994).

MARY S. ERBAUGH

FIGHTING AS A WAY OF LIFE:
GUERRILLAS, LONG MARCHERS, AND YAN'AN

Fighting became a way of life for hardened, local militias. Many of the toughest fighters were also the most independent. Separatism posed constant problems. Hakka warlord Chen Jiongming led repeated battles against the Republican government for the secession of eastern Guangdong and western Fujian. Sichuan, Fujian, and Hunan provinces tried to secede as well. Paramilitary secret societies also continued to rebel; both Deng Xiaoping's father and Zhu De were leaders in the Older Brother Society (Schram 1966). Dissatisfaction in the Nationalist Army increased throughout the 1920s, and even officers began to defect. But as late as 1927 the only real Red Army was the local, heavily Hakka, Hai-Lu-Feng Army. Its commander, Zhu De, joined forces with his old Berlin classmate Ye Ting, a Guangdong Hakka who had once supported Guangdong secession. Both participated in the prophetic Nanchang Uprising, considered the founding of the Red Army, when a whole Nationalist division defected to the Communists in 1927. Zhu and Ye led two thousand soldiers away through the Hakka mountains and soviets of Guangdong.

By 1929 Zhu De, backed by Chen Yi, wanted to "enlarge Communist operations" into the Hakka heartland of eastern Guangdong. Mao opposed this as bad strategy. Zhu attacked anyway, and was defeated. By 1930 the Central Committee opposed setting up additional soviets on the Guangdong-Fujian-Jiangxi border, and condemned further expeditions there as putting local short-term gains ahead of national revolution. Western Fujian guerrillas defied orders to attempt a link-up with the Meixian guerrilla Fang Fang and the East River Guerrillas, but were defeated outside Meixian in 1931. Almost immediately afterward Li Lisan proposed liberating all of Jiangxi. The Western Fujian Soviet vowed to liberate the whole nation, starting with Hakka country. They attacked Dabu, were defeated again, and saw their ranks drop from three thousand to four hundred (Kuo 1968:24-28; Longyan Committee 1987:132-36). Yet Fujian radicals grew increasingly radical, particularly on the border between Hakka and Min country, where gangs forced women to bob their hair. Radicals banned "superstitious practices," including burning incense or ritual candles, worshipping the gods, tomb sweeping, fortune telling, and extravagant weddings, down to the bride's parents' gift of a chicken. These moves disproportionately affected the more prosperous and ritually active Min. A bitter purge

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ensued (Longyan Committee 1987:137–39), but an entire Nationalist Army of twenty thousand, mostly Hakka, defected to the Communists soon after (Benjamin Yang 1990:64).

The Nationalists tightened their blockade around the soviets, banning even the import of salt to these landlocked counties. Seasoned infantry and aerial bombers stepped up their attacks, forcing the Communists to abandon the soviets in a withdrawal that came to be called the Long March. Zhu De and Ye Jianying led the main flank of the marchers out of the Central Soviet in October 1934. An extremely high percentage of the eighty-six thousand marchers were from Hakka regions. Preparations were minimal, though Zhou Enlai negotiated a fairly smooth evacuation with the Guangdong Hakka warlord Chen Jitang. Ren Bishi (a Hunan Xiang, as was Mao) and Xiao Ke (a probable Hakka) scouted the early route around Xiao's native territory on the Hunan-Guangdong border (Alley 1977; Longyan Committee 1987:218–19, Benjamin Yang 1990:100–103). But ragged troops spent a year under constant attack, zigzagging north over nearly ten thousand kilometers of mountains, deserts, swamps, and the Tibetan plateau, before they found refuge at Yan'an (map 7.4).

The early route moved from Hakka village to Hakka village, where marchers were better able to beg for shelter. Peasants along the route were often angry and out of supplies, but early casualties were low. Hakka fighters had a greater chance to fade into the mountains, and desertions reached twenty thousand even before a gory battle at the Xiang River, on the border of Hakka country. Only about thirty thousand marchers reached Zunyi in Guizhou, where Mao's peasant faction finally gained the upper hand and ordered a linkup with Zhang Guotao in Sichuan. But Zhang declared the Long March a failure and deliberately marched his troops out of range. Zhu De mediated, but disputes continued. As the marchers fled up the Tibetan plateau, survival came increasingly to depend on negotiations with angry minorities with excellent historical grounds for hostility. One of the few effective negotiators was Liu Bocheng, a probable Hakka from a mixed Han-minority area of Sichuan. Even Liu's adulatory official biography mentions his recollection that "listening to my explanation, the Yi looked rather doubtful" (Hsiao Hua 1978:74–76). Less than twenty thousand of the original marchers reached Yan'an (Harrison 1972:245–50, Benjamin Yang 1990:105–106, 125).

Chances of survival were just as poor, and the atmosphere even more demoralized for those left behind "to carry on the struggle." Some thirty

thousand stayed back at the Central Soviet—mostly sick, local fighters with only one gun for every three revolutionaries. Their commander, Chen Yi, lacked even the code to decipher the final radioed instructions from the Central Committee. Nationalist troops rapidly took over sixteen thousand prisoners, and executed many. Benton (1989, 1992) analyzes the grisly aftermath in the former soviets, which came to be known as the Three-Year Guerrilla War of 1934–37. The Nationalists killed the families of leftists down to the infants, sold women into prostitution, and burned whole villages and forests. In some places, where they placed a bounty on severed heads, they collected so many that they accepted pairs of ears instead. They also killed many She and burned their villages, some three times over. By April 1935 a Nationalist report boasted: “There is not a dwelling that has not been burned, there is not a tree that has not been felled, there is not a fowl or a dog that has not been killed, there is not an able-bodied man remaining” (Benton 1992:68).

Yet Gregor Benton describes how many leftists survived underground. Chen Yi, a marked man, stepped inside a house only twice in three years. Nationalist soldiers had particular difficulty if they did not speak Hakka (Harrison 1972:242–43). The Nationalists forced whole villages into exile, but people slipped back to work in the mountains making charcoal or paper, gathering herbs, or chopping wood. Sometimes, when the Nationalists forced peasants to chop down the forests that hid the guerrillas, leftists could persuade them to come late, leave early, and chop with the dull side of their blades. Survivors of some former soviets recovered better than others. Much depended on luck. And the better the roads, the easier the Nationalist attack. But Benton also analyzes other factors, in addition to raw heroism, that aided survival. Numerous overlapping factors allowed the survivors of the Western Fujian Soviet to recover better than most. The area was isolated enough for shelter, but had sufficient connection to the coast to receive information. The mild climate allowed year-round forage and sleeping in the woods. Human factors were also critical. The soviet had been indigenously organized, making it flexible and sensitive to local people. The Central Soviet, in contrast, where transplanted intellectuals conversed in Russian until the eve of the Long March, had particular difficulty in recovering. (Eliminating Central was the top Nationalist priority.) Leaders at Western Fujian were better educated than those at many other soviets, such as Western Hubei–Southern Hunan, and so were able to write appeals to sympathizers in the cities or inside the government. Self-reliant women and solidarity with the She were other

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important assets (Benton 1989:62, 1992: 67–68, 96–98, 125, 485; Chen Tiejian 1983:107).

Hakka Long Marchers became guests again when they finally reached Yan'an. Southern rivalries cooled in the North, where the use of Mandarin linked refugees from all over China (S. T. Leong 1985:285). There Mao consolidated his power, brokering the integration of the urban idealists with peasant guerrillas. Mao was probably ambivalent about the Hakka, grateful for their militancy, but relieved to have their power diluted. Zhang Guotao had a final falling out and defected to the Nationalists in 1938. But many southern guerrillas, including Chen Yi, survived to find their way north, where they formed the core of the New Fourth Army. Mao also led a rectification campaign in 1942, which set the rules for political loyalty that were enforced until the late 1970s. Rectification forced all factions to focus on their changed situation at the new base. It also targeted abuses associated often, but not exclusively, with Hakka guerrillas, especially "mountaintopism" (*shantou zhuyi*), the tendency for local chiefs to ignore central authority. Eventually Chen Yi, Zhu De, and many other Long Marchers led the battles that overthrew first the Japanese and then the Nationalists.

POST-1949 NATIONAL POWER: ETHNIC SILENCE, HIGH POSITION

Hardened by decades of civil war, the Communists sought a "scientific" socialism with strong central control when they took national power in 1949. They acted immediately to weaken local loyalties, with severe impact on local traditions. Native-place associations were closed, only government-sponsored religious organizations were permitted, and "feudal" or "superstitious" customs were suppressed. Beijing also tried to forge better relations with the minorities by strongly discouraging "Han chauvinism" (*da Han zhuyi*) and designating minority nationalities to receive subsidies and affirmative action. Han subgroups, including the Hakka, were explicitly forbidden to apply. The one major area of tolerance for local culture was language. Nationalist policy had suppressed the dialects, while the Communists tacitly encouraged bilingual education. And traces of Taiping language reforms lingered in new promotions of simplified characters and a highly accessible vernacular style.

Many Hakka heroes became national leaders. Chen Yi served as foreign minister and in many other high posts. Li Lisan became minister of labor. Guo Moruo, who did dangerous reconnaissance in wartime

Chongqing, headed the Academy of Sciences. The president of the Chinese Medical Association was Fu Lianchang. Raised in a Changting Christian orphanage, Fu made the Long March, then led strong campaigns against venereal disease and prostitution, and for birth control and public health. Deng Xiaoping administered Sichuan, assigning Hu Yaobang, his loyal Jiangxi Hakka Long March subordinate, to Deng's own home county. (Mao followed the same patronage pattern when he assigned his successor, Hua Guofeng, to administer Mao's home county in Hunan.) Land reform was at least partly modeled on Hakka communal agriculture. Ye Jianying designated three counties in Meixian prefecture as land reform models (Fan and Ding 1983:80). The chief agricultural planner of the Great Leap Forward (1958–60) was Vice Premier Tan Zhenlin, a Hunan Hakka veteran of the Jinggang Mountains period and the Three-Year War. The Great Leap, which led to disastrous famine, probably marked the peak of his career. Hakka were especially prominent in the military. Ye Jianying became commander in chief of the People's Liberation Army. Of ten seasoned fighters who were named marshals (a rank above general), three were indisputably Hakka: Ye Jianying, Zhu De, and Chen Yi. Two more were probably Hakka: Liu Bocheng and Nie Rongzhen. Fang Fang, the Meixian guerrilla, held many posts under Ye Jianying before transferring to overseas Chinese liaison, where his ability to speak Mandarin, Cantonese, and Hakka were real assets.

The Cultural Revolution was particularly difficult for many Hakka leaders. Mao's faction promoted a Yan'an-style ideology. This emphasized self-reliance, which resulted in suspicion of foreign contacts, and also encouraged struggle against enemies, a collective economy that promoted the countryside over the cities, and strict Party discipline for everyone, including intellectuals. Overseas ties became a severe liability, as did any support for a market economy. Mao's faction may have felt some animus for their Hakka coworkers. The military, certainly, had remained relatively outside the Maoists' control. Chen Yi, Ye Jianying, Tan Zhenlin, and others tried vainly to reverse the Cultural Revolution with the "February Adverse Current" of 1967. Deng Xiaoping was denounced as a villain second only to soon-to-be deposed Chairman Liu Shaoqi. Deng was exiled to an old Jiangxi base, where he oiled machinery and played bridge until he was rehabilitated in 1973. When he fell again in 1976, Ye Jianying secretly flew him to safety in the Guangdong Military Region, then lobbied his case with the Central Committee. When Deng was rehabilitated again in 1977, Ye

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backed him strongly against Mao's handpicked successor, Hua Guofeng (Franz 1988:211, 252–53, 258). In the shadowy world of late Cultural Revolution palace politics, Mao's faction invoked Yan'an with increasing fervor. "Localism" and other offenses associated with Hakka guerrillas became code words for attacks on Deng and his group. Attacks were often worded as denunciations of Zhang Guotao, the Hakka fighter who had defected in Sichuan nearly forty years before. Meanwhile Deng's faction developed a competing Long March iconography featuring many Hakka heroes.

THE DENG XIAOPING ERA: HAKKA POWER, ICONOGRAPHY, AND POVERTY

Deng's return in 1977 rehabilitated many Hakka leaders. Both real and symbolic power increased, despite continued poverty in the Hakka heartland. The high point probably came around 1984, when Hakka individuals made up half the Standing Committee of the Politburo, eleven of the 105 top leaders, and many of the lower rank. The heritage of strong women is not evident, though Nie Rongzhen's daughter, Nie Li, is a colonel general.

Long March iconography proliferated, as Deng took care to highlight his own role in early communism (Alley 1980; Franz 1988; Thompson notes to Mao 1990:30–31). Dozens of Long March biographies and memoirs appeared, still without mentioning the word "Hakka." Newspapers published accounts of reunions between Long Marchers and their now-middle-aged children, whom they had been forced to leave behind to be raised by peasants in the Hakka heartland (Huang Ping 1988). Long March iconography came to be used by a variety of groups. Intellectuals who had resisted Maoism often invoked Ye Ting, the military hero who had been court martialed, then killed in 1946. Popular new posters pictured him wearing a romantic cape as he scratched poems of resistance onto his prison walls. Many viewed Hu Yaobang as a patron of intellectuals. A hagiographic biography, which linked Hu's virtues directly to a Hakka-chauvinist account of his heritage, was published in Hong Kong and circulated informally on the mainland (Yang Zhongmei 1988). The student demonstrations of 1989 began when the seventy-three-year-old Youth Leaguer died suddenly in mid-April, his death becoming the excuse for the early deployment of massive activities organized for the anniversary of the May Fourth reformist student movement of 1919. By late May the frail, elderly Marshals Nie Rong-

zhen and Xiang Xiangqian (of Shanxi) wrote Deng Xiaoping to urge tolerance for the demonstrators. But Deng and the military recycled Long March iconography to glorify the geriatric mania for central control, which culminated in the Beijing Massacre on 4 June 1989. After the massacre, the icons only increased, part of a propaganda campaign to glorify the army and thus, indirectly, justify Deng's role. Cultural troupes toured the long-ignored Hakka soviet base areas on the Fujian-Jiangxi border to perform "local songs" for retired veterans (Min 1989, Zheng Hanming 1989).⁹ A propaganda poster honoring the fiftieth anniversary of the Party founding featured a portrait of Deng, surrounded by Long March images, with the wild geese associated with exile and reunion flying overhead (Yang Guchang 1991).

Still, Hakka areas remained poor, despite the success of individual politicians. Peasant lifespan doubled nationwide after 1949, and income increased. But the rural interior remained behind, and neither Yan'an nor Hakka peasants have prospered. Hakka leaders apparently avoided the common corruption of pumping huge sums into their home districts. Deng has never returned to the hometown he last saw in 1920 (WuDunn 1991). And the government investment that came was overwhelmed by high population and baseline poverty. During 1950s land reform, old Fujian base areas, including Changting and Qingliu counties, were so poor that people who had sweet potato porridge to eat were classed as landlords. During the Cultural Revolution an intellectual mother and daughter sent to Qingliu found themselves the only literate females in town (Fu Ping, personal communication, 12 February 1988). Xiamen Red Guards also made their way to villages near Qingliu, Changting, and Liancheng, hoping to recruit the peasants whom they had heard were "brave but ignorant, and therefore easier to command." They found that 80 percent of the peasants had never been to the county seat, most women were illiterate, and even salt was scarce. The city teenagers fell ill on the local diet; one banker's son snorted that the place was like "Black Africa" (Ling 1972:297-304).

China's poorest regions are in the extreme Northwest, far from Hakka country. But even in the 1980s and 1990s Meixian, Changting, and Ruijin remain poor and isolated, at least a day's grueling drive from the nearest railway, a severe handicap for trade. Many villages are con-

9. But after the massacre, outraged Chengdu students who, like Deng, were natives of Guang'an, rushed back to the Deng family graveyard to dig up the bones. They found soldiers already in place to arrest them (Chan and Unger 1990).

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nected only by unpaved road. Meixian Prefecture still has the poorest counties and highest population density in Guangdong. Annual per capita income for the Meixian metropolitan region was only US\$108 (401 yuan) in 1985 (Moser 1985:253; Vogel 1989:242-47). Western Fujian Hakka counties remain the poorest in the province. Few official figures are available, but gazetteers offer provocative details. By Chinese standards, the county seats remain very small and lacking in amenities. Changting City had 380,000 people in 1982, Liancheng City had 150,000, and Qingliu City 170,000. The economy rests on agriculture, with manufacturing restricted mostly to bamboo products. Even recommended tourist spots bear grim testimony to the aftermath of war, among them martyr's cemeteries for those executed by the Nationalists, sites of long-destroyed buildings where Zhu De or Chen Yi once slept, the caves where they hid, and the Changting prison where writer Qu Qiubai was shot (Li Yuming et al. 1986:32-36; 1987:43-48). Even so, Hakka country, including western Fujian, has grown much more prosperous since the Cultural Revolution. Ming historian Cynthia Brokaw spent nearly a month in the small Liancheng County town of Sibao in autumn 1993, researching a long-defunct imperial-era publishing industry. She reports that Sibao had five thousand people and no running water. Communications were difficult over narrow mountain roads, and the two telephones in town often did not work. However, food was adequate and people did not appear malnourished. Electricity was available, if erratic. The town had acquired a few television sets, and built a movie hall to show a weekly martial arts film. The cultural level is said to be unusually high. Boys finish grade school or junior high, although girls often drop out earlier. A high school is available at the county seat. Almost everyone can speak some sort of Mandarin. Distinctive Hakka traditions survive and people speak Hakka. Elderly women wear a blue tunic with black trim, said to be a traditional Hakka woman's garment. Elaborate silver jewelry is on sale at the market, and some children wear protective silver amulets. Many Daoist ceremonies are celebrated. And the town boasts a tiny new Hakka Studies Center (Brokaw, personal communication, 20 January 1994).

EMBRACING OTHERNESS: OUTSIDE CONTACTS AND REVISED IDENTITY

Mainland scholars date the revival of Hakka studies directly to Deng Xiaoping's 1977 return, when reformers reduced central control, encour-

aged local market economies, and aggressively solicited overseas ties. The Hakka, like the Cantonese, the Min, and the Wu, took advantage of decreased Party scrutiny to revive many local traditions. They are also busily revising Hakka identity. The Long March veterans remained relatively free of ethnic corruption, and appear not to have spawned a new Hakka clique. By 1992 no Hakka remained on the Standing Committee, and the only probable Hakka among the fifteen members of the 1989 Politburo had stepped down.

Outside contacts are probably the most important stimulus for the construction of a distinctive Hakka identity. Tens of millions of overseas Chinese have come to the mainland looking for their roots, stimulating the revival (and revision) of many traditions. Many pay to be buried on Chinese soil, with traditional Daoist funerals, music, and opera (Dean 1988). Their investment also boosts the economy; even tiny Sibao boasts a fancy new house built with overseas funds. Belated attempts to solicit overseas Hakka investment to match Cantonese and Fujian capital are underway. When the word “Hakka” finally came out of the closet and into the headlines of *People’s Daily* in 1991, it solicited overseas funding for Meizhou urban renewal, a Hakka folk festival, and a proposed Beijing Museum of Overseas Chinese History featuring Hakka history (*Renmin ribao* 1991, Nie 1991).

Assimilation can render ethnic distinctions acceptable, especially if they are nostalgic. The visible results of the Hakka revival are scholarly work and positive recognition of minority connections. The most conspicuous revivalism comes from the most nearly assimilated urban groups. Taiwan Hakka led the way in December 1988, inspiring their mainland cousins with fourteen thousand protestors who demanded that the Nationalist government “return our mother tongue” and permit the use of Hakka in government, schooling, and broadcasting. As Howard Martin describes in this volume, Taiwan Hakka culture centers and speech contests proliferated and *Hakka Magazine* published accounts of highly varied activities (see also Chiu 1992; Huang Hsuan-fan 1993:57–65). Beijing then attempted to appear more tolerant of local language and culture than was Taipei. Mainland Hakka enthusiasts took advantage of the opening.

Scholarly recognition offers supreme prestige. “Hakkaology” (Kejia-xue), a newly named academic field that embraces the “guest” label, was launched in December 1989. Meixian hosted an international conference, conducted in Hakka, and used overseas support to upgrade the local teacher’s college into Jiaying University. Over sixty Hakka studies

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centers sprang up nationwide, even outside Hakka country at East China Normal University in Shanghai and the Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing. A newly founded International Association for Hakkaology held its convention at the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 1992.¹⁰ Forty mainland scholars, many of them non-Hakka, presented papers, along with twenty-eight Hong Kong, Taiwan, or overseas Chinese, and nine Japanese and Western researchers (including Erbaugh, Johnson, and Martin of this volume).

Most presentations and discussions were in Mandarin or English, with simultaneous translation. The sole presentation delivered in Hakka language came as a peace offering from a bilingual Hong Kong Cantonese pastor. Most authors avoided comparison with other Chinese, and described the Hakka in flattering terms. Poverty was not discussed. Party history remained off limits, except for an earlier version of Mary Erbaugh's paper (1992), which went unchallenged. But the papers were also highly informative and ventured into much previously taboo mainland territory, including the Daoist ceremonies now performed in Fujian (Dean 1988, Lagerwey 1992, Ye Mingsheng 1992). Others reached out toward Taiwan and overseas by discussing the diaspora, Christianity, and Sun Yat-sen. Several solicited investment, and interpreted Deng Xiaoping's visit to the booming Shenzhen Economic Development Zone (in part-Hakka Bao'an County) as support for Hakka entrepreneurs. Discussion was friendly but frank. Many lobbied for greater access to the mainland: "What do you mean you're 'still investigating' whether Sun was a Hakka? You have all those materials you won't let us see!" "Why can't we meet on the mainland?" Calls for professionalism abounded: "By that definition, the entire U.S. is Hakka too!" "Every Hakka genealogy I've ever seen has ancestors in the 'northern nobility'!" Some decried the study of Hakka in isolation, or compared only with northern Chinese, since Hakka language and customs share so much with those of other southerners. Many urged circulation of primary materials and foreign studies (Chen Shenglin 1992, Wang Hongyou 1992, Wang Tsu-de

10. Additional sponsors included the Centre d'Anthropologie de la Chine du Sud et de la Péninsule Indochinoise of the Centre Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique in Paris; the Aw Boon Haw Foundation (of the Tiger Balm fortune); and the Hong Kong Hakka Association. *Asiaweek* (*Yazhou zhoukan*) honored the conference with a cover story on the Hakka for its Chinese edition (but not the English one) (Xin 1992). To encourage communication, the References in this volume note the affiliation of the authors of the Hakka conference papers cited in this chapter.

1992). Some warned—accurately—that some early Western and Japanese studies had solicited Hakka support for the imperialists.

The biggest surprise was the positive view of minorities. Confident that Hakka have finally been accepted as Han Chinese, several scholars discussed positive minority influences on Han culture (Chen Shenglin 1992, Jiang Binzhao 1992, Li Mo 1993, Zhang Youzhou 1992). Mainland affirmative action is desirable enough that many Han now switch to minority registration on their official identification cards. The She remain one of China's smaller minorities, numbering only 630,000. But this number is a phenomenal 71 percent increase between 1982 and 1990 alone.¹¹ Most of the increase comes from switched registration, almost certainly by Hakka. David Wu discusses how a switched ethnic registration need not require a change in culture, but it does change the interpretation of the new identity (1991:167–68).

Mainland minority policy now also serves as a model for Han local culture lobbyists, even in Taiwan. Taiwanese, Hakka, and indigenous activists have goaded the Nationalists toward greater language and political power by using both the Western term “human rights” (*ren quan*) and the socialist term “minority nationality.” Tibet provided a startling model in 1987 when Taiwanese protestors invoked a Beijing proposal to make Tibetan the primary working language of Tibet; this is far more liberal than anything the Nationalists allow on Taiwan (Huang Hsuan-fan 1993:56). (Beijing scuttled the plan after the 1989 riots in Lhasa.) Mainland Hakka scholars who criticized the Academy of Social Sciences for ignoring local Han subcultures carefully avoided the term “minority nationality,” but referred to the Hakka as a “subethnic group” (*minxi*), a recent coinage, possibly inspired by English. They argued that the Hakka are distinct according to Stalin's four criteria for defining a minority nationality: distinctive language, territory, customs, and identity.

ASSIMILATION VERSUS COMING OUT

Hakka pleasure in “coming out” is understandable. Reticence in discussing recent politics reflects an embattled history, as well as possible backlash. Cantonese and Fujian local cultures are experiencing revivals at least as strong, and far better financed. Glorifying Hakka culture could later backfire via a revival of negative stereotypes. In fact, Cantonese

11. China's overall population increased only 12 percent. Minority population jumped 28 percent, largely from switched registration (*Beijing Review* 1990).

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who dislike the communist regime use old anti-Hakka stereotypes to excoriate the Long March as the “Hakka Road,” to denounce Mao Zedong with far-fetched claims that he had Hakka ancestors, and denounce Deng Xiaoping as “that little Hakka” (Friedman 1995:556–58). Hakka invocations of Deng Xiaoping’s support may play well in 1994, but what will happen when Deng dies? Many also look uneasily at Eastern European ethnic revival and civil war.

Nationwide reforms have superseded many of the Hakka customs that once seemed progressive. The value of Hakka as a common language has been undercut by the success of a Mandarin vernacular, even as decades of peace (and better technology) make it obsolete as a code. Peace devalues local militias. The southern economic boom could hardly have less use for peasant rebels—or communal agriculture. Chinese women now have at least statutory equality, and outside work for cash. Overseas Chinese can take surprising pride in a strong China, whatever they think of its government. A strong nation can actually permit freer expression of local identity. Pride in a modern nation, which Hakka helped to pioneer, can dilute the more parochial local passions, and permit even sojourners to view the nation as their native place.

Glossary

Terms marked (C) are Cantonese, those marked (H) are Hakka, and those marked (*) use the common English spelling. All other terms are Mandarin pinyin.

- Bendi 本地
bendiren 本地人
benshengren 本省人
bentu 本土
benturen 本土人
buzhang 部長
- Chaozhou (Teochow, Chaochou,
or Chiu Chao*) 潮州
choisam (C) 菜心
Chong Yang 重陽
Chongzheng Hui 崇正會
Chou ke fen sheng 仇客分聲
chuanzi ji 船仔髻
- da Han zhuyi* 大漢主義
da ke jia zu 大客家族
difang zhuyi 地方主義
dong 洞
duoyuan 多源
- fan gui* 番鬼
- fang* 房
fazhan 發展
fengshui 風水
fenlie zhuyi 分裂主義
funü hui 婦女會
- gongsheng* 貢生
Guangfu lao 廣夫姥
Guangfu ren 廣夫人
guanhua 官話
gui 鬼
guo fu 國父
Guomindang 國民黨
guoyu 國語
- hai ren hai ji* 害人害己
hai ren li ji 害人利己
Hak Nhin (H) 客人
Hakka (*) (Kejia) 客家
Hakka jim deihjyuh (C) 客家估
地主
Han 漢

GLOSSARY

- hanjian* 漢奸
hen you qian 很有錢
 Hokkien (*) (Fujian) 福建
 Hokklo (*) (Fulao) 福佬
houyi 後裔
 "Huan wo Kehua" 還我客話
huiguan 會館

jaahpgwaan (C) 習慣
jian zei 奸賊
jiansheng 監生
jitian 基田
jouhdak gunleung, cheutdak
tengtong (C) 做得官娘，出
 得廳堂

kaibu 開埠
ke or Ke 客
Ke fei 客非
Ke min 客民
ke ren 客人
Ke shen 客紳
keji 客籍
Kejia 客家
Kejia fengyun 客家風雲
Kejia zazhi 客家雜誌
Kejia zuqun yundong 客家族群
 運動
Kejiaxue 客家學
kongsi (*) 公司

lairen 來人
lao 佬
li 里
li ren hai ji 利人害己
li ren li ji 利人利己
liang 糧
liangtian 糧田
liumang wuchan 流氓無產

mei you qian 沒有錢
meilidao 美麗島
minnanhua 閩南話
minxi 民系
 Min-Yue-Gan 閩越贛
 Minzhu Jinbu Dang 民主進步
 黨
minzu 民族
minzu ziwo zhongxin pianjian 民
 族自我中心偏見

Neng mai zu tian, bu neng mai
zong yan 能賣祖田，不能
 賣宗言
nishou 逆首

pengmin 棚民
Punti (*) (Bendi) 本地

qiangjiu 搶救
Qing Ming 清明

GLOSSARY

- ren* 人
ren quan 人權
Ren sheng, bu ren xing 認聲不認姓
rentong 認同
- shan ge* 山歌
 Shanmin 山民
shantou zhuyi 山頭主義
shaoshu minzu 少數民族
shawen zhuyi 沙文主義
 She 畚
sheju 設局
shengfan 生番
shengyuan 生員
 Shung Him Tong (*) 崇謙堂
 Subei 蘇北
suweiai 蘇維埃
- Tang ren* 唐人
tichang 提倡
ting 廳
tonghua 同化
toujia 頭家
 Tsung Tsin Mission (*) 崇真會
tu 土
tu ren 土人
tu shen 土紳
tu zhong shen min 土眾紳民
tuanlian 團練
tulou 土樓
tutan 土談
- waishengren* 外省人
wangbu 旺埠
wu gui 烏鬼
wuju 武舉
wushen 武紳
- xian* 縣
xiedou 械斗
 Xin ge Kejiaren 新個客家人
xinchaoliu 新潮流
xiuca 秀才
xuetong 血統
xue yuan guanxi 血緣關係
- Yimin Miao 義民廟
yuanzhumin 原住民
 Yue 約
yuzu 語族
- zei shou* 賊首
zhanbu 佔埠
zhengzhi gongju 政治工具
zhongyang jiquan zhi 中央集權制
zhongzu 種族
zhu 住
zuquan zaiwo 族權在握
zuqun rentong 族群認同
zuqun tezhi 族群特質
zuqun yundong 族群運動

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Contributors

SHARON A. CARSTENS is associate professor of anthropology at Portland State University in Oregon. She has conducted research in Malaysia, Singapore, and Taiwan, and has written numerous articles on Chinese culture in Southeast Asia.

MYRON L. COHEN is professor of anthropology at Columbia University. He has conducted long-term research in Taiwan, and more recently has worked in the People's Republic of China. He is the author of numerous books and articles. His most well-known book, *House United, House Divided* (1976), is based on research in a Hakka community in Taiwan.

NICOLE CONSTABLE is assistant professor of anthropology at the University of Pittsburgh. She is the author of *Christian Souls and Chinese Spirits: A Hakka Community in Hong Kong* (1994).

MARY S. ERBAUGH is associate professor of Chinese translation and linguistics at the City University of Hong Kong. She has conducted sociolinguistic research in the People's Republic of China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, and is currently writing a book about language and power in twentieth-century China.

ELIZABETH LOMINSKA JOHNSON is a curator at the University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology. She has published numerous articles based on her long-term research among Hakka in Hong Kong.

HOWARD J. MARTIN received a doctoral degree in anthropology from the University of Virginia in 1990. He has published articles based on several years of archival and field research in Taiwan and is now working on an ethnographic history of Hakka in northern Taiwan.

CONTRIBUTORS

ELLEN OXFELD is associate professor of sociology and anthropology at Middlebury College, Vermont. She has conducted Hakka research in Calcutta and Toronto and is the author of *Blood, Sweat and Mahjong: Family and Enterprise in an Overseas Chinese Community* (1993).

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